

The Significance of Information Literacy Instruction in the Preparation of Jamaican Students for Tertiary Studies

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Abstract

Information handling skills have become critical to the individual's survival in the 21st century as these skills facilitate critical thinking and the forming of opinions, as well as the ability to evaluate sources and make decisions. Many students, upon entering tertiary institutions, struggle to cope with the information demands of tertiary level education. A more aggressive approach is needed at the secondary level to aid in a smooth transition to the tertiary level. In Jamaica there are no standards for school libraries nor is there a formal curriculum for information literacy instruction in schools. This paper will act as a guide for policy makers, educators and information professionals as it explores the nature and importance of information literacy in education, examines the current state of information literacy instruction in the Jamaican school system, and offers recommendations for the development of Information Literacy Instruction (ILI) in Jamaican schools.

Keywords: Information literacy, Jamaican secondary schools, tertiary education.

Introduction

INFORMATION LITERACY AS A CONCEPT HAS ITS GENESIS IN THE 1974 work of Paul Zurkowski who stated that “people trained in the application of information resources to do their work can be called information literates”, cited by Addison and Meyers (2013, n. p.). Subsequent development of the concept includes the importance of information handling skills which emerged in an information age where people needed to be able to locate and use information for effective and efficient problem

solving and decision-making. According to Porter and Miller (1985, 149–60), the term is a combination of two concepts, that of ‘information’ or raw data processed in such a way as to give meaning and ‘literacy’ seen as being able to access, interpret and make sense of information. An even further expansion is credited to the Association for Teacher Librarians of Canada (OLA 2019) which defines information literacy as “. . . the ability to recognize the need for information to solve problems and develop ideas; pose important questions; use a variety of information gathering strategies; locate relevant and appropriate information; assess information for quality, authority, accuracy and authenticity” (para. 3). Dalhousie University (2019) defines information literacy as the “set of integrated abilities encompassing the reflective discovery of information, the understanding of how information is produced and valued, and the use of information in creating new knowledge” (para. 1). Evidently, a key focus of information literacy as we know it today is the degree to which one is able to locate, evaluate and use information independently.

In a pedagogical environment, information literacy applies not just to students’ ability to make citations and bibliographies, but also to how students digest information and news of all types. Students are taught to critically engage with information. While an educator or librarian may initiate information literacy efforts, the task should be diffused throughout the curriculum so students can build up skills over time, according to Najmabadi (2017, 140–153). This, she suggests, should be done from the preliminary stages of learning which are at the primary and secondary levels.

Locating and verifying information is just half the battle educators and library professionals have to worry about with their clients. Teaching individuals how to analyse information is deemed to be the hardest part. The ability to gather information, examine multiple perspectives, and then re-evaluate prior beliefs must be reinforced across the curriculum. After being taught the essential skills of information literacy, students should be able to learn effective techniques for evaluating the quality and credibility of sources, think critically about the intentions of the sources, and apply different search strategies to increase the accuracy and relevance of sources. Too often, individuals looking for information, particularly for their schoolwork, conduct an oversimplified search especially when using the internet. This would then lead to millions of results. With a sea of information at their fingertips, it is crucial for young people to understand and think about how they search and what they find online.

Source evaluation, decision-making, the fostering of successful learners,

confident individuals and responsible citizens who are able to make effective contributions to society are all clear benefits to be derived from exposure to information literacy. The first part of the 21st century is also known as the “Information Age,” because of the explosion of information available to society. Society has been described by Community Development Foundation (1997, 1–77) as “. . . a society characterized by a high level of information intensity in the everyday life of most citizens, by their ability to transmit, receive and exchange data rapidly . . .” The citizens of this society are confronted with the explosive growth of knowledge in all spheres of life including the economic, social and political . . . In order to keep abreast of the changes, the education system will need to equip all citizens with the needed information management skills. Once individuals have mastered these skills, they should become competent and independent lifelong learners. They should therefore become flexible in their thinking, adaptable to change, and better able to function effectively in an information-rich environment.

It is critical that students enter tertiary institutions information literate. Regardless, according to Goodin (1991, 1–11), college librarians have indicated that many students enter college unprepared to function in the academic library. The preparation needs to begin in the primary schools and intensify in the secondary schools so that the transition to tertiary institutions will be seamless. Sadly, the Jamaican education landscape does not boast a formal structure that adequately supports information literacy instruction. This paper sets out to guide policy makers, educators and information professionals as it explores the nature and importance of information literacy in education, examines the current state of information literacy instruction in the Jamaican school system and offers recommendations for the development of Information Literacy Instruction (ILI) in Jamaican schools.

