ABSTRACT

NESREN NABIL ELHERTANI. Understanding Information Literacy in the Digital Age: A Review of the Research on Students’ Research Processes. (Under the direction of Dr. Nancy Penrose.)

Information literacy is a critical thinking skill that will continue to help students beyond the classroom. Students’ research processes correlate strongly with their information literacy; it is crucial to see the trends in the investigations done on student research and how to teach information literacy effectively. Many of the past researchers agree that Google is commonly used among student researchers. Alison Head discovered that although students use Google often, they are not reliant in doing so. Instead, students used a hybrid-approach—using both academic and nonacademic sources to overcome challenges as they research. This demonstrates that students have the ability to distinguish between which resources are credible, and which resources are helpful tools. However, students on a scholarly website tend to ignore other factors of it possibly not being a scholarly source. Angela Weiler found that when students use Google, they are aware that these are not credible sources, so they evaluate the findings differently than searching in library databases. These investigations show that the digital age has changed the ways that students research. We must investigate new teaching strategies for students to succeed in quality research. The data from the investigations shows that we need to pay serious attention to Google as a resource. Cecelia Brown’s sessions teach students how to effectively use Google. Barry Maid and Barbara D’Angelo also proposed a method that breaks down the research process in steps to help students move through it smoothly. Many other scholars have agreed with steps of this method.