Strategies for Implementing A New Curriculum For Information Literacy

(Higher Education Institutions other than Cambridge)

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Summary

The Strategies for Implementing A New Curriculum for Information Literacy (ANCIL) project was developed from the original ANCIL project by Drs. Coonan and Secker. Both projects were a part of the Arcadia Programme of University Library Cambridge. The programme ran from 2008 to 2011 with the remit of examining the role of libraries in the digital age and funded Arcadia Fellowships to undertake 10 week intensive research projects in this field. Details of the programme and related projects can be found at http://arcadiaproject.lib.cam.ac.uk/.

Two Arcadia Fellows (Dr. Helen Webster and Katy Wrathall) were given the remit of investigating strategies for implementing ANCIL. Dr. Webster was to concentrate on University of Cambridge whilst Katy Wrathall would research implementation at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) other than Cambridge. This report outlines the latter strand. It details the creation of an Information Literacy provision audit and two pilot projects, one by interview at University of Worcester and the other by online survey at York St John University. The outcomes are discussed and recommendations for future utilization are given.

A New Curriculum For Information Literacy

In 2005, the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) issued the Alexandria Proclamation. It included the following:

> "information literacy and lifelong learning are the beacons of the Information Society, illuminating the courses to development, prosperity and freedom.
> 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.
> Lifelong learning enables individuals, communities and nations to attain their goals and to take advantage of emerging opportunities in the evolving global environment for shared benefit. It assists them and their institutions to meet technological, economic and social challenges, to redress disadvantage and to advance the well being of all."

IFLA (2005).

This proclamation has informed the development of A New Curriculum for Information Literacy (ANCIL). According to Coonan and Secker (2011)

> "This short project seeks to develop a practical curriculum for information literacy that meets the needs of the undergraduate student entering higher education over the next five years."

Their aims were:

> "To understand the information needs of future undergraduate students on entering higher education
> To develop a revolutionary curriculum for information literacy that can be used with undergraduate students entering UK higher education
> To equip students with the knowledge, skills and behaviour around information use to support their learning in the digital age

To develop a flexible curriculum that can be used and adapted in a variety of settings

To support face to face, blended and online learning provision"

(Coonan and Secker, 2011).

ANCIL consists of ten strands:

- Transition into Higher Education
- Becoming an independent learner
- Developing academic literacies
- Mapping and evaluating the information landscape
- Resource discovery within discipline
- Managing information
- Ethical dimension of information
- Presenting and communicating knowledge
- Synthesising information and creating new knowledge
- Social dimension of information.
-

These strands can be broadly placed within five categories:

- Key skills
- Academic literacies
- Subject specific competencies
- Advanced information handling
- Learning to learn.
-

The curriculum is intended to be used across an undergraduate's timeline in the University, it is designed to be progressive in delivery, building a set of information skills which will culminate in an information literate independent learner. This has been likened to a spiral scaffold

"allowing learners to develop an informed and reflective understanding of their subject and of their own learner identity in relation to it."

(Coonan and Secker, 2011).

The ANCIL definition of Information Literacy is:

> “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.”

Strategies for Implementing ANCIL in Higher Education Institutions other than Cambridge

Why audit?

The Strategies for implementing ANCIL project had two separate but complementary strands, one being a 12 week project to examine methods of implementing ANCIL within Cambridge and the other being a 10 week project investigating strategies within non-Cambridge HEIs.

Information Literacy has long been believed to be primarily the domain of academic librarians. In 1999 the SCONUL Information Skills Taskforce found that

> "'There are few academic library services that do not now regard the teaching of information skills as an important part of their mission' (Biddiscombe, 1999). This is evident from recent trends of activity in this area of work, identified from data supplied by the Library and Information Statistics Unit at Loughborough University. The average number of hours spent by library staff providing orientation and post-orientation for students in SCONUL institutions has increased over the last six years from 13 hours to 22 (per 100 fte students). There are variations within this, for example, in 'new universities' the figures are 22 and 28 respectively, whilst for CURL (Consortium of Research Libraries) institutions the figures are 6 and 17. Though the amount of 'teaching' varies from institution to institution the trend is very clear. The number of users receiving orientation or post-orientation sessions is increasing overall from 36% to 46%, while appearing to be constant in the 'new' universities at 60%."

