

# Scholarship, practice and leadership in higher education

[Business](#), [Leadership](#)



From a pragmatic point of view, what higher education demands in the current context of the Information Age and the globalized, digital economy is a vision of improvement and change; that is, a vision for moving forward, a vision which discerns mistakes and more importantly, addresses them. It is important to note that teaching and learning are processes; fundamental modes of human behavior and endeavor.

With the increasing demand for higher education across countries, and as new technology applications emerge, most of administrators, faculty, and students embrace a new educational infrastructure; one which is built upon information technology. While this is true, it is also true that the digital divide is widening. This is to say that children from the lowest strata of society have less access to computers, the Worldwide Web, and new information resources in their schools than the wealthy. Such realities create future problems for these children because of the fact that most careers nowadays require information technology skills.

Within this context, this paper seeks to explicate how information literacy influences, shapes and moulds scholarship, practice, and leadership in higher education. It is important to note that there are a number of definitions of information literacy but most of these definitions are derived from the definition provided by the American Library Association (ALA) Presidential Committee on Information Literacy (1989): 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 (p. ) As far as higher education is concerned, information literacy then should not be

viewed as discipline specific, but the other way around; a position argued by Diane Zabel in her article entitled " A Reaction to Information Literacy and Higher Education. " " It is imperative that information literacy not stand in isolation but be integrated across the curriculum" (Zabel, 2004). It can be observed that the demands of the current global and digital economy require more collaboration and concerted efforts.

If we are to comply with such demands, the direction that our institutions of higher education should take, in terms of their instruction and research should be leaning towards multi-disciplinary, participatory and collaborative approaches. " For information literacy to succeed, it must be integrated, relevant, ongoing, collaborative, and applied" (Zabel, 2004). Such ideas resonate even in Sean Lauer and Carrie Yodanis' article entitled, " The International Social Survey Programme: A Tool for Teaching with an International Perspective. " Lauer's and Yodanis' focus is, however, on the teaching of sociology in the undergraduate curriculum. Over the years that we have used ISSP in the classroom, we have found that it does contribute to a learning environment in which students' sociological questions and answers are not limited to their own country but are cross-national" (Lauer et al, 2004). The current global and digital economy has implications not only in terms of instruction and research, but also on the concept of leadership. In as far as the current market paradigm is concerned, corporate business activities also tend to put premium on teamwork, collaborations, and collective strength in terms of leadership.

In the current global and digital economy, the idea is for an individual to be capable of multi-tasking and networking; faculty members who do not only teach but also do research, practicing nurses who do not only do clinical duty but also do research, sociologists working side by side with medical practitioners, etc. In the final analysis, information literacy is a very important life-skill that an individual should possess in order to cope up with the demands of the globalized and digital economy.