The before and after of an Information Literacy Policy

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THE BEFORE AND AFTER OF AN INFORMATION LITERACY POLICY AT THE CAPE PENINSULA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY (CPUT)

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Abstract

This paper outlines the stages that were followed in developing an information literacy policy and its subsequent implementation at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT). The paper clearly highlights the challenges and opportunities presented during the process. The paper also presents results of a mini information literacy audit conducted in CPUT to gauge how faculties were responding to the policy guidelines. It was also important to identify the gaps and work on strategies to address those. These strategies will be discussed. Furthermore the paper also outlines how an Online Information Literacy Module has been developed and how it is used by various academics in the institution to enrich and enhance their Information Literacy curriculum. Lastly the paper presents information on how the library uses the institution's eLearning platform, Blackboard, to administer tests for various lecturers who make use of this online module.

Keywords

Information Literacy, policy development, academic library, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, South Africa

1. Introduction

It took many years and overcoming various obstacles to get an Information Literacy Policy approved at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT). The library realized that to successfully integrate Information Literacy (IL) into the academic curriculum there had to be an institutional policy, as also indicated by Breivik and Gee [cited in Grafstein 2002:198]:

> "Although librarians have in one form or another been teaching IL for many years, these projects have met, and will continue to meet, with minimal success, as long as they are initiated solely by librarians and supported only within the confines of the library. They argue that such programs can meet with success only when they are developed within an explicit statement of philosophy from the highest levels of academic administration that establishes IL as part of the educational mandate of the institution."

The process started when the library developed a position paper in 2006 and proposed that IL be a credit-bearing module that must be integrated into the curriculum in all undergraduate programs at CPUT.

2. Developing the Information Literacy Policy Framework

The position paper included definitions and explanations of what Information Literacy entails, an overview of what was already happening with regards to Information Literacy (IL) programs within CPUT, an example of a curriculum linked to various IL standards, staff requirements and qualifications of library staff and a list of important references to indicate the critical importance of Information Literacy:

- The National Qualification Framework (NQF) refers to critical cross-field outcomes (CCFO's) to indicate generic outcomes that inform all teaching and learning. There are 8 CCFOs identified

by the NQF, of which one is "collecting, analyzing, organizing and critically evaluating information". This reflects the basic purpose and content of Information Literacy training/education [National Qualification Framework, 2006].

- In the Council on Higher Education's (CHE) Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) National Review Manual [2006a:33] the importance of Information Literacy and Library Instruction is highlighted in the fact that they require course heads to indicate "Library training and availability" for each of the courses that are being quality reviewed. As an example within the *HEQC Criteria and minimum standards for bachelor of education (Honours)* [CHE, 2006b:9] the following are found:
    - o Criterion 8 section vi: Appropriate use of the library and other locally accessible curriculum resources is built into the programme design and teaching and learning strategies.
    - o Criterion 8 section vii: Orientation workshops are presented to ensure that students are enabled to access all library resources...

- The Committee for Higher Education Librarians of South Africa (CHELSA) has been mandated by the HEQC to develop common guidelines though which HE libraries can be audited. In the Guide for Self Review of University Libraries (Draft 1) drafted by CHELSA [2006] and based on the document "HEQC Criteria for Institutional Audits", the following are indicated in Critical Success Factors 6 – "Service Quality" (HEQC Criteria, 4,16,17,19):

    - o There is an Information Literacy Policy for the University.
    - o There are active and continuing programmes of Library orientation.
    - o There is active and continuing instruction in accessing, evaluating and using information at different levels.
    - o Such programmes are developed collaboratively and supported actively by academic staff, librarians, deans, and other information providers.

    Indicators that are listed for the points detailed above are:

    - o Number of information literacy presentations to groups.
    - o Number of participants in information literacy group presentations.
    - o Number of students attending information literacy presentations as a percentage of FTE students.

- In the Strategic Plan of the CPUT the following is indicated:

    "The university is fully aware of the importance of producing graduates who are not only able to find employment but who are able to live fruitful and fulfilled lives in ways that contribute to the development of a productive and innovative society. We aim to provide them with the skills to be able to succeed in a rapidly changing environment where many will find careers outside of the discipline of their basic tertiary qualifications. With this aim in mind we will endeavour to produce graduates who have the following characteristics.

    Our graduates will:

    - • Be able to create and apply knowledge
    - • Have the capacity for critical thinking
    - • Be able to effectively and productively make use of knowledge resources and ICT for the benefit of the country" [Cape Peninsula University of Technology, 2006:5-6].

This is a clear indication that CPUT requires that graduates be equipped to live productive and fulfilled lives, aiming to "provide them with skills to be able to succeed in a rapidly changing environment". If this is the aim of CPUT, then it would be imperative for our graduates to be information literate.

