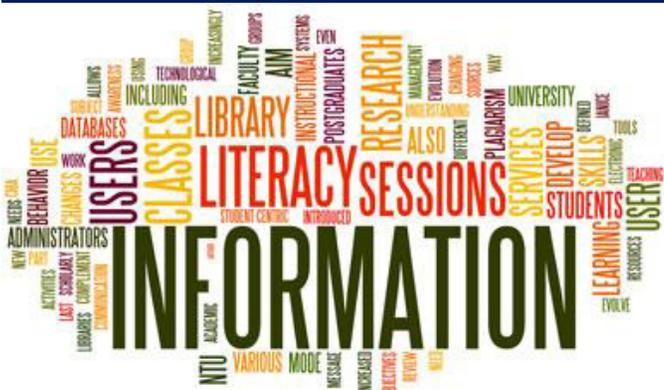# An Advanced Information Literacy Programme for Postgraduate Students

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<<<<QUOTES>>>>

• "…our students should be playing Beethoven with research processes, but instead we are hearing Mary Had a Little Lamb."

— William Badke

Introduction

The radical change in the provision of information

PG Students
- Researchers
- Required to carry out in-depth research

Requires

knowledge and strategies to ensure maximum utilization of information.

What is the situation?

Statement of the Problem

What Should Be Happening

The Problem Statement

What Is Actually Happening

PG students should be experts in research strategies

-use of library catalogs
- database search, etc.

PG students lack basic skills of literature search

CRUX OF THE PAPER

Information Literacy Programme for **PG Students.**

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What postgraduate IL programmes are existing in Universities in Africa?

- What perceived benefits do IL offer in African Universities?

- What are the barriers facing IL programmes in African Universities?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Framework
- Definition of terms –
- - Literac & Information Literacy
- **IL Theories/models**
- **Review of Related studies**
- **Proposed IL programme**
- **Summary and Conclusion**

LITERACY

Merriam Webster Dictionary: Literacy is the quality or state of being literate.

Chambers English Dictionary (2003): Literacy is "the condition of being literate.

IL is the set of skills needed to find, retrieve, analyze, and use information.

Bothma, et. al (2014) defined IL as 'the ability to find, **retrieve**, **analyse** and **use** information.

Literacy contd...

Integral parts of IL elements which Bundy (2004) defined under three elements

- 1. **Generic skills:** a. problem solving, collaboration, team work, communication, critical thinking

- **2. Information skills:** information seeking, information use, information technology fluency

- **3. Values and beliefs:** a. using information wisely and ethically, b. social responsibility and community participation.

