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Connecting and thriving through integration: a (sP)acific example.

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Abstract:

A Library project to integrate information and academic literacy skills into the curriculum of an undergraduate programme at the University of Auckland provided a collaborative opportunity to analyse and map the curriculum to the University's Graduate Profile. The collaboration further enhanced the project teams' (Liaison/Subject librarian, Learning Support Services Manager/Librarian, Student Learning Advisor, and PhD student researcher) understanding of the curriculum. This ensured the effective and seamless integration and scaffolding of skills students require to successfully complete their course assignments and assessments.

The integration project utilised a range of methods including the use of online resources and a learning management system; assignment-specific activities; face to face workshops; a targeted learning session (First Year Experience); course tutorials (Vaka Moana) and self-directed activities. The *Talanoa and *Teu le va/Tauhi va methodologies specific to engaging with Pacific students and staff were also applied as an essential part of the project.

The paper discusses how academic and information literacy skills integration in this project are driven by the University's Graduate Profile and course objectives and requirements rather than from a library skills framework. The importance of collaboration and relationship-building between stakeholders (librarians, learning advisors, academic staff, tutors and students), what worked well, and improvements are also discussed based on feedback received from staff and students. Skills development through the scaffolding process and future developments will also be discussed in this paper. The model used in this project can be adopted and adapted in other programmes, and specifically to Pacific students.

***Talanoa and *Teu le va/Tauhi va** (references see

http://www.library.auckland.ac.nz/guides/arts/pacific-studies#=2&methodologies)

Background:

The University of Auckland Libraries and Learning Services consists of multiple libraries spread out over several campuses. The merger of the University Library, Student Learning Services, and English Language Enrichment in 2013 has resulted in a more integrated and holistic learning support service for students. It has also created more opportunities for staff

from these units to collaborate on a range of initiatives including the integration of information and academic literacy in workshops, courses and the curriculum.

In late 2010 the Pasifika Subject Librarian approached the Learning Support Services Manager regarding a collaboration project to integrate information literacy into the Pacific Studies curriculum. The project received approval from both Library Management and the Head of the Department of Pacific Studies. In addition to the Pasifika Subject Librarian and Learning Services Manager (who was later replaced by a Learning Support Services Librarian), the project team was expanded to include a Student Learning Services Advisor, and a PhD student majoring in Pacific Studies.

The project undertook an alternative approach to integrating information literacy into the undergraduate curriculum. At the recommendation of the Department Head, the project began with an initial examination of the programme curriculum. This involved collecting all undergraduate course information over the last two years (including course assessments). Selected courses, specifically their assignments and exams, were mapped to the attributes of University Graduate Profile (https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/for/current-students/cs-academic-information/cs-regulations-policies-and-guidelines/cs-graduate-profile.html).

The mapping process provided the project team with important baseline information on how information literacy was being taught and 'mapped' to the relevant Graduate Profile attributes. Departmental agreement was reached to integrate and develop information literacy and academic literacy into undergraduate courses. In 2013, the team began with two Stage 1 courses.

Pacific learning support & library workshops

Prior to the information literacy/academic literacy curriculum integration project, students enrolled in undergraduate Pacific Studies courses could attend generic information literacy workshops open to all students run by the Learning Support Services team. They could also attend subject-specific workshops organised by the Pasifika Subject Librarian and course lecturers either during or outside of tutorial times. The subject-specific workshops focused on using specific resources and search strategies for assignments.

Although information and academic literacy were viewed as important graduate attributes by the lecturers, developing these specific skills was voluntary and extra-curricular. Many students viewed these skills as something to be 'done' in Stage 1 and therefore attendance at Library workshops offered in Stage 2 and 3 was low.

However, common feedback from students in the last year of their studies was that knowing about library search techniques and resources earlier on (e.g. in Stage 2) would have made a huge difference. Comments received from lecturers indicated that students were under-utilising the range of library resources available to them, as evidenced by the inadequate citations they provided in their assignments and problems with referencing. This was impacting on students' overall grades and subsequent study options.

