

6-7-2013

# Teaching Information Literacy for Life: Addressing the Issues

Sharon A. Weiner  
sweiner@purdue.edu

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## Recommended Citation

Weiner, Sharon A., "Teaching Information Literacy for Life: Addressing the Issues" (2013). *Libraries Faculty and Staff Presentations*. Paper 21.  
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# TEACHING INFORMATION LITERACY FOR LIFE: ADDRESSING THE ISSUES

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# 3rd Annual Connecticut Information Literacy Conference

June 7, 2013

*Sharon Weiner, EdD, MLS*

*Professor*

*W. Wayne Booker Chair in Information Literacy*

*Purdue University*

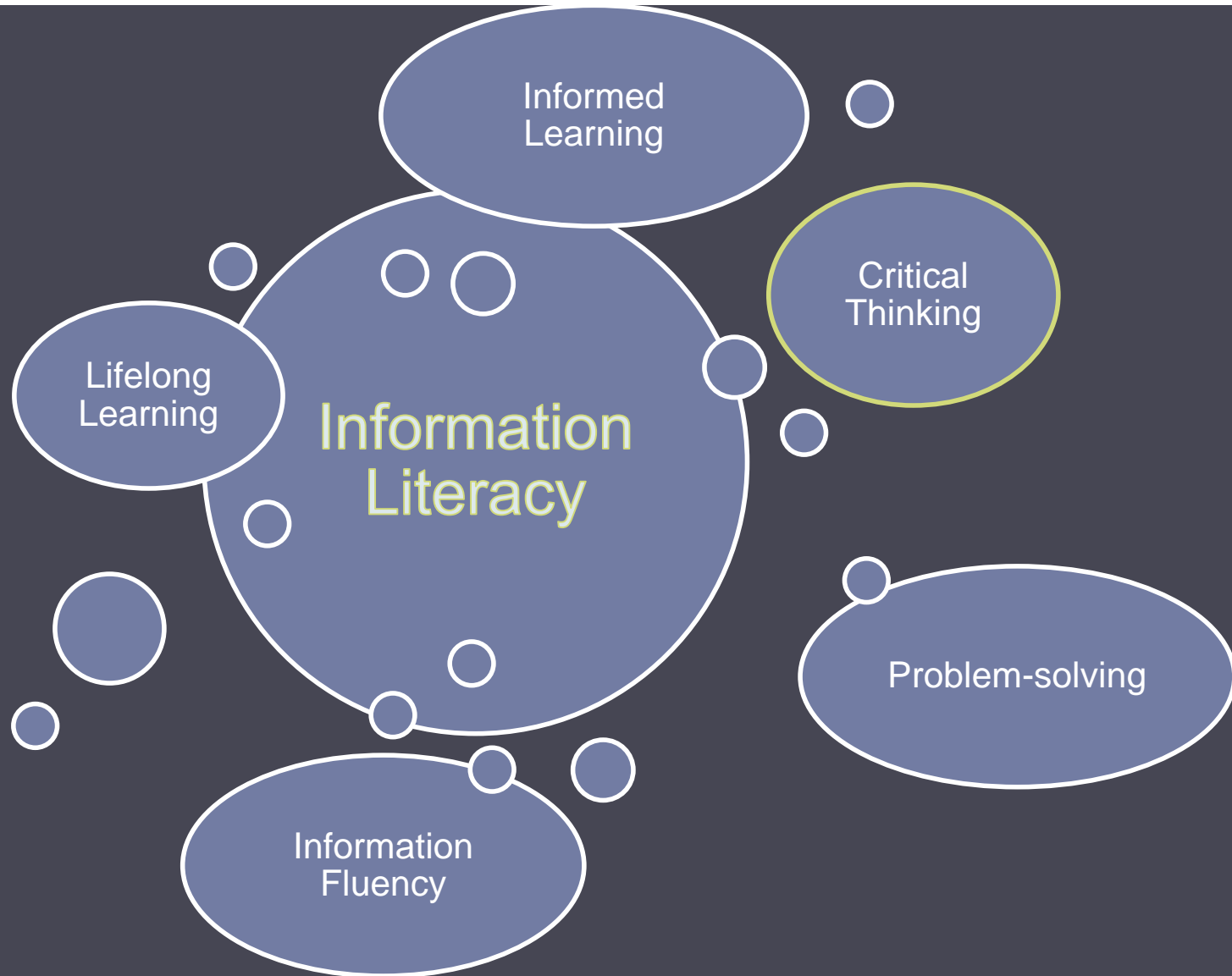
*Vice-President, National Forum on Information Literacy*

