

Reframing Information Literacy as Theological Habits

Embedding the Framework into Theological Curriculum

BRANDON BOARD, ANABAPTIST MENNONITE BIBLICAL SEMINARY

IN 2018, LIBRARIANS AND TEACHING FACULTY AT ANABAPTIST MENNONITE Biblical Seminary (AMBS) revised the institution's *Information Literacy Policy* document. With some additional influence from the Association of Theological Schools' (ATS) standards and its own educational goals, the seminary drew on the Association of College and Research Libraries' (ACRL) *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* and its new definition of information literacy as a "set of integrated abilities" to embed information literacy concepts more deeply into its process of theological education.

In contrast to the idea that information literacy is solely the responsibility of librarians, AMBS teaching faculty collaborate with librarians to build and assess information literacy throughout the curriculum. Demonstration of information literacy is required for admission to the Master of Divinity program and advancement to candidacy in Master of Arts programs.

This paper will describe the conceptual background for this contextual adaptation of the information literacy framework, the collaborative process for revising the seminary's information literacy policy, and the seminary's experience implementing the revised policy in instruction and assessment activities. The purpose is to serve as a sort of case study and demonstration of the fact that ACRL's framework offers an opportunity to develop customized versions of information literacy that match the academic environment.

Background

Located in Elkhart, Indiana, Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary is a small seminary affiliated with the Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada denominations. Originally conceived as an association between two geographically proximate seminaries, AMBS is an organization that has weathered significant change over the last few decades.¹

One of the primary shifts to which the organization has had to adapt is a significant change in the demographics of its students. In the 2018–19 academic year, 43% of the seminary’s students were not affiliated with Mennonite Church USA or Mennonite Church Canada, while about one third of the student body are from countries other than the United States.² An increased focus on online education and a broader recruiting net has also meant that the seminary sees fewer “traditional” graduate students³ and more students who have been out of academia for a significant amount of time.

All of these demographic changes have underscored the importance of information literacy education and assessment for AMBS students. The first attempt at formally including information literacy came in 2006, when it was added to each degree program’s educational outcomes.⁴ In a 2014 presentation at the Atla Annual conference, the then-AMBS Director of Library Services Eileen Saner (who retired in 2016) discussed what each of these new information literacy program goals entailed:

In the MA in Peace Studies and Theological Studies programs, the goal is “Demonstrate the ability to locate, evaluate, and use information effectively.” The goal for the MA in Christian Formation expands the phrase, “use information and resources effectively.”⁵

Within the seminary’s Master of Divinity program, information literacy found its place under behaviors one would expect of practicing ministers: “demonstrat[ing] personal authority and integrity in ministry” by “knowing when to seek information and where to find it.”⁶

The work to formally include information literacy as part of the seminary’s curriculum alerted teaching faculty to its necessity, with some going on to describe “sloppy citation practices and greater use of inappropriate Internet resources,” as well as concern over “students relying on mediocre but conveniently available Internet resources while overlooking key library holdings.”⁷

The system that was put in place to address these deficiencies involved requiring students to demonstrate information literacy prior to graduation. For this purpose, students would submit a research paper for evaluation prior to

graduation. A rubric was used to evaluate these papers in five key areas of information literacy:

- Ability to determine the nature and extent of the information needed
- Ability to locate appropriate information, including its authority, accuracy, and quality
- Number of sources
- Variety of sources
- Formatting of citations in footnotes and bibliography⁸

The evaluation was completed by the campus Writing Services Coordinator, who was also a student. The Writing Services Coordinator would evaluate each paper based on the five areas of the rubric, scoring each area on a scale of 0 (unacceptable) to 4 (excellent). A paper receiving a score of 2 (good) in all five categories was deemed to have adequately demonstrated information literacy, and the requirement would be satisfied.⁹

There were two significant issues with this approach. First, it kept information literacy solely in the remit of the library—and out of the hands and minds of the teaching faculty. While many professors found themselves working towards information literacy with their students regardless of the program requirements, the structure of this particular policy allowed them to not focus on it quite so carefully.

