Preparing University of London Students for Living and Working in the World:
The development of Information Literacy / Critical Information Fluency

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Final Report

July 2019
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1 Background and summary
Some big questions about information literacy:
What particular capabilities in (critically) Identifying, Sourcing, Obtaining, Managing, Using and Citing / Referencing Information do UoLW graduates:
- Have when they graduate?
- Need for what they will do next and beyond?
This report suggests that there is a gap between the answers to these two questions.
That being so:
- How do / could / should we help them develop these information capabilities?
- (How) do / could / should we assess their information capabilities?

Background
This work was undertaken as a CDE project “Integrating Information Literacy”, aiming to successfully integrate (IL) skills into a wide range of international, including undergraduate, programmes.

Sponsorship and Work
Sponsors: Dr Mary Stiasny, PVC (International) and Dr Sandra Tury, AD, UoLW Library Services.
Project staff: CDE Fellows Dr David Baume and Dr Benedetta Cappellini.
Literature on IL has been studied. Surveys and interviews have been undertaken with providers of information Services, and with UoLW Course Leaders. UoLW Course Leaders have also been supported on course design, by the project and by UoL Worldwide Library Services.
The current project concludes with reports and a CDE event to further raise awareness of IL needs.

Summary
The importance of Information Literacy (IL); academic, professional and personal; is suggested. A basic account of Information Literacy, and then a more sophisticated account of what we may call Critical Information Fluency, are offered. Proposals are made on the value of, and possible approaches to:
- Policy for IL, perhaps alongside or included in other policies concerned with, for example, teaching and learning, assessment, QE / QA, graduate attributes, and employability;
- Auditing current IL practice;
- Developing IL;
- Embedding, monitoring and evaluating the implementation of IL.
Some stakeholders are identified.
Case studies are provided, as are some definitions and sources.
Support has been provided to programmes on the implementation of information literacy through work on learning outcomes, learning activities and assessment.

This report
Some sections of this report have been circulated as working papers and various stages. There is therefore occasional repetition.

Acknowledgements
We are grateful to our project sponsors, Dr Mary Stiasny, PVC (International) and Dr Sandra Tury, AD, UoLW Library Services, and to CDE Director Dr Linda Amrane Cooper, for their sustained support, commitment and encouragement; University of London Worldwide programme leaders for
their engagement in the project; and CDE Fellows for generous feedback. Also to participants in workshops about the work; with Sandra Tury, at Supporting Student Success October 2018 and RIDE March 2019, both in London, and the European Distance Education Network, June 2019, in Bruges; and Jane Secker (City University of London) and Katy Woolfenden (University of Manchester), at LILAC, April 2019, in Nottingham.
2 Information Literacy as an Essential Skill for Living and Working in the World

We start from the CILIP (2004) account of IL:
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)

We also note CILIP’s later account (2018):
Information literacy is the ability to think critically and make balanced judgements about any information we find and use. It empowers us as citizens to reach and express informed views and to engage fully with society (CILIP 2018)

These; in perhaps a more active form, that describes doing rather than knowing or thinking; are essential academic, disciplinary, professional and also personal capabilities. These capabilities, sometimes called literacies, take somewhat different forms in different disciplines and professions, as well as having features in common.

These information capabilities link and overlap with, for example, other capabilities and attributes including digital, employability, communication, numeracy, study / learning. Other literacies are considered briefly in Appendix 4.

**Abilities**

Starting from, and building a little on a CILIP’s accounts above, and adding in what we consider to be the crucial skill information management; six main, although of course overlapping, elements of information capability can be identified. These are the abilities critically to:

1. Define and specify the information required – “I need information about …”
2. Identify and source the information required – “I can find this information here …”
3. Obtain / access the information – “I have the information in front of me.”
4. Manage information – “I can readily access my information and references”
5. Use the information for your intended purposes – “These sources … provide ways to make sense of these observations … in these ways … .”

Also, justify information decisions at each stage.

We refer to this as critical information fluency, or as a cluster of information capabilities, not because we are keen to create another term, but rather because we are trying to avoid matters of definition of what is and is not information literacy.

Analysing this list:

1. This can be anywhere from a basic or a high-level academic and professional skill.
2. This is perhaps a more technical activity, though still requiring some judgement and expertise, or access to expertise
3. This is substantially a technical skill, depending heavily on the particular library and database systems to be accessed
4. This is principally a technical skill, although it also requires academic/professional judgement
5. This is at the heart of the practice of the discipline or profession
6. This is again substantially a technical skill, although difficult cases require some judgement

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1 ‘When’ may be less important than it was in 2004, given current methods for locating information.
Justifying information decisions at each stage is a meta-ability, necessary for the practice of high-level information capabilities and for the continuing development of these capabilities. But even at this account is incomplete. It still offers a linear account. It does not capture the dynamic, iterative nature of real information searches. It does not include the vast range of types of search, from “I know exactly what I’m looking for” through to, perhaps, “I have this vague memory…” and “I wonder if there’s anything out there that may help me with this?” Work on a fuller account of necessary information capabilities continues.

**Values and Principles**

Values and principles should inform these capabilities. These include fairness, legality, ethicality, and accuracy; more broadly, good academic and professional practice. Disciplines and professions may have their own associated values and principles.

**Discipline specificity**

The IL activities should be undertaken in ways that are appropriate to the discipline or profession being studied, and to the particular task being undertaken.

**Effectiveness and efficiency**

They should be exercised in ways that are effective and efficient.

**From Information Literacy to Critical Information Fluency**

The idea of literacies in higher education can bring a difficulty. “Literacy” can sound a little low-level, for higher education. It may be considered as just a set of technical skills, however important. We are developing an account of Critical Information Fluency which we hope better represents the necessary information capabilities and actions of students and staff in HE and the world beyond. ‘Critical’ has long been essential in the way we approach information and sources. The more widely available information is, the more important a critical approach becomes. At a minimum, students need to consider the Word Wide Web as a portal rather than as a source. Beyond that, students need both to adopt, and then later to develop, criteria for judging credibility of sources, Emile not adopt critical stances to everything they read. ‘Fluency’ is intended to suggest a certain grace, ease, flexibility; a product of repeated thoughtful practice.

Critical Information Fluency is more than a set of capabilities, more than something that we can do. It is something that we just do. It is part of our academic, professional, academic practice, indeed part of our personal. It is something that we cannot not do.

**A predisposition**

Also important, but harder to define, may be a more diffuse ability and predisposition. This is, perhaps, to scan as well as ts search, without a particular goal or need in mind. An intention to see what is out there that might, perhaps in unexpected ways, be interesting or even useful, now or later. We may feel that this also an important element of information fluency. At least peering over the edge of our silo.
3 Developing Information Literacy, progressing to Critical Information Fluency

Linear and spiral approaches

Broadly, two approaches can be identified to developing students’ Information Literacy and Critical Information Fluency – linear and spiral.

