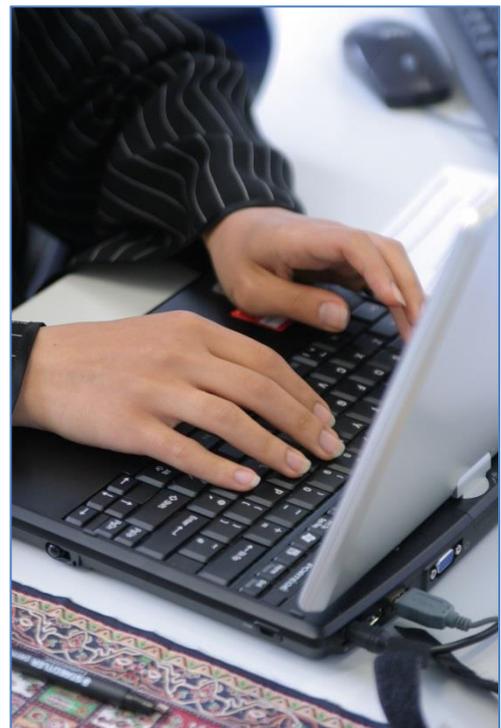


Research Briefing N° 96

Integrating library literacy through distance learning module design

The project aim was to evaluate the effectiveness of a range of strategies to integrate library literacy into an online academic programme. The focus was on the extent to which requiring masters level students to use the online library to find their key readings would encourage them to become more proficient and autonomous library users.

Key words: library literacy; online learning; master's degree; module design



Key findings

The findings of the project are relevant to any programme which requires students to become proficient and autonomous users of libraries at a distance.

- Students were initially extremely reluctant to source their own readings, and it was only through the use of directed tasks that their confidence and competency in becoming distant library users developed. Students began with very limited skills and experience in undertaking library searches, and were unaware of the wealth of resources available. Confidence developed during the module, with many students becoming proficient library users.
- Engaging with the library at a distance enabled students to develop a range of individual and unique approaches to organising and extending their learning.
- Many students described becoming “converts” to using the library at a distance, claiming it had become their preferred method of using the library and its facilities.

What we did

The research was funded by the Centre for Distance Education's (CDE) Teaching and Research Awards in 2013, and was developed from a pilot project. The project, carried out in response to perceived weaknesses in distance learning students' autonomous use of library resources, sought to develop strategies to engage online learners to become proficient library users at a distance, and to evaluate the effectiveness of those strategies. Specifically, the evaluation sought to identify the effect on students' learning, and their confidence in the use of the library at a distance.

The project integrated a range of library guides, resources and searching techniques to the core introductory module "What is Education?" on the Masters (MA) in Education programme at the Institute of Education (IOE). The predominantly international student cohort enrolled on the module may not have had physical access to the

Newsam library (based at the IOE), and may have had a range of previous experiences of using physical and virtual library resources.

How we did it

The project was evaluated with a range of data collected during and subsequent to the teaching of the module. This data included:

- library usage data;
- student feedback both during and after the module (via mid- and end of module evaluations, and a student survey);
- detailed interviews with eight students.

In addition, module tutors were invited to share their observations and reflections.

Further information

[See the Centre for Distance Education's website – Teaching and Research Award Resources](#)

The full project report is soon to appear.

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