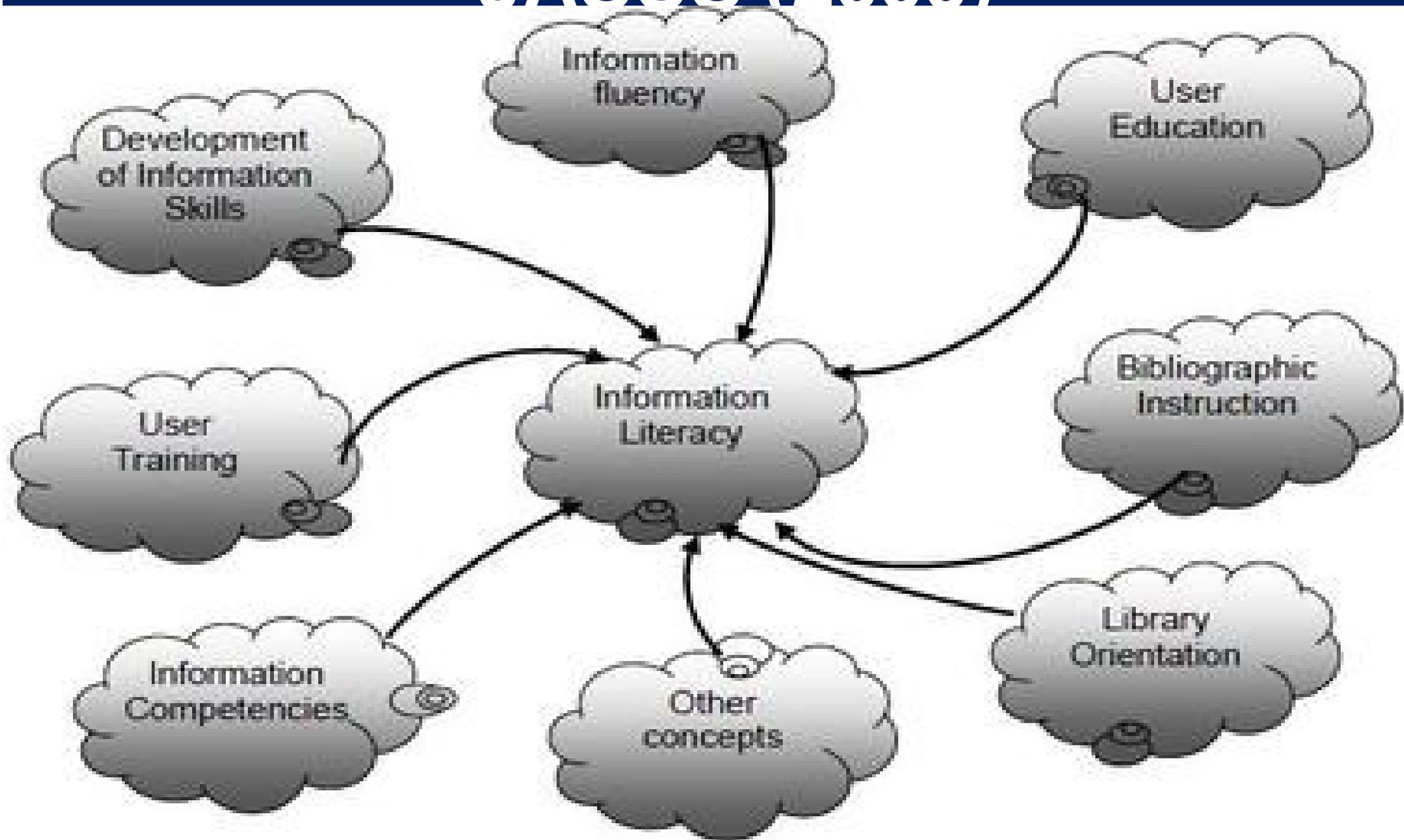# Information Literacy Concept by JASUS (2006)

Figure 1 – The Concept of Information Literacy. Lau, Jasus (2006)

INFORMATION LITERACY MODELS

The Big 6: (*Mike Eisenbert and Bob Berkowitz, 1987*)

- **TD** = Task Definition
- **ISS** = Information Seeking Strategies
- **L&A** = Location & Access
- **I** = Use of Information
- **S** = Synthesis
- **E** = Evaluation

INFORMATION LITERACY MODELS CONTD...

- **The PLUS model-Herring (**James Herring**)**

- P = Purpose Identifying the purpose of an investigation or assignment

- L = Location Finding relevant information sources related to the purpose

- U= Use Selecting and rejecting information and ideas, reading for information, notetaking and presentation

- S = Self evaluation : How pupils evaluate their performance in applying information skills to the assignment and what they learn for the future.

METHODOLOGY

1. **Use of Databases:** eg. *Emerald, ScienceDirect*, Directory of Open Access Journals *(DOAJ),* Encyclopedia of Research Design.

2. **Use of relevant search terms**: The search terms used were – Literacy, IL, IL programme, advanced IL programme, curriculum, postgraduate students.

3. **Search strategy:** Advanced search strategy was applied, using the Boolean Operators. Natural language queries were also used, especially on some platforms such as **ASK.com.**

METHODOLOGY Contd..

- **Research Design:** Descriptive Design
- **Method of Data Collection:** Group Discussion
- **Population of the Study:** Group 4 CPD Members

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

- Data gathered were analyzed using **qualitative** **method of analysis.**

- **RQ1:** What postgraduate IL programmes are existing in Universities in Africa?

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Cluster 1: Do you run an IL programme in your country at the postgraduate level?

Sn	Country	Response
1	Ghana	Yes but very few universities run IL at PG level.
2	Nigeria	Yes but not adequately and not in many of the universities.
3	Tanzania	No
4	Uganda	Not so sure but I think it is not yet being implemented at the Postgraduate level.

