

THE NEW “SEARCH AND WRITE”-PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN LIBRARY

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Abstract. *The Bologna Process has meant major changes in the way Norwegian University Libraries look upon them selves and their own mission. This is in particular true for the way we see our relationship with the students.*

There have always been library courses at the University of Bergen Library, at entrance level for the Medical and Law students, at master level for students of Social Sciences or Humanities. Traditionally, these courses have focused on the resources available, the OPAC, the databases, the journals (electronic or printed) that students may use.

The Bologna Process: A new system of Higher Education in Norway

As part of the Bologna Process the whole system of higher education in Norway went through major changes. The degrees were changed, and we now have the common European system of Bachelor/Master/Ph.D-levels. At the same time, the studies themselves were broken up into smaller units, and quite a few of them changed from having a traditional written exam at the end (called “school-exam”) to having essays or papers as the form of evaluation.

In this situation the Library started looking closely at its own practises and relationships with the students. We were inspired by the form of “information literacy” that had been developed especially in the old polytechnics in North England, and by the pedagogical teachings of Carol Kulthaul, and applied to the University Senate for funding in order to make something similar.

With this extra funding, we appointed several working groups to look at different aspects of information literacy, and in the book “Aspects of the digital library”, co-edited by directors Angela Repanovici, Kari Garnes and I, more can be read about the different stages we went through. During this period, we cooperated with different other libraries in Norway and Denmark, and I think that this is one of the criteria for success; that you look around and find partners that also are interested in the same work, learn from each others and pool your resources. During the first couple of years, we used a program that has been developed by the University of Aalborg Library in Denmark, and adapted to University of Bergen use, for

instance by addition of learning material on academic integrity, academic referencing and ethical use of other scholars' texts.

This addition was a result of input from the university teachers and staff. We realise that we are dependent on good cooperation with the university teaching staff in order to implement the information literacy programmes and make them successful and useful for students.

Why?

Why are we doing this? Why use resources on making programs for information literacy, and fighting an uphill battle to have them accepted and implemented by university teachers, instead of just showing students that ask for specific resources?

One reason can be found in our view on pedagogy, where we agree with Carol Kulthaul that learning is a process that must be situated in time to the task or problem that must be solved. We are the ones that can match what library resources for students to use at a certain time of their essay-writing, or other problem solving.

Also, we see ourselves in the library as somebody that can teach students information literacy, and do our best to do this. Teaching in the field of information literacy belongs mainly to us, so to speak, and we are supported in our work by efforts done in libraries in other countries.

IFLA has a standing committee devoted to information literacy. Their definition, developed in accordance with the American Library Association is: "the information literate person is, "able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use it effectively. "" (Bibliotheca Alexandrina 2005)

Thirdly; the teaching of information literacy is a task given us by our university, and also, lately, by the Norwegian Committee for Higher Education (NOKUT), in their evaluation of the University of Bergen. The University, in its strategic plan, and NOKUT, in their evaluation report, are both adamant that the Library program of information literacy is a good thing for students, and something that all students need to learn.

What?

So how do we go about making sure that all students develop information literacy? This, of course, is the difficult task. Students are pressed for time, and professors feel that their own favourite subjects receive far too little attention and time in the curriculum as it is. On the other hand, some of the teaching staff realizes that students that are on their way to becoming information literate have mastered the basics in studying, and need little help with this, instead proving to be more rewarding in a tutorial situation, and getting better grades.

This way, we have been able to gain acceptance in some departments by personal connections and knowledge, or by proving our worth to the teaching coordinator. This works for as long as the teaching coordinator is in position, but a major drawback is that

teaching coordinators will change every three or four year. Also, the subject specialists may change or be on leave, and then the whole plan may falter. We see that this is a very vulnerable and person-dependant way of working, which functions very well when it functions.

At the same time, our Director has been very active in the University teaching advisory committee, making sure that they are fully informed about the programmes we have developed. The University has asked the faculties to start cooperating with the library in order to implement information literacy in the most efficient way.

Cooperation!

So this is the way we work at the moment, trying to encourage the different departments to commit themselves to the library's program of information literacy. We need full cooperation from the teaching staff, as they are the ones that know when and how the library's teaching will be best situated in the total teaching of the students.

In our cooperation, we aim to give the information literacy course in the best possible relation to the essay, paper or problem-solving task facing the students. We need to know what kind of essay they are writing, what kind of results the teacher is expecting, and what the learning outcomes are expected to be. Only then can our program be of the most use for the students.

In our experience, it is not very difficult to get this information from the teaching staff. Almost every one is happy to cooperate with the library, and eager for any help their students may get. Sometimes we disagree on what is to be taught when. The main challenge for us at the Arts and Humanities library is that we serve many different subjects and departments, and that the initial cooperation, until the routines have been settled, is very time-consuming.

The new program:

The new Search-and-write-program is divided in two parts, one mainly for new students, and one for students on Master level, or writing term papers. The two parts are also divided into smaller parts, corresponding roughly with the stages in an information searching process as described by Carol Kulthaul (Kulthaul 2004, p.45): Task initiation, Topic Selection; Prefocus Exploration; Focus Formulation; Information Collection and Search Closure. Also, the modules on Academic Integrity and Evaluation of texts for use have been kept and developed.

The academic librarian who is responsible for the chosen academic subject will get in touch with the department, and plan the course, using as many or as few of these modules, in what ever order s/he feels is appropriate for the students, depending on where they are in the writing process, and what kind of essay they are writing. We will mainly offer the course in information literacy to students with essays, papers or similar forms of problem/task-oriented exams.

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