
IL at eye level: Cardiff's Handbook for information literacy teaching comes to your screen

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Have you ever wished for a single, comprehensive source of tips, guidelines, examples and ideas for information literacy teaching? Specially tailored to a higher education environment? Downloadable and adaptable at the click of a hyperlink? Look no further than Cardiff's *Handbook for information literacy teaching* (HILT), now available on the web at:

<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/insrv/education-andtraining/infolit/hilt/>.

We had two main aims when developing HILT. First, we wanted to equip subject librarians and



other Cardiff staff playing an information literacy (IL) role with techniques to promote IL within academic schools, prepare learning outcomes and deliver and evaluate effective learning experiences for their target audiences. Secondly, we wanted to ensure consistent and high-quality practice in IL teaching across the information services division. HILT is intended to form a central element of our staff training for IL practitioners.

But now HILT has gone global. Our web version is available under Creative Commons licence and enables the wider IL community to access the handbook's content and materials. As a result, we have received expressions of interest from librarians across the UK and enthusiastic comments from the United States, Canada, New Zealand and Ireland. A practitioner from Stockholm has even expressed a wish to translate sections into Swedish.

Indeed, we welcome the use and adaptation of the handbook by anyone in the national and international academic communities, provided that this is for non-commercial purposes and the Cardiff source is acknowledged.

HILT'S HISTORY

Our inspiration was Cardiff's *Information skills teaching* manual, written in 1996. In the light of the university's approval of an 'Information literacy guidance note' in 2002 (updated in 2007)¹ and its merger with the University of Wales College of Medicine in 2004, we decided to completely overhaul the original manual, making it applicable to the twenty-first century. The result was the first *Handbook for information literacy teaching*, which was launched internally in 2005. It was extensively revised in 2007, following internal evaluation by Cardiff's subject librarians and external

evaluation by four other South Wales institutions.² Hence, the revised version responds to the needs and tastes of our Cardiff audience, and has also to an extent been influenced by the comments of external practitioners.

The examples of original materials at the end of the *Handbook* were contributed by subject librarians from across information services and have proved especially popular. These include ideas for library orientation, practical IL exercises, database user guides and templates for feedback forms and marking sheets. Together they constitute a set of 'pre-invented wheels' covering the entire IL teaching process, and are geared towards learners ranging from the new student to the researcher. These materials can be adapted or customised for specific subjects with minimal effort or may serve as inspiration for entirely new approaches.

The case studies interspersed throughout the *Handbook* are new to this edition and are intended to illustrate some of the creative methods used in Cardiff. Each case study presents a subject librarian's overview of a particular method, to help inspire and encourage others. We hope that these small nuggets of wisdom have added a 'human touch'.



Have you tried...?

Using music in Information Literacy sessions

Get your workshop or lecture off to a good start by using the power of music! Carefully chosen tracks played on a CD player or PA system as students arrive can create an informal and welcoming atmosphere. Feedback from students indicates that this is a popular approach. However, don't just reach for your favourite CD! Think carefully about the mood you want to create. Choose music which is appropriate to the time of day (e.g. something relaxing and unobtrusive for a 9am session or something lively and invigorating for that after lunch slot!). Music can also be effectively used at the end of a session or to indicate the start and finish of activities. You will have lots of fun experimenting!

(Check first that your institution holds a PP2 licence.)

Nigel Morgan, Science Library

For further information see:

Campbell, Don. 2001. *The Mozart Effect: Tapping the Power of Music to Heal the Body, Strengthen the Mind, and Unlock the Creative Spirit*. London: Hodder & Stoughton.

To tailor the *Handbook* to our audience's preferences even more, we decided to adjust the writing style so that the text appears less formal and wordy. The five members of the HILT Group sharpened their shears and gave each section a thorough and systematic pruning according to a set of pre-determined style guidelines. The outcome is, we hope, a more readable and concise document. In the print version, we also had space to add some cartoon illustrations to enliven the text. Unfortunately, due to restrictions in the copyright licences, we were unable to incorporate these into the web version.

