

FOREWORD

There is wide recognition that information literacy is an essential element of success in academic work, employment, and everyday life. Though many variations of definitions of information literacy abound, I consider information literacy to be a way of thinking—a *habit of mind*. Its defining characteristic is the drawing upon information-related strategies and skills, almost instinctively, to address problems or questions. For students, the development of this habit occurs optimally through the integration of information literacy concepts, skills, and strategies in courses, curricula, and cocurricular activities. It becomes a habit through progressive reinforcement during the formal educational process.

There are foundational information literacy competencies that are common to most situations. There are also specialized information literacy competencies that one would apply as contexts vary. For example, information literacy in academic work differs from that in the workplace or for personal uses. Disciplines are examples of varying contexts that influence

information literacy. Students and practitioners in the sciences would draw on different information skills, strategies, and resources to solve problems or answer questions than those in the humanities or social sciences. These adaptations of information literacy should be grounded within a discipline through a deep understanding of its paradigms. These include the foundational concepts, models, and pedagogies that underpin the discipline.

It is with pride that I introduce *Integrating Information into the Engineering Design Process*, the first book in the Purdue Information Literacy Handbooks series. It is an outstanding example of the application of information literacy in a discipline. No other work has so thoroughly and capably integrated information literacy with the learning of engineering design. The authors and editors have succeeded in presenting a cohesive and evidence-based approach to an engineering paradigm: the design process. Working in close collaboration, engineering faculty, staff, and information specialists have developed a groundbreaking resource.

I invite proposals for future handbooks in the Purdue Information Literacy Handbooks series, the purpose of which is to promote evidence-based practice in teaching information literacy competencies through the lens of the different academic disciplines. The hand-

books will include the perspective of disciplinary experts as well as library and information science professionals. For more information, please refer to the Purdue University Press website at www.press.purdue.edu.

Sharon Weiner, EdD, MLS

Series Editor

Professor and W. Wayne Booker Chair in Information Literacy, Purdue University Libraries

Vice President, National Forum on Information Literacy