

# Embedded Information Literacy: An Arts & Humanities Model Marni Harrington & Christy Sich, Western Libraries

With the installation of a new Arts & Humanities Dean and recognizing the need to address the information literacy skills of undergraduates, the faculty and library teamed-up to integrate course design. We piloted an embedded information literacy program for a 3<sup>rd</sup> year course in the Department of Classical Studies. The implementation was successful due to collaboration with the faculty, department and course instructor as well as the continual assessment, adaptation and evaluation of the course content. Due to the organic nature of this model, it may be adapted to other programs in Arts & Humanities.

**“Competence in the use of the library is ... a complex of knowledge, skills, and attitudes not too be acquired in any one course but functionally related to the content of many.” (Knapp, 1956)**

**What is Information Literacy?** (ALA, 1998)  
The ability to:


- Access information effectively and efficiently
- Evaluate information critically and comprehensively
- Use information accurately and creatively

**Integrating the Library into Course Design**  
The best education involves one in which critical thinking and lifelong learning are core to university experience. To achieve this goal a partnership with librarians and faculty is essential. Librarians bring unique expertise to course development and delivery (Grafstein, 2002). Dean Pennee understands the value of integrating library instruction in appropriately-designed courses (Harrison, 2006).

**The Proposal:**

- 3<sup>rd</sup> year course - *The Ancient Novel*
- 25-30 students
- 4 scheduled class timeslots (50 min each)
- Annotated Bibliography assignment worth 10% of final mark

**Team approach**



Due to a tight timeline, the team approach allowed us to quickly develop appropriate content and meet the deadline for delivery. Each instructor / librarian has different teaching styles and expertise. The team-teaching approach offered variety for the students (e.g. active learning skills vs. expert search and retrieval skills). Also, knowing that this was a potential “model” for other departments to adopt, having involvement from a variety of subject librarians meant immediate exposure to the concepts and content used.

**L'Année Philologique**  
“How would it be used for other classes?”

**Searching**  
“How do I further refine my search? I'm having trouble finding relevant information.”

**One-minute Papers**  
Formative assessment distributed after each session to provide anonymous student feedback, questions and clarification

**Resources**  
“What is available? I've only ever used books from the stacks.” “Once I find a book in the catalogue, how do I get it?”

**Session 2:**  
- Information retrieval  
- Finding background information

**Session 1:**  
- The research process  
- How to read scholarly material

**Reading a citation**  
50% correct discriminating between book, journal article, encyclopedia entry

**ASSIGNMENT**  
The preparation of an annotated bibliography will assist you with the final research paper.

- 10 % of Final Grade
- 6 sources required and at least one of each: *book, journal article and website*
- include list of appropriate keywords in search strategy
- annotations require 3 elements:  
*author credentials show a connection to thesis relate back to each other*

**Session 4:**  
- How to Write an Annotated Bibliography

**Session 3:**  
- Advanced information retrieval  
- Focus on Classical Studies database  
- Advanced RefWorks

“The sessions supported the course content well. ...more intensively collaborative course design on a larger scale might yield even better results.”

“Sources used [for the final essay] were more relevant and appropriate.”

“Information sessions exceeded my expectations in several ways ... quality of information, attention to good pedagogy and presentation of materials.”

**Post-class Instructor Survey**  
Summative assessment of effectiveness and scope of library instruction

**Library Research Post-test**  
Summative assessment to inform future instruction, assess learning outcomes and question skill transfer

**MLA**  
66% now use

83% said library sessions helped prepare for final essay

**Transferability**  
94% will use skills in other Classics courses  
78% will use skills in courses outside Classical Studies

**L'Année Philologique**  
83% now use

**L'Année Philologique**  
80% had never used or knew what it was

**MLA**  
60% had never used or knew what it was

**Demographics**  
81% of class in 3<sup>rd</sup> year or above (77% of these students majoring in Classical Studies)

**Library Research Pre-test**  
Introductory assessment to inform instruction, provide a snapshot of library experience and understand class demographics

**Next steps:**

- Expand to other departments
- Evaluate and compare results with initial pilot
- If results warrant, offer faculty wide program

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