

Preparing Distance Learning Students for Studying, Working and Living in the World:
The Development of Information Capabilities

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Final Report

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1 Conclusions and Summary

1. The capabilities of dealing with information in all its many forms, are essential for life, work and higher study. They are an important part of the practice

3 Information capabilities essential for studying, working and living in the world

3.1 *Our starting points*

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5.1 Access to Information

Most students on face-to-face courses or distance learning courses in the global North have almost constant and high-bandwidth access; to information and library sources, to course resources, to fellow students, and to the wider Internet. This is not the case for all students in the global South. Most have some access, although it may be intermittent and slow. Some online access may be a requirement of ad f hi

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components of item 1 described above. Also, systems and required skills change, for example with the new University of London OpenAthens-IDAP system.

Library and online resources are available to support the development of basic information literacy. However sophisticated our information capabilities may become, as explored below, this basic information literacy remains essential.

An example of how a University of London Worldwide programme develops

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5.13 *Sipping from the waterfall*



Some 100 million items are in or accessible through the University of London Worldwide Library alone.

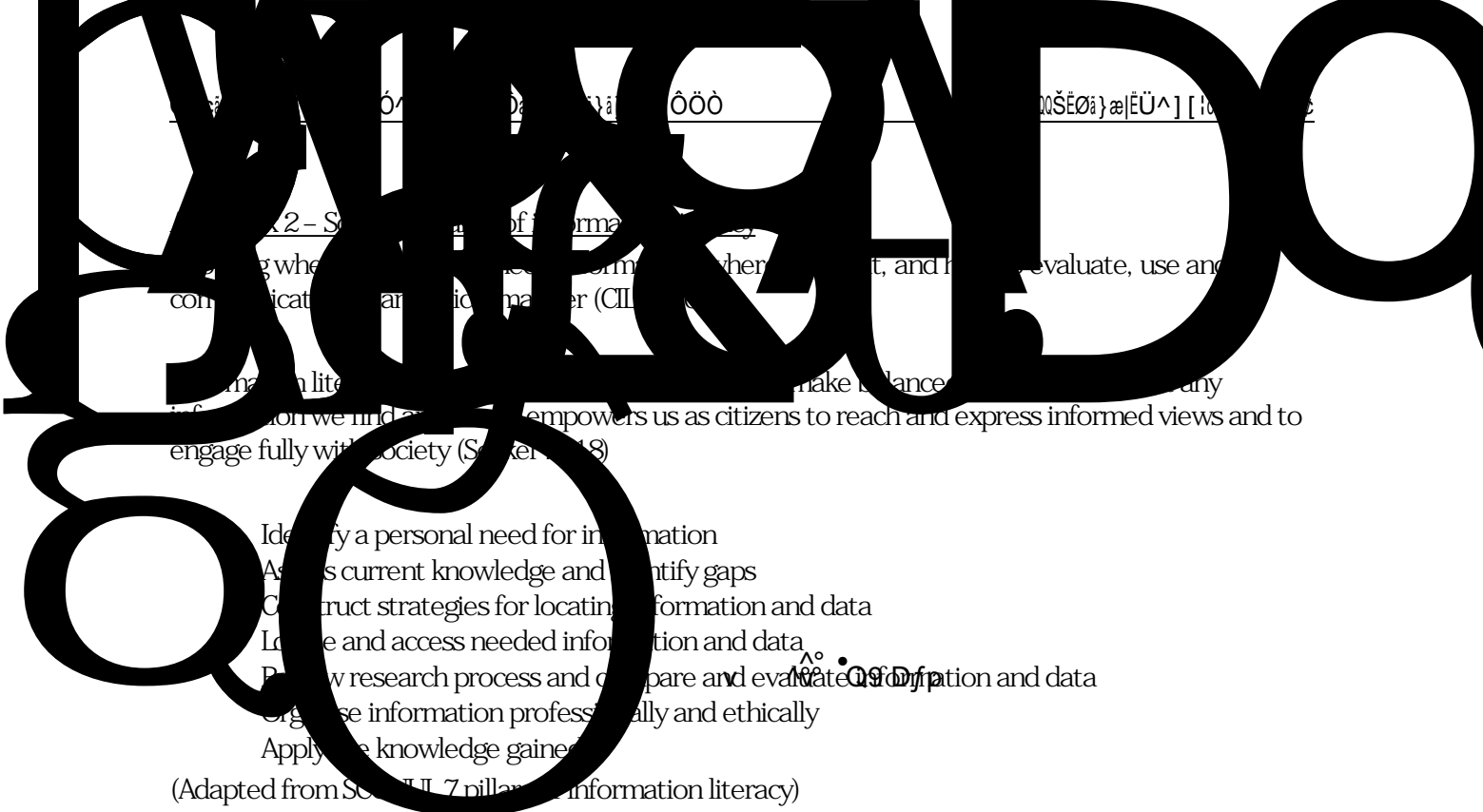
The amount of knowledge / information may be doubling every two or so years.

