

## **eCDF 423 Information Literacy Expert Review – July 2006**

### **Prepared by:**

Dr Bryony Wakefield  
Trainer/Program Administration Officer  
Information Literacy Program  
Australian National University (ANU) Canberra, Australia

## Information Literacy e-Learning Modules – Reusable and Portable across a College of Education, a Polytechnic and a University

### *Module 1: Essay Writing with Reading against the ANZIL Standards*

**Reviewer: Dr Bryony Wakefield**

In reviewing *Module 1: Essay Writing with Reading* against the 6 ANZIL standards listed, each of the standards has been met. General comment and comment on each standard have been included below.

ANZIL Standard	Meets standard
1. The information literate person recognises the need for information and determines the nature and extent of the information needed	Yes ✓ No <input type="checkbox"/>
2. The information literate person finds needed information effectively and efficiently	Yes ✓ No <input type="checkbox"/>
3. The information literate person critically evaluates information and the information seeking process	Yes ✓ No <input type="checkbox"/>
4. The information literate person manages information collected or generated	Yes ✓ No <input type="checkbox"/>
5. The information literate person applies prior and new information to construct new concepts or create new understandings	Yes ✓ No <input type="checkbox"/>
6. The information literate person uses information with understanding and acknowledges cultural, ethical, economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information	Yes ✓ No <input type="checkbox"/>

### ***General comments***

In reviewing this module I am satisfied that the six ANZIL information literacy standards have been met. I found that the *Essay Writing and Reading* module has been well thought out, providing students with clear information and analysis on aspects of writing an essay. This information has been supported by appropriate examples and suitable activities that provide students with an opportunity to apply their learning. The module provides a user-friendly method of delivering online learning. Further, the design of the module is appropriate for the content and allows easy movement between sections.

***Standard One: The information literate person recognises the need for information and determines the nature and extent of the information needed.***

- The section “Understand the topic” meets the requirements of Standard One of the ANZIIL Information Literacy standards. Information has been clearly set out explaining to students how to break-down an essay question in order to understand what the essay question is requiring the student to do, what information students need to look at and what they are being asked to write about.
- In “Understand the topic” the first activity works well and encourages people to consider the instruction words and provides positive feedback. The use of examples before asking students to attempt the activity works particularly well in the content words example.

**Aspects of “Understand the topic” to consider:**

- The second page of this section “What will I do” explains how the green arrows are to be used, however this information needs to be stated on the Introduction page, where the arrows are first introduced. Further, it might be useful to mention that one can navigate through the module by the table of contents on the left hand side of each web page.
- In the third page of this section “Your topic” a sentence could be placed at the end of this page stating that examples of each of the types of words will be given in the following web pages – students may spend a lot of time considering these words before realising that examples are given in the following pages.
- In the fourth page of this section “Instruction words” where it states “See a list of instruction words” it would be useful if this read: “See a list of instruction words and their definitions”.
- The section summary clearly summaries the section. In order to encourage students to go over areas that they may not feel comfortable with in this section, it would be useful to have a statement at the end of the section stating: “If you want to go over any of these words you can return to any of the sections at any time during the module either by using the green arrow to the left of your screen or by clicking on the table of contents to the left of your screen.”
- The tips provided in this section are relevant to the content and work well.

***Standard Two: The information literate person finds needed information effectively and efficiently***

- Standard Two has been effectively met in the “Make a plan” section and the larger section “Get started”. Students have been shown different ways of breaking down an essay question and how to plan their approach to the essay.
- The “Make a plan” section clearly takes in different people’s learning skills. The opportunity for people to take a test, to indicate their learning skills, is also a good idea as it prompts students to consider that there are several approaches to learning and it is important to consider what best suits them. The questions, table and mind-map are all useful methods of breaking down research and considering the information. Students however may feel intimidated by some of these methods. It might be useful to emphasise that these are approaches that students should consider using but that their use will be dependent on students’ learning styles.
- The suggested questions to get students started on their essays are well thought out. It would, however, be useful if an explanation was included with each question as to why/how the question was constructed, so that students can implement this method in other essays.

***Standard Three: The information literate person critically evaluates information and the information seeking process***

- This module clearly outlines how to critically evaluate information and the information seeking process.

