

Launching An Information Literacy Programme

*Lesley Utting
And
Lorraine Orman*

The Ayson Clifford Library is located at the Carey Baptist College in Auckland. The College was established in 1926, and the Library currently contains about 27,000 items. It subscribes to 120 periodical titles, offers access to numerous CD-ROM databases, provides Internet access for students, and makes the catalogue available via the Internet. Users consist of College staff, university students, NZQA students, pastors and subscription members. Students are both onsite and distance, while the pastors are situated throughout the country.

The introduction of an expanded Information Literacy Programme came about as the result of comments made in the College staffroom, which coincided with the fact that the Librarian, Lesley Utting, was studying information literacy at the time. The comments were along these lines: "Have you noticed how many of our students are including information from the Internet in their essays? But they're often not using reliable sources, and they hardly ever provide correct citations so we can't check their references. It's a real problem."

The Library staff did some brainstorming about ways of tackling the problem, and as a result the Librarian asked for time to deliver a presentation to academic staff during the next Staff Development Day.

Initially we considered a presentation directed at the lecturers which would inform them about information literacy. However, upon considering the literature, the Librarian decided that a bit of smart psychology was needed. We decided to both inform and upskill the lecturers by talking them through a session which would subsequently be presented to students. We hoped that the lecturers would expand their own knowledge of information literacy and support our proposed programme at the same time.

We developed a Powerpoint presentation which included online demonstrations of the databases and tools mentioned during the talk. We felt it was necessary to use up-to-date technology to avoid the possibility of the staff and students deciding that this was just another routine promotional session about the library, and thinking, "I know all this."

The presentation to the staff covered the following points:

❖ What is information literacy?

"An information literate person is one who:

- ❖ recognises that accurate and complete information is the basis for intelligent decision making
- ❖ recognises the need for information
- ❖ formulates questions based on information needs
- ❖ identifies potential sources of information
- ❖ develops successful search strategies

- ❖ accesses sources of information including computer-based and other technologies
 - ❖ organises information for practical application
 - ❖ integrates new information into an existing body of knowledge
 - ❖ uses information in critical thinking and problem solving.”
- ❖
- ❖ **The Six Steps of Information Literacy (a simpler model of the above):**
 - ❖ Defining information
 - ❖ Locating and retrieving information
 - ❖ Selecting information
 - ❖ Organising and synthesizing information
 - ❖ Presenting information
 - ❖ Evaluating the information process
- ❖ **Why are we introducing an information literacy programme?**
 - ❖ To cater for the wide range of information literacy abilities among Carey students
 - ❖ To introduce staff and students to the concept of information literacy
 - ❖ To develop an awareness among students that information is available from an increasing variety of sources
 - ❖ To help students cope with “infoglut” as electronic sources become more overwhelming
 - ❖ To help provide Carey students with the skills to become lifelong learners
- ❖ **The Programme for 2001:**
 - 1) **Library Introduction (Orientation):**
 - ❖ Voluntary or at request of lecturers
 - ❖ Library tour
 - ❖ Location of collections and facilities
 - ❖ Location of research tools
 - ❖ Brochures and point-of-use guides
 - ❖ Library procedures
 - ❖
 - 2) **Course-specific sessions on library and research skills, worked out in conjunction with the lecturer, eg. He Akoranga Pukenga/Learning Skills course proposed):**

Session 1 to cover:

 - ❖ Different collections/formats
 - ❖ Types of information in different collections
 - ❖ Using the catalogue and locating material
 - ❖ Self-directed Worksheet (assessed)

Session 2 to cover:

 - ❖ Revisiting learning areas from Session 1
 - ❖ Introduction to journal indexes and fulltext databases
 - ❖ Introduction to finding information on the Internet
 - 3) **Research skills presentation to first-year students:**
 - ❖ Delivered during lecture time, using data projector
 - ❖ Pertinent and fast-moving (approx. 30 minutes)
 - ❖ Demonstration of new library system (Liberty)
 - ❖ Introduction to Index NZ online (journal index)
 - ❖ Introduction to Findarticles.com (fulltext articles)

Conclusion:

- ❖ We need the support of academic staff
- ❖ We need feedback from academic staff
- ❖ We want the programme to be flexible, responsive, and integrated into Carey courses as much as possible

Feedback from staff on the Programme outlined above was varied. Most lecturers were immediately supportive, but there was some initial discussion of the need for students to use the Internet during their research. However it was concluded that many students will probably be determined to use the Internet, so they should be introduced to the necessary information literacy skills.

