Chapter 1
Introduction—Revisiting Old Mantras: Transforming the Educative Role of the Library in the Curriculum

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Abstract This book was inspired by the need to change the conversation about how academic libraries conceptualise and communicate their educational expertise, and how they add value to learning and teaching in their institutions. For over a decade, staff at Monash University Library (MUL) and La Trobe University Library (LTUL), Australia, have been influenced by the scholarship of learning and teaching to enhance how library skill development programmes connect to the curriculum.

1.1 About this Book

This book was inspired by the need to change the conversation about how academic libraries conceptualise and communicate their educational expertise, and how they add value to learning and teaching in their institutions. For over a decade, staff at Monash University Library (MUL) and La Trobe University Library (LTUL), Australia, have been influenced by the scholarship of learning and teaching to enhance how library skill development programmes connect to the curriculum. Successfully navigating the social and structural norms of our universities to extend our libraries' role in the curriculum is substantially attributed to pedagogical models that underpin our information literacy (IL) teaching practice. Although we have adopted two distinct models to guide our practice in this regard, each of these models is robust and theoretically informed. Furthermore, our models have evolved with time, are aligned with higher education skill agendas, have adapted to organisational changes and held firm in times of disruption.

Above all, our models supply the missing link between theory and practice in IL by explaining *what* skills library staff can deliver and enable in the curriculum, and of critical importance, *how* these IL skills can progressively develop within disciplinary

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content. Making the 'what' and the 'how' explicit is significant, as learning and teaching approaches guided by these pedagogical models have enabled library staff to transition from transactional service providers to sophisticated educators. This shift has been pivotal for transforming our libraries' educational practices. In effect, both our libraries have reconceptualised how librarians perceive their role and value within the university, extended their influence to embed IL skill development in the curriculum and importantly, redefined what collaboration looks like in library–faculty teaching partnerships (Salisbury et al., 2012; Torres & Jansen, 2016).

As a result of this shift, we have expanded our teaching capabilities, gained the language to communicate with faculty colleagues and kept the library visible and responsive to emergent skill agendas that enhance student learning outcomes. The result of reconceptualising our teaching practice is effecting lasting and transformative change by repositioning our libraries as key stakeholders in the student learning space. We have forged a new path along which cross-institutional collaboration has become visible, and the library's leadership role in enabling students' IL skill development in the curriculum has widened. This book shares practice-based examples illustrating this change.

Distinctively, this book consolidates knowledge in several pertinent areas that are highly relevant to educators, including establishing library–faculty partnerships, explicitly and coherently developing students' IL skills within disciplinary content and transforming perceptions of the educative role of academic libraries. The practice-based examples in this book provide practitioner narratives that demonstrate how our models inform embedded IL teaching practice and curriculum design to enhance the student learning experience.

1.2 Rationale

Definitions of IL and what this skill set entails is long contested in the library literature, as a result, different interpretations and categorisations of IL abound (Sample, 2020). The most commonly used definition describes the information literate individual as successfully performing a range of skills to effectively engage with information (ANZIIL 2004; ACRL 2015; SCONUL, 2011). One benefit of a skills-based definition is that it offers a clearly identifiable set of outcomes for teaching (Sample, 2020). The problem discussed and debated internationally throughout academic libraries for several decades, however, is how to frame and connect IL skills meaningfully to disciplinary content (Bruce, 1994; Moselen and Wang 2104; Corrall & Jolly, 2019; Dawes, 2019). The preference has largely been to establish integrated teaching and learning approaches supported by library–faculty teaching partnerships to bring library skill development programmes closer to the curriculum (Callan et al., 2001). However, this has not been without its challenges. Despite ongoing strategic efforts undertaken by academic libraries globally, establishing traction in the curriculum, so, the library can make a difference to student learning outcomes remains more often

than not the exception rather than the rule (Corrall & Jolly, 2019; Dearden et al., 2005; Helfrich, 2013; Mileham et al., 2001).