*sweiner@purdue.edu*

# Outline

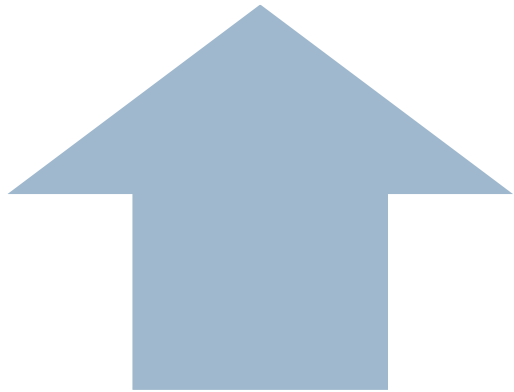
- Background: Let's clarify--what is information literacy (IL)?
- IL as a critical competency for workplace and for everyday life
  - What does it mean in those contexts?
  - How does it differ from school?
- What are the issues?
- Addressing the issues

# Background: What is IL?



# Background: What is IL?

**NARROW CONCEPTION OR BROAD CONCEPTION?**



Teaching skills—  
course success



Teaching range of  
competencies—life  
success

# Background: What is IL?

*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.*

.

ALA 1989

# A Critical Competency

*The ability to seek, find, and decipher information can be applied to countless life decisions, whether financial, medical, educational, or technical.*

*Obama 2009*





# A Critical Competency

- Informed community (healthy democratic community):
  - *Digital and media literacy widely taught in schools, public libraries and other community centers*
  - *Citizens active in acquiring and sharing knowledge within and across social networks*
  - *People can assess and track changes in the information health of their communities*

# A Critical Competency

- Academic success
  - Core curricula
  - LEAP initiative  
Liberal Education and  
America's Promise—AACU)
  - Accreditation standards
  - Southern Association of Colleges  
and Schools Quality  
Enhancement Programs



# What does IL mean in the workplace?

W. Wayne Booker



<http://www.lib.purdue.edu/infolit/bookerChair/wayneBooker>

# What does IL mean in the workplace?

- Produces positive outcomes for small and large businesses
- Growing # of studies of employers on what employees need and lack:
  - Ability to formulate precise, accurate questions
  - Ability to locate, understand, organize, and use information
  - Use variety of media and formats

# What does IL mean in the workplace?

- Ability to assess the credibility of information
- Judgment in sifting for relevant information



# What does IL mean in the workplace?

- Ability to use research process to describe, summarize, synthesize information
- Ability to monitor trends and readily adapt to them



# What does IL mean in the workplace?

- Critical thinking, problem solving, analytical reasoning, oral and written communication skills
- Social skills, the ability to listen, teamwork, collaboration



# What does IL mean in the workplace?

- Willingness and ability to continually learn new skills
- *Ability to adopt and adapt, create and recreate, contextualize and recontextualize*

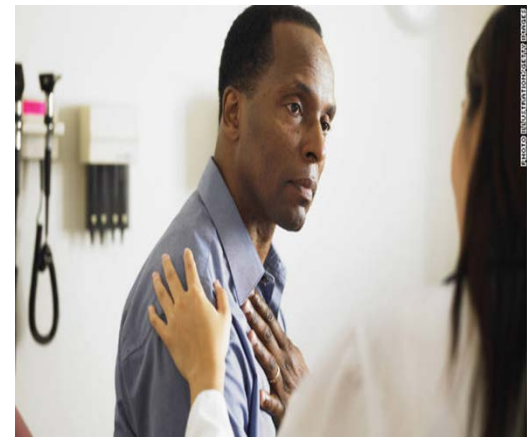
*Lloyd 2003*





# What does IL mean in everyday life?

- Examples of health and finances
- Better health outcomes, more empowered patients, less cost
- 36% of adult U.S. population low health literacy (87 million)
- 75% of low health literacy have insurance



# What does IL mean in everyday life?

- People with inadequate health literacy:
  - Have difficulty controlling chronic illnesses
  - Are less likely to understand and participate in disease prevention and health promotion programs
  - Are more likely to be hospitalized
  - Have less autonomy in self-care and decision making
  - Are more likely to have bad disease outcomes, mortality