This gave rise to the second issue. With professors not necessarily working information literacy into their syllabi and not grading student submissions with an eye on information literacy, it allowed students to work their way through their programs without necessarily gaining these skills. Then, having completed all course requirements for graduation, the student would find himself/herself unable to pass the library's information literacy requirement.

As an example, consider the story of J.,¹⁰ as recounted by current AMBS Director of Library Services Karl Stutzman:

J. was finishing his Master of Divinity degree at AMBS. J. completed his AMBS coursework over a number of years through work at an extension site, on-campus intensives, and online courses. J. was a first-generation immigrant from another country, where he had completed his undergraduate degree. Due to cultural differences in educational systems, J. had very little experience writing in his undergraduate degree, and those papers were written in a very different style. J.'s cultural style also made him reluctant to reach out for academic support. As part of his graduation requirements, he learned that he needed to submit a paper that would be assessed for information literacy skills, something that he needed to

demonstrate in order to graduate. Because J.'s career as a student had spanned many years, his requirements reflected the seminary's former information literacy policy that assessed all students just before graduation. When the AMBS librarian evaluated J.'s paper, he discovered that J. could not immediately pass the information literacy assessment. The librarian worked with J. over the course of several videoconference appointments to consult about additional research materials and revise the paper to make it acceptable from an information literacy standpoint. Unfortunately, J. was almost finished with his seminary degree and was not planning to write any more papers. J. stated that he had found his writing assignments to be extremely difficult and stressful. "This would have been so helpful years ago," he remarked to the librarian. "I have been struggling all along." Although J. was able to pass the information literacy assessment and graduate, he did not gain the skills at the time in his academic career when they would have been most helpful.¹¹

A New Policy

Because of J. and many students like him, it was clear something needed to be done. The policy put in place in 2006 was a start, but it was not enough. In 2016, the then-new library director Karl Stutzman began the process to reassess and revise the policy, which culminated in a full revision of the policy in the 2017-2018 academic year.

This was done with two significant goals in mind. First, the new policy needed to increase the teaching faculty's ownership towards information literacy, rather than having it function as a sort of "tacked on" program goal that was mostly the purview of the librarians. While the Association of Theological Schools considers information literacy an explicit responsibility of the library,¹² it seems that this is best done with a more holistic approach. It is "a more comprehensive project, requiring the close collaboration of a school's entire educational cohort, including librarians, teaching faculty, and academic administrators."¹³

Second, while the existing policy allowed for assessment of students' information literacy, it did not do so early enough to remedy deficiencies. As demonstrated by J.'s example, the existing policy often served merely as an additional hurdle to graduation—another box to check after all the coursework had been completed. The new policy and procedure would need to allow librarians and teaching faculty to assess students' abilities earlier in their time at

AMBS, and thereby identify information literacy issues with sufficient time to address them.

The 2017–2018 policy revision coincided with the seminary preparing for reaccreditation through the Association of Theological Schools, with the ATS self-study due in 2018, to be followed by a site visit in 2019. As the librarians and Academic Dean began reviewing the existing policy, which was part of the seminary's Academic Policy and Procedures manual, several issues stood out as needing correction. First, that manual's information literacy policy was based on the ACRL's *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education*,¹⁴ which at that point was fairly outdated, having been replaced by their *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*¹⁵ in 2015. Librarians and teaching faculty had been utilizing *Framework* principles in the seminary's teaching strategies, but the formal policy and assessment tools remained outdated.

At the same time, the seminary's administration was working with the teaching faculty to assess the seminary's programs and curriculum mapping. This raised awareness among these key groups of the way that information literacy had previously been included as program goals for the Master of Arts and Master of Divinity programs. In an email to the author, Karl Stutzman describes some of the problems raised in this review:

*Unfortunately, the information literacy goals were not well-represented in the curriculum map and looked like something tacked on by the library rather than something fully owned as part of the curriculum. Furthermore, it seemed we were treating information literacy as an end unto itself, as an outcome of our program rather than as a foundational skill for completing graduate theological work.*¹⁶

Given these realities, the seminary had arrived at an opportune moment in which to revise its Information Literacy Policy. Teaching faculty devoted significant time to this process, which included inviting the library director to discuss librarians' evolving professional understandings of information literacy. After a few rounds of proposed policy changes and additional discussion with teaching faculty, the new policy was formally approved in December 2017 and took effect beginning in the 2018–19 academic year.

