

A New Curriculum for Information Literacy:

ANCIL for Cambridge Colleges

What is Information Literacy?

ANCIL defines information literacy in the broadest sense:

Information literacy is a continuum of skills, behaviours, approaches and values that is so deeply entwined with the uses of information as to be a fundamental element of learning, scholarship and research. It is the defining characteristic of the discerning scholar, the informed and judicious citizen and the autonomous learner.
(ANCIL 2011)

This definition is aligned with that of UNESCO's Alexandria Proclamation:

Information Literacy lies at the core of lifelong learning. It empowers people in all walks of life to seek, evaluate, use and create information effectively to achieve their personal, social, occupational and educational goals. It is a basic human right in a digital world and promotes social inclusion of all nations.
UNESCO (2005) Alexandria Proclamation

Why is a Information Literacy strategy needed?

This broad approach to information literacy encompasses not only the development of autonomous learners in the university context, but also promotes employability and lifelong learning in social and personal spheres of life. Supporting students in developing their information literacy in a digital age becomes the business of anyone within an institution who is involved with the academic development and pastoral care of students. It is no longer the domain solely of librarians, but necessitates a joined-up, interprofessional approach across an institution.

The short video introducing ANCIL gives a concise overview of the case for a new approach for information literacy at a strategic institutional level. It can be viewed online at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vY-V2givliE>

What is ANCIL?

A New Curriculum for Information Literacy (ANCIL) was developed during two 10 week research projects funded by the Arcadia Programme, which is based at Cambridge's University Library and aims to rethink the role of the research library in a digital age. The remit of the ANCIL fellowships was to develop a revolutionary new curriculum for

information literacy in a digital age, and to investigate strategies for implementing the curriculum, both at Cambridge and in other higher education institutions. The curriculum is a practical framework for information literacy which meets the needs of the undergraduate student entering higher education over the next five years. It is designed for delivering information literacy across a variety of contexts and formats. To suit the needs of different contexts, it is flexible and adaptable rather than offering any one prescriptive mode of delivery.

Why ANCIL for Colleges?

The curriculum takes a very broad interpretation of information literacy, which goes well beyond basic skills of searching for information, learning to use tools such as catalogues and databases, and the traditional remit of the librarian. It is not the preserve of any one profession or service within the institution, but is an initiative which involves join-up between all parties involved with teaching and learning, or student support more generally across the whole institution, including the University (Faculties and Central Services) and the Colleges.

The curriculum is grounded in a view of information literacy as fundamental to the ongoing development of the individual in both an academic and a social context. This vision is closely allied to the uniquely personal and holistic educational context which a Cambridge College offers its students. Its design was informed by the following principles, which are reflected also in the teaching and learning environment of the Colleges:

- **Holistic**: supporting the whole process of study and research rather than just teaching traditional library skills
- **Modular**: consisting of ongoing input to meet the developing needs of students during their whole undergraduate career, not just one-shot or induction sessions.
- **Embedded**: forming a salient part of academic teaching, or run closely alongside it over the course of the academic year, and with activities and problems directly related to students' subject context and individual learning needs.
- **Active and assessed**: containing a significant element of active and reflective learning, including informal and formative assessment through discussion and peer learning.
- **Flexible**: for use and adaptation in all contexts which offer Higher Education, and designed specifically for flexible implementation in a variety of formats to take into account the specific structures and priorities of different Colleges and subjects.
- **Transformative**: grounded in a broad reading of 'information literacy' which sees IL not as a set of competencies but as a fundamental attribute of the discerning scholar, and as a crucial social and personal attribute in the digital age.

ANCIL's broad, flexible and student-centred approach means that it fits particularly well in the College context. It can enhance College teaching and learning, and support students in becoming information literate, successful learners in academic, employment and social contexts.

How can ANCIL be delivered?

There are a variety of ways in which the curriculum could be implemented by a College to develop students' learning, from 'light-touch' enhancing of existing provision to offering a framework for designing new provision. Delivering ANCIL need not be resource intensive, and does not replace what is already offered by the College.

