



Information literacy: Need of hour

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Abstract

We are living in information era, Information literacy is important for all. The phrase information literacy first used by Paul G. Zurkowski. Information literacy is the key to social, cultural, and economic development of nations and communities, institutions and individuals in the 21st century and its acquisition as part of the basic human right of lifelong learning. The information that kids encounter, however, is not always accurate or high-quality. The information and digital literacy skills can help set kids up for success as lifelong learners. Information literacy includes the ability to identify, find, evaluate, and use information effectively. Regardless of the terminology, be it digital literacy or media literacy, having information literacy skills are the fundamentals to thrive in a digital space. An information literate is able to recognize, assess the need of information, evaluates information, etc. The steps of information literacy are planning research, organizing ways to search, finding resources, etc. The proto-type curriculum of information literacy includes Tool literacy, Resource literacy, Social-structural, literacy Research literacy, etc. Information Literacy Skills training equips students or researchers with certain skills which help them and also information literacy does have positive impact on education.

Keywords: Information literacy

Introduction

Presently we are living in knowledge society and information era, today information is considered as commodity which can be sold or information is capital, and therefore everyone need to be thirsty for information and there is a need to quench the thirst of information needy or demander. This is possible through providing information and making individual information literate. Historically, the phrase *information literacy* was first used by Paul G. Zurkowski, to draw a relatively firm line between the "literate" and "information illiterates". Information literacy forms the basis for lifelong learning. Drawing upon Enlightenment ideals like those articulated by Enlightenment philosopher Condorcet, Shapiro and Hughes (1996) argued that information literacy education is "essential to the future of democracy, if citizens are to be intelligent shapers of the information society rather than its pawns, and to humanistic culture, if information is to be part of a meaningful existence rather than a routine of production and consumption". In 2003, NFIL, NCLIS and UNESCO, sponsored an international conference in Prague, The resulting Prague Declaration described information literacy as a "key to social, cultural, and economic development of nations and communities, institutions and individuals in the 21st century" and declared its acquisition as "part of the

basic human right of lifelong learning". The Alexandria Proclamation linked Information literacy with lifelong learning. More than that, it sets Information Literacy as a basic Human right that it "*promotes social inclusion of all nations*". Today's information and digital landscape offers young people unprecedented access to tools and resources for learning. The information that kids encounter, however, is not always accurate or high-quality. Foundational information and digital literacy skills, such as conducting strategic online searches, judging the legitimacy of online sources, sifting out misinformation, and recognizing advertising, can help set kids up for success as lifelong learners. Information literacy forms the basis for lifelong learning. It is common to all disciplines, to all learning environments, and to all levels of education. It enables learners to master content and extend their investigations, become more self-directed, and assume greater control over their own learning.

What is information literacy?

Information literacy includes the ability to identify, find, evaluate, and use information effectively. From effective search strategies to evaluation techniques, students learn how to evaluate the quality, credibility, and validity of websites, and give proper credit. Information Literacy has also been referred

to as digital literacy or media literacy. Regardless of the terminology, be it digital literacy or media literacy, having information literacy skills are the fundamentals to thrive in a digital space.

According to the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals in the UK Information literacy is defined as "Information literacy is knowing when and why you need information, where to find it, and how to evaluate, use and communicate it in an ethical manner." This definition implies several skills. We believe that the skills (or competencies) that are required to be information literate require an understanding of:

1. A need for information;
2. The resources available;
3. How to find information;
4. The need to evaluate results;
5. How to work with or exploit results?;
6. Ethics and responsibility of use;
7. How to communicate or share your findings? and
8. How to manage your findings?.

Who is information literate?

An information literate individual is able to:

1. Recognise the need for information.
2. Determine the extent of information needed.
3. Access the needed information effectively and efficiently.
4. Evaluate information and its sources critically.
5. Incorporate selected information into one's knowledge base.
6. Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose.
7. Understand the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information.
8. Access and use information ethically and legally.
9. Classify store manipulate and redraft information collected or generated.
10. Recognize information literacy as a prerequisite for lifelong learning.

What are the steps of information literacy?

Information literacy involves these steps:

- Planning research or posing a question-for example, "Is global warming real?"
- Organizing a way to search for the answer-divide students into groups.
- Finding resources-such as databases, documentary films, Web sites, print sources, and local experts.
- Evaluating the resources and thinking critically about them-Who made the message and why? What is left out of the message? How might others view the message differently?
- Expressing the information learned in meaningful ways-for example, student-produced podcasts, e-zines, and wikis.

What is the curriculum for information literacy?

