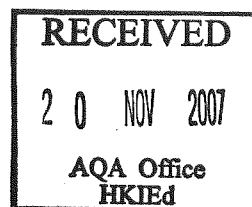


THE HONG KONG INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

Academic Quality Assurance Committee

Teaching Development Grants 2006/07



***“An Information Literacy Program for HKIEd”  
Project Report***

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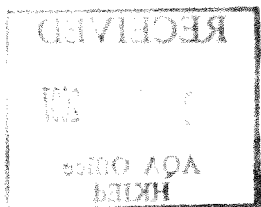
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**Abstract**

The objective of this project is to investigate and recommend on the introduction of a comprehensive and embedded program of information literacy at the Hong Kong Institute of Education. The project aims to identify the key information literacy competencies required (such as information searching, evaluation, application, and management techniques), as well as examine best practice in university libraries in Hong Kong and elsewhere. The project will also explore models for the integration of information literacy training into the curriculum, and will recommend on the most appropriate approach within the HKIEd context.



## **“An Information Literacy Program for HKIED”**

### **TDG Project Report**

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#### ***What is Information Literacy?***

The Hong Kong Institute of Education Library, like its counterparts in Hong Kong and elsewhere, offers students a wide range of educational and orientation programs on library services and resources. These are collectively termed as “information literacy” programs to emphasize that the ability to retrieve, evaluate and apply information is a fundamental skill required for effective learning, and is as necessary as “IT literacy” or other expected core competencies.

As defined by the American Library Association (ALA, 1989), “information literate people are those who have learned how to learn, because they know how knowledge is organized, how to find information, and how to use information in such a way that others can learn from them”. Philip (2002), in a White Paper prepared for UNESCO, the U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, and the National Forum on Information Literacy, concluded that the development of some measure of information literacy is important for all citizens, to equip them with the ability to retrieve and digest information which will enable them to remain an informed and participating member of society.

In 2006, the Association of College and Research Libraries of the American Library Association (ALA, 2006) defined an “information-literate” individual as being able to undertake the following:

- determine the extent of information needed
- access the needed information effectively and efficiently
- evaluate information and its sources critically
- incorporate selected information into his or her 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.

In the United Kingdom, the Society of College, National and University Libraries has also proposed seven “pillars” of information literacy skills in its position paper *“Information Skills in Higher Education”* (SCONUL, 1999). Expanding on the above definitions, the seven skills advocated are:

1. The ability to recognise a need for information
2. The ability to distinguish ways in which the information ‘gap’ may be addressed
3. The ability to construct strategies for locating information
4. The ability to locate and access information
5. The ability to compare and evaluate information obtained from different sources
6. The ability to organise, apply and communicate information to others in ways appropriate
7. The ability to synthesise and build upon existing information, contributing to the creation of new knowledge

In an education context, the Association of College and Research Libraries has also claimed that information literacy competencies extend learning beyond the formal classroom setting by providing students with skills in the evaluating, managing and using of information (ALA, 2006). Through information literacy, students become engaged in using a wide variety of information sources, enabling them to expand their knowledge and sharpen their critical thinking as a part of the learning process. The report supported the incorporating of information literacy across curricula in all university programmes, and encouraged faculty, librarians, and administrators to achieve desirable learning outcomes by collaborating to develop such programmes.

### ***Status of Information Literacy in Higher Education Worldwide***

Many higher education institutions recognize the importance of the principles articulated above, and have incorporated an information literacy component into their understanding and expectation of student and graduate attributes and generic competencies. A number of British universities, for example, have adopted the SCONUL guidelines above to provide a wide variety of instructional activities to



teach students appropriate information skills, and have reported positive outcomes from these initiatives (SCONUL, 2004). In 2002, for example, Cardiff University implemented the embedding of information literacy skills into the curriculum as a formal university policy. The University of Abertay, Dundee likewise integrated information literacy learning outcomes into all its undergraduate programs in 2004.

In Australia, the Council of Australian University Librarians has developed a suite of information literacy standards for higher education (CAUL, 2001), and recommended that higher education institutions should incorporate information literacy into the formal curriculum. A second edition of these standards, entitled the “*Australian and New Zealand information literacy framework : principles, standards and practice*” was published in 2004 and supported the introduction of information literacy education in all education sectors, emphasizing that information literacy has to be woven into the curriculum content, structure and sequence with the collaboration of educators, librarians and administrators to incorporate information literacy in the curriculum (Bundy, 2004). Of the different approaches adopted in the past in the design of the information literacy programmes, the CAUL framework supported the embedding of information literacy in the design and teaching of educational programs across the curriculum. Approximately forty Australian and New Zealand universities and higher education institutions have adopted these information literacy standards. Monash University, for example, has embedded information literacy into all courses using the CAUL standards as its basis (Monash University, 2002). At the University of Melbourne, the integration of information literacy into academic programs commenced from 2003, and the standards have been adopted as one of the principles guiding teaching and learning at the University (University of Melbourne, 2002). In 2002, the University of Newcastle also acknowledged the importance of information literacy as an essential attribute of its graduates, and has applied the standards to a number of course disciplines via the integration of information literacy modules into the curriculum (University of Newcastle, 2002).