This position paper was circulated to all staff at CPUT via e-mail for comment. Many positive comments were received from the academic community as many of them saw the need and importance of information literacy skills for our students.

In early 2007 a proposal, including all the positive comments that were received from the academic community, was send to the chair of the Senate Teaching and Learning committee for consideration. After various debates the Senate Teaching & Learning committee approved that a project team be set-up to start the developments for an Information Literacy Policy. This team consisted of key role players in various faculties and in the Library. The process of getting an institutional policy approved was followed and by June 2009 the Council of CPUT approved an official policy. The policy indicated that a Information Literacy Committee (ILC) be appointed with equal representation from Faculties (50%) and CPUT Libraries (50%), and the Information Literacy Librarian ex officio. There are also representatives from departments such as eLearning, Academic Teaching & Learning and Quality Assurance that serve on the ILC. This committee was appointed as a sub-committee to the Senate Teaching & Learning Committee. The author was appointed as the chair of the ILC and reports back on a quarterly basis to the Senate Teaching & Learning Committee.

3. The role of the Information Literacy Committee (ILC)

The Information Literacy Committee (ILC) is a sub-committee of the Teaching and Learning Committee which is a standing committee of the Senate of the CPUT. The work of the ILC is aligned with the mission and strategic plan of the institution. The Committee reports, makes recommendations and provides guidance to the Senate Teaching & Learning Committee on all aspects relating to information literacy in the University. It promotes and coordinates the implementation of the Information Literacy policy and strategies specifically concerned with improving information literacy at CPUT.

The aim of the ILC is as follows:

•   To ensure that the IL Policy is communicated to all faculties.
•   Matters relating to implementation or interpretation of policy or procedures to be referred to the Information Literacy Committee and from there to the Teaching and Learning Committee.
•   To facilitate the implementation of these policies and strategies.
•   To monitor and review the implementation of these policies and strategies.

The function of the ILC is as follows:

•   To monitor and review the institution's IL Policy.
•   To receive and review reports from faculties on all aspects of information literacy.
•   To identify and promote best practice in information literacy.

4. Information Literacy Audit

Once the policy was approved the library staff embarked on doing a mini Information Literacy Audit throughout CPUT. The reason for the audit was to see what was already in place in each course, how it was taking place in terms of the academics and the librarian's involvements. It was also important to identify the gaps and work on strategies to address those. The library developed the questionnaire which was used for the audit, see Annexure A.

Procedure:

A short one page audit questionnaire was developed (see Annexure A), and a list of all the courses per faculty was attached. The questionnaire had 6 questions in total (indicated as Q1 – Q6 in tables below); the first 3 questions were to be completed by the lecturer(s) in that particular course and the other 3 questions by the faculty librarian for that particular course.   Meetings were held with all the faculty and branch librarians per faculty to explain the procedure and the requirements. All faculty and branch librarians were asked to complete the audit form for each course within their faculties and to send it to the relevant lecturers; this included all Certificate, Diploma, B. Tech and M.Tech courses within CPUT.

Results:

The table below indicates the six faculties at CPUT, the number of courses within each faculty and the number of no responses received per faculty.

	Faculties	Nr of courses *	%	No response **	%
1	Applied Sciences	34	16%	13	38%
2	Business	62	29%	29	47%
3	Education and Social Sciences	21	10%	6	29%
4	Engineering	35	16.5%	10	29%
5	Health & Wellness Sciences	16	7.5%	12	75%
6	Design and Informatics	44	21%	25	57%
	TOTALS	**212**	**100%**		

* Where there are courses that are offered on more than one campus, they were counted more than once, e.g. ND: Horticulture is offered on the Cape Town campus as well as the Bellville campus and was therefore counted as two courses.

** The "No Response" indicates that no information was received from the faculty for some of the courses. In some of these cases however, the faculty librarian does teach certain elements of IL.

Results per faculty:

Applied Sciences
34 courses

Q1		Q2	Q3		Q4		Q5	Q6		Other
Yes	No		Faculty	Library	Yes	No		Faculty	Library	
9	9	9	9	2	14	5	11	6	6	2

According to the results:

- Lecturers teach IL skills within 26% of the courses.

- Faculty Librarians teach IL skills within 41% of the courses.

- In 26% of the courses IL skills are being taught by both the Lecturer and the Faculty Librarian.

Business
62 courses

Q1		Q2	Q3		Q4		Q5	Q6		Other
Yes	**No**		**Faculty**	**Library**	**Yes**	**No**		**Faculty**	**Library**	
13	19	11	8	1	24	13	24	3	21	8

According to the results:

- Lecturers teach IL skills within 21% of the courses.

- Faculty Librarians teach IL skills within 39% of the courses.

- In 3% of the courses IL skills are being taught by both the Lecturer and the Faculty Librarian.

