

Information literacy

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Terms used in libraries

- Library skills
- Library instruction
- Bibliographic instruction
- Information skills

Information literacy

“Information Literacy encompasses knowledge of one’s information concerns and needs, and the ability to identify, locate, evaluate, organize and effectively create, use and communicate information to address issues or problems at hand; it is a prerequisite for participating effectively in the Information Society, and is part of the basic human right of life long learning”. (UNESCO 2003)

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Information literacy – what?

- IL is “an intellectual framework for understanding, finding, evaluating, and using information – activities which may be accomplished in part by fluency with information technology, in part by sound investigative methods, but most important, through critical discernment and reasoning”
- “... able to recognise when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information”

(ALA, AC&RL Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education, 2000)

- In essence, IL is a framework for finding, evaluating and using information. The concept;
 - Is applicable for all disciplines, learning environments and all level of education;
 - Ensures that learners become more independent, enabling them to assume greater control over their learning and research;
 - Forms the basis for life learning

ACRL - Five Standards

The information literate individual;

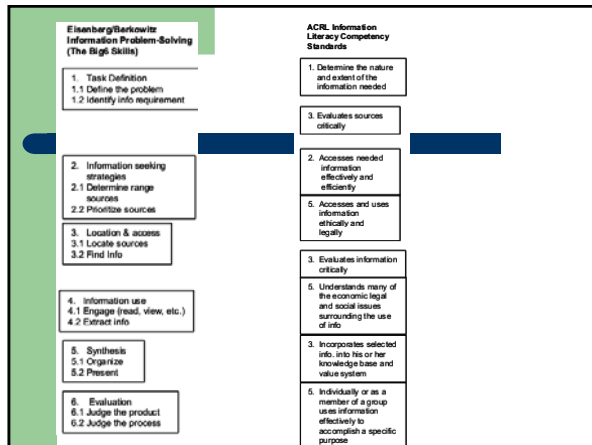
- Determines the nature and extent of the information needed
- Accesses the needed information effectively and efficiently.
- Evaluates information and its sources critically and incorporates selected information into his/her knowledge base.

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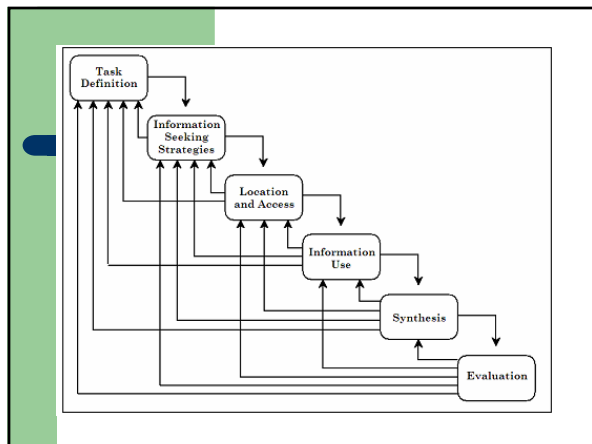
4. Uses information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose.
5. Understands many of the economic, legal and social issues surrounding the use of information and accesses and uses information ethically and legally.

Why IL? – Because IL

- Is an essential component of critical thinking and research-led learning and teaching
- Enables one to meet the challenges arising from the proliferation of information
- Will help one reap the benefits of the Modern Working Environment in our everyday working life
- Can play a key role in promoting an understanding of what constitutes plagiarism and in deterring its practice by promoting integrity and accountability in the use and presentation of information
- Is a lifelong learning in our knowledge society.



1. Task Definition
 - 1.1 Define the problem
 - 1.2 Identify the information needed
2. Information seeking strategies
 - 2.1 Determine all possible sources
 - 2.2 Select the best sources
3. Location and Access
 - 3.1 Locate sources
 - 3.2 Find information within sources
4. Use of Information
 - 4.1 Engage (e.g., read, hear, view)
 - 4.2 Extract relevant information
5. Synthesis
 - 5.1 Organise information from multiple sources
 - 5.2 Present information
6. Evaluation
 - 6.1 Judge the result (effectiveness)
 - 6.2 Judge the process (efficiently)



International Information Literacy Initiatives

- In 2003, information professionals from 23 countries in all 7 continents met in Prague for the IL meeting of experts and resulting in the Prague declaration, calling for IL to be “an integral part of education for all”

Contd.,

- IL section of IFLA has sponsored the creation of a comprehensive statement of "International guidelines on IL"
- UNESCO under the mandate of a 2001 UN General assembly resolution, has held two world summit on the Information society conferences in Geneva in 2003 and Tunisia in 2005, which produced "Geneva Declaration of Principles" and the Tunis Commitment.

Recent research on IL

- Courlann Dixon-Thomas in his thesis titled "Information Literacy and the 21st century Academic Librarian: a Delphi Study (Jan 2012). says that,
Results of the study inferred that librarians and faculty must work together with other constituents to build partnerships for better information literacy integration into the college curriculum.

- The need for transforming 21st century informational literacy instruction is not solely the responsibility of instructional librarians in academic libraries.
- It is jointly the responsibility of faculty and administrators in higher education as well as faculty and curriculum designers in ALA-accredited graduate schools as well.

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- Expanding information literacy instruction and assessment into the college curriculum and utilizing 21st century technology tools so that all students learn to be information literate in a progressive learning environment will better prepare college students for global communication, the workforce, and lifelong learning.

From Library Orientation to IL

- Before 1970s, the standard approach to library instruction in higher education was to provide Library orientation for new students at the beginning of their studies.
- It was then realised that Library Orientation is not sufficient to meet the students' needs.
- Then Bibliographic Instruction gained momentum in 1970s and peaked in the 1980s.

- With so many databases and search engines available, new researchers are faced with challenges such as
 - where to begin,
 - how to decide
 - where to stop and
 - what to use

- By the late 1980s, BI had established itself as a standard component of library service.
- Advanced technologies like library automation and internet in 1990 increased access to information exponentially, creating more complex instructional challenges.

IL key concepts;

- To respond to such challenges the concept of IL gained currency in 1990s
- ACRL of ALA introduced standards
- Key concepts are
 - Locating
 - Evaluating and
 - Using information effectively
 - "Learning how to learn" and "Life long learning"

- This led Librarians to rethink their instructional objectives
- Many concluded that teaching critical thinking is fundamental to achieving these outcomes.
- Globalisation of information access has made critical thinking the most essential survival skill in the information age.

Strategic principles of IL instruction – Douglas L. Gragg

1. Students are most receptive to instruction when they perceive its value and relevance for their immediate concerns and projects
2. It is most successful when it is embedded in the curriculum.
3. It is most successful when it involves the cooperative efforts of librarians and teaching faculty.

4. Students learn best how to find, evaluate and use information effectively by doing it themselves
5. IL instruction prepares students for lifelong learning best when it emphasizes skills that will be useful and resources that will be available beyond graduation.

Exercise

- Current practices in your institution
- See exercise handout

Exercise:

1. What activities do you carry out? E.g. instruction to individuals
2. How do you carry out these activities?
3. Where do you carry out these activities? E.g. in the library, in a class-room
4. When do you carry these out? E.g. the beginning of the term / semester?

Q & A

Thank you

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4. Gragg, Douglas L. "Information Literacy in Theological Education." *Theological Education* 40 (2004): 99-111.