

Cambridge Information Literacy Network: Framework

CONTEXT

Information literacy (IL) is widely recognised as an important graduate skill; UNESCO (2005) describes it as “a basic human right in the digital age”. CILIP, the UK’s library and information association defines it as follows: *“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 develop informed views and to engage fully with society.”*¹

The University of Cambridge implicitly recognises this by including in its mission statement the following core values for students:

- the encouragement of a questioning spirit
- quality and depth of provision across all subjects
- the close inter-relationship between teaching, scholarship, and research
- education which enhances the ability of students to learn throughout life

The University of Cambridge Learning and Teaching Strategy 2015-2018 states that the University aims to:

“develop knowledge and skills which are relevant at all stages of each student’s career and which equip students to continue to learn throughout life; and to produce graduates who are the future leaders in their field”.

The Learning and Teaching Strategy is supported by the Strategy for Student Wellbeing 2016-2019, which states that:

“In support of these aims the University will, in partnership with the Colleges endeavour tocreate an environment that promotes opportunities for students to learn and develop as individuals and which allows them to enhance their physical, mental and social health and wellbeing” (University of Cambridge, 2016a).

Libraries at Cambridge are committed to supporting these strategic goals, ensuring that we fulfill our responsibility to all students to provide consistent, equitable access to resources required for learning, and to reinforce the University’s aim to ‘equip students to learn throughout life’². We believe that the following concept of learning holds true for students engaging with library training:

“the notion of learning as excursive, as a journey or excursion which will have intended direction and outcome but will also acknowledge (and indeed desire) that there will be deviation and unexpected outcome within the excursion...” (Meyer and Land, 202)³

¹ <https://www.cilip.org.uk/news/421972/What-is-information-literacy.htm>

² C.A. Reid Literature Review on Information Literacy

³ R. Land, G. Cousin, J.H.F. Meyer, P. Davis Conclusion: Implications for threshold concepts for course design and evaluation, J.H.F. Meyer, R. Land (Eds.), *Overcoming barriers to student understanding: Threshold concepts and troublesome knowledge*, Routledge, London (2006), pp. 195-206

FRAMEWORK

1. Overview

Cambridge Information Literacy Network (CILN) is a group of library staff from the collegiate university who are contributing to the change processes required to implement the Framework.

CILN's Framework makes use of publicly recognised frameworks, including the work conducted as part of the Library's Arcadia projects (2011)⁴ in devising A New Curriculum for Information Literacy (ANCIL), and the Association of College and research Libraries (ACRL) Framework for Information Literacy (2014)⁵. We have benchmarked with, and reviewed, current UK HE institutional implementations of IL framework and this document demonstrates relevant and appropriate focus on current needs.

The framework will form the basis for our teaching and learning engagement opportunities and has been devised in order that we provide a cohesive, joined-up approach which delivers a consistent experience for students. The framework should allow for information literacy teaching which is closely related to the academic curriculum and is specific to the context in which students are learning. Information literacy competencies are not intended to be linear, but be allied closely to academic subject skills and individual student development, thus supporting the collegiate education Cambridge students receive. Academics, and college skills advisors should be able to clearly identify how library training will support their students.

The Framework embraces all information literacies, including digital capabilities.

2. Framework Competencies

The Cambridge Information Literacy Framework makes use of four competencies to outline the key elements. The content for each is described below; for more contextualised information please contact the network through the CILN site⁶. FOR NOTE: The use of the word 'information' implies a variety of formats and sources, including data.

Resource Discovery

Developing skills relating to resource discovery leads learners to understand that the search process encompasses both the sources themselves, as well as the means to access those sources. Learners understand that resource discovery is likely to be a non-linear, iterative process where they will engage regularly with finding and evaluating information from a wide range of sources to satisfy their research question. In addition, it entails understanding specific formats and types of information appropriate to the discipline. Resource discovery requires flexibility on the part of learners to pursue alternative avenues as understanding develops.

⁴ <https://www.repository.cam.ac.uk/handle/1810/244639>

⁵ <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework>

⁶ <http://camiln.org>

Critical Assessment

Learners critically examine the resources they are using, asking relevant questions about origins, context, and suitability for the current information need. They understand the importance of how authority, such as disciplinary expertise is constructed and will determine the credibility of a source. They understand that the information they find is influenced by those who select and curate information, in addition to those who create it.

Managing Information

Understanding the scholarly practices within their discipline, learners engage with relevant information, related workflows and develop strategies for handling information of all kinds. They demonstrate the ability to identify, gather and synthesise perspectives relevant to a research topic. Information has value and, as creators and users of information, learners will understand their rights and responsibilities (ethics) when participating in a community of scholarship. Information use requires learners to provide appropriate attribution and citation to sources they use and to develop practical skills to manage the range and variety of information sources they employ.

Creating and Communicating

Learners should see themselves as being information creators as well as information users. Information creation, such as presentations, data visualization, writing, maths models etc, is a process which embraces review and change, reusing and re-purposing discovered content in different formats or for future study. Learners will understand the processes by which scholarly material in their discipline is produced, reproduced and disseminated. Learners consider how they contribute to the body of knowledge through original research work (projects and dissertations) and by joining the scholarly conversation within their discipline specific community of practice.

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