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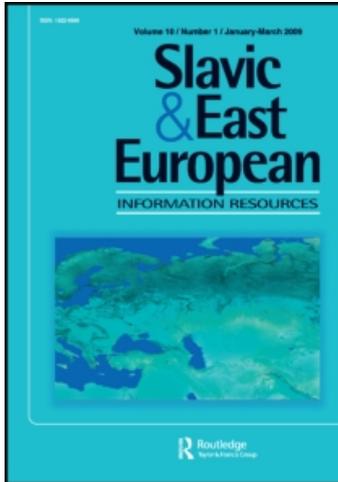
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Marta Meštrović Deyrup ^a

^a Walsh Library, Seton Hall University, South Orange, New Jersey, USA

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Information Literacy: Discipline-Specific or Core Competency?

MARTA MEŠTROVIĆ DEYRUP

Walsh Library, Seton Hall University, South Orange, New Jersey, USA

Building on the results of her 2005 survey of information literacy practices among American Slavic librarians, the author suggests that information literacy, as a theoretical approach to teaching research skills, has not been widely embraced by Slavic librarians. To a large part this is because Slavic studies is a highly specialized field, while information literacy programs tend to map to general education requirements. This article examines whether information literacy has any place in a subject discipline such as ours, and if so, how it should be taught. The author provides examples of discipline-specific information literacy initiatives both from inside and outside the field of Slavic studies.

KEYWORDS *Slavic studies, librarianship, information literacy*

In the 2005 issue of *Slavic & East European Information Resources*, I published the results of a survey that looked at how many of our colleagues were involved in information literacy programs on their campuses. At the time, about a quarter of Slavic librarians took part in the provision of virtual bibliographic instruction (BI), almost 40% participated in online reference, and three-quarters were using the Web to make printable handouts for their users or to post online subject guides. Those impressive numbers led me to pose the question of how our specialized expertise “will be incorporated into information literacy programs that have a broader, more generalized purpose.” Put another way, does information literacy have any place in a subject discipline such as ours, and, if so, how should it be taught? It is these

Address correspondence to Marta Meštrović Deyrup, PhD, MLS, Associate Professor/
Catalog Coordinator, University Libraries and Co-Director, Elizabeth Ann Seton Center for
Women’s Studies, Seton Hall University, 400 South Orange Avenue, South Orange, NJ 07079,
USA. E-mail: deyrupma@shu.edu

large, and still largely unanswered questions that I hope to address in this paper.¹

A good way to begin this discussion is to examine the pieces by Wojciech Zalewski and Edward Kasinec that are excerpted or reprinted, as the case may be, in this special double issue. From the point of view of this article, the observations that Zalewski and Kasinec make about the proper education of a Slavic librarian are as relevant as their discussion of bibliographic instruction. For example, while most of the introduction to Zalewski's by-now classic book, *Fundamentals of Russian Reference Work*, was devoted to a discussion of the traditional hierarchical system of knowledge—that is, one in which published bibliographic “guides to knowledge” are the “first step in the quest for information” and in which students move from the general to the specific—Zalewski also offered several predictions about the field of Slavic Studies that would eventually come true. Among them was the idea that machine-readable and print information would eventually converge and that there would be an “internationalization” of databases.² Zalewski presciently noted that the skill set of scholars would inevitably change in a “new era of information exchange,”³ but in 1985 what would constitute this skill set was still on the horizon.

Edward Kasinec's original 1978 article was even more concerned with how one defines Slavic bibliography than with the nature of the bibliographic tools required.⁴ The first approach identified by Kasinec was a “library science approach,” focused on the skill sets needed to become a Slavic bibliographer; while the second, “Slavic studies approach,” focused on the “creation, distribution, preservation, [and] exploitation of the written documentation of the Slavs.”⁵ Kasinec goes on to write that:

A course in Slavic bibliography should leave the student with the ability to use research aids efficiently...as well as giving him a solid understanding of the past of his particular discipline in Slavic studies...Thus by means of such a course, both the intellectual and literary historian should discover a significant amount of new material for study.⁶