Shapiro and Hughes (1996) outlined a "prototype curriculum" that encompassed the concepts of computer literacy, library skills, and "a broader, critical conception of a more humanistic

sort", suggesting seven important components of a holistic approach to information literacy:

- **Tool literacy** or the ability to understand and use the practical and conceptual tools of current information technology relevant to education and the areas of work and professional life that the individual expects to inhabit.
- **Resource literacy** or the ability to understand the form, format, location and access methods of information resources, especially daily expanding networked information resources.
- **Social-structural literacy** or understanding how information is socially situated and produced.
- **Research literacy** or the ability to understand and use the IT-based tools relevant to the work of today's researcher and scholar.
- **Publishing literacy** or the ability to format and publish research and ideas electronically, in textual and multimedia forms. to introduce them into the electronic public realm and the electronic community of scholars.
- **Emerging technology literacy** or the ability to continuously adapt to, understand, evaluate and make use of the continually emerging innovations in information technology so as not to be a prisoner of prior tools and resources, and to make intelligent decisions about the adoption of new ones.
- **Critical literacy** or the ability to evaluate critically the intellectual, human and social strengths and weaknesses, potentials and limits, benefits and costs of information technologies.

Top ten information literacy skills

1. Know when information is required

Students should be able to determine when information and research is needed for a specific assignment or academic task.

2. Know how to write a research question

Once students know what information is required, they should understand how to formulate a research question.

3. Know where to find information

After receiving instruction from librarians and classroom teachers, students should be able to locate quality materials in the library and online.

4. Determine/understand sources of information

Students should understand where information comes from. For example, would an assignment be best served by using a book, article, website, or newspaper article, and knowing the difference between each?

5. Select the best source

Having sought out sources of information, students should be

able to determine which ones are the best.

6. Use the information

After they have selected quality information sources, students should be able to use the information to complete the assignment, task, or project.

7. Organize information

The student should be able to decide how to compile and consolidate all of this information. The school librarian is there to train the student in this task.

8. Present information

Whether it is a paper, presentation, or project, there is always an outcome to information seeking. Students should be able to present a quality presentation or product.

9. Evaluate information

Students should be able to look back on their work to see what was successful and what could have been improved. What additional information could be located in the future, what information seeking behaviors could be changed?

10. Use information in an ethical manner

Students must know how to cite and use their information in a fair and ethical manner. Librarians are educated in intellectual property rights, acceptable use policies, and intellectual freedom. They are the experts in your schools for training students in using information ethically, fairly, and legally.

Importance of information literacy skills training

It equips students or researchers with:

- Skills which will enhance the quality of research skills and expand career opportunities in the information economy
- Search strategies to locate and access relevant information, this is the use of the Boolean logic operators which are AND, OR, NOT
- Skills to analyse and critically evaluate research findings
- Skills to identify the legal and ethical issues relating to the use of information
- Skills on citation and referencing, thus acknowledging other people's work.

Effects on education

The rapidly evolving information landscape has demonstrated a need for education methods and practices to evolve and adapt accordingly. Information literacy is a key focus of educational institutions at all levels and in order to uphold this standard, institutions are promoting a commitment to lifelong learning and an ability to seek out and identify innovations that will be needed to keep pace with or outpace changes.

Educational methods and practices, within our increasingly information-centric society, must facilitate and enhance a student's ability to harness the power of information. Key to harnessing the power of information is the ability to evaluate information, to ascertain among other things its relevance, authenticity and modernity. The information evaluation process is crucial life skill and a basis for lifelong learning. According to Lankshear and Knobel, what is needed in our education

system is a new understanding of literacy, information literacy and on literacy teaching. Educators need to learn to account for the context of our culturally and linguistically diverse and increasingly globalized societies. We also need to take account for the burgeoning variety of text forms associated with information and multimedia technologies.

Information in any format is produced to convey a message and is shared via a selected delivery method. The iterative processes of researching, creating, revising, and disseminating information vary, and the resulting product reflects these differences.

Conclusion

In today's information-centric era it is necessary that to make an information goer Information literate, Information literacy is knowing when and why you need information, where to find it, and how to evaluate, use and communicate it in an ethical manner.

The information that young ones encounter, however, is not always accurate or high-quality. Foundational information and digital literacy skills can help young ones to be successful lifelong learners. The information literate is able to recognize, assess the need of information, evaluates information, etc. There certain steps of information literacy *viz.* planning research, organizing ways to search, finding resources, etc. The model curriculum of information literacy includes Tool literacy, Resource literacy, Social-structural, literacy Research literacy, etc. Top ten information skills are know when information is required, know how to write a research question, etc. Information Literacy Skills training equips students or researchers with various skills which help them and also information literacy does have positive impact on education.

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