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Library Newsletter (Word from the Stacks)

University Library

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## Library Newsletter Volume 6, Issue 1

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# Word from the stacks...

## Literacy: A Concept at Home in the Library

by P. Gavin Ferriby, Ph.D.  
Interim University Librarian

Literacy is a complex and multi-layered concept that has varying uses in different fields of study.

—what is it?

UNESCO (United Nations Education, Cultural, and Scientific Organization) emphasizes print texts when it publishes a basic definition as “ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, compute and use printed and written materials associated with varying contexts.” Literacy is a continuum of skills and skill-sets to help people participate in society and develop human potential, knowledge, and awareness.

Literacy statistics are often a proxy for a region's or nation's economic development; cultural historians on the other hand emphasize that literacy always exists in a milieu of values and assumptions in a cultural context, and is also ideological. This in turn gives rise to ideas about cultural literacy, media literacy, ecological literacy, health literacy, and a related concept of “numeracy” or the ability to compute and perform basic logical operations. More “modal” literacies are sometimes identified as functional, critical, and rhetorical.

All these concepts of literacy find a home in a library—a set of human services, information resources, and physical settings designed to support the educational and cultural mission of this University, and of the life of

learning. Libraries assume that it's always better to know than not to know—even when knowledge disturbs assumptions and critiques authorities.

This edition of the libraries newsletter explores several dimensions of literacy—not an encyclopedia, but a sketch-book, and I hope a spring-board for more reflection.

- Gavin Ferriby, Interim University Librarian, announces University membership in PLoS (Public Library of Science) a peer reviewed, open-access, international resource for the scientific world; and describes SPARC, a collaborative scholarly coalition for publishing and academic resources
- Rachel Gaither, Business Research Librarian, describes the new Patent and Trademark Depository Library at Sacred Heart University.
- Elizabeth (Libby) Knapik, Head of Information Literacy Programs, describes the development of 14 “meta-rubrics” for more accurate assessment of undergraduate learning—she participated in formulating the rubrics for Information Literacy.
- Kim Macomber, Reference Librarian with a special concern for the Isabelle Farrington School of Education, describes new literacy resources available at the library.
- Nancy DelVecchio, Collection Development Librarian, specifies

new databases available via the University Library.

Gavin Ferriby, Ph.D. joined the Library as Assistant University Librarian in June 2006.

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## University Library Joins PLoS: Public Library of Science --by Gavin Ferriby



On behalf of the entire University, the University Library has joined the Public Library of Science (PLOS) as one of more than 200 institutional sponsors in the United States (and many more international sponsors). PLOS "is a non-profit organization of scientists, physicians, and libraries committed to making the world's scientific and medical literatures a freely available public resource." All PLOS publications are fully peer-reviewed publications of the highest standing, but are free via the Web to all researchers as an alternative to traditional high-cost profit-sector publishers. Financial support for PLOS comes from individual and institutional members, grants, and submission fees from authors (who often receive grant-in-aid assistance). PLOS membership benefits Sacred Heart University faculty by reducing the amount of the submission fees modestly.

Scientific literacy will be a cornerstone of world economic and cultural development, especially for teachers and researchers in poorer countries. PLOS is deeply committed to open access, excellence, scientific integrity, community engagement, and internationalism, among other values, and views science as a public resource, to be used with full attribution to authors and creators. PLOS membership is fully consonant with the University's core values and extend its academic and intellectual mission through scientific cooperation. More information about PLOS include videos can be found at <http://www.plos.org>



## Introducing SPARC to SHU --by Gavin Ferriby

The University Library has joined SPARC –The Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition. This is an international alliance of academic and research libraries which actively seeks to redress the imbalances in the current scholarly publishing system. It functions as a catalyst to stimulate the emergence of new scholarly publication models which disseminate high-quality research and reduce the financial pressures on libraries and research institutions.

SPARC believes that stakeholders in academic publishing (writers, editors, scholarly associations, publications, libraries, and university leaders) will be best served by effective and sustainable models content delivery. By educating the public about the problems and opportunities, advocating for changes, and fostering real-world publication opportunities, SPARC has already demonstrated how new scholarly models can compete with for-profit publishers, drive down the cost of publication, and promote a milieu in which editors and editorial boards can play a more prominent role in the business operation of their publications. More than 800 universities and institutions are members of SPARC, which funds its programs from coalition member fees and grants to augment its capital fund. As a coalition member, Sacred Heart Universities takes its place as an institution committed to the development and success of high-quality scholarship and lower-cost patterns of delivery and the dissemination of research and expertise to propel economic and social development. More information can be found at <http://www.arl.org/sparc/index.shtml>

## Literacy --by Kim Macomber

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, literacy is defined as "the quality or state of being literate; knowledge of letters; condition in respect to education, *esp.* ability to read and write." The entry for "literate" has a few more meanings, although they primarily deal with the ability to read and write. The earliest meaning is "acquainted with letters or literature; educated, instructed, learned" and ends with "one who can read and write." In some ways, it seems that the meaning deteriorated over time. For centuries, being literate focused on the ability to communicate at a certain level with the written word. It has been only recently that the meaning of literacy has broadened to include more than reading and writing.