Auditing

ANCIL can be used as an audit tool to identify and evaluate current information literacy provision. This can achieve a number of aims:

- Highlighting and sharing good practice
- Promoting join-up between different providers
- Identifying gaps in provision
- Avoiding duplication or conflicting provision

An audit could be conducted at various levels: across a whole College, within a subject grouping by a DoS or service such as a College Library, or by an individual to evaluate their own practice for staff development purposes.

The Curriculum might also provide a framework for the gathering of data on levels of student information literacy, from sources such as requests for guidance from College Librarians or Directors of Studies, attendance patterns at workshops on various aspects, feedback patterns through supervisor surveys or CamCORS reports, and access data on online or paper-based resources. This data could be used to inform future provision.

Benchmarking

ANCIL offers a framework to articulate the levels of information literacy expected of students at different points during their studies. Using ANCIL as a benchmarking tool can:

- Offer the basis for a shared understanding of information literacy between students and teaching staff. It can help to articulate for students the expectations of their Directors of Studies and Supervisors, so they can better understand, acquire and further develop the necessary skills and attributes at the appropriate stages in their learning.
- It might therefore form the basis of a document for students, with signposts as to where these skills and attributes will be addressed and other sources of guidance within the college and externally. It may also help students to identify and articulate areas which they find problematic in their own learning, and to request further guidance.
- Provide a shared framework for individual students and teaching staff to track and review progress. This could be used to inform Supervisors' termly reports, and for the Director of Studies to set goals with a student in their termly meeting. In conjunction with the document for students (see above), it can also be used to enhance Supervisors' feedback on weekly assignments.

- Offer a framework for Directors of Studies and Supervisors within a College subject group to agree on the areas and levels of information literacy that students are expected to attain at various points in their course, and how to address them. This can also be mapped on to Faculty expectations (particularly if a similar exercise has been undertaken by the Faculty). This can ensure a consistent, joined-up approach to Information Literacy development and assessment for students.

Teaching

ANCIL is a practical curriculum which not only offers a syllabus for information literacy, but also suggestions for teaching. It is not prescriptive, and is neither generic nor subject specific; instead, it identifies the core attributes of information literacy provision to be adapted to fit the disciplinary requirements of each subject. It offers suggestions for teaching and assessment activities that can be adapted and incorporated into a variety of teaching contexts, from stand-alone workshops to activities integrated into the normal course of supervisions or guidance from Directors of Studies or Tutors. The ten strands of the curriculum are not plans for ten separate sessions, nor are they intended to replace or add to existing provision; instead they are a menu of elements that can be combined to create or enhance teaching of whatever type that meets the learning needs of students at various points in their studies. A 'pick-and-mix' approach is recommended for both the content of delivery sessions and for the activities suggested.

Teaching the curriculum could take a number of forms, not all of which need be resource intensive. Delivery might include:

- A model to inform one-to-one guidance delivered by a Director of Studies, Tutor, Librarian etc. See the section on **guidance** below, and the document *Information Literacy First Aid* for more information.
- Small activities embedded within supervisions. These need not add extra material to the Supervisor's teaching, but offer ways to teach the subject content in a way which also helps students to develop their information literacy. A resource containing sample activities for supervisions is available on the project wiki.
- Loosely structured discussion groups or seminars led by Directors of Studies, Supervisors or College Librarians or student peer mentors. These may be largely student-led around the themes of the curriculum or using the model *Information Literacy First Aid*.
- Add-on workshop sessions run for subject-specific or more generic groups of students by a Director of Studies, College Librarian or Skills Tutor (where these exist). There are suggested activities within the ANCIL curriculum document suitable for a workshop context, which can be combined in various ways to create a tailored session as needed. Such workshops could be delivered along the lines of and in conjunction with existing provision such as induction activities, Transkills workshops etc.
- Informing and enhancing supplemental resources such as online or paper-based guides.

