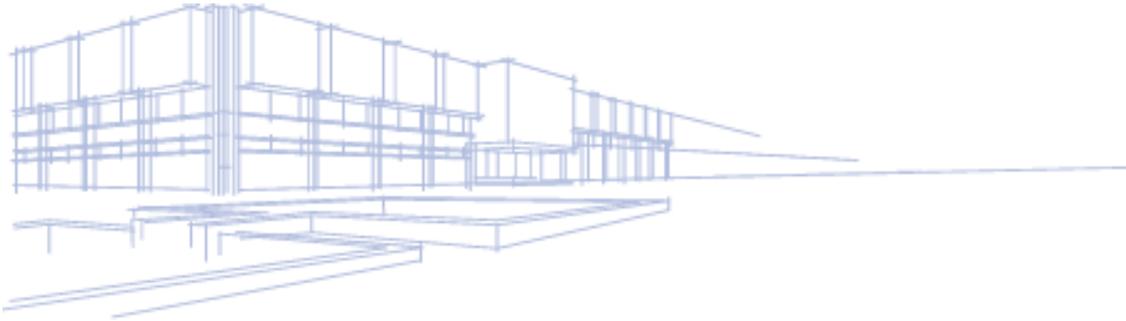




# **How to fit teaching of information literacy with students' needs: an online credit course model from the University of Tartu Library**

Vilve Seiler, Kärt Miil, Krista Lepik  
University of Tartu Library, Estonia

LIBER 40th Annual Conference 2011, Barcelona



## Overview

- Why and how information literacy?
- Context of the study: online information literacy course “Basics of Information Literacy”
- Methodology: content analysis of students reflections and feedback
- Results of the study
- Where to from here?