These comments suggested that the information literacy skills students learnt in Stage 1 were insufficient, were not being developed by students beyond Stage 1, and were not being transferred to higher levels of research. This was unlikely to change without a plan that clearly identified, developed and scaffolded a required integrated set of research skills from Stage 1 to Stage 3.

Collaboration

Various approaches and efforts had been made in the past by the Pasifika Subject Librarian to hold collaborative workshops and seminars with key staff and programmes such as: Student Learning Services, Tuākana (student mentoring programme), Student Associations (Pacific students), Student Equity, and Pacific Alumni (McFall-McCaffery, 2007). These partnerships were successful but were unable to be sustained or expanded due to various factors such as staff turnover and other work responsibilities.

Where collaboration has been successful it has been largely due to lecturer support and existing working relationships between the staff members from the various teams. In one case, a Learning Advisor from Student Learning Services had previously worked on an information and academic literacy integration project with the Pasifika Subject Librarian.

In other cases, Student Learning workshops and support were offered to students, but this was independent from the Library workshops or Librarian support. Other opportunities to undertake a collaborative approach in student support programmes in the past have been on an ad hoc basis without continuity.

A more structured and sustainable approach was needed. To successfully embed academic and information literacy into the curriculum required the support and official approval from Heads of Department and academic staff. In other words, a top-down, bottom-up and integrated approach was needed.

Literature review

Information Literacy

The definition of information literacy as used by the Australian and New Zealand Institute for Information Literacy [ANZIIL] is the ability to "recognise when information is needed and the capacity to locate, evaluate, and use information effectively"(Bundy, 2004, p.3). It is generally accepted that information literacy is a key competency for lifelong learning and integral to participating in society (Bruce, 2001; Corrall, 2008).

The role librarians' play in fostering information literacy in academic institutes has changed over the last decade. Librarians are now initiating partnerships *with* faculty rather than simply responding to requests *from* faculty. Bruce (2001, p.11) talks about "curriculum partnerships" between librarians and faculty. These partnerships include developing course-specific websites, self-directed online modules, and collaborating with faculty on learning design.

Information literacy collaborations and partnerships have become more than just the traditional on-shot library skills tutorials. Integrating information literacy into the curriculum, rather than as an 'add-on' outside of the curriculum, is the most effective way of ensuring students develop information literacy skills (Corrall, 2008; Salisbury & Sheridan, 2011). This can only be achieved through effective library-faculty partnerships.

Graduate Attributes

Many universities now have graduate attributes as a way of articulating what skills (including information and academic literacy skills) students should graduate having obtained. Although these attributes may vary across institutions, they generally cover discipline-specific knowledge and generic/transferrable skills, knowledge, abilities (Barrie, 2006). Faculty are expected to provide opportunities for students to develop and obtain these attributes within the curriculum. However, research indicates that implementation of graduate attributes into teaching and learning has been limited (Barrie, 2007). This presents an opportunity for librarians to collaborate with faculty on curriculum integration of relevant graduate attributes/skills.

Pacific Learners

"Pasifika" is not a homogeneous group, but is made up of different ethnic groups. Each ethnic group has different languages, cultures, customs, and experiences. A common generalisation in education is that Pacific people often seem to prefer to learn together in groups; however they also have varied learning styles (Pasikale, 1996). According to Helu-Thaman (2014), it is important for teachers to understand their students, and to utilise Pacific approaches and examples students relate to. A learning, teaching and research environment that upholds cultural democracy, and values a diverse student background is crucial to student success. This is supported by Mahina-Tuai (2004) who talks about the need to connect clients to services which "speak" to them that they can identify and engage with.

Although Pacific students' utilisation of the library is high compared to other university support services (Anae & Suaalii, 1996), their library experiences can be overwhelming and daunting (Helu-Thaman, 1985). Despite students indicating that they use the library frequently, they don't necessarily connect the library to the development of core research skills important to academic success. Libraries are not traditionally part of Pacific cultures. Knowledge is not traditionally found in libraries, in a building or in books, but is transmitted orally and passed down through generations (Lilley, McFall-McCaffery & Marsters, 2009).