HOW CAN HILT HELP ME?

We think that the *Handbook* is crammed with good ideas. Are you looking for ways to brighten up library inductions by incorporating interactivity? If so, look no further than the Cephalonian Method; you'll find information and a case study on Cardiff's popular method in the 'Library Orientation' section.

Need advice on planning a lesson for your students? Check out our 'Lesson Planning' and 'Lesson Formats' sections. You'll find a handy checklist of recommended items to include in your lesson plan and advice on preparing instructor notes (essential when a colleague has to deliver a session in your absence). There are also tips on giving one-to-one sessions and using flexible teaching methods to cater for the specific needs of your learners. You'll find lots of other suggestions too, including the use of mind mapping, audience response technology and quiz formats for lectures. We also include tips on making sure that your chosen gadgets behave on the day!

The thought of standing in front of a class can strike fear into the heart of any new IL teacher. If you are new to the field, you will find plenty of reassurance in the 'Lesson Delivery' section, which features sound advice on presentation skills. However, if you are an 'old hand', there are helpful tips on managing your teaching environment and your students to ensure things run as smoothly as possible.

Evaluation and reflection are vital. We discuss various ways of eliciting feedback, formally and informally, including seeking the views of tutors on how students have benefited as a result of your teaching. You may also be called upon to take part in the formal assessment of students' work. The 'Assessment' section discusses various methods of performance-measurement and associated mark-

ing schemes for taught students, to help you and the school gauge how IL-'wise' your students are.

Finally, there is a useful template document to help you make a case for embedding IL into curricula. At Cardiff, we consider embedding to be central to a successful IL strategy.

HOW DO I ACTUALLY USE THE HANDBOOK?

HILT is designed to be dipped into as the need arises rather than read from cover to cover. Subject librarians at Cardiff are encouraged to treat it as a practical tool, to annotate their printed copy, attach their own notes and repurpose the teaching materials. Indeed, HILT can be used in a variety of ways:

- If you are new to teaching, HILT provides background reading to give you a grounding in the basic skills required of IL teachers.
- If you are a more experienced practitioner, you can enhance your existing skills by exploring new ideas and topics.
- HILT can be a useful aid to reflective practice. You may find suggestions that may inspire you to change or develop your teaching. Even if you disagree with us, you will find much food for thought.
- HILT is a source of practical advice and tips gleaned from our experiences, successes and disasters!
- You can use the teaching materials as they stand or adapt them to your own requirements.

We have made the *Handbook* available in both Word and PDF formats. If you are extracting or adapting material, you can simply copy and paste the text from the Word version, subject to the terms of our Creative Commons licence (you will find a link to this on the HILT web page).

WATCH THIS SPACE

HILT is still being developed. The substantial revision of the text in 2007 has meant that we now can focus on adding extra features. These will include:

- an index so that you can quickly find where terms such as 'learning outcomes' or 'online tutorials' appear in the text
- a bibliography indicating some of the books, journal articles and web sites that have inspired us and that will provide useful further reading for each topic.

During 2009 we will again revise the text to take account of new IL developments; for example, we will be expanding the section on library orientation to include innovative methods such as 'library bingo'. We will also enhance the text with more case studies.

So watch this space for exciting future developments! And remember: comments and suggestions on any aspect of the *Handbook* would be extremely welcome.

REFERENCES

- 1 Cardiff University, 'Information literacy: guidance note', 2007, available at <http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/learning/practices/infolitguid-note/informationlitgn.html> (accessed 13 April 2007)
- 2 P. Clinch and A. Jones-Evans, 'The Cardiff Handbook for Information Literacy Teaching – a case study in sharing staff training materials', *Journal of information literacy*, 1 (3), 2007, available at <http://jil.lboro.ac.uk/ojs/index.php/JIL/article/view/ART-V1-I3-2007-2/29> (accessed 22 April 2008)