

Together we are stronger – from a vision to an integrated information literacy program

*The Information Literacy Team at
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“It has been argued that new tasks and new ways of operating require new skills on the part of teachers and learners. It is no longer enough to be an expert in a subject discipline and thus students must be multi skilled as well as possessing a range of core skills and competencies. A university's expertise must now cover not only subject knowledge but a spectrum of key abilities which a competent graduate has mastered as part of the degree programme.” (Davies 1998:209)

Introduction

In 2002, the joint Board for the Library and the Computer Center at the Swedish School of Economics and Business Administration (Hanken) found it necessary to renew the ICT strategy as the state of the ICT services was quite bad – at the same time “there was light at the end of the tunnel” as numerous good potential ideas and projects were contemplated. The perspective was broad as the Board as well as the heads of the Library, Computer Center and Administration all realized that today ICT affects everyone’s everyday work. Especially the main “information service center”, the library, cannot today survive without good ICT. So an important starting point for the strategy work was that it was a *joint* ICT and information strategy, the main purpose being to help both faculty and staff to use efficient tools and work in a modern way. The second important starting point was to involve all types of users and give all faculty and staff members a chance to participate in the process.

The final result was threefold –an improved study milieu, the “Easy-All-in-one” service concept and, as the main goal, improved information literacy for students, faculty and staff. The strategy, eHanken 2010, can be found on the Hanken website.

To stimulate and encourage the teachers and students to use new interactive teaching and learning methods, as well as to enable use of new media for communicating, distributing and accessing materials, an *improved study environment/milieu* was needed. This included two strategic improvements – the buildings had to be prepared to enable better facilities for working in groups and using mobile computers (electricity, tables etc), and of course, improvements in the ICT-infrastructure – servers, systems etc had to be modernized allowing and encouraging modern working methods.

The *support services* for both students and teachers had to be more accessible to enable the modern working habits. This also meant that the service had to adapt more to individual needs. The concept “Easy-All-in-one-Service” – “Samlad och enkel service” – was initiated including the idea that the consumer of the services shouldn’t be rushed around from one service desk to another. The implementation of this consumer centered concept resulted in remodeling the old journal reading room in the library to a modern learning lab. Today, at the two service desks, InfoBITen and ServicePunkten, students and faculty get help with information retrieval or computer problems and study affair problems; computers, large tables and WLAN facilitates studying and group work.

Finally, and most important, during the strategy process it became obvious to all participants that although systems theoretically can make users more productive no help comes from any

good system if the user doesn't have the ability to use it properly – this goes for general office products, as well as complicated administrative systems and library databases. To be able to use the databases, they have to be accessible, the potential user has to know they exist, how to use them both “mechanically” as well as understand their content. Also, collected data has to be processed, documented and presented properly with the right references in the right place. Thus, the main focusing area for the years to come, for all user categories (students, faculty, staff) was *information literacy*.

The rest of the paper focuses on the process of creating an information literacy program, the content and on its implementation.

The process of creating an information literacy program

In the ICT strategy the definition of information literacy is very broad and includes computer, media and presenting skills: *searching for information* (search engines, information resources), *preparing information* (statistical tools, ethical rules for using information, reference technique), *producing own material* (word processing, spreadsheets, presentation tools), using *tools for communication* (web conference, video conference, chat, discussions), *disseminating information* (e-mail, bulletin boards, netiquette) and *using tools for cooperation* (chat, groupware, e-mail, conference via phone, web and video).

To create the information literacy program a working group was founded, with representatives for the Library, Computer Center, Office of Study Affairs, and Teacher Support Unit. At the same time the study administration was preparing for the Bologna process and the new Degree regulations starting from August 1st 2005. In the discussions it soon became clear, that to be able to say that we have information literate students and graduates, we have to include teaching of information literacy skills in the curriculum. We realized that to ensure that all our students have to get an equal opportunity to acquire these skills – this meant we should try to include high information literacy as a goal in the new Degree Regulation of 2005. The goal was added to the new Regulation, thanks to the Office of Study Affairs who took a very active part in this process.

The second step towards creating an information literacy program was to go through the courses to be included in the curriculum – to see which skills were missing and which were included. We had described the different types of skills earlier, but had not set a basic level for them at different points of the study process. We also decided that we wanted the skills taught when needed, that is *skills-just-on-time*, as most of these skills are forgotten if taught without a context and need.

To accomplish this we decided to talk directly to the department heads and teachers in charge. In the spring of 2005 we talked us trough the 7 departments and 17 subjects – the aim being to find out which courses are compulsory, which skills were taught at which level and what was missing in order to achieve our goal. We promised to use a maximum of 15 minutes of the professors' valuable time – but ended up talking with most of them a lot longer. Although time consuming then, this approach has saved us time later, as it made us understand the “whole” curriculum as well as the different teaching approaches in the different subjects. It also helped the faculty as the people behind the information literacy project became visible. This has later facilitated the communication between staff and faculty.

