

Information literacy, libraries and students' experience of learning in HE: Review of research literature.

Project supported by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) in conjunction with the Society of College, National and University Libraries (SCONUL)

Project duration:

January-June 2006

Funding

£24,500 from HEA

Investigators:

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For news on the project: go to:
<http://infolit-review.blogspot.com>



Objectives of the review.

To inform practitioners, policy makers and researchers in UK Higher Education (HE) by illuminating key concepts, evidence and issues concerned with information literacy in students' experience of learning in HE. This will include a focus on approaches to teaching and support of information literacy, and on the impact of information literacy and libraries as regards the student learning experience. This will be done by addressing review questions, currently formulated as follows:

- Review Question 1: What concepts and models of information literacy are currently in the HE discourse and applied in practice in HE?
- Review Question 2: What are the key trends in students' and academics' behaviour with information resources?
- Review Question 3: What, if any, is the evidence for a link between information literacy and approaches to learning?
- Review Question 4: What pedagogical approaches are being adopted in the teaching and support of information literacy, including e-learning?
- Review Question 5: What evidence is there that the pedagogical approaches identified in RQ4 are successful in their impact on the student experience?
- Review Question 6: What is the available research evidence of the impact of libraries on the student learning experience?

The overall approach will be based on systematic review. However, since this review addresses a number of review questions, some of them wide ranging in themselves, and since the time period available for the review is limited to six months, it will not be feasible to review each question systematically. The six questions will be approached in differing ways, depending on the nature of the literature and the centrality of the question to the overall scope of the project.

In terms of "information" and "use of information" we focus on information to which the library facilitates access. In terms of librarians' use of ICT, we focus on its use for teaching information literacy, and for supporting development of information literacy. We have used the term "information literacy" in this document since this is now widely accepted. However, we are aware that other terms have been used to identify this concept in the literature and a full range of synonyms will be used in searching.

Outcomes of the review

- A final report.
- An annotated, indexed database of key literature, including grey literature, with electronic and print output.
- Dissemination of the findings of the review to the national and international information literacy community, and the wider HE community.

Roles and management

The project is managed from the University of Sheffield. A part time Research Assistant will have a coordinating role for documentation, provide day to day support and take a key role in searching, selecting, keywording and extracting data. Team members will collaborate in drawing up and developing the review protocol, and will each take a lead with a particular review question. An Advisory Group, chaired by Sheila Webber, will provide advice and feedback on issues to do with the review questions, the review protocol, quality control and review outcomes. They will also help in identifying potential items for the review (particularly grey literature and international material).

A virtual forum will be established, so that the team members outside Sheffield, and the Advisory Group, can be readily involved in debate, and have easy access to core documents and bulletins. The International members of the Advisory Group will contribute in virtual mode (only) throughout the project.

Advisory Group

Mr Andrew Booth, Director of Information Resources & Reader in Evidence Based Information Practice, School of Health and Related Research (ScHARR), University of Sheffield, UK.

Dr Christine Bruce, Associate Professor and Director of Teaching and Learning, Faculty of Information Technology, Queensland University of Technology, Australia.

Professor Barbara Fister, Academic Librarian, Gustavus Adolphus College, USA.

Ms Hilary Johnson, Director of Information Resources & Services, The University of Northampton, UK (representing **SCONUL**).

Professor Heidi Julien, School of Library and Information Studies, University of Alberta, Canada.

Dr Liz McDowell, Director, Centre for Excellence in Teaching & Learning in Assessment for Learning, Northumbria University, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK.

Dr Anne Morris, Reader in Information Processing, Department of Information Science, University of Loughborough, UK (representing the **Higher Education Academy**).

Ms Gill Needham, Head of Strategic and Service Development, The Open University Library, UK.

Ms Judith Peacock, Information Literacy Co-ordinator, Queensland University of Technology, Australia.

Mr Ola Pilerot, Deputy Head Librarian, Skövde University Library, Sweden.

A Centre for Inquiry-Based Learning in the Arts and Social Sciences Student Ambassador (tba).