A linear approach typically starts with technical skills – perhaps, from the list under Abilities above, items 2, Identifying and sourcing the information required; 3, obtaining / accessing the information; and 6 - referencing the information. Perhaps once the student had some information to manage, also 4, managing their information. During a programme of study, perhaps in later years, the remaining items – 1, Define and specify the information required; and 6, Use the information – may be introduced, after the core technical skills of obtaining / accessing information, managing it, and proper referencing have been embedded into practice.

Spiral, by contrast, has students undertaking each of these six steps, with steadily increasing complexity, through the programme of study. An advantage of the spiral approach is that students can, from the start other studies, locate the technical IL skills they are developing in the broader context of essential academic and professional skills. They can see why information literacy matters, beyond finding the information specified for particular assignments and avoiding plagiarism.

Combinations of linear and spiral approaches are of course possible.

Progression – repeated small steps

Whether a linear or a spiral approach is adopted, each assignment can require a small advance in information literacy – the requirements to find an additional source, to find an ill-defined source, to find some information without a source being given, to take a critical approach, to compare and contrast what 2 or 3 or more different sources, to specify the kind of information being sought, to rate different sources, to develop and use criteria for rating different sources, to reference using a different style …

Using this model of slow steady progression, of increasing sophistication, throughout the programme, a relatively high level of Information Literacy, indeed Critical Information Fluency, will be attained by the end of the programme, without any individual step being too demanding.

This is a staircase rather than an escalator. The student has to do the work, to climb; with support and guidance at each step. But this continued high-frequency low-intensity attention to the enhancement of Information Literacy and Critical Information Fluency, just as to the enhancement of other academic and professional capabilities and expertise, will show progress being made.
4 UoLW Programme leaders’ perspectives

Summary
- Programme leaders mainly understand the core characteristics of IL
- Programme leaders agree that IL is essential for our students
- Programme leaders agree that more could and should be done, including incorporating IL into programme learning outcomes, assessing IL, and measuring the effectiveness of existing IL initiatives
- There are inconsistencies on IL across programmes with respect to learning outcomes, learning activities, assessment, and consideration of transferable skills
- IL (basic and advanced) is somehow taken for granted in programmes
- Support for improving / developing IL may come too late in programmes
- Support for improving / developing IL might, alas, be seen an ancillary or extracurricular activity, rather than as core

Methodology
Data were collected via semi-structured interviews and questionnaires (see appendix for list of interview’s questions and questionnaire). We recruited 14 respondents consisting of Programme directors, Deputy programme directors, managers and librarians.

Findings – key themes
Considering the limited number responses, findings cannot be analysed statistically. Instead we provide a summary of the key themes emerged from interviews and questionnaires. Quotations from respondents are provide in italics.

1. Defining Information Literacy
There is a common understanding of Basic Information literacy (BIL), which is mainly understood as:

*The ability to find and use information from a range of sources. What immediately springs to mind for me is the ability to effectively utilise online sources, whether this be the internet or databases or other platforms.*

If this definition could be more related to basic information literacy in the world outside higher education, there are also more advanced skills –perhaps Advanced Information Literacy (AIL) – related to HE. For example:

*This means learning the skills associated with finding, using, storing and reporting good quality information from published sources such as journal articles, scientific papers, books and also grey literature such as reports, conference proceedings. This includes knowing how to use databases such as PubMed, to find papers, library tools such as Discover. The storage of this information in a reference management software and knowing how to quote, cite and reference properly and how to avoid plagiarism. The emphasis for me here is on the researching element both as a user and for my students. I believe we have recently introduced Blackboard Collaborate Ultra which is a synchronous conferencing platform used for tutorials in many Universities. This can also be recorded for later playback (asynchronous).*
These two accounts show how IL is linked to other practices: archiving skills and specific writing practices including referencing, citing, paraphrasing and avoiding plagiarism. These accounts clearly show how AIL is essential for equipping students with skills and standards which are essential for HE. There is often an understanding that there might be a need to develop further IL skills, but what needs to be developed and how has not been clearly specified.

2. Promoting Information Literacy

Initiatives to promote IL (BIL and AIL) are varied across the programmes. IL has been included in the following activities/documents:

- Learning outcomes of the programme
- Library support and input
- Learning outcomes of some modules
- Student assignment
- Assessment criteria
- Library support and input
- Extracurricular activities on the VLE

In some programmes basic and advanced information literacy are included in some modules (for example Research methods) or final dissertations.

Project students must take part in the Intermediate Library information skills module (which includes group work, and librarian feedback). Information literacy is vital to our students, and underpins the work they need to do for all assessed assignments and the project.

In others IL seems to be well-embedded across the curriculum: from LOs of the programme to assignments, as well as extracurricular activities on the VLE (usually optional). There are also ad hoc initiatives such as revisiting or introducing new extra-curricular activities and support for students. These are usually organised together with the UoL library. For example:

I am collaborating with Sandra Tury to integrate elements of information literacy into early activities on the core modules of the programme in response to low levels of student satisfaction, competence and competence in using the online library. I will also increase the number of links to valuable resources within UCL.

We have information skills training provided by the library in the form of computer assisted learning modules. A foundation one covering basic information about accessing resources from the library

https://ble.lshtm.ac.uk/pluginfile.php/163391/mod_resource/content/1/lib_found/index.html

We have an intermediate level module for project students specifically around literature searching strategies.

https://ble.lshtm.ac.uk/pluginfile.php/131795/mod_resource/content/1/index.html

We also have a School document on academic writing which covers citation and referencing with other resources accessible via this link https://lshtm.sharepoint.com/Teaching-and-Support/Pages/study-skills-links.aspx

The IT services department also make training for Endnote and Mendeley available via our LSHTM student communities area of Moodle

https://ble.lshtm.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=1401
Interestingly, programmes that have been revalidated recently or are under revalidation, are aiming at including IL more systematically.

We are in the process of updating all of our modules and module specifications. We are developing a new introductory module, Introduction to the study of divinity, for 2019-20 which will incorporate basic information literacy skills. Level 4 modules will provide direct access to the essential and further readings on the module page, but, at levels 5 and 6, students will be provided with a list of sources which are available via the online library, in addition to scanned chapters. They will have an opportunity to develop more advanced information literacy skills in the dissertation module at level 6.

We are in the process of redeveloping the BBA programme and the induction/resource hub will feature specific content to guide students on using databases and navigating specific websites. This is still in the early development stages and will evolve over the next 9 months or so.