Progress on the initiatives described above has been varied. The Research Skills presentation to students was delivered three times at the beginning of Semester One. As outlined to the lecturers, it was delivered using Powerpoint and online demonstrations, and it covered the following areas:

Library catalogue:

- ❖ Available on the Library homepage
- ❖ Ability to do own renewals and reserves (forthcoming)
- ❖ More user-friendly searching facilities

Religious and Theological Abstracts:

- ❖ Indexes hundreds of journals in the subject areas
- ❖ 80 of these journals held in this Library
- ❖ Many more journals available in other theological libraries

Index to New Zealand Journals (INNZ):

- ❖ Indexes NZ journals relating to the social sciences
- ❖ Some journals available in this library
- ❖ Others widely available in Auckland libraries

Findarticles.com database:

- ❖ Indexes hundreds of international journals
- ❖ Full text provided free on the database
- ❖ Available via the Internet

“Your Library offers books, journals, CD-Roms, audiocassettes, videos, databases, Internet access, study carrels, coffee, PLUS friendly staff. *How can you manage without using the Library?*”

There was a noticeable increase in the number of students using the Library resources after these presentations, and also students asking for training in how to use specific tools such as RTA and the Internet. We felt that by going into the lecture room we were able to build a rapport with the students that we hadn't achieved before.

Feedback from the academic staff was extremely favourable. A flow-on effect developed as lecturers realised the benefits of tailoring such a presentation to their particular topics, and the library staff have been asked to present several such sessions. The presentations were particularly effective when we tailored the presentation round a current essay topic for the course, and did some prior research of our own.

- ❖ Introduction to finding information on the Internet
 - ❖ Follow-up small group training sessions available
- 4) Voluntary small group training sessions on research tools:
- ❖ Within Library
 - ❖ Scheduled or as requested
- 5) Research skills/information literacy section within the Library pages on the College website (to be prepared during 2001).

The He Akoranga Pukenga/Learning Skills course has not yet been delivered at the College, so plans for the course-specific sessions in the Library are currently on hold. However the planning has been done and the lecturer is still enthusiastic, so we hope that this will happen. The Information Literacy section of the Library webpages is also still in the planning stages.

A point-of-use guide called *Finding Information on the Internet* was prepared in response to that dreaded question, "Can you show me how to use the Internet?" The guide is aimed at beginners and covers Getting started, URLs, Hyperlinks, Search engines and directories, and Evaluating Internet information. It is available in two versions; one for use in the Library, and one for distance students. The next point-of use guide to be prepared will be for the library catalogue (Liberty).

Library staff are very pleased with the progress of the Information Literacy Programme, particularly the presentations delivered in the lecture rooms. We feel that getting ourselves out of the Library environment and standing up in front of staff and students has greatly enhanced the profile of the Library. We have a lot of work still to do for some of our initiatives – but we believe that our Information Literacy Programme has been well and truly launched.

Source: Doyle, Christina. *Information literacy in an information society: a concept for the information age*. Syracuse, NY, Eric Clearinghouse on Information and Technology, June 1994, p. 3.

As quoted in: Booker, Di, ed. *The learning link: information literacy in practice*. Adelaide, Auslib Press, 1995.

Lesley Utting, Librarian
Carey Baptist College
Auckland, New Zealand

Lorraine Orman
Carey Baptist College
Auckland, New Zealand



This may be of interest to librarians who support distance education students.

Theological Education and Distance Learning: A Working Bibliography. Compiled by Charles Bellinger c.bellinger@tcu.edu

Theological Librarian, Asst. Prof. of Theology and Ethics Brite Divinity School

Scope: This is a rough, working bibliography regarding distance learning and seminaries. Suggested additions are welcome; keep in mind, however, that I'm trying to focus on theological education. Works on distance education in secular contexts are, generally speaking, not within the scope of this bibliography. <http://libnt2.lib.tcu.edu/staff/bellinger/theo_distance_bib.htm>