

**University of Massachusetts Amherst**

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**From the Selected Works of Isabel R Espinal**

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# Information Literacy and General Education at UMass Amherst

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Available at: [https://works.bepress.com/isabel\\_espinal/3/](https://works.bepress.com/isabel_espinal/3/)

# Information Literacy and General Education at UMass Amherst

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UMass Amherst Libraries

June 2008

# NEW in 2008: Information Literacy to be infused throughout the UMass Amherst General Education curriculum

## How so?

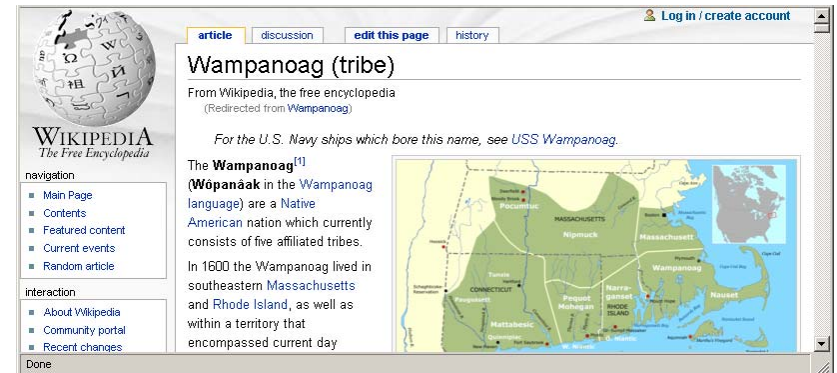
As an aspect of critical thinking, like writing

## What does that look like?

### Amended Form F.

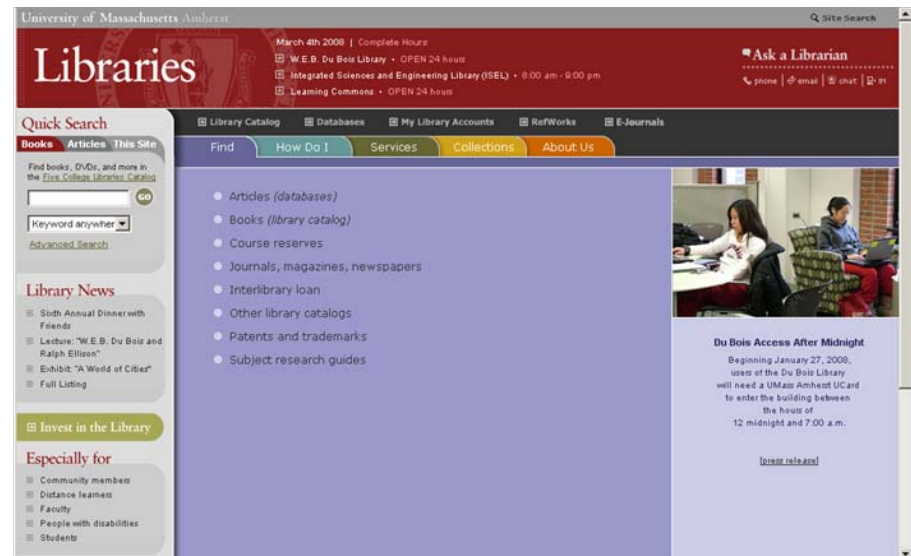
3. **Critical Thinking**: Courses should emphasize critical thinking. Writing, problem solving and **information literacy** should be the norm rather than the exception, and should be reflected in the assignment, examination, evaluation (feedback to student), and grading procedures. Please describe how the course will meet this goal. *[Voted by the Faculty Senate General Education Council on February 15, 2008. Draft: some change in wording is expected.]*

# Google and Wikipedia



Do students find high quality online resources and support services easily?

Do they know how to use them efficiently?



# What's at stake – one example

Google Scholar BETA

Web Images Video News Maps more »

Search wampanoag

Advanced Scholar Search  
Scholar Preferences  
Scholar Help

Scholar All articles - Recent articles

Results 21 - 30 of about 1,770 for wampanoag. (0.15 sec)

All Results

[E Spicer](#)  
[N Richards](#)  
[K Waters](#)  
[R Kendall](#)  
[D Silverman](#)

[book] John Eliot's Indian Dialogues: A Study in Cultural Interaction  
J Eliot, HW Bowden, JP Ronda - 1980 - Greenwood Press  
[Cited by 3](#) - [Related Articles](#) - [Web Search](#) - [Other access via UMLinks](#) - [Library Search](#)

[A Possible Pre-Algonkian Culture in Southeastern Massachusetts](#) - [Get Full Text via UMLinks](#) - [all 2 versions »](#)  
EB Delabarre - *American Anthropologist*, 1925 - JSTOR  
... 359. AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGIST last land retained for their own exclusive use by the  
**Wampanoag** Indians; also, as being bordered by extensive salt-grass meadows ...  
[Cited by 2](#) - [Related Articles](#) - [Web Search](#) - [Library Search](#)