3. Evaluating existing Information Literacy

Although we are not aware of any case in which an evaluation of IL has been conducted, respondents are confident that students somehow ‘get it’. This might be simply because students do progress into further levels of study, pass the VLE test or a specific module. However there are also some negative evaluations of students’ level of IL.

Our students, busy senior professionals, often approach information gathering on a ‘need to know’ basis. Also older on average, they are more likely to be discouraged by a small number of confusing or negative experiences in using the library.

The evaluation that ‘we need to do more to be honest’ seems to be common. For example:

In response to low levels of student satisfaction and competence in using the online library, I will also increase the number of links to valuable resources within the College."

I think the IL course we have is a good start but it needs to be embedded into curricula if we expect students to actually engage with it.

We are grateful for the developing provision of the online library which offers much improved study support for our students, but we are also aware that, in some respects, there will be greater challenges and we intend to meet these by means of the appropriate design of our redeveloped study materials.

4. Supporting further development of Information Literacy

In terms of future support, respondents seem to aim at ad-hoc solutions. Some suggest the there is a need to incorporate IL more organically and are working closely with the library to create ad-hoc support for students. In evaluating these initiatives, it seems that localised responses are activated without broader and coherent guidelines. In some cases, these localised responses go almost in opposite directions. The example below shows two different responses: from channelling IL skills into the curriculum to, perhaps, spoon-feeding students.
We have recently incorporated the foundation module into an elective module on the programme, and some optional study group tasks in a core module, to develop IL. The Intermediate module is now compulsory for project students. One other possibility could be to make the foundation module compulsory in the Core... This year we piloted a pre-enrolment course which did flag up the foundation module and recommended students complete it.

Until now, students have been provided with reading lists in subject guides, with a few chapters/articles available online. Redeveloped versions of our modules will focus entirely on sources available online, either through the online library or by providing scanned chapters. This should mean that students will no longer struggle to find key resources, as they so often have in the past. We will, however, provide a supplementary reading list for each module and encourage students to seek additional resources from these, or via JSTOR, and this will demand higher-level information literacy skills.

Interestingly many programme directors were not aware of the existence of policy/guidelines for IL in their colleges or UoL Worldwide programmes.

I'm not sure we have a specific policy, more than information literacy is flagged up at many stages in both DL, F2F MSc teaching and doctoral teaching. And 2 modules are offered by the library to ALL students

Lack of consistency across programme might be due to the lack of a framework/guideline/policy that directors can refer to.

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Lack of consistency across programme might be due to the lack of a framework/guideline/policy that directors can refer to.
5 Pedagogical implications: The information literacy dilemma

There is a dilemma.

We want to help and guide our students, in particular in their first year of study, to access the particular resources that we have selected for them to enable them to produce good answers to the assignments that we set for them. We also want our students to reference the sources appropriately. So we want to develop their technical skills in information literacy – obtaining, and referencing. We often want them to study, so to speak, inside a box of our own devising.

This is understandable. The University of London online library offers access to (currently) approaching 100 million items. It would surely be unreasonable to say to students, in week one, “Here’s the assignment, go forth and find, select and use appropriate sources.”

However, by graduation, they surely need to be able to undertake such a wide-ranging search, indeed across a much wider range of sources, albeit usually but not always within the boundaries of their discipline or profession.

The dilemma is that, by pointing students at the resources they need, we fail to help them to develop the wider capabilities they will need.

The essential resolution of this dilemma is to treat the move through Information Literacy and into Critical Information Fluency as a developmental process, to be undertaken throughout the programme of study. This will require coordination, across modules and across years of study.

Elements of this approach might include:

1. From an early stage, requiring students to use an increasing number of sources which were not on the reading list. To avoid inappropriate cooperation, students could be required to locate and log on the VLE a source which they intended to use, one that had not previously been logged by another student.

2. Including critical reviews of sources as assignments, to help students develop the essential capability of being their own referee, articulating and justifying their judgements on published sources.

3. Asking students to generate their own criteria for good sources.

Other methods are outlined later in this paper.

One overall approach might be to produce general accounts of information literacy and critical information fluency to be attained at the end of first, second and third years of study and then for the award of a Masters degree. This would ease course design and coordination.
Course design: Three approaches to developing Information Literacy

Beyond the linear / spiral approach, and animating the coordinated approach suggested immediately above, three main approaches to the development of information literacy can be identified:

1. **In a separate IL module, course or class**
   - Advantage – The module designers, teachers and assessors will be experts in their particular literacies.
   - Disadvantage – Students may take these literacies less seriously than they take their main discipline of study, and these literacies may remain somewhat separate from course design, teaching and assessment of the main discipline of study.

2. **Included in the course, and taught and assessed by subject specialists**
   - Advantage – These literacies will be planned, taught and assessed as part of the students’ main discipline of study, rather than as an adjunct, and so seen by students as core.
   - Disadvantage – Those teaching these literacies may not be completely up-to-date with recent developments in these literacies and the teaching of them.

3. **An integrated approach**
   - Advantages – Subject specialists and literacies experts can collaborate in the design of courses, and in teaching and assessing discipline-appropriate accounts of the literacies, integrated in the disciplinary courses. The Academic and disciplinary credibility of literacies is thus enhanced; they are treated as part of disciplinary practice, and all relevant expertise is applied. Co-operation will be required.

Organization, structural and other factors may come into play alongside these educational considerations.
7 Auditing current practice

Much is already be happening in relation to Information Literacy, whether or not it is so identified:

- Individual courses and programmes may have learning outcomes, assessment criteria, individual assignments, projects and/or assessments, which, explicitly or implicitly, develop and assess students’ information literacy.
- The library may offer information, training and/or consultation to individual students or groups of students; undergraduate, postgraduate and research.
- Current policy and strategy on, for example, teaching learning and assessment or graduate attributes/employability may also refer, without necessarily using the term, to capabilities recognisable as information literacy.

The result of an audit of current local good practice provides an important foundation for policy development. An audit will also identify pockets of enthusiasm for and expertise in Information Literacy in the institution. It will further identify capable and enthusiastic practitioners who will be able and keen to support further developments.

The library, educational development service and academic units are often good starting points for such an audit, probably in this order.
Policy for Information Literacy / Critical Information Fluency

Policy Development
Following an audit, a good starting point for policy development is probably – wherever the energy and enthusiasm lie.

From a starting point of energy and enthusiasm, the process of policy development is likely to be more effective, the greater the number of stakeholders involved in the process.

Experience of those who have developed policy suggests that few if any stakeholders will be actively opposed to the idea of Information Literacy. The problem is more likely to lie with getting sufficient attention and priority accorded to IL, in amongst other competing pressures.