If you do a quick search in our catalog of the word "literacy," as either a keyword or subject term, there are results ranging from educational aspects of reading and

writing to Scientific, Cultural, Health, Workplace, Moral, Mathematical, Visual, Oral, and Moral literacies, just to name a few. Needless to say, the concept of literacy has advanced well beyond the ability to read and write at a certain level. Perhaps it has gone back to the earlier meaning of "acquainted with letters or literature; educated, instructed, learned."



Of course, there has to be some way of measuring the basic level of one's ability to read and write in a specific subject in order to be considered literate in that area. However, just the ability to read and write the vocabulary does not constitute literacy. Literacy needs to go beyond the basics and delve into a deeper understanding of a discipline.

Everyone has the ability to be literate. Education is the

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## **New Designation for Sacred Heart University: Patent and Trademark Depository Library** **--by Rachel Gaither**

On Monday, October 26, 2009, the Sacred Heart University's Ryan-Matura Library officially celebrated its designation by The Commerce Department's United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) as the 82<sup>nd</sup> official Patent and Trademark Depository Library (PTDL). As a PTDL, the Ryan-Matura Library is part of a nationwide network of public, state and academic libraries designated as PTDLs authorized by 35 U.S.C. 12 to disseminate Patent and Trademark information and support the diverse intellectual property needs of the public.

PTDLs maintain complete collections of over 6.7 million patents and nearly 2 million active or pending trademark registrations, as well as related information in various print and electronic media. Services at all designated PTDL's are free and include, among other things, assistance in accessing and using patent and trademark documents, and training in using USPTO databases.

Dr. Gavin Ferriby, the library's interim director believes that, "The PTDL will be of great value to the large business community in Connecticut and, especially, Fairfield County. The PTDL program will allow the Ryan-Matura Library to provide inventors and entrepreneurs with access to a wealth of information found only in patent and trademark documents and provide expert staff assistance in its usage."

A complete list of all current PTDL designated libraries can be found on the USPTO's Web site at <http://www.uspto.gov/products/library/ptdl/locations/index.jsp>.



**SHU Provost and VP for Academic Affairs Thomas V. Forget announces the official opening of the new Patent and Trademark Depository Library at Sacred Heart University's Ryan-Matura Library on campus**

## **Value Rubrics Assess Undergraduate Learning** **--by Elizabeth (Libby) Knapik**

In May of 2008, I was asked to participate in the American Association of Colleges & Universities' (AACU) VALUE Project (*Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education*). The project involved working with faculty experts to develop 14 meta-rubrics that were eventually tested at twelve VALUE Leadership campuses. This project is part of an overall effort by the AACU to pioneer common assessment methodologies in response to the Spelling Commission (<http://www.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/hiedfuture/about.html>). I served on the team charged with the formulation of meta-rubrics for information literacy. The other members of the team were all University Librarians representing institutions from all over the country.

The first part of the process involved each member of the team individually reviewing a collection of rubrics in information literacy in order to gather common criteria. The collection consisted of some rubrics that had already been gathered by the AACU as well as those supplied by members of the team. Once we had gathered the common criteria, we worked as a team to decide which of these criteria to use in our first draft of the rubric. When we had agreed on which criteria to use, we then had to write performance level descriptors for each one (at four performance levels).

Our first draft was tested at the leadership campuses and revised based on feedback that the team received from them. The entire process took almost 18 months to complete. The rubrics are intended for institutional level use in evaluating and discussing student learning, not for

grading. If you are interested in learning more about the VALUE project please visit: <http://www.aacu.org/value/index.cfm>. If you are interested in viewing the rubrics for information literacy please visit: <http://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/pdf/InformationLiteracy.pdf>.

## **Editorial Policy**

### **Submission of articles or opinion letters:**

All submissions of articles or opinion letters must be sent to the editor via e-mail at [cioffim@sacredheart.edu](mailto:cioffim@sacredheart.edu) for publishing consideration. Submissions must be received by deadline date to be considered for upcoming publication. Space availability will be considered when deciding whether to incorporate an article. Byline of the author submitting article or opinion letter will be published. Submissions without bylines will not be published. Any submissions by a group or a committee must have all the members' names on the piece.

