

# The Transformer:

## *Education through Transformation!*

A Newsletter for Students by Students of The Graduate School of Education, University of Massachusetts, Lowell Spring 2004

### Message from the Dean

After a long winter intersession, I look forward to the return of students and start of classes on January 28. Our new location on the fifth floor of O'Leary Library is proving to be a comfortable haven during this harsh New England winter. The warm, clean offices and classrooms are certainly conducive to work and study. I invite more students to take advantage of any opportunities you might have to study here, before or after class or on weekends. One constraint, however, is that we have access to the building only when the library is open. You can check library hours by calling 978-934-4550.

Enrollment for the spring semester has been brisk, as we welcome a considerable number of "career changers." The greater interest in education careers seems only partly motivated by the economy, as more people decide they want to pursue a long delayed desire to teach.

Several faculty changes have taken place in the past month. Dr. Phelan has retired but will continue to teach part-time. Dr. Gibson has been appointed Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Services but will also continue to teach one course. Dr. Greenwood has been elected chair of the faculty, a three-year term, to replace Dr. Phelan. And Dr. Laura O'Dwyer has been appointed Assistant Professor of Education for Leadership in Schooling, effective September 1, 2004.

Searches for new faculty in math and science education as well as leadership in schooling are in progress.

Best wishes for an enjoyable and productive spring.

Donald E. Pierson, Dean

### Spring 2004 ID Schedule

Please note: the location to obtain student ID's has changed. ID's are now obtained in the basement of Southwick Hall on North Campus (In the cafeteria, near the mail room). To obtain a student identification, you'll need a copy of your class schedule and a picture ID.

For the Spring, ID's can be obtained during the following hours:

Monday 11am – 5pm

Tuesday 10am – 5pm

Wednesday 11am – 5pm

Thursday 10am – 5pm

Friday 9am – 12:30pm

### Parking Permits/Decals

If you need a parking permit for your car please go to the following web address and fill out the appropriate form: <http://parking.uml.edu> After 12:00 noon on the following business day you can pick up your decal at the Parking Bureau in Ball Hall 218 - UML North. Be sure to bring your automobile registration and your UML ID card (or a copy of your Spring'04 semester class schedule) with you when you pick up your decal. You only need to apply for a decal if you are a new student or are parking a new vehicle on campus. Existing UML parking decals (the rectangular ones) are good for your entire stay at UML. Please remember to follow all parking regulations. One regulation to be particularly aware of is that "students are NEVER considered visitors to either campus. Please do not park in these spots or you will be ticketed and/or towed".

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## Ode to Perspectives & Vision

By Elise Manley Frangos

With apologies to Clement Clarke Moore

"Twas the night before Xmas all through the house,  
Not a thinker was stirring, not even John Rawls.  
We've covered those Idealists, Platonists,  
Kantians who used categorical imperatives to make us feel blue.  
Phillippa Foot engaged him in battle;  
His cattle-like thinking, on him she did tattle.  
We wrestled postmodernist, constructionist,  
moralist men,  
They rode through our minds with their flashes  
of pen, Sensations of Hume, Sizer, St.  
Augustine, and Rawls, Phantasms of ethics,  
their idea onward crawls,  
So now as we wait for the fat man in red;  
We'll ponder great minds, most or many are dead.  
They live on in our papers, cited clear APA,  
To be read by Doc Simmons, so often called,  
"Jay."  
On Plato! On Ari! On Hook and Husserl! (We  
waited so long for a hint of a girl.)  
Yay! Wollstonecraft hinted at co-education,  
Freire stressed learning as freedom from all  
subjugation.  
Mill greeted us with his utilitarian yore,  
Spinoza blew past us, (that interminable bore!).  
In Derridian language I'm waxing obtuse,  
Those men, their ideas, in our heads live  
profuse.  
We worked really hard at Boot's Factory Mill,  
Which was followed by Neill's cool freeform  
school, Summerhill.  
And all of these memories flood back as it  
snows,  
We have someone to thank as we're seated in  
rows.  
He dealt with us distant and close to his face;  
when it all grew so daunting, he slowed down  
the pace.  
PowerPoints posted and study groups met;  
He sent out those rubrics, - changed deadlines  
he set.  
Read papers, revisions and journals galore;  
Most of this stuff was most likely a snore!  
But through all of the pages of thought and  
connection,

He kept plugging on, forcing depth and  
reflection.