Besides the curriculum, a few unexpected issues arose in the discussions: One was the question about information literacy of non-Hanken students – how to support foreign students and exchange students as well as students starting directly at the master's level. The faculty also pleaded for a general “standard” how to write, cite and structure academic reports – teachers have varying practices. So we promised to create a general writing guide and provide both integrated and separate courses in information literacy in Swedish and English.

As a final outcome an integrated information literacy program, including skills, courses and levels was approved by the Teaching and Research Council in May 2005.

The Information Literacy Program

As a result of the discussions with faculty members we could list the courses where information literacy skills already were or would be integrated. These constitute all together the integrated information literacy program.

Table 1: The integrated Information Literacy Program at Hanken, accepted by the Teaching and Research Council in May 2005.

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	MASTERS PROGRAMMES
Introduction to studies at Hanken including the information environment	Introduction to Research Methods, 6 credits	Research Methods	Information Literacy Course for "new"
Informatics (Computer Driving License, A-level & Library Module & Study Technique), 6 credits	Subject related support by the teacher in finding, using and presenting information	Proseminar / Bachelor's Thesis	Academic Writing
Introduction to Organization and Management, 6 credits	Swedish I-IV (Business Communication, Text Analysis and Translation, Professional Writing, Introduction to Academic Writing), 6 credits		Research Seminar / Master's Thesis
Interactivity on the web (e.g. Introduction to Marketing & Business Writing)	Interactivity on the web (Subject Courses)		

Based on this listing, the learning goals for the information literacy program were stated as follows:

<p>Information literacy skills of a student after the FIRST year at Hanken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • basic skills in using tools needed for searching and handling information (Computer Driving License, A-level), <i>Informatics</i>, • skills to use tools needed for studying at Hanken (WebOodi, WebCT, Moodle, course information on the web), <i>Introduction Week</i> and <i>Informatics</i>, • knowledge of computer security at Hanken, <i>Informatics</i>, • basic skills in netiquette, criticism of sources and how to use information ethically and correctly, <i>Informatics</i> and <i>Introduction to Organization and Management</i>, • basic skills in structuring long texts, <i>Introduction to Organization and Management</i>, • knowledge of commonly used economic and business information sources, <i>Informatics</i> and <i>Introduction to Organization and Management</i>, • ability to read a reference list and to find the primary source, irrespective of type and format, <i>Informatics</i>, and, • knowledge of the process of information retrieval, <i>Introduction to Organization and Management</i>.
<p>During the SECOND year at Hanken, the student uses and develops the information literacy skills by doing exercises in connection with subject courses. In order to accomplish the exercises successfully, the student is expected to handle, search, critically evaluate and make use of the information that he/she accesses by using skills</p>

learned during the first year at Hanken. In addition, new skills are learned, such as:

- basics in statistical analysis of information,
- basics in academic writing and referencing, and,
- basics in meetings and presentations

During the THIRD year the skills are deepened and the student is mainly handling, searching and using information according to the area of his/her major subject. The goal is a Bachelor's Thesis of high quality, both technically and from the point of view of content.

Informatics is a compulsory course, where the students get TIEKE's Computer Drivers License, which is a national ICT certification program. In addition, one information retrieval module and one study technique module are taught. *Introduction to Organization and Management* is a compulsory course, during which the students have to write their first scientific paper in small teams. Into this course an information literacy module is integrated and the guidelines "Instructions for Reports and Papers at Hanken" are presented to the students as a standard for written exercises at Hanken. This course is followed by another compulsory course, *Introduction to Marketing*, which uses the teaching platform WebCT. The students get familiar with activities on the web and e-learning. In addition, the students write their second scientific paper, individually this time. In the following two years information literacy skills are taught by the teacher in the compulsory courses *Introduction to Research Methods* and *Swedish I-IV*, and in the subject courses as required. In the *Proseminars* the library gives a guest lecture, brushing up the student's information retrieval skills.

In association with the Bologna Process, new students from other universities or polytechnics can get admission to study for a Master's degree at Hanken. These new students are unfamiliar with the information literacy skills approach and the pedagogical methods at Hanken, in some cases even with the academic writing process. Therefore we thought that they needed an introductory course, which takes them to the same level as Hanken Bachelors. The first move is to offer the same information literacy module as in *Introduction to Organization and Management* separately this fall and develop it further when needed. Since this separate module will be taught in English, it can be offered to exchange students, visiting Hanken for one or two semesters, as well. The Information Literacy Team has initiated discussions about reallocating resources for the course *Academic Writing*, in order to offer it to all Master's degree students. While writing their Master's thesis, students will have the possibility to attend a voluntary *Thesis Lab*, a workshop focusing on information retrieval and MSWord.