Education and Social Sciences
21 courses

Q1		Q2	Q3		Q4		Q5	Q6		Other
Yes	**No**		**Faculty**	**Library**	**Yes**	**No**		**Faculty**	**Library**	
13	4	10	10	0	14	3	12	6	9	10

According to the results:

- Lecturers teach IL skills within 62% of the courses.

- Faculty Librarians teach IL skills within 67% of the courses.

- In 52% of the courses IL skills are being taught by both the Lecturer and the Faculty Librarian.

Engineering
35 courses

Q1		Q2	Q3		Q4		Q5	Q6		Other
Yes	**No**		**Faculty**	**Library**	**Yes**	**No**		**Faculty**	**Library**	
13	12	13	12	0	3	22	3	3	0	10

According to the results:

- Lecturers teach IL skills within 37% of the courses.

- Faculty Librarians teach IL skills within 9% of the courses.

- In 9% of the courses IL skills are being taught by both the Lecturer and the Faculty Librarian.

Design and Informatics
44 courses

Q1		Q2	Q3		Q4		Q5	Q6		Other
Yes	No		Faculty	Library	Yes	No		Faculty	Library	
10	7	11	8	3	5	26	8	0	7	2

According to the results:

- Lecturers teach IL skills within 23% of the courses.

- Faculty Librarians teach IL skills within 11% of the courses.

- In 9% of the courses IL skills are being taught by both the Lecturer and the Faculty Librarian.

Health & Wellness Sciences
16 courses

Q1		Q2	Q3		Q4		Q5	Q6		Other
Yes	No		Faculty	Library	Yes	No		Faculty	Library	
1	3	1	1	3	3	1	2	0	3	1

According to the results:

- Lecturers teach IL skills within 6% of the courses.

- Faculty Librarians teach IL skills within 19% of the courses.

- In 6% of the courses IL skills are being taught by both the Lecturer and the Faculty Librarian.

Totals for CPUT
212 courses

Q1		Q2	Q3		Q4		Q5	Q6		Other
Yes	No		Faculty	Library	Yes	No		Faculty	Library	
59	54	55	48	9	63	70	60	18	46	33

According to the results:

- Lecturers teach IL skills within 28% of the courses.

- Faculty Librarians teach IL skills within 30% of the courses.

- In 12% of the courses IL skills are being taught by both the Lecturer and the Faculty Librarian.

Once the audit was done, presentations were made by the author to the management of some of the faculties. Here the information of the audit was shared and discussed, as were issues around the implementation of the Information Literacy Policy.

5. Curriculum: CHELSA Information Literacy Guidelines

All the Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in South Africa had the opportunity to share, input and be part of the development of these guidelines. This was a CHELSA initiative to provide a generic Information Literacy training guideline that could be used by all the HEI's in South Africa. This process took place in 2009 and the final document was available in early 2010. At CPUT the ILC agreed that this document be used to benchmark all current Information Literacy programs against and be seen as the standard to follow. This CHELSA document was distributed widely on campus to all the role-players via various avenues. It was also agreed to introduce an integrated IL program into the academic curriculum and that librarians and lecturers have complementary roles in delivery of IL instruction [Graftstein: 2002:201].

6. IL Policy Integration Process and Monitoring by the ILC

Once the IL Policy was approved and the IL Audit results were available together with the CHELSA guidelines, it was important to start monitoring the integration within the various courses across all the faculties at CPUT. A process had to be established to do this in such a way so that it could be monitored with ease and that progress could be reported on a quarterly basis to the Senate Teaching & Learning Committee. The ILC decided that for each course proof must be provided to this committee in the form of a study guide where information literacy was incorporated in the various courses. The Information Literacy Policy and the ILC does not prescribe where it should be done, but that it be done. As stated by Virkus [2003:44-45]:

> "Although during earlier years much of the teaching activities were separate from the curriculum, now there are trends towards the integration of information literacy into subject areas. Some discussions have taken place into the question of whether information literacy should be taught as a separate unit or integrated into the curriculum, but the majority favours the curriculum integration model."

The lecturer's or HoD's per faculty departments forward these guides to their respective representatives on the committee. The committee checks each of the study guides to see if information literacy is sufficiently covered within the curriculum and highlight areas not covered. The author developed a spreadsheet format in which each course, per faculty, per campus, per librarian was listed. All study guides received are recorded on this spreadsheet as well as the level of integration. Areas not sufficiently covered are listed next to the course and these are communicated back to the faculty. The lecturer for that particular course must then re-submit the study guide including the areas that were not covered. This spreadsheet is continually being updated and together with the ILC minutes are submitted to the Senate Teaching & Learning Committee to report progress. With this spreadsheet we can see progress at a glance. See an extract in Annexure B.

