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# Campus priorities and information literacy in Hong Kong higher education: a case study

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**Title:** Campus priorities and information literacy in Hong Kong higher education: a case study

**Purpose:** The purpose of this paper is to describe the strategic efforts of the Hong Kong Baptist University Library to build institutional support for information literacy in an environment of major curriculum reform.

**Design/methodology/approach:** The paper outlines the current state of information literacy efforts in Hong Kong higher education, provides a context for renewed potential of these efforts, and describes a number of approaches that were undertaken to build institutional support. Further, a change agency approach is used to assess these efforts thus far and provide guidance for the future.

**Findings:** Campus-wide information literacy programmes have been virtually non-existent in Hong Kong. The current higher education environment and mindset is conducive to recognizing information literacy as a vital component in teaching and learning. Librarians can turn this opportunity into reality by gaining authority, credibility and visibility on campus, and by strategically aligning with institutional priorities such as outcomes-based education, assessment, and lifelong learning.

**Originality/value:** This paper provides a Hong Kong perspective on integrating information literacy at the institutional level, and offers several specific strategies that have successfully been undertaken by librarians at one institution.

**Keywords:** Information literacy, Higher education reform, Academic libraries, Outcomes-based education, Hong Kong

**Paper type:** Case study

## **Campus priorities and information literacy in Hong Kong higher education: a case study**

### **Introduction**

Building a curriculum-integrated information literacy programme that provides students the opportunity to learn, practice, and refine their skills and knowledge throughout their programmes is a worthy goal in higher education. It is a goal that has been articulated and endorsed by national bodies, adopted by libraries and their institutions, and implemented at the programme and course level in many fine examples. Most of these examples, however, are still found within the educational systems of North America, Europe and Australia. Hong Kong has a long history with the British educational system, and growing ties with North American and Australian systems, yet the importance of information literacy has yet to take hold.

This case study will examine how librarians at Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU) set about staking a place for information literacy within a changing institutional/educational framework and in support of student learning. Means by which authority, credibility, and institutional alignment were sought will be described, and the changes that needed to occur within the HKBU Library in order to achieve our goals will be examined. Throughout, the case will be examined in light of strategically integrating information literacy into campus priorities, with the hope that achieving institutional-level support at the outset will result in coordinated, sustained efforts that are not dependent on individual relationships. Finally, we will utilize a change agency approach adopted by Tiffini A. Travis and applied to information literacy efforts, in an effort to assess our efforts thus far and to ensure that we can “sustain integration of information literacy into the university curriculum” (Travis, 2008, p.18).

### **Literature Review**

In order to build information literacy programmes in higher education, librarians in recent years have relied on accepted standards to define information literacy and make explicit to stakeholders the types of learning outcomes that such a program would support. In the United States, the oft-cited *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education*, published by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), outlines learning outcomes and performance indicators that denote an information literate individual (Association of College and Research Libraries, 2000). ACRL has also published best practices for programs, proficiencies for instructors and coordinators of such programs, and discipline specific information literacy standards for a number of disciplines, all available on their website (Association of College and Research Libraries, 2009). The Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL) endorsed a set of standards in 2001, and a second edition was published in 2004 entitled the *Australian and New Zealand Information Literacy Framework: Principles, Standards and Practices* (Council of Australian University Librarians, 2001; Bundy, 2004). The CAUL and ANZIL standards also provide learning outcomes and performance examples, as well as clearly placing the standards in the context of curriculum alignment and assessment.

The Society of College, National and University Libraries in the United Kingdom (SCONUL) developed a diagrammatic model known as the “Seven Pillars of Information Literacy” in their position paper, *Information Skills in Higher Education* (Society of College, National and University Libraries, 1999).

Integrating information literacy as a campus-wide priority that reaches well beyond the library has been eloquently addressed by advocates such as Breivik (1998, 2006), Rockman (2004), Jacobson and Germaine (2004), Booth and Fabian (2002) and Peacock (2007). Iannuzzi (1999), Peacock (2002) and Kempcke (2002) have called on librarians to take on strong campus leadership roles in an era that demands high levels of information literacy, and as such, understanding campus culture and organizational change is discussed by Bennett (2007), and by Lakos and Phipps (2004). Calls for campus-integrated information literacy were bolstered by the standards offered by ACRL, CAUL and SCONUL, and higher education reform demanded that if information literacy was to be adopted, so too were assessment measures.

