UoR Library Newsletter

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Information Literacy for all

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What are Literacy and Literacy Skills

The traditional definition of literacy is the ability to read and write, or the ability to use language to read, write, listen and speak. In the modern context, it has defined reading and writing at a level adequate for communication, or at a level that lets one understand and communicate ideas in a literate society.

However according to UNESCO defined Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, develop their knowledge and potential, and participate fully in their community and wider society (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization - UNESCO)

Literacy skills include listening, speaking, reading, and writing. They also include such things as awareness of the sounds of language, awareness of print, and the relationship between letters and sounds. Other literacy skills include vocabulary, spelling, and comprehension.
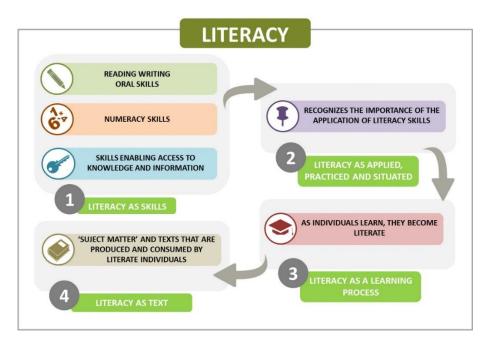
Importance of Literacy Skills

Literacy is critical to economic development and individual and community well-being. Lacking vital literacy skills holds a person back at every stage of their life. literacy is essential for education, employment, belonging to the community, and the ability to help one's children. Literacy gives people access to their information needs.

Literacy can make provision of the best strategies to the individuals that are not only necessary to sustain one's living conditions in an appropriate manner, but individuals are able to benefit in other ways as well. These include making decisions, developing rational thinking skills, differentiating between appropriate and inappropriate, inculcating the traits of diligence, resourcefulness, and conscientiousness, and understanding the significance of morality and ethics. When individuals will be able to read and write well, they would be able to move into the outside world, socialize with others, and accomplish their desired goals (Kapur, 2019). When understanding the meaning and significance of literacy, there are four main aspects, which need to be taken into consideration. These are stated as follows: (Understandings of Literacy: Education for All Global Monitoring Report, 2006).

Significance of Literacy

Source: FIP Foundation for Education and Research, 2022

Literacy plays a significant role in reducing gender, race, nationality, and religious inequality that favors. Benefits of literacy are as follows,

- Literacy improves health.
- Literacy promotes "lifelong learning" and builds skills.
- Literacy improves the economy and creates jobs.
- Literacy promotes gender equality.
- Literacy promotes democracy and peace.
- Literacy builds self-esteem and overall quality of life.

Type of Literacy Skills

Literacy skills can be divided into three main areas.

Literacy Skills		
Digital Literacy	Media Literacy	Information Literacy

Type of Literacy Skills

✓ **Digital Literacy**

Technology has significantly impacted our daily lives, and as a result, a new kind of literacy has emerged. digital literacy involves the ability to use technology effectively and for a purpose. Digital literacy gives us a whole new way to communicate and discover new information.

Technology forces us to assess what we see more than ever before. Being able to assess what we see and determine the reliability of sources is an essential component of digital literacy because anyone may publish anything on the Internet.

We can possess a variety of literacy abilities when we are digitally literate, such as: reading websites, using search engines, accessing videos and podcasts, evaluating web resources, using e-mail, chat services, texts, blogging, using social media sites, using map searches, researching on the Internet.

✓ **Media Literacy**

Media literacy is about understanding the different ways that information is produced and distributed. There are many forms of media, with new ones being created all the time. Forms of media can include; Blogs, Tweets, Podcasts, Videos, e-books, social networks, e-mails, streams, TV, and film.

✓ **Information Literacy**

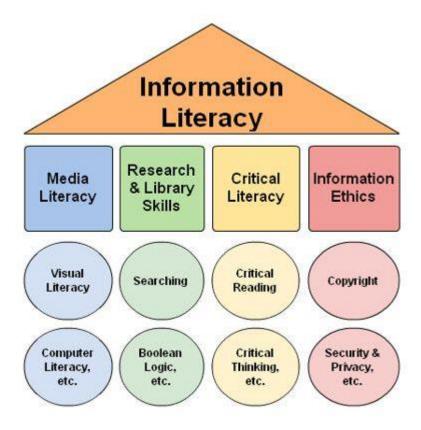The American Library Association (1989) has defined Information Literacy as follows;
"To be information literate, a person must be able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information"
Information literacy is the ability to find, evaluate, organize, use, and communicate information in all its various formats, most notably in situations requiring decision-making, problem-solving, or the acquisition of knowledge. On the other hand, information literacy is the ability to identify what information is needed, understand how the information is organized, identify the best sources of information for a given need, locate those sources, evaluate the sources critically, and share the information.
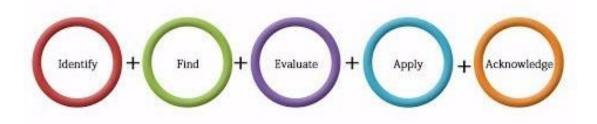
Also, it is a combination of research skills, critical thinking skills, computer technology skills, and communication skills. it is essential for academic success, effective functioning in the workplace, and participation in society as knowledgeable citizens.

An essential component of being information literate is having the capacity to think critically and render fair judgments regarding the information we discover and use. We can get new knowledge, draw conclusions, and communicate our opinions with knowledge.

Information Literacy Umbrella

information literacy as having five components: identity, find, evaluate, apply, and acknowledge sources of information.

Five components of IL

However, Information literacy is crucial for today's learners because it encourages problem-solving techniques and critical thinking abilities. It also helps to students become successful, productive employees, prepares a person for lifelong learning, self-assured people, and responsible citizens by encouraging them to ask questions, seek information, form opinions, evaluate sources, and make decisions. Hence, developing information literacy skills is very important for everyone in this era.

References:

American Library Association (1989). Presidential committee on information literacy. Final

report, Chicago, American Library Association.

FIP Foundation for Education & Research (2022) in: UNESCO. Understandings of literacy.

Education for All Global Monitoring Report.2006,147-159p. Retrieved September 10, 2022 from: http://www.unesco.org/education/GMR2006/full/chapt6_eng.pdf

Kapur, Radhika (2019). Significance of Basic Literacy Skills. Retrieved September 10, 2022

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TRAINING & USER AWARENESS

The Library, Faculty of Agriculture in collaboration with the Internal Quality Assurance Cell of the Faculty of Agriculture, organized an awareness programme on Plagiarism prevention and Plagiarism Prevention Policy of University of Ruhuna for the final year research students of the Faculty of Agriculture.

The session was held Via the Zoom platform on 18th August 2022 at 10.00 a.m. The resource person of the session was Mr. K. T. S. Pushpakumara, Senior Assistant Librarian, Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna.

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