For Samoan and Tongan people learning is a holistic process and libraries are associated with formal education. Traditional learning for Pacific people is also very visual and by observation, by listening and by example, not usually questioning the holders of knowledge and authority. Reverence and fa'aaloalo or respect for knowledge often transfers into the formal classroom, and is interpreted in various ways i.e. to mean agreement, understanding, or nothing to contribute. Silence can also mean disagreement for Samoans and Tongans, especially when people are not being consulted. For Pacific initiatives to succeed, their perspectives and input is crucial (Calvert, 1992) through talanoa/talking and consultation.

Through talanoa (Vaioleti, 2006), establishing quality relationships with staff and students is crucial in understanding students' learning and needs. Teu le va (Airini, 2010) or tauhi va (Ka'ili, 2005) literally means caring for, valuing and cherishing relationships. Relationships are very important in Samoan and Tongan culture, and they underpin service or tautua in Pasifika library support services (http://www.library.auckland.ac.nz/subject-guides/maori/mst_about.htm). Trust is very important in Samoan and Tongan relationships, and is the basis of genuine collaborations and partnerships, providing other opportunities to work together.

Integration approach

After the mapping process was complete and agreement was reached, the curriculum integration project was rolled out at the beginning of 2013, starting with two Stage 1 courses: Pacific 100 Introduction to Pacific Studies (148 students) in Semester 1 and Pacific 105 Pacific Worldviews (105 students) in Semester 2.

Pacific 100 is a compulsory Stage 1 paper, and the majority of the class are first year students. Because of this, the course coordinator and lecturer wanted students to familiarise themselves with the Library - basic skills of knowing where the Pacific books are located in the Library; who to seek help from; how to search and find a book on the shelf; and critical evaluation of sources.

Taking these needs into consideration, the project team initially scoped what existing support was available to **all** first year students. This included the First Year Experience (FYE) which offers a Targeted Learning Session (TLS) to first year students focusing on their assignments. The TLS brings together librarians, learning advisors, tutors, and FYE mentors in one place to address whatever problems or questions students have in relation to their assignment.

After consultation with the course coordinator it was agreed to include a TLS into the Pacific Studies 100 course curriculum. In addition, other identified needs were accommodated within the course to gradually build on students' skills.

CourseBuilder (CB), an online course development tool, was used to create a course specific site for both Pacific 100 and 105. The site included course content, information and academic literacy components, and self-directed activities.

Pac 100 Introduction to Pacific Studies

In the first week, students attended a University orientation session for Māori and Pacific students. The Pasifika Subject Librarian was invited to speak, and this provided an opportunity for her to introduce herself, outline what support was available, and promote the course site. Students were strongly encouraged to attend the generic library tours being offered during the first two weeks of the semester as a way of familiarising themselves with the physical library.

Pacific Studies staff agreed to work collaboratively to scaffold the assessment tasks - students would be required to write an initial essay proposal as a precursor to their final essay submission. The proposal would then be peer reviewed by classmates using Turnitin's

PeerMark tool, and feedback provided to the students. Students would then write and submit their final essay based on the peer feedback. The purpose of the peer review was also to enable students to begin developing their critical thinking skills early on in the semester. This peer review exercise and comments was shown to assist students with completing the final essay.

A Targeted Learning Session (TLS) was offered a week before the essay was due and was held in the Library. This was compulsory and scheduled in the students' normal tutorial time. The focus was on the two peer commentaries students received on their essay proposal. It gave students the opportunity to address any questions they had.

According to Henley (2014) key elements to the success of TLS included the following. These elements were supported by the Pacific Studies TLS experience:

- TLS timed 7 days before assignment due date.
- Convenor present at sessions as well as tutors.
- Building TLS into the assessment preparation activities, in tutorials, library workshops and promotion in lectures with emphasis on encouraging all students to attend.
- Scheduling TLS directly after a lecture and walking the students over to the library.
- Regular communication with tutors and lecturer in preparation for helping students, and go through the assignment questions to anticipate potential confusions/queries/ and coordinate helpful collective advice.
- Stagger TLS attendance by tutorial groups to spread the numbers more evenly.