Information Skills Task Force, on behalf of SCONUL. (1999).

There is also a growing understanding that

> "Librarians alone can not provide an effective information literacy program for the entire student body on campus. When departmental faculty and librarians share the responsibility for the information literacy program, it can be implemented with a more coherent and systematic

approach throughout the campus. The information literacy curriculum can:

Be more problem, inquiry or resource based when integrated.

Be applied with more effective use of instructional pedagogies and technologies

Be integrated and articulated better within the disciplines' learning outcomes

Information literacy therefore depends on collaboration among classroom faculty, academic administrators, librarians and other information professionals. In order to effectively implement a program all parties must be involved"

Courtright Memorial Library Otterbein University Ohio, 2011.

It was not clear to what extent such collaboration may exist and to that end it was decided that ANCIL could be used to form the basis of an audit of Information Literacy provision within two HEIs. This would provide information as to existing provision across the institutions, whether this was formalised, and at what stage in an undergraduate's career it was delivered.

Institutions

Due to the time constraints of the project it was believed that no more than 2 HEIs could be audited. The universities selected and the reasons for doing so are outlined in the following paragraphs.

University of Worcester

Sarah Oxford (Academic Liaison Librarian) had undertaken research into the effectiveness of Information Literacy teaching at the University. She works closely with a Course Leader in one of the Faculties she supports to embed the teaching into course content and measure the effects of such teaching. It was believed that this work and the existing professional connections with the University would make it a good subject for one of the pilots.

York St John University

Clare McCluskey (Academic Support Librarian) has done much work on Creating Information Literacy Partnerships in Higher Education, presenting on

the subject at LILAC 2011 (her presentation is available at http://lilacconference.com/WP/wp-content/uploads/McCluskey.pdf). This pre-existing commitment to collaboration in Information Literacy provision made York St John University a logical choice for the second pilot.

Methods

Defining the questions

Various levels of organisation charts for both institutions were used to map the skills and support provision for formal, student led, academic led and embedded delivery. This enabled identification of areas where there was a potential overlap of provision, areas susceptible to a lack of provision, the identification of those positioned and skilled to deliver the provision, and whether parity of provision exists.

The 10 strands of ANCIL (as previously defined above) were used to form the basis of an Information Literacy Provision Audit Questionnaire (see Appendix A).

The strands were then further expanded into more specific applications to try to ascertain whether respondents understood what was involved in each of the strands, whether they were involved in delivering them in full or in part and whether delivery was formal and mandatory or informal and elective.

Respondents were also asked to identify at what stages of the undergraduate timeline they were supporting and helping students (this was intended to include the teaching of students) and to identify those with whom they worked collaboratively on a formal basis.

Further questions were also asked as to ownership or responsibility for Information Literacy, how to deliver the Curriculum, any known issues, which areas of an institution might be reluctant to change how provision was delivered, which areas would be "champions" and who were the top influencers. (See Appendix B).

Posing the questions

In order to test the effectiveness of the questions it was decided the survey would be carried out in different ways at University of Worcester and York St John University. At Worcester, in close collaboration with Sarah Oxford

(Academic Liaison Librarian) and Ellen Williams (Student Achievement Officer), individuals and teams were identified to take part in a series of one-to-one interviews. It was decided that the full set of questions would be asked of each interviewee to try to identify issues arising in different areas and professions.

At York St John, Clare McCluskey (Academic Support Librarian and Teaching Fellow) and Helen Westmancoat (Deputy University Librarian and Teaching Fellow) distributed the survey electronically using the free version of SurveyMonkey (a free online survey tool). A shorter more fact-finding version was sent for non-Library and Information Services (LIS) participants (see Appendix B). The theory was this would encourage them to complete the survey. LIS staff received the full version (a combination of those shown at Appendices A and B).

Unfortunately the constraints imposed by SurveyMonkey meant that the longer survey had to be split into two, which may have had some adverse impact on responses as it was noted that several respondents only returned the first part.