Documents referred to are available on the ANCIL project wiki:

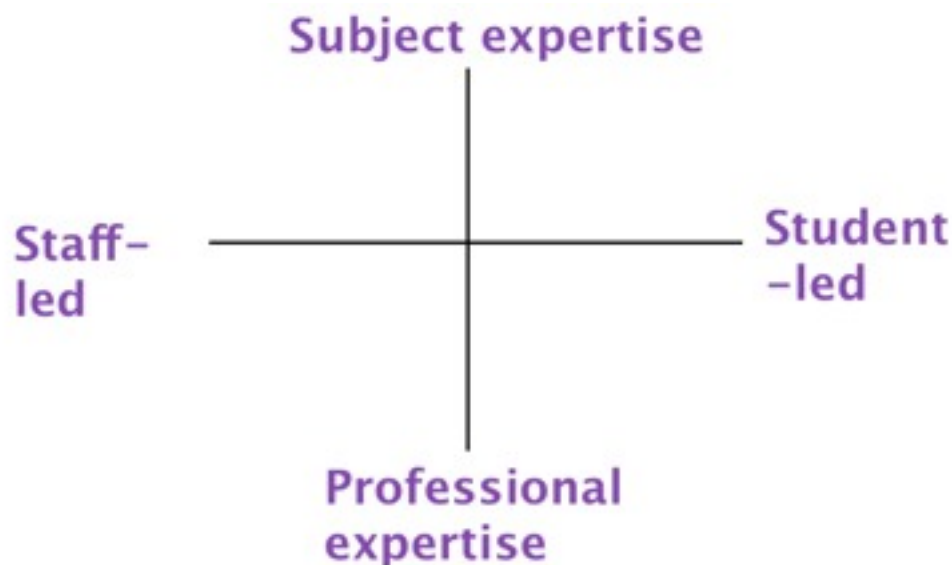
<http://implementingancil.pbworks.com>

Teaching might be either:

Proactive and staff-led (in which staff anticipate the need for students to develop certain skills at particular points such as induction, transition to second year, writing dissertations etc). Staff would set priorities and goals, and structure the delivery accordingly across the course of the students' degree. Supervisors or workshop leaders might use the Curriculum to create a more structured approach to developing their students' information literacy over the course of a term or year, by setting their own core priorities and when they will address them. Potential disadvantages of this approach may be that the timing of delivery does not coincide with the point at which students perceive the need for, value or can assimilate the learning.

Reactive and student-led (in which staff offer guidance in response to students' requests or on assessment of the performance of individuals or small groups of students, though feedback or termly reports). Reactive provision need not mean remedial; instead it might be a more embedded form of provision led by students' own indications of when they perceive delivery to be most relevant to them. Potential challenges may be that such provision is particular to a specific short-term need, last-minute and crisis-led, and does not result in longer-term, deep or transferable learning. The model *Information Literacy First Aid* offers a guide for structuring student-led delivery in a way which promotes deeper learning.

Incorporating both approaches together in some combination will offer holistic and joined up provision. Provision might entail the subject expertise of academics, or the professional expertise of staff such as librarians, counsellors, study skills tutors or college nurses. Best practice would entail joint provision.



Guidance

ANCIL can be used as a model for effective, holistic, one-to-one guidance to students, either as part of overall academic and pastoral care by DoSs and Tutors, by professionals working in the context of booked guidance appointments, or ad hoc queries by students. The *Information Literacy First Aid* model has been developed from the core attributes of ANCIL to help staff meet the student's immediate learning need while placing it in the context of their broader and longer-term information literacy development. It can inform the guidance offered by a range of professionals, where information literacy touches on their work with students, and promote deeper, more autonomous learning. Within a College context, these professionals might include:

- Directors of Studies and Tutors
- Supervisors
- College Librarians and other library staff
- Learning Developers and study skills tutors
- Healthcare professionals such as College Nurses
- Peer Mentors
- Student Union representatives

Who might contribute to delivery of the Curriculum?

Delivery of ANCIL at a College might be led or coordinated by the Senior Tutor, or other figures who have an interest in developing the information literacy skills of the College's students, such as the College Librarian, Admissions Tutor, Skills Tutor, etc.

