Going beyond Google

Early experiments in teaching critical literacy
“What’s this class supposed to be about”? 

- Teaching ‘Social Learning in the Professions’
- A work-in-progress talk through,
- Seeking ideas
- NOT a fait-accompli
Critical literacy is:

- Recognising when information is needed
- Finding and retrieving information
- Evaluating the credibility of the information
- Constructing arguments based on the information
- Applying the information in practice
Positioning the problem

- Specific search terms that work (and the distinctions between them):
  - Critical literacy
  - Information literacy
  - Higher level literacy
  - ICT literacy
Why now?

- ICT ‘dooms students to endless choice’
- Libraries increasingly virtual
- Boundaries of the ivory tower toppling???
- Non-critique of reality TV – are we seeing same with ICT?
A theoretical position can’t ignore

- Race
- Class
- Gender
- Disability, sexuality, etc
Solutions from the literature

- To do nothing
- On line, non-programme specific ‘study skills’ modules
- Librarian taught non-programme specific one term modules
- Lecturer taught programme specific one term modules
- Annotated bibliographies
Grappling with the solution

- ‘Social Learning in the Professions’
- In the context of studying social science for practice
- Looks at: How to write an essay
- When and how to reference
- How to find a text, how to choose a text
- Assignment one: Annotated bibliography
- How to read a text
- Assignment two: Literature review
Too early for any real results

- Will we ever have results?
- Points requirements going up, end of ‘extending participation’
- Huge changes in professional field
But… indications might be promising

- Provisional results comparing summer exam board 2010-11 and 2011-12 for ACAD 1250

- Number of students: 27, 54
- Mean score (submitters): 43.8, 51.36
- Modal score (all): nn, fail, 2i
Summer exam board results

2010-11

student pass rate

nn
fail
3rd 40-49
2ii 50-59
2i 60-69
1st 70+

2011-12

student pass rate

nn
fail 0-39
3rd 40-49
2ii 50-59
2i 60-69
1st 70+
Student feedback

- Needed in first term
- Not sure what it's all about/how it's distinct from other courses
- Not relevant to work/real world
- A ‘marmite’ course
Responses to feedback

- Moved to first term
- Choice of topic introduced for annotated bibliography
Looking to the future