

THE INFORMATION LITERACY COMPETENCY STANDARDS FOR USERS OF POLISH MEDICAL LIBRARIES AS A CHALLENGE FOR THE HEALTH LIBRARIANS

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Abstract

The poster presents information literacy competency standards proposed for Polish medical libraries as well as describes how our library workforce develops professional competencies to follow the standards. What is more, it shows how we changed the system of users' training in our library.

Introduction

The document *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Users of Polish Medical Libraries* was formulated in the Main Library of the Medical University of Gdańsk in 2006 as a proposition for all the health libraries in Poland. The main reason for creating these standards was to inspire the medical librarians to find the best training model of developing users' information literacy skills. The people who act in medicine and health sciences have very special information needs. Therefore, in order to be a good guide for them in the "knowledge sea", a librarian has to make any necessary effort to become a competent "info teacher".

Standard One

User is aware of his or her needs for medical information and is able to specify them, i.e.: he or she is able to define those needs as well as their scope.

Standard Two

User of a medical library is able to locate and access the needed information. He or she:

1. is aware of different sources of information and is able to differentiate them:
 - 1.1. knows both electronic and traditional kinds of documents and publications;
 - 1.2. knows various kinds of scientific medical information sources;
 - 1.3. is able to distinguish the nature of sources;
 - 1.4. understands the methodology of the construction of databases and is aware of the kinds of information they contain;
 - 1.5. is able to recognize the importance of particular sources to different fields of medicine;
2. is able to choose information sources appropriate to his or her needs;
3. has the ability to locate the sources of information and utilize them:
 - 3.1. knows various scientific information tools and is able to use them;
 - 3.2. knows how to formulate questions, to construct searching strategies and to use Boolean operators as well as to limit the obtained results;
 - 3.3. has knowledge of various IT tools used in a library as well as on the Internet;
 - 3.4. knows and uses the principles and methods of accessing information in a library as well as outside it;
 - 3.5. knows the elements of bibliographical description to various kinds of sources and is able to identify them on that basis;
4. effectively accesses and manages the needed information;
5. verifies and optimizes the applied searching strategies.

Standard Three

User of a medical library critically evaluates the obtained information:

1. knows the criteria of evaluating the reliability of information sources and uses them in practice;
2. knows the criteria of evaluating publications, which he or she uses to evaluate and select the appropriate publications;
3. analyses and evaluates the obtained results.

Standard Four

User of a medical library uses the selected information to create and spread new knowledge:

1. knows how to draw conclusions from the possessed information and uses them to create new value;
2. knows the ways of spreading knowledge and chooses the appropriate ones;
3. knows the methodology of creating publications as well as other forms of mass media and knows how to utilize them;
4. is aware of law and ethical regulations concerning science as well as spreading knowledge and acts according to them;
5. on the basis of the gained and processed information he or she creates new value and spreads it in accordance with law and ethical regulations.

Results and conclusions

In order to guarantee a constantly improving level of the librarians' professional knowledge, we:

- have introduced a system of monthly internal workforce trainings in our library,
- systematically participate in different conferences and workshops,
- try to be up to date with current trends in librarianship presented in the literature,
- study new IT possibilities.

Owing to the above actions:

- we are able to:
 - develop our professional knowledge,
 - make progress in our IT skills,
 - improve our teaching methods,
 - expand our pedagogical knowledge,
 - develop a collaborative work system;
- we know:
 - the role of emotional intelligence,
 - how to manage our own emotions in the educational process,
 - the importance of nonverbal communication;
- we have also learnt:
 - the law regulations concerning the copyright,
 - how to measure the effectiveness of training,
 - how to effectively promote library educational services;
- we constantly improve our knowledge of English, the basic language in science.

The newly gained professional knowledge allowed us to:

- organize and equip the special Multimedia Computer Room dedicated for trainings,
- define different groups of users,
- implement a new system of trainings adequate to the users' needs and skill level,
- prepare and introduce the online basic library trainings,
- introduce the online system of questionnaires for the participants of trainings.