Audits

Participants

In all 37 responses were received across the two HEIs. Those who took part either as interviewees or by returning the survey held a variety of roles, which could be summarised as:

- Academic support librarians
- Front-line librarians
- Technical roles within Library and Information Services (LIS)
- Student Services officers
- Careers officers
- Heads of Service
- Deputy Deans
- Heads of Programmes and Courses
- Lecturers
- Adminstrators

This wide range of roles enabled a broad view of Information Literacy Skills provision to be obtained.

Interviews

Representatives from seven departments at University of Worcester participated in the face-to-face interviews. These were kept deliberately informal and scheduled to last between one and one and a half hours. As the project had no official base in the University, and in order to keep the location as neutral and informal as possible, the interviews were held in one of the coffee shops on site. The questionnaire was used as a script, and interviewees were asked to identify whether the support they provided was formal or informal, mandatory or voluntary and delivered in conjunction with other areas or not.

It became evident that whilst interviewees often did not initially recognise their provision as falling within the ten strands they did once the strands were expanded into the more specific questions. The questions apparently provided an opportunity for reflection on their own practice for many of the participants, providing a greater insight into the structure of delivery and the occasional lack of awareness of the work in this field of other departments. All participants expressed keenness to work collaboratively and believed an inter-discipline approach to be the ideal pattern, but they were all very aware of possible barriers to this.

It was found that informal interviews elicited a very good response and that, whilst they are extremely time consuming, they obtained a clear picture of where provision is delivered, where collaboration would be beneficial and where duplication of provision is occurring. The information gathered was used to create maps of formal academic led provision, formal student-led provision, and formal embedded provision. A sample map can be found at Appendix C.

Surveys

Helen Westmancoat, Clare McCluskey and Debbi Boden at York St John University kindly agreed to support a pilot of the Audit in their institution.

The Management Structure chart of York St John University was used to identify where Information Literacy provision existed in some form and how best to approach the pilot.

After consideration it was decided to distribute the questions across the departments supporting and teaching students at York St John University in order to assess the usefulness and clarity of the questions when answered remotely without contact with the questioner. Clare McCluskey distributed them as an online survey using SurveyMonkey. In order to encourage completion the shorter survey was distributed to the majority of recipients whilst the ancillary questions were asked only of library and information personnel. The limitations imposed by the version of SurveyMonkey used meant that the extended questionnaires had to be split into two separate surveys, which may have had an impact on responses received.

Although the survey was only able to run for a short time, due to the constraints of the project, 30 responses were received, with 15 being from library and information personnel and the rest from academic personnel. No responses were received from other “support” services. It was very soon evident that the responses to the online surveys were less complete and contained little or no reflection on provision, delivery and collaboration and more emphasis on providing bare facts.

The results of the surveys were again used to create maps of formal delivery (see Appendix C for an example) but it was not possible to differentiate between student led, academic led, or embedded provision or indeed whether provision was mandatory.

The importance of semantics and tailoring the questions to the recipients was very evident, for example one respondent felt unable to answer any questions relating to the words “support” or “help” for students, as they felt that was not their role. It would seem that a sound knowledge of the culture and terminology of an institution is vital to eliciting useful responses. It is doubtful that any survey could produce responses as complete as those obtained by interviews but what was obtained would provide a sound basis for further investigation.

Results

A breakdown of the results can be found at Appendix D.

It was found that the results from the audit could be used in a variety of ways. For example, to identify:

- duplication of provision, in which case collaboration and shared delivery can be encouraged
- areas which have insufficient, or no, provision which require action
- good practice which can be shared across the institution
- individual or group training requirements where skills are not available
- the role within an HEI best placed to take the curriculum forward
- resources required for adequate provision
- possible barriers to provision and methods for overcoming them.

An area of interest, or possibly concern, was the low level of support of students in the ethical use of information by those working in academic libraries, although asignificantly higher proportion stated that they did support students in understand ethical issues such as plagiarism, copyright etc. This may indicate a lack of understanding of the term “ethical dimension of information”.

The reluctance, and sometimes refusal, of some participants to engage with the survey as it used terminology such as “support students” and “help students” was also a concern, which might merit further investigation to identify whether it is an issue of semantics or whether some people in HEIs really believe it is not their role to help or support their students.

