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Conversation and Change: Integrating Information Literacy to Support Learning in the New Zealand Tertiary Context.

A thesis presented for partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Massey University, Manawatu

Angela Joy Feekery

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ABSTRACT

This thesis outlines a participatory action research (PAR) PhD project aimed at embedding information literacy development into a four-year Bachelor of Environmental Planning (BEP) at a New Zealand university. The research suggests enhancing information literacy is an effective strategy to support students' development of essential academic competencies over the full undergraduate programme. The research took an 'informed learning' (Bruce, 2008a) approach (using information to learn), shifting the focus of information literacy development from the library into the academic classroom. PAR allowed a dual focus on both action (to support staff to change pedagogy) and research (to understand the process of change).

The key purpose of this research was to support BEP instructors to identify ways they could embed IL development into their curriculum and assessment to support students' learning during the transition into and through tertiary study. This involved reconceptualising students' apparent lack of effective research and writing skills as a developmental concern. Prior to this research, existing information literacy support in the Bachelor of Environmental Planning had an information search and retrieval focus. Furthermore, product-focused assessment did not explicitly engage students in key aspects of the research and writing process.

Therefore, this research took a learner-focused, process-oriented view of learning, and developed a thread of reflective learning throughout the programme. To support quality source selection and use, library workshops were refocused and new formative assessments were created requiring students to justify source selection and reflect on learning. While the interventions proved successful in supporting learning, the research revealed that more in-depth conversation with academics, librarians and students on how information impacts on learning is needed to encourage students to make considered information choices and become informed learners.
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Thirdly, this journey has been a collaborative learning experience, made possible by the commitment of the five participating BEP instructors I am eternally grateful that you volunteered to engage in this research. Your dedication and commitment to improving student learning was sustained over the two years of the project and beyond. Your stories are captured within these pages, your friendships valued, and your contribution to my learning immeasurable.

A huge thanks also goes out to the BEP students, who volunteered to be a part of this process and gave honest, reflective feedback. The whole point of this research was to help you learn, and I truly believe you have.

Finally, my sincere thanks goes to the university librarians who actively engaged in developing and delivering the re-focused library workshops, and engaged in on-going conversation with me around IL. Your professionalism and dedication to student learning is admirable, and your efforts in this research are truly appreciated. Thanks also to librarians at other universities for discussing your experiences, successes and challenges with me.
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# Abbreviations

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<td>ACRL</td>
<td>Association of College and Research Libraries</td>
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<td>American Library Association</td>
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<td>ANCIL</td>
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