



# Global Projects Preparation: Infusing Information Literacy into Project-Based Curricula at Worcester Polytechnic Institute

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## Abstract

Librarians work with administrators and faculty of the Interdisciplinary & Global Studies Division (IGSD) to ensure that students are prepared for real-world off-site projects.

Information literacy (IL) skills carry over from the academic setting to professional and personal life. At WPI these skills become practice with the real-world projects undergraduate students perform as part of their degree requirements.

## Background

All WPI undergraduates are required to complete significant project experiences and one is an Interactive Qualifying Project (IQP) equivalent in credit to three courses. The IQP is an interdisciplinary team project that helps students understand how science and technology impact society.

The majority of students choose to complete their projects at a wide variety of Project Centers around the United States and the world at locations such as Washington, D.C., South Africa, and Thailand.

Prior to the teams' off-site experiences, students enroll in a seven-week Research Methods course (ID2050) during which librarians teach students information literacy skills and meet with teams. Librarians partner with IGSD faculty to embed online tutorials and in-person team consultations into the course requirements.

## Objectives of Partnership

**Librarians partner with faculty to embed information literacy tutorials & research consultations into course requirements**

**Students & faculty input helps to assess inclusion of information literacy skills**

## Assessment of Student Information Literacy Skills

In 2006-2007 ninety-five students responded to a poll added as a survey in their online course site near the end of the ID2050 course term, a response rate of 38%. These anonymous responses were collected, collated, and summarized by the librarians who work with the IQP students.

- **96% of the students agreed or strongly agreed that the research consultation with the librarian improved their ability to perform research for their project.**

- Sixty-three percent agreed or strongly agreed that the Research Circuit online tutorial improved their ability to perform research for the IQP project; however, 13% did not feel that the online tutorial helped them improve their skills.

## Faculty Feedback and Perceptions of Student Performance

When responding to the question "**What information literacy skills do you feel your students are still lacking after completing their projects?**" faculty commented that improvements could be made in the following areas:

- creating better annotated bibliographies (not just copying the existing abstract), preparing more accurate APA citations
- better integration of multiple types of resources into their bibliographies.
- in thinking more broadly about their project topic which "may influence their search strategies."
- in synthesizing literature for their background chapter

## Impact

Student self-evaluations indicate that librarian involvement enhanced their development of information literacy skills .

## Future Directions

Project teams working on campus do not get the same level of instruction from librarians, so outreach to reach more teams is underway. Librarians will also work with faculty to help create rubric to assess background chapters of project reports.



## References

--. (2004) Learning Outcomes of the Interactive Qualifying Project. [www.wpi.edu/Academics/Depts/IGSD/outcomes.html](http://www.wpi.edu/Academics/Depts/IGSD/outcomes.html)

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