Stakeholders include:
- Students
- Academic units - schools, faculties, departments, programmes
- Programme leaders and lecturers
- Staff / educational / academic development units and developers
- Library and information services and staff
- Learning development units and learning developers
- Learning technologists
- Careers and employment services
- QA / QE
- Senior academic management

Possible elements of a policy / strategy for Information Literacy / Critical Information Fluency

It may be most productive, and also most accurate, to treat Information Literacy / Critical Information Fluency as part of the discipline or profession, part of disciplinary or professional practice, rather than as separate and adjunct to the disciplines and professions.

Given an account of Information Literacy / Critical Information Fluency, a policy might suggest working towards these two goals:

a. Any course or programme; in its design, its provision of learning resources, its teaching, feedback on student work and assessment; supports students to develop and demonstrate the necessary IL / CIF capabilities; and

b. Other College systems and services; for example, student support managers and Library and information services, QA and QE; should support students to develop and enact the necessary capabilities, and assure that this is happening effectively.

What will success look like? Perhaps, every graduate:

a. Is information literate / critically information fluent, as defined above;

b. Feels supported by their educational experience in achieving IL / CIF, and

c. Values, maintains and extends their IL / CIF into the future.

Policy and embedding in practice

As with any policy, it will be important, first to support the embedding of the policy into practice, and second to check that QA processes ensure that the policy is being implemented effectively.

Some of the stakeholders listed above – perhaps, in particular, perhaps, academic development, libraries, learning development and employment / careers – will have a strong and effective role in supporting the implementation of policy into the design and operation of courses, and in providing
the necessary expertise in monitoring and evaluation. The institution’s normal QA processes can also help to ensure that the policies are being implemented, and are achieving what they are intended to achieve.

A complementary approach is to treat Information Literacy as one element of good academic practice. By including attention to proper sourcing and referencing, Information Literacy makes it less likely that students will engage in such bad practices as plagiarism.

More on this in a later section on evaluating information literacy

**A sketch of a possible policy**

**Rationale for a policy and strategy on Information Literacy:** The ever-accelerating growth and turnover, both of information / knowledge and of sources, require graduates to practice an increasingly sophisticated, critical and questioning approach to sources, knowledge and information.

**Purpose:** Essential graduate qualities; alongside and as part of their other academic, disciplinary and professional capabilities and knowledge; include the commitment and the critical capabilities to specify, identify, locate, obtain, use and reference appropriately, information, in work, research, study and life

The primary purpose of a possible policy / strategy on Information Literacy would be to ensure that graduates of the University have developed and demonstrated such essential qualities.

More colloquially, such policy / strategy can ensure that University graduates are, and have the passion and the ability to remain, full members of the global knowledge and information society.

Enhanced student satisfaction, retention, performance and employability, and enhanced University reputation and finances, would be additional benefits.

**Possible core of a policy:** Through course design, teaching, learning and assessment, students will develop and demonstrate; in ways appropriate to the discipline or profession they are studying; the commitment and the capability critically to specify, identify, locate, obtain, use and reference appropriately, information, in ways that build on and go beyond subject benchmark requirements.

**Considerations for Implementation:** Information Literacy, as considered here, should be included; in discipline-appropriate terms; in programme and core module learning outcomes. Courses should provide opportunity, teaching, support and resources for students to develop the necessary capabilities and commitments. Attainment of Information Literacy should be assessed as a part of module / programme assessment.

Implementation may best be achieved by co-operation between discipline and information specialists.

**Considerations for monitoring:** QA processes would monitor, report, and as required make recommendations, on practice and attainment in information literacy.
9 Case Study – QMUL

(Based on interview with Martin Beeson, Teaching and Learning Support Manager, Mile End Library, Queen Mary University of London)

The IL Policy at QMUL originated with the Library. (The library includes a teaching and learning support function and a research support function.) The IL Policy it was derived in part from QMUL employability and graduate attributes policies.

Policy is a great start, but it’s not enough. Every new course and every course review requires continued attention to IL. Subject librarian membership of course teams aids this process. But it doesn’t work every time.

To help effective and credible library involvement with courses, faculty liaison librarians at QMUL are gaining HEA accreditation.

QMUL prefers the embedding of information literacy rather than bolt-on or optional provision.

A library-based and a subject-specific approach can work productively together. Embedding requires at least some academic ownership of IL.

IL skills are academically necessary, but also necessary for wider personal and professional life and indeed citizenship.

It is important to evaluate the impact on student learning of the teaching of IL.

Constant marketing of IL is required. Arguments for IL include:

1. The critical / evaluative / academic nature of IL
2. The essential role of IL in independent learning and research
3. Theoretical bases for IL, including threshold concepts and the nature of scholarly practice

Not all academics are fully up-to-date with recent developments in information sources and information search methods. Tactful support from subject specialist librarians can help.

The total set of IL skills required by a student or an academic is substantial but not overwhelming. It is readily learnable within a course. Academics’ fear that Information Literacy means turning students into librarians is not well founded!
Information Literacy and Beyond:
Some issues in Policy and Practice (also circulated separately as a discussion paper)

Background
This is an interim account of findings from a project being undertaken by the University of London’s Centre for Distance Education (CDE). The project, ‘Integrating Information Literacy’, aims successfully to integrate Information Literacy (IL) skills into a wide range of international, including undergraduate, programmes. The current paper uses the umbrella term ‘Information Capabilities’, to avoid issues in the definition of Information Literacy. ‘Critical Information Fluency’ is used as to describe an emergent account of necessary high-level information capabilities.

Aims
In a little more detail, the ‘Integrating Information Literacy’ project aims to:

- Identify current policy and good practice in the development of information literacy across the curriculum in University of London Programmes.
- Support the integration of IL skills into curricula at both postgraduate and undergraduate levels, through working with Programme Teams and delivering writing workshop(s) for Programme Teams to facilitate the integration of IL skills.
- Establish evaluation processes and measures of the effectiveness / impact of IL skills instruction in University of London Programmes.

Accounts of good IL practice in University of London Worldwide (UoLW) programmes are being collected.

Sponsorship and Work
Sponsors: Dr Mary Stiasny, PVC (International) and Dr Sandra Tury, AD, UoLW Library Services.
Project staff: CDE Fellows Dr David Baume and Dr Benedetta Cappellini.

Literature on IL has been studied. Surveys and interviews have been undertaken with providers of information Services, and with UoLW Course Leaders. UoLW Course Leaders have also been supported on course design, by the project and by UoLW Library Services. The current project concludes with reports and a CDE event to further raise awareness of IL needs.