Team members

Ms Sheila Webber, Senior Lecturer, Department of Information Studies, University of Sheffield. In 2005 Sheila has been invited to speak on information literacy in Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands, Australia, France and Canada. She is co-recipient of an AHRC award investigating UK academics' conceptions of, and pedagogy for, information literacy. As well having led two funded research projects, she has extensive management experience from her work in the British Library. She has taught information searching and strategy for 25 years. She coordinates and teaches on modules on information literacy and information literacy research.

Professor Sheila Corral, Head of the Library and Information Management Research Group, Department of Information Studies, University of Sheffield. Sheila was instrumental in setting up the original SCONUL Information Skills Task Force and led the Expert Group which produced the CILIP Defini-

tion of Information Literacy. She was invited to give keynote addresses on information literacy at several events during 2005, including the inaugural Librarians' Annual Information Literacy Conference.

Dr Philippa Levy, Academic Director, Centre for Inquiry-based Learning in the Arts and Social Sciences and Senior Lecturer, Department of Information Studies, University of Sheffield. Philippa has long-standing interests in networked learning and information specialists' educational roles in the networked environment, including the use of ICT in pedagogical approaches to information literacy teaching/support. She has recently co-edited a book entitled *Developing the New Learning Environment: the changing role of the academic librarian* (Facet, 2005).

Mr Bill Johnston, Senior Lecturer, Centre for Academic Practice and Learning Enhancement, University of Strathclyde. Bill researches problems of progression, integration and diversification of student academic, social and career development. He has a particular research interest in information literacy and is joint recipient with Webber of an AHRC grant to research UK Academics' Conceptions of, and Pedagogy for, Information Literacy. He developed and teaches a credit-bearing elective Information Literacy, offered to level 2/3 undergraduates (the first to be offered in the UK) and has recently provided academic consultancy on an *Information Literacy and Study Skills* project commissioned by Learning and Teaching Scotland.

Sharon Markless, King's College London and Information Management Associates

David Streatfield: Information Management Associates

Sharon and David have conducted research together for almost twenty years, much of it focused on education libraries. Their early work concentrated on the development of information skills; from there they moved into a wider consideration of the role of education libraries in supporting teaching and learning: developing models to help school librarians to become more effective. Their research has been funded by the lead UK library and information funding bodies. Their recent work for the Department for Education and Skills involved designing school library self-evaluation tools and support materials for primary and Secondary schools. This work drew heavily on their strategic research review of the benefits of library use in schools prepared for the DfES and on their own research. The tools are also intended to help build up a national evidence-base for school libraries. The two sets of tools and accompanying support materials were published by the DfES and distributed to 36,000 schools in 2004. Their academic library research and development work has focused on the Impact Implementation Programme (sponsored by LIRG and SCONUL). This programme involves teams of university library staff working through a three phase annual cycle conducting action research into aspects of service impact evaluation. (See *Library and Information Research* Spring 2005, whole issue.)

Hosting organisation: University of Sheffield

The work will be led from within the Department of Information Studies, but will also involve the new Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning: CILASS (Centre for Inquiry Based Learning in the Arts and Social Sciences). Information Literacy and networked learning are two key elements of CILASS' strategy to enhance student learning.

The **Department of Information Studies** is a 5*A research department, having received the highest rating possible in each of the Research Assessment exercises. The Department has an international reputation for research into information literacy, information behaviour and networked learning/learner support. Relevant research includes a 3-year project (2002-5) awarded to Webber and Johnston by the Arts and Humanities Research Council investigating UK academics' conceptions of, and pedagogy for, information literacy. The Department is committed to research-led teaching, and has *Educational Informatics* and *Information Literacy Research* modules available to students on its Masters programmes.

£4.5 million was awarded to the University of Sheffield in 2005, as part of the HEFCE CETLs initiative, to establish **CILASS** (Centre for Inquiry-based Learning in the Arts and Social Sciences). CILASS will promote collaborative, inquiry-based learning/teaching strategies that integrate a discipline sensitive focus on information literacy development with imaginative approaches to ICT-enhanced learning. A Learning Development and Research Associate specialising in information literacy, working full time in CILASS, has just been appointed and is due to start work by November 2005.

10 November 2005