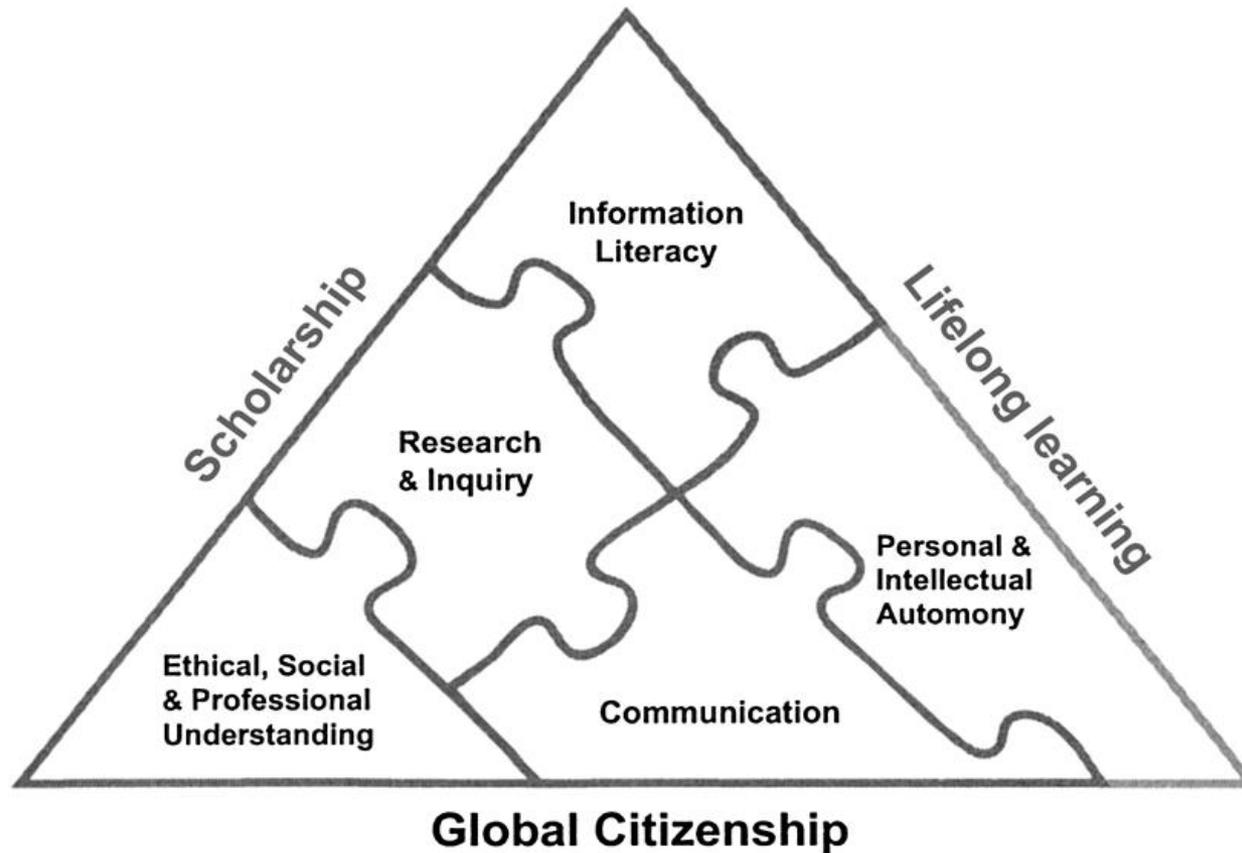


# Information literacy defined

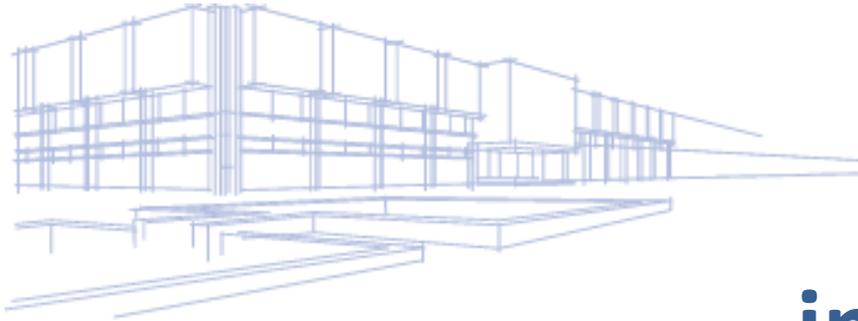
*„To be information literate, a person must be able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information.”*

American Library Association. (1989). *Presidential Committee on Information Literacy: Final Report.*

# Information literacy and lifelong learning



Barrie, S. C. (2004). A research-based approach to generic graduate attributes policy. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 23(3), 261-275.



# How to teach information literacy

- Integrated or embedded into the subjects
- Stand-alone courses, integrated into the curricula
- The role of the library
- The role of e-learning



# Online course Basics of Information Literacy

- Free elective course for all faculties
- 3 ECTS credit points, 8 weeks
- Since 2007, every year 50-80 graduates
- Target group: Bachelor's and Master's students
- Subject librarians as instructors
- Individual tutoring and feedback

- Course Tools
  - Course Content
  - Assessments
  - Discussions
  - Learning Modules
  - Mail
  - Roster
  - Web Links
  - Who's Online
- My Tools
  - My Grades

Your location: Home Page



### Welcome to the course

Instructors: Subject librarians of the University of Tartu Library



[Syllabus](#)



[Course activities schedule](#)



[Learning modules](#)



[General forums](#)



[Exercises](#)



[Assessments](#)



[Instructors' groups](#)



[Blackboard Student Manual](#)

# Learning modules

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I. Overview of information sources

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II. Principles of information search in databases

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III. Databases and e-journals

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IV. Search in online catalogue ESTER

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V. Search in Estonian article databases

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VI. Search in EBSCO databases

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VII. Search in CSA databases

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VIII. Search in publishers' e-journals databases and in e-book databases

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IX. Search in ISI Web of Knowledge

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X. Search in Scopus

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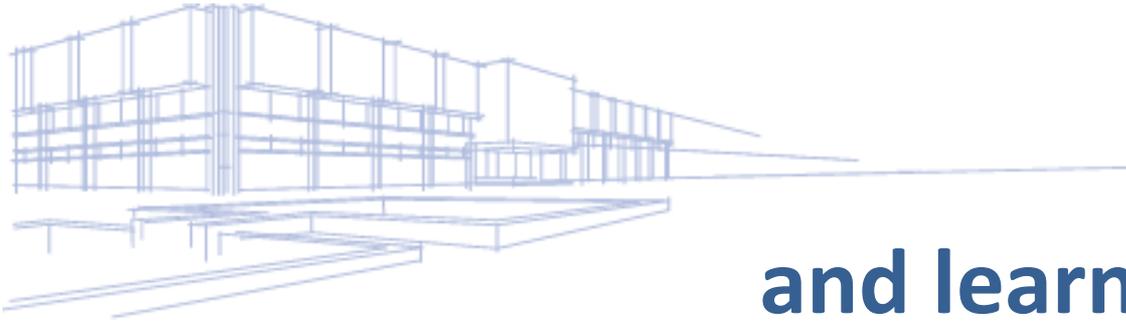
XI. Information search on the Internet. Scientific search engines and portals