Assessment of information literacy instruction has grown considerably in the literature of the last decade. Rader notes in her thirty-year review of information literacy literature, that assessment of learning outcomes had been minimal but had begun to increase (2002). At the time, however, evaluation consisted largely of assessing attitudes about instruction as opposed to actual learning (Bober and Poulin, 1995; Warner, 2003). Lorenzen (1999) soundly placed information literacy in the context of the growing outcomes-based education movement, asserting that most library instruction is already attuned to outcomes-based ideals. Standard texts by Grassian and Kaplowitz (2001), Avery (2003), and Radcliff et al (2007), have provided guidance and samples for assessing all aspects of information literacy programmes. Burkhardt notes that although large-scale, standardized assessment tools have recently been developed (e.g. Project SAILS and the Educational Testing Service’s iSkills Assessment), case studies “remain the backbone of assessment in libraries”, as locally developed learning outcomes and assessment tools are highly prevalent in the literature (2007, p.29).

This Hong Kong-based case study, which will include further references to relevant literature in various sections, aims to participate and add to the international conversation on information literacy leadership, programme development and assessment.

### **Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU) & the HKBU Library**

Hong Kong has eight government-funded universities, several with world-class reputations, and all with strong and growing programmes within their own scope. Currently, Hong Kong is in the midst of an extensive educational reform process that is heading towards a new “3+3+4” academic structure that will be implemented in 2012. This structure will see higher education move from a three-year to a four-year undergraduate degree system (with six years of senior secondary education). Education reform in Hong Kong goes well beyond this very visible change, and includes many aspects related to ensuring educational excellence in preparing citizens for success and responsibility in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This paper will not provide an extensive review of this reform, but will briefly highlight those aspects that are of specific relevance to information literacy. Broadly speaking, an emphasis on critical thinking, inquiry and lifelong learning, generic and transferable competencies, and on adopting an outcomes-based educational approach have been given considerable

importance - all areas that open the door for information literacy to gain momentum in the region.

Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU) is a mid-sized university offering a broad range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, with a long-standing ethos of whole-person education. This ethos can be seen alongside that of many liberal education institutions that look to facilitate not only intellectual growth, but social, ethical and vocational attitudes and abilities as well. The HKBU Library is not unique among Hong Kong libraries in having a long history of offering library instruction, in a variety of ways, in support of the institution's educational efforts, e.g. orientations, open workshops, course-related workshops, online tutorials, etc. The Library *is* somewhat unique in that it has a mandate provided by the University, and articulated in the University's latest strategic plan, to "Integrate the Library's programmes more deeply into the University's processes of teaching, learning, and research" (Hong Kong Baptist University, 2006). This was the beginning of the Library's advocacy efforts to be seen as an integral teaching unit on campus. As one of only six strategic action items under the focus area of teaching and learning, this directive should not go unnoticed or underestimated. By proactively and successfully advocating for the Library to be recognized and included in the University's strategic plan in the area of teaching and learning, we would now have a path to institutionalized information literacy planning before us. Every conversation we had on campus could now begin with "Since we have been charged with integrating library programmes and services into the curriculum ...."

### **Education Reform & Information Literacy**

The education reform in Hong Kong is part of a broader movement that emphasizes transferable competencies, critical and creative thinking, problem-based learning, and lifelong learning, all of which have the potential to provide renewed enthusiasm for information literacy integration.

In the current educational context, information literacy has been shown to underlie many best practices in teaching and learning (Snavely, 2008), and to relate to the goals of restructured general education programmes that situate student learning and assessment at the core (Rockman, 2002). Peacock states that the shift "from discipline-rich teaching to ... process-oriented learning (which focuses on the development of generic capabilities)" provides the opportunity for librarians to take on new "pedagogical leadership" roles (Peacock, 2002, p.1). Breivik and Gee refer to the American Association of Colleges and Universities' call for developing lifelong "intentional learners" who excel at "interpreting, evaluating and using information discerningly from a variety of sources" (American Association of Colleges and Universities cited Breivik and Gee, 2006, p.41), and further suggests that unless today's campus administrators support information literacy "it is unlikely that the next twenty years will see any significant progress toward graduating students who are genuinely at home in the information society in which we all live" (Breivik and Gee, 2006, p. 41). Travis notes "a number of shifts in academia have created an environment that is more receptive to including information literacy in discussions of student learning" (Travis, 2008, p.19).

