



CREATING KNOWLEDGE 2018

Co-redefining and co-creating Academic literacies in PhD education: Insights from a project at Umeå University Library, Sweden

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Our presentation discusses the practices and findings from a PhD workshop series at the Academic Resource Centre, Umeå University Library, Sweden. The partnership between librarians, writing tutors/researchers in supporting PhD research has recently become a new reality with Information Literacy courses offered as tools for resources and searching (Hassani, 2015; Paasio & Hintikka, 2015; Garson, 2016). The insights from our course contribute to this literature by re-conceptualizing “academic literacy”, including Information Literacy, in doctoral education.

Adopting *Academic Literacies* (Lea & Street, 1998, 2006) as our workshops’ underlying framework, we propose literacy beyond individual, transferable cognitive skills of writing and reading. Rather, it is an interrelated, dynamic, and situated set of knowledge, skills, and personal attributes that help PhD students acculturate into disciplinary discourses, the academic community, and wider social contexts.

Our course approaches literacy holistically as comprising Research competence, Information literacy, and Academic English, with consideration to social processes (power, identity, and authority). The workshops cover critical reading, the literature review, writing abstract, communicating research and writing papers, but the PhD students are also encouraged to make sense of their writing by having critical, inquiry-based reflections about themselves, academia, and social discourses.

The results from the first three workshop seasons emphasize *knowledge co-creation* – between academic librarians and researchers, and between workshop instructors and PhD students, as one key principle in developing academic literacies. The findings indicate that Information Literacy can be seen beyond tools and resources but rather a springboard that stimulates PhD students’ critical thinking in their becoming researchers. The positive feedback from the participants also gives the rationale for the expanding roles of the library (Delaney and Bates, 2018). These workshops have strengthened our belief that collaboration is one important strategy for librarians and writing tutors/researchers to acquire the skills of the future.

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