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XII. Evaluation of information sources

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XIII. Avoiding plagiarism



# Teaching and learning activities

- Constructivist approach to learning
- Information search exercises on students' research topic, posted to asynchronous discussion forums
- Individual feedback from instructors as replay to students' postings
- All exercises and feedback visible to all participants

Your location: [Home Page](#) > **Course activities plan**

2 / 4
100%

<p><b>3</b></p> <p>28.09</p> <p>-</p> <p>4.10</p>	<p>Module VI: Search in EBSCO databases</p> <p>Module VII: Search in Cambridge Scientific Abstracts (CSA) databases</p>	<p><b>Exercise 2</b></p> <p>1. Get acquainted with EBSCO and / or CSA databases on your speciality using course materials and the virtual subject libraries (<a href="http://www.utlib.ee/erialaportaal2/">http://www.utlib.ee/erialaportaal2/</a>)</p> <p>1. Build a query/queries on your subject using logical or proximity operators, truncation, quotation marks and parentheses.</p> <p>2. Perform a keyword search (preferably, Advanced Search) in the database(s) that you need to use. Submit the description of the search. Which search fields did you use? How many results did you get? How did you limit your search? Did you get relevant hits? How many of them did you eventually get?</p> <p>3. Perform the subject search in the same database(s). Describe the course of the search and explain your way of finding suitable subject terms? Which of these searchers proved to be more suitable for your subject? Describe your searches for all exercises as precisely as possible.</p> <p>The best way for doing this would be to present different screen images of your queries (AltGr+Print Screen, to be pasted into the text of the exercise).</p> <p>Send the completed exercise to the forum EBSCO and CSA by answering the letter "(tutor's name) rühm".</p>
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8 points

Your location: **Discussions**
**Discussions**





 **General forums** ▾

   [News and information](#) ▾ ( 10 Messages )

   [Self introduction](#) ▾ ( 93 Messages )

   [Students' problems](#) ▾ ( 46 Messages )

Siia foorumisse on oodatud kõik teie küsimused ja probleemid.

   [Feedback about the course](#) ▾  ( 3 Messages )

 **Exercises** ▾

   [1. Catalogue ESTER](#) ▾ ( 186 Messages )

Send your exercise as replay to yours tutor's posting.

   [2. EBSCO and CSA](#) ▾ ( 174 Messages )

   [3. Other databases; 4. Analysis 1](#) ▾ ( 206 Messages )

   [5. WOS and Scopus](#) ▾ ( 154 Messages )

   [6. Internet ; 7. Analysis 2](#) ▾ ( 209 Messages )

   [8. Summary](#) ▾ ( 105 Messages )

**Course Tools**
 ▾





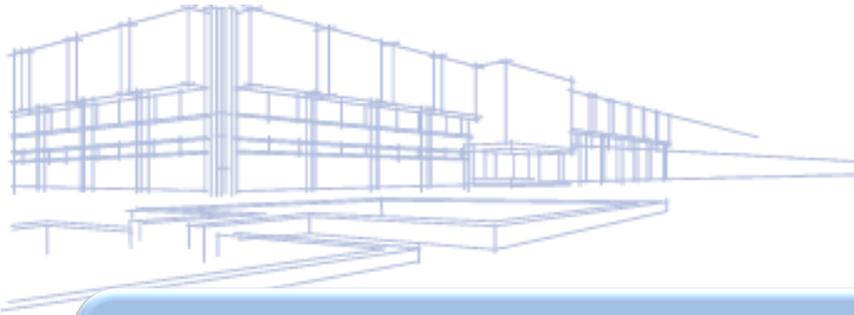

(H) = Hidden

**Instructor Tools**



# Content analysis of students' reflections and feedback

- Data derived from course feedback posts and reflections provided by graduates
- Qualitative content analysis as a method for analysis and interpretation of the data
- Qualitative data analysis software Atlas.ti