So papers turn in, and order your beer,  
Let's give him applause that in Fitchburg they'll  
hear!

P & V with Doc Simmons has come to an end,  
No longer Professor, now philosopher-friend.  
The impact will widen both here and away,  
For the teachings of thinkers do touch us each  
day.

*Elise Manley Frangos was a student in Dr. Simmons' Perspectives & Vision class in Fall 2003. She is in the Doctoral Program in Language and Literacy. Her research and teaching interests are in the areas of whole school literacy initiatives, re-culturization of schools, teacher-leadership, writing improvement, and reading strategies for struggling adolescents. She is currently the English Chair in Arlington grades 6-12, where she teaches Advanced Placement English and works on curriculum articulation with ELA staff centered on Essential Questions and Common Assessments.*

### Thanks!

Thanks to GSOE faculty, staff and students who helped Judy Davidson mark her 50th birthday last September by joining the celebration and contributing to the Central Asia Institute. Over \$7,000 was raised which builds 50% of a school in Olding, a village in the mountains of Northern Pakistan. Thanks to everyone who donated to the cause!

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### Want to Write for The Transformer?

You can submit articles to us at  
[thetransformer@uml.edu](mailto:thetransformer@uml.edu).

## Graduate Student Organization (GSO) News

The Graduate School of Education Graduate Student Organization continues to lead the way with various new initiatives that are open to all Graduate School of Education students.

**Announcements and Communications:** Part of the GSO's mission is to help keep open lines of communication between all members of the Graduate School of Education. The GSO has a Bulletin Board in the lobby (by the mailboxes) on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor of O'Leary library. Important announcements are posted there. The GSO officers also have mailboxes in the hallway of 5<sup>th</sup> floor of O'Leary. Please feel free to contact us at any time with comments, feedback, suggestions or ideas.

### GSO Website and Marketing Flyer:

The GSO now has our own website. We will be posting important updates and announcements on the site on a regular basis. The website address is: <http://gse.uml.edu/gse/gso.htm>

The GSO is also working on a marketing flyer to help promote the activities that we do. Look for the flyer on the website and on the bulletin board in the Spring.

**Getting involved with the GSO!** GSO officer elections will be held in April. If you are interested in becoming involved in the GSOE Graduate Student Organization please contact Carolyn Siccama at [csiccama@rcn.com](mailto:csiccama@rcn.com).

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## GSOE Alumni Publishes Book

Phyllis A. Gimbel, a 2001 graduate of the UMASS Lowell doctoral program in Leadership in Schooling, recently published a book which emanated from her doctoral dissertation. The Foreword is written by Dr. Milli Pierce, Director, Harvard University Principal's Center.

The concise book, *Solutions for Promoting Principal-Teacher Trust*, published by ScarecrowEducation, is a quick read for busy

practitioners. Phyllis' book serves as a resource for current and aspiring principals, other school administrators, and teachers who want to know how to develop and maintain collaborative relationships between staff and principals. In an age of accountability, change is often mandated. School leaders cannot effect change without enlisting belief in their leadership. This book offers school administrators an opportunity to gain insight into principal and teacher perspectives on what particular behaviors are most effective in promoting trust.

With three easy-to-read tables summarizing the meaning of trust in schools, the most commonly identified principal and teacher trust-building behaviors, and a list of suggested trust enhancers for principals, the solutions proposed here can be a way for overworked administrators to gather practical information quickly. This resource offers school leaders a chance to focus their leadership on building and maintaining faculty trust early in their tenure, paving the path for school improvement. Phyllis' book is available online at [scarecroweducation.com](http://scarecroweducation.com).

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## Awards Day 2004 - May 1

On May 1, the Graduate School of Education and the Graduate Student Organization are sponsoring an Awards Day & Celebration. There will be two short presentations and an awards ceremony, followed by lunch. A portion of the event will be held in the new Graduate School of Education space on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor of O'Leary Library. Mark your calendars. Look for more details to follow, including postings on campus.