### ***Status of Information Literacy in Hong Kong Higher Education***

In Hong Kong, the Information Literacy Task Force of the Joint University Librarians Advisory Committee (JULAC) compiled an overview of information literacy practices and initiatives in 2005, indicating that university libraries in Hong Kong are offering a wide variety of programs to students at different levels (JULAC, 2005).

The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology Library, for example, offers a course in “Information Skills for Lifelong Learning” (known as “Eureka!”) to all undergraduate students (Hong Kong University of Science and Technology Library, 2003). A problem-solving approach is used to introduce key databases and sources in different subject areas, as well as general searching principles. At the University of Hong Kong, the Library also provides credit bearing information literacy sessions as part of the “Foundations to Information Technology” module for all first year undergraduates (University of Hong Kong Libraries, 2007). It was also reported in the JULAC paper that an introductory course in information literacy is mandatory for Associate Degree (AD) students as well as Business undergraduate students at Lingnan University. At Hong Kong Baptist University, library workshops are compulsory for first year students, and form one of the core requirements for students in the “University Life” programme. Further progress on information literacy programs has been made at the Chinese University of Hong Kong in the 2006-07 academic year, when the CUHK Library collaborated with the University Information Technology Services Centre (ITSC) to incorporate information literacy competency programs into their mandatory “Student IT Proficiency Test” (Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2006). A web-based Information Literacy Tutorial courseware package has also been developed by CUHK Library for this new Information Literacy Section in the Student IT Proficiency Test (Li, 2007).

A summary table of information literacy practices at the libraries of all UGC institutions – giving details of the format, content and degree of integration of each program – is appended to this report as Appendix 1.

### ***Benefits of Information Literacy***

A study of information literacy programs at the California State University Northridge has argued that the traditional approach to information literacy - consisting of one-time library visits and instruction - is insufficient to achieve positive or lasting learning outcomes for students (Lampert, 2005). The study discussed the pilot integration of an information literacy module - consisting of three units of basic skills, research skills, and professional skills - into the curriculum, and how new students were expected to progress through these units to attain both research and professional competencies during their course. The study concluded that in order to achieve better learning outcomes, information literacy programs must be immersed in the curriculum and include practical learning tasks such as assignments and interactions

with librarians and faculty.

Several studies of information literacy in other universities also reported positive learning outcomes as a result of embedding literacy programs in formal curriculum. At the Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU), librarians collaborated with instructors to offer training sessions to students taking an interdisciplinary course. A subsequent survey of students' attitudes about information literacy and their perceptions of their own library skills found that 95% of the students found the training valuable and the program overall worthwhile. Some students developed a great deal of confidence in the ability to use the library after the training, and improved their ability to navigate and utilize the wide variety of library resources (Malenfant & Demers, 2004). At Daniel Webster College, all first-year English students who attended the collaborative information literacy programs reported a marked difference in how they approached the exercises after attending the information literacy classes (Hearn, 2005). They reported improvements in their research skills through a greater awareness of library resources and a better understanding of how to approach a search for information, starting with the resources introduced to them during the program rather than through Internet search engines.

Similar results can also be found in Hong Kong. An assessment on information literacy instruction programs has been conducted by the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology Library in 2004 (Wong, Chan & Chu, 2006). A group of 688 users from 25 library sessions were surveyed. Results showed that over 85% of attendees were positive about the usefulness of the library sessions; and that they retained and used the skills they had acquired. The students' overall ratings of the library sessions and instructors were comparable with ratings for University credit bearing courses.

Studies in other universities have further indicated that embedding information literacy modules within a "General Education" or "Foundation Studies" program can be beneficial to students in a number of ways. At California State University (CSU), a one-unit information literacy course is part of the General Education program for all first year students. In a survey to determine a baseline of information competency skills of students, it was found that the Information Literacy course could strengthen



the connection between course contents and student learning, and could assist students to develop into confident, self-directed, and independent lifelong learners (Rockman, 2002). In another study (Holliday & Fagerheim, 2006) at Utah State University, assessment results showed that integrating an information literacy course into the General Education curriculum improved student performance on research papers. Ninety percent of the instructors said that students appeared to be more confident after attending the library course, and noted that students used high quality and more relevant sources in their assignments as a result of this.