Kasinec imagined a series of lectures that “might be divided according to the three broad themes: (1) book printing and book trade; (2) libraries, archives, and manuscript repositories; and (3) bibliographic work and education.”⁷ He did not see a large difference between the skill set needed by the Slavic bibliographer and that of the academic researcher. In effect, he proposed that the Slavic librarian be trained as the researcher par excellence. This education would be firmly rooted in an understanding of the flow of knowledge among the publishing industry, libraries and archives, and the needs of the information consumer—an idea that forms the basis of our

current ideas about scholarly communication. Kasinec also appears to have been greatly concerned with the relationship between the user and a text and with the idea that there was a proper bibliographic tool or resource for a particular research need—this too, pre-dated the development of special digital “tools” for electronic scholarship. In a pre-Internet, pre-electronic database world, Kasinec saw the interconnectedness of a vast information pool (to be sure, accessed through print catalogs) that the researcher would be able to tap into. Even 30 years ago, he saw the importance of visual materials, “marginalia,” and “ephemera” in research.

Many of us will nod in agreement at the approach to Slavic librarianship presented by Zalewski and Kasinec. It is certainly reasonable to expect students to understand what constitutes our particular branch of knowledge, how that knowledge is organized, and what principal resources support the discipline. A glance at Zalewski’s updated online version of *Russian Reference Works*,⁸ and indeed at our own catalogs and reference shelves, shows us that many of the print tools that were created in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are just as valuable today, particularly for historical research. However, if we were to ask ourselves whether the world Zalewski and Kasinec were describing still exists, the answer would be a resounding *no*. The Soviet Union formally dissolved into its constituent republics seventeen years ago, the age of our incoming university freshmen. Its empire in Eastern Europe collapsed even earlier. Indeed, *Eastern Europe* is no longer viable as either an intellectual or a pedagogic construct. The European Union, once seen as an extension of the Common Market, now includes 10 member states from East-Central Europe and the Baltics, and two candidate states from Southeastern Europe. One would be hard pressed to consider these countries as anything other than a part of mainstream Europe in terms of their goals, aspirations, and political structure.

The structure of knowledge organization has also changed quite substantially since the time Zalewski and Kasinec first published the pieces reprinted in this volume. Massive databanks of information relevant to the field of Slavic Studies and electronic tools to mine that information now exist, creating access points that are much more fluid than those of our existing print catalogs. Today the very idea that anyone could possibly master a fixed set of knowledge seems quaint and outdated. There is a surplus, instead of a paucity of knowledge, and much of that knowledge is cross-disciplinary. Many of our students are not part of Slavic studies departments, but instead are attached to schools of international relations, schools of business, or schools of public health. Their information needs are not the same as those of students from the liberal arts and social sciences, our primary users in the past. Our traditional forms of scholarship do not serve these communities very well. Does our profession?

Slavic librarians, like other area studies librarians and subject specialists, define themselves in terms of their academic discipline. Being a “Slavist” is a

crucial—if not the foremost—part of their professional identity. As Michael Brewer has noted, the job profile of contemporary American Slavic librarians is very similar:

As one might expect, academic libraries are the primary employer of most Slavic librarians. A full seventy percent of those surveyed work in academic libraries... Nearly all of those employed in academic libraries (eighty-four percent) work with collections that support PhD programs in Slavic-related fields, and about two-thirds of academic librarians work for institutions that give their librarians tenure or some equivalent status... With tenure also often comes the option, or requirement, of serving as adjunct faculty in some capacity (as an instructor, a member of a dissertation or thesis committee, etc.). In these situations, Slavic librarians tend to be associated with a Slavic department, a school of library or information science, or have some other departmental assignment, usually relating to their second master's or PhD degree. The survey results indicate that working as adjunct faculty is an option for just over half of academic librarians. Seven percent are *required* to serve as adjunct faculty (as needed) and just over forty percent do not have the option of working as adjunct faculty.⁹

Brewer goes on to note that:

Wide-ranging linguistic competency seems to be one of the hallmarks of the Slavic librarian. More than two-thirds have a working knowledge of at least four languages beyond their native tongues ... Though it may not be a prerequisite, most Slavic librarians *do* hold a second master's or PhD in another discipline, usually one related to Slavic.¹⁰

In the hiring process of a Slavic Studies librarian the committee normally consists of teaching faculty as well as library staff. Most schools that have a Russian and East European Studies program list Slavic librarians among their faculty, pointing to the genuine respect with which our profession is held by the academic community. For many Slavic librarians the teaching faculty are, in fact, their colleagues—they studied alongside these professors in graduate school and today work with them at universities and colleges.