The new Information Literacy Policy (Appendix 9A) is short and details three information literacy habits that AMBS students and faculty should practice:

- Critical assessment of resources' relative value and authority
- Reflective discovery of resources
- Ethical use of information

The document continues by prescribing the building and assessment of information literacy into the seminary curriculum. Before describing the educational goals which align with development of information literacy habits, the policy document provides a single sentence that radically changed the way information literacy instruction and assessment is carried out for the seminary's students:

*Demonstration of information literacy is required for admission to the Master of Divinity program and advancement to candidacy in Master of Arts programs.*¹⁷

Whereas the old system required assessment at the time of graduation, this policy requires assessment much earlier in the process, typically after a given student's first year of studies. For example, in the case of a student pursuing a Master of Divinity degree, he or she must "petition for formal admission into the MDiv program after they have successfully completed 11 credit hours of study and are in process with other courses."¹⁸ The process for students pursuing a Master of Arts degree is similar. Students pursuing MA degrees are admitted to the programs upon admission to the seminary. After completing the 11 credit hours, with additional hours in progress, "students are assessed for their readiness to be advanced to candidacy for the" Master of Arts degree.¹⁹

The AMBS Academic Catalog lists several criteria for faculty to consider when evaluating students' petitions for admission, or advancement to candidacy:

- Supporting evidence of the student's call to ministry
- Completion of personality inventories
- Submission of a plan for growth in spiritual formation
- Academic performance
- Recommendations from the student's academic advisor, MDiv program director, and other faculty leaders ²⁰

In addition to these criteria, AMBS librarians now complete a formal information literacy assessment as part of the students' admission to the Master of Divinity program or advancement to candidacy in the Master of Arts programs.

Information Literacy as Theological Habits

Arguably, one of the strengths of ACRL's *Framework* is that its "threshold concepts are not standards to be slavishly followed, but understandings that, once grasped, are reflected in the ways in which students do research."²¹ This idea inspired the description of "theological habits" in the seminary's new

Information Literacy Policy. Accompanying the new policy is an *Information Literacy Scaffolding* document (Appendix 9B) which details the contexts where students can develop and utilize each habit, how these habits relate to the ACRL *Framework*, and who is responsible for developing these habits in the students.

The first habit listed in the new Information Literacy Policy is the “critical assessment of resources’ relative value and authority,” which is tied to the *Framework’s* “Information has Value” and “Authority is Constructed and Contextual” frames. When writing, the students should be utilizing sources with strong reputations among scholars in their fields. However, they must critically engage with these sources—not merely summarize or agree with everything. Teaching faculty work with students to develop this habit by working to learn about and evaluate appropriate sources for various types of theological scholarship, as well as by emphasizing the importance of giving proper credit for information used.

Much leeway is given to teaching faculty to determine the best way to develop this habit within their students. Because of changes in the structure of the seminary’s library instruction opportunities, it has increasingly fallen to professors, instead of librarians, to discuss the different types of sources available, how to access them, and how to evaluate them. Previously, librarians conducted the typical sort of “one-shot” instruction sessions with newly-enrolled students, during which students would learn about the different types of resources available in the library and how to access them. The determination was made, however, that this fits more appropriately within the scope of work for teaching faculty, as it is a skill which must be honed. A single session during the first week of a student’s seminary career, while better than nothing, is not sufficient. For example, several professors are in the habit of using class time to bring students to the library for tours of the collection. Professors use this time to show students how they (the professors) conduct their own research, which often results in explanations of various library resources related to the students’ coursework. Sometimes these tours are conducted jointly with a librarian.