Recommendations

Planning the audit

Before any audit is undertaken the management in each department must be fully informed, and in agreement with the aims and outcomes of the process. This will not only ensure their support, but that of their teams who will be prepared and willing to participate.

Both the pilot audits were carried out in a very short timescale. This would not be recommended procedure as a good deal of time is needed to plan, create, schedule and disseminate the surveys, or carry out the interviews, and then to assess the outcomes.

The involvement of partners with a wide knowledge of the HEI is extremely important, to identify suitable participants, market the audit to colleagues and ensure collaboration. The identification of possible issues with semantics in individual institutions should then be possible at an early stage to prevent misunderstandings and minimise non-participation.

Getting the answers

It is recommended that, whenever possible, interviews are undertaken in preference to questionnaires being distributed as it was interesting to note, but perhaps not surprising, that the interviews elicited a fuller response and interviewees spent a considerable amount of time reflecting on their own roles and how they provide information literacy education, how that could be adapted, who they could work with and whether collaborative provision could be strengthened. The surveys, in contrast were not always fully completed, perhaps due to misinterpretation of the questions and answers were not expanded on in a reflective manner as occurred during interviews. However, interviews are obviously more demanding on time and require a suitable environment in which they can be conducted.

Outcomes

Wiki

An unexpected outcome of the project was the Implementing ANCIL wiki. Several of those who took part in the pilots expressed a need for an informal, accessible online space, which could be used to find information about ANCIL and the documentation surrounding the curriculum. They also identified a need for this space to cover the provision of Information Literacy education in Universities generally, discuss issues, share best practice and resources and find the project outcomes. The consensus was that it should be a space that all those involved in delivering Information Literacy could share and use, whatever their discipline.

To that end the wiki was created on a free platform. It can be found at http://implementingancil.pbworks.com/. It contains much of the body of this report and sections covering:

- Introduction
- Why Information Literacy needs a curriculum
- ANCIL
- Using ANCIL as a skills audit tool
    - Using ANCIL as a skills audit tool: Skills audit questions
    - Using ANCIL as a skills audit tool: response to ancillary questions
    - Using ANCIL as a skills audit tool: University of Worcester Case Study
    - Using ANCIL as a skills audit tool: York St John University Case Study
- Implementing ANCIL: Training
- Tools
- Resources
- Resources for University of Cambridge Supervisors
- Resources for University of Cambridge Colleges
- Information Literacy First Aid Model
- Ideas exchange

Conclusion

It is clear from the results of the pilots that ANCIL is a viable tool for creating an audit of the provision of Information Literacy skills within an HEI institution other than Cambridge. Whilst it was necessary to expand on the basic strands and include questions covering their component parts, all those involved recognised at least part of their own delivery within the content. The fact that the questions prompted reflection and assessment on their own and their institutions' delivery of teaching and support, the identification of opportunities for collaboration and improved provision, endorses the importance and validity of the new curriculum. An Information Literacy Provision Audit is therefore seen to be a useful and applicable strategy to aid in the implementation of ANCIL.

References

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APPENDIX A

Information Literacy Provision Audit Questions answered by all respondents

1. What is your job title?
2. How would you summarise your role?
3. Do you support students?
    3.1. At which point do you support them?
    3.2. Throughout their time in HE
    3.3. At transition
    3.4. At first year
    3.5. At second year
    3.6. At third year
    3.7. At post-graduate
    3.8. At leaving
4. These are the strands of the new curriculum. Do you in your role deliver or support students formally with any of them now?
    4.1. Transition to HE
    4.2. Becoming an independent learner
    4.3. Developing academic literacies
    4.4. Mapping and evaluating the information landscape
    4.5. Resource discovery in a set discipline
    4.6. Managing information
    4.7. Ethical dimension of information
    4.8. Presenting and communicating information
    4.9. Synthesising information and creating new knowledge
    4.10 Social dimension of information literacy
5. Do you formally or informally (please state which)
    5.1. Help students produce work at HE level?
    5.2. Help students differentiate between a popular and an academic resource?
    5.3. Help students find their academic voice?
    5.4. Help students work out how to find resources and understand the process?
    5.5. Help students think about how they research and why?
    5.6. Help students identify how they learn and what strategies they can use?

