

## **Critical Analysis 1**

Reflecting on progress to date the Research Cycle module had provided both direction and challenges in addressing the research question undertaken. However, the unexpected need to defer participation in the module last year has had a direct impact on adjusting and committing to re-participation this year. Nonetheless, the decision to retain the original research question chosen, given its pertinence to library services, has greatly facilitated renewed involvement this year.

The initial challenge of refining the research question and suitable methodology had been achieved on the previous effort. A preliminary assessment highlighted the need to create a structured approach ensuring that thoughts and ideas were connected and relevant. As advised, the creation of a mind map addressed this prerequisite. Given that the stated purpose of a mind map is to show the parts of a topic and the links between said parts (Cryer, 2006), the online mind mapping tool Mindomo was deemed appropriate. This software was highly suitable for exploring new material, connecting information, and stimulating new ideas. It therefore greatly assisted initial engagement with the research process.

Establishing the most appropriate research methodologies to implement was the second challenge that needed to be addressed. However, the difficulty of this task was significantly reduced through the instruction to adopt a triangular approach. Allowing for the time constraints of this module, survey questionnaires, focus groups and interviews were deemed the most suitable methodologies to embrace. Using a combination of these methods will give a broader validity to any research findings. Ensuring sufficient quantities for each method should provide increased reliability.

The final and most substantial challenge was the undertaking of the literature review. Consultation with available resources quickly established a gap in the existing literature relating to Ireland. Academic discourse on information literacy in Ireland is primarily addressed by Claire McGuinness. The focus of McGuinness's research is information skills training in higher education institutions in Ireland. However, the approach undertaken is from the perspective of the information specialist and not the experiences of the student. Less focused studies on information literacy in Ireland are provided by Hegarty and Carbery. Their studies concentrate on the design of information literacy programme specifically for nursing students in their institute. The purpose of this research is to examine if first year

students, irrespective of discipline, who participate in library instruction acquire information literacy skills.

The objective henceforth is to stay concentrated. The literature review requires updating as the majority were considered prior to the deferment. The literature evaluated to date on information literacy is diverse and extensive; the intent is to focus on Irish literature, specifically any motivated by the student experience.

## References

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McGuinness, C. (2009). Information skills training practices in Irish higher education. *ASLIB Proceedings*, 61, 262-281.