### ***Library Based Information Literacy Programs at HKIEd***

In a teacher education context, the acquisition of information literacy competencies is essential to student teachers, not only for their own learning, but to enable them to incorporate these skills in their approach to teaching, and to cultivate sound information seeking practices amongst their own students (Hunt, 1997). In 2005, the Education and Manpower Bureau of the HKSAR Government developed a suite of information literacy standards and indicators for students at both primary and secondary levels (HKSAR, 2005). The objective of this information literacy framework was to enable students at these levels to master the necessary skills to locate, comprehend, critically evaluate and synthesize information, and to apply this to inform decision making and problem solving. HKIEd, as the leading institution supporting the professional development of teachers in Hong Kong, needs to prepare its graduates for the introduction of information literacy education in primary and secondary schools, and therefore should take this into consideration in the introduction of future information literacy programs offered to HKIEd students.

Currently, the HKIEd Library strives to improve the information skills and information seeking behaviors of Institute students through a variety of programs aimed at different student levels, interests and competencies. The Library's Information Services Section offers the following categories of information literacy programs during the academic year:

#### ***1. Basic Library Skills***

Usually offered in late August and early September, these classes provide students

with basic knowledge of the organization of library materials and the skills required to locating items. Each session will include a demonstration of the library catalogue, information on electronic resources, intercampus delivery and other major library services.

## 2. *Advanced Course-related Instruction*

These classes provide students with an in-depth understanding of different kinds of library materials, as well as the search techniques for accessing them. Classes are organized and delivered on an “as required” basis - on the receipt of requests from academic staff - and are offered at any time during the academic year. The session introduces different kinds of information resources and searching skills, as well as hands-on practice in retrieving information in specific subject disciplines of fields of study. Customization of the content to meet the needs of individual programs is encouraged and supported through liaison with academic staff.

## 3. *Library-initiated Workshops and Large Group Presentations*

Classes are offered for students, staff and research assistants throughout the academic year. Participants can choose to register in workshops which suit their schedules. The workshops focus on searching techniques and hands-on demonstrations of various databases.

During the 2006/07 academic year, over 3,800 participants have attended Library workshops across the range of disciplines and levels. Table 1 provides a breakdown of the attendance at each type of program, and the number of sessions offered overall.

**Table 1 – HKIEd Library Information Literacy Programs, 2006/07.**

Information Literacy Programs	No. of Sessions	No. of Participants
Basic Library Skills Workshops	24	343
Advanced Course-related Instruction	26	592
Library-initiated Workshops.	82	2,932
<b>Total</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>3,867</b>



## ***Incorporating Information Literacy as a Module in the Core Curriculum – A Proposed Model for HKIED***

While the existing information literacy programs offered by the Institute Library have been designed to progress students through a range of competencies from simple orientation and use of the library catalogue to the more advanced research and retrieval skills, they do not sit within the curriculum framework, and therefore are not usually tailored to address the professional and discipline specializations which students have elected to pursue.

Furthermore, as the library programs are not mandatory, the level of attendance at these sessions varies considerably from one department to another, reflecting differences in interest and levels of understanding – both by the students and by their departments – of the value of information literacy programs to student learning.

Within the academic structure of HKIED, in which there is a separation of professional studies and discipline studies, it is also not easy to locate formalized information literacy programs within the curriculum. Difficulties clearly emerge in ensuring that all students have access to the same level of information literacy training, and that this is both relevant and timely to their field and level of study. In addition, embedding information literacy in the curriculum on a subject by subject basis can be cumbersome, repetitive, and competitive with the time demands of the subject itself.

Therefore, to address the above problems while also providing a comprehensive and integrated information literacy program for all students, the Library recommends that the optimal location for such a program lies in the Core Curriculum. The Library proposes that Information Literacy be developed as a mandatory “foundation” module within the General Education (GE) Domain, alongside other modules focused on generic competencies, to form the foundation of a common learning experience for all students.

The Bachelor of Education Core Curriculum of HKIED consists of the four “domains” of Discipline Studies, Professional Studies, Complementary Studies and General Education. This approach aims to prepare students for teaching from both a

discipline and a pedagogical perspective, while also offering students choice and flexibility in their course of study. The introduction of information literacy as a generic module into the General Education stream at an early stage in a student's course will have the immediate benefit of preparing students for undertaking elective General Education modules at a later stage, while also providing students with vital information skills as they commence their Discipline, Professional and Complementary Studies. In addition to developing the information and research skills of students to support their learning, the proposed information literacy module can also be viewed as a stepping stone or a foundation for the students' further professional development.