## Who's Who at the Graduate School of Education

An Interview with Dr. Joyce Gibson

This issue spotlights Dr. Joyce Gibson, a professor in the Graduate School of Education and newly appointed UML Associate Vice Chancellor in Academic Affairs for Academic Services.

Dr. Gibson earned her doctorate from the University of Florida in educational administration, and minored in cultural anthropology. Her academic interests are in leadership with a special interest in how leaders behave in difficult and changing times. Additionally, the topics of: women in leadership, equity, cultural diversity in schools and the community, and community involvement in education are of great interest and intrigue to Dr. Gibson.

Since 1992, UMASS Lowell has been honored to have Dr. Gibson grace its halls and buildings. Although UMASS Lowell was her first official full-time teaching position, she had been teaching in a community setting, consulting organizations, and working as a trainer in many different settings within higher education. "I am happy to say that I am a much better teacher than I was then, thanks to my colleagues and my husband, who is an excellent teacher."

Over the past four years she has taught two required courses: Diversity in the Classroom from the Graduate Program in Teaching, and Change and Conflict, from the Leadership in Schooling Program. However, if you are now looking forward to take a course with Dr. Gibson, it will prove to be more difficult. Since being appointed to her new position, she will only be teaching one course in the fall 2004 semester.

"A big change for me has been my appointment as Associate Vice Chancellor in Academic Affairs for Academic Services. I applied for the position because I have had an itch to get back into administration for some

time, and this was a chance to work on a much broader scale at the university."

In reference to Dr. Gibson's most recent projects outside the UMASS classroom, she has been focusing on grant writing for the Center for Family, Work and Community, where she was the Co-Director. Currently, they are working on another partnership proposal with staff from Lowell High School.

If that were not enough, she recently co-chaired an interdisciplinary group of faculty with Professor John MacDougall of the Regional, Economic, and Social Development (RESO) department to create a certificate program in Peace and Conflict Resolution studies. They have completed their research, have approval from RESO and the College of Arts and Humanities, and will be submitting it to the graduate policy committee for approval in the spring. We wish them good luck.

In the following section, we take a more personal look at our faculty as they answer a few "favorites" questions:

### Dr. Gibson's Favorites:

**Food:** home made dishes; I enjoy cooking, and especially trying new dishes from Gourmet magazine

**Ice Cream:** cookies and cream

**Book:** mysteries, books on spirituality, and biographies

**Outdoor Activity:** walking or bicycling

**Hobby:** reading, growing plants (I have over 80 in my house)

Her quote of the day is: "An act of love that fails is just as much a part of the divine life as an act of love that succeeds; for love is measured by its own fullness, not by its reception." Harold Loukes.

Her proudest accomplishment: Cultivating loving, and strong family relationships with my husband, adult children, and with my good friends.

Her proudest professional accomplishment: Her work with doctoral students on their dissertations. "It involves close

working relationships where faculty and student learn from each other, adjust to each other's styles, and wade into unknown waters in pursuit of knowledge to benefit others. My richest experiences have come from the work with my colleagues and students on doctoral committees."

When asked if she'd like us to know something else about her: she told us that she is a grandmother! Christina is 2 years and 2 months, and Rolando is 2 years and 7 months, and she is as "nutty" about them as she can be. "I used to think grandparents were a little crazy, always showing pictures of grandchildren and making a fuss about them. Well, I have joined that crowd now and couldn't be happier."

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you again Dr. Gibson for inviting us into your world and sharing part of your story with us. We appreciate and commend your dedication and look forward to seeing those pictures of Christina and Rolando.

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## Math & Science Colloquium: April 1, 2004

The Ninth Annual Colloquium on Research in Mathematics and Science Education will take place on Thursday, April 1, 2004, 3:30 –6:30, South Campus, O'Leary Library, (61 Wilder Street) in Conference Room 222.

The keynote speaker, **Andee Rubin**, is a director of the NSF funded project **VISOR** at TERC. Her presentation, ***What is Statistical Reasoning and How Does it Develop***, will focus on the study of the development of middle and high school teachers and their students' reasoning about data, especially when using new statistical visualization tools. The project explores different perspectives on peoples' understanding of associations between variables and the effect of the use of software on those perspectives.