The second habit is the “reflective discovery of resources.” Students demonstrate this habit by employing several of the knowledge practices within the *Framework’s* “Research as Inquiry” frame:

- Formulate questions for research based on information gaps or on reexamination of existing, possibly conflicting information
- Determine an appropriate scope of investigation
- Use various research methods, based on need, circumstance, and type of inquiry
- Organize information in meaningful ways

- Synthesize ideas gathered from multiple sources

Librarians work with students to develop this habit during their *Leadership in an Anabaptist Perspective* (LEAP) coursework.²² During instruction sessions and workshops, librarians teach students about the various discovery tools available to them. This is done through exercises in which students are given sets of questions and some basic guidance about where they might find answers. Librarians work with students to nudge them in more informative directions as the students try to work their way through the library's information resources.

As students encounter resources on their journey to answer these questions, librarians help them follow the string of scholarship backwards, demonstrating the process of information creation through the scholarly conversation. Additional time is spent working with students helping them to recognize cognitive bias—do they gravitate towards sources from their own traditions because the sources align with what the students believe, or are they open to different ways of viewing and understanding the world?

The third habit in the new information literacy policy is the “ethical use of information.” Since the seminary's librarians serve in an additional capacity as the writing staff, it naturally falls to them to work with students to help them learn about ethical issues related to information use. Again, librarians lay the groundwork for this habit during the LEAP coursework. Goals for these sessions are to help students recognize the various forms of plagiarism (and thereby avoid them), as well as to teach them to cite sources properly. Much of this workshop centers around an activity where students are given various essays to read. These essays are intentionally filled with various examples of plagiarism: in one essay, it might be as simple as some missing citations. In another, there are passages which are copied directly from source material, without any indication that it is anything but the author's own work. Librarians ask students to work through these essays in groups and to make note of the places where plagiarism is present. The idea being that if students can recognize plagiarism in another's work, they should be able to avoid it in their own. As students move forward in their seminary career, librarians continue to utilize their additional roles in writing support to work with students on the ethical use of information.

Assessing Information Literacy Habits

When a student reaches the point in his or her academic studies to be considered for admission to the Master of Divinity program, or advancement to candidacy for one of the Master of Arts programs, librarians solicit the submission of a

research paper from the student. Students are advised that this is a requirement for their admission or advancement and are given some guidance on what to submit.

Librarians are not asking students to write an entirely new paper. Instead, students are asked to submit a research paper that they wrote and submitted for one of their classes. They are asked to think of papers which required a decent amount of research, as this gives librarians a more accurate picture to evaluate. Librarians then advise students that this evaluation does not concern the content of the paper or writing ability of the student. Presumably, the teaching faculty member who graded the assignment already gave the student adequate feedback on the content and style. Rather, librarians are assessing the ways the students used and interacted with their sources.

When students have chosen the paper they want assessed, they email the paper to a generic email address; in this case, *writingservices@ambs.edu*. Email messages to this address automatically create a work ticket in the library's writing services work tracking interface, created using the Spiceworks online help desk platform. This system allows librarians to collaborate more efficiently and ensure assessments are completed in a timely manner.

Once the paper has been submitted and the work ticket created, a librarian will "claim" the ticket and begin the assessment. The assessment is completed using a basic rubric (Appendix 9C) which closely follows the *Information Literacy Policy* and *Information Literacy Scaffolding* documents. Each of the three information literacy habits receives its own evaluation, based on the work the student has done in the paper.

For the first habit (the critical assessment of resources' relative value and authority), librarians consider three criteria. First, do the paper's sources have solid reputations among scholars? What types of sources are these and are they considered to be reputable? If not, does the student have an appropriate and legitimate reason for utilizing them? Second, does the student critically engage with the chosen sources, or does the paper merely summarize or agree with them? Some summary and agreement is to be expected, but librarians are looking to see if the students take the next step in their engagement and use the sources to inform and formulate their own ideas. Finally, does the student discuss the relationships between various sources, comparing how they are related and contrasting how they disagree? If the student has used a disreputable source, do they discuss the source's appropriateness in spite of this?

