

[IFLA Information Literacy Satellite Meeting, 14-15 Aug 2014](#)

Guest post by [Shona Thoma](#), Maynooth University Library

On the 14th and 15th August 2014 I attended the IFLA Satellite Meeting on Information Literacy in Limerick. The meeting gave me the chance to get a little deeper into the elements involved in delivery and assessment of Information Literacy, and to examine alternative approaches to and definitions of it.

This was my first international conference, and as is to be expected, the conversations had outside of the meeting rooms over coffee or meals were just as interesting and useful for learning about new events, teaching tools, and projects that others are working on. I have to give a mention of thanks here to groups such as NPD Ireland and the sections of the Library Association whose events I have attended over the last two years and have offered the opportunity to dip a toe in the networking pool through “speed-networking” etc. This certainly made the prospect of striking up conversations with my fellow attendees slightly less daunting.

The below summaries are just a selection of the many and varied presentations I attended over the two days, and the key points I took from them.

Keynote: Nancy Fried Foster

Using examples from her own research at the University of Rochester (<https://urresearch.rochester.edu/institutionalPublicationPublicView.action?institutionalItemId=28347&versionNumber=1>) and subsequent studies, Foster presented findings from investigating different information seeking groups and how their approaches and techniques for searching differ. She elaborated on the different techniques observed in a good average student getting high grades vs. a time pressured researcher with a funding deadline, or a busy medical student. She noted that bad habits don't necessarily equal low information literacy – the people studied were found to be good researchers. Researchers are “messily organised” - only they need to find the information in their office so they cannot be judged on this, they must be assessed on their output. Foster also stated that we cannot judge our best researchers by their use of Boolean operators!

Forthcoming research will provide new knowledge of the nitty-gritty of research for librarians through an ethnographic study of students’ processes. This is drawn from students keeping map diaries, providing details of what students are doing throughout the day: where they go daily, and what areas are seldom visited. The study also utilised photo elicitation interviews, retrospective interviews where participants drew comic strips, and a Design Workshop on their ideal website.

The results are not fully analysed yet but Foster advised looking out for their publication as it will provide valuable insights into how students and researchers search and manage their information, and help us to make this more efficient, but in ways that suit their habits.

Follow Foster on Twitter: @AnthroLib

Constructing Learning in the Online Environment Using the Right Tools: Modelling, scaffolding, journaling, reflection, peer review, and rubrics – Kim Glover

Glover shared her experience of a library research course, run completely online. The course runs for

8 weeks and covers a research problem given by the instructor at the beginning of the course, the final project being an annotated bibliography.

These tools are used to help the students to develop their research skills:

- Modelling – an example from a previous student who did well is shared with the students.
- Rubric - students know how they will be evaluated and it is also used for conducting peer evaluation. Beware of a mechanics only rubric - sometimes students got mechanics right but didn't achieve the overall quality required.
- Scaffolding - detailed feedback is given at the beginning, this then tapers to only being essential support.
- Journaling - students record how they are going to take what they learnt and use it in other courses. This has proved to be the most successful part of class affording a place for reflections and communication with the tutor.
- Peer Review – the class had previously lacked peer interaction and a colleague recommended peer review. Students learn from each other by correcting each other's work and gain a sense of responsibility for each other.

Glover noted that she has not witnessed negative feedback in the peer review, sometimes the students don't give a lot, but generally it's constructive.

The annotated bibliography is worth the majority of marks. Continuous feedback and providing the rubric results in very high pass rates and the retention rates have been excellent each time the course is run.

The student evaluation of the course have been very positive, in particular they appreciate that it is well organised and sets clear expectations.

On Demand and Across the Globe: International Tutor Support and Teaching an Online Library Course – Elizabeth Newall, Lulu Qiu and Robin Chin Roemer

This online library course was born out of students' repeatedly requesting help with literature searches. The course runs over 5 days and participants post reflections, learning and questions online about the course content. The feedback has been consistently good every time the course has run.

However, those online in the evening weren't getting as much support as those who were logging-on during the day. This was down to tutors being online during their working day, typically finishing at about 5pm in the UK. Newall looked at how to negotiate this problem, and decided to follow the sun! She sought new tutors for the course from Washington and China, creating an international partnership with Qiu and Roemer. Tutors assisted all students participating in the course regardless of location.