[Another Look at the Causes of King Philip's War](#) - [Get Full Text via UMLinks](#)  
P Ranlet - *The New England Quarterly*, 1988 - JSTOR  
... In the nineteenth century, John Gorham Palfrey stated that King Philip, chief of  
the **Wampanoag** tribe, was "an unreasoning and cruel barbarian" who had no cause ...  
[Cited by 2](#) - [Related Articles](#) - [Web Search](#)

Off campus students and users won't get this option unless they go to Google Scholar through the Library's website.

http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0028-4866(198803)61%3A1%3C79%3AALATCO%3E2. Google

Getting Started Latest Headlines RefGrab-It post to del.icio.us

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## Another Look at the Causes of King Philip's War

Philip Ranlet

*The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 61, No. 1 (Mar., 1988), pp. 79-100

doi:10.2307/365221

This article consists of 22 page(s).

# So, What is information literacy?

The Association of College and Research Libraries defines information literacy as “the set of skills needed to find, retrieve, analyze, and use information.”

<http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlissues/acrlinfolit/infolitoverview/introtoinfolit/introinfolit.cfm>

## *Five Standards*

Standard One: Know (*that you need to know*)

Standard Two: Access

Standard Three: Evaluate

Standard Four: Use

Standard Five: Ethical/Legal Issues

“Ultimately, information literate people are those who have learned how to learn. They know how to learn because they know how knowledge is organized, how to find information, and how to use information in such a way that others can learn from them. They are people prepared for lifelong learning, because they can always find the information needed for any task or decision at hand.”

*The American Library Association Presidential Committee on Information Literacy (January 10, 1989, Washington, D.C.)*



# Why information literacy?

- Equips individuals for lifelong learning
- More than knowing how to use computers
- Includes critical analysis of information
- Highlights the global nature of information
- Allows use of relevant information for informed decision making
- Informed citizens, consumers, professionals, individuals

(some of this is from

<http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlissues/acrlinfolit/professactivity/advocate/advocateil.cfm#dept> and  
<http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlissues/acrlinfolit/infolitstandards/using/infolit-highered.ppt> )

# AACU (Association of American Colleges & Universities)



## The Learning Every Student Needs

### KNOWLEDGE of Human Culture and the Natural World:

- Science
- Social sciences
- Mathematics
- Humanities
- Arts

### INTELLECTUAL AND PRACTICAL SKILLS:

- Written and oral communication
- Inquiry, critical and creative thinking
- Quantitative literacy
- Information literacy
- Teamwork
- Integration of learning

### INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY:

- Civic responsibility and engagement
- Ethical reasoning
- Intercultural knowledge and actions
- Propensity for lifelong learning

“ [T]he only education that prepares us for change is a *liberal education*. In periods of change, narrow specialization condemns us to inflexibility—precisely what we do not need. We need the flexible intellectual tools to be problem solvers, to be able to continue learning over time. ”

— David Kearns, former CEO of Xerox Corporation



# Accreditation

## NEASC CIHE Standards for Accreditation (2005)

### **Standard Four: The Academic Program**

4.6 The institution ensures that students use information resources and information technology as an integral part of their education. The institution provides appropriate orientation and training for use of these resources, as well as instruction and support in information literacy and information technology appropriate to the degree level and field of study.

### **Standard Seven: Library and Information Resources**

7.8 The institution demonstrates that students use information resources and technology as an integral part of their education, attaining levels of proficiency appropriate to their degree and subject or professional field of study. The institution ensures that students have available and are appropriately directed to sources of information appropriate to support and enrich their academic work, and that throughout their program students gain increasingly sophisticated skills in evaluating the quality of information sources. (See also 4.6)

<http://www.neasc.org/cihe/standards2005.htm>

**\*\*\* UMass Amherst is up for reaccreditation in 2009 \*\*\***

# Start in General Education

According to Breivik (1998),

"the best place to start information literacy planning is with general education or core curriculum, where concerns for competencies that all students should acquire provide a natural home for the discussion of information literacy abilities" (p. 44). Breivik challenges the lecture format so often used in large, entry-level courses (p. 23). She argues for "resource-based learning" in which students "access, evaluate, organize, and present information from all the real-world sources existing in today's information society" (p. 25). This approach places students in the role of information producer and includes activities that extend beyond the traditional classroom, involving students in community service, television production, Web development, collaboration, and publication (p. 25).

Professor acts as facilitator, motivating students to participate in their own learning

(as quoted in Mackey, Thomas, and Trudi Jacobson. "Integrating Information Literacy in Lower- and Upper-Level Courses: Developing Scalable Models for Higher Education." *The Journal of General Education* 53.3 (2005). In Project Muse.)