For the second habit (the reflective discovery of resources), an additional three criteria are considered. First, does the student utilize a variety of sources in appropriate formats? Librarians have found many students tend to find one or two sources with which they agree, or which they find summarize key points of

their argument well, and then lean heavily on those sources.²³ Second, is the student utilizing scholarly resources available to them through the library, or are they relying entirely on materials they already have on their bookshelf at home? While utilizing materials they own is not necessarily problematic, avoiding engagement with additional scholarly resources available through the library can represent a sort of intellectual laziness, rather than the stated goal of a habit of intentional and reflective discovery of information. Third, the sources are considered for their perspective. Specifically, do the sources come from a variety of perspectives or do they all tend to say the same thing?

For the third information literacy habit (ethical use of information), librarians consider the following criteria. First, does the paper properly credit its sources for the use of ideas? Many students, especially those from different cultural backgrounds like J., find it difficult to grasp the idea of citing ideas (and not just direct quotations). Second, are the citations formatted properly? Third, does the paper paraphrase its sources in an acceptable way? Does the student concisely and accurately describe the main idea in the source material or is the source's idea misrepresented? Finally, is the student's choice of information to use appropriate to the context of the paper?

After the librarian reads the student's submitted paper with these criteria in mind, the librarian gives the paper a score of *yes*, *no*, or *partial* for each criterion. A student whose paper shows adequate evidence of all criteria receives a *yes* score for each, and this information is then passed on to the registrar and the student's academic advisor for use when considering the student's petition for admission to the Master of Divinity program or advancement to candidacy in the Master of Arts programs.

When a student's paper receives a *no* or *partial* score, the evaluating librarian provides additional information about what exactly was missing and how the student can go about correcting it in the future. Again, this information is then passed on to the registrar and the student's academic advisor for use when considering the student's petition for admission to the Master of Divinity program or advancement to candidacy in the Master of Arts programs.

To be clear, a paper receiving several *no* or *partial* scores will not, on its own, be enough to deny a student advancement or admission. They could serve as an additional piece of evidence in the faculty's decision not to admit or advance a particular student, but the ultimate goal of this process is not to make it harder for students to advance in their careers. Rather, the goal is to identify shortcomings in students' information literacy habits with enough time to address them before it is time to graduate.

Upon submitting an evaluation which was determined to fall short of the librarians' expectations for the students' information literacy habits, librarians

are in the habit of reaching out to the student directly to discuss the results of the evaluation. Often, this is done with the intention of offering students additional counsel as they move forward in their academic careers.

As an example of how this looks in practice, consider the story of S., as recounted by Director of Library Services Karl Stutzman:

S. was finishing her first year of coursework at AMBS. Because she intended to study toward the Master of Divinity degree, S. needed to apply for formal admission to the program after her first year of study. S.'s work would be reviewed by the teaching faculty, who would assess whether S. had the capabilities needed to complete the program. S. was taking courses online and through on-campus intensives. In addition to her coursework, S. had a full-time job and significant responsibilities in her local congregation. Plus, S. struggled because her first language wasn't English. S. was not able to utilize the information literacy instruction she was given in one of her intensive courses; she continued to have trouble finding library resources and applying the formal requirements of the citation style used at AMBS. Because S. came to AMBS after the implementation of the new information literacy policy, her information literacy assessment was part of her process of applying to continue studying toward the Master of Divinity. The librarian evaluated S.'s research assignment and discovered it did not meet the information literacy criteria set out in the new rubric; the librarian also identified the remediation areas S. needed to work on. After reporting these results to S. and her faculty advisor, the librarian set up a videoconference to work with S. on research skills and citation formatting. After S. found additional resources and installed Zotero software on her computer, she felt more confident completing upcoming assignments in her AMBS courses. "I'm so glad for this opportunity," she said. "I really needed help with this." After the consultation, S. also felt comfortable approaching the library staff for further research and writing assistance, ensuring that she would be more likely to succeed academically in the Master of Divinity program.²⁴

Moving Forward

While not perfect, the steps taken at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary represent an important leap forward in the way it is teaching and assessing information literacy among its students. Moving information literacy assessment into the earlier part of a student's time at the seminary has allowed librarians and

teaching faculty to identify deficiencies with enough time to address them—and this is not insignificant.

