

Information discernment, mis-information and pro-active scepticism

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Abstract

A participatory action research approach was employed to investigate school students' information discernment capabilities. Placing school student participants at the centre of the research process enabled them to define the problem in their own words and begin to find solutions to the issue of how to choose good quality information. Findings confirmed the results of many studies - that school students adopt a cognitive default position of trust and are relatively unquestioning when using information sources for their work (in this case the Extended Project Qualification or EPQ). Results also showed that with an appropriate embedded learning and teaching intervention, which includes aspects of information and digital literacy, school students adopt a cognitive questioning state, which leads to pro-active scepticism, enhancing their information discernment and in turn enables them to make better information choices. This has implications not only for school teachers and librarians but for educational policy makers also.

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Biographies



Geoff Walton is Senior Lecturer and Programme Leader in the Department of Languages, Information & Communications at MMU. He teaches on the MA Library & Information Management and the BSc in Digital Media and Communication. Previously he worked at Northumbria University during which time he and colleague Dr Ali Pickard secured British Academy/Leverhulme Trust funding. He has also worked on research projects including the EU AMORES project (*an Approach to Motivating Learners to Read in European schools*) <http://www.amores-project.eu/>, visual metaphor in information literacy (the Fishscale of academicness), ASkapp time-management and information literacy smartphone application and Information literacy and self-efficacy. He is currently Principal Investigator for a recently completed project on the psychophysiological aspects of information literacy. Geoff is Principal Supervisor for research projects on students' information literacy in transition from further education to higher education and a number of journalism related PhDs by professional practice. For more information see: <https://scholar.google.co.uk/citations?user=Uw5lXpUAAAA&hl=en>



Alison Jane Pickard was appointed as a Lecturer in Research Methods in 2000. In 2002 she became Programme Leader for the BSc (Hons) Information and Communication Management and later introduced the BSc (Hons) Librarianship Work Based Learning. Alison became Head of Subject for Information and Communication Management in 2007 during which time she also developed a Professional Doctorate Programme in Information Science. 2007 saw the release of her first text book on *Research Methods in Information*, published by Facet. This text book has now been translated into Italian and is now in its second edition and is used as a core research methods text internationally. Alison is now Director of CPD and Collaboration for the Faculty, a role which allows her to combine research passions, teaching interests and professional expertise.



Lara Dodd is currently a doctoral student researching the combine research behaviour of aspiring undergraduates at Northumbria University. She assists on academic and commercial research projects and teaches in the Department of Computer and Information Science. Lara has spoken at several information science and literacy conferences and festivals and is currently concentrating on publishing. Prior to her arrival at Northumbria University Lara ran a consultancy business that specialised in providing qualitative research to the education sector. Lara has worked for a wide range of public, private and charitable organisations since 2006 and is passionate about information behaviour and qualitative and hybrid methodological approaches.

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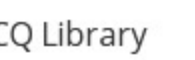

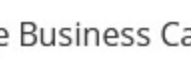

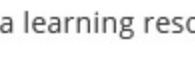
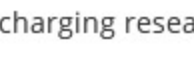
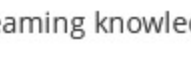

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