**Aspects of “Know about information” to consider:**

- In the section on “Books and book chapters” while the information on the book “Old King Cole” is interesting it either needs to be clearly labeled as an aside or taken out of the module. Where it is currently placed is misleading as to its relevance to the training module.
- The activity asking students to scroll over references to see the different parts identified is well thought out. There seems to be a jump, however, from the description of using different sources into the actual activity. The title above the activity “Book chapters from your readings” could be replaced with “Understanding different parts of a reference”.

- The interesting facts, while interesting, are distracting. The person using this module can only take in so much information. It is therefore a concern that the interesting facts might take away from the students learning. One exception is the interesting fact given under the Academic journal section, which is directly relevant to the training.
- The Matching Activity is very useful and provides an opportunity for students to assess if they have understood the different reference types correctly. Of concern, however, is the response that appears on the screen if they provide an incorrect answer. The response, “Whoops! Have another go”, is rather alarming/discouraging. It would be more appropriate for the comment to be encouraging to the student; “Have another go” would be sufficient.
- In the section “Develop essay content” students are provided with methods of expanding on their earlier questions, table and/or mind map. The development of this exercise is two-fold. Firstly, it reiterates the importance of the earlier exercise and secondly provides a building block for this earlier exercise. It would, however be useful to include some explanation on how the extended questions were chosen; so that students could more readily transfer this learning into other essay topics. The use of the three methods of approaching an essay topic acknowledges different approaches to learning.

***Standard Four: The information literate person manages information collected or generated***

- The section on “Use information” provides clear discussion and examples on how to manage research material when writing an essay.

***Standard Five: The information literate person applies prior and new information to construct new concepts or create new understandings***

- The section “Gathering information” provides a comprehensive guide to selecting and recording information. This is supported by well thought out examples that provide a clear approach to managing and generating information effectively.
- As mentioned in reference to the web page “Your topic”, a sentence could be placed at the end of “Reading techniques” stating that examples of each reading technique will be given in the following web pages – students may spend a lot of time considering these words before realising that examples are going to be given.

- The questions set out in the “skimming” section are well considered and will hopefully prompt the student to ask themselves what information they have acquired through skimming.
- The “scanning” activity gives a good sense of the care that needs to be taken when scanning a document.
- The “Select and Record” section is a well developed and clearly introduces students to different ways of gathering information. This section was done particularly well.
- Under the “Make notes section” there is a link to the APA style guide. This link would be better positioned on the “Books and books chapters” section, where different types of sources/references are introduced.
- As mentioned under Standard Three: in the section “Develop essay content” students are provided with methods of expanding on their earlier questions, table and/or mind map. The development of this exercise is two-fold. Firstly, it reiterates the importance of the earlier exercise and secondly provides a building block for this earlier exercise. It would, however be useful to include some explanation on how the extended questions were chosen; so that students could more readily transfer this learning into other essay topics. The use of the three methods of approaching an essay topic acknowledges different approaches to learning.
- The section on “Construct an essay” is well structured. The use of a different example for the breakdown of the essay allows the student to identify how the skills learnt in this module are applicable to different essay topics. The diagram of the example essay shows a clear introduction, middle and an end. This section clearly illustrates how to build on prior information and how to collate the research that the student has undertaken into an essay. This section could have benefited from a clear description of a noun and a verb. This section pre-supposes that students have a clear understanding of these terms.
- The section “Construct an essay” provides students with a clear breakdown of how to construct an essay. It does, however, seem a great deal more advanced than the previous sections of this module. It might be useful to recommend to students that they may want to go through this section twice. Initially, to work through the ideas and secondly to consider these ideas in the light of their own essay topic.

***Standard Six: The information literate person uses information with understanding and acknowledges cultural, ethical, economic, legal and social issues surrounding the use of information***

- In the “Use information section”, the information on plagiarism is well set out and covers the main aspects of plagiarism. The student on completing the “Use of information section” should have a clear understanding of the legal aspects and considerations when undertaking research and essay writing.
- In the “Use information section”, the striking a balance diagram is a very effective way of demonstrating the balance of voices needed in an essay.
- In the “Use information section”, the information on citations has previously been referred to. It may be more useful to discuss this aspect earlier, or remove earlier discussions of citations until after students have completed this section of the module.
- In the “Why do you cite” example that shows a conversation between a student and a tutor, the options to either listen or read the conversation acknowledges that different people have different learning skills. The advice given by the tutor provides both appropriate information and also offers a method for documenting quotations correctly.