Learning for life: can it happen online?

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Learning for life

- “a mix of operational, discipline and critical literacies appropriate to your selected career and lifestyle”

- appropriate mix differs between individuals
Literacy in this context

- Operational literacy
- Discipline literacy
- Critical literacy
Operational literacy

- Practical ‘doing’ skills
  - Driving a car
  - Knitting a jumper
  - Locating a book by title
  - Opening a computer program
  - Photocopying a journal article
  - Referencing a book
Discipline literacy

- Understanding the language / signs / conventions / norms / habits of your chosen discipline (professional culture)

  - Acronyms
  - Jargon
  - Content
  - Meaning & connotation
  - Practice & teaching
Critical literacy

- Ability to analyse broader issues, to construct meaning and to communicate meaning
  - Understanding and analysing
  - Relating to other work
  - Evaluating and critiquing
  - Synthesizing and presenting
What’s the mix?

- Operational literacy + discipline literacy + critical literacy = lifelong learning

- What are the proportions and the progression?

- Basis for information literacy programs
Information literacy at CQU

- Approach is discipline specific
- All students receive the same opportunities
- Collaboration with the lecturer is vital
- Use the framework provided by ANZIIL
Traditional approach

- Structured sessions
- Lot of operational detail and some critical analysis
- Guides for distance students to mirror on-campus classes
And then came online …

- Popularity of online tutorials
- CQU and Compass
- Many advantages – reach large numbers, self-paced learning, intuitive screens …
- Loss of some of the advantages of face-to-face
Early indications

- Low usage figures for Compass
- Student evaluation of Compass
- QULOC project to assess web based tutorials

CQU’s response

- Generic Vs subject specific
- Compass for Science, Compass for Psychology
- How discipline specific is appropriate
- 32 students enrolled in the Bachelor of Biomedical Science
Project findings

- Preference is for demonstration
- Preparation was not a good investment
- Near enough is good enough
- It is all “web stuff”
- Intuitive interfaces determine the source
- Improved searching strategies
Lessons learned …

- Understand the needs of the audience — “librarians search, users browse”
- Understand the nature of the medium
- Face-to-face strategies don’t work in different environments
- Limit operational skills training
- Expand the critical literacy component
Moving on …

- Literature review & information management tutorials
  - Audience involvement
  - Little operational detail
  - Development of concepts
  - Discipline linkages
  - Attention to design feature

- Usage is high in terms of enrolments
There’s more to online

- Computer mediated tutorials (chat)
- Subject guides
- Workbooks
- Postgraduate course
The future

- IL will stay discipline specific
- Increase in the number of courses & programs online
- Smarter use of Compass
- More discipline specific tutorials
- Federated searching
Learning for life: it can happen online!!

Any questions?