Concurrent sessions will be focused on

- Collaborative concept mapping and its effect on achievement in science education
- Qualitative mathematics perspective
- Superintendent thinking about teacher technology integration

To register for the colloquium:

**E-mail** to: Regina\_Panasuk@uml.edu or  
**Call**: 978.934.4616 or 978.934.4601 or  
**Fax**: 978.934.3005

*Please respond by March 10, 2004*

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## GSOE Papers, Presentations & Publications

Thanks for reading our new column. We hope you like it. We believe that the hard work of GSOE faculty, staff, students and alumni should be publicized and celebrated among peers. If you have written a paper, book, article, book review or have gotten a paper accepted at a conference or conducted other scholarly work, please send the details and information along to us and we will list it in this column. All information can be submitted to **thetransformer@uml.edu** for possible publication in a future edition of The Transformer.

### Paper Presentations by UML GSOE Graduate Students

**Frank Andrews**: "The Stock-Trac Investment Simulation", will be presented to a joint conference of the Academy of Business Education and Financial Education Association on April 22-23, 2004 in Mystic CT.

**Charmaine Hickey**: "A Study of Second-Career Pre-Service Teachers' Perceptions of Teaching and School Organization", will be presented at the New England Educational Research Organization, April 21-23 in Portsmouth, NH.

*Technology in Education*, 36 (2), 33p.  
Spring, 2004.

**Sharyn Gallagher:** "The Course Graphic in Finance", will be presented to a joint conference of the Academy of Business Education and Financial Education Association on April 22-23, 2004 in Mystic CT.

**Carolyn Siccama:** "Decisions college faculty make in planning asynchronous online college courses", will be presented at the New England Educational Research Organization, April 21-23 in Portsmouth, NH.

**Mary Clisbee**, presented at the Strategies in Qualitative Research Conference at the University of London in May, 2003. Mary presented her paper entitled "Using Nvivo for Literature Analysis". The conference was sponsored by SDG Associates and the developers of QSR Nvivo in conjunction with the University of London.

**Melissa Juchniewicz**, presented a workshop at the New England Faculty Development Consortium's Fall Conference (<http://www.nefdc.org>) on November 14, 2003. Melissa's workshop was entitled "Teaching in Community". As a Professor of English and Literature at Northern Essex Community College, Melissa has taken part in the Teaching in Community Project, based on Parker J. Palmer's book, *The Courage To Teach*. In 2003, Melissa was co-facilitator of the project at Northern Essex and, through her presentation, encouraged other institutions to explore this professional development model.

#### Publications by UML GSOE Faculty, Students & Alumni

Bruenjes, L. S., Siccama, C. J., LeBaron, J. (2003). Internet2. In H. Bidgoli (Ed.), *The Internet Encyclopedia*. Indianapolis, IN: Wiley.

Moloney, J., Dion, S., Hickey, C., Siccama, C. (2003). Transforming graduate students into leaders through service learning. (Submitted for publication).

Shuldman, M. (2004) Superintendent conceptions of institutional conditions that impact teacher technology integration. *Journal of Research on*

Lebaron, J, Miller, D. The potential of jigsaw role-playing to promote the social construction of knowledge in an online graduate education course. (Will appear in a forthcoming issue of the Teachers College Record, Columbia University).  
[http://gse.uml.edu/lebaron/RP-fnl.embedAA\\_020922.pdf](http://gse.uml.edu/lebaron/RP-fnl.embedAA_020922.pdf)

Lebaron, J, Miller, D. The teacher as "agent provocateur": Strategies to promote community in online course settings. (Will appear as a chapter in a book to be published at the University of Oulu in Finland for a European Union audience).  
[http://gse.uml.edu/lebaron/Oulu-TAPfinal\\_030922.pdf](http://gse.uml.edu/lebaron/Oulu-TAPfinal_030922.pdf)

Moloney, J. & Tello, S. (In Press). Achieving Quality and Scale in Online Education through Transformative Assessment: A Case Study. *Elements of Quality in Online Education*. John Bourne and Janet Moore, (Eds.). Sloan-C and the Sloan Center for Online Education. (16 pp).

Freedman, S., Tello, S. & Lewis, D. (2003). Strategies for Improving Instructor Student Communication in Online Education. *Virtual Education: Cases in Learning & Teaching Technologies*, Fawzi Albalooshi, (Ed.). IRM Press. 156-168.