Interim conclusions and recommendations

1 Levels of Information capability
It may be useful to distinguish between two main levels of information capability:

- **Basic**, which involves accessing and using various reference sources, e.g. library databases, print sources and freely available internet sources; and
- **Advanced**, which additionally involves, as a normal part of academic and professional practice, identifying and locating appropriate information sources in the most efficient manner. This includes, but is not limited to, selecting and using keywords or search terms; critically evaluating the sources for authority, currency and relevance to the task at hand; and justifying decisions about information.

Both Basic and Advanced information capabilities also involve using and processing
information in scholarly and professional ways, and communicating information to the intended audiences, including proper referencing.

2 **Necessary information capabilities**

Information Literacy, as currently often defined and practised, is arguably inadequate to meet the needs of our graduates even when they graduate, let alone for 50 or 70 or more years of work and life. In this respect we may be severely under-ambitious for our graduates. It would be difficult to overestimate the academic, professional and personal importance of high-level information capabilities. Some reasons:

- The amount of information in the world may currently be doubling every two or so years, acknowledging serious difficulties of both defining and measuring information.
- This information is of widely varying quality, which strengthens further the need to be a critical and selective user of information. We all need to be, to some extent at least, our own referees, of sources and of information.
- Growing proportions of what the student knows when they graduate become variously wrong and irrelevant each year after graduation. So students need to be critical of what they already know, as well as of new information and ideas.

This gap between students’ needs for information capability and the information capabilities that we currently teach them is particularly evident at undergraduate level. This typically concentrates on what we have called Basic IL – colloquially, studying within the box, sometimes literally studying the contents of a box. Programmes may not consistently or systematically teach or assess even Basic IL, which may be contributing to student non-completion or failure.

We see more advanced work on information literacy / critical information fluency in project and dissertation modules, although these are few in University of London Worldwide programmes. Some more advanced IL is seen in postgraduate programmes, where explicit attention to IL is leading to greater student achievement, especially in dissertations.

Students make limited use of the UoLW library. Work is underway to increase use.

3 **Benchmarks and standards**

High levels of information capability are explicit in QAA subject benchmarks, for example for Masters degrees in Business and Management: “Using information and knowledge effectively in order to abstract meaning from information and to share knowledge...” They are strongly implicit at undergraduate level: “An appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge” and “The ability to manage their own learning, and to make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources (for example, refereed research articles and/or original materials appropriate to the discipline).”

4 **A dilemma**

There is a dilemma. We want to be helpful to our students. To be helpful, we typically give them ready access; including references, hyperlinks, PDFs or printed copies; to some, most or even all of the required reading, indeed also sometimes to the optional reading.

This is particularly understandable in distance education, where we cannot make the same assumptions about access to a physical library as we can with institution-based students.

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2 The issue of project and dissertation modules at undergraduate as well as postgraduate level also merits attention. Graduates surely need to be capable independent learners as well as having current disciplinary knowledge.
But in doing this, we simultaneously enable them in the short term, and fail to enable them to develop the necessary more advanced information capabilities suggested earlier.

5 Libraries and Information Literacy
Libraries have taken an important lead on IL. However, information literacy / fluency is much bigger than just a library issue, even when we properly consider libraries as services and as curating portals rather than as collections. Information is pretty much everywhere.

6 Developing and Embedding IL
Students can be helped to develop and internalize the capability and commitment to define what information they need, identify appropriate sources, critically review what they find, and of course use and reference it appropriately. These capabilities and commitments can be taught, learned and assessed. Information literacy / critical information fluency can be embedded explicitly in curriculum, in learning outcomes, in pedagogy, and also of course in assessment.

Information literacy / critical information fluency take different forms in each discipline.
They are a necessary part of disciplinary and professional practice.
There is a case for teaching information skills when they are needed, not (just) at induction.

7 Course Design and information Literacy
There is an intimate connection between the design and operation of courses and the associated requirements for student Information Literacy. (in each of these cases, indeed in all conceivable cases, critical use and proper referencing of information are also required.)
Three examples:
1. If complete PDFs or printed matter are provided, then few or no selection or search skills are needed, other of course than within the material.
2. If links are provided, then references should also be provided, in case of broken links, and students need the basic ability to locate and obtain sources from references.
3. By contrast, if no guidance to sources is provided beyond the assignment itself, then students will need advanced skills of constructing, implementing, reviewing and revising searches.

This may suggest that we should start with the course as designed, and deduce from the course the information capabilities that are required.
However, if the arguments in section 2, on necessary information capabilities, are accepted, then the picture changes. Courses and assignments also need to be designed to require and develop steadily more advanced information capabilities in students. In general, this shift will enrich the course and the learning.

8 IL, policy, strategy and collaboration
Without institutional policy and strategy that requires information literacy / critical information fluency; perhaps as a graduate attribute; then provision will remain partial, and current local initiatives by enthusiasts are unlikely to come together to achieve the necessary synergies.
Information Literacy is part of institutional policy in many Higher Education Institutions.
Collaboration between academic leaders and information specialists will increase the effectiveness of the development of Information literacy / critical information fluency.
As ever, top-down (policy), bottom-up and middle-out (both achieved through sharing of practice) are required for maximum benefit.
9 What do we mean by “information” in our disciplines?
“Information” can take any form from raw data to accounts of sophisticated, complex, high level understanding, theories and models. It can include images and artefacts, as well as text and numbers. And it can doubtless also take many other forms. Different kinds of information are likely to require different kinds of capabilities.

10 Grey literature
There is a lot of valuable information in the grey literature. And a lot that is less valuable. Essential real-world information capabilities therefore include the ability to judge the quality and the relevance of everything we come across that might be of use.
We each need to be our own referee.

11 Sipping from the waterfall
Some 97 million items are in or accessible through the University of London Worldwide Library.
The amount of knowledge / information may be doubling every two or so years.
The half-life of (true) (useful) knowledge is reducing, quickly.
A further essential information capability is sipping from the waterfall without drowning.

12 Critical Information Fluency – an emergent account
“I am Critically Information Fluent, in that I:
1. Identify what information I need;
2. Identify why (and when?) I need it;
3. Find it efficiently;
4. Evaluate it rigorously according to explicit and appropriate criteria;
5. Manage it;
6. Use / process it for my intended academic / professional purpose(s), and
7. Communicate it to the intended audience(s) clearly, accurately, appropriately and ethically.
Also, I can justify my decisions and actions about information at each stage.”

Further work is being planned on policy development and implementation in relation to information capabilities, and on relations between information literacy and other literacies, as summarised in Section 13

David Baume, Sandra Tury, Benedetta Cappellini, Revised July 2019
Implementing and integrating Information Literacy in UoLW Programmes (also circulated separately as a discussion paper)

Information Literacy lies at the core of lifelong learning. It empowers people in all walks of life to seek, evaluate, use and create information effectively to achieve their personal, social, occupational and educational goals. It is a basic human right in a digital world and promotes social inclusion of all nations" (UNESCO, 2005 – The Alexandra Declaration.