As ANCIL's approach to information literacy is holistic and transformative in a broad sense, there are several roles in the College who might be involved in delivering or supporting the delivery of the Curriculum at some level, whether this is teaching workshop sessions, offering expertise and guidance to students or staff, or signposting students to appropriate sources of support. Each role might also offer their perspective and professional expertise to others on the issues as they are presented in their work, to inform and complement the practice of others. Joined-up provision across the various roles in the college and ongoing dialogue between parties is key.

The roles which might have some role in delivering or supporting the curriculum include the following (depending on the precise remit and institutional structure, which varies across Colleges):

Senior Tutor

The Senior Tutor's role is key in offering a coherent lead in implementing ANCIL, encouraging joined-up provision across the College and beyond, and ensuring that various roles within the College are resourced and empowered to contribute. An important part of

this process will be auditing provision within the College and drawing the expertise of non-academic and non-teaching professionals into the discussion, to inform the practice of Directors of Studies and Supervisors. Professional staff such as College Librarians and Nurses have a distinct and valuable perspective on students' learning which can enhance teaching.

Resources:

- Cambridge Information Literacy Map
- ANCIL Audit tool

College Librarian

The changing role of libraries in the digital age has brought about new dimensions to the traditional role of the librarian in terms of teaching information literacy, which ANCIL can support. The College Librarian (and other College library team members, where applicable) has extensive expertise which can inform the delivery of ANCIL across the College, particularly of Strands 4, 5, 6 and 7. Depending on available resources, delivery of the curriculum by the College Library might include workshops, but may more frequently be in the form of enhanced one-to-one guidance using the model of Information Literacy First Aid. The role of the College Librarian, as opposed perhaps to that of the Faculty Librarian, is particularly well positioned to support the transition to university of first year students. Library provision of ANCIL could be enhanced by join-up with Directors of Studies and Supervisors, led by the Senior Tutor and Directors of Studies, so that Library guidance is informed by the wider context of teaching and learning in which students seek information, such as reading lists (their contents and also the expectations that they imply), course requirements (e.g. compulsory courses which may place higher demand at particular times for resources and guidance). College Library staff occupy a neutral, non-judgmental position as they do not assess students' work, and therefore have a valuable perspective on the issues raised by students' information literacy development from which other staff may benefit.

Resources:

- ANCIL for Cambridge Libraries
- ANCIL Information Literacy First Aid
- Curriculum document: workshop activities
- Cambridge Information Literacy map

Admissions Tutor

The Admissions Tutor, together with other members of the team such as the Schools Liaison Officer, can inform delivery of the curriculum with current knowledge of the contexts from which students arrive at Cambridge, and the varying levels of information literacy from which students make the transition into Higher Education.

Resources:

- Curriculum document
- Cambridge Information Literacy map

Tutors

ANCIL can inform the Tutor's role in overseeing a student's general welfare. The aspects of the role which ANCIL might touch on include: help in developing transferable skills, advice on study methods, reviewing progress, initial careers advice and liaising with Directors of Studies. It is anticipated that delivery of ANCIL would be in the form of enhancing one-to-one advice, to provide a framework around which to discuss academic development and information literacy in a wider sense, including employability. A good knowledge of other providers to whom students can be referred is key. Tutors are in a neutral, non-judgmental position as they do not assess students' work, and therefore have a valuable perspective on the issues raised by students' information literacy development from which other staff may benefit.

Resources:

- Curriculum document
- ANCIL Information Literacy First Aid
- Cambridge Information Literacy Map

Directors of Studies

ANCIL can play a key role in the duties of the Director of Studies. The aspects of the role which it might enhance include: advising new students on learning procedures, monitoring and discussing progress including supervision reports, explaining University, College and Departmental Library resources, liaising with supervisors, the college and faculty Librarians and Tutors, and offering advice on any matter relating to the subject, particularly if the student is in difficulty.