Pac 105 Pacific Worldviews

In Semester 2, the project team worked with another Stage 1 course (Pacific Studies 105).

Hands on assignment-specific workshops were offered during normal tutorial times. Course tutors attended and participated in the workshops creating a more authentic collaboration and sharing of expertise.

The workshops utilised online learning. The course site included interactive exercises students could complete during the workshop. They were also able to record their research process within the course site for future use.

At the end of the workshop students were encouraged to complete the online workshop evaluation form.

Approaches common to both courses

The project utilises the talanoa and teu le va approaches. Throughout both courses, there was ongoing collaboration between the librarians, learning advisors, tutors, and lecturers. Talanoa, informally and formally, was happening between the project team and key

stakeholders including the students. The Vaka Moana extra weekly tutorials in the Fale Pasifika provided another avenue for talanoa between tutors and students.

The Vaka Moana tutorial sessions covered questions students had on course assessment tasks. The sessions were facilitated by the course tutors and topics for discussion were given out before the session, basically at point of need (e.g. exams, assignment deadline etc). The Pasifika Subject Librarian attended some of these sessions and contributed to the talanoa or discussions. Students could also visit her at the weekly Library clinics offered at the Fale Pasifika building, or in the Library, or through email or phone.

The Pasifika Subject Librarian was also given access to CECIL (learning management system) for both courses. This enabled better understanding of course communication between lecturers, students and tutors. In addition, the Librarian could monitor information that had relevancy to information/academic literacy development.

Communication by email, phone, and face to face meetings (including informally at department and university events) played a huge part behind the scenes in gaining agreement and follow-up on course developments.

A blended learning approach was made possible through the online course sites. The sites provided self-directed learning opportunities for students outside of class; activities which could be used in the Library workshops; and an online space where students could record their research process. The workshops used Pacific examples, metaphors and concepts to foster understanding of information and academic literacy activities (e.g. referencing is similar to acknowledging our Atua and those who came before us in Pacific settings).

In both courses students completed an anonymous questionnaire at the end of the semester. This gave them the opportunity to reflect on the research process (what they had learnt, challenges) and if they found the course site to be useful. The information was later used to assist the project team evaluate the effectiveness of information and academic literacy integration.

Evaluation

At the end of the year the team evaluated the integration project progress. This included analysis of the student questionnaires, number of course site visits, and feedback from Library workshops. The results of the analysis were shared with the lecturers and tutors, who were also invited to provide any feedback. The project team were then able to make any necessary changes for 2014.

Examples of student feedback:
- "It was like a checklist for me. I used it to check whether I was on the right track and this really helped in terms of planning and getting my essay completed".

- "I learnt new methods on how to find and locate sources for both assessments. Learnt things I didn't know before."
- "We touch based on not only library referencing but also minor details of our course. Identified assignments, took us through the Pac 105 Website"
- "It provided skills that we can use throughout our years at university. It is also applicable to other courses besides Pacific studies."

Examples of staff feedback:
- "… thanks for the amazing innovation that you have provided with coursebuilder. It was a great success and hope to continue working with you in the future."
- "Malo Judy and Stephanie: I just wanted to write, again, and thank you, for all the work you did for the Pacific 100 website, both to get it to this point, and to integrate it with all those other university resources. I, and all of us here at Pacific Studies, are deeply appreciative of your work, and I wanted to be sure to acknowledge it in a way that made these sentiments, and my gratitude clear."
- "Excellent thank you ...Love your efficiency and support, not just for the students but for me also...Thank you...The students LOVE the format of Cecil - and CB is a 'God send' :)"

Progress in 2014

Close working relationships through the project aided a first time invitation to the Pasifika Subject Librarian from the Department Head to the 2014 staff retreat to talk about the integration project. Despite having received management approval of the project, some lecturers did not fully appreciate the project's objectives. All lecturers' buy-in was needed in order for the project to get ahead.

