



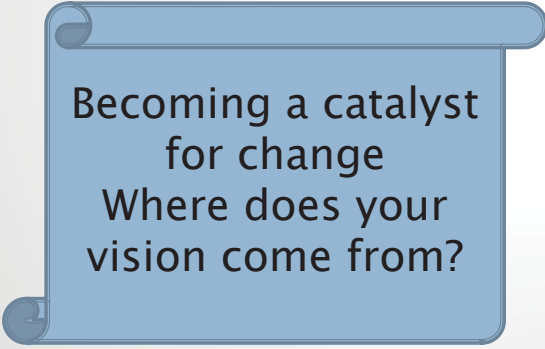

Informed Learning: A Catalyst for Change in Theological Libraries?

by Christine Bruce




Informed Learning: a catalyst for change in theological libraries?

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Becoming a catalyst
for change
Where does your
vision come from?



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graph LR; A["Informed Learning  
Key concepts"] --> B["Informed Learning in  
Faith  
Communities"]; B --> C["Theological Librarians  
Building  
Informed  
Communities"]
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Informed Learning
Key concepts

Informed Learning in
Faith
Communities

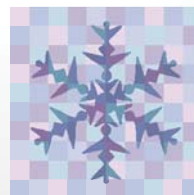
Theological Librarians
Building
Informed
Communities

INFORMED LEARNING

»» On key concepts

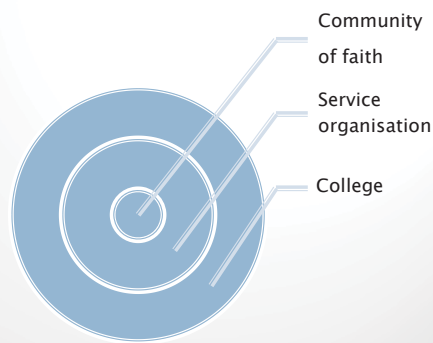
Information experience

- ▶ What does the community we serve experience as information? **What informs** them as they go about their work, study and spiritual development. How do they use that information?
- ▶ What does the experience of being an information user look like? What **information practices** are important? How do people engage with information in these?
- ▶ What does it mean to be information literate in the theological/church context.



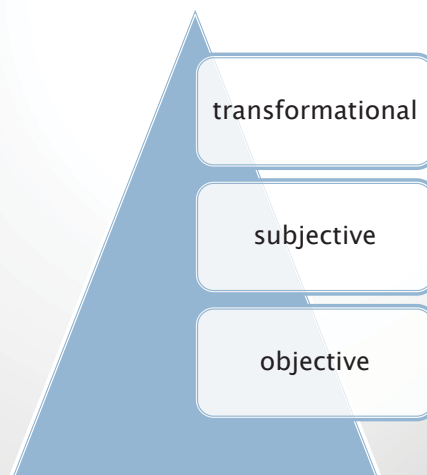
Experiencing Information Use

- ▶ How do people experience information use in the context of the college and beyond its walls?
- ▶ In the taking up of vocation?
- ▶ In the wider community of faith?



Ways of experiencing information

- ▶ Typically, information may be experienced as:
- ▶ What is experienced as information?
- ▶ How do people experience using that information?



INFORMATION LITERACY: the experience of effective information use

We transform and ground our understanding of information literacy by focussing on people's experience of using information in different contexts.

People's experience of information literacy is an "intricately woven fabric, revealing different patterns of meaning depending on the nature of the light cast upon it"

(7 Faces p.151).

Experiences of Information literacy

INSIGHT	WISDOM
KNOWLEDGE BASE	
PROCESS	CONTROL
SOURCES	
INFORMATION AWARENESS	

From information literacy to informed learning

- ▶ We can talk about information literacy (experiencing information use in different ways) as being about **informed learning** (Bruce 2008).
- ▶ Informed learning is using **information** creatively, reflectively, effectively and ethically in order to **learn** in any of life's paths. It is **learning** that is grounded in the effective **information** practices of professional, community and academic life.

Why think about information literacy as informed learning?

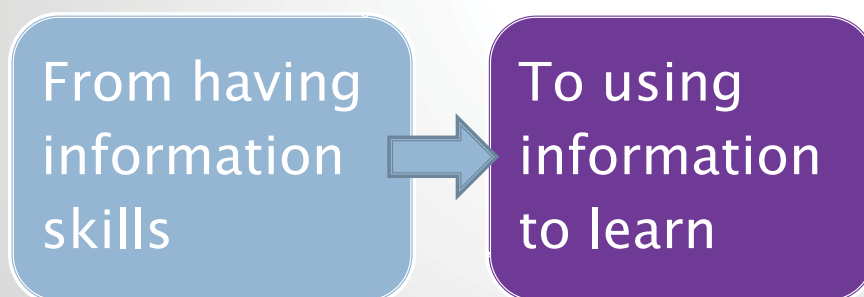
... the word, *inform*, fits nicely with the roots of the word 'educate'; which comes from the Latin *educare* which is to lead out or bring out.