It is no surprise that because of this close affiliation to their constituency and their high degree of educational specialization, Slavic librarians in the United States tend to be more active in scholarly associations, such as the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies (AAASS), than in professional associations such as the American Library Association (ALA) or the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL). For example, a representative from the Library of Congress served on the program committee of the 2007 AAASS Annual Convention and on the Board of Directors; the East Coast Consortium of Slavic Library Collections is listed as a AAASS special interest affiliate; and the conference program includes

several talks organized by the AAASS Bibliography and Documentation Subcommittee on Collection Development, as well as meetings of the B&D Working Group, the Slavic and East European Microform Project (SEEMP), and the American Bibliography of Slavic and East European Studies (ABSEES). There is also the Subcommittee on Copyright Issues and the Subcommittee on Digital Projects, two active, new subcommittees that include Slavic studies faculty. None of these committees is sponsored by the American Library Association or another library organization. Similarly, there are relatively few presentations given by Slavic librarians at our national or even state library conventions. While ALA has a division expressly for Slavic librarians, the Slavic and East European Section of the Association of College and Research Libraries (SEES), Slavic librarians often choose to attend professional Slavic association meetings, rather than the ALA convention, particularly if funding is limited.

American Slavists have their own academic culture that may appear arcane to an outsider. They use specialized, often foreign-language bibliographic tools (dictionaries, encyclopedias, indexes, and the like) and rely on a taxonomy (Library of Congress subject headings and name authorities) that was specifically created to handle Slavic studies. There are even special Romanization schemes for the various Cyrillic alphabets—each slightly different from the other. Dealing with Slavic in computing has also been another hurdle, requiring familiarity with various keyboards and encodings. It can also be argued that Slavic librarians are much more politicized than other area studies librarians, because, until quite recently, much of the funding for Russian and East European studies programs came from the US Department of State's Title VIII Program, which helped underwrite the teaching of foreign languages considered essential to our national defense. Among these were Slavic languages, in particular Russian. As a result, the institutional goals for these programs were shaped by our national defense policy towards the Soviet Union. This resulted in less available resources for the study of individual East Central European cultures (such as Czech, Polish, and Bulgarian), and led to an absurd state of affairs in which an entirely artificial language "Serbo-Croatian" was being taught at American universities largely because of US support for a non-aligned Yugoslavia. The diversity of these cultures, the multiplicity of languages, and the lack of access by Americans to archival resources in the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc all contributed to the high degree of specialization that was needed in order to enter the field of Slavic librarianship. Finally, as the demographic data cited by Michael Brewer indicates, half of all American Slavic librarians today are over 50. This fact points to a cohort that has been well-trained in the use of the print bibliographic tools that continue to define the profession, rather than in newer theoretical models of instruction now in vogue among library school graduates. In sum, I believe it would not be too unfair to say that most Slavic librarians have been educated according to a

nineteenth-century model of scholarship, in which knowledge is largely seen as hierarchical both in its organization and transmission, and a major form of research is done by “chaining” (tracing citations from one work to another) or by consulting bibliographies supplied by teaching faculty.

The collective portrait that emerges from this quick overview of the profession is of a group of highly-educated specialists, who are integrated into a single academic discipline. Because this branch of librarianship is so narrow, both in its training and its focus, one has to ask whether a concept like information literacy, which advocates a “general education” approach to bibliographic instruction, has any relevance to our own discipline. The answer to that question, of course, depends on what we mean by bibliographic instruction and information literacy. The ACRL has developed a definition of information literacy, which has been adopted by the general academic library community and that can, with some minor modifications, be used as a benchmark for Slavic librarians. This definition emphasizes information literacy as a general skill set that, once mastered, is “common to all disciplines, to all learning environments, and to all levels of education. It enables learners to master content and extend their investigations, become more self-directed, and assume greater control over their own learning. An information literate individual is able to:

- Determine the extent of information needed
- Access the needed information effectively and efficiently
- Evaluate information and its sources critically
- Incorporate selected information into one’s knowledge base
- Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
- Understand the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information, and access and use information ethically and legally.”¹¹