/r	**Cluster 2**: What is the nature of IL programme in your country?
1 Ghana	The PG students are taught how to make use of the library. The students are given a two day orientation which starts with the library tour on how to search for information using OPAC, where to find what, who to ask for help and services available at the library. This in my opinion is not enough for them to know how to get the best out of the library.
2 Nigeria	Library orientation programme which is done only at the matriculation week of the postgraduate students. This is done in one day which I think is not enough for the students to master the basic IL skills required of them. They are taught how to make use of the library; borrowing of books and using the library catalogue. They are also taught how to make research.
3 Tanzania	The PG students are considered to be experts instead. So they are left to do their searches on their own.
4 Uganda	At the postgraduate level, students are expected to know how to find information on their own.

- **RQ 2:** What are the perceived benefits that IL offer in African Universities?

S/n	Country	Response
2.	**Ghana**	It helps the students to be grounded in research process and knowledge management. It also gives the individual the know how to continue learning even after formal education. It makes one IL for lifelong learning.
1.	**Nigeria**	When students are impacted with IL skills, the librarians will have less headache because it has been observed that postgraduate students ask more questions than undergraduates because the little IL skills offered the undergraduate students remain fresh in their minds until they graduate. Considering a postgraduate student that may have been working for many years before enrolling for the course, he/she surely would not remember how to use the library and the Internet and also cite relevant sources. I believe the PG students need these skills urgently.
4.	**Tanzania**	It is very needful because it would expose them to basic skills in information search and will save the time they utilize in searching for information when they come to the library. Most often, the students roam about the library and waste so much time that would have been better invested.
3.	**Uganda**	IL skill will empower the PG students and enable them be more confident when they are making any research.

- **RQ 3:** What are the barriers facing IL programmes at postgraduate level in African Universities?

S/n	Country	Response
1	Ghana	Inadequate number of qualified staff to teach the course; lack of commitment in supporting IL programme for PG students; inadequate information on IL subject; unwillingness of library staff to get involved.
2	Nigeria	Lack of information on what to teach; lack of the commitment of the students. Most PG students believe they know it all about IL; lack of existing guide on what to incorporate in the content of the IL programme; lack of collaboration among library staff and the faculty.
3	Tanzania	It has been observed that there is lack of IL policy in universities in Tanzania; lack of interest among students.
4	Uganda	Inadequate technological infrastructure/computers, inadequate electronic resources and inadequate human resources.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Is IL existent in for PG in libraries?

It can be seen that in Ghana and Nigeria, IL programmes are existing but in few universities. In Tanzania, IL programme is not being practiced while in Uganda, it is not being implemented fully. This agrees with Anafo et al. (2014) and Buer (2005) assertion that IL is important for students if they are to inculcate the habit of lifelong learning.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS CONTD...

- **Importance of IL?** respondents agreed that IL programme is very important and must be incorporated into the curriculum of postgraduate students as this will help them whilst in school and even after their formal education. This supports Bothma et al 2014 findings that it is not possible for one to learn everything one needs to know in one's field of study in a few years at the university.

DOAR (www.opendoar.org)

- The Directory of Open Access Repositories – *Open*DOAR, is an authoritative directory of academic open access repositories.

- As well as providing a simple repository list, *Open*DOAR lets you search for repositories or search repository contents.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS CONTD...

- it came to light during our discussions that though there are a lot of databases available in our libraries, knowing how to form meaningful queries to get what one needs becomes a problem. Rasaki (2008) asserted that in many universities that offer the course for credit earning, the emphasis is on library and reading skills with utter neglect of computer and technology literacy.

PROPOSED IL PROGRAMME FOR POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS

ADVANCED IL PROGRAMME FOR POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS

Course	Learning Outcome	Learning activities	Assessment
Introduction to IL	-To learn about the need for IL -To know about critical thinking	Identifying the need to be information literate and how useful it is for research	Online quiz and group exercises
Introductory Information Skills/Library Catalogues	-to know about the various types of library catalogue -to get familiar the library OPAC and its uses	-Opportuni ty given to students to differentiate between card catalog and OPAC and ability to use various catalogs.	Online quiz and group exercises
Study and research skills	-Introduce students to technologies and resources that will underpin their university work.	Identifying the types of sources students would use to research a particular topic.	Discussions, short quizz
Advanced Information Skills (Database Searching)	To learn about Boolean system and using Boolean operators, constructing a search query, recognition of differences in databases, search engines	-Use of Treasure hunt -Students will be taught how to use the library databases.	-Database Search