With Hong Kong universities embarking on a momentous curricular change in moving from a three-year to a four-year undergraduate degree, at a time when current educational and pedagogical thinking promotes the development of independent,

lifelong learners, the time for information literacy to take hold in Hong Kong might be upon us.

### **Information Literacy Developments in Hong Kong**

Evidence of coordinated, systematic infusion of information literacy into Hong Kong's universities is lacking. Lorenzen (2002) reviews the English language literature on academic library instruction programs outside of the United States between 1901 and 2000, and though he usefully identifies that library instruction is indeed occurring around the world, two points should be noted in relation to Hong Kong. Though Lorenzen's report is not comprehensive, only one article from a Hong Kong institution is included, and it is an article that is very specific to one programme of study as opposed to an institution-wide approach.

With the same limitation of searching for English language articles only on Hong Kong based information literacy or library instruction efforts in ERIC, LISTA, and Emerald Fulltext, it is surprising to note that relatively little has been written since 2000. Only a dozen articles focusing on information literacy were identified. Almost half of these articles are related to school programmes, leaving a mere half dozen focusing on information literacy in higher education. Topics of these articles include: user searching behavior/needs (Chu and Law, 2007, 2008), assessing student attitude and retention following library instruction (Wong *et al.*, 2006), educating users on circulation policies (Leung, 2005), promoting information literacy through web-based instruction (Li *et al.*, 2007), and developing a first-year required information literacy course within an Information Systems department (Loo and Chung, 2002). Only two of these articles expose an institutional approach to incorporating information literacy. Loo and Chung report on the design of a required information literacy and technology course that is aligned with the mission of a small liberal arts university. However, since the time of publication this course is no longer required of all students, though it remains as an elective for all undergraduate students and a requirement for associate degree level students. Li *et al.* report on successfully introducing and integrating an information literacy component into their large institution's mandatory information technology proficiency test. A web-based tutorial was developed to provide students with self-learning opportunities in preparation for this test, and face to face workshops are also offered. Both the workshops and the tutorial are encouraged, but not mandatory.

Though little might have been published, efforts in Hong Kong university libraries to provide information literacy instruction have certainly been undertaken. A 2004 survey was conducted under the auspices of Hong Kong's Joint University Libraries Advisory Committee (JULAC) gathering detailed information from all eight university libraries about information literacy efforts including statistics, staffing, audience, types of instruction offered, pedagogy, assessment, marketing, collaborative efforts, professional development, etc. (JULAC Information Literacy Task Force, 2005) A great deal of teaching and learning was taking place, however, when asked if there were any institutional level efforts aimed at building information literacy programmes, six of eight institutions reported that there were not any such efforts on their campuses. One institution reported that there was a campus level programme related to IT proficiency. Another institution reported that a working group had been convened by the Chief Information Officer/University Librarian to plan for a programme at the campus level.

For the purpose of this paper, an email follow-up focusing on campus-level programming was undertaken with the seven other JULAC libraries. (A number of high quality instructional efforts have been undertaken in recent years across the JULAC libraries, however, these efforts will not be reviewed here.) It was found that though many individual programs or courses require some level of information literacy instruction via workshops or online tutorials, there continues to be little attention paid to information literacy at the institutional level. None of the seven institutions ensures that all students have information literacy instruction somewhere in their curriculum; though there are instances where particular programmes have adopted such requirements for their own group of students. Two institutions have required IT proficiency programmes/tests that include information literacy elements, but students are only encouraged, not required, to attend workshops or complete online tutorials that focus on information literacy knowledge and skill development. Tellingly, only one institution reported having a planning document for the upcoming four year curriculum with any mention of information literacy. To be fair, many of these planning documents are still to come, but at this stage, information literacy in a 21<sup>st</sup> century university education appears to be a concept that has not made much of an impact in Hong Kong.