At first glance, this definition appears to devalue the skills of a Slavic librarian. After all, if all information needs are equal, why won’t a generalist suffice? Even the series of tasks emphasized seems to suggest that very little factual knowledge is required when searching for information. The emphasis is instead on process. This is not surprising, considering that many proponents of information literacy, such as Carol Collier Kuhlthau, Ross Todd, and Violet Harada, came out of school librarianship and that their research is deeply rooted in practical educational applications.¹² Simplifying a bit, we can say that for most contemporary library educators, unlike for most Slavic librarians, the emphasis of information literacy instruction is often on helping students understand the mechanics of how to envision, research, and complete a term paper or other assignment. If we look at the training of the profession at large, we can see how profoundly at odds this model is with our current professional norms, which focus on a mastery of specific bibliographic tools.

This is not to say, however, that our field does not participate in what we can call, for a lack of a better term, information literacy programs. *Virtual Slavica*, a special monographic supplement to *SEEIR* published in 2005, describes the many projects with which our professional community is involved: “Copyright issues, digital reference, text encoding, online translation, presentation issues, and use of grant funding,” among them.¹³ Many of these projects are quite ambitious and take advantage of the skill sets developed by our technical services librarians, who make up a large percentage of Slavic librarians. For the most part, our field has seen its future in the creation of online digital tools, many of which are being migrated from a print format. But while the creation of digital tools is an important objective, I would argue that much less attention has been paid to developing “information literacy skills” among our undergraduate and graduate students. As the results of my 2005 survey indicated, most Slavic librarians appear to be using the Web primarily as a publishing vehicle. Since the majority of Slavic librarians do not head an information literacy program but, instead, participate in one as part of a team, one would suspect that when they use online reference tools (chat, for example), they do so as part of their general reference services.

To take one outstanding example, in 2002, Helen Sullivan looked at some of the ways her institution, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, was using the Web to teach research skills.¹⁴ UIUC adopted an online course management tool (WebCT) for instruction. Although it used threaded discussion, email, and online posts, the course was highly traditional in the way it approached research tools. “After looking at a number of sites and reexamining what we wanted to accomplish,” Sullivan wrote,

we returned to an older model for the discussion of reference sources, that presented by Jacques Barzun in *The Modern Researcher*. The structure used by Barzun, describing the variety of resources by type, provided the flexibility needed for linking sources by region and subject. At the same time, it demonstrated basic elements of the strategy necessary for research in particular areas of Slavic studies.¹⁵

Like Kasinec, Sullivan described a new method of training for those involved in Slavic Studies:

To accommodate the diverse needs of scholars in Slavic studies, a Web-based Slavic bibliography course would be useful. Such bibliographic instruction would have to be available as it was needed. It would have to include consultation with a librarian, introduce the scholar to major resources, discuss strategies in various regions of the Slavic world, include paper and online resources, and accommodate networking with other interested scholars. Ideally, it would also allow for interaction with

a number of librarians at various institutions, preparing scholars more thoroughly for a research visit. While this would not duplicate the conditions of working in a research center (like a major university library), it would enhance research in those institutions by better preparing the user.¹⁶

Sullivan's proposal became a reality, and the course served as an introduction to traditional print tools, such as "catalogs, encyclopedias, biographical materials, periodicals, dictionaries, handbooks, and bibliographies," as well as online resources. She also helped to found the Slavic Reference Service, which provided "chat" support for users and an informal consortial reference service, supported by libraries in Russia and Poland. This program has grown to include Web 2.0 technologies, a MySpace page¹⁷ and a blog.¹⁸

In 2006, Angela Cannon, a colleague of Sullivan, conducted a comprehensive survey of the literature on "digital reference trends" for the special volume on *Virtual Slavica*. Cannon noted a number of developments, such as the "conflict between print and digital resources, coping with electronic serials, full-text databases and websites, digital communication tools such as e-mail, chat, and web forms, the proliferation of websites from Eastern Europe and the NIS, and opportunities for bibliographic instruction via the web."¹⁹ However, most of the projects that she listed could be categorized as training in the use digital tools or the provision of support services, rather than information literacy education. It is certainly true that practitioners like Sullivan have developed a comprehensive and quite exciting course that takes advantage of newer technology to enrich the educational experience of her students. But can we call her course—or the digital services described by Cannon—an information literacy program? Should an information literacy program in Slavic studies be characterized primarily by the use of digital technology, or is it actually something quite different?

