

From black screens to student success

Jessica Lönn-Stensrud, Julie Skattebu, Tone Gadmar, and Heidi Konestabo

The academic training in higher education is a profound part of the university social responsibility. Not only should students be strong within their academic subject, they should also gain generic skills for their future professional career. Information literacy skills helps the students become lifelong learners and contributors to society by learning them to find, evaluate, organise, convert, and communicate information (1). These skills help the students master writing in different genre, finding reliable sources, critique research, separating theories from evidence-based claims, and being able to distinguish which science is reliable. And in today's digital society, these skills will be crucial.

But how do you teach these skills in a world that turned digital overnight?

In a third semester pharmacognosy course, students write a project assignment about plants as drugs. The assignment is limited to 8 pages. Despite being offered a voluntary two-hour course form the library, the subject teacher reports that students have been struggling with finding, evaluating, and using sources. Especially proper and correct use of sources has been a problem. Facing having to teach 60 students in literature search and citation practices with black screens, we came up with an alternative plan for how to train the students in finding, evaluating and using sources in a digital world. This resulted in a better understanding and higher attendance. Here we will tell you about the alternative plan, how we handle black screens and the outcome.

1. Horton, Forest Woody, "Understanding information literacy: a primer". 2008. UNESCO: Programme and meeting document, CI.2007/WS/18, 94 p.
<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000157020.locale=en>