### **Assessing ourselves**

Recognizing that Hong Kong Baptist University was limited in its information literacy programme (for a number of reasons that will not be elucidated here), and seeing the great potential that was currently available in the environment of education reform, University curriculum planning, and Library responsibility as outlined in the University's strategic plan, the HKBU Library set out running. Running, not walking, due to the sense that our opportunity to get involved in institutional planning and curriculum reform was a time-limited opportunity. It was the fall of 2007, and planning for the 2012 four-year curriculum was already underway. The time to put forward an information literacy agenda was upon us.

The Information Services team, which was responsible for library instruction, quickly assessed what we had, what we lacked, and what strategies would be useful in trying to expand our role in supporting student learning. We had external calls to action from both the government (inquiry-based education, lifelong learning, etc.) and the HKBU administration (integration of library services within the curriculum). We had direction and support from the Library Administration to enhance the Library's role and reputation with respect to teaching and learning. We had a small team of dedicated and skilled teaching librarians. We had a long-standing, required library orientation session for first year students within the University's uLife Orientation Programme. We had relationships with some faculty and/or departments that allowed for course-integrated instruction. We had experience in providing online information literacy instruction and two online tutorials – one basic and one more advanced.

We lacked the human resources necessary to build and support an expanded instructional programme, and this had long been the reason for not engaging in more fulsome efforts. Although this was absolutely true, more importantly, we lacked authority, credibility, and basic visibility outside of the Library. These concepts are inter-related and the strategies undertaken to bring about change in these areas happened somewhat simultaneously. Each of these important areas will be reported on in separate sections below, but underlying all efforts in building a campus that embraced information literacy as an important learning outcome was the goal to gain broad *institutional* support. Faculty support, of some faculty, in some programmes,

as is so often the case, was simply not enough. In the midst of educational reform at the University, reform that was beginning to take shape in curriculum, pedagogy, and general philosophy about student learning, we saw information literacy floating in the ether - and we didn't even have to put it there, we simply had to pull it in.

### **Beyond Faculty-Librarian Collaboration**

Many successful information literacy programmes are built over time via close collaboration between individual librarians and faculty members. These initially isolated collaborations can lead to expanded conversations and further collaborations resulting in information literacy becoming an important aspect of an entire programme(s). However, this approach suffers from being piecemeal, dependent on individuals, and difficult to develop, sustain and assess systematically.

Kempcke (2002) goes further to suggest that despite the considerable amount of literature describing successful collaborations, they have not translated into very many instances of full campus integration. He states that an information literacy programme depends on "a network of associates, supporters, and allies that goes beyond collaborative instructional efforts" (p. 531). More recently, Travis (2008) also laments the lack of success in truly embedding information literacy across university programmes, and suggests that isolated collaborative efforts are not well-suited to "affecting student learning at the institutional level ..... Only written policies and assessed student-learning outcomes will enable uniform and sustainable integration into the educational process" (p.18). Prolific on the topic is Sean Penn Breivik, who for over twenty years, in numerous publications, has championed the idea that information literacy is "fundamentally a learning issue, not a library issue" (Breivik and Gee, 2006, p.60), and to this end her most important works are written for an audience of university administrators, not librarians. Still, libraries and librarians are central in her advocating not for libraries, but for the "quality of learning, research, and service that can occur on campuses where more imaginative use is made of academic libraries" (p. 29).

With this philosophy in mind, and with the educational planning and reform that was occurring on our campus, we made a conscious decision to move beyond our comfort zone of working with "library-friendly" faculty (although we would continue our efforts on this front as well). Our goal was to identify and become involved in campus initiatives that would be enriched by an understanding of how information literacy, and the Library, could support student learning. Kempcke (2002) suggests that Sun Tzu's classical Taoist text on military strategy, "The Art of War", is a useful text for librarians trying to battle their way into academic culture via masterful strategic thinking. And though Kempcke, and Sun Tzu, might chide our humility, we don't claim masterful strategic thinking, but we do claim the courage and determination to get out on the field, and see what we can do at a level that is broader than individual librarian-faculty partnerships.