In the Information Literacy Program it is also stated that we work for raising the information literacy of the personnel and faculty as well. This has been done so far by arranging an ICT Fair where available tools were presented, and in January we arranged a small copyright campaign. A new course program called "InfoKomp-kurser" (abbreviation from informationskompetens i.e. information literacy) has been arranged every Tuesday at 2:30 – 4 p.m. during Spring 2006. In the courses different tools, such as The Nelli Search Portal, Webropol, WebCT, RefWorks, etc., are presented for the personnel and the faculty and in some cases also for students. The size of the audience has varied between three and thirty. This effort will continue next fall because of the positive feedback.

Other experiences of the information literacy program are so far:

– *Informatics*:

- The Computer Drivers License takes all students to the same computer literacy level. Participating in the lectures is voluntary and the tests can also be taken elsewhere, since it's a nation-wide certificate.

- It has been possible to loosen up the library module since the librarian meets the students again in their next course, when they actually have a clear task. Efforts to making this module available electronically will be done in the near future.
- Unsatisfying results concerning the study technique module shows that it needs to be restructured.
- *Introduction to Organization and Management*: The Information Literacy Team is involved in the course from planning to evaluation with the Professor and the assistant teachers. The final version of the integrated Information Literacy Module contains 50 min. information retrieval, 40 min. writing and structuring papers with MSWord and 30 min. referencing, and the module turned out to be easy to offer separately as well.
- *Introduction to Marketing*: The examiners added an individual paper exercise on their own initiative.

While working with the project, it became clearer and clearer that we need to do more for spreading information about and preventing *plagiarism*, since this is a subject of big concern and without clear outlines at Hanken. Remarkable is also that we felt that the faculty has started to trust in us on our second crusade about the Master's degree students. This, we think, was achieved by keeping promises and making actions that showed that they can count on us, and up to this point, the best sign of appreciation.

The Writing Guidelines

Based on a query about different needs in the process of writing the bachelor's thesis the project started to develop some new guidelines for referencing correctly. These guidelines were taken into the same report as a guide for information retrieval and text structuring. Referencing guidelines are always difficult (and that comprises almost any guidelines) as there are so many different views on the practices of writing correctly. In spite of the fact that many alternatives exist, the referencing practices at Hanken can mainly be divided in two directions, namely the Harvard and Oxford direction. Harvard is most frequently used but Oxford is also accepted at two departments (Finance and Commercial Law). In addition to these directions we could also have taken into account the guidelines of different academic journals especially in the way they are putting up the bibliography. At this point of the process we decided to stick to the Harvard way and give information about other ways at a later stage of the students' studies where e.g. different programs for bibliography creation are used.

In the process of writing the guidelines we worked together with the Department of Management and Organization and the professor of the Swedish language, who had been responsible for some existing guidelines for referencing correctly. These existing guidelines were used as a baseline. The idea of the new guide was that it would serve as a starting point in the process of referencing and mainly for the first written reports at Hanken. As we introduced the guidelines we wanted to use another approach to get feedback. Instead of hearing comments indirectly (i.e. through gossips) we decided to be proactive and encourage faculty and students using the guidelines to give constructive critique directly to the information literacy team. But first we wanted to test the guide in "real life" i.e. by collaborating with the basic course *Introduction to Organization and Management* through lecturing about referencing issues (see experiences below), different sources of information as well as how to write long document technically. After the test we would "publish" the guide and inform about its existence to faculty and students. Unfortunately we could not stick to our original plan because a rumor about the guide spread at Hanken and some teachers wanted to start using it immediately. This meant that we had to make the guide official at a point when we weren't comfortable to do so. The process of testing was interrupted in this way but luckily enough it was no disaster.

At this point we would like to address the issue of plagiarism as it created a more vivid discussion than any other issue both with faculty and with students. Showing the slide in

Figure 2 and talking about it in-class usually created a dead silence. As we see it, referencing is about avoiding plagiarism so this issue had to be brought up. There are a lot of possibilities and temptations to use other texts or ideas as your own in this age of sharing and accessibility. Plagiarism and dealing with it is something we are working with at the moment, mainly by getting acquainted with different programs that scan documents and compare them with different databases and the web.

Figure 2. Plagiarism

PLAGIARISM

- If you do not provide the source/s when you quote or report somebody else's work, the reader is given the impression that what you are saying is based on your own ideas. Using other authors' texts or ideas without acknowledging them is called *plagiarism*. Plagiarism is a kind of theft, and in an academic context it is an especially serious offence that cannot be excused

The Future

Our next step is to develop our web site and make more support material available online. Web courses in information literacy will also be offered in the future. We are already participating in projects with other universities teaching in Swedish in Finland in order to develop joint teaching materials. In order to meet the new questions raised when the students get more information literate, we try to attain developing the ICT support desk (the joint support desk of the Library, the Computer Center and the Teacher's Support Unit) into an "Information Literacy Support Desk". The most important task, however, is to continue the informal discussions with whoever interested in order to make information literacy firmly established.

Literature

Davies, David. "The Virtual University: A Learning University." *Journal of Workplace Learning: Employee Counselling Today* v10 n4 (1998): p174-213.

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