

Computer literacy: it's  
not an option  
anymore



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Computer Literacy: It's not an Option Anymore The long list of requirements necessary to successfully complete a college program can make the process of getting a degree a demanding task. Undergraduates have requirements for academics such as math or English. Different majors each have their own unique set of requirements. There are requirements for everything from attendance to correct and complete paperwork. With today's dependence on electronic information, computer literacy should be added to the list of required skills. A student's course work is so integrally dependent on the effective use of computers to access instructions, browse and access library materials, and establish organizational skills that computer literacy should be required for all students.

Computers are the media of choice that many teachers use to get assignments and instructions to the students. These may be in a wide variety formats that need to be understood by the student to be able to access them. They may be PowerPoint, word perfect, or zipped. They may be available to save, open, or download. It's the responsibility of the student to successfully access this information. Without the skills needed to be able to access this material, the student's grades will suffer. A health science class should not have to take the time to tutor students on downloading an assignment. The professor does not want to hear about missing assignments or listen to excuses. The student should be required to understand the myriad of formats that assignments may take and be able to successfully download them.

A good student will spend a considerable amount of time at the library. As more and more books, papers, and journals are made available electronically, much of the student's library time will be spent online. These

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are the materials that students use daily to write reports and conduct research. However, to make use of this valuable resource, the student needs to understand how to search, locate, and download it. Without the proficiency to access this material, the student will be severely limited in their studies. Every student needs to be able to search and access the large number of electronic databases that the library has available.

A good student is an organized student. The skill to handle large volumes of information requires a certain set of computer skills. Creating files and understanding the features and limitations of the operating system can help students transport and store the information they need to study and do research. Good organization saves the student time and allows them to manage larger amounts of relevant information resulting in more thorough research. This would mean that more extensive and more thorough research could be conducted. A working knowledge of these skills should be required of all college students.

The electronic age has made vast quantities of information available at our fingertips. Yet, without the skills needed to access and store this material, it is of little value. Instructors increasingly rely more and more on the electronic transfer of assignments and information, students need the skills to access and save the material. Often, the required material may be at the library on one of the numerous databases that the college has available.

Having a thorough knowledge of how to use these facilities is necessary to do even rudimentary research. Being able to organize all this available information so it is easy to use by the student requires the student to have more than just a cursory knowledge of the operating system. The student

needs to be computer literate and it is a skill that should be mandatory for all students.