The half-life of (true) (useful) knowledge is reducing, quickly.

A further essential information capability is sipping from the waterfall without drowning

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2 - Skills of Information Literacy

Identify when and where to use information, where to get it, and how to evaluate, use and communicate it in a particular context (CIL)

Information literacy empowers us as citizens to reach and express informed views and to engage fully with society (Skelton 2008)

- Identify a personal need for information
- Assess current knowledge and identify gaps
- Construct strategies for locating information and data
- Locate and access needed information and data
- Plan a research process and compare and evaluate information and data
- Organise information professionally and ethically
- Apply the knowledge gained

(Adapted from Skelton 2008, 7 pillars of information literacy)

An information literate individual is able to:

- Determine the extent of information needed
- Access the needed information effectively and efficiently
- Evaluate information and its sources critically
- Incorporate selected information into one's 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

(ALA 2000. Since rescinded but still of value.)

Information literacy is the set of integrated abilities encompassing the reflective discovery of information, the understanding of how information is produced and valued, and the use of information in creating new knowledge and participating ethically in communities of learning

Appendix 3 - University of London perspectives on information capabilities

Summary

Programme leaders mainly understand the core characteristics of IL

Programme leaders agree that IL is essential for our students

Programme leaders agree that more could and should be done, including incorporating IL into programme learning outcomes, assessing IL, and measuring the effectiveness of existing IL initiatives

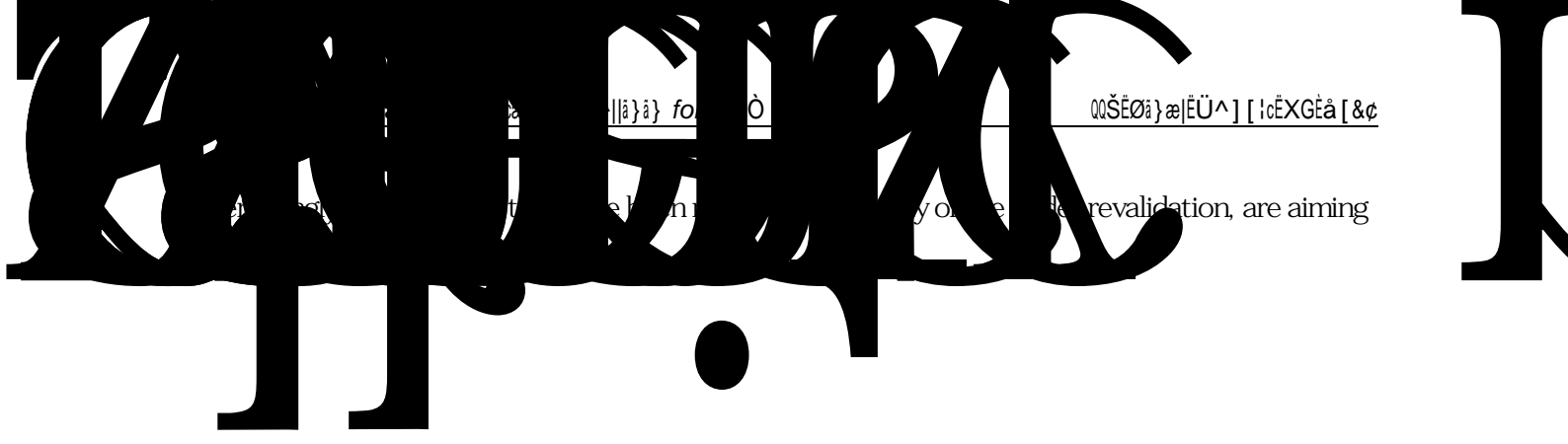
There are inconsistencies on IL across programmes with respect to learning outcomes, learning activities, assessment, and consideration of transferable skills