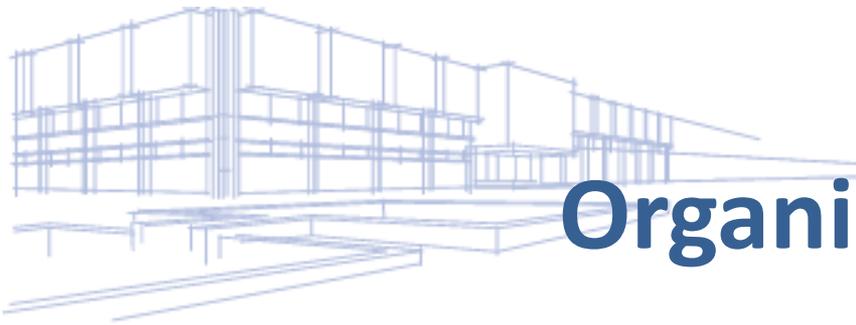


# Results

Course organisation and learning process  
Assignments and feedback

Were the expectations met?  
Was it feasible?  
What came as a surprise?

Usefulness of the course  
Evaluation of the course in the context of  
university studies



# Organisation of the course

## Clear structure

- *The course is very well-structured and logical.*

## Useful learning materials

- *Learning materials are very relevant and easy to follow.*

## Fixed schedule

- *Due dates are very useful, they make you complete the work in time. Otherwise, I would have left everything to the last minute.*

## Flexible

- *Allowed us to enjoy the subject.*

## E-learning format

- *The web format allowed the form to complement the content.*



# Assignments and feedback

## Assignments

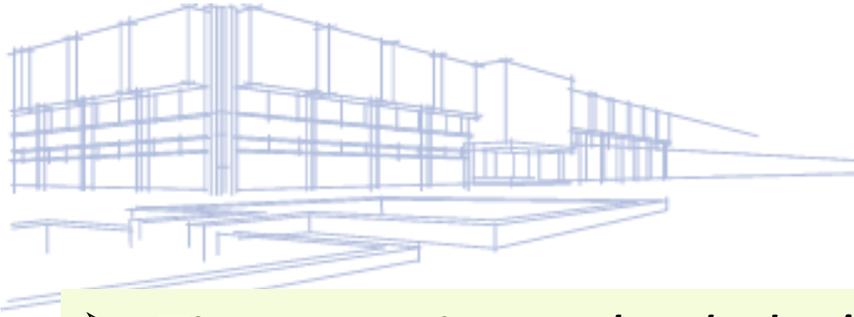
- *Each home assignment gave new skills, although the solving of them took an awful lot of time.*

## Analysis of the work of fellow students

- *The experience of analysing the works of fellow students gives a solid basis for the evaluation of the purposefulness of one's own work.*

## Role of the instructor

- *The instructors did not give only technical guidance, but they had a clearly felt individual approach and a will to offer substantial help.*



# Expectations

- *Time to write my bachelor's thesis is getting nearer and I thought that the course would be useful.*
- *At the beginning I thought that this subject was a convenient opportunity for getting the credit points working at my home computer, but now I don't think so. This subject gave me much more than I ever dared to expect.*
- *I knew precisely what I wished to find from this subject and I got all of it.*

*I became addicted and I very often found myself spending hours in making different searches.*

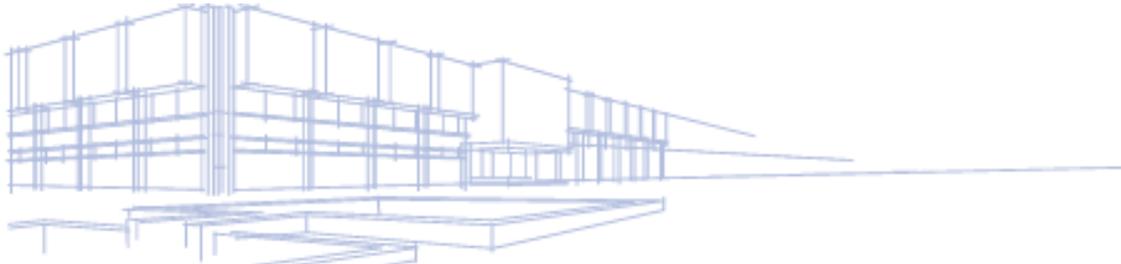
**Time-consuming**

*I had to work hard.*

*Skills of finding information improved with each assignment.*

*It took much more time than I had initially planned.*

# Eureka!



**Subject portals of  
the library**

➤ *Links offered at the UT Library subject portals proved to be extraordinarily useful for me, I found the most interesting results just there.*

**Subject headings  
list**

➤ *Speaking of this course, I am most happy about finding the subject heading list, as earlier, it had trouble in finding the most suitable search terms.*

