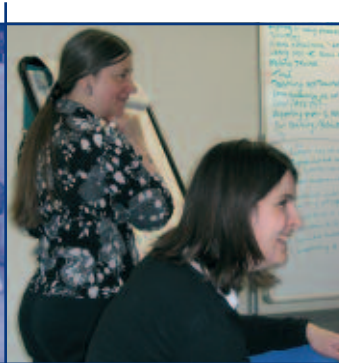
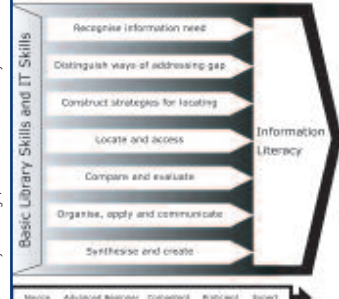


Information Literacy



SCONUL Seven Pillars Model for Information Literacy
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This briefing paper reports on the Information Literacy strand of CILASS activities. Information literacy is “knowing when and why you need information, where to find it, and how to evaluate, use and communicate it in an ethical manner” (CILIP 2004).

Information literacy is fundamentally related to inquiry-based learning (IBL) in that the “higher order” information literacy capabilities, including critical evaluation, synthesis and communication of information, in addition to knowledge of relevant information resources and skills in information searching, are essential for effective inquiry. A key model that is used at the University is the SCONUL ‘Seven Pillars’ of Information Literacy, see diagram (above, top left).

Establishing a community for information literacy

The Information Literacy Network was established in 2005, with the aim of supporting the development of the CILASS Information Literacy strand and providing a framework for a new partnership in the University of Sheffield between librarians, academic information scientists and educational developers/researchers. The group is chaired by Professor Sheila Corrall, the current Head of Department of Information Studies and coordinated by CILASS.

Impact evaluation indicates that the Information Literacy Network has proved to be a particularly good example of boundary spanning staff partnership activity, and demonstrates the value of such partnership at institutional level (and beyond). It is developing as a highly proactive group that is making a strong contribution to progress on objectives related to the CETL’s Information Literacy strand. Individual Network members also act as advocates for information literacy and its connection with inquiry-based learning within a wide range of formal and informal contexts.

The group has run a number of successful staff development events and taken part in external dissemination opportunities including

- Lunchtime session on the theme of the information literacy issues surrounding use of social networking sites such as Facebook.
- IBL Café events on information literacy themes e.g. ‘Assessing information literacy’ and ‘Embedding information literacy in the curriculum’.
- “Information literacy: essential skills for learning through inquiry”, workshop at the LTEA Conference, Manchester, June 2006.
- “Is number 5 alive? What does the ‘Information Literate Graduate’ mean to our students” workshop at the University of Sheffield Learning and Teaching Conference 2008 in conjunction with the Student Ambassador Network.



- The Information Literacy Network has had a strong presence at LILAC: Librarian’s Information Literacy Conference for the last three years with IBL themed workshops, papers and posters.

A number of activities are planned for the future including the co-ordination of a student-led film project, dissemination activities including a multi authored book and extending activity with members of academic staff.

Information literacy strategy

Information literacy is of strategic importance at the University of Sheffield. The Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (LTAS) 2005-2010

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was directly informed by the work of the development group for the CILASS bid to HEFCE in 2004. In particular, the work of the group fed into the conceptualisation of 'the Sheffield Graduate' and into explicit articulation of the University's commitment to both IBL and information literacy development across all programmes of study.

The Information Literacy Network has supported strategic development at departmental level through its own activities. The group ran a series of awareness workshops during 2005-6 and 2006-7 aimed at helping departments with strategic planning for embedded information literacy development in relation to their Departmental LTAS. This resulted in knock-on developments in a number of departments. This strand of the Network's activity is being taken forward with the benefit of increased collaboration with Learning and Teaching Services (LeTS). Initiatives that are indicative of a strategic approach include staff-focused projects such as department-wide audits of IBL and information literacy activity.

"As a result of attending the information literacy session we've developed a concerted departmental info literacy strategy, which has involved setting up targeted activities within modules and working much more closely with library staff. This has started to address longstanding concerns about the development of independent learning skills within the Department"
(Academic staff, 2006-7).

Information literacy through inquiry

A number of CILASS curriculum development projects have focused on developing students' information literacy through inquiry-based methods

- Department of Psychology: the PEBBLE (Psychology Enquiry-based Learning) project. Two Level One modules were developed, one addressing concerns that students may have poor information evaluation skills and may lack a well rounded conception of the study of Psychology. The second addressed the development of information literacy searching and synthesis skills in the context of Psychological statistical research methods.

The information literacy activities were very useful in teaching them information literacy skills. In the feedback the students were very clear that they felt much more confident using the Web of Knowledge (Psychology Project Leader)

- School of English: IBL grant project "Information Literacy in Core Modules". This project involved the creation of small collaborative tasks in a number of core Level One and Level Two modules supported through the seminar programme that involved students in structured inquiry-based interactions with information resources that are key to the successful study of the subject.

I found the research tasks encouraged me to seek out further texts than those supplied on the reading list by providing me with new formats to searching for texts (Student in the School of English)

Very helpful, it was good to work in a group as we could help each other with the tasks, it made the assessment seem less daunting (Student in the School of English)

Extremely useful. What I learned will be used for the remainder of my degree (Student in the School of English)

- Department of Journalism Studies: "Enhancing Information Literacy". This project aimed to enhance the information gathering and evaluation skills that are essential to the profession through the development of an information portal to support student inquiry.
- Department of Information Studies: Scholarship of Teaching and Learning project. Sheila Webber and students on the BSc Information Management programme are exploring the nature of information and information behaviour in the virtual world Second Life. She is also working with other educators and Librarians to develop 3D models of information literacy in Second Life.

Partnership with the Library

In addition to working with the Library through the Information Literacy Network, CILASS invited the Library to run two development projects under the CILASS departmental funding strand. The first project "SEIL: Student Engagement with Information Literacy" successfully developed information literacy support for students and staff through the CILASS Liaison Librarian, online resource lists, copyright advice and development of online information literacy tutorials. The second project "Developing a Library Community for IBL" featured an extensive IBL development programme for Academic Liaison Librarians drawing on expertise in the CILASS community of academics, students and colleagues in LeTS.

"It's changed a lot about the way I deliver to young students, I can see a whole path way here of doing things differently." (Librarian)

References:

CILIP: Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals. (2004) *Definition of information literacy*
<http://www.cilip.org.uk/policyadvocacy/informationliteracy/definition/default.htm>

SCONUL (Society of College National and University Libraries) (2008) *The Seven Pillars of Information Literacy*
http://www.sconul.ac.uk/groups/information_literacy/seven_pillars.html



Centre for Inquiry-based Learning in the Arts and Social Sciences (CILASS)

Information Commons, 44 Leavygreave Road, Sheffield S3 7RD

Phone: 0114 222 5270 Fax: 0114 222 5279 Website: www.shef.ac.uk/cilass/home.html