### **Adopting Standards, Gaining Authority**

Historically, librarians at HKBU have had little influence on university-wide planning, as they are not academic staff, and have few positions on university committees and working groups. As we hoped to make a case for Library involvement on such committees, we decided that it would be useful to formally adopt well-respected, external standards to provide authority for our position, and for



our approach with respect to the importance of and the methods for including information literacy within the curriculum. Our voice as a profession is surely stronger than our individual voices, and with a focus on outcomes and assessment, external standards are often seen as a way to ensure the relevance and validity of both. The adoption of standards would also assist individual librarians to be comfortable in talking about information literacy outside of the Library, in advocating for its inclusion in the curriculum, and in recognizing/claiming their own expertise as reflected in accepted standards.

The ACRL Standards for Information Literacy were chosen to provide the foundation for our programme. These standards were chosen over other respected standards such as CAUL and SCOUNL for two reasons. First, the librarians at HKBU were familiar with the ACRL standards (as they are by far the most cited in the literature of information literacy, as American-centric as it may be), and two of the teaching librarians were alumni of the ACRL Institute for Information Literacy, and so were particularly well-versed in applying these standards and associated methods to their work. Second, the ACRL standards, like the CAUL standards, are outcomes-based and so made a logical fit with our institutional environment and our attempts to adopt outcomes based approaches in the Library's instruction programme (more on this below). As both the SCOUNL and CAUL standards have strengths and differences from the ACRL standards, we would use them as appropriate in furthering discussions, but would formally adopt one set of standards for simplicity and clarity.

As the ACRL standards are rather long and detailed, we decided to simplify/adapt them to our own environment, as have many libraries before us. We also began encouraging a developmental approach to curriculum integration (learn, practice, repeat, refine sophistication) by identifying learning outcomes for various stages of learning. We developed an information literacy matrix based on the five oft-cited standards (define needs, access, evaluate, use, understand ethical issues) with four levels for each standard – foundation, basic, intermediate and advanced. Though not mapped to specific years or courses at this stage, there was a general understanding that foundation level skills would apply to associate degree students (equivalent to two-year college programmes elsewhere), basic level skills to first or second year students, intermediate to second or third year, and advanced to final year or postgraduate students. Of course, in many cases postgraduate students would have to be taken from basic all the way through advanced depending on their knowledge of, and experience with, library research.

### **Embracing Outcomes, Earning Credibility**

Not only did we want elements of information literacy to be recognized as important learning outcomes in courses and programmes throughout the University, with faculty using our HKBU-adapted ACRL standards as a guide, we also wanted to apply the same demands for outcomes-based assessment to our own instructional programme. We attended campus seminars on outcomes-based teaching and learning (OBTL), and began applying the OBTL framework to the teaching and learning that took place within the context of our library instruction sessions. Though one or two-shot instruction sessions (our usual method of delivery) were quite different from semester long courses, we found that OBTL could certainly be adopted in the Library's educational context as well. A standardized class preparation template was prepared that focused on outcomes, assessment, curriculum, and pedagogy, and also mapped each of the outcomes of a specific class to the broader ACRL outcomes

previously identified as appropriate to HKBU. This template was tested and revised by several librarians who had formed an OBTL working group in the Library, and put into use in the spring of 2008.

This benefited us in several ways. We better understood the philosophy and process of applying OBTL practices, which meant that not only were we able to converse with faculty as they were working on their outcomes, but we might even be recognized as experts on campus. We could assist faculty in framing their information literacy learning outcomes, which might help them frame their other outcomes as well. There was much discussion on campus about the incredible amount of work that would need to be undertaken to write learning outcomes and assessments for all courses, and so our early experience would hopefully set us on the right track for future collaboration.

Further, we prepared programme level information literacy outcomes as samples to be used for discussion with faculty as they developed their programme and course-level outcomes. The samples posited specific information literacy outcomes that would be addressed in certain key courses throughout the programme's four-year curriculum. These outcomes would be developmentally based and iterative, i.e. students would have the opportunity to learn, practice, build and refine their knowledge and skills over the course of their entire programme.

Last, but certainly not least, adopting the OBTL framework within our own instructional practices, allowed us to assess whether students in our own sessions were learning successfully. This was, not surprisingly, a revelation - oxymoron intended!