According to the module development guidelines for General Education (GE) programs, a GE module should offer academic study of a topic within one or more academic disciplines at an intellectual level appropriate for 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> year university students. The most important criterion for selection of topics or issues for GE modules should be their relevance to current concerns of students in their lives as citizens, educated young people and future professional teachers of Hong Kong (HKIED AB20/2006). A foundation information literacy module is not only compatible with this but supports the broader objective of General Education to "help them [students] learn skills in finding, managing and communicating knowledge" (HKIED APDC WG on Core Curriculum, 2004).

### ***Conclusion***

It is crucial for HKIED students to become information literate, not only for their own pursuit of academic excellence and professional competency at HKIED, but to provide them with a solid foundation on the theoretical and practical knowledge on implementing information literacy in their future teaching as required by the EDB. What is more, the Information Literacy module proposed by the Library will have the potential to strengthen the students' career prospects by offering them an initial stage of training in teacher-librarianship should they wish to pursue this.

The Library therefore submits this paper to the TDG Sub-Group and the AQAC for their consideration. The paper is intended to act as a starting point for discussion not only of the embedding of information literacy as a "foundation" module for all students, but also for a broader discussion about the value of formal development of

information literacy skills as a generic student competency. This paper has provided the background and a conceptual framework for incorporating information literacy into the BEd Core Curriculum. The feasibility of the proposal and the actual implementation strategy will require broader consultations and discussions between the Library and the Institute.

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**A Survey of Information Literacy Programs Offered in University Libraries in Hong Kong as of March 2007**

Question	HKU (as of Jan 2005)	CityU (as of Jan 2005)	HKBU	CUHK	LU	PolyU	HKUST
Is your library offering information literacy courses to your students? If yes, are they for-credit or non-credit?	Y	N (Note : ongoing scheduled library courses are structured in a way to help students develop information literacy)	N [note: library workshop for new undergraduates is compulsory for Yr-1 students to take as one of the core requirements in the University Life programme; it is a non-credit one-off session workshop]	Y, include credit and non-credit	Yes - Library colleagues teach one of the lectures (1.5 hour) of a term course – "Introduction to Information Literacy" (BUS010 for AD students and BUS110 for UGC-funded students) – a total of about 20 sessions in a year - provide in-class presentations on library skills or particular library resources at the invitation of academic c. Students can earn "Integrated Learning Programme (ILP)" credits ( <a href="http://www.ln.edu.hk/ssc/ilp/">http://www.ln.edu.hk/ssc/ilp/</a> ) by taking library organized information literacy workshops. Although ILP credits are not regular class credits, students must earn at least 75 ILP credits to graduate.	Yes. Subject focused sessions could be integrated into curriculum/course as and when necessary. General information skills (with topic focused) are covered by information literacy programmes run by the Library: I. Subject related research skills and orientation sessions offered by various departments (and outposts in China) designed and conducted by our librarians as parts of courses run by the units. II. Information literacy programmes run by Library: Online Information Literacy Programme – certificates issued to users who have attained an average score of at least 70% of the exercise of the Programme. Information Literacy Programme - students can choose to join a variety of topical workshops, a certificate will be issued to those	Yes. Include credit and non-credit - GNED008 Eureka! Information Skills for Life-Long Learning, • All undergraduate students • Free elective • 14 sessions (1 hour each) • 1 credit - SUST061 Eureka! Information Skills for Life-Long Learning • Secondary school students joining the Summer@UST programme, • Free elective • 16 sessions (1 hour each) • 1 credit if they study at HKUST in the future - Library Research Classes for MAIS • Postgraduate students taking the MAs in Liberal Arts programme • 2 sessions (3.5 hours each) for 2 two COHERTS – 14 hours in total • Quizzes given at the end, marks were counted towards one of the course offered, not a full credit on its own.