**Re-evaluation of  
one's skills**

➤ *I thought that I was well at home with internet searches.*

**Learning of terms**

➤ *As a result of this course, many terms (both in Estonian and in English) became clearer to me and I became very interested in searching and reading literature.*



# Benefits

## Knowledge about databases

- *I gained very many ideas and knowledge of different databases that I did not know existed at all.*

## General benefits

- *During the course I learned to plan my searches better and to combine subject headings.*

## Articles for research

- *I found the core materials for writing my graduation thesis just during this course.*

## Search skills

- *Now I can find my way easily even in entirely unfamiliar databases and some of my acquaintances have started to use my help 😊*

knowledge about databases

mandatory for all students

gained search skills

learning process

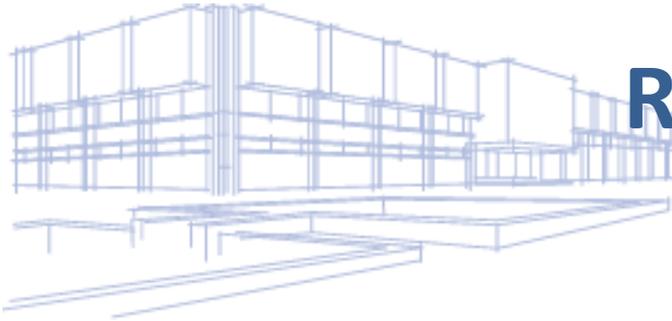
eureka

useful for study and research

learning materials

assignments

course instructor



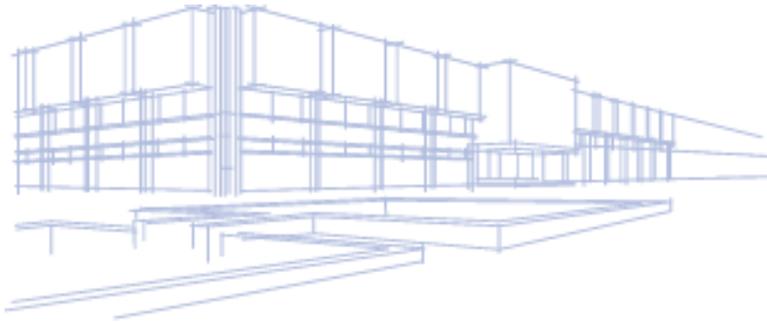
# Role of information literacy in university studies

- It was believed to be necessary especially before writing a research work.
- It was suggested that we should advertise the course more widely.
- It was thought that the course should be compulsory for all students.

***Poor information literacy could hinder (if not interrupt) the academic career of many students and it cannot be expected that all students could master it independently***

- The course has a wider meaning than just teaching information literacy.

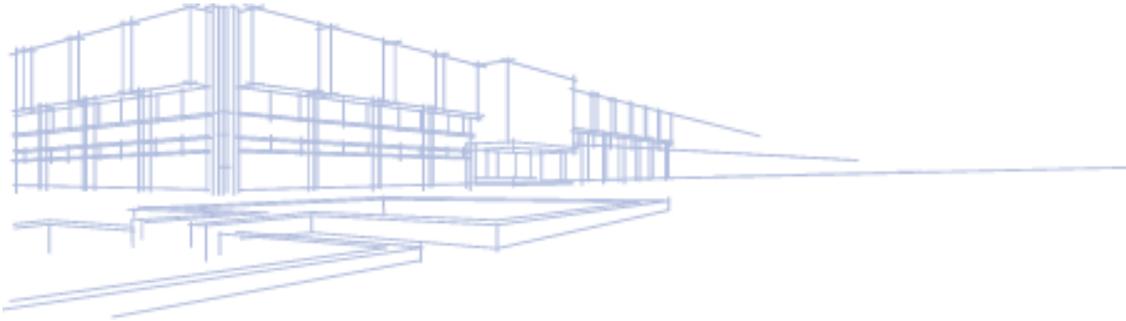
***For me, the most important fact was that thanks to this course, I realised that to take all stages of research is not simply a “waste of time”, but it will very definitely help to write a better research work.***



## Where to from here?

- Included into the curricula as an elective course!?
- All-university elective course for doctoral students
- Estonian-wide e-course for high-school students
- Speciality-based information literacy modules integrated into different subjects

Stand-alone information literacy e-course allows to teach students information literacy that meets their needs.



**Thank you!**