5.7. Help students deal with negative learning experiences?
5.8. Help students identify support available?
5.9. Help students learn to influence through use of language?
5.10. Help students understand how they are influenced?
5.11. Help students develop reading techniques like skimming
5.12. Help students learn they can find relevant information in a resource that isn't apparently about their topic?
5.13. Help students develop evaluation skills?
5.14. Help students learn who their subject experts are and why?
5.15. Help students know what the best tools are for them to use?
5.16. Help students explore new "finding aids"
5.17. Help students know key people to go to including their peers?
5.18. Help students develop note-taking skills
5.19. Help students manage their time?
5.20. Help students plan?
5.21. Help students develop an information handling strategy, eg folders etc?
5.22. Help students with citations and referencing?
5.23. Help students use current awareness strategies?
5.24. Help students understand and avoid plagiarism?
5.25. Help students understand the ethics of information use?
5.26. Help students understand copyright issues/
5.27. Help students understand and manage their online presence and digital footprint?
5.28. Help students use the right tone for different occasions?
5.29. Help students formulate research questions?
5.30. Help students evaluate new information?
5.31. Help students realize learning is ongoing?
5.32. Help students transfer their skills to the workplace?
5.33. Help students be open-minded about new information?

6. Who do you work with formally to deliver these outcomes?
7. Who would you like to work with in your organisation?

APPENDIX B

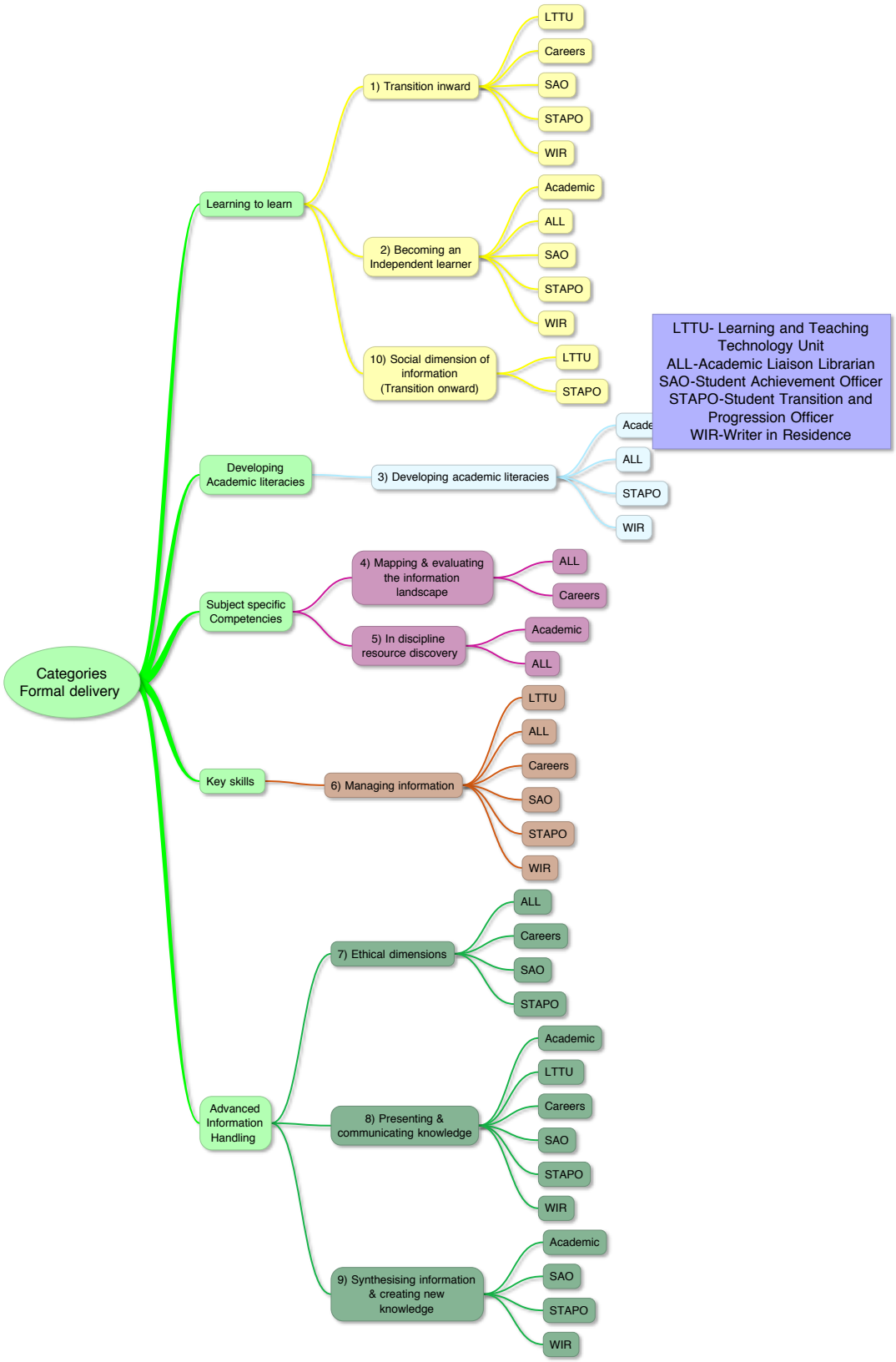
Questions for all face to face interviewees but only answered by Library and Information Services online survey respondents

