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The Welsh Information Literacy Project: Phase 2

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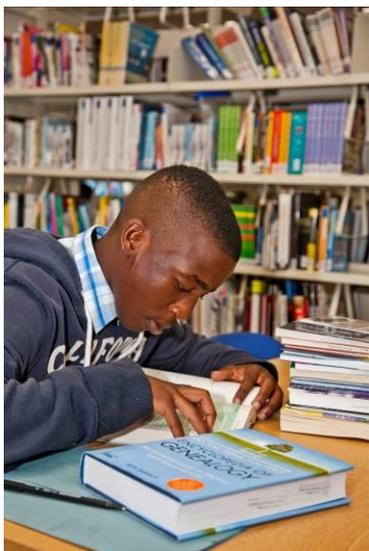
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In issue 5(1) of the Journal of Information Literacy, we reported on Phase 1 of the Welsh Information Literacy Project. One year on, the project is moving to a new host, to Grŵp Llandrillo Menai, a further education college in North Wales. This report highlights the progress of the project in Phase 2, whilst based at Cardiff University.

Keywords

information literacy; Wales; Welsh; CQFW; case studies; framework; advocacy

1. Background



The Welsh Information Literacy Project was established after a 24-hour workshop in Gregynog Hall in November 2009, which brought together librarians from across the education sector as well as from public libraries and representatives from the Welsh Government. The workshop agreed an action plan and mandated Cardiff University to seek funding from CyMAL: Museums, Archives and Libraries Wales to take the initiative forward.

Joy Head joined the project in July 2010 as Information Literacy Development Officer for Wales and the Welsh Information Literacy Project was officially launched on 8 September 2010 – UNESCO's International Literacy Day. The project has an active, cross-sectoral steering group with representatives from public, school, further education, higher education and health libraries in addition to the National Library of Wales, WHELF and CILIP Cymru. Support from the Welsh Government through CyMAL and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) has also been integral to the project.

The aim of the project is to promote the understanding and development of information literacy (IL) in education, the workplace and the wider community in Wales. In Phase 1, the project scoped the current situation in Wales, illustrating practice through a range of case studies and highlighting benefits of IL in relation to the educational, social, political and economic priorities in Wales. Alongside this, the project created a draft framework for IL in Wales, taking inspiration from the Scottish model (Irving and Crawford 2008).

Phase 2, from April 2011 to March 2012, built on the foundations of Phase 1, realising the benefits of the draft framework and integrating it into policy and practice.

2. Information Literacy Framework for Wales

By the end of Phase 1, the Information Literacy Framework was prepared and agreed by the steering group. At the start of the second phase, the framework was made available for wider consultation inviting comment from the library community as well as from the Credit and

Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW) and Agored Cymru, a Welsh accrediting organisation for lifelong learning.

By June 2011, the framework had been adapted to reflect the feedback and was available bilingually, in English and Welsh, in its final form on the project website. The framework illustrates progression in IL through each level of the CQFW from Entry Level (building confidence for those preparing for learning or work) right through to doctoral study. Each level is arranged using the updated SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information Literacy (SCONUL 2011a) and Level 8 for doctoral studies uses the researcher lens (SCONUL 2011b).

In Wales, in addition to the subject curriculum, there is a Skills Framework for 3-19 year olds (Welsh Government 2008). This non-statutory framework from the DfES is integrated into the delivery of all curriculum areas in schools and includes such skills as developing thinking, communication, ICT and numeracy. The Information Literacy Framework for Wales highlights the IL element of these key skills. For example, the capabilities listed under 'Developing ICT' are essentially IL by another name, most of which are defined more by the identification and use of information than by the technology. Sadly the heading of 'Developing ICT' potentially detracts educators from understanding its breadth. To highlight the relevance of IL to the Skills Framework, the Welsh Information Literacy Framework uses wording from the Skills Framework wherever possible for its own learning objectives up to Level 3 (A-levels).



As envisaged by the Gregynog workshop, the Information Literacy Framework for Wales has provided a reference point for educators, librarians and policy makers to ensure a common understanding of IL, which can be integrated into their policies or strategies. This approach was exemplified at the end of March, when an Independent Review of Digital Classroom Teaching, commissioned by the Minister of Education and Skills, reported their recommendations. The report *Find it, make it, use it, share it: learning in digital Wales* (Hayward 2012), recommended that not only should a wider range of digital materials be available within the classroom, but that teachers be supported to develop their digital capabilities. IL was specifically included as a digital capability, with reference to the Information Literacy Framework for Wales.

3. Information literacy units of learning

The CQFW is a national educational framework in Wales which provides accreditation to all forms of learning at progressive levels in schools, the community, university or the workplace. The project worked closely with Colegau Cymru and NIACE Dysgu Cymru, who were running their own project to develop example units of learning for lifelong learning. This team identified the importance of IL and how learning in this field can be adapted to the learner's level and context. As a result, the Colegau Cymru/NIACE Dysgu Cymru project worked in partnership with the Welsh Information Literacy Project and funded the creation of seven units of learning, from Entry Level 1 up to Level 4. The units were written by Agored Cymru, based on the Information Literacy Framework for Wales. This project also created a handbook and gathered together a resource bank of teaching materials to support those running the units and funded pilots. The pilots took

place in Cardiff and Vale College and in Coleg Llandrillo. These experiences have been written up as case studies and are available from both projects' websites.

The units are now available through Agored Cymru (2012) for libraries and colleges to use with their readers or staff. With the Welsh Government's *Libraries Inspire* strategy delivery plan target for 15% of libraries to be offering one or more of the new accredited IL units by March 2013 (Welsh Government 2012), the project will continue to support the units in Phase 3.

4. Advocating information literacy

The other key strand of activity in Phase 2 was the creation of resources to help equip librarians to promote the benefits of IL within their own context, and in particular in schools, in the workplace or for employability, and to support digital inclusion.

Joy Head moved on from the project in November 2011 and Louise Harrington and Sarah Puzey, working part-time, undertook the development of these resources. A benefits analysis of IL for the workplace and employability is available on the website, along with a graphic, a leaflet and an adaptable slideshow. For schools librarians and education librarians talking to trainee teachers, there is an infographic, a leaflet and two sets of presentation slides. The leaflets have already been used in presentations to schools and included in book boxes for teachers. Welsh librarians are welcome to carry on requesting printed copies of the employability and schools leaflets to distribute to teachers and others.

5. Phase 3



Phase 3 of the project will be focusing on implementation: embedding IL in schools, equipping public library staff to facilitate IL development, and further promoting and supporting the IL units of learning. As a result, it seemed appropriate to relocate the project away from a university. My thanks go to Grŵp Llandrillo Menai for taking up the baton for Phase 3, and to CyMAL for funding this project into a third year. My thanks too go to the steering group, who have been key to the success of the project so far, and of course to Joy Head, Louise Harrington and Sarah Puzey for their commitment and hard work.

For further information on the project, to view the framework or advocacy materials or for contact information, please visit the project website at <http://welshinformationliteracy.org> or in Welsh at <http://llythrenneddgwybodaethcymru.org>.

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