# What does IL mean in everyday life?

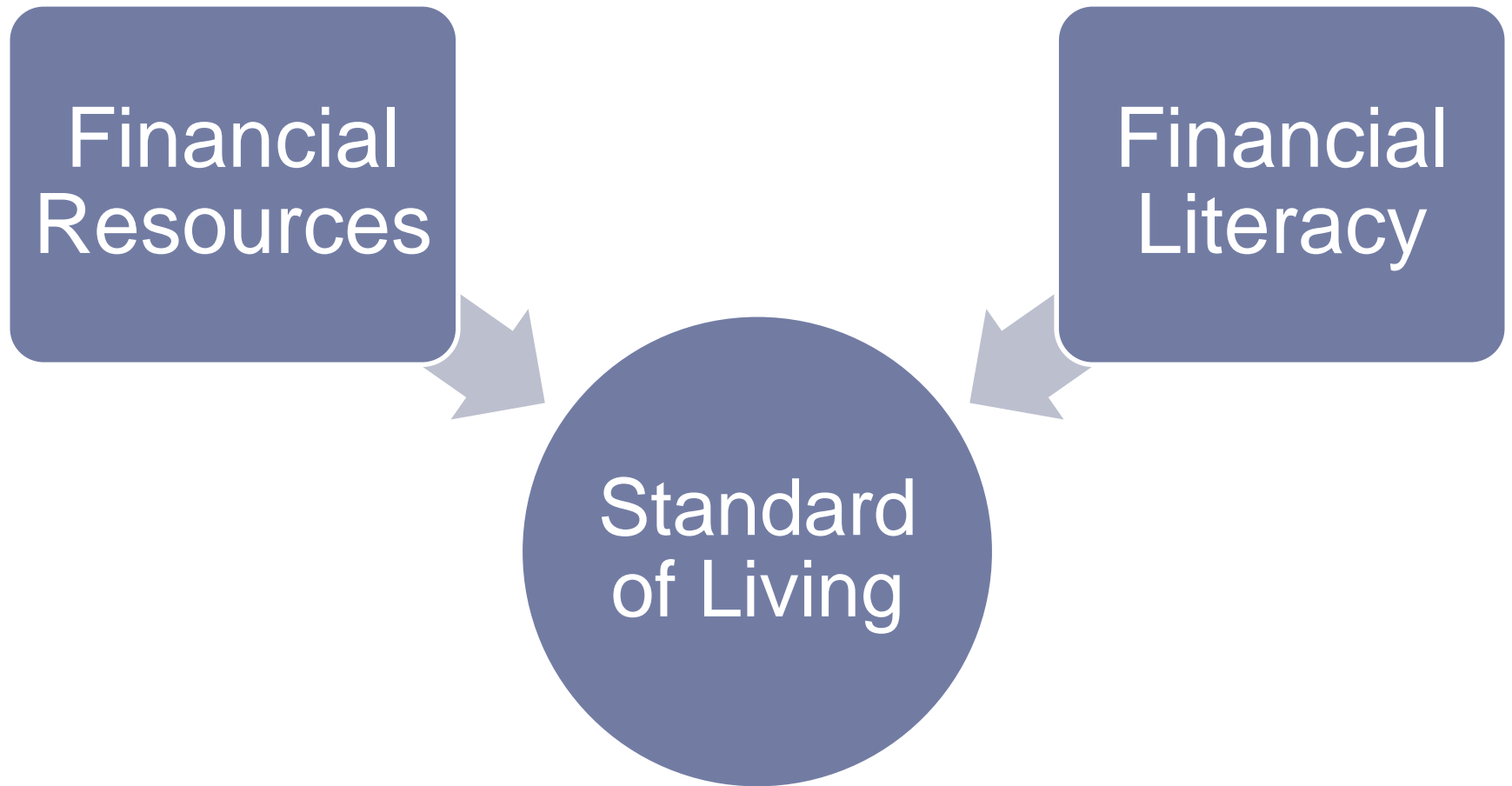
- *Financial Literacy:*
- College students far more financially literate than high school seniors
- Those who studied science, social science, engineering had the highest financial literacy scores, in spite of the fact that they have had little related course work.  
Business next.