- “ IL (basic and advanced) is not always made explicit in programmes
- “ Support for improving / developing IL may come too late in programmes
- “ Support for improving / developing IL might, alas, be seen an ancillary or extracurricular activity, rather than as core

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Although we are not aware of any case in which an evaluation of IL has been conducted, respondents are confident that students somehow 'get it'. This might be simply because students do progress into further levels of study, pass the VLE test or a specific module. However there are also some negative evaluations of students' level of IL

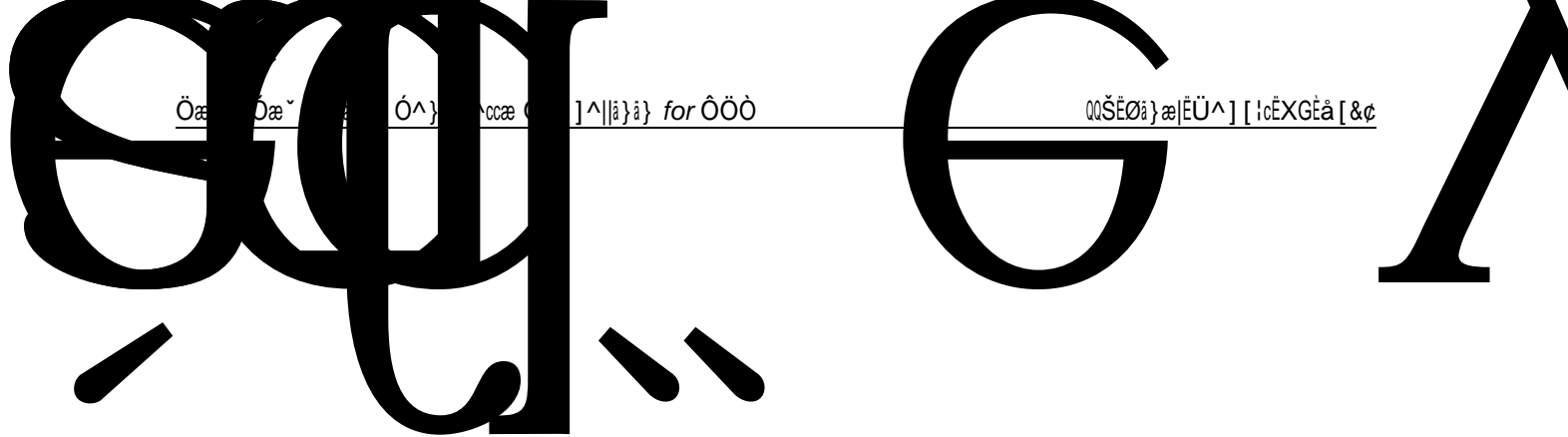
The evaluation that 'we need to do more to be honest' seems to be common. For example:

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In terms of future support, respondents seem to aim at ad-hoc solutions. Some suggest the there is a need to incorporate IL more organically and are working closely with the library to create ad-hoc support for students. In evaluating these initiatives, it seems that localised responses vis



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Interestingly many programme directors were not aware of the existence of policy/guidelines for IL in their colleges or UoL Worldwide programmes.

Lack of consistency across programmes might be due to the lack of a framework/guideline/policy that directors can refer to.

There is a common understanding of Basic Information literacy (BIL), which is mainly understood as:

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Respond: Return to the e-tivity 2 Forum and explore a bibliography recommended by one of your colleagues.

Post a reply under this entry giving your thoughts on the selection of articles that were recommended to you. How useful and interesting did you find this selection? Could

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The IL Policy at QMUL originated with the Library. (The library includes a teaching and learning support function and a research support function.)

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