1. Who "owns" the Information Literacy support and teaching?
2. Who do you think should?
3. How should the new Curriculum be delivered?
4. Could it be delivered collaboratively?
5. Who would be on your side?
6. Who might get in your way or need further convincing?
7. What other challenges might you face?
8. What would you need to support you when implementing the curriculum? E.g. resources?
9. Who are the top three people to get on side in your organization?

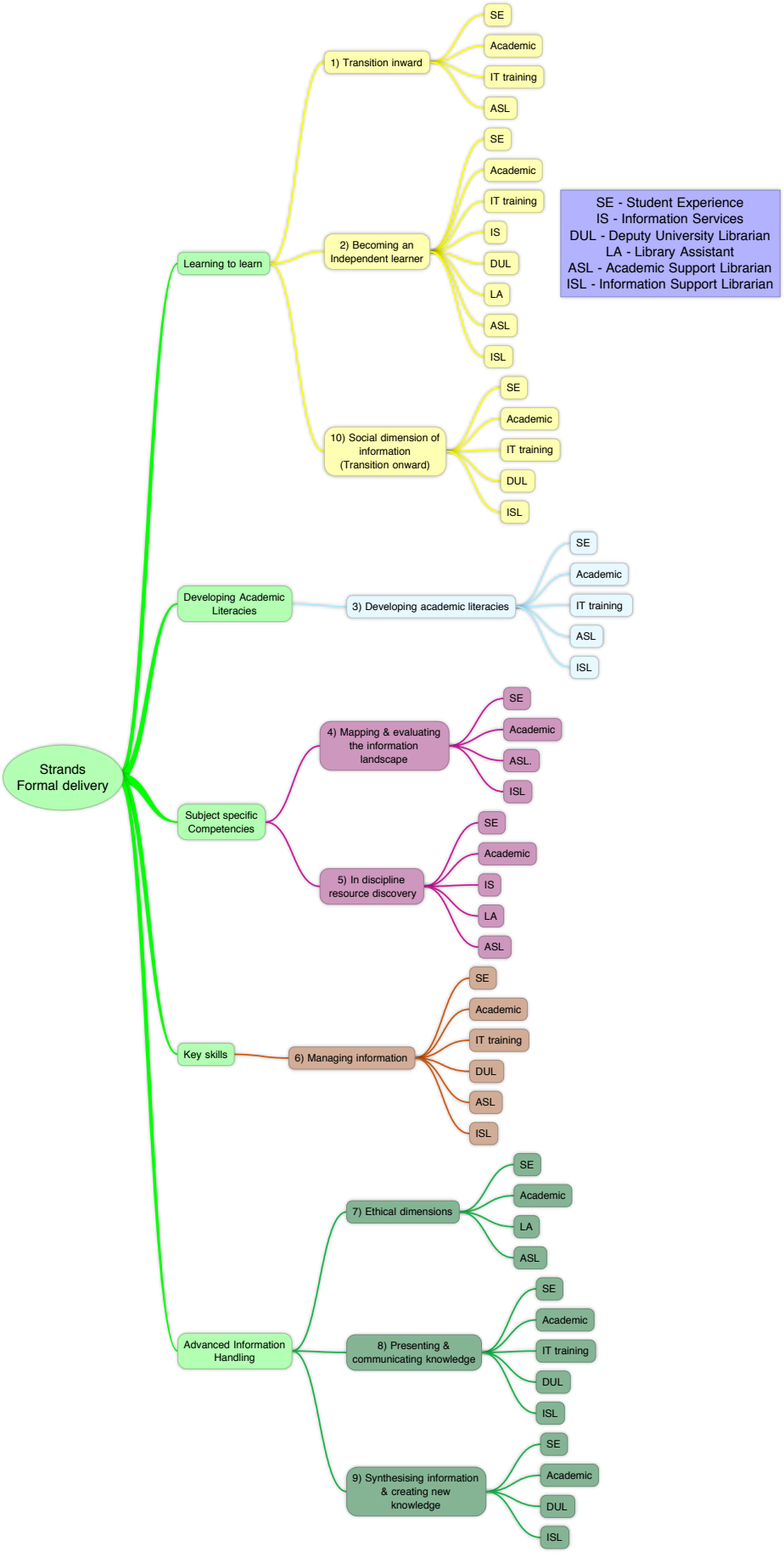
APPENDIX C

Sample Mapping Charts

Provision of Information Skills at University of Worcester by ANCIL Category



Provision of Information Skills at University of York St John by ANCIL Category



APPENDIX D

Responses

Questions for all interviewees and survey respondents

37 people completed the survey, 30 by online response and 7 by interview. The responses broke down as follows:

1. What is your job title?

   Academic support librarians

   Front-line librarians

   Technical roles within Library and Information Services (LIS)

   Student Services officers

   Careers officers

   Heads of Service

   Deputy Deans

   Heads of Programmes and Courses

   Lecturers

   Adminstrators
2. How would you summarise your role?

   Not collated here
3. Do you support students?

   2 respondents answered No and answered no further questions

   3.1. At which point do you support them?

      3.1.1. Throughout their time in HE

         ALL

      3.1.2. At transition

         11

      3.1.3. At first year

         ALL

      3.1.4. At second year

         ALL

      3.1.5. At third year

         ALL

      3.1.6. At post-graduate

         4

      3.1.7. At leaving

1

4. These are the strands of the new curriculum. Do you in your role deliver or support students formally with any of them now?
   4.1. Transition to HE
   11
   4.2. Becoming an independent learner
   19
   4.3. Developing academic literacies