# What does IL mean in everyday life?

- May be related to problem-solving ability rather than possession of time-limited financial facts.
- *Knowing how to approach a problem and how to research it are key to making the best personal financial decisions.*

*Mandell 2008*

# What does IL mean in everyday life?



# How does work and everyday IL differ from IL for students?

- Tasks and problems tend to be complex, messy, and open-ended, difficult to analyze
- Focuses less on identifying information needs—problems often **assigned** to an employee to resolve



# How does it differ from IL for students?

- Uses different approaches to information seeking and use
- Goes beyond mastery of information-seeking skills
- Tasks are context-specific, not generic

# How does it differ from IL for students?

- Different for different types of jobs
  - Vocational workers, occupation
  - Managerial used more primary sources (like internally-generated information) than secondary (important in academic work)
  - Networked to gather information
  - Needed time management, social networking, organizing internal information such as emails



# What are the issues?

## Addressing the issues...

- Think about what you can do...
- Professionally, societally, personally



# What are the issues?

- Many people are not transferring/applying IL skills to different contexts
- 21st century workplace and everyday literacies not well understood or sufficiently researched yet
- Need research on how to prepare college students and develop employees with IL



# What are the issues?



# What are the issues?

- Who should teach information literacy for the workplace and everyday life? How and when should this teaching occur?
- Most employers surveyed thought that K-12 schools, 4-year colleges and universities, or employees themselves were responsible.



# What are the issues?

- Managers believed it was easier to develop these skills in students than in experienced workers.
- Individual coaching and mentoring were the most effective methods to improve employee skills in these areas.



# What are the issues?

- College training in digital literacy is rare, though it was identified as a critical challenge.
- Academic librarians tend to teach IL skills for course-level success
- Are libraries models for workplace and everyday IL?



# Addressing the issues...

- Work together as a community by engaging stakeholders in IL
- Plan education as a progressive continuum through life rather than as segmented courses, modules, learning outcomes to be mastered and forgotten
- Consider the transitions between pre-school, elementary, secondary, higher education

# Addressing the issues...

- Develop institutional missions that prepare students for the next phase
- Develop better understanding of relationship between IL in the formal educational process and the workplace and everyday life—Internship Project
- Develop empirical evidence on the cost of lack of IL; case studies of how IL affects decisions and problem-solving



# Addressing the issues...

- Establish policies about IL expectations in job; develop strategies for teaching and assessing
- Provide professional development opportunities on IL
- Develop recognition programs that will help to publicize innovation and models

# Addressing the issues...

- Do a reality check for yourself and your organization:
  - Do you use research process to describe, summarize, synthesize information?
  - Do you monitor trends and readily adapt to them?
  - Do you use a variety of media and formats to gather info for your job?
  - Are you and your co-workers willing and able to continually learn new skills?
  - How capable are you in critical thinking, problem solving, analytical reasoning, oral and written communication skills, social skills, the ability to listen, teamwork, collaboration?
  - What about your everyday literacies?

# Addressing the issues...

- Informed communities need public policies that:
  - *Support production, dissemination of relevant, credible information*
  - *Enhance capacity of individuals to engage with information*
  - *Promote people's engagement with information and with one another*

# Addressing the issues...

## Policy and NFIL



- Series of summits—lifelong learning, competitiveness
  - Prague Declaration, 2003
  - Alexandria Proclamation, 2005
  - American Competitiveness in the Internet Age, Washington, 2007
  - October 2014, Washington

# Addressing the issues...

## Policy and NFIL

- Information Literacy Proclamation Project
  - Need for recognition of IL as societal issue, not just library or school issue
  - Increase visibility of IL outside of libraries
  - Give policy makers notice about an emerging issue
  - Annual recognition of IL

State of Connecticut



By His Excellency Dannel P. Malloy, Governor: an  
**Official Statement**

*WHEREAS*, information literacy provides the tools and skills to find, evaluate, and use credible information from all sources in our constantly evolving world; and

*WHEREAS*, the ability to search, find, decipher, and analyze different forms of information is a key component in effective decision-making across various financial, medical, educational, and industrial fields; and

*WHEREAS*, information literacy, as taught in schools and libraries, is a crucial part of education and will expose students to analytic and research practices that will better prepare them for changing technologies; and

*WHEREAS*, individuals who are comfortable working with digital informational are better able to seek highly skilled jobs and compete at high levels in the global economy; and

*WHEREAS*, information literacy encourages individuals to draw conclusions, make informed decisions, apply knowledge to using new technology concepts, and supports creative thinking that may develop innovative products and processes using technology; and

*WHEREAS*, using information acquired through technology to understand human, cultural, and societal issues promotes an informed and engaged citizenry; now

*THEREFORE*, I, Dannel P. Malloy, Governor of the State of Connecticut, do hereby proclaim October 2012 as

**INFORMATION LITERACY AWARENESS MONTH**  
in the State of Connecticut



A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Dannel P. Malloy", written over a horizontal line.

# Addressing the issues...

**What can you do?**

Email your idea to [sweiner@purdue.edu](mailto:sweiner@purdue.edu)

Or write on paper and collect in your row



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Thank you!

Questions and comments...