Personal note – it may also be a basic human obligation as well as a right.)

Introduction
As the title suggests, this account focuses on University London Worldwide (UoLW) programmes. For this reason, the accounts of information literacy and other information capabilities used here may differ from wider and more general accounts.

This difference arises because students on UoLW programmes cannot be assumed to have the same almost constant and high-bandwidth access, to information and library sources and to the wider Internet, that are enjoyed by most students on mostly face-to-face University of London courses. This in turn means that they cannot reasonably be required or expected to be able to locate and access information in a variety of formats including print books, newspapers, radio, television, videos, and the other internet sources. So UoLW must provide as many as possible of the necessary resources and materials, ideally all, whether literally “inside the box” or through the provision of PDFs, access to online editions of books, and links to Library and selected databases. This provision ensures that UoLW student have access to the essential course materials and readings. But it can make it harder to develop students’ information capabilities beyond the basics suggested here.

Basic Information Literacy
In UoLW, we can usefully take basic information literacy to mean the abilities to:

1. Locate and gain access to a specified source; for example, a journal article; given a reference and / or web link to the source³.
2. Use the information appropriately;
3. Perhaps, manage information; and
4. Reference the source properly in accordance with a defined referencing system.

Basic information literacy elements 1, perhaps 3 and certainly 4 are essential technical abilities for academic work at any level. The abilities are for the most part generic across disciplines, although disciplines may also have particular sources and resources which students need to be able to access and reference correctly.

These basic abilities may be technical, but they are not trivial. Students need support to become, not just confident, but skilled and fluent in them.

Element 2 by contrast is a fundamental part of the practice of a discipline. It should, for the most part at least, be learned within the discipline.

³ Even when links are provided to sources, these links may fail or change. Hence it is advisable for students to be able to find sources from references as well as from links.
Implementing Basic Information Literacy

Undergraduate students should be required to develop, and to demonstrate through assessment, basic information literacy during their first semester of study. So should any postgraduate students who have not already achieved it. All students should continue to practise and develop basic information literacy throughout their studies.

The set of abilities we are here calling basic information literacy may be included as a separate learning outcome, or it may be considered to be an assessment criterion for any student work that refers to published material. It is in the nature of academic work that these abilities will be required in most if not all modules.

For students to practise these basic abilities, they will need to be able to use Library information systems and a range of academic databases and sources as required by their discipline. There is perhaps no need to assess separately the skills to use such systems. These skills are essential components of item 1 described above. Also, systems and required skills change, for example with the new OpenAthens-LDAP.

Library and online resources are available to support the development of basic information literacy. However sophisticated our information capabilities may become, as explored below, this basic information literacy remains essential.

An example of how a UoLW programme develops basic information literacy is provided at Appendix 4.

Moving beyond Basic Information Literacy towards Critical Information Fluency

We understand the wish in distance learning to simplify student access to materials. Why the need for students and graduates to go beyond basic information literacy? Some reasons:

- The number of information sources, and the amount of information available, are vast, and are growing rapidly. This makes search and selection larger and more complex tasks.
- The varied quality and reliability of both sources and information requires a critical approach.
- Valid and useful information and knowledge are turning over at a growing rate. To put it another way, the half-life of valid and useful information knowledge is decreasing.
- There is growing specialisation in much academic and professional practice.
- There is also a growing need for inter-disciplinary and inter-professional working, which requires students to have some familiarity with a range of disciplines and professions.
- The QAA expects honours graduates to be able “to manage their own learning, and to make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources (for example, refereed research articles and/or original materials appropriate to the discipline)” (QAA, 2019). This goes well beyond basic information literacy.

A blurry boundary

The boundary been between basic and advanced information skills is somewhat blurry, contestable. This does not reduce the value of the distinction. It just makes us less dogmatic about what is, and what should be, variously basic and advanced.

Critical Information Fluency

(See account in Section 2)

Some issues in implementation:

- Students will not suddenly become critically information fluent. We should provide a staircase for them to climb, steps marked by new skills and by enhanced levels of each skill.
- Critical information fluency includes 6 or 7 abilities. This simplifies the design of progression – each ability can sometimes be worked on separately.
- Also, these distinct abilities need not always be developed in the order above.
- Development of critical information fluency lends itself to a spiral curriculum, in which the steps are practised and returned to with increasing sophistication (Bruner 2003).

How can this work in practice?

Where students are all studying the same content, using the same sources and undertaking the same assignments, basic information literacy is probably enough; although even here we might encourage them to use a wider of sources, or even to find one or two sources themselves, as in Appendix 5. However, and acknowledging possible complexity and cost, there are strong educational arguments for greater individualisation of study, if possible starting on a small scale in the first year and steadily increasing through the degree:

- Encouraging students to follow their own interests and enthusiasms, within the course syllabus and learning outcomes, can use and increase students’ motivation and engagement.
- Even a modest differentiation of student focus and student assignments can increase the quantity and value of student collaboration and peer learning.
- The scope for student-student plagiarism is reduced.
- Project and dissertation modules are typically a feature of later years of a degree, although less so in distance learning programmes. Such modules are powerful and effective vehicles for the development of critical information fluency as an element of independent studies.
- Hopefully such independent studies are a feature of postgraduate programmes, particularly when these are taken by students who are already in employment and who bring both considerable expertise and particular interests and questions to their studies.

**Implementing Critical Information Fluency**

We might, in programme and module documents, say something like:

Students will be supported, encouraged, and assessed on their ability to go beyond studying the core readings provided, and to:

1. Identify what information they need in order to complete a particular piece of work;
2. Identify why it is needed;
3. Locate and obtain it efficiently;
4. Evaluate it rigorously according to explicit and appropriate criteria;
5. Manage it;
6. Use / process it for their intended academic / professional purpose(s), and
7. Communicate it to intended audience(s) clearly, accurately, appropriately and ethically.

Also, justify their decisions and actions about information at each stage.

They should do all this, in increasingly sophisticated ways, at increasing academic levels, and in ways appropriate to their particular field of study.

They should do this in relation to their particular interest / assignment / project / dissertation.

Criteria and methods for doing each of these things will be explored as part of the course and with support from subject specialist information professionals.

Feedback will be given on students’ work in respect of critical information fluency.

These abilities will be assessed.

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4 Perhaps these should be two separate points. Locating it—establishing where it is—and obtaining it—making it available to read and use—may be separate abilities, although clearly closely linked.
Responsibility for implementing Basic Information Literacy / Critical Information Fluency

The teaching, learning and assessment of basic information literacy / critical information fluency all need to be designed into courses, and included in learning outcomes or assessment criteria.

