

Can't I just google?

In 2009 La Trobe is implementing a new common first year curriculum in health sciences. The library is supporting the curriculum renewal process in a variety of innovative ways. We are currently developing responses to the critical issues of embedding academic literacy with other faculties. We will demonstrate the learning objects, learning designs and other materials created to support academic staff and independent student learning for research skills in the first years. The initial results of the extensive evaluation process will be available and plans for future embedding of information literacy in the curriculum will be outlined.

Information literacy is a vital ability to enable empowered, participative citizens in the knowledge society. Information literacy has been defined as 'knowing when and why you need information, where to find it, and how to evaluate, use and communicate it in an ethical manner'. The library has a sound and comprehensive information literacy policy and framework. Our task is to ensure the students have an opportunity to grow as “knowing, doing and being” information literate citizens able to fully participate in the knowledge society. This will be achieved as part of a wider University curriculum renewal program.

As Webber and Johnston (2003) suggest there is no easy solution to creating an information literate society. We are not seeking easy answers but exploring and evaluating on the evidence a variety of strategies, responses and initiatives through the Building Blocks project. Ideally La Trobe is becoming more “aware of developments, evaluating, and seeing opportunities for knowledge creation, extension and wisdom”.

Nuts and bolts session outline:

Overview of the Building Blocks Project : Embedding Research/Inquiry (information literacy) graduate capabilities into the curriculum.

The main focus of this Nuts and Bolts session is on the library involvement in the introduction of the enquiry based learning model in the Health Sciences faculty.

Key features of the Building Blocks project:

Link to project website <http://www.lib.latrobe.edu.au/building-blocks/>

The four strands of the project are:

1. Strategy.

La Trobe University Library has a clear, strong and comprehensive Information literacy policy and framework. This framework is currently enacted in a wide variety of ways across the university. Depending on the subject, faculty and campus at student attends there are widely differing experiences. One of the aims of the project is to develop a strategy to ensure high quality and consistent experiences across the university, across

faculties, and campuses. Ideally we are working towards an embedded model of research/inquiry skills development.

2. Action research/evaluation of the Library Common First Year in Health Sciences

The curriculum model of enquiry based learning in Health Sciences lends itself well to a truly embedded model of Information literacy Two major forms of embedding were undertaken:

One: embedding the explicit teaching and assessment of research/enquiry skills in the curriculum. The faculty adopted a constructively aligned curriculum approach (Biggs and Tang) and information literacy or research/inquiry skills were explicitly taught as part of the enquiry based learning approach. As the curriculum was re-designed to offer common subject to all 1700 first year students the common subjects ensured all students undertook and were assessed for information literacy skills in two particular subjects.

Two: information literacy tutorials embedded in the learning management system/. These modules were designed to be readily available on the web, and also linked from the LMS. They were also identified by lectures in classes and in the LMS and a quiz worth 5% of the marks was part of the assessment.

http://latrobe.libguides.com/health_sci

The evaluation plan for this model is designed to include quantitative and qualitative data in order to gain a more complete picture of stakeholders' experiences. It includes collection of the following data:

1. Data to determine the level of scholarly literacy of incoming first year students
2. Data to assess the impact of online information literacy modules on student skills and graduate attributes development
3. Data on use of the Library and its resources during 2009 - by this cohort
4. Qualitative data from key stakeholders on the organizational, institutional and learning processes

3. Reusable Learning objects

Design, discovery and delivery of a variety of reusable learning objects. The intention is to develop and implement a number of learning objects. The learning objects will range from a redesigned use friendly interface for accessing existing webpages and library guides to creation of new IL specific widgets to redevelopment of complete generic information literacy tutorials.

4. Prototype of faculty involvement: Science Technology and Engineering.

Exploring useful ways of library involvement in developing academic skills including information literacy in first year 'cornerstone' subjects in the Faculty of Science, Technology and Engineering- this may include re-development of existing learning objects or modes of instruction; involvement in the design of constructively

aligned curriculum; participation in a foundation studies/scaffolding program or other models.

Activities:

Distribute the pre-experience questionnaire and encourage participants to complete the 'knowledge' questions.

Discuss results for students (and for participants) to date.

Address issues relating to the survey-gender, web 2.0, vocabulary etc,

View and discussion of efficacy of the Health Sciences information literacy modules.

Discussion of learning objects and sharing of learning objects.

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