

***Information Literacy – a New Approach
Supporting Teaching Skills Development***

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Abstract

Information literacy represents a determining factor in the development of the information society because a society based on lifelong training cannot be imagined without an adequate information literacy. In this sense, it becomes the primordial condition of the professionalism and success of the future specialist in

any domain. This is why, simultaneously to his professional training, a student must acquire habits of scientific information and his own experience related to scientific information. Information literacy skills constitute the key factor in lifelong learning, being the first step on the road towards the realization of the educational goals. In the present paper, we aim to highlight the primordial role played by information literacy in the education of any individual in the society and also the help it provides to academics in the development of their didactic skills.

Key words: information literacy, didactics, lifelong learning, information skills

Introduction

Just like in any activity domain, holding and obtaining relevant and up-to-the-minute information have a positive influence on the decisions adopted on any institutional level, information being considered a very important resource along with the classical ones: labor, nature, capital.

The development of information transmission and processing technologies in answer to the rapid increase of the people's need for information has been an answer to this challenge. It is known that information can be accumulated continually, but it has, by excellence, a perishable character, a conclusive example in this sense being the expansion of the Internet. (1)

At the beginning of the 21st century, we are faced with an accelerated dynamics and amplitude of the social changes; new development directions appear in this sense, aiming to align the instructive-educative objectives to the concrete demands of the knowledge-base society.

Consequences of the new tendencies in the educational domain

On the European level, there is an increasing mention of globalization, multiculturalism or cultural diversity (2), so, the educational domain needs to acknowledge the new tendencies and adapt to the latest technological environment by:

- Distance learning (distance activities)
- Access to virtual libraries

- Obtaining the professional qualifications required by a global employment market
- Tolerance in accepting to enrich one's own culture with elements from other cultures
- Development of one's individual skills related to using information

In the above-mentioned context, it has become possible to pass from the information society to the knowledge society, in which the individual is able to understand, evaluate and use information.

The new educational technologies are a direct consequence of both the evolution of the psycho-pedagogical methods in education, and of the new IT & C technologies. (3) In time, the didactic means have undergone interesting transformations: from printed courses to TV distance learning programs (direct transmission or video recordings), to real-time interactive multimedia information via the Internet. The didactic method imposed by the information society is computer-assisted training, which uses the principles of programmed learning in the context of the new IT & C technologies. (4) The actual educational systems differ from the traditional ones through a series of features:

- An increasing importance of personality and skills development;
- A shift of accent from teaching to learning;
- An adoption of the active, participative methods;
- A promotion of independent work and creativity;
- A stimulation of cooperation and dialogue, integrating collaborative environments;

Information literacy and its role in the educational process

At the basis of lifelong learning are the technological and research skills, without which we cannot become informationally independent. The information skills represent the first step towards the realization of the educational goals, and those who can develop them are the specialists in information and documentation sciences, but also the teaching staff, who should be encouraged to get involved in the domain of the activity with the information, having the obligation to become aware that they play a main role in providing an information literacy. Unfortunately, there are some barriers in the creation of a pertinent information literacy:

- Lack of knowledge about documentary typologies
- Lack of knowledge about information resources spotting techniques and strategies

- Lack of knowledge about the forms and the way of disseminating information
- Knowledge of the information resources and their location but impossibility to access them

In order to overcome these barriers, we need to master the theories and the techniques of the information literacy. The classical definition refers to the “*Ability to spot, evaluate and use information so as to become informationally independent for life.*” (5) The basic elements of the information literacy involve knowledge concerning the information sources and their organization and provide skills for:

- precisely determining and defining the information need;
- efficiently spotting the information sources;
- critically evaluating the informative elements and the information sources;
- integrating the selected information in one’s basic knowledge;
- organizing, applying and communicating information to other people;
- effectively using information to realize the proposed activity;
- using information ethically and legally;
- synthesizing and building new information based on the existing information, contributing to the creation of new knowledge.

