Distinguishing Yourself as a Job Candidate

The Value of Information Literacy to Employers

" There is a distinct difference between today's graduates who demonstrated how quickly they found answers online and seasoned employers who needed college hires to use a combination of online and traditional methods to conduct comprehensive research. "

(Head, 2012)

A recent study on how newly employed college graduates solve information problems found a big gap between what employers expected and what these new employees were able to do

Interviews with employers found they expect college hires will at least

- Know how and where to find information online, without much guidance

- Use a search strategy that goes beyond Google and finding an answer on the first page of results

- Articulate a "best solution" and conclusion from all that was found

(Head, 2012)

Being able to solve information problems can give you a big boost in the workplace

And if you are information literate, you are on the way to being able to solve information problems

This person has a very limited understanding of information literacy!

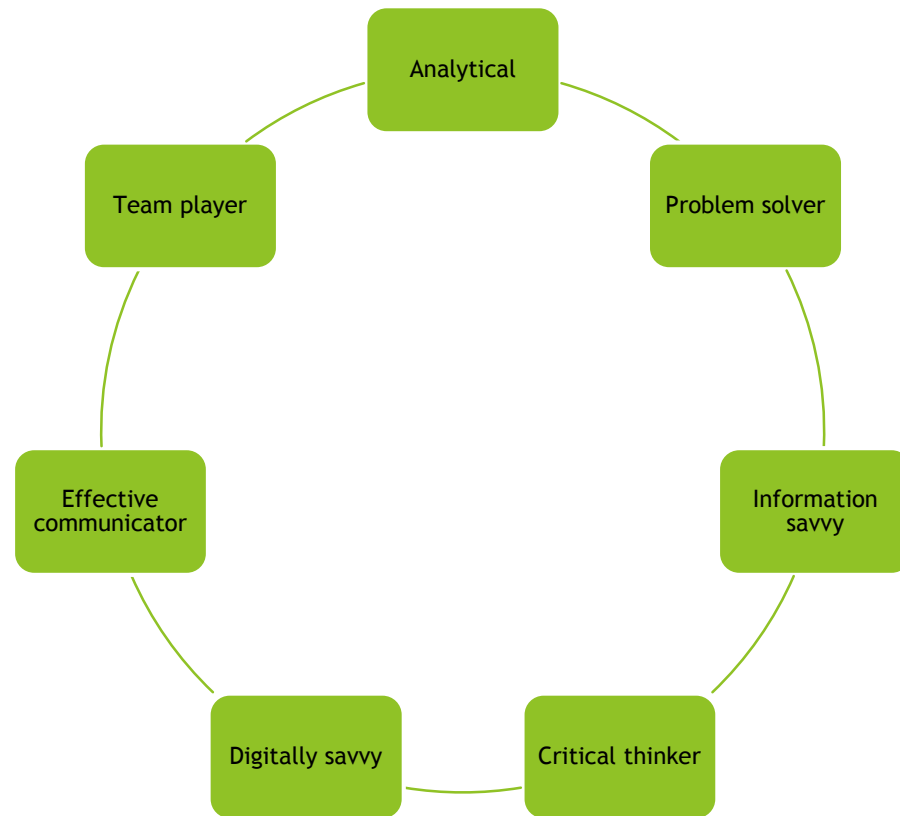# Let's consider what are employers looking for when evaluating potential hires

Hard skills

- ▶ What you need to know and be able to do for the specific job you are interested in

Soft skills (also called 21st century skills)

- ▶ The value-added abilities that make you a better employee, and therefore more attractive to employers!