### **Content:**

Submitted articles can deal with any number of issues either controversial or not. The editor reserves the right to deem an article inappropriate for publication, if it is used for personal attacks or complaints. The editor also reserves the right to edit either the style or length of any submitted article.

## Information

### Spring Hours & Numbers

**Monday - Thursday** 8:00 AM - Midnight

**Friday** 8:00 AM - 6:00 PM

**Saturday** 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM

**Sunday** 12:30 PM - Midnight

**For more information, please call:**

Reference desk: x7726 (203-371-7726)

Circulation desk: x7702 (203-371-7702)

**For a list of special hours please visit our website at**

<http://library.sacredheart.edu/AskUs-hours.html>

### Cambridge Branch Hours & Numbers

**Monday - Thursday** 9:00 AM - 9:00 PM

**Friday** 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

**Saturday** Noon - 4:00 PM

**Sunday** Closed

**For more information, please call:**

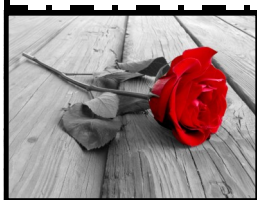
Cambridge desk: x4872 (203-365-4872)

## Literacy

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key. As Paulo Freire states on page 12 in his work, "The Politics of Education," translated by Donald Mado, "no educational practice takes place in a vacuum, only in a real context-historical, economic, political, and not necessarily identical to any other context." Real literacy comes when reading and writing within the context of a discipline brings true meaning to the words.

## Staff Notes



On December 14, 2009, the Sacred Heart University Library staff marked the passing of Sachiko Spohn (1949-2009), our long-time Interlibrary Loan Assistant, who died after a brief illness on November 19. Staff and friends gathered in the Gallery of

Contemporary Art to speak about her, and to view her numerous beautiful art works, most of which had never been shown previously. Our deepest condolences and best wishes go to Clifford Spohn, her husband, her daughters, and all her family. We will all miss Sachi greatly.

Deana Santoro-Dillon has been very ably serving as Interlibrary Loan Assistant since September, and many thanks for her care and attention to this demanding work.

The University Library staff benefited enormously from the work of Joe Fox, our intern who was with us from September to December. Joe assisted with service at the reference desk, wrote two library guides, analyzed the (aging) VHS collection, and did myriad other tasks, all on a few

hours per week. Joe is finishing his Master in Library and Information Science at San Jose State University, and our best wishes go with him.

## Choice Reviews Online: A New Tool for Resource Selection

--by Gavin Ferriby and Nancy DeVecchio

Sacred Heart University Library has implemented *Choice Reviews Online* the new digital version of Choice Cards, familiar to faculty book selectors for some years.

The content and recommendations available via *CRO* remain the same, but the mode of delivery has changed. One of the biggest advantages to this new resource is the ability for each selector to define his or her interests, to search keywords, authors, and other information, and to see a wide range of materials. This last "range" is especially important for inter-disciplinary fields, since no longer is the library restricted to one card to give to one selector --any faculty in principle can review recommendations for any resource. Faculty will still need to coordinate recommendations with departmental liaisons and library area selectors, but now can do this via e-mail or spread-sheets --reducing the manual effort necessary. For more information, see the Library Guide at [http://libguides.sacredheart.edu/collection\\_development](http://libguides.sacredheart.edu/collection_development)

## New Library Databases

--by Nancy DeVecchio and Gavin Ferriby

The databases available via the library web site have presented librarians with some challenges in recent months. Two critical databases, *CINAHL Plus With Full Text* (Nursing and Health Sciences) and *WestLaw* (Social Sciences) were dropped by the State of Connecticut (through iConn) because of budget cutbacks, and are now University subscriptions.



Despite state cutbacks, however, the University Library has moved forward to continue to provide premium-quality new resources:

*BioOne* and *Annual Reviews: Life Sciences* will further support Biology and other science teaching and learning, in fields which are rapidly moving to completely digital information resources;

*Nursing and Allied Health* (ProQuest) and ODTbase will further support Health Sciences instruction as those areas develop more graduate programs, including the new DNP --Doctrate in the Practice of Nursing;

*Historical Abstracts with Full Text* will become available on February 1, and will provide full-text access to 295 journals covering world history more than 100 digital books, and abstracting and indexing for over 2,600 other publications.

For links to these and other databases, please see the library's web page at: <http://library.sacredheart.edu/dbA-Z.html>