However, there are still questions to work through. First, at the moment, the information literacy assessment is tied to a research paper. On one hand, this is ideal, as it allows librarians to quickly and easily identify the resources a student is using and to evaluate how the student is interacting with those resources. However, there are other types of assignments that require students to interact with library resources and that could be considered evidence of a student's information literacy. For example, a student utilizing the library's collection of biblical commentaries as part of sermon preparation should demonstrate many of the same information literacy habits as a student writing a research paper. However, depending on the student's preaching style, that student may not end up with the entire text of the sermon in written form, ready to submit to the library for evaluation. But is this student's scholarship less valuable, or less valid, merely because of a difference in format? Just because a problem is difficult to solve does not mean it is not worth solving. More careful work must be done to consider the types of work students are doing at the seminary, in addition to research papers, and make accommodations to allow these as evidence for information literacy.

Additionally, there is desire on the parts of both librarians and teaching faculty to see the partnership fleshed out more fully. Currently, much of the information literacy assessment is in the hands of librarians, while the teaching faculty handles much of the instruction. This chapter has detailed some of the ways this works and the reasons behind the decisions to structure it this way. Moving forward, this partnership between librarians and teaching faculty needs to become more collaborative, with librarians more significantly involved in instruction and teaching faculty taking a more active role in assessment.

Conclusion

This chapter has detailed a significant change made to the *Information Literacy Policy* document at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary. Whereas the original information literacy policy required students to demonstrate their information literacy prior to graduation, the new policy moves the assessment timetable forward significantly. The intention of this move is to allow librarians and faculty to identify gaps in students' information literacy with sufficient time to address them.

In the initial year of evaluations under the new policy, feedback has generally been positive. Students have expressed their appreciation for the librarians'

feedback, which often has a different tone and focus than the feedback they receive from their professors. Professors have expressed their appreciation as well. Many times, the feedback students receive from librarians echoes things the faculty have been working on, but faculty find it helpful to have additional independent voices, whose expertise differs from that of their own, offering feedback that nonetheless aligns with their own.

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Notes

1. The association mentioned here gave the organization its original name: *Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries*. This name was officially changed to *Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary* in 2012, almost 20 years after the founding seminaries merged into a single entity. For more on the history of the organization, see Karl Stutzman, “Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (Elkhart, Indiana, USA),” *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online* (March 2019), [https://gameo.org/index.php?title=Anabaptist_Mennonite_Biblical_Seminary_\(Elkhart,_Indiana,_USA\)&oldid=163778](https://gameo.org/index.php?title=Anabaptist_Mennonite_Biblical_Seminary_(Elkhart,_Indiana,_USA)&oldid=163778).
2. Stutzman.
3. That is, younger students moving into Master’s programs immediately after finishing undergraduate work.
4. Eileen K. Saner, “Library Orientation in a New Era: A Transition in Progress, Continuing the Conversation,” 274, <https://slideplayer.com/slide/5294755/>.
5. Saner, 275.
6. Saner, 275.
7. Saner, 275.
8. Saner, 275.
9. Saner, 275–6.
10. Not his real name.
11. Karl Stutzman, email message to author, March 22, 2019.
12. ATS, *Standards of Accreditation*, 4.2.1.
13. Douglas L. Gragg, “Charting a Course for Information Literacy in Theological Education,” *American Theological Library Association Summary of Proceedings* 58 (2004): 52.
14. ACRL, *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education* (Chicago: American Library Association, 2000).
15. ACRL, *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* (Chicago: American Library Association, 2016).
16. Stutzman, personal communication.
17. Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, *2018–19 Academic Catalog* (Elkhart, IN: Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, 2018), 14. Unfortunately, revision to the information literacy policy occurred too late to be included in the 2018–19 Academic Catalog.
18. Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, *2018–19 Academic Catalog*.
19. Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, *2018–19 Academic Catalog*, 28.

20. Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, *2018–19 Academic Catalog*, 14–15.
21. William Badke, “DIKTUON: The Framework for Information Literacy and Theological Education: Introduction to the ACRL Framework,” *Theological Librarianship* 9, no. 2 (2015): 6.
22. Taking place every August before the beginning of the fall semester, the academic catalog officially describes LEAP as “a required hybrid course that orients students to theological studies, the formation of the learning community, opportunities for personal assessment, the nature of missional leadership, and exploration of sustaining spiritual practices.” Unofficially, it serves as a sort of week-long credit-bearing orientation session for new students.
23. This is especially obvious when a paper’s footnotes consist almost entirely of *ibid.*
24. Stutzman, email message to author, March 22, 2019.

Appendix 9A: Information Literacy Policy

Information Literacy Policy

Revision for Academic Policies and Procedures Manual, effective 2018-19
Theological scholarship, reflection, and research require particular habits with regard to information use. AMBS students and faculty should practice these information literacy habits: 1

- Critical assessment of resources' relative value and authority
- Reflective discovery of resources
- Ethical use of information

The AMBS Library teaches these information literacy habits to all new students, using the Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education from the Association of College and Research Libraries' as a reference point and toolkit. Teaching faculty collaborate with librarians to build and assess information literacy throughout the curriculum. Demonstration of information literacy is required for admission to the Master of Divinity program and advancement to candidacy in Master of Arts programs.

Particular educational goals in each degree program have a special resonance for ongoing development of information literacy habits. These include:

- MDiv: Graduates demonstrate personal integrity and authority in ministry
- MATPS: Graduates analyze theological and biblical foundations of peace and justice, considering Anabaptist perspectives
- MACF: Graduates reflect critically, contextually, and constructively on the theological content and practices of their specialized ministries

(Approved by Teaching Faculty, December 2017)

1. ATS Standard 4.2.1 explicitly references information literacy as a responsibility of the library. This policy accounts for the expectations of this standard and references elements of ATS Standard 3 on the Theological Curriculum. <https://www.ats.edu/accrediting/standards-and-notations>
2. <https://www.ats.edu/accrediting/standards-and-notations> 2 http://www.ala.org/acrUsites/ala.org/acrl/files/content/issues/infolit/Framework_ILHE.pdf

Appendix 9B: Information Literacy Scaffolding

Information Literacy Scaffolding

Context	Frames	AMBS IL habit	Content	Responsibility
Research Reading & Writing	Information has value	Critical assessment of resources' relative value and authority	evaluation of appropriate sources, citations	Course instructor
Leadership in Anabaptist Perspective (LEAP) - library assignment and workshop	Research as inquiry	Reflective discovery of resources (reinforce Critical assessment of resources' relative value and authority	Discovery tools, following threads of research process, cognitive bias, tradition source come from a source "authority"	Librarians
Leadership in an Anabaptist Perspective (LEAP) - writing workshop	Scholarship as conversation	Ethical use of information	Activity on plagiarism, paraphrasing, and citation style	Writing staff
Advancement to candidacy (MA) or Admission to program (MDiv)	N/A	All 3 habits	Assessment of academic work	The expectation is that this happens in core courses (list specifically) by the professor in that course. If students do not follow sequence, need to negotiate assessment with professor.

Appendix 9C: Information Literacy Assessment Rubric

Information Literacy Assessment Rubric

This is to be incorporated in assessment in courses that have an information literacy component. If there are deficiencies that require remediation, library and writing services staff are available to work directly with the student.

Habit	Evidence Checklist	Demonstrates (Yes/No/Partial)	If no/partial, describe deficiency to be addressed
Critical assessment of resources's relative value and authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Sources have solid reputation among scholars – Critical engagement with sources - not just agreement – Comparison/contrast of sources or discussion of appropriateness 		
Reflective discovery of resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Variety of sources in appropriate formats – Sources selected from library resources and especially scholarly resources – Sources from varied perspectives 		
Ethical use of information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – All sources attributed properly – Proper citation formatting – Acceptable paraphrases – Information used in context 		

Karl Stutzman, March 2018