### **Assessing Learning Outcomes, Celebrating Lapses**

After years of teaching all of the important topics that most library instruction sessions cover e.g. catalogs, databases, search strategy, evaluation, etc., it was time to determine if our teaching was actually translating into learning. After years of faculty and student feedback telling us our sessions were useful and well-organized and well-executed, it was time to move beyond perception. This can be a nerve-wracking and possibly ego-bruising experience. Even though librarians forever lament that they are expected to cover too much material in one-shot instruction sessions, somehow we still want to believe that we can do it anyway. We want to believe that though we'd love to have more time, we can facilitate learning with whatever time we are given.

In order to prepare for true, performance-based assessment the instructional team at HKBU Library adopted the only reasonable approach – we readied ourselves for failure, and planned to celebrate every learning lapse that would become evident through our assessment! Identifying areas in which learning is not occurring is indeed a reason to celebrate. It provides the only meaningful opportunity to improve in specific areas based on actual assessment data. One should note that staff development and attention to the psychology of change is important in adopting assessment practices. With a small instructional team of three, we were able to build necessary trust and encourage each other in accepting both the strengths and weaknesses of our current instructional experiences. The tone of celebration and support was crucial.

Our first use of the new model was with a foundation level class for associate degree students, which had over 20 sections over a two-week period. This was the perfect class to begin with as the multiple sections allowed us to quickly assess, make changes, and assess again. Using our class preparation template, we designed the

outcomes, assessment, curriculum, and pedagogy for the class. Three learning outcomes were set relating to identifying academic resources, constructing search strategies, and finding articles using a database. Our assessment method was relatively simple – an in-class worksheet that students would submit at the end of the session. After the first few sections, our assessment plainly revealed that the students were not achieving the outcomes. This hurt – but just a little!! We remembered how important it is to identify learning lapses, and set to diagnosing the problems. We concluded that there was too much material and it was too advanced for this level. We modified and tried again, but still found that though students appeared to understand examples, they failed to be able to apply skills needed for the exercises. We modified again, building in almost repetitive examples, and spent less time on areas that they did well on. This time we saw clear improvement – the repetitive examples seemed to work. Still, we found students “doing” things correctly, but not writing down what they did on the worksheets appropriately. We improved the wording on our instructions to assist students in demonstrating their learning to us. In the final few sessions, not only were students achieving the learning outcomes to a more than satisfactory level, but our sessions were more focused, more targeted on problem areas, and students were working at a higher level than we would have expected after the first few sessions.

As mentioned, our assessment methods were relatively rudimentary to begin with – each worksheet was examined and each exercise (tied to specific learning outcomes) was judged as successfully or unsuccessfully completed. Data was then loosely “compiled” to reveal what percentage of students were successfully achieving each of our learning outcomes, i.e., each of the three librarians reported approximate figures based on whatever method they found to be useful. We set a minimum goal of 75% of students successfully achieving each outcome as criteria for evidence of successful learning on the whole. As described, our students were initially unable to show evidence of successful learning, with student success percentages ranging from 55% - 75% on each of the learning outcomes. As we examined and made changes to our outcomes, methods and materials, we also made changes to our assessment methods and data collection methods. We developed assessment rubrics to ensure that all librarians were evaluating student performance consistently, and now judged each outcome on a scale of “Needs Improvement – Acceptable – Good – Excellent” which gave more insight into student learning than a simple pass/fail approach. We tallied all data for each class using simple Excel spreadsheets to ensure that we had accurate data. By the end of the two week period, 82%, 87%, and 89% of students were achieving the three outcomes respectively at least to an acceptable level. There was still room for improvement, however, as only 47%, 43% and 66% of students were achieving the outcomes to a good or excellent level.

The entire process of implementing this approach was somewhat painful, completely exhausting, totally energizing, and absolutely successful. We shared this experience in the Library’s annual retreat along with all of the documents and templates that we had created. To see three well-seasoned instruction librarians stand up and say proudly that they had discovered their students had not been learning very well was a celebration indeed.

Librarians at HKBU could finally internalize the idea that teaching does not equal learning. What can be covered in 50 minutes, and even covered with great skill as a teacher, does not equal learning. With this knowledge, and more importantly perhaps, with the proof of unsuccessful and successful learning in our hands, we were

now in a position to discuss these results with faculty. We were now in a position to show that we have *evidence* that covering too much material takes away from student ability to learn the 3 most important things, or that having 60 students in a lab built for 40 takes away from student ability to learn, etc. We were also in a position to better understand that faculty, too, might have to learn a little about their own classrooms and teaching techniques as they implement an outcomes-based curriculum.