Moloney, J. & Tello, S. (2003). Principles for Building Success in Online Education. *Syllabus Magazine*, v16, 7, 14-17.

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### Spring 2004 Library Hours

Monday – Thursday 7:30am – midnight

Friday 7:30 am – 5:00pm

Saturday 10:00am – 6:00pm

Sunday 1:00pm – midnight

Website: <http://library.uml.edu>

## New IRB Guidelines

The University of Massachusetts Lowell Institutional Review Board (IRB) has revised their requirements as of September 29, 2003. For any information regarding the new requirements please review the IRB website at: <http://irb.uml.edu>

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## Helping teachers and students through Donorschoose.org

It is simple, yet powerful. **Donorschoose** is an organization aimed to help teachers and students in the classroom. Currently, the program is set up in the New York City region. Given the success of the program, it is slowly expanding nationally. Their expansion schedule is full for the next year. Donorschoose works as follows:

A classroom teacher needs supplies, books or any type of classroom resources to assist with their teaching, but they do not have the financial resources to purchase such supplies. The teacher writes and submits a proposal to Donorschoose. The staff of Donorschoose verifies the proposal and costs out the price of requested materials. If accepted, the proposal is posted on the Donorschoose website. "Citizen-philanthropists", as Donorschoose calls them, can then browse the proposals and donate to a specific proposal. The proposals can be searched by discipline, by grade or by amount.

Once a proposal is fully funded, the staff of Donorschoose purchases the supplies and sends them to the teacher. To accompany the requested supplies, the teacher receives a camera to take pictures and stationary to write thank you notes. The donor then receives thank

you's and photos of the children using their new supplies.

Special thanks to Judy Davidson who introduced us to Donorschoose. For more information visit their website at <http://www.donorschoose.org>

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## RESO Offers New Graduate Certificate

The Department of Regional Economic and Social Development (RESO), our neighbors in O'Leary Library, will offer a new graduate certificate (pending approval) beginning in the Summer of 2004. The Graduate Certificate in Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies will require a total of 5 courses. There are 3 required courses including Conflict Resolution; Analyzing Peace, Violence and War; and a field experience. Examples of electives are Community Organization and Change, and Psychology of Diversity. This certificate is certainly suitable for those of us in education who want expertise and skills in understanding conflict and achieving conflict resolution. For more information contact Prof. John MacDougall at 978-934-4303, [John\\_MacDougall@uml.edu](mailto:John_MacDougall@uml.edu).

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## Student Mailboxes

Attention: Initial Certification (IC) students! Do you know you have a student mailbox at the Graduate School of Education? You can use these boxes, located near the GSOED main office on the 5<sup>th</sup> Floor of O'Leary to communicate with your professors and with each other. There are also mailboxes for the GSO officers and this semester's Teaching Assistants.

Other students may use their personal e-mail accounts, or activate their UML student e-mail account (go to <http://postoffice.uml.edu/>).

## **Rocco Perla & Dr. Carifio Win Award for Paper**

Rocco Perla and Dr. James Carifio's collaborative and interdisciplinary co-authored paper entitled "The Nature of Scientific Revolutions From the Vantage Point of Chaos Theory: Toward a Model of Scientific Change" won the 2003 Distinguished Paper Award for the annual conference of the Eastern Educational Research Association (EERA) that was held in Hilton Head, South Carolina in Spring 2003.

Mr. Perla and Dr. Carifio will be presented this award at a luncheon at the coming EERA conference in Clearwater, Florida in February 2004. Their paper will be presented again as an invited paper at the American Educational Research Association's (AERA) annual national conference in April in San Diego, California, where they will also receive an award from this research organization for this paper and work. The paper, which has sparked much interest in the science education community, was most recently an invited presentation at the bi-annual International History, Philosophy and Science Teaching conference held in Winnipeg, Canada last July, and it is being published in the conference proceedings.

Mr. Perla is an epidemiologist at Health Alliance Hospitals and adjunct professor at Mount Wachusett Community College. He is an advanced doctoral student in the Mathematics and Science Education Program in the Graduate School of Education at GSOE. Dr. Carifio is a professor of cognitive psychology and education in GSOE.