Information Literacy and Education

Information literacy has become the purview of the library profession as librarians have always educated their users in how to find and use information. Julien (2005, 210–16) states that librarians have made teaching others how to access and evaluate information a core responsibility to their professional skill sets. For this reason, librarians have developed various kinds of programmes for educating their users.

The school library is a catalyst for literacy and reading and for teaching and scaffolding inquiry learning. School libraries make a difference to students’

understanding and achievement and provide support for teaching and learning throughout the school. They also play a key role in the cultural and social life of the school. The school library is pivotal to developing 21st century learners. There is a large and growing body of evidence showing the impact of the school library on student achievement. It is a fundamental resource for supporting students' learning, and a key support for teaching staff. It therefore reflects and encourages collaborative learning and sharing of ideas.

According to Schultz-Jones and Oberg (2015), “. . . a school library should be managed within a clearly structured policy framework that recognizes the library as a core resource and center for reading and inquiry” (6). It further states that a school library policy should be formulated bearing in mind the overarching policies and needs of the school and should reflect the ethos, mission, aims and objectives as well as the reality of the school.

Information literacy has particular relevance to the education system of any country since another way of describing it is “learning how to learn”. This means that information literacy is basic to learning. The various approaches to learning which stress inquiry, student-centredness and independence in learning demand that learners be equipped with information handling skills. Kajberg and Lorrington (2007, 1–30) state that in each subject area, extensive attention should be given to the teaching of information literacy as it is what students need in order to become lifelong learners.

The mastery of information skills facilitates resource-based learning. Iton and Iton (2011, 1–15) correctly stated that “teaching information literacy skills is a learning issue and not just a library issue”. Information literacy requires the input of both the faculty and the information professionals working collaboratively to enable students to effectively wade through the flood of information to retrieve what is needed to accomplish their learning tasks.

Schools are said to have the chief responsibility of educating the nation's citizens and preparing them to face the challenges to survive in this information society. There are several information literacy models in existence that will help with the understanding of these skills. All the information literacy models have components that reflect the idea of learning how to learn, thus making them an important part of the education system.

Recognising the importance of information literacy, educators in developed countries like the USA, Canada and Australia have made it an integral part of their education programmes at all levels of the school and college systems. They have embedded those skills in the curriculum to be taught by librarians working jointly

with teachers. In the UK, higher education has been the main area in which information literacy movements have been taking place to reduce the number of students entering higher educational levels with very limited idea of how to access information. Information literate individuals are expected to be adaptable, capable, and valuable employees, with much to contribute. The governments in these developed countries have put the required policies in place to ensure the full integration of information literacy in the curriculum and this is accompanied by quality library service to ensure consistency in the delivery of the instruction.

Unfortunately, this has not been the case in the Caribbean where libraries are in various stages of development and where in many instances, there is no formal government policy to govern them, thus information literacy is hardly recognised or taught consistently in schools or colleges. Guided by the UNESCO-endorsed School Library Manifesto of 1999, the school library is necessary for sustained development in literacy, education, information provision and economic, social and cultural development. The Manifesto further addresses the need for the direct support of the relevant authorities, through the development of specific legislation and policies to support school libraries. Further it states, “Governments, through their ministries responsible for education, are urged to develop strategies, policies and plans which implement the principles of the manifesto. Plans should include the dissemination of the manifesto to initial and continuing training programmes for librarians and teachers” (IFLA 2019, par. 16).

For these reasons, the Government of Jamaica should give serious consideration to the development of a national policy on information literacy instruction in schools, including who should teach it, when it should be taught, and how it should be taught.

Information Literacy in the Jamaican Education System

Education is one of the significant factors instrumental in the development of a country. Students of all ages must be equipped with the skills that will allow them to adapt and cope with the changing demands of higher education and according to Eaton and Treadgold, (1999, 8–10), workplace and the world around them. It is then the responsibility of the educators to ensure that students are capable of dealing with the vast amounts of information which they will confront on a daily basis and that they learn to apply information literacy skills effectively. To achieve this, there needs to be curriculum reform that is supported by an educational philosophy.

