



dmu.ac.uk
DE MONTFORT
UNIVERSITY
LEICESTER

THE INFORMATION SOURCE EVALUATION MATRIX

Successfully shaping our world

KAYE TOWLSON

The Information Source
Evaluation Matrix, a creative
approach to making
information evaluation easy
and relevant

SESSION COVERAGE

- What is the Information Source Evaluation Matrix?
- Background to development
- In what context has it been used?
- The response
- Benefits
- The future

WHAT IS THE INFORMATION SOURCE EVALUATION MATRIX?

- A quick easy framework to judge the relevance and quality of a given piece of information
- Covers the “5Ws” and asks the user to award points for quality, relevance, authority, content and purpose of a specific piece of information in relation to the task in hand.
- <http://www.library.dmu.ac.uk/Images/Selfstudy/ISEMLeaflet.pdf>

BACKGROUND TO DEVELOPMENT 1

- Internal RITA project (Leigh and Mathers 2008) revealed student (mis)perception of their information evaluation skills.
- Existing online tutorials Intute Internet Detective, OU Safari, QUICK offered but largely ignored
- Cross faculty/departmental project: reviewed embedding of information evaluation into curriculum and led to development of ISEM.
- Internal RITA project Leigh, Mathers and Towlson (2009) and HEA ICS Subject Centre Project Leigh, Mathers and Towlson (2010)

BACKGROUND TO DEVELOPMENT 2

- Students need tool for systematic evaluation of information. Clear students needed a means of weighting a source by the amount of the information that is relevant to the task. Hence the ISEM.
- Clear potential for developing information evaluation skills as matrix clearly raises awareness and forces application

CONTEXT OF ISEM USE

- All faculties within DMU plus a high percentage of Library sessions
- HEAT Transition Project and Local Sixth Form College
- Linking tool/exercise between sessions
- International students: space to think and engage
- Other institutions and enquiries from overseas ie. Sweden, America, Hawaii
- Framework for assessment and feedback tool to reflect the quality of sources used.

THE RESPONSE

- Overall, students perceive improvement of their evaluation skills as a result of using the matrix
- Students found matrix helpful in evaluating material and easy to use
- Matrix increased awareness of evaluation criteria
- Matrix facilitates comparison of sources

THE RESPONSE

- Increased confidence in ability to evaluate information
- Quality of journal papers acknowledged but also their specialist nature
- Small change away from reliance on books
- Recognition of value of commercial websites

BENEFITS TO STUDENTS

- ISEM is quick and easy to use
- provides a disciplined approach to information evaluation
- enables easy comparison of materials
- promotes good citation practice
- is adaptable to different academic tasks
- can be applied in different cultural contexts
- facilitates education for sustainable development by reducing the need to print material peripheral to the task in hand.
- The tool will help students to develop better evidence based arguments for assignments and achieve a better quality of work.
- The tool is also inclusive of all levels of students as it is not specific to a certain level of study but applicable across all levels.

BENEFITS FOR STAFF

- The use of the Information Source Evaluation Matrix (ISEM) enables the selection of quality academic or task related material and provides a framework for critical thinking which is often not strongly developed in students.
- Comparative improvement in quality of academic information utilised in assignments as identified by participating tutors.
- Provision of descriptors which allow a weighting to be given to a source for the particular task in hand. This gives a strong indication of the value of the source to the students' work.

BENEFITS FOR UNIVERSITY

- Reduction in plagiarism and more evidence of citation identified by participating tutors.
- Reduction of unnecessary print outs
- Develop capabilities of international students, from different academic cultures, to adopt Western citation practices.
- Supports key graduate employability skill (CBI/UUK 2009)

THE FUTURE?

- Expanding use
- E – version
- Any more?
- Any questions?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- CBI and UUK *Future fit, preparing graduates for the world of work*, [WWW] CBI Available from http://highereducation.cbi.org.uk/uploaded/HRE_091_Future%20Fit%20AW.pdf [Accessed 25/03/11]
- Leigh, M. Mathers, E. L. and Towlson, K. B. (2009) “Using face-to-face sessions and focus groups to develop online support to enhance student content evaluation skills in VLE learning communities”. SOLSTICE Conference, *It’s all in the blend?* Edge Hill University 4th June 2009
- Leigh, M., Mathers, E.L. and Towlson, K. (2010) An investigation of the successful application and development of a quick, easy to use, cross-disciplinary information evaluation matrix. The Higher Education Academy Subject Centre for Information and Computer Sciences 11th Annual Conference, 24 – 26 August 2010. Durham, U.K.
- Mathers, E.L and Leigh, M. (2008) “Facilitators and barriers to developing learning communities”. The Higher Education Annual Conference: *Transforming the student experience*, Harrogate 1 – 3 July 2008
- Towlson, K., Leigh, M. and Mathers, L. (2009) The Information Source Evaluation Matrix, a quick, easy and transferable content evaluation tool, *SCONUL Focus* (47), pp. 15-18.