The award winning paper has been accepted for publication by the International Journal of Science and Education. It is the first of three papers Mr. Perla and Dr. Carifio have co-authored on this topic in the past year. The second and third papers, which focus in detail on a number of the major points raised in the first paper, will be presented at the upcoming EERA conference in Spring 2004 and have been submitted for publication prior to the conference because of the importance of this topic.

The nature of scientific change involves resolving a number of very difficult issues and problems about the nature of science, scientific theory, and knowledge as well as the factors and dynamics that bring about scientific change. Understanding and having a formal model of the nature of scientific change is important in a globally competitive society that is driven by scientific discovery, change and the applications of discoveries and changes rapidly in the market place. Further, teaching the nature of scientific knowledge and change is now a core objective in the science education reforms that have been mandated at the state and federal level and having formal models of these phenomena will facilitate both teaching and achieving these new critical mandated goals.

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## **Math and Science Doctoral Program Reception**

Do you want to earn a doctorate in Math or Science Education? The Math and Science Education Doctoral program is seeking highly motivated individuals who want to improve their teaching skills and learn more about pedagogy, psychology, and content. Want to find out more? Attend a reception on February 12th at 6:30 p.m. in O'Leary 528. All Math and Science Education faculty, and current and prospective students will participate. Refreshments will be served. If you want to attend, send an e-mail to Dr. Regina Panasuk at Regina\_Panasuk@uml.edu.

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## **Qualitative Research Network Holds Meeting**

Judy Davidson is the Graduate School of Education representative on the Steering Committee for the Cross-Campus Qualitative Research Network (QRN). The first Spring 2004 meeting will take place on February 11th, at noon in McGauvran 410. All are welcome to hear Eduardo Siqueira from the Work Environment Department who will present his dissertation work, "Dependent Convergence: The Struggle to Control Petrochemical Hazards in Brazil and the United States" which has just been published as a book. Lunch will be served.

## Leadership in Schooling Ed.D. Program Note

The course Research Planning, 05.710, will be offered in Fall 2004 and Spring 2005 (not summer 2004). Those students who wish to start their second comprehensive examination preparation may do so independently during the summer (not as a directed study) or may wait until the fall.

## Food for Thought

Good news and reminders for those who need energy before class or during break. The Broadway and Wilder Café in McGauvran, (which can be reached from outdoors or from inside by using the "catwalk" from O'Leary) is open until 6:30 p.m. Recently they made a change in their menu and are now serving Green Mountain Coffees.

Additionally, the dining hall (to the left as you enter the building to go to the bookstore) is open until 6:30 p.m., serves full meals, and is very economical.

Vending machines are available for those taking classes in Coburn Hall. Water, soda and snack machines are located in the basement of Coburn. We are also pleased to mention that the Graduate Student Organization, with the support of Dean Pierson, is working with UML administration to explore the possibilities of installing "healthy food" vending machines on the 5th Floor of O'Leary. Updates on this initiative will be provided as the details emerge.

## Industrial History Center Experience Opportunity

Teacher's aides are needed at Tsongas Industrial History Center. Do you love hands-on learning and working with youth? Would you enjoy working with park rangers and professional museum teachers? If you are looking for career experience or would like to resume your career in education, volunteering as a part-time museum teacher's aide at the Tsongas

Industrial History Center could be for you. As a teacher's aide, you will receive training, work side-by-side with professional park rangers and museum teachers, helping give innovative, hands-on school programs. The Tsongas Center, located in the Boott Cotton Mills Museum, is a partnership of the University of Massachusetts Lowell and Lowell National Historical Park. For more information and complete description of volunteer jobs and contact information, please visit: <http://www.uml.edu/tsongas/volunteer.htm>

**Next Comprehensive Examination Scheduled For:**

**Saturday, July 10, 2004**

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# The Literature Review

By Sharyn H. Gallagher, MBA, PMP

For many doctoral students, the dissertation is an intimidating requirement. It is the final requirement in the degree program and entails considerable effort to complete. It is the most significant piece of research and writing that many of us will ever do in our careers. This article attempts to demystify one piece of the dissertation, the literature review. The following summary is based primarily on McMillan and Schumacher (2001) and Pyrczak (1999).