- ▶ Informed Learning brings out the potential within each of us. It fits with the idea that education is our giving shape to ourselves (in-FORM-ing ourselves) by realizing our potential.
(David Kent, e-mail correspondence 28-08-09)

The etymology of 'inform' (with thanks to David Kent)

To give form or shape to	To give organising power to	To give life to
To imbue and actuate with vitality	To animate	To mould
To figure	To fashion	<i>Webster's revised unabridged dictionary (1913)</i>

INFORMED LEARNING



INFORMED LEARNING

simultaneous attention to what is
learned and information use

Using
information



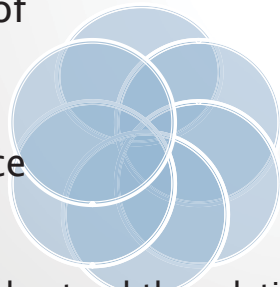
To learn,
become
aware of
something

INFORMED LEARNING

» information use in
communities of faith,
especially the Christian church
community and related
settings – beyond information
literacy for academic
purposes?

Center for the Study of Information and Religion – GOALS <http://csir.slis.kent.edu>

To advance understanding of the role of information in religious practice



To investigate the importance of information in the religious world

To understand the relationship between the information seeking behaviour of clergy and the knowledge that supports them

1st International Conference on Information and Religion

- ▶ Research Frontiers in the Study of Information and Religion
- ▶ Keynote: Brenda Dervin ‘Spiritual Knowledge’
- ▶ Papers to become available, also see *Annual Review of Information and Religion*.
- ▶ May 20, 2011

Conference topics

- ▶ Information seeking behaviour of clergy
- ▶ Information, entropy and belief
- ▶ Use of multimedia in sermon delivery
- ▶ Longitudinal studies of the role of information in the development of new congregations or growth of established ones
- ▶ Information and its application to local congregations and communities

Journal of College and Character

<http://journals.naspa.org/jcc>

- ▶ Special issue (announced 17/2/2011)
- ▶ Role of theological seminaries in increasing interfaith cooperation in the United States
- ▶ Youth voices: Why interfaith work must happen on college campuses.

Informed learning in the church community is experienced as using information in five different ways.

Each of these describes a different experience of using information to learn in the church community:

1. *Growing faith*
2. *Developing relationships*
3. *Managing the church*
4. *Serving the community*
5. *Outreaching beyond the community*

Gunton, L Bruce, C. and Stoodley, I. (manuscript), Experiencing religious information literacy.

1. Using information for growing faith

Informed learning is experienced as understanding and interpreting communication inspired by God to develop a personal faith journey.

Forms of information (**what information**): the Bible, artistic expression and narrative, craft, stories, drama and song around the same message.

Approaches to learning (**How information is used**): personal reflection and study, small group/peer discussion, informal conversation, formal education in the form of workshops, seminars and lectures, and learning by doing.

3. Using information for managing the church

Informed learning is experienced as using collaborative approaches to engage with corporate information to develop administrative functions.

Information: a broad range of documentation, shared in print, digital format via email, or in audio, as presented during meetings or conversations; minutes, quotes, invoices, reports, statistics.

Learning: in groups, where the sharing of information is interactive rather than solitary learning experiences, such as reading or listening.

4. Using information to serve the community

- ▶ Informed learning is experienced as using personal interpretations of gifts and talents in response to needs within the community.
- ▶ Forms of information: text, such as church notices, and verbal information distributed in face-to-face interactions, such as worship services or committee meetings, including digital information.
- ▶ Learning by doing, using kinaesthetic styles, putting learning into practice; engaging in acts of service.

5. Using information to outreach beyond the community

- ▶ Informed learning is experienced as using personal interpretations of gifts and talents in response to needs beyond the church community.
- ▶ Forms of information: controlled ,published, printed formats. Materials provided by charities and other mission organisations. Materials prepared by the church about outreach programs. Commonly received during face-to-face interactions, such as during a worship service.
- ▶ Learning by doing, using kinaesthetic styles, putting learning into practice; engaging in acts of service.

