

Institution: Staffordshire University
Unit of Assessment: 36 – Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management
Title of case study: Information Literacy
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Geoff Walton's PhD thesis in the area of information literacy, together with the input of Allison Pope, led to two significant impacts. The first is the development of a web-based online study skills tool, called The Assignment Survival Kit (or ASK). This tool has been adopted by a number of colleges and universities worldwide. The second strand of impact is the manner in which this work underpinned the delivery of information literacy teaching programmes for the British Library of Development Studies (BLDS).</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>From his PhD work Geoff Walton has produced (with co-authors) 5 journal articles, 3 books, 3 book chapters, and 13 conference papers – many in collaboration with his colleagues at Staffordshire, including Alison Pope. His work is centred on explaining the cognitive, metacognitive and affective processes that are involved in becoming information literate and how these can be maximised in any pedagogical or training setting. A significant portion of this work involves analysing the blended learning environment (a combination of face-to-face and online interventions) especially the ways in which online discourse can be used to create novel learning interventions. The elaboration of this research into pedagogical tools occurred in two papers co-written with Allison Pope and others, both in 2008. This in turn led to the development of the online discourse model evaluated in Hepworth & Walton (2009) Walton & Hepworth (2011; 2012); and Cleland & Walton (2012). Walton & Hepworth (2011) received the <i>Highly Commended Award Winner</i> at the Literati Network Awards for Excellence 2012. Geoff Walton received the Special Libraries Association (SLA) Information Professional Europe Award 2010 sponsored by Dow Jones for his outstanding contribution to the profession.</p> <p>Development work on ASK was funded by Staffordshire University's Technology Supported Learning internal funding and further qualitative research was funded by LearnHigher to develop the content. ASK received a Universities, Colleges & Research Group (CILIP) award. In February 2013, Geoff Walton and the team received HEIF 5 funding for £100,000 to develop ASK as a smartphone app (provisional brand name <i>ASKtheAPP</i>) in partnership with an established app development company. Further research will be carried out to extend the applicability of ASK beyond HE and FE for use by secondary school children, the NHS and SMEs.</p>
<p>3. References to the research</p> <p>Andretta, S., Pope, A. and Walton, G (2008). Information literacy education in the UK, reflections on perspectives and practical approaches of curricular integration. <i>Communications in Information Literacy</i>, 2 (1), pp36-51.</p> <p>Adams, J. Pope, A and Walton, G. (2008). <i>Using Web 2.0 to enhance the Staffordshire University Assignment Survival Kit (ASK)</i>. In Parker, J. E. and Godwin, P (eds). <i>Information literacy meets library 2.0</i>. London: Facet Publishing, pp139-150.</p> <p>Hepworth, M. and Walton, G. (2009). <i>Teaching information literacy for inquiry-based learning</i>.</p>

Impact case study (REF3b)

Oxford: Chandos.

Walton, G. and Hepworth, M. (2011). A longitudinal study of changes in learners' cognitive states during and following an information literacy teaching intervention. *Journal of Documentation* 67 (3), pp449-479.

Walton, G. & Hepworth, M. (2012 OnlineFirst). Using assignment data to analyse a blended information literacy intervention: a quantitative approach. *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*, 44 (2)

4. Details of the impact

Strand 1

The research work discussed above provided the 10 stage framework of the ASK online tool. ASK is a web-based tool designed to support first year undergraduates tackling their first assignment. It was launched in October 2006 as a contribution to Staffordshire University's Widening Participation agenda and in support of the University's Information Literacy Statement of Good Practice. It now underpins the University's aim of creating graduates who are technologically, digitally and information literate. This resource has been adopted either fully (i.e. the software is maintained onsite) or partly (software accessed by a link-through to Staffordshire University) by ten universities worldwide (Staffordshire plus Kent, York St John, Swansea, Sydney University of Technology, Manchester, Aston, Cumbria, Brighton, Minnesota), and several colleges in the Staffordshire University network. It is thus in regular use by tens of thousands of students in the UK, Australia and in the United States. In addition, there are external hits from France, Greece, Italy, New Zealand, Singapore, UAE and Zambia.

Strand 2

The research work has been used by the British Library of Development Studies (BLDS) (part of the Institute for Development Studies (IDS)) to underpin the practical and theoretical framework of an information literacy programme for partners in Africa. The BLDS use the above research as an underpinning teaching 'bible' with which to construct teaching and learning opportunities in information literacy. Drawing heavily from not only the evidence but the theoretical concepts and practical examples the IDS have constructed a number of highly successful courses which have been delivered in developing countries in Africa. The target audiences are information intermediaries, including librarians, researchers, and development NGOs. The programme includes the co-development of a scalable, enquiry-based information literacy programme; a monitoring and evaluation toolkit to measure the impact of information capability interventions; and regional workshops to share best practice approaches to stimulating demand for research knowledge. BLDS have collaborated with the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP) and the Information Training and Outreach Centre for Africa (ITOCA) to co-develop courses in 2010. Four courses were developed:

Pedagogy for Trainers of Policy Makers: This course is designed to enhance the training skills of individuals who provide training in how to access and use research information, to policy makers and influencers. The course aims to help participants develop a highly participatory, learner-centred training style. It covers aspects of learning theory (for example constructivism and behaviourism) as well as more practical aspects of organising training (for example, room layout and designing PowerPoint slides).

Training the Trainers Information Literacy Skills: Hosted in Nigeria, the emphasis of this course

Impact case study (REF3b)

was to develop facilitation skills in training, and to focus on generic skills rather than the more specific product led searching skills.

How to improve search skills: This course was run in Zimbabwe with researchers and librarians from 11 universities based in Southern Africa, in partnership with INASP. The purpose of the course was to help participants in Southern Africa and similar environments share information about refining their search skills and up scaling their information literacy programmes to the institutional level.

Pedagogical Approaches to teaching and learning course: This course was aimed at information literacy trainers, and was piloted with participants from 7 African countries. This course focused on developing the learner-centred training skills of senior academics and librarians who, as designated ITOCA National Liaison Coordinators, ran information literacy courses using more traditional teaching methodologies.

The project achieved 4 key impacts:

1. Creation of four training courses tailored to specific audiences
2. Transformed stakeholders' behaviours regarding teaching and training
3. A tool for measuring impact of training
4. Best practice approaches in stimulating demand for research knowledge

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

University of Kent: <http://www.kent.ac.uk/ai/ask/>

University of Technology, Sydney: <http://www.lib.uts.edu.au/news/29331/assignment-survival-kit>

Learnhigher.ac.uk: Centre for excellence in teaching and learning. In their information for literacy staff, ASK is included as one of their resources. <http://learnhigher.ac.uk/Staff/Information-literacy/Activities-for-students.html>

Information Skills for a 21st Century Scotland (online community of best practise which is open to all practising professionals): <http://www.therightinformation.org/slip-blog/>

RSC Eastern (JISC Regional Support Centre): <http://moodle.rsc-eastern.ac.uk/mod/url/view.php?id=3037>

Walton and Hepworth, eds. (2013) Developing People's Information Capabilities. Emerald. 978-1-78190-5. This edited volume includes reports of the IDS/ BLDS projects and their impact.