There were set exercises and set resources in the course which made things straightforward for the international tutors. The US students enjoyed participating in a course based in the UK, and it gave the students in the University of Nottingham's Chinese campus a greater sense of belonging to their parent University.

This solution of cross-time-zone tutoring allowed better responses to student queries, although sometimes it wasn't clear what time they should log-in. In future they will clarify this across the time-zones.

Differences in academic terminology are also an important factor to note when tutors are

corresponding with students in a different region.

Overall, this partnership allowed for a great exchange of ideas, peer learning across countries and a professional development opportunity for all of those involved.

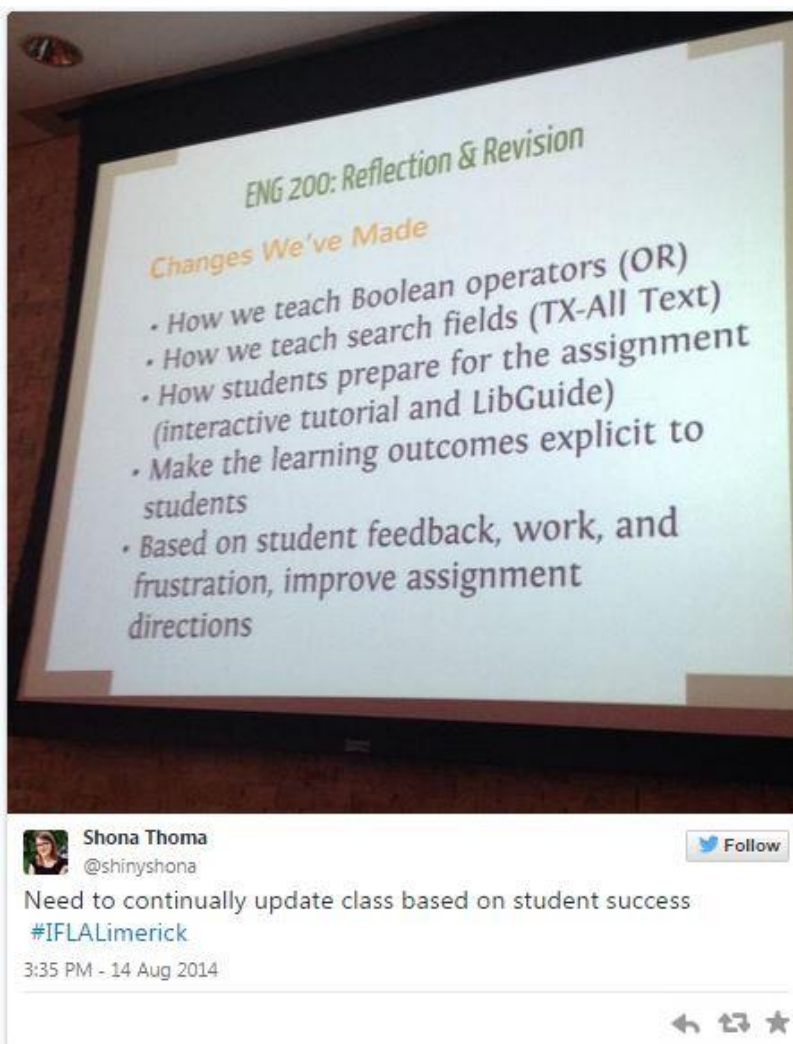
Workshop: Coming Face-to-Face with the future of Information Literacy Assessment

From a selection of workshops, I chose to attend Brandy Whitlock and Julie Nanavati's 'Coming Face-to-Face with the Future of IL Assessment: Why and How to Use Authentic and Performative Measures to Assess Student Learning'.

Whitlock and Nanavati highlighted ways to set clear learning objectives, how to match those with appropriate assessments, and how the results of assessment can be used to modify future classes. They advised using ACRL standards and Bloom's Taxonomy to help devise manageable outcomes. To ensure that the student can gain the most from carrying out a task or assignment they should be given:

- Detailed instructions
- Rubric
- A successful example

The student should always be at the centre of the outcome, focusing on what they will be able to do after instruction. Whitlock and Nanavati emphasised the need to continually update your class based on students' success and feedback, and shared examples of how they have done this in their courses.