### **Improving Visibility, Impacting Priorities**

Librarians cannot change the image, the understanding, or the role of the library on their campuses from within their libraries. A concerted effort was made to identify appropriate happenings on campus that are relevant to libraries and information literacy. A domino effect can happen from simply attending a faculty seminar on outcomes based teaching and learning, for example. In our case, attending such seminars helped us to identify the key faculty supporters and detractors. We could then share our internal OBTL efforts with those faculty who could support us and help us move our efforts outside of the Library. Working on OBTL matters with one particular faculty champion, led us to becoming aware of the discussions on campus that were being held to develop graduate attributes for HKBU. Attending open meetings, voicing opinions on proposed attributes, and putting forward suggestions to the “scribe” of the institutional document led to success, and information literacy was included in the HKBU Graduate Attributes, which were recently passed by Senate. All educators on campus now have a responsibility to ensure graduates have “effective information literacy and IT skills ... to function effectively in work and every day life” (Hong Kong Baptist University, 2009). Now we had another opening line for discussions – “Since all of our graduates must have effective information literacy skills ....”

Simultaneously, we identified a first year, required course in information technology that we felt might benefit from an information literacy component. We arranged to meet with the three course directors from the computer science department and made our “pitch”. Not only were they receptive, but the timing was perfect as they were in the midst of redesigning the course to include an “information management cycle” framework which fit well with certain aspects of information literacy. As this was a required first-year course, we felt we were beginning to build the foundation of a programme that would vastly improve upon the required library orientation session, and limited course-integration instruction that only some students were receiving. Would the computer science faculty have contacted us to collaborate on their new approach? This is doubtful, at this stage, but perhaps in the future, faculty will be more aware of the expertise and experience that teaching librarians can offer. In the interim, we will be looking for other strategic opportunities that will help build a comprehensive programme rather than support one course at a time.

On another front in the realm of increasingly impacting priorities by our proactive presence, the University Librarian offered to prepare a Library submission for a major institutional quality assessment exercise on teaching and learning. All faculties and schools were required to prepare a submission, but the Library and other support services were not. Offering to prepare a submission, which was accepted and included in the overall document, helps to position and recognize the Library as a teaching and learning unit. In attending discussion meetings on the preparation of the University’s submission as a whole, the Library also volunteered to write one section of the document (based on submissions from all faculties and schools) that was

particularly relevant to the Library, on programme delivery (including resources, teaching modes, and learning environments). The Library was included in this and several other sections of the institution's final submission, illustrating our role in teaching and learning in a very visible way. We await the results of the assessment, and hope that our external assessors will acknowledge the role and impact of the Library.

Though it is occasionally uncomfortable, always challenging, and considerable extra work, the efforts we have made in becoming part of campus-wide discussions have all met with tangible successes. Evidently, waiting for an invite might not be as effective or as expedient as simply showing up, and further, showing up with something to offer in support of the institution's priorities and concerns.

### **Initiating and sustaining change**

Travis (2008) provides a compelling model for the use of change agency theory in working with curriculum committees and other institutional bodies on information literacy agendas. She argues that understanding how change is adopted and diffused throughout a university, along with using strategies of "intervention" can help to overcome resistance to change, facilitate adoption of new ideas, and sustain change over time. Travis' case study of California State University, Long Beach (CSULB) is examined in light of research undertaken by Hall and Hord (2005 cited Travis 2008, p.24) on educational leadership, who identified six functions of interventions: developing/articulating a vision of change, planning/allocating resources, investing in faculty learning, checking on progress, giving continuous assistance, and creating an environment of support. Travis elucidates these six functions in light of library literature, and applies them to the integration of information literacy at CSULB. Applying these six functions to HKBU provides both validation for what has been accomplished thus far, and direction for future work.