Soft, or 21st century, skills
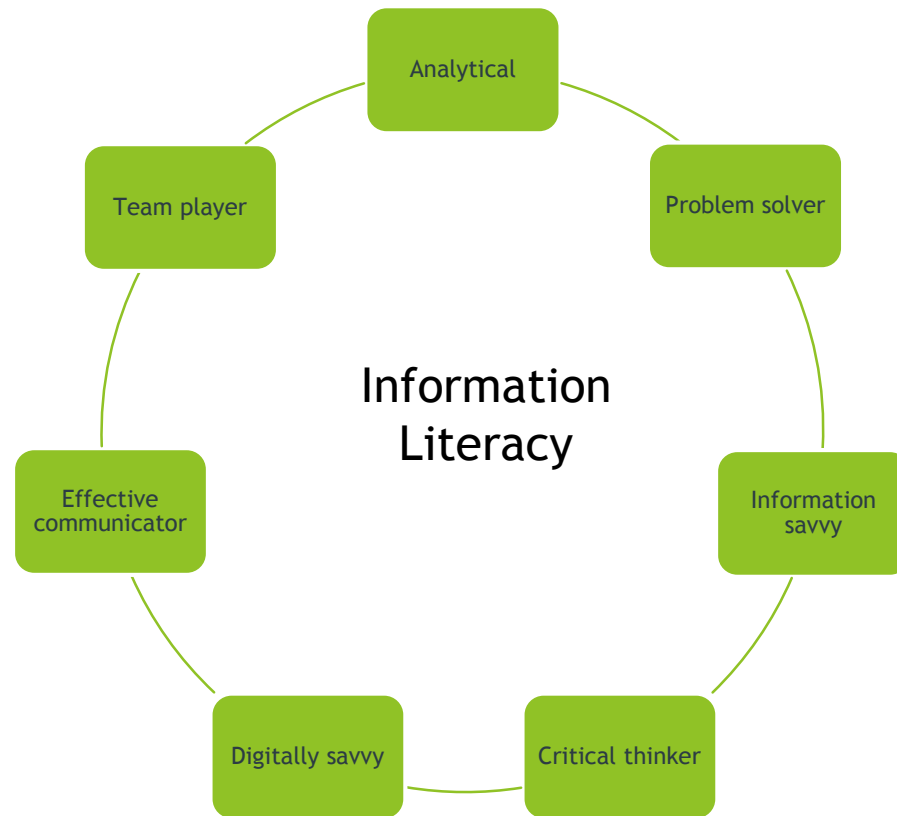
Do you consider yourself to be

- A critical thinker?
- A problem solver?
- Information savvy?
- An effective communicator?
- A team player?
- Analytical?
- Digitally savvy?