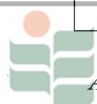
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Question	HKU (as of Jan 2005)	CityU (as of Jan 2005)	HKBU	CUHK	LU	PolyU	HKUST
						who have attended 3 sessions within a specified period. The completion of a. above is a compulsory requirement for Ph. D. and M. Phil. students of the Industrial & Systems Engineering Department. The Department of Civil & Structural Engineering has made a. above, the library orientation session and a tailored library skills session compulsory for undergraduate students of a course.	
<i>If for-credit, are they a one-off session or a series of classes?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- For-credit</li> <li>- 6 different sessions for the "Foundations to Info Technology" course (Main Lib)</li> <li>- Most are one-off session (Law Lib)</li> <li>- A series of classes for "Advanced Research Methodology" course upon teacher's request (Law Lib)</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A	Include one-off and a series	One-off sessions but a certificate will be awarded for anyone taking three or more library organized information literacy workshops	N/A	Include one-off and a series
<i>Are they integrated with a core curriculum, specific discipline or course, or general information skill?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "Foundations to Info Technology" course (Main Lib.) – general information skills</li> <li>- Sessions offered by the Law Lib. Are parts of a course (Law Lib.)</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- General information skills</li> <li>- Integrated into the curriculum e.g. law and medicine</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- BUS010 is a core course required for all AD students</li> <li>- In-class presentations for particular courses are discipline specific</li> <li>- One of the information literacy workshop (co-organized by the Library &amp; the Teaching and Learning Centre) called "Preparing for University Study" is one</li> </ul>	N/A	Yes

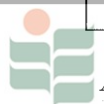


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Question	HKU (as of Jan 2005)	CityU (as of Jan 2005)	HKBU	CUHK	LU	PolyU	HKUST
					of the core curriculum in the ILP programme - Other library organized information literacy workshops belong to general information skill classes		
<i>What kinds of collaboration does your library have with other departments on campus in offering classes? (e.g., offer a class jointly)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Jointly organize the "Foundations to Information Technology" programme with the Dept. of Computer Science &amp; Computer Centre (Main Lib)</li> <li>- Jointly organize courses on "Job Hunting" &amp; "Further Studies" with the Student Centre (Main Lib.)</li> <li>- Annual HKL II Day is organized with support from the Dept. of Computer Science &amp; the Law Faculty (Law Lib)</li> <li>- Jointly organize "Evidence-based Medicine Searching Skills" with the Faculty of Medicine (Med. Lib)</li> <li>- Offered course jointly with the Music Technology course (Music Lib.)</li> </ul>	Organize briefing sessions to new students on how to make use of the e-tools in cooperation with Computing Services Centre and Academic Registration & Records Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Collaborated with teaching staff to organize a seminar on special topic.</li> <li>- Invited speakers to talk on specific theme/topic in open seminar</li> <li>- Collaborated with teaching faculty, honors project/program coordinators to offer course-based/subject specific library workshops</li> <li>- Jointly organized exhibition with departments/units or other institutions, e.g. 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary seminar and exhibition organized by the Archives on the History of Christianity in China</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Collaboration with faculty to organize workshops on specific subjects.</li> <li>- Collaboration with the Centre for Learning Enhancement (CLEAR) to offer subject specific courses as part of the <i>Improving Postgraduate Learning</i> program to all postgraduate students.</li> <li>- Collaboration with Information Technology Services Centre (ITSC) to offer Information Literacy courses to assist students in preparing for the Information Literacy Section in the mandatory Student IT Proficiency Test.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Library collaborates with academic departments for ad-hoc in-class presentations</li> <li>- The Library collaborates with ITSC (Information Technology Service Centre) to design information literacy workshops that will complement each other (Library focuses on information searching skills and ITSC focuses on IT skills)</li> <li>- The Library collaborates with the Student Services Centre &amp; the Teaching and Learning Centre in offering ILP-bearing workshops</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Collaborate with the Building &amp; Real Estate Department to include library skills in courses offered via the Hong Kong CyberU.</li> <li>- Collaborate with programme leaders, lecturers of various departments and outposts in China to offer library workshops on specific subjects.</li> <li>- Jointly organize seminars and workshops with the Education Development Centre.</li> <li>- Work with various departments and outposts in China to integrate library orientation sessions into their departmental orientation activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Jointly organized Job Hunting workshop with Career Center</li> <li>- Tailor-made classes based on requests of teaching staff, e.g. CENG109 Biotechnology and its Business Opportunities, TEMG310 Management of Technological Innovations, GNED 001 / 021 / 041 Effective Learning and Thinking Skills, BISC 358 Bioinformatics, Copyright Issues for Classroom Instruction, etc.</li> <li>- Tailor-made classes based on requests of teaching/research supporting staff, e.g., Patent Information Workshop for Technology Transfer Center</li> <li>- Invited by CELT to give Anti-plagiarism – Avoid Academic Crime workshop to new students during orientation week.</li> <li>- 1 credit general education course, GNED008, was offered through CELT.</li> </ul>



Question	HKU (as of Jan 2005)	CityU (as of Jan 2005)	HKBU	CUHK	LU	PolyU	HKUST
							Invited by Office of the Vice-President for Academic Affairs Outreach and Summer Programs section to offer SUST061 students joining the Summer@UST programme.



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