It is somewhat ironic that many American Slavists still perceive the parameters of our field as being rigidly defined by geography, language, or format. This is not the situation in many of the countries that form the basis of our subject specialties. For example, the University of Ljubljana's research classes for its students, who may not be Slavists, but who are engaged with Slavic-language materials, focus on an information literacy (rather than a subject specific) model of instruction. Students are trained to become successful in locating and using information for a particular assignment or project. This includes the following strategies: "Define information need; decide on appropriate information resources; identify appropriate subject headings; make note of relevant documents; check the most recent information resources; acquire and evaluate the relevant documents."²⁰ These strategies are very similar to ACRL's definition of information literacy.

Similarly, the European Union, while committed to linguistic and cultural diversity, supports legislation that would create a “single market in creative content online.”²¹ This implies that knowledge creation will not be country- or language-specific. The EU also is aggressively marketing a “knowledge-based world economy” among its member states. The Bologna Process, which established common accreditation standards for the region’s universities, has resulted in an overhaul of the European library school curriculum, the goal being to make it more uniform, and frankly more in line with an American model of education. The teaching of information literacy is one component of such an education.

A similar reorientation is taking place among practitioners of Slavic studies in the United States. A brief look at how the future of our subject discipline has changed appeared in 2006 in the pages of *NewsNet: The Newsletter of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies*. The authors, Ronald G. Suny and Dmitry P. Gorenburg, attempt to demonstrate a commonality to “Eurasian Studies” that goes beyond geography. In doing so, they propose a highly sophisticated skill set for the field:

The study of Eurasia has special requirements, not the least of which are the linguistic and social scientific tools needed to study foreign cultures and societies comparatively. Deep local knowledge, as well as training in archival research, ethnographic field work, and quantitative methods, all contribute to our understanding of a region undergoing deep, rapid transformation. Our association can no longer simply be the home primarily of historians and literary scholars, as it has been for some time, but must expand to reclaim its earlier roots in political science, sociology, economics, geography, and anthropology. The AAASS also can no longer be the nearly exclusive home to scholars outside the region as it was forced to be during the long years of the Cold War. It must now develop strong links and common projects with the scholars of the region. Internationalization of Eurasian studies is imperative in the coming decade. We can no longer be concerned primarily with centers and tops [sic], can no longer privilege Russia over other countries, but must recognize the vast diversity of the region and show that the geographic scope of our organization includes Central Asia and Caucasia, as well as Slavic nations and Eastern Europe.²²

While this discussion of skills does not precisely match the ACRL’s definition of *information literacy* and, in fact, does not even mention the library at all, the requirements outlined by Suny and Gorenburg do provide a road map for our profession to consider. The knowledge of “linguistic and social scientific tools” and the ability to train scholars in “archival work and ethnographic fieldwork, and quantitative methods” require a very sophisticated library support structure both in terms of staff and resources. The

“internationalization of Eurasian studies” requiring “strong links and common projects with scholars of the region” dovetails very well with our own professional culture, since Slavic librarians are perhaps even more eager to collaborate and to work on multi-university projects than most teaching faculty.

Another indication of how Slavic teaching faculty view information literacy instruction appeared in a 2008 *NewsNet* article devoted to the growth of distance education and its effect on the field of “regional studies.” As Klaus Segbers and Catharine Theimer Nepomnyashchy rightly point out, one of the main obstacles to this endeavor “has been making available to students access to necessary research materials”:

The growing wealth of scholarship available in digital form is helping to place equitable bibliographic and research tools at the disposal even of students located in areas poor in conventional library resources. It is imperative that online programs invest in the necessary subscriptions to make major databases available to online students. The reverse side of this issue, however, is the fact that students have the Internet at their disposal, including such potential sources of plagiarism as Questia. This situation prompts two proposals. First, an online workshop on using the Internet as a research medium should be a component part of any online program (and probably of any traditional college or university program at the present time). Second, students should be clearly informed, as they generally are in traditional study programs, of what constitutes plagiarism from the outset of any online course.²³

