



Challenges in teaching information literacy in online courses

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This presentation will discuss the activities of University of Tartu Library in information literacy education.

To give all students the opportunity to develop information literacy skills and abilities more in depth we developed 2006 a web-based course „Fundamentals of information literacy“. It is a credit bearing free elective course, giving 2 credit points (3 ECTS). This course is general, directed to all faculties and all subject librarians are involved in teaching, tutoring the students of their subject area.

The entire course is delivered in the Blackboard learning environment. In an e-learning course it is possible to offer a more comprehensive program as it is possible in face to face classes. We can consider the needs of students with different skill levels and use the discussion tool for giving feedback.

The ACRL Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education were used to develop the program of the course. The course discusses different types of information sources, principles of information search which can be used in different search environments, search opportunities for finding scholarly information on the Internet and evaluation of search results.

During the course the students have to perform information searches on their research topic and evaluate the search results. The tutors give feedback to the exercises of each student. Both the exercises and tutors' comments are posted to a discussion forum of the course where all participants can read them and learn from others' searches too. The students also have to analyse some searches of their fellow students. At the end of the course they draw up a summary of their searches through various sources/databases and reflect on their information search process.

In 2008 an online course for doctoral students „Introduction to information research“ were developed and carried out following the same model with subject librarians as tutors. This course is registered in all doctoral curricula of the University of Tartu as elective course.

Based on general basic course some subject librarians have designed discipline specific online courses, which are taught in cooperation with the faculties as a part of some subject. The subject librarians enjoy their role as consultants and facilitators in developing information literacy skills and abilities of the students.

The feedback to our courses has been generally positive, the students like the simple and logical order of the materials and the elements of active and self directed learning. E-learning is a perfect form for this kind of courses, because here the form and the content complement each other.

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