#### *Developing/articulating a vision of change*

Our efforts at developing and communicating a shared vision of intended change can be seen in our modified ACRL learning outcomes document, our outcomes-based instruction planning template, our examples of programme-level information literacy learning outcomes, and the successful adoption of information literacy as an HKBU graduate attribute. We must continue to refine these messages and learn to communicate them with various stakeholders in ways that will be most meaningful to them. We must move beyond attending open session discussions to being invited to discuss concrete ideas at the level of departmental and general education curriculum committees.

#### *Planning/allocating resources*

The HKBU Library administration has made the teaching and learning role of the Library a top priority, communicating this message both internally and externally. Initial support was provided in the form of encouraging the Information Services department to spend time building strategic relationships and attending campus events that would further our involvement in curriculum planning. More concretely, and critical to future successes, an additional full-time position was funded in recognition of our expanding teaching responsibilities (a result of the required course we had become involved in) and our future plans to be highly involved in curriculum and outcomes development.

### *Investing in faculty learning*

Faculty learning thus far has been at the level of repeatedly being involved in faculty meetings where the concepts and importance of information literacy for inquiry-based and lifelong learning are introduced and reinforced. In future, we hope to provide faculty workshops, preferably sponsored by committees and groups outside of the Library, on developing information literacy outcomes and on incorporating information literacy into general education courses. Of course, we continue to invest in individualized faculty learning in all of our one-on-one interactions with faculty as well.

### *Checking on progress*

In order to monitor campus commitment and involvement in information literacy efforts, we need to find ways to ensure that we have feedback and are aware of new developments on campus. Thus far we have relied mostly on attending open seminars and events, but we need to become more formally engaged in campus planning groups and curriculum committees. We have long been on the Complementary Studies Committee due to our involvement in the orientation programme provided to first year students, and have recently had a Library representative appointed to the Senate Committee on Postgraduate Studies. We will be looking to become involved in a newly formed general education working group, and to offer formal assistance to groups within departments that are working on the new four year curriculum.

### *Giving continuous assistance*

Attendance and input at campus events, along with informal conversations at these events, aim at highlighting how librarians can assist faculty in creating programmes, courses, exercises and assignments conducive to graduating information literate students. We are about to launch a faculty consultation service, which will include consulting on learning outcomes, pedagogy and assessment for information literacy.

### *Creating an environment of support*

Support for librarians adopting change has been provided in terms of coaching, modeling and training. Continued professional development will be essential in becoming campus leaders in instituting good teaching and learning practices in relation to information literacy. Support for faculty adopting change is an area in need of development on our campus. There is no body at HKBU devoted to teaching excellence, though there have been discussions about the possibility of creating one. We would look to work with such an office to promote our services and deliver relevant workshops for faculty. We might also consider working with Library and University administrators to create a reward system for faculty who make innovative changes that highlight information literacy in their courses/programmes.

## **Conclusion**

Having taken an honest look at our strengths and weaknesses, and having moved outside of the walls of the Library, we have found ourselves in a new position on the HKBU campus. We have moved our instruction programme forward to a point where it is no longer solely the Library's programme, but the institution's programme. There is still work to be done in working out the curricular details of where and how information literacy learning outcomes will be integrated into the university's new

curriculum. As new general education working groups and four-year curriculum committees are being formed, we are working to become a part of such teams.

With our modest but significant successes thus far, and the opportunities that still remain ahead of us, we find ourselves on the brink of an exciting possibility, where high levels of information literacy might become one of the defining, quality characteristics of a Hong Kong Baptist University education. This would not only further define HKBU's unique role in the Hong Kong higher education sector, but it would also strengthen, through leadership, the sector as a whole with regard to information literacy efforts.

We hope that our experiences can provide other academic libraries struggling to bring information literacy to the forefront in their own institutions with some ideas, some guidance, and some inspiration to go beyond our initial steps. Consider building a respected foundation through the adoption of external standards, modified to fit the local environment. Look for ways to develop a program that has an affinity to institutional practices and priorities regarding student learning. Encourage and support an open and self-reflective philosophy of continuous assessment and continuous improvement at all levels. Look for ways, big and small, to build a growing presence in the eyes, and minds, of faculty and administrators. Finally, share and celebrate your successes, and even your failures, with colleagues inside and outside your own institution. We can all benefit from each other's experiences in bringing about even a small measure of library-led institutional change.

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