

Variations on the Theme of Information Literacy

**Implementation of Information Literacy into the
First-Year Curriculum at Åbo Akademi University,
Turku, Finland**

Eva Costiander-Huldén, Information specialist

Creating Knowledge 2.6.2016

Åbo Akademi University

- Medium sized university with 800 freshmen every year, three faculties in Åbo (Turku), one i Vasa (Vaasa), Finland
- For many years: a library service presentation during the first week for each faculty, big classes, too much information too early
- Some of the study programmes had short courses for first yar students

First Year Experience

- From the student's perspective
- FYE – to meet the "world of the academy", to gain cultural awareness and build relationships/networks (Staffan Andersson)
- We are too esoteric in our communication!
- We should work together with faculty staff to create and develop a meaningful and holistic introduction to the studies

Academic study skills 5 credits

- A need for a common course, planned together with study advisors and/or faculty teachers for each study programme
- Comprehends study orientation, study techniques, study planning and *information literacy*
- 10 different courses, tailor made for each study programme at ÅAU

Two different approaches

The "traditional", "semi integrated"

- A mixture of activities and assignments on the net (Moodle), tests, grouped in modules + Group meetings
- Ex. *Faculty of Humanities*: 180 students, divided into 20 mixed groups, 5 group meetings, 14 assignments (some of them individual)

- Assignments concerning: self reflections about studies, interview with group supervisors about academic careers, learning styles, time thieves test... etc.
- *Information literacy modules*
 - Study material (videos, ppts)
 - Test (20 random questions)
 - Assignment with searches in databases, reflective answers 1-2 pages, group feedback
 - Options to take part in computer class training

Feedback and lessons learned

- Students: very divided opinions!
 - some of the students had no experience of learning platforms as Moodle, and found it, and the assignments, muzzy (flummiga), as other thought the idea of gathering course material and all the stuff on the same place was very practical

- tests were considered funny by many but unpedagogic by some
- the IL part was mostly positive evaluated

Teachers and librarians:

- small groups created good contacts
- too many assignments -> drop outs, too much administration
- IL tests and assignments worked well
- responsibility must be clear
- could be more problem based
- IL training in classes could be mandatory?

The "embedded approach"

- Implemented in Chemical Engineering, 40 students/8 groups
- A clear goal from the beginning: to produce a report and a poster, presenting a product and components and to learn to work in groups, to get learning/working skills for the future
- Poster competition
- 28 ! assignments, many of them tests
- Including laboratory safety day





Products 2015



The task of the Information specialist

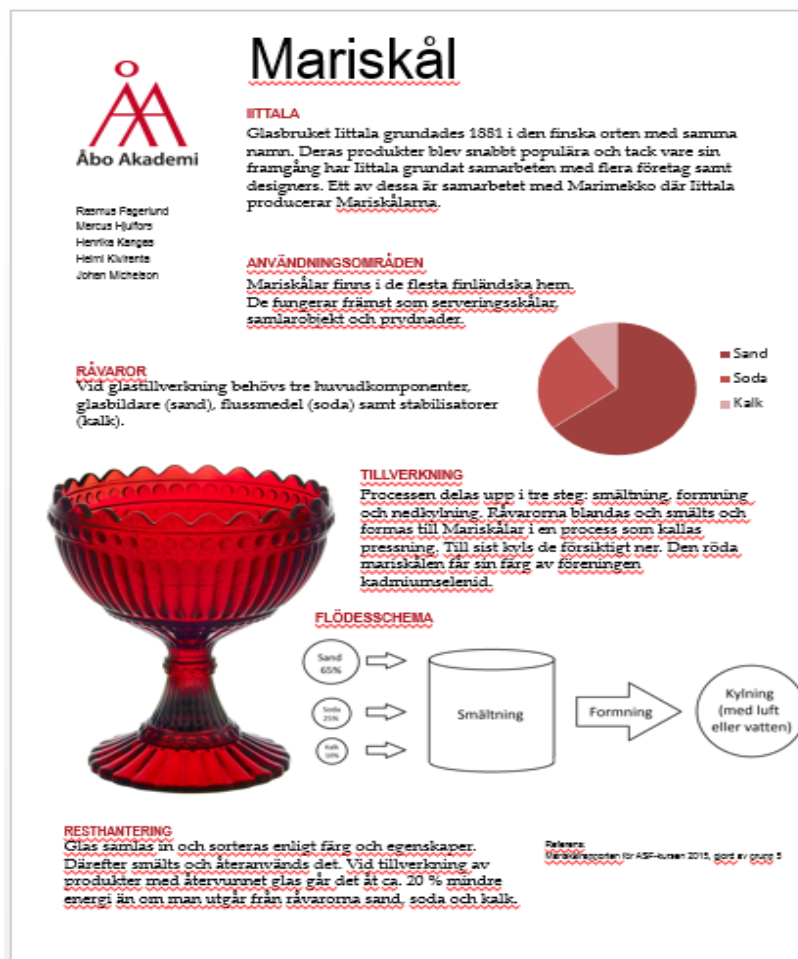
- Takes part in the planning of the course and is a part of the teachers team
- Is also a subject specialist, with a degree in chemical engineering
- Deeply involved in the whole process, available for supervision and takes part in seminars
- Computer class training in information search and evaluation, reference management
- Small groups enables feedback and support, no drop outs

Feedback and lessons learned

- Students:
 - very useful to learn to work "academically", and in the case of IL, to learn to search and referate
 - learning by doing: Moodle, Alma (the library database) and Nelli (library portal for subject databases)
 - to know one's learning style
 - to learn about the product chosen

- Difficulties:
 - To deliver the assignment, to keep deadlines (too many)
 - The use of time, unclear game rules
 - To find relevant information about the product
 - Would be nice to chose the product oneself

Presentations developed to posters



Teachers and the IS:

- fantastic reports with almost correct reference lists
- many types of references, good presentations, good opponents, almost as good as candidate level presentations
- group work doesn't fit everybody
- introduce Harvard earlier
- better game rules for teachers: don't wait with feedback
- less assignments, clear goals for every group meeting

Reflections

- The embedded model: a more constructivistic way to learn, more motivation
- The IS/Librarian is more involved, more planning and demands more time, but is more rewarding and enhances learning
- Creates partnership with the faculty staff
- No drop outs

Next year's products, suggestions made by students

