Information literacy and academic writing: Intertwined processes, integrated services

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Information Literacy Landscape

Secker & Coonan, 2011. A New Curriculum for Information Literacy (p.6)
Outline

• *The student research process: Intertwined processes*

• *Student challenges*

• *Designing support for student learning*

• *Integrated support: The writing centre at UiB*

• *A sustainable model*

• *Value*
The student research process: Intertwined processes

Writing «for thinking» (Dysthe)
Mindmapping, brainstorming
Annotated bibliography
Identifying key issues

Choice of topic
Defining research question
Reading, data collection
Draft writing
Rewriting and editing
Closure

Pre-focus exploration
(Kuhlthau, 2004, Kuhlthau et al., 2008)

Uncertainty, confusion
(Kuhlthau, 2004, Dysthe, 2006)
Student challenges

- Defining / narrowing down a research question
- Dealing with large amounts of available sources, what/how to read
- Using terminology
- Evaluating information analytically and critically
- Using the information read in the context of one’s research question
- Structuring the text
- Expressing own views
- Constructing and supporting arguments - using sources
- Summarising or paraphrasing others’ thoughts and views acceptably
- Drawing conclusions
- Documenting sources

Designing support for learning

Is information literacy education supporting student learning?
Designing support for learning

Research findings
(Bruce, Limberg, Sundin, Holliday & Rogers, Head & Eisenberg)

Student learning conditioned by conceptions of info seeking.

Educators’ narrow conceptions of IL can limit student learning.

If focus on:
• procedure, tools rather than knowledge content
• info needs and search terms rather than research question formulation
• Discourse emphasises finding sources rather than learning about a topic
Designing support for learning

FROM

• research as fact-finding
• research as locating sources
• surface learning
• instrumental, skill-based definitions of literacy

TO

• scrutinising and analysing
• research as building understanding
• deeper understanding of a topic
• literacy as a culturally situated phenomenon

E.g. Limberg, Lupton, Holliday, Baer, Elmborg, Dysthe, Bean
Intertwined processes in research

- Searching
- Reading
- Writing
Integrated support: The writing centre at UiB
Academic writing and writing centres

Writing across the curriculum (WAC)

• 1970s-1980s and even before
• Response to more public universities
• Writing promotes learning and understanding
• Promotes development of writing centers and composition courses
• Bologna process and the Norwegian Quality Reform

Writing in the disciplines (WID)

• Roots in European university traditions
• 1990s-2000s: part of WAC-movement
• Social-constructivist approach: internalise subject conventions
• Promotes subject specific writing guidance and embedding
Writing centres in Norway

- Tromsø University
- University of Bergen, HUM-library
- Bergen University College
- Stord / Haugesund University College
- Stavanger University Library
- Norwegian University of Science and Technology
- Oslo University Library
- Oslo and Akershus University College
- Norwegian University of Life Sciences
The writing centre at the University of Bergen

- **Pilot**: 2014-2017
- **Humanities library**

**Staffing**
- Writing teachers
- Academic librarians

**Next steps:**
- External evaluation
- Expanding the service to other faculties
The writing centre at the University of Bergen

Activities:

- Individual guidance
- Composition workshops & teaching
- Training tutors
- Research & development
The writing centre at the University of Bergen

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- Collaboration with WS at Bergen U.C.
- Two MA-students
- One PhD-student

- Search & Write tutorial
- Tools for guidance
- Writing in disciplines
Kajsa's & Sandhya's Writing Club - Short version

University of Bergen PhD students Kajsa Parding and Sandhya Tiwari talk about their writing club, and how it has helped them with their thesis work.
Information literacy
- Searching
- Referencing
- Literature evaluation
- Ethical use

Academic writing
- Critical reading
- Thesis development
- Paper structure
- Argumentation
The writing centre at the University of Bergen

Activities:

- Humanities and more
- ca. 100 students
- dialogic guidance

Individual guidance

Composition workshops & teaching

- Open workshops
- ca. 15 integrated classes
- Embedding
- High school outreach

Photos: UBB
Integrated and embedded support

First aid for the reference list
Language and flow

Dialogic guidance
Searching
Evaluating sources

Consultations at the writing centre
Finalising

IL / library instruction

IL / library instruction

Searching
Resources
Topic selection
Research question
Brainstorming

Composition class

Composition
Argumentation
Citation
Writing groups
Feedback

Symposium

Feedback in practice

Improves librarian’s subject knowledge
Working for a sustainable model

✓ Strategic issues

UiB action plan – Attractive learning environments:

To develop library and writing centre services at our learning centres
Working for a sustainable model

✓ Organisational issues
  Responsibility and task sharing
  faculty-based vs. centralised

✓ Staffing issues
  Resource allocation
  Professional development
Value

• For student learning
  – research as **building understanding**
  – deeper understanding of a topic

• For the library and writing centre
  – Better contribution to student academic development, better educators
  – Doing away with disconnects
  – Real partner in education - relevance
Takk!
The difficult thing is to find just what you need, and not thousands of articles about completely irrelevant stuff.

MA student

Sometimes I get desperate when I cannot find any information at all.

MA student

(Torras & Sætre, 2009)
Designing support for learning

«[…] engage in the literacy movement by moving away from instrumental, skill-based definitions of literacy and toward an understanding of literacy as a culturally situated phenomenon […]» (Elmborg, 2006)

«A discourse that [emphasizes] «finding sources» more than «learning about» might limit students’ engagement with information and the process of inquiry» (Holliday and Rogers, 2013)

«librarianship’s paradigm shift from service providers to active educators» (King, 2012)
Intertwined processes in research

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- Reading
- Writing
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