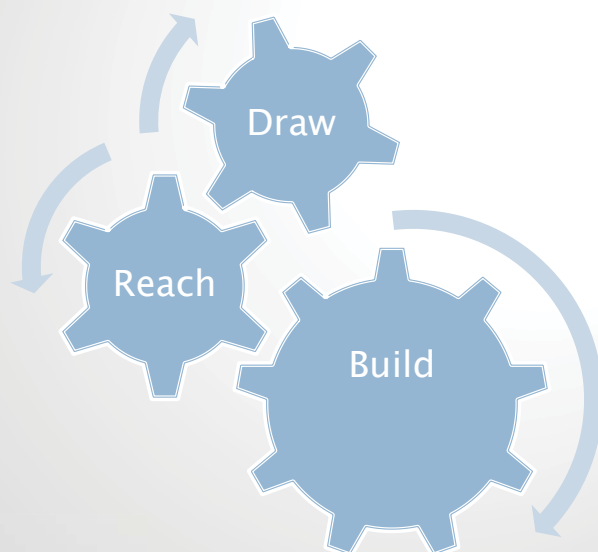
Category Name	IL experienced as	Focus	Information experienced as	Learning experienced as	Margin
1. Growing faith	Understanding and interpreting communication inspired by God to develop a personal faith journey	God Personal faith	Received Personalised with internal application	Reflective	Relationships
2. Developing relationships	Using information generated through social and pastoral interactions to grow relationships	Relationships with people	Relational Shared with others	Communal	Management issues

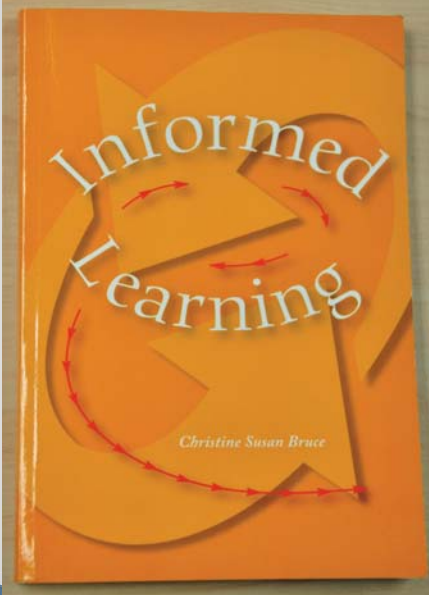
Category Name	IL experienced as	Focus	Information experienced as	Learning experienced as	Margin
3. Managing the church	Using collaborative approaches to engage with corporate information to develop administrative functions	Business or operations of the church	Corporate Systematic	Evidence based	Own service role in the community

Category Name	IL experienced as	Focus	Information experienced as	Learning experienced as	Margin
4. Serving the community	Personal interpretation of gifts and talents in response to needs within the community	Service within the community	Personalised with external application Responsive	Kinaesthetic	Issues outside the community
5. Outreaching beyond the community	Personal interpretation of gifts and talents in response to needs beyond the church community.	Service outside the community	Personalised with application beyond the community Responsive	Kinaesthetic Responsive	Proactivity Other faiths

INFORMED LEARNING

»» Theological librarians building informed communities





DRAW ON RESOURCES

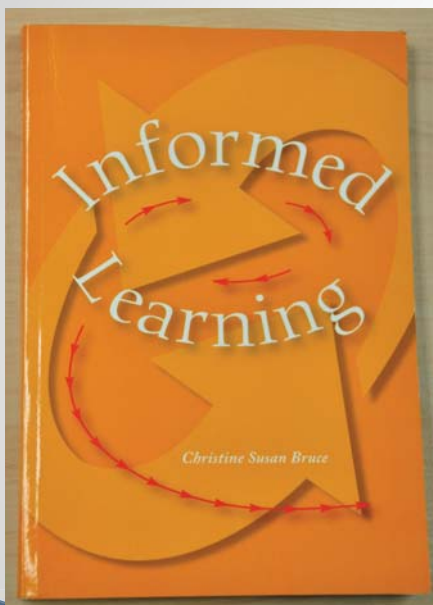
Explains how to help students become informed learners by:

Exploring their student experiences of information use

Exploring the experience of information use in relevant communities

Designing experiences of effective information use into their learning opportunities

Encouraging reflection on information use



Tips and Tricks


Such as:

Sample engagements blending information interaction with content learning

Questions to ask yourself and academic colleagues

Prompts to build into student assignments

Suggestions for possible learning tasks



DRAW attention to experiences of information use

- ▶ From a range of communities.
- ▶ To widen the horizons of students and other members of the college community.
- ▶ Use the wide research base in information literacy and information use in academic and community contexts.

DRAW attention to experiences of using information to learn

- ▶ *In the wider academic community*
- ▶ *In faith communities*
- ▶ *In other relevant context*
- ▶ *Help people become more aware of 'how information can be actively used to grow faith, develop relationships, manage the church ... thereby supporting the pursuit of spiritual wellness and the cultivation of lifelong learning.'*

Lyndelle Gunton, (2011), Religious information literacy; using information to learn in church community.
Australian Library Journal.