Students would probably welcome guidance and examples on how these abilities are interpreted and implemented in particular disciplines and programmes.

The teaching and learning of these abilities may best be achieved through cooperation between subject specialist academics and subject specialist information professionals.

An example of how a UoLW programme develops some more advanced information capabilities is provided at Appendix 5.

These abilities are fundamental parts of academic and professional practice.

Work on IL will be more effective in a policy framework. Suggestions on policy have been made. A checklist and toolkit will hopefully be developed from this paper.

Support on implementation is available from UoLW Library – Sandra.Tury@london.ac.uk and from the UoL Centre for Distance Education – cde@london.ac.uk.
12 Quality assuring and evaluating Information Literacy

As reported in Section 11 above:

The QAA expects honours graduates to be able “to manage their own learning, and to make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources (for example, refereed research articles and/or original materials appropriate to the discipline)” (QAA, 2019).

This requirement probably goes beyond basic information literacy.

Individual QAA subject benchmark statements refer in some cases to required information capabilities.

Quality assurance in relation to information capabilities would be likely to ask questions including:

- Is there a policy on the development and assessment of students information capabilities?
- If so, is it being enacted?
- If so, is it being effective in developing students’ information capabilities?
13 Further work

**Integrating Information Literacy, Phase 2**

The current project has suggested above all that (a) information literacy is of great and increasing importance as a graduate capability, (b) practice on information literacy is highly varied across UoLW, (c) colleagues want help on IL, (d) libraries are willing and able to help, (e) a discipline-centred approach is needed, and (f) lack of a policy framework may slow the development.

A further project, starting September 2019, will further address these issues. The key elements and deliverables are:

1. The development of policy frameworks and guidance notes. Policy and recommendations will be tested on the Global MBA programme.
2. A UoLW Information Literacy Implementation Group (working title). This will have roles both in guiding and disseminating the proposed project and more importantly in ensuring sustainability once the proposed project is complete. It will include library and information professionals; learning technologists; learning developers (who along with library and information professionals and lecturers are in close contact with the difficulties that students experience around information literacy); academic developers (who have a wider role in relation to educational change); and module and programme leaders. The group’s further functions will include sharing expertise on the definition and implementation of information literacy; locating, reviewing and where necessary developing resources; and QA, monitoring and reviewing implementation. It will also inform future policy.
3. Reviews of current practice on information literacy. Some IL initiatives, including in the Masters in Global Diplomacy (SOAS) and in Refugee Protection and Forced Migration Studies (SAS) (see Appendix 4), are now sufficiently well-established to make it possible to undertake a thorough review and draw implications for future evidence-based policy and practice.
4. Embedding IL into the new Global MBA Programme.
5. Impact on IL in early-adopter MAs (see 3 above) and the new policy-led MBA implementation will be compared.
6. Accounts of and guidance on implementing discipline-specific information literacy. Information literacy will only come fully to life within programmes when it is conceptualised and implemented in discipline-specific ways.

**Literacies**

The term ‘literacy’ is common across a wide range of higher education activities, well beyond its original meaning. It seems beneficial to identify common challenges and opportunities, and to see if there is scope for synergy among the many current and emergent literacies.

This can best be done by bringing various practitioners and supporters of these various literacies together.

Accordingly, a small CDE study conference will be undertaken late in 2019, with providers of various literacies across UoL, to see if there are common features across various literacies, and to see what scope there may be for learning from and with each other in support for the definition and development of literacies.
14 Conclusions

Information Literacy / Critical Information Fluency are essential for our graduates to live and work effectively in the world of the 21\textsuperscript{st}-century. Identifying these capabilities as key elements of, professional, personal and disciplinary capability increases the chances of these capabilities being developed and valued. Such development is more likely to occur where an IL policy is in place, enacted and monitored.

Without institutional policy and strategy that requires information literacy / critical information fluency, perhaps as a graduate attribute, then provision will remain partial, and the current fragmented local initiatives by enthusiasts are unlikely to come together to achieve the necessary synergies. IL is part of policy at QMUL, and at many other Higher Education Institutions. Collaboration between academic leaders and information specialists will increase the effectiveness of the development of Information literacy / critical information fluency.

As ever, top-down (policy), bottom-up and middle-out (both through sharing of practice) are required for maximum benefit.

In summary:

- Support for students on basic information literacy (IL) is patchy.
- We are not developing their critical information fluency (CIF) enough.
- Developing IL and (especially) CIF in distance education is hard, but possible.
- There are examples of good work being done.
- IL and CIF are fundamental parts of academic practice, not add-ons.
- IL / CIF need to be embedded in course and curriculum.
- A policy framework would help.
- UoLW Library and CDE offer joined-up support on the development of information literacy and critical information fluency.
References and Sources


Lilac Conference archive - [https://www.lilacconference.com/lilac-archive](https://www.lilacconference.com/lilac-archive)
Appendix 1 – The CDE integrating Information Literacies Project

Centre for Distance Education (CDE)

Integrating Information Literacy (IL) skills into University of London Programmes

Project sponsors
Mary Stiasny, PVC (International), University of London
Sandra Tury, Associate Director-Online Library Services, University of London

Project goals
Successfully integrate information literacy (IL) skills into a wide range of University programmes.
In a little more detail, the project aims to provide programme teams with support on IL that is practical, evidence- and practice-based and scholarship-informed. This support should lead to enhancements in students’ critical and informed use of a range of appropriate information sources.

Working definition of information Literacy (IL)
“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]

Project objectives
1. To identify current policy and good practice in the development of information literacy across the curriculum in University of London Programmes.
2. To support the integration of IL skills into curricula at both postgraduate and undergraduate levels, through working with Programme Teams and delivering writing workshop(s) for Programme Teams to facilitate the integration of IL skills.
3. To establish evaluation processes and measures of the effectiveness / impact of IL skills instruction in University of London Programmes.

Timescale
March 2018 – May 2019

Issues to explore include:
Accounts of IL; responsibility for IL in course design, teaching, and library and information services; IL demands on students and support for student IL development; teaching institutions and IL; student approaches to IL; professional requirements for IL; relations with Digital Literacy; critical IL.

Outputs
Presentation to and discussions with programme leaders and teams; briefing notes and resources for staff, perhaps also students; CDE events; perhaps input to writing retreats for course teams; reports on CDE website; ODL and IL conferences and publications.

Project staff / contacts
Benedetta Cappellini, Programme Leader, RHUL and CDE Fellow, Benedetta.Cappellini@rhul.ac.uk
David Baume, CDE Fellow, david@davidbaume.com

We welcome ideas, suggestions and questions about the project.