The purpose of information literacy is to provide each individual with a minimum knowledge luggage allowing him to use information, to have different skills, in a context requiring information resources. (6) According to a classical information literacy application model, the stages that any pupil, student, researcher etc. needs to go through are (7):

- getting to know the information and documentation structures (location, organization, services, offers);
- getting trained in library research (getting to know the services provided, the information sources, etc.);
- getting trained in the use of information resources (spotting and exploiting information regardless of its source).

„An essential task of intellectual education is the acquisition by the young generation of a system of scientific knowledge, with intellectual habits and skills indispensable to a personal and professional evolution able to meet the demands of competitiveness.

The mastering of a set of work techniques along with the assurance of an adequate motivational substratum lead to a completion and enrichment of the knowledge assimilated in school and at the university

through individual effort. These procedures contribute to the realization of the fundamental aim of modern education, namely to «teach the student how to learn». These methods and techniques circumscribe an intellectual work style characteristic for each individual.” (8)

Lately, the users have had to face a continually growing information production, especially because – as far as the Internet search is concerned – filtering the useful information requires specific abilities. So, the information literacy and the technological literacy have become indispensable.

As university libraries play a basic role in the training of the information literacy of their users, they need to gradually familiarize them with certain aspects necessary for their evolution towards competitiveness by:

- familiarizing them with the offer of the university library,
- familiarizing them with the information tools,
- forming their habits in relation to the access to information.

Proposition concerning the setting of some didactic landmarks for the discipline “Information Literacy”

Further on, in our paper we would like to propose a model of discipline sheet, whose accent falls on the general, transversal and specific goals, which, in our opinion, the discipline should meet. (9) As far as the *General goals* of the discipline are concerned, those that we identified are:

- acquiring knowledge and support-habits for the orientation in the information flow;
- forming selection, use and evaluation habits in relation to the information and documentation sources;
- implementing intellectual work habits.
- forming certain methodical habits essential when carrying out a research in the domain (10)

In point of *Attitudinal goals*, we have chosen the following:

- to adhere to the option for the need to get informed for their professional training;
- to accept the principle of lifelong training;
- to appreciate the role of the course in the context of the information and knowledge society;
- to appreciate the role of the library in the training of information literacy.

The *Cognitive goals* we identified are:

- to know the basic concepts of the course;
- to know the structure of the system of information institutions;
- to know the info-documentary offers;
- to know the significance of the terms in the domain of library indexation, information and documentation;
- to know the distinct peculiarities of a scientific study, of a bibliographic list, to know how to quote;
- to know the information instruments provided by libraries, the types of document;
- to know how to identify documents from a bibliographic perspective;
- to know the rules for drawing up bibliographic references for scientific papers.

The praxeological (formative) objectives have in view:

- to be able to formulate correctly the information demands;
- to be able to carry out bibliographic research in library catalogues (to select information according to author, title, main topic, key word etc.);
- to be able to use the Internet, the analytical databases and full-text databases accessible in libraries efficiently;
- to be able to obtain information from primary, secondary, tertiary documents, from traditional/electronic information resources;
- to be able to elaborate essays, abstracts;
- to be able to realize the bibliographic description of the books, papers from different types of documents (book, review, annals, newspaper etc.);

Conclusions

Information literacy represents the primordial condition for the professionalism and success of the future specialist in any domain. So, simultaneously to his professional training, the pupil/student must acquire habits and experience in scientific information, developing his information skills. Both the specialists in information sciences and documentation, especially librarians, as members of the educational community, and the academics involved in the activity with information need to learn to play the main role in assuring the spreading of information literacy.

Using their creative skills and their professional possibilities and relying on integrated programs in their training courses, they need to have

an active contribution to the educational process, helping the students in their aspirations of improving and completing their knowledge, of cultivating their habits and skills, their values and data, necessary to continue their lifelong learning.

So, the library, a stable support for the educational system, has been and will remain the institution assuring a permanent and unconditional help to all those who want to attain real performances.

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