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'Strategic approaches to Information Literacy: a CETL perspective.'

Theme: Strategic approaches to Information Literacy & Embedding and enriching

CILASS: Centre for Inquiry Based Learning in the Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Sheffield is a Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, funded by HEFCE. CILASS has initiated a far-reaching learning and teaching development programme which aims to exploit the synergies between collaborative inquiry, information literacy (IL) and networked learning in new and innovative ways. This short paper will present the strategic approach and initiatives taken by CILASS to IL development within the CETL context.

Inquiry based learning (IBL) is a powerful pedagogical strategy for actively challenging and engaging students with the questions and problems of their discipline. The development of strong information literacy capabilities is fundamental to the success of IBL. Close collaboration between academic information scientists with specialist interests in information literacy, librarians, core CILASS staff and academic staff working on discipline-based IBL projects is a key feature of CILASS strategy.

Based on this collaborative framework, CILASS has begun to take forward a number of activities designed to support the further embedding of information literacy development into the subject-based curriculum. These include:

- Partnership with the University Library, to promote and extend the use of an Information Literacy VLE module. It is envisaged that this will provide a vehicle for introducing assessment of students' Information Literacy development.
- Support for an Information Literacy audit to be carried out within an academic department (Information Studies). It is anticipated that an outcome of this project, led by Ms Sheila Webber, will be an Information Literacy auditing tool, based on the SCONUL '7 Pillars' model, for use by other departments.
- Support for the establishment of a multi-professional IL Network led by colleagues in the Department of Information Studies working in collaboration with the Library. The Network will provide a focal point for discussion and debate on IL within the CILASS community, with impact on strategic development in IL across the wider University. The importance of IL has recently been recognised formally at a strategic level in the University, within its new Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy.

In addition, the CILASS research programme will support development of IL in the curriculum through identifying and disseminating good practice and extending understanding of IL within different disciplinary contexts.