   16
   4.4. Mapping and evaluating the information landscape
   3
   4.5. Resource discovery in a set discipline
   6
   4.6. Managing information
   12
   4.7. Ethical dimension of information
   10
   4.8. Presenting and communicating information
   15
   4.9. Synthesising information and creating new knowledge
   11
   4.10. Social dimension of information literacy
   6

   Several of those surveyed did not answer this section at all. Of some concern was how few LIS respondents felt they do, or should, support students in ethical dimensions of information (2)

5. Do you formally or informally (please state which)
   5.1. Help students produce work at HE level?
   17
   5.2. Help students differentiate between a popular and an academic resource?
   15
   5.3. Help students find their academic voice?

13 (no LIS)

5.4. Help students work out how to find resources and understand the process?

18

5.5. Help students think about how they research and why?

6

5.6. Help students identify how they learn and what strategies they can use?

13

5.7. Help students deal with negative learning experiences?

14

5.8. Help students identify support available?

15

5.9. Help students learn to influence through use of language?

6 (no LIS)

5.10 Help students understand how they are influenced?

7

5.11. Help students develop reading techniques like skimming

10 (no LIS)

5.12. Help students learn they can find relevant information in a resource that isn't apparently about their topic?

11

5.13. Help students develop evaluation skills?

15

5.14. Help students learn who their subject experts are and why?

14

5.15. Help students know what the best tools are for them to use?

12

5.16. Help students explore new "finding aids"

8

5.17. Help students know key people to go to including their peers?

16

5.18. Help students develop note-taking skills

3 (no LIS)

5.19.Help students manage their time?