## Literature Review: What is it?

A Literature Review (LR) is a summary of research and articles for a particular research area. Typically, it is included in the beginning of the dissertation but sometimes can be a standalone section. It enables the researcher to outline the relevant work that has been done already that contributes to the body of knowledge being investigated. It provides a framework for critiquing previous work and outlining areas for further study on a research problem. It helps build a case for the argument and allows the researcher to compare or contrast what has been learned in the past.

Many faculty have personal preferences about how a literature review is done so be sure to meet with your dissertation chair and committee to understand their expectations. Most departments at UML have a Dissertation Guide that will also provide useful information for successfully completing this requirement.

Depending on your study, you may wish to focus on literature produced in the previous 5-10 years. Since technology evolves and has an impact on teaching and learning and since populations change over time, studies that were done much earlier than this time frame may no longer be relevant. However, some significant studies may have been done long ago that are relevant to your topic.

In addition to providing background knowledge to the researcher, an LR can be useful in a number of ways. An LR may help the researcher to articulate the significance of the problem being researched. It may help to refine the problem statement and research design to focus it on a specific issue and to identify the research hypothesis. As the researcher reviews other documentation, s/he may discover that some problems have been already studied in great detail and other areas have not; in reading other studies, s/he may also discover nuances to the findings that lead to new ideas for study. It will prevent unintentional replication of work already done.

In a quantitative study, the LR tends to be done before the formal study begins. In a qualitative study, the LR goes on throughout the data collection period of the research as very often the problem statement evolves as the study is conducted. Thus, materials that are relevant will change as the problem evolves.

LR typically has three sections to it: an introduction, criticism of literature and summary. The introduction outlines the purpose and scope of the review. The criticism section discusses the strengths and weaknesses of existing studies. The summary identifies any gaps in the knowledge and relates the current study to the prior ones.

## Literature Review: The Search Process

The key steps in the process of composing a literature review are the following. First, a topic is selected and a problem statement drafted. Then a search of various databases and indices is conducted. Through the search, secondary and primary sources are identified for further review. The secondary and primary sources are read and details organized. Last, the review is written.

Secondary literature synthesizes prior work and provides an overview of the research published already on a topic. It may include articles reviewing the research of others or those in reference books (like encyclopedias or textbooks.) Primary literature is the original research findings and writings by the researcher or theorist. It can be quite detailed, lengthy and more technical than secondary literature.

### Database Search Process

UMass Lowell (UML) subscribes to a number of periodicals (online and in print) and database search sites such as ERIC. It may be helpful to meet with a librarian to discuss your research topic and possible sites that might be most useful to search. This is an area that has been made much easier with the use of computerized databases and the Internet. By doing computerized searches, the student can read many abstracts of studies that may even help define or refine the topic of interest. Roseanna Kowalewski is UML's Education and Social Science Librarian. Every graduate student can get access to the UML Library web page and online resources.

The doctoral dissertation is a time to explore a topic of interest to the student. A well-done literature review will help the writer frame the issues being studied. It will also be a springboard for advancing the topic another step and adding more to the body of knowledge.

### References

McMillan, J.H. & Schumacher, S. (2001). Literature review. In *Research in education: a conceptual introduction* (pp.108-140). New York: Addison Wesley Longman, Inc.

Pyrczak, F. (1999). *Evaluating Research in Journals* (pp.31-45). Los Angeles: Pyrczak Publishing.

*Sharyn Gallagher is on UML's faculty for the College of Management. She is currently pursuing her doctorate in Leadership in the Graduate School of Education.*

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## Graduate Research Grants Available!

Don't forget that GSO students may apply for graduate research grants to support their research efforts. The next deadline for submission is March 21, 2004 (there is a spring and a fall deadline). Go online to retrieve an application at <http://www.uml.edu/gsa>. Click on "Apply for a Graduate Research Grant Award (GRGA)" and print the form. There is a \$1000 per student per degree program limit on awards.

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## Ask Us or Contact Us

**The Transformer** is a collaborative project originally begun by five Doctoral students who were members of the *Leadership in Higher Education* course in Spring 2002. You may contact us by e-mailing [thetransformer@uml.edu](mailto:thetransformer@uml.edu).