The tools available to guide IL practice include national and international standards and frameworks (CAUL, 2001, 2019; ANZIIL, 2004; ALA, 2000; ACRL, 2015; SCONUL, 1999, 2011), and these documents are continually extended and refreshed to reflect changing terminologies, concepts and understandings. While the intention is to assist with programme implementation (Bundy, 2004; Doskatsch, 2002; Martin, 2013; Sample, 2020), in our observation, consistent use of these practice models has not always been able to be sustained by academic libraries. This limits their relevance to the curriculum. In addition, the nomenclature and jargon associated with defining IL in the literature perhaps suggests a level of confusion as to how librarians articulate IL skills and process concepts. At times, this has led to a cluttered discourse symptomatic of the issue at hand (Becker, 2018; Sample, 2020), and sustainably embedding IL skills in the curriculum continues to be problematic for many libraries. Remaining responsive and relevant to student learning in an ever-changing educational landscape demands more of libraries than a continued effort focussed on reinventing IL.

What is required is a single constant; a flexible, adaptable pedagogical model to guide library teaching practice and transcend library-centric interpretations of IL. The importance of this is even more significant in a rapidly changing higher education sector, where the student population is diversifying, and teaching and learning cannot be separated from digital transformation. This suggestion does not diminish the strong institutional imperatives for libraries to embrace change (Llewellyn, 2019), but rather reinforces the notion that foundational educational theory needs to be a constant alongside ongoing change if libraries are to successfully embed IL in the curriculum. However, also crucial to success is partnership with faculty to enable access to the curriculum and reach students in a relevant and meaningful way.

1.3 Who Owns the Curriculum?

Because building students' IL skills for research and learning remains a current issue in higher education, academic libraries have an opportunity to transform their educative role, align the library within the educational priorities of the institution and provide leadership in this regard (Pinfield et al., 2017). But in taking up the challenge presented by this opportunity, librarians should ask themselves an important question: *Who owns the curriculum?* Asking this question disrupts traditional views that library professionals cannot share the curriculum space, particularly in terms of IL and related skill development.

Greater metacognitive awareness is demonstrated by students when skill development is made explicit, at the point of need, and within the context of content knowledge (Hattie et al., 1996). Unless IL skill development is activated in the curriculum, it often remains disconnected and invisible to educators and students alike. Therefore,

the challenge for academic libraries lies in implementing embedded skill development models which constructively align and progressively develop students' research skills as a considered and sustained intention of learning (Salisbury et al., 2012; Smith, 2011; Torres & Jansen, 2016). This suggests more is required than standalone, one-shot IL sessions or individual successful examples of collaboration for skill development that are well documented in the literature. Although these published examples are valid in representing evolving ways to solve a complex problem, such approaches demonstrate individual successes rather than a coordinated, deliberate organisational response to effect lasting and sustained impact in the curriculum. What we advocate, in the practice-based examples shared in this book, is to place IL skills, processes and concepts with a constructivist epistemology informed by the learning theory of constructivism (Biggs, 1996). Constructivism marries learning and teaching, thus guiding educators in how IL learning experiences can become seamlessly woven into the fabric of the curriculum using a developmental approach. As such, the skills required by the learner to critically engage with discipline knowledge is experienced at the point of need so new skills and knowledge can be constructed by individuals.

The complexity of achieving this goal is compounded by the fact that many libraries do not coordinate a curriculum and do not share responsibility for IL with curriculum owners. Such accepted mantras about curriculum ownership can inhibit librarians' agency to fully participate in curriculum design related to IL. In essence, academic libraries require access to the curriculum to achieve their educational strategic aims. There is a lack of literature offering pedagogically sound models to inform and guide library–faculty collaborations for implementing embedded skill development approaches. This has clearly impeded the ability to frame IL curriculum objectives, learning outcomes, learning activities and assessment criteria. To overcome this dilemma and open up a shared educational space, librarians need collaborative teaching partnerships with discipline academics using theoretically informed conceptual pedagogical models. Conceptual models provide a way to embrace new skill agendas and keep the library relevant in changing learning contexts.

1.4 Our Journey

LTUL and MUL started a similar journey around the same time. Both libraries concluded that bridging the library–faculty divide required a robust, theoretically informed model for IL to give relevance and purpose to this skill set as foundational skills for learning. We identified the need for a model that could develop the teaching capabilities and pedagogical knowledge of librarians in order to address the teaching skills gap commonly found in libraries (Bewick & Corrall, 2010; Namaganda, 2020; Schachter, 2020). Our libraries were therefore exploring the same landscape and travelling similar paths, but holding different guidebooks.