Information literacy can fill in gaps

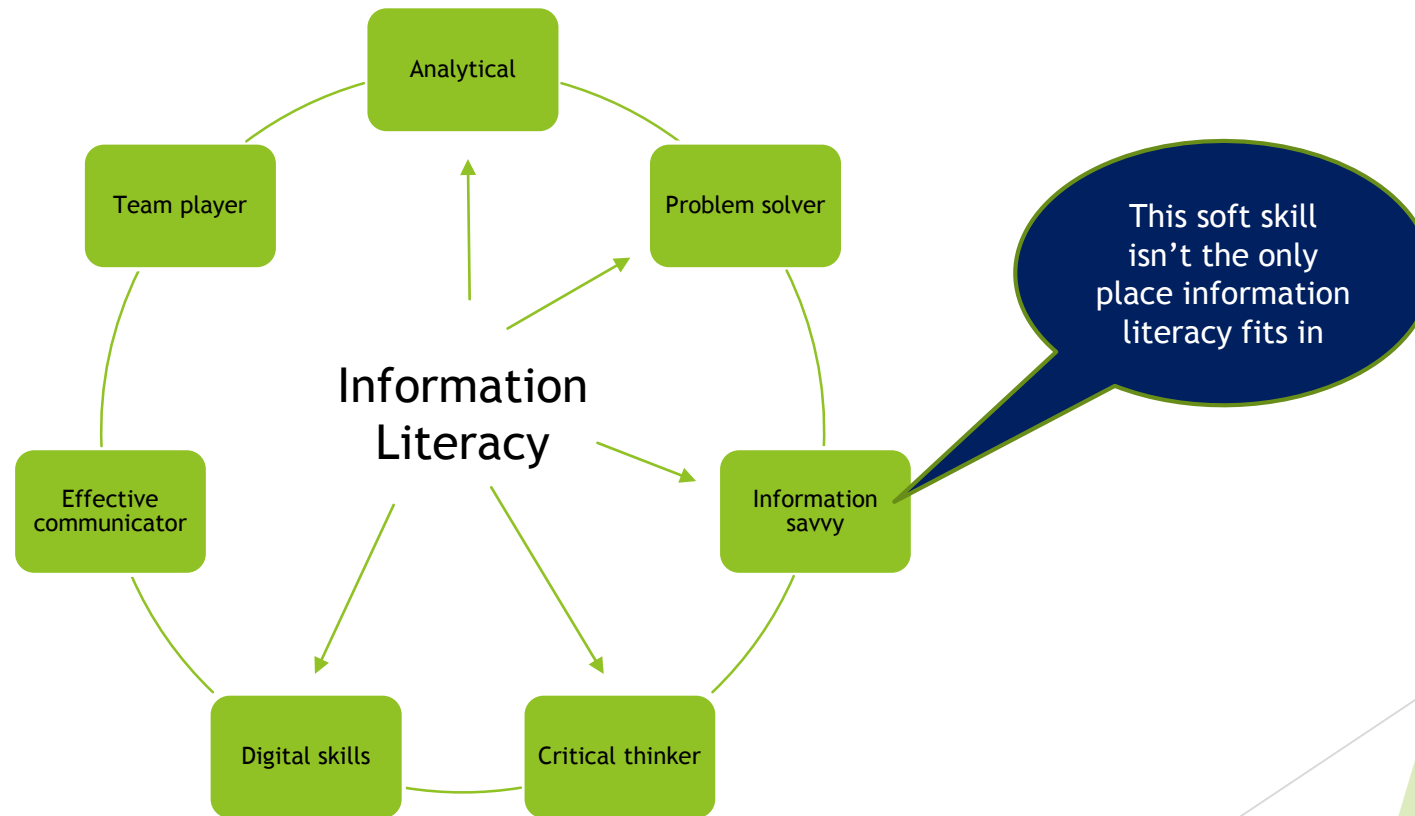Let's see how

Soft, or 21ˢᵗ century, skills

Where does information literacy fit?
It is a strong contributor to these soft skills

Consider how information literacy abilities contribute to problem solving

Problem Solving

"the process of designing, evaluating, and implementing a strategy to answer questions or achieve a desired goal"

(Weiner, 2011)

Information Literacy

"the set of integrated abilities encompassing the reflective discovery of information, the understanding of how information is produced and valued, and the use of information in creating new knowledge and participating ethically in communities of learning."

(ACRL, 2016)

Need to find info about the problem

Part of designing and evaluating

Strategies often involve others, ethical participation is important

Let's compare digital literacy and information literacy

Digital Literacy

▶ Understand technology

▶ Use technology comfortably

▶ Select appropriate technology

▶ Use social media

Information Literacy

▶ Understand when information is needed

▶ Recognize who might create that information

▶ Able to search for and find information expeditiously

▶ Able to determine value of the information

▶ Can ethically create and use information

Includes ability to use information technology, but goes further

Personal Learning: Another soft skill

- A hallmark of information literate individuals: lifelong learning

- Mentioned specifically by some employers

- Emphasize your personal learning in interviews

- Indicates motivation and love of learning. What employer would argue with that?

Let's hear it for Gen Ed requirements! UAlbany has 2 for information literacy

Lower Level

- Met in Writing and Critical Inquiry courses (UUNI 110, AENG 110)

In the major

- Met in various ways in different departments (such as distributed throughout courses in the major or in one specific course)

As a student at UAlbany, you are gaining important information literacy abilities that will continue to help once you graduate.

Here's your to-do list:

- Reflect on what you have learned and are learning about information

- Take the opportunity to learn more:

  Sign up for a UUNL information literacy course

  Read *The Information Literacy User's Guide: An Open, Online Textbook*

  Explore the resources in the Information Literacy Playlists

  Make a list of the information-literacy related abilities you have

- When you prepare for an interview, determine how you might showcase these abilities

- And continue with your lifelong learning!

References

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