



## Enhancing Students' Tertiary Blended Learning Experience Through Embedding Digital Information Literacy

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### ABSTRACT

This article argues that integrating practices of digital information literacy can support a learner-centred, developmental blended learning experience. It considers the consequences of blended learning delivery for teachers and students and how the affordances of such delivery might benefit digital information literacy development. Additionally, the article aims to contribute to a discussion about the design of blended learning for digital information literacy development in tertiary institutions.

**Keywords:** blended, learning, online, information, literacy

### Introduction

New Zealand tertiary institutions increasingly offer a mix of face-to-face and online learning, often referred to as blended learning. With growing diversity in tertiary education and larger numbers of enrolled students in classes, online learning can open up new possibilities for enhancing students' learning. However, the way blended learning is designed impacts on how student learning can be supported in a course. Considered, well-designed learning opportunities that include literacy development are thus critical for engaging students and enhancing their blended learning experience (Bernard et al., 2009; Gunn, 2013).

Researchers point out that academic study requires continuous literacy growth (Strauss, Goodsir & Ferguson, 2011). Students or teachers may not always fully recognize how ongoing academic literacy development contributes to the tertiary study experience and student success (Feekery, 2013; Strauss et al., 2011). Fostering academic literacy appropriately in a blended context is as crucial a question as it has been in a face-to-face context (Feekery, 2013; Gunn, 2013). One approach is explicitly to teach digital information literacy by integrating it with the academic literacy practices in a course. Not only does this approach acknowledge the interwoven nature of content learning and literacy development, it responds to related academic literacy challenges – for example reading