Although their ideas are in fact similar to what we might call gen-ed information literacy requirements, it is clear that Segbers and Nepomnyashchy were responding to a need they saw among their own students, not to a library initiative. Indeed, the fact that these two scholars did not mention the role that Slavic librarians (even those located in areas that are relatively “poor in conventional library resources”) habitually perform in making electronic databases accessible to all, in ensuring that these electronic databases are of the first quality, and in training students both in electronic research methodology and in the ethical use of online materials, suggests that neither of them thought about this as an information literacy program. This is an unfortunate development, especially in a field (such as ours) that is undergoing massive restructuring, precisely because it represents a lost opportunity for collaboration between teaching faculty and Slavic librarians in the development and teaching of a specifically Slavic form of information literacy.²⁴

Although the ACRL’s definition of information literacy might seem rudimentary, both faculty and librarians know that there is a large gap between the bar that we’ve set for our students and the actual level of their research skills. Slavic librarians know this anecdotally from our own

experiences with the undergraduate student who believes the subscription databases are housed in the library's basement or the graduate student who does not understand the basic format of a bibliographic record and is thus unable to navigate the catalog. And we also know it from the extensive research that has been done on methods of assessing student learning. Information literacy assessment is now a part of the accreditation process at many universities and is a large component of how library services are evaluated. This is as true for universities that fall under the aegis of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education as it is for those schools that use the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) for self-assessment.²⁵ Perhaps the most important observation about student behavior that can be drawn from the most recent (2006) NSSE survey is that there is a definite correlation between use of the library and library instruction, and "deep learning," as well as "the Institutional Emphasis and Contributions in Information Literacy Scale" and two other predictors of student success: "the NSSE Gains in General Education scale" and "the Gains in Practical Competency scale."²⁶ The fact that library skills are consistently seen as a valuable predictor of overall student success is thus an important consideration for anyone designing a Slavic information literacy program.

Despite the obvious need for such a curriculum, there have been very few attempts on the part of Slavic librarians to map information literacy objectives to concrete, discipline-specific learning goals. Michael Brewer's online guide, which defines Slavic information literacy in terms of professional, technical, library, and cultural competencies,²⁷ continues to be the only easily-accessible and relevant treatment of the topic. The situation in Slavic studies contrasts sharply with the kind of public discussion that has taken place among other members of our profession. The general consensus reached during this discussion has even prompted Jeremy J. Shapiro and Shelley K. Hughes to call information literacy a new humanistic discipline in itself. Shapiro and Hughes argue for a common skill set—similar to that proposed by Brewer:

- Tool literacy—The ability to use print and electronic resources including software and online resources.
- Resource literacy—The ability to understand the form, format, location and methods for accessing information resources.
- Social-structural literacy—Knowledge of how information is socially situated and produced. It includes understanding the scholarly publishing process.
- Research literacy—The ability to understand and use information technology tools to carry out research, including the use of discipline-related software and online resources.
- Publishing literacy—The ability to produce a text or multimedia report of research results.²⁸

Whether we choose to acknowledge it or not, I believe that this approach describes what is actually taking place in our own field. Certainly Slavic librarians already spend a great deal of time on what Shapiro and Hughes refer to as *tool literacy*, *resource literacy*, and *research literacy*. It would not take much tweaking to create a Slavic-specific component of the liberal art that they call information literacy. The difficult part is determining what such a curriculum would entail.

While the library literature is full of discipline-specific information literacy programs, John W. East's 2005 article "Information Literacy for the Humanities Researcher: A Syllabus Based on Information Habits Research" is one approach that might be applicable to courses in Slavic information literacy. East started with the supposition that the way research is being done in the humanities is at odds with most library instruction programs. He went on to propose a new library curriculum that would focus on the mastering of certain learning objectives that are derived from the cycle of humanistic knowledge production. East divided his syllabus into two parts: "general skills" and "specific formats" (the kind on which our field, for the most part, has tended to concentrate). I list below his learning objectives in their entirety because they provide a valuable road map for a discipline-specific information program.