As a result of attending the retreat and talking with staff, two Stage 2 courses (plus a Stage 3 course) were added to the integration project this year and also as part of the Certificate in Academic Preparation programme for 2015.

Discussion

What worked well?

Using the curriculum mapping approach was an effective way of integrating information and academic literacy into the curriculum. It allowed the project team access to, and an understanding of, the curriculum. This assisted in identifying any gaps and how skills could be scaffolded.

Collaboration was essential to the success of integration. Sharing and contributing expertise (librarians, learning advisors, lecturers, tutors) meant the project group could ensure information and academic literacy skills were seamlessly integrated into the curriculum.

Student reflections allowed the project team to see areas where students struggled and how these could be addressed in the future. The most commonly identified problems were locating and evaluating relevant information to support assignments and referencing.

The number of site visits for the online course sites indicated that students utilised the online information outside of their lecture and tutorial time. Feedback from students supports this.

From the project team's perspective, having information and academic literacy embedded into courses proved far more effective and rewarding than the traditional add-on library workshop. Using blended learning meant not everything had to be covered in the workshops.

Challenges

A number of challenges have been encountered so far. In some courses tutors had to be actively encouraged (and reminded) to use the online course site and to promote it to the students. Tutors began their employment during the week semester begins, so basic training on how to use the site, familiarity with the content, and engaging with the site is therefore not routine for some tutors. Without the tutors' support, students were unlikely to use the course site and associated resources. An earlier briefing of newly employed tutors would assist greatly with this.

An awareness of support services and how to access them is important. The challenge is to be more visible and continue to network with key staff and support services so both staff and students are aware of Libraries and Learning Services and where to seek help. Building these relationships and close associations are important in Stage 1. This is where students also learn about the expectations of tertiary study, and in their first year develop the study skills academic study requires. Working together in a supportive environment that values talanoa and teu le va provides students with the confidence and skills needed to succeed at university.

A significant challenge was staff turnover. Changes in course coordinators and tutors make it difficult to build on previous work achieved. This raises the issue of how we can ensure ongoing collaboration. It takes time to meet with staff, gain their support for curriculum integration and train them in using the online course site, both throughout and beyond the semester. Only by embedding the work into the structure and policies of the Faculty and the Departments can this be overcome.

Scalability in relation to the TLS was a further challenge. Having all the (100+) students attend at the same time was difficult for staff to manage, and resulted in an uneven distribution of attendance between the first and second hour. Based on this experience, attendance has since been staggered by tutorial group. Most Pacific students in their first year like to work in small groups, and they are encouraged to use the same approach for the TLS. This has worked well – students can listen to questions other students had.

The lack of a student cohort moving from Stage 1 to Stage 2 produces particular difficulties. Students taking Stage 2 papers may not necessarily have taken Pacific papers in Stage 1.This makes scaffolding skills (and reinforcing those skills) difficult as some students will not have received information/academic literacy training as part of this project in their first year. Nevertheless with goodwill and whole team support these issues can be resolved. Possible solutions to this challenge are currently being explored with the Department.

Where to next?

Further scaffolding of skills into Stage 2 and 3 courses will be undertaken and included in learning objectives and formal assessment.

The project team will incorporate more Pacific concepts and examples into the academic/information literacy workshops and project activities, and continue to utilise Talanoa and Teu le va approaches. For Pasifika students, success is often not focused on the individual "I" but on the "we" as the success of one means the success of the family/aiga or group.

The project is also conducting a three year survey on students in their first year (Stage 1) and third year (Stage 3) on their information/academic literacy knowledge and skills at these levels. The survey ends in April 2015 and the data will be valuable in further informing and enhancing the delivery of information/academic literacy services more relevant to student needs.

The project has shown the value of the integration of IL/AL skills and strategies into the undergraduate programme courses. To continue to develop, the work will need to be owned by academic staff and integrated into the policies and structure of the Faculty and the Departments.

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