Snakes or Ladders? Evaluating a LibGuides pilot at UCD Library – Michelle Dalton

Michelle Dalton presented on UCD's experience of using LibGuides to help direct students to relevant resources for their subject. Dalton warned against using LibGuides to market your library's content. They should be used as a filter, helping students to navigate information within their discipline. At UCD they determined to keep the guides simple, not wanting to overload students with information.

Students don't think they need LibGuides or they don't know about them. Marketing the guides is key to their success, and improving the students' research experience. Those students who used the guides found them really useful.

A statistics package is built into LibGuides so analysis could be done on a detailed guide vs. minimal guide. Students looked at the introduction page and databases guide mainly. They don't spend a huge amount of time on the LibGuide pages. Link usage can also be analysed. This data could then be used to check with academic staff if the resources being used are in fact the ones they want students to use.

LibGuides are now used for all e-learning support at UCD. Promotion was carried out through face to face instruction and collaboration with academic staff.

More information on UCD Library's LibGuides experience can be found in the Journal of Academic Librarianship.

Challenge Accepted: On a Quest for Information Literacy - Kathrin Knautz, Anja Wintermeyer and Julia Goretz

Faced with a new generation of students and a trend towards lack of motivation in higher education, Knautz, Wintermeyer and Goretz asked: how can we improve higher education and make a more dynamic learning environment? They found the answer in "gamification".

They decided to use game elements for conducting information literacy instruction. Rewards throughout a computer-game styled learning platform were used to drive student motivation. Students need to compete against each other and their tutors by completing tasks that would advance their information literacy.

Students usually receive experience points for completing quests, helping them to move through the levels of the game. The students also choose an avatar from four possible races, for example elf or giant, adding to the game-like experience.

There are 15 possible levels, with the information literacy course being passed at Level 11. If students continue playing beyond Level 11 they get a better than pass grade. There are also extra achievement badges to collect.

The use of a leader board contributes to the game-like environment and helps to motivate students by creating competition. They cannot see whole leader board however – just their immediate neighbours.

The students and tutors gave very positive feedback on the game being a useful tool for exam preparation. The ability to achieve bonus points towards the final exam was seen as very useful to the students! The benefits of engaging students with these game elements have obviously been recognised as the creators have been asked to develop a meta-system to allow lecturers to “gamify” their courses.

Keynote: Dr Michael Stephens

Stephens spoke about how he hopes his 8 year old neighbour won't be told to turn his device off in his future education. The phone shouldn't be seen as a barrier but a new opportunity to engage with education. For librarians, this means adapting our skills so that we can be useful in new ways. This could mean helping educators to build learning platforms, conducting outreach with mobile technology or expanding the audience for our collections in unexpected ways. Experimenting with apps, software and other new technology is the best way to learn how they will be useful to us.

Stephens asked us to challenge our concept of professional development, moving away from PowerPoint and reading journals. He noted that while people might be uncomfortable with changes and chaos, we need this for innovation to occur. For the library to be a place where learning happens, their needs to be room for play and discovery suited to multiple intelligences.

Follow Stephens on Twitter @mstephens7

Main areas of learning from the sessions I attended

1. Learning from assessment – continually revising approach based on the students feedback
2. International considerations of online courses – time-zones and terminology
3. Embracing new opportunities provided by emerging technologies – exploring new tools as part of CPD.
4. Gamification – creating new ways to engage students is becoming increasingly important and this looks set to be big.
5. Information Literacy skills beyond formal education – using in information literacy in new contexts and being flexible in our definitions.

Dr Sheila Webber has more blogs and information from presentations I didn't make it to on [her site](#)

I blogged in more detail about the Round Table discussion on Information and the Active Citizen, and my own experience of presenting a Pecha Kucha, on my [blog](#)

I created a Storify of tweets from the meeting here: <https://storify.com/shinyshona/ifla-satellite-meeting-limerick>