1.4.1 MUL—The Models of Engaged Learning and Teaching

MUL has adopted a theoretically informed, empirically researched model known collectively as the Models of Engaged Learning and Teaching (MELT; Willison, 2017) (see Chap. 2). The MELT consists of skill development frameworks on research, work and digital skills. The first of the published MELT was the RSD framework (Willison & O'Regan, 2006, 2018). This framework illustrates skills encompassing the ability to identify information needs, locate, evaluate, manage, analyse and synthesise information and communicate research outcomes. Over the years, the RSD framework inspired several other frameworks. Among these are the Work Skill Development (WSD) framework (Bandaranaike & Willison, 2009, 2018; revised by Monash University Library 2019) capturing skills for work readiness, and the Digital Skill Development (DSD) framework (Torres et al., 2018), describing what it means for students to be digitally literate. The MELT has empowered library staff to open a dialogue with faculty that now explores a rearticulation not only of what research, work-ready and digital skills encompass, but how to enable skill development as a shared endeavour between library and faculty.

1.4.2 LTUL—Library Learning and Teaching Partnership Framework

LTUL created a local model articulated in the Library Learning and Teaching Partnership Framework (LLTP Framework; La Trobe University Library, 2019) (see Chap. 3). LTUL applies the well-established notion of constructive alignment (Biggs & Tang, 2011) to embed IL skill development in curriculum design. This provides a basis for academics, educational designers and librarians to collaborate on embedding IL literacy learning outcomes, learning activities and assessment tasks, and ensuring all these elements are in place and are explicitly connected. As a result, librarians are part of curriculum development and design teams which also include academics, academic skills lecturers, as well as educational designers and developers. Significantly, whether as part of a design team or a more informal collaboration, library staff have become a valued partner in the curriculum design process; in turn, raising the profile of the library team across the university. It has also made other forms of collaborative development possible, such as the creation of online resources to support a subject's intended learning outcomes, activities and assessments.

1.4.3 Collaboration and Shared Responsibility for IL in the Curriculum

Our robust models have situated the library in what Whitchurch (2012) describes as a 'third space' environment where university staff from professional and academic backgrounds are involved in knowledge transfer through collaboration in multi-professional teams that are not part of formal institutional structures. Significantly, the third space responds to narratives of exclusion that can render professional groups invisible. The third space often engenders convergence rather than separation; academic and non-academic activities are not polarised but rather connected in the delivery of student skill development agendas. Our models have been instrumental in providing a way forward for academics and professional staff to collaborate and share the responsibility for developing essential skills for learning as considered aspects of the curriculum. Without sound models, the library–faculty discourse surrounding IL and the relevance of these skills for students to succeed with their studies remains an ongoing debate.

1.5 What Sparked This Book

A chance conversation between MUL and LTUL staff, the editors of this volume, on overcoming the challenging barriers that often prevent library staff from effectively connecting the library to the curriculum, highlighted some interesting synergies between our distinct models for students' skill development. This edited volume shares some practice-based examples from MUL and LTUL and the paths taken to transform and reposition the library in their institutions. The approaches adopted at LTUL and MUL demonstrate the following shared characteristics:

- Pedagogical learning and teaching frameworks informed by theory
- Underpinned by sustainable strategies
- At scale
- Relevant to curriculum design
- Enhances the student learning experienced by and aligned with university teaching strategies/agendas
- Innovative and demonstrates industry leadership, adding value to the sector.

1.6 How to Use This Book

This book is designed to inspire you. We suggest you read Chaps. 2 and 3 first as these chapters are foundational to your understanding of the key characteristics and theoretical underpinnings of the models informing the practice-based examples in this book. Becoming conversant with the pedagogical frameworks adopted by each

of our institutions is fundamental, as this is the first step towards making sense of how these tools have been applied and how you might connect these approaches to your own library and teaching context. Then explore the remaining chapters depending on where your interest lies. In the final chapter, we take a reflexive turn and present the reader with an overarching analysis of the preceding chapters. By exploring the patterns that emerge across the practice-based examples in this book, we are able to draw some conclusions about successful collaborations between librarians and academics, how these connections are fostered and sustained in the complex university environment and the role of theoretical frameworks.

1.7 Terminology in This Book

The terms used by academic librarians to describe the content of their IL teaching practice differs, and as a result, the lexicon within this landscape is vast (Sample, 2020). In recent years, the terminology has evolved to better:

- connect library vocabulary to dominant institutional skill agendas,
- reflect the subtlety of the library teaching focus and
- align with discipline-specific contexts.