General Skills

- Establish how information is disseminated in the discipline and understand how to identify the repositories (whether physical or virtual) which contain significant collections of relevant materials.
- Be able to identify appropriate bibliographic resources, both print and electronic.
- Be aware of the value of library catalogues as a bibliographic resource and be able to locate catalogues of other libraries via the Web.
- Understand the factors which limit the usefulness of a bibliographic resource, such as chronological scope, types and language of resources indexed, currency, methods of indexing.
- Be able to search databases effectively, particularly with regard to choice of search terms, use of controlled vocabulary (where available), use of Boolean operators and design of search strategy.
- Be aware of the importance of keeping up to date with new publications and be able to develop strategies for achieving this.
- Be aware of the importance and limitations of inter-library loan services.
- Understand the value of informal contacts with other researchers as an information resource.
- Be able to identify electronic discussion lists and forthcoming conferences which are relevant to the area of research.

- Be aware of the value of specialist staff in libraries and other repositories as an information resource. Be able to use personal bibliographic software to organize references.

Specific Formats

- Be aware of suitable bibliographic tools (including library catalogues) for identifying relevant books.
- Understand the value of browsing library shelves to locate additional references.
- Be aware of the value of an extensive personal collection of books, and identify sources from which to purchase new and second-hand material.
- Be aware of major publishers in the discipline and be able to make use of alerting services which they offer.
- Be aware of suitable bibliographic tools for identifying relevant journal articles.
- Understand the importance of regularly scanning core journals and browsing journal shelves in libraries.
- Be aware of relevant collections of e-journals and understand how to search such collections and how to browse new issues and make use of email alerting services.
- Be aware of the value of book reviews as an information resource and understand how to locate reviews of relevant books.
- Be aware of the importance of the “book article” as an information resource and of relevant bibliographic tools which list such works.
- Be aware of the value of theses as an information resource and understand how to identify relevant theses.
- Be aware of the problems involved in obtaining copies of theses.
- Be aware of the value of unpublished material as an information resource and understand the challenges involved in identifying and accessing relevant documents.
- Understand how to locate specialist gateways and search engines that may help to identify relevant Web resources. Be aware of other formats in which relevant information may appear and understand how to identify and access such materials.²⁹

I believe that it is very beneficial for Slavic librarians to cast a careful eye at generic information literacy programs such as the one outlined by East and decide whether these programs can be adapted for our own uses. Because information literacy is one of the criteria by which universities are accredited, it is particularly important to use language that can be mapped to the definitions used by our accrediting bodies. That being said, an information literacy program also needs to be discipline-specific, which means (first and foremost) that it must be responsive to the needs of its clientele. Our field

has several advantages in this respect. We are a highly-specialized, highly-educated, and highly-motivated group of professionals, who, as noted before, are well integrated into the academic disciplines of our faculty. This gives us an enormous advantage over our library peers. Because our field is changing dramatically the possibility is open for us to have an impact on shaping it—an exciting challenge for all who want to consider it.

NOTES

1. Marta Meštrović Deyrup, "Report on SLAVLIBS Survey on Information Literacy," *Slavic & East European Information Resources* 5, no. 1–2 (2005): 41–46.
2. Wojciech Zalewski, *Fundamentals of Russian Reference Work in the Humanities and Social Sciences*. (New York: Russica Publishers, 1985), 207–208.
3. Zalewski, *Fundamentals*, 219.
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5. Kasinec, "How Might One Teach," 182–4, 185–6.
6. Kasinec, "How Might One Teach," 189.
7. Kasinec, "How Might One Teach," 189.
8. Wojciech Zalewski, *Russian Reference Works* (Stanford, CA [1999]), <http://library.stanford.edu/depts/hasrg/slavic/3refint.html>. Here information is organized not only by format but a "who, what, when, where" approach to information—the journalistic paradigm—which is more in keeping with today's idea of an appropriate tool for a particular purpose.
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10. Brewer, "You Can't Get There," 34–35.
11. Association of College and Research Libraries, *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education* (Chicago, 2004), <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/acrl/standards/informationliteracycompetency.cfm>.
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13. The quote is from the new book announcement for *Virtual Slavica* at <http://www.haworthpress.com/store/PDFFiles/ForReps/Nuebert-Virtual.pdf> (accessed June 4, 2008, site now discontinued). Michael Neubert, ed., *Virtual Slavica* (Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press, 2005), also published as special issue, *Slavic & East European Information Resources* 6, no. 2–3 (2005).
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