

# Information literacy in Finland

...integrated into university studies, a core component of academic skills

A key area of joint development for Finnish university libraries in the first decade of the 20th century.

## Development on the national level

- The Council for Finnish University Libraries launched a project for 2004-2007 to integrate information literacy studies into university studies
- At the end of the project, the development of teaching was integrated into the core functions of libraries

## Project results

- Mapping of the focal areas of information literacy
- Recommendation for universities to include information literacy in degree requirements
- Q&A bank
- Network of contact persons
- Pedagogical development of teaching (seminars, cooperation with teaching personnel)
- A book entitled *Informaatiolukutaito yliopisto-opetuksessa* (Information literacy in university-level teaching)

## International cooperation

- Cooperation with Scandinavian partners (NordinfoLIT)
- A joint network of contact persons with CILIP, the umbrella organisation of British library associations
- Interest in expanding international cooperation

## Finnish recommendation for information literacy



The Finnish recommendation for information literacy is based on international standards for information literacy competency. The recommended scope of information literacy studies at all levels is 1-2 credits. It is also recommended that new students be taught the basics of information seeking and retrieval and other necessary learning skills as part of compulsory general studies, for example, as part of IT and ICT studies. Instruction in advanced systematic information seeking and the information literacy skills needed for the Master's thesis should be integrated as a compulsory component into the thesis seminar.

### 1. New students

- general presentation of information sources and organisation of information
- basics of information access, seeking and retrieval
- the use of publications and services needed in studies
- basics of the assessment of the reliability of materials and the ethical use of information

### 2. Bachelor's level students: Information literacy in intermediate-level studies

- primary sources of information in one's field, organisation of information
- conceptual organisation of one's information needs
- search methods, systematic search processes and strategies
- comprehensive seeking for information on the research topic, analysis of the process and results
- introduction to the reference practices and standards of the field, tools for bibliography management and their use in the production of academic texts
- deeper insight into the assessment of the reliability of materials and the ethical use of information

### 3. Master's level students: Information literacy in advanced-level studies

- deeper insight into the information sources of one's field
- updating the knowledge of the primary sources of information in the field
- determination of the need for information on the research topic, conceptual organisation of one's information needs
- revision of search methods, systematic search processes and strategies
- comprehensive search for information on the research topic, analysis of the process and results
- deeper insight into the reference practices and standards of the field, tools for bibliography management and their use in the production of academic texts

## Klaara question and answer bank



Finnish information literacy teachers have at their disposal a common question and answer bank, which they may update and supplement independently. The technical platform of the bank is the Moodle course management system, which can be accessed through the portal of the Finnish Virtual University. The questions cover four categories: definition of the need for information, selection of information sources, planning and implementation of information searches, and evaluation and use of information sources. The questions have been written both in Finnish and Swedish. At the moment, there is great interest in Finland to develop the Q&A bank in Swedish and English and to engage in cooperation in both languages.

## Examples of innovative development in universities

### Personal information specialist experiment

- Students were appointed for one year a personal information specialist to provide support in the writing of the Master's thesis
- ▶ Motivated efficient writing of the thesis

### Integration of information literacy studies and general studies

- Information literacy studies as part of the compulsory studies in ICT (ICT Driving Licence)
- ▶ Especially functional in the teaching of the technical skills required for information literacy

### Integration of information literacy studies and intermediate level studies

- Pharmacology on the Internet online course
- ▶ A statistically significant change in the critical use of sources, motivated students to use scientific sources
- Critical Club: a course for analysing the methods, results and conclusions of scientific articles
- ▶ The course members noticed errors in prestigious international journals

### Pedagogical evaluation of learning materials

- Evaluation of the usability, visibility and pedagogical functionality of 15 field-specific online courses
- ▶ The links provided in the courses should be assessed with care
- ▶ Learning objectives should be expressed concretely and in terms of the field in question

### Information literacy from the point of view of media education

- The concept of volitional literacy
- ▶ in addition to information management, information literacy needs to be seen as conscious social empowerment enabled by information and communication technologies

## National organisation for IL development in Finland

Activities cover the development of teaching, international cooperation, communication (mailing list, website), sharing of experiences and seminars

Cooperation with teachers

Support group (regional representation)	
Coordinating library The development of operations	Coordinating library Q&A bank, Virtual University
National and international information literacy contact persons in libraries	Personnel providing instruction
Library staff	

## Articles and presentations on the topic

<http://www.helsinki.fi/infolukutaito/english/papers.htm>

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