9

5.20.Help students plan?

12

5.21.Help students develop an information handling strategy, eg folders etc?

7

5.22.Help students with citations and referencing?

14

5.23.Help students use current awareness strategies?

4

5.24.Help students understand and avoid plagiarism?

14

5.25.Help students understand the ethics of information use?

8

5.26.Help students understand copyright issues

10

5.27.Help students understand and manage their online presence and digital footprint?

4

5.28.Help students use the right tone for different occasions?

10

5.29.Help students formulate research questions?

9

5.30.Help students evaluate new information?

13

5.31.Help students realize learning is ongoing?

11

5.32.Help students transfer their skills to the workplace?

5

5.33.Help students be open-minded about new information?

11

6. Who do you work with formally to deliver these outcomes?

Responses included:

- *Lecturer*
- *Head of Programme*
- *Senior Lecturer*
- *Deputy Dean*
- *Academic Support Librarian*
- *Deputy University Librarian*
- *Library Assistant*
- *International office*
- *Student Services*
- *Print unit*
- *Disability unit*
- *Nobody/No response*
- *Information Services Manager*
- *EIS Development Manager*
- *Students*
- *E-Learning*
- *Writing Development*
- *Student Support and Experience*
- *Teaching and Learning*

7. Who would you like to work with in your organisation?

   Responses included:

   - *Nobody/No response/NA*
   - *Lecturer*
   - *Programme Administrator*
   - *Head of Programme*
   - *Senior Lecturer*
   - *Deputy Dean*
   - *Learning and Teaching Development*
   - *Librarian*
   - *Library Assistant*
   - *Information Services Manager*
   - *Student Services*

- *Careers*

Questions for all interviewees and LIS survey respondents

1. Who "owns" the Information Literacy support and teaching

   Whilst the majority of those who answered the question (21) named the library professionals, the academics were also identified as owners, in one case, everyone in the University including students and in one other case Student Services equivalent.

2. Who do you think should?

   There was a wide range of responses, including:

   - *Librarians*
   - *Strategic level (PVC or DVC)*
   - *Collaborative partnership across University*
   - *Librarians and academics*
   - *Ownership is a flawed concept*

3. How should the new Curriculum be delivered?

There were 12 responses to this question, 8 stating that it should be embedded within the full extent of a course, 2 stated it should be in a single mandatory module, 2 by a blended learning module, and only 1 stating that the Library should deliver via workshops.

4. Could it be delivered collaboratively?

All 12 respondents agreed it could be delivered collaboratively in their Institution.

5. Who would be on your side?

There were 16 responses identifying supporters of this approach:

- *Quality*
- *Academic staff*
- *Library and Information Management*
- *Student support teams and managers*
- *Deans or equivalents*
- *Everybody*

6. Who might get in your way or need further convincing?

The 11 responses (some named more than one problem area) identified:

- *Students*

- *Management*
- *Academic staff*
- *Librarians*
- *Finance departments*
- *Nobody*

7. What other challenges might you face?

The 11 responses (some named more than one problem area) identified the following challenges:

- *Ensuring parity of provision*
- *Staff shortages*
- *Strategic direction*
- *Finance*
- *Time*
- *Materials*
- *None*

8. What would you need to support you when implementing the curriculum? E.g. resources?

- *Training*
- *Time*
- *Strategic direction*
- *Finance*
- *Materials*
- *Staff*
- *Technology and tools*
- *Nothing (1)*

9. Who are the top three people to get on side in your organization?

The 10 responses (some named more than one problem area) mentioned:

- *Director of Library Service*
- *Heads of Faculty (or equivalent)*
- *DVC/PVC Quality or Teaching and Learning*
- *VC*
- *Librarians*
- *Registrar*