As such, the reader will come across a wide range of terms in this book which describe and expand on the concept of information literacy including research skills, learning skills, digital skills and capabilities, information and digital literacies, academic skills, evidence-based practice and disciplinary specific terms such as primary literacies or any combination of these terms. The dominant terms at LTUL are information literacy or information and digital literacies, and at MUL, the dominant terms used are research skills or research and learning skills. The chapters use dominant terms as well as other skill related terminology that aligns with the practice-based example discussed.

1.8 Themes in This Book

Many of the chapters in this book are co-authored between librarians, learning skills advisers and discipline academics (see Biography section for more information). This is testament to how the experience of using pedagogical tools that support our common educational goals has become a bridge connecting library staff and academics in the third space (Whitchurch, 2012). Each practice-based chapter presents an application of one of the frameworks, contextualised within a discipline. The practice-based examples are organised in Parts II–V according to the following themes reflecting the discourse in the literature.

1.8.1   Theme 1 (Part II): Enabling Collaborative Partnerships

This theme explores the importance of structured library–faculty collaboration to align learning objectives and bring the library closer to the curriculum. Partnerships between library and academic educators require common understandings and mutual trust to open conversations about shared learning and teaching objectives to bridge the divide between roles traditionally perceived to be distinct in higher education (Dearden et al., 2005; Olivares, 2010; Walter, 2018). The practice-based examples responding to this theme demonstrate how we are successfully establishing a stronger library–faculty nexus by underpinning and guiding our collaboration with a shared language and pedagogically informed approaches. The results of the collaboration show practical, diverse and sometimes surprising outcomes.

1.8.2   Theme 2 (Part III): Facilitating Curriculum Design Conversations

Enabling skills as explicit elements in curriculum design and teaching practice requires a common language among educators (Salisbury et al. 2012; Torres, 2018). Using practice-based examples shows not only how pedagogical tools have demystified the language around the particular skills relevant in a given curriculum, but how to scaffold these skills incrementally as part of the curriculum design. The application of pedagogical models to inform conversation highlights the skills contributed through library programmes and cements the libraries' impact in the curriculum.

1.8.3   Theme 3 (Part IV): Motivating Students and Developing Skills

Motivating students to learn is reliant on making the experience of learning relevant and meaningful. Activating metacognition through instructional approaches can make students more aware of themselves as learners, and importantly, supports students' ability to transfer skills from one learning context to another (Pintrich, 2002). Our practice-based examples describe how pedagogy applied to IL teaching practice can contribute to students' ability to transfer the skills needed to engage with learning to other areas of study.

1.8.4   Theme 4 (Part V): Contemporary Skill Agendas

Linking IL programmes to contemporary skills agendas in higher education demonstrates that libraries are becoming more strategic and ambitious in their educational efforts (Corrall & Jolly, 2019). To successfully make this leap into contemporary skill agendas, libraries need to go beyond library-centric interpretations of IL, and reconceptualise how these skills, process and practices relate to the repertoire of skills and attributes graduating students should have on completion of their studies (Hill et al., 2016). A novel approach by MUL and LTUL has been to embrace contemporary skill agendas in higher education such as employability and digital skills by extending understandings of how higher order thinking skills underpinning IL can also be articulated as skills relevant to workplace settings and digital contexts.

1.9   In Conclusion

The goal of this book is to demonstrate how it is possible to firmly connect the library to the curriculum and sustain that connection over time. This book describes a theoretical and practical way forward to overcome common and persistent challenges faced by the library sector in establishing its educational role within the university. We share our ways of thinking about and our practice for embedding IL because we believe they transcend ad-hoc library teaching approaches, opening a newly visible skills discourse for a shared curriculum (Salisbury et al. 2012; Torres & Jansen, 2016).

While this book is written primarily for academic librarians, we expect and hope, it will also prove useful to faculty academics and the many campus professionals involved in contributing to students' skill development. Our premise is that cultivating and underpinning cross-campus partnerships with theoretically informed models provides the means to establish common interests and educational goals. As such, the right environment can bring the scholarship of teaching and learning to the library–faculty partnership to create a shared and more impactful response in the curriculum.

Finally, should you wish to discuss the models and approaches we share with any of the editors or contributors to the book, we are all available for further conversations. We hope our stories stimulate, inspire and motivate you to take a risk and apply transformative pedagogical models to your teaching practice to leverage your expertise and better connect your library to the curriculum.

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