# How does information literacy relate to writing and critical thinking?

## Writing

- Finds models of good writing
- Good writing incorporates facts, evidence, previous writing

## Critical Thinking

- The information literacy standards involve critical thinking: know, access, evaluate, use and ethics.
- Emphasizes the inquiry approach to learning
- Includes higher order tasks such as analysis, synthesis, evaluation and reflection (some of this is from <http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlissues/acrlinfolit/professactivity/advocate/advocateil.cfm#dept> and <http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlissues/acrlinfolit/infolitstandards/using/infolit-highered.ppt> )

But it is not enough to ask for writing and critical thinking, since both of these other skills can exist independently of information literacy.

# Responsibility for Information Literacy Education

- Shared responsibility of all educators and information providers
- Requires collaboration of faculty and librarians
- Must be integrated into courses at all levels to provide reinforcement of skills

(some of this is from

<http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlissues/acrlinfolit/professactivity/advocate/advocateil.cfm#dept>  
and <http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlissues/acrlinfolit/infolitstandards/using/infolit-highered.ppt> )

# Examples of assignments, etc. used by professors *for each standard*

Standard One: Know

Standard Two: Access

Standard Three: Evaluate

Standard Four: Use

Standard Five: Ethical/Legal

# Examples of assignments used by professors for Standard One: Know

**“The information literate student determines the nature and extent of the information needed... student defines and articulates the need for information..”**

## Example: Communication 497F

Keep a running commentary or record of your research process (e.g., Research Log). Keep a record of the book call numbers, the names of databases, and the search engines that you use to complete these tasks.

Reflect on whether your research topic and question can be researched within the timetable of the semester.

Lastly, think about the ways in which your study can help us understand the material, social, political, and cultural conditions of Latina/os in the US.



# Examples of assignments used by professors for Standard Two: Access

“The information literate student accesses needed information effectively and efficiently.”

The stereotypical “library research session.” Students may learn to use a particular database or sets of databases; learn techniques like subject searching and/or Boolean logic; learn how to broaden or narrow a search; and learn how to retrieve information from the Libraries’ print and electronic collections.

# Examples of assignments used by professors for Standard Three: Evaluate

“The information literate student evaluates information and its sources critically and incorporates selected information into his or her knowledge base and value system.”

Dean's Book Course: as an in-class exercise, give students three Web sources of information on a topic to evaluate; then, have them locate, present, and justify a scholarly, credible Web source on the same topic.

# Examples of assignments used by professors for Standard Four: Use

“The information literate student, individually or as a member of a group, uses information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose.”

Physical Therapy students: locate ten reliable consumer health websites on a topic, and create a patient education brochure on that topic based upon information from those sites, and including the sites as further reading for patients.

# Examples of assignments used by professors for Standard Five: Ethics

“The information literate student understands many of the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information and accesses and uses information ethically and legally.”

Introductory biology class: Watch film “Glory Enough for All,” about the discovery of insulin, and write a brief reaction piece centered on some of the ethical and intellectual property issues raised in the film.

# Why integrate Information Literacy into the curriculum?

- Information literacy (like writing) is a process, not a discrete set of skills that can be learned in one lesson; it must be practiced, practiced, practiced
- Information literacy represents a shift in thinking and it must be reinforced

(some of this is from

<http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlissues/acrlinfolit/professactivity/advocate/advocateil.cfm#dept> and  
<http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlissues/acrlinfolit/infolitstandards/using/infolit-highered.ppt> )

## What else is being done at UMass *within General Education*

- First Year Writing
- Junior Year Writing

## What else is being done at UMass *outside General Education*

- Library instruction, by librarians, scattered and documented
- Info lit by faculty, scattered and undocumented throughout the curriculum
- Librarians working with faculty to design assignments, subject and course research guides, curriculum mapping by subject librarians, inclusion in some SPARK courses
- Research Literacy Program at the Commonwealth College
- Possible formation of an Information Literacy Task force in 2008

# Different info lit competencies match up with different Gen Ed competencies

## Examples – Ethics of Information

- In an analytical reasoning class, e.g. computer science, students can work on intellectual property issues regarding copyright and open source.
- These issues can be addressed in a social science class like anthropology which can question the notion of intellectual property as a cultural and social construct.

# Assessment

Sample assessment techniques include:

- Research journal
- Research portfolio
- Annotated bibliography
- Essay examination
- Self-assessment
- 1 Minute Paper
- Library instruction online form
- Rubrics
- Pre- and post- tests

(some of this is from

<http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlissues/acrlinfolit/professactivity/advocate/advocateil.cfm#dept>  
and <http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlissues/acrlinfolit/infolitstandards/using/infolit-highered.ppt> )