		...engines.	
Information Retrieval and Literacy	Student will be introduced to: -Web-based IR -Online Journals -Cross-Language &Multi-Lingual Information Retrieval -Evaluating Information	Practical Exercises: -Concept Identification Information Retrieval Systems: Inverted Indexing- Documents	-Short quiz
	- Information Retrieval Systems: Inverted Indexing – Stopwords, Boolean Operators, Normalizing, Addresses, etc. -Web Directories Meta sites -Operator Precedence and Nesting Quorum Searching		
Open Access Repositories	Recognizing the benefits of publishing in open access repositories. -To learn about institutional repositories. Open Source Software -To learn about copyright policies	Students will be introduced to Registries and Harvesters	
The Research Process	To learn about: -formulation of research topic and questions -stating a problem of research	Students will be allowed to formulate research topics and state the problem.	Quizzes

	plagiarism		
Social Media for Academic Research	To learn about: -Academic use of social media -Social research environment -Various social media platforms and benefits. -Principles of online collaboration using social media -dangers of social media -digital footprint management. -the importance of ORCID, Google Citation,	-Social media in practice. Various academic social media platforms will be introduced and students will register. Eg. LinkedIn, Mendeley, Pininterest Googlescholar, Twitter, ResearchGate, Wikispaces, Academia.edu, etc.	Quizzes

	Hootsuite; Blogging.		
Management & Organisation of Information	To learn about: -Personal Information management -Personal Archiving Literacy -tools for PIM eg.	Students will be engaged in practical exercises on: - filing structures. – how to organize their folders on their laptops and on Google Drive. -File naming conventions	Quizzes
Cloud Services and Storage as a research tool	To learn about: -Cloud computing -Principles for collaboration -Google Drive -Online Privacy and Security -Gmail Calendar Management	Exercises	Quizzes
Publishing tools	To learn about: -Electronic authoring principles -Exporting for publication -Using a word processor effectively	Introduction to Zotero	Quizzes

E-learning module	To learn about: -the blackboard platform used in the institution	-Creation of usernames and passwords for students -navigation skills -posting of papers on the platform	Group practicals
Virtual Research Environments (VREs)	Students will learn about: -managing, facilitating, learning, sharing and building an online research community -Virtual research environments/eco-systems E -e-research	- online search of digital tools by for VREs. -possible download of such tools and utilization of the tools.	Group practicals and quizzes.

Table X: Tabular presentation of the advanced curriculum for postgraduate students developed by CPD Intake3 Group4, 2015....*Table partlyadapted from CPD3 course contents.*

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Postgraduate students should be mandated to attend IL skill programmes organized by the library such as briefing by librarian, computer-aided instruction, online courses, and workshops. This will enhance their ability to use available information sources in various formats.

- IL skill programmes should be inculcated in postgraduate curriculum to enhance students 'research ability and information use in the emerging information age.

RECOMMENDATIONS CONTD...

- Librarians must plan and put in place mechanisms that will enhance regular literacy programmes; especially on the use information search and retrieval tools for postgraduate students for efficient use of library resources. This will invariably improve research output and reduce pressure on information professionals.

- Information professionals should lay more emphasis on educating library users especially postgraduate students on how to identify, evaluate, use, and communicate reliable information sources in and outside the library.
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CONCLUSION

Managing an IL Programme (ILP) at a postgraduate level often comes with challenges. One needs to be aware of the resources involved such as financial resources for buying the hardware and software, training of trainers (human resources), the physical resources such as the buildings, furniture and reliable connectivity. However, having an IL Programme for postgraduate students in academic institutions will without doubt enhance their information search and retrieval for LIS professionals and students at large.

CONCLUSION CONTD...

Having information competencies in the information age provides opportunities to incorporate IL into the academic curriculum and foster collaboration between faculties, students and librarians.

Thus, in order to promote effective IL education several efforts need to be taken into consideration. One of them being, mainstreaming IL in the curriculum. It should be firmly embedded in subject context, in the curriculum itself because the need to acquire these skills only becomes meaningful to students in a curriculum context.

THANK YOU FOR LISTENING