7. Information Literacy Online

In 2001 the author developed an online information literacy course. This course has been re-developed in 2010. It is available from the library website. It takes the users through the information literacy process in 5 steps. This course is available at http://ixion.cput.ac.za/library_2/infoLit/index.html. Lecturer's use it to enhance their information

literacy curriculum and student's can use it in a self-directed way. The author uses the Blackboard environment to administer tests for various lecturers. These test marks are being incorporated within the year mark of those students. This is also part of the shift towards "implementation of modern ICTs in delivering information literacy courses" [Virkus, 2003:20].

8.   Conclusion

Over the years various attempts were made to integrate Information Literacy at CPUT, but success was only seen once there was a formally approved information literacy policy. It is also recognized that a policy on its own does not guarantee success; it is only the beginning of a long process. The formation of an ILC, as a sub-committee of the Senate Teaching & Learning Committee, where progress is monitored and reported, added strength to the policy.   The value of regular presentations and communication to the various stakeholders should not be overlooked. The faculty and branch librarians' role in terms of quality teaching and assessment brings this process full circle and that is why most of our faculty and branch librarian's have done accredited "train the trainer" programs to ensure a certain level of teaching standards. We still have a long way to go, but now we have everything in place to guarantee success with the integration of information literacy into our academic programs at CPUT.

9.   Bibliography

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Information Literacy (IL)
Audit

2009

Faculty:		Faculty Librarian:	
Campus:		Course:	

1. Is IL being offered to the students in this course by the faculty lecturer? Please tick.

YES	NO

   If yes, please attach or describe the syllabus/program that is being offered as well as any IL manuals/coursework and materials used.

2. Please indicate the subject name and code in which IL are being taught as well as the lecturer's name.

Subject name:	
Subject code:	
Lecturer name:	

3. Which venues are being used for this training? Please tick.

Faculty classrooms	Library training rooms

4. Is IL being offered to the students in this course by the faculty librarian? Please tick.

YES	NO

   If yes, please attach the lesson plans for each session for this course.

5. Please indicate the subject name and code in which IL are being taught by the faculty librarian.

Subject name:	
Subject code:	
Lecturer name:	
Librarian name:	

6. Which venues are being used for this training? Please tick.

Faculty classrooms	Library training rooms

Information Literacy Audit and Integration Progress						
Faculty	**Dept**	**Course**	**Campus**	**Librarian**	**Subject Guides received**	**Outstanding elements and further comments**
Engineering	Engineering: Chemical	ND: Engineering: Chemical	Cape Town	A		
Engineering	Engineering: Chemical	ND: Engineering: Chemical (Extended)	Bellville	B	*	IL well integrated
Engineering	Engineering: Chemical	B Tech: Engineering: Chemical	Cape Town	A	*	Search strategy, evaluation of information
Engineering	Engineering: Chemical	M Tech: Engineering: Chemical	Cape Town	A		
Engineering	Engineering: Civil	ND: Engineering: Civil (Extended)	Cape Town	A	*	IL well integrated
Engineering	Engineering: Civil	ND: Engineering: Civil	Cape Town	A	**	IL well integrated
Engineering	Engineering: Civil	ND: Engineering: Civil	Bellville	B	*	IL well integrated
Engineering	Engineering: Civil	B Tech: Engineering: Civil	Cape Town	A	*	IL well integrated
Engineering	Engineering: Civil	M Tech: Engineering: Civil	Cape Town	A		
Engineering	Engineering: Electrical	ND: Engineering: Electrical (Extended)	Cape Town	A	*	IL well integrated
Engineering	Engineering: Electrical	ND: Engineering: Electrical	Cape Town	A	*	IL well integrated
Engineering	Engineering: Electrical	B Tech: Engineering: Electrical	Cape Town	A		
Engineering	Engineering: Electrical	M Tech: Engineering: Electrical	Cape Town	A		
Engineering	Engineering: Mechanical	ND: Engineering: Industrial & Systems	Bellville	A	*	IL well integrated
Engineering	Engineering: Mechanical	ND: Engineering: Mechanical (Extended)	Bellville	B	*	Searching tools and resources
Engineering	Engineering: Mechanical	ND: Engineering: Mechanical	Cape Town	A	*	IL well integrated
Engineering	Engineering: Mechanical	ND: Engineering: Mechanical: Marine Engineering	Granger Bay	C		
Engineering	Engineering: Mechanical	ND: Engineering: Mechanical: Mechatronics	Bellville	B	*	IL well integrated
Engineering	Engineering: Mechanical	ND: Operations Management	Bellville	B		
Engineering	Maritime Studies	ND: Maritime Studies	Granger Bay	C		

NOTES:

Study guide received: When a study guide has been received for a particular course it has been indicated with a *. If there are more than one * indicated it represents the number of study guides received for a particular course.

Outstanding elements and further comments: This column will indicate either 1) IL well integrated or 2) No IL integration or 3) some IL integration has been done, but list areas that were not included. These should be addressed with that department for inclusion and re-submission of study guide.