REACH forward from skills

- ▶ Consider the information experience of members of the community, as well as those beyond the community; including the experience of less represented/ marginalised groups
- ▶ Take an interest in the broader needs of the learning community and how it might be possible to serve them
- ▶ Think and talk about what the library could do to help

REACH beyond skills: Librarians' experiences of Information literacy

- ▶ Practical
- ▶ Information literacy is experienced through the purposeful acquisition of technical skills
- ▶ Social
- ▶ Information literacy is experienced organically through the process of socialisation (being part of a learning community)

▶ Demasson, Andrew E., et al (2010) *How do public librarians constitute information literacy?* In 5th Int. Conf. on Qualitative Research in IT & IT in Qualitative Research (QualIT2010), 29-30 Nov. 2010, QUT., Brisbane, QLD
<http://eprints.qut.edu.au/39896/1/c39896.pdf>

REACH BEYOND SKILLS

- ▶ Information literacy (education is not) teaching a set of skills but rather a process that should transform both learning and the culture of communities for the better.
- ▶ (Breivik, P. (2000) Foreword, Information Literacy Around the World, edited by C Bruce and P. Candy,
- ▶ We can help people learn by understanding the learners' perspective, and
- ▶ Help people become better information users by understanding their information experiences.

BUILD – Make building an informed community a goal

- ▶ Informed scholars, students and researchers
- ▶ Informed workers in ministry and mission
- ▶ Informed members of the community of faith
- ▶ Aware of how they use information to learn
- ▶ And aware of how those they serve might use information to learn

Partner and Collaborate

With...

- ▶ College staff, other colleges
- ▶ Members of the church community
- ▶ Other libraries, BCC, SLQ, academic
- ▶ Researchers and research projects
- ▶ Funders/decision makers – lobby!

Partnering in learning design

- ▶ Identify a small number of learning strategies that encourage information use and awareness.
- ▶ Talk about them and encourage academics to ask their students to reflect on their information use
- ▶ When researching for essays students could write about the different forms of information they have used and critique value to their learning.
- ▶ Embed info practices, eg creating current awareness strategies and reflecting on what is learned on implementation.



Partnering in academic development

- ▶ Bring students information needs and experiences to the attention of their teachers
- ▶ Bring the information experiences of the faith community to peoples attention.
- ▶ Share articles, papers, books
- ▶ Identify a key message that you want to be your own and repeat it, everywhere...!

Partnering in ensuring the spiritual wellness of the college community

- ▶ We have seen how people use information in different ways in their faith walk (Gunton, 2011).
- ▶ Librarians can bring this kind of knowledge to the table and partner or indeed lead the process of building spiritual wellness in the college community and beyond.

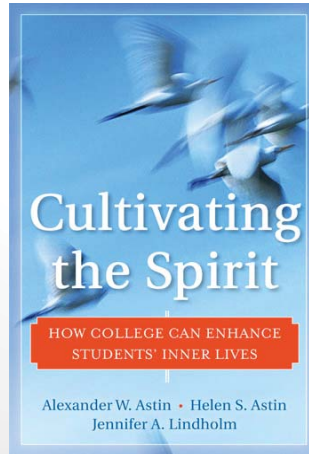
Cultivating the Spirit

Findings show that religious engagement declines during college, but spirituality shows substantial growth.

Students become more caring, more tolerant, more connected with others, and more actively engaged in a spiritual quest. The study identified a number of college activities that contribute to students' spiritual growth.

Spiritual growth enhances academic performance, psychological well-being, leadership development, and satisfaction with college.

www.cultivatingthespirit.com
www.spirituality.ucla.edu



Building library services

- ▶ Should we redesign library services according to peoples information experiences (their interesting, complex ways of using information) instead of fitting them to our services?
- ▶ How can we take peoples real life information experiences more seriously? Designing services and learning to suit them rather than expecting them to fit traditional moulds?
- ▶ See MacAdam, (2000) In Bahr, A (ed) Future teaching roles of academic librarians.



Theological libraries

Theological libraries have the potential to contribute to the academic library agenda around the issue of attending to spiritual growth and personal transformation in the learning community.

What can I do

- ▶ Something small
- ▶ Something focussed
- ▶ Something targeted at a key group that will benefit
- ▶ Something that will involve those responsible for funding and the well being of the college/library



Acknowledgements

- ▶ ANZTLA for inviting the contribution
 - ▶ The QUT information studies research team for the intense intellectual effort in this area
 - ▶ Lyndelle Gunton and Dr Ian Stoodley for their particular interest in informed learning in faith communities
 - ▶ Information Systems Discipline for providing a summer scholarship to assist Lyndelle to continue the work
 - ▶ Uniting Church of Australia for hosting Lyndelle's research
- 