Directors of Studies might use the workshop activities suggested in the curriculum to help create sessions in addition to subject teaching; they might also use ANCIL as a basis for a discussion with Supervisors about expectations of the level of information literacy to be developed by students, in order to develop a coherent approach, and as a framework for discussing progress with students in termly meetings. ANCIL might also inform occasional meetings with students to discuss problematic areas of progress.

Resources:

- The Curriculum document
- ANCIL Information Literacy First Aid
- ANCIL teaching resources for Supervisors
- Cambridge Information Literacy map

Supervisors

Supervisors are one of the most valuable aspects of teaching and learning at Cambridge, and, for the students, their supervisors are perhaps the most immediate and important source of information literacy provision as well as subject teaching, and have potentially the most impact on students' learning. It is in the first instance the supervisor who creates in the student the initial need to actively seek, use and create information, through the work they set each week. Unless this information need is set up well by the supervisor, and the student offered structured guidance in developing the skills to meet that need, the student may not be in a position to make best use of their librarian. Supervisors are also in the best position to identify areas in which an individual student may need to improve their information literacy, and to work with them to do so in the context of the assignments set with immediate feedback on their progress. To teach effectively, engaging with other

providers at College and Faculty Level is key, and the Cambridge Information Literacy map will aid in identifying them.

A set of teaching resources for Supervisors offers a variety of approaches for offering information literacy teaching *through* the usual course of subject teaching, without diverting time and resources from it. ANCIL can also be used as a framework to promote good communication between the Supervisor and Director of Studies regarding expectations, and to tie in the perspectives of other providers such as the College Librarian.

Resources:

- ANCIL teaching resources for supervisors
- ANCIL Information Literacy First Aid
- Cambridge Information Literacy map

JCR: Academic affairs or library reps, peer mentoring

The JCR can play a key role in engaging students with developing their information literacy and the benefits of drawing on the expertise of staff such as the College Librarian. ANCIL can offer a framework around which peer mentor training could be developed, possibly alongside the role of library rep or existing peer mentoring systems. Peer mentors or Academic Affairs officers might use the Information Literacy model as a way of informing the guidance they offer to students who may approach them with questions or issues. Awareness of the issues which arise in students' work, and the appropriate sources of guidance to whom students might be referred, would also be valuable. JCRs and Library reps may play a role in presenting the student perspective of information literacy development to the college, which will greatly inform teaching.

Resources:

- Curriculum document
- Cambridge Information Literacy map
- ANCIL Information Literacy First Aid

College nurse

College Nurses may often be made aware by students of information literacy issues which are having a negative impact on their health and wellbeing. As a result, College Nurses may frequently offer general guidance on aspects such as time management, managing reading and note-taking as well as the more affective, personal aspects such as making the transition to HE and learning to learn. College Nurses may also be involved more directly in teaching information literacy in Strand 10: the social dimension of learning and becoming a lifelong learner; students may need guidance in using information sources such as the web appropriately for finding information on health issues.

College Nurses may choose to offer a formal session, for example, *Using the Web for Health Information*, but it is anticipated that the Curriculum might rather be used to inform the practice of College Nurses as ongoing professional development in the academic issues that affect students' health and wellbeing, and as a basis for offering guidance that reflects that offered by academic staff. The experience and professional expertise of College Nurses might also usefully be drawn upon by others offering information literacy teaching, as students may present their perspectives to College Nurses differently than to

other staff members, and College Nurses may have distinctive and valuable insights on these issues which could inform the practice of other colleagues.

Resources:

- ANCIL Information Literacy First Aid
- Cambridge Information Literacy map

Development Office:

Drawing on the expertise of alumni with an interest in Higher Education and Employability might be very valuable for informing any careers-related information literacy activities in College.

Resources:

- Curriculum document

ANCIL resources

All ANCIL documents can be found at the project wiki:

<http://implementingancil.pbworks.com/>

Further information about the ANCIL project including updates about future developments in Cambridge and nationally can be found at:

<http://newcurriculum.wordpress.com/>