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Developing Digital and Information Literacies in LSE Undergraduate Students

Jane Secker and Maria Bell

London School of Economics and Political Science, London, UK. {j.secker, m.bell}@lse.ac.uk

This presentation reports on work undertaken at London School of Economics and Political Science to enhance the information and digital literacy support for undergraduate students. Illustrating good practice, the session should be of interest to practitioners embedding information and digital literacy within their institution. In 2012 a team from LSE Library and Centre for Learning Technology reviewed undergraduate support in information and digital literacy across central services and academic departments. Using the ANCIL (A New Curriculum for Information Literacy) framework (Secker & Coonan, 2012), the team mapped existing support at LSE to the ten strands of ANCIL. ANCIL defines information literacy broadly, influenced by the UNESCO declaration (UNESCO, 2005), as the skills, behaviour and attitudes that make up the informed scholar and the judicious citizen. The review in Summer 2012 revealed pockets of good practice and gaps in provision at LSE. The findings and recommendations (Bell, Moon & Secker, 2012) were endorsed by LSE's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee in February 2013. The team is consequently developing a digital and information literacy framework to ensure consistency across the institution. They are also undertaking pilot projects to embed information and digital literacy into undergraduate programmes in several academic departments. Using an action research approach, valuable for evaluating the impact of IL, (Vezzosi, 2006) the pilots will investigate the benefits to students, time required in the curriculum and resource implications of the embedded model. The team has been influenced by research undertaken at York St John University to build academic partnerships (McCluskey, 2011).

The report recommends LSE enhance the staff development programme to ensure that academics understand the importance of digital and information literacies to use the framework for embedding this into teaching. The framework makes explicit the roles and responsibilities for information and digital literacy encouraging support services and academic departments to work collaboratively. Progress on this work will be discussed. Finally information literacy teaching delivered by Academic Librarians is also been reviewed. Working with the learning technologists, the team has developed a portfolio of teaching which can be customized and embedded into undergraduate courses either face to face or online. Bell (2011) suggests that a proactive approach of open dialogue between stakeholders can support change, build trust and foster a greater understanding of issues. This project provides a clear vision of digital and information literacy support but also allows dialogue between academic and support staff about teaching and learning in the digital age. LSE as a research-led university, has taken a traditional approach to teaching, assessment and skills support. Recognising the need for information literacy has therefore been challenging and the authors will share their observations. Arguably, the framework and the pilots are changing teachers' attitudes about the need to embed digital and information literacy into the curriculum. Only by working in partnership with academic and other support staff will LSE graduates be equipped with a broad range of survival skills for the digital age.

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