April 2018
Appendix 2 – Some accounts of information literacy

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 the ability to think critically and make balanced judgements about any information we find and use. It empowers us as citizens to reach and express informed views and to engage fully with society (CILIP 2018)

- Identify a personal need for information
- Assess current knowledge and identify gaps
- Construct strategies for locating information and data
- Locate and access needed information and data
- Review research process and compare and evaluate information and data
- Organise information professionally and ethically
- Apply the knowledge gained

(Adapted from SCONUL 7 pillars of information literacy)

An information literate individual is able to:

- Determine the extent of information needed
- Access the needed information effectively and efficiently
- Evaluate information and its sources critically
- Incorporate selected information into one’s knowledge base
- Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
- Understand the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information, and access and use information ethically and legally

(ALA 2000)

Information literacy is the set of integrated abilities encompassing the reflective discovery of information, the understanding of how information is produced and valued, and the use of information in creating new knowledge and participating ethically in communities of learning.

(ACRL 2015)

Information Literacy lies at the core of lifelong learning. It empowers people in all walks of life to seek, evaluate, use and create information effectively to achieve their personal, social, occupational and educational goals. It is a basic human right in a digital world and promotes social inclusion of all nations. (UNESCO, 2005) – The Alexandra Declaration.

(Personal note – it may also be a basic human obligation.)
Appendix 3 – Reference Management Software

Students can usefully be encouraged and supported to use reference management software. Of course, they should use it critically. Their use of it should be founded on sound knowledge and understanding of referencing conventions, and of the purposes of referencing. This knowledge and understanding will enable them to check what the reference management software produces, and to produce a defensible reference when the software misbehaves or does not deliver.

However, with these precautions, and used properly and intelligently, good reference management software:

- Increases the accuracy of referencing;
- Reduces the need to memorise referencing systems, although the need to be able to reference manually is not removed;
- Increases student versatility, because good reference management software can generate references in a wide variety of referencing systems; and
- Helps each student to build their own bank of references in the discipline, as well as getting into a good information management habits.
Appendix 4 – Basic Information Literacy – Example from SAS
Sarah Singer, SAS

MA Refugee Protection
Within the MA Refugee Protection and Forced Migration Studies, core modules include an Information literacy activity (E-tivity) in which students are provided with an online tutorial on how to use the e-library, the databases and primary source materials it has access to.
For core module 1 the E-tivity is geared towards accessing materials on international law, while for core module 2 it focuses on accessing materials related to Forced Migration Studies.
The E-tivity itself focuses on retrieving a journal article, which it is expected will be students’ primary use of the E-library.

E-tivity 2 – 5% Information retrieval (Weeks 1 and 2)
In this E-tivity students are asked to retrieve a piece of academic commentary from UoL’s e-Library. To facilitate this activity, students are provided with an online tutorial on how to use the e-library, the databases and primary source materials it has access to. This not only helps students fulfil the E-tivity but also provides the necessary research skills to fulfil the module requirements.

| Purpose: To retrieve this piece of recommended reading for Week 1 from the e-Library: |
| [*journal article*] |
| Task: Please follow the following link [UoL E-Link] which will lead you to the library online tutorial. Complete the online tutorial and use the skills you have learned to access the above piece of academic commentary. |
| In the E-tivity 2 forum, comment on any difficulties you found in accessing this item and any interesting or useful resources you encountered in using the E-Library, particularly in relation to accessing reading materials for Week 1. Please post your comments by Monday of Week 2. |
| Respond: In the E-tivity 2 forum please post comments on your peer’s E-tivity task by way of sharing your own experiences, between Monday of Week 2 and Sunday of Week 2. |
Appendix 5 – With Elements of an Advanced / Critical Approach – Example from SOAS

J Simon Rofe, SOAS

Global Diplomacy Example: E-itivity 1

Purpose: To access e-resources and use a bibliographic database to find articles from an academic journal through the online library.

Task: Watch the tutorial on retrieving information from the online library. Using an appropriate database search for articles relating to 'Diplomacy'.

Produce a bibliography containing two articles chosen by you. One that is available through the University of London's online library, the other through the SOAS library.

Write a short paragraph of no more than 200 words to accompany your bibliography telling your colleagues why these particular articles are worth reading and what they will gain from using your bibliography.

Post the bibliography and its rationale in the e-itivity 2 Forum.

Respond: Return to the e-itivity 2 Forum and explore a bibliography recommended by one of your colleagues.

Post a reply under this entry giving your thoughts on the selection of articles that were recommended to you. How useful and interesting did you find this selection? Could you recommend an article to add to this bibliography?

Submit both forum entries to TurnItIn no later than 11.59pm (London time) on the date of the submission. E-itivity submission dates are detailed in the Study Calendar.

Outcome: You will be able to search the University's databases, identify and access and evaluate appropriate academic journal articles, and present the required bibliographic information accurately.

We recommend you spend a minimum of 2 hours on this e-itivity, and as much time as you are able participating in the forum.

This Rofe Model draws on the work of HEA National Teaching Fellow, Professor Gilly Salmon. Her work in 2002 established the of value of E-tivities as the “frameworks for online active and interactive learning” http://www.atimod.com/e-tivities/intro.shtml and the five stage model of implementation http://www.atimod.com/e-tivities/5stage.shtml
Appendix 6 – Briefly exploring literacies

The meaning of ‘literacy’ has expanded. It used to mean something like ‘being able to read and write’, maybe also ‘listen and speak’. Now literacy (sometimes, literacies) carries a much broader meaning, something like ‘being competent or capable’, at – what?

We already have several (often overlapping) proposed literacies – assessment literacy, digital literacy, information literacy, library literacy, cultural literacy, academic literacies, research literacy. (References to numerical literacy – otherwise known as numeracy – suggest the attraction and perceived value of the label ‘literacy’.) So there may be other literacies to come.

Employability can be recast as a literacy – careers literacy. So could the (surely misleadingly named) soft skills or attributes – for example, communication, teamwork, leadership, problem solving, strong and appropriate values, adaptability ...

What all these literacies have in common is they are capabilities, perhaps with an admixture of personal qualities. They are not knowledge, although their practice usually requires knowledge, or perhaps access to knowledge, and hopefully critical engagement with and use of knowledge.

Further work is planned to explore relationships and possible overlaps / synergies among these various literacies. This is described in section 13

A larger question explores the potential value of considering academic and professional disciplines as fields of practice as well as knowledge; as, in part at least, literacies. Associated work would explore the relations between practice and knowledge in disciplines.

A larger question still considers the potential value of exploring what capabilities, qualities, literacies are variously common and distinct across the wide range of academic and professional disciplines and practices.