Based on the findings of a study by Rodney-Wellington (2014, 73–100), information literacy should be one of the most important subjects to be taught in Jamaican schools. In another study, Chambers-Lyn (2012, 1–90) indicated that the Ministry of Education in Jamaica did not have an official policy for Information Literacy Instruction in schools, thus leaving teacher/librarians to develop their own curricula. In the Jamaican education system, the teaching of Information Literacy is more organised and visible at the tertiary level, although some amount of it is also done at the primary and secondary levels. At the primary and secondary levels, the subject is still often being referred to as “library skills” and might be a timetabled subject offered to students and often confined to such basic topics as ‘The Parts of a Book,’ ‘The Dewey Decimal Classification System’ and ‘The Catalogue.’ For some schools that do not offer library skills as a stand-alone subject, these competencies might be taught through integration with other subjects. The benefits of this were mentioned by Rodney-Wellington whose findings showed that those who were exposed to information literacy instruction performed better than those who were not. In some of the schools where these skills were taught, instruction began at the primary level and continued until grades seven or eight at the secondary level with a refresher course often done at grades ten and eleven as students prepared for the School Based Assessment (SBA)¹ component of the CSEC examinations.

Modern approaches to information literacy reject the traditional teacher-centred approach to learning. Instead, it is based on the active learning model in which the student is at the centre of the learning environment. Information literacy programmes provide learners with self-directed, independent and constructive learning opportunities. Swapna and Biradar (2017, 31–50) further state that information literacy helps to make individuals lifelong learners as it empowers them to acquire the knowledge, values, skills and understanding they will need throughout their lifetime, during which they can apply them with confidence, creativity, and enjoyment in all roles, circumstances, and environments. These actual components of these skills can be seen in the various models developed by library professionals over the years.

In the Jamaican situation, information literacy skills are sometimes taught by a classroom or subject teacher, a librarian or teacher-librarian. In many instances, the libraries are staffed by non-professionals who themselves do not understand what is to be done. Additionally, even when there are librarians in charge, they are not scheduled to work with the teachers and they are left alone to manage the programme. Information literacy is therefore rarely taught through collaboration between the librarian and the classroom or subject teacher. Occasionally, the related

approach to teaching is adopted as the teacher-librarian tries to connect what is being taught with the curriculum. This is done with minimal input from the teachers who might be consulted occasionally or randomly, and then the librarian tries to align his/her lessons with what is being done in the classroom. When teachers and teacher-librarians work together, students will achieve higher levels of literacy, reading, learning, problem-solving skills and information and technology skills. The skills are integrated by this combined approach to plan, execute and evaluate information literacy instruction based on the needs of the curriculum. The integrated approach is rarely practised in Jamaica for many reasons, including the time required, teachers' belief that the library is not relevant to their teaching and sometimes, the lack of knowledge in the educational sphere by the librarian. As McKenzie (2005, 1-63) noted in her research on Jamaican school libraries, it is important that information literacy instruction not stand in isolation but be integrated across the curriculum. Since the literature states that the integrated approach is the best and the research supports this, the government should endeavour to make provisions for this to be done when developing a policy for information literacy instruction in schools and universities. For students to progress through their general educational courses, information literacy skills should be taught using the integrated approach at every stage.

Over the years, the Jamaican government has made tremendous improvements to the education system by improving the Primary Education Improvement Project and implementing the Reform of Secondary Education (ROSE), the Primary Textbook Project, the National Assessment Programme, and including Information and Communication Technology (ICT). However, little is still being done at the national level to consider the important contribution that libraries make to education, especially through information literacy skills instruction.

Information literacy at the secondary level

At the secondary level in Jamaica, there tend to be more qualified school librarians and so information literacy instruction is more consistent and based on some kind of syllabus created by individual librarians. A timetabled library skills session is usually facilitated at this level but usually only for students of grades seven to nine. A refresher course is subsequently given when the students reach grades ten and eleven when they are preparing to complete their School Based Assessments (SBAs). Information literacy instruction is being introduced through the Reform of Secondary Education (ROSE) programme. This programme was developed to

tackle the concerns that were seen as detrimental to the secondary education system from grades seven to nine, as they relate to equity, quality, and productivity. The main goal was to provide a common curriculum with the methods proposed for achieving equity in basic educational opportunities. Some of the skills that may be learnt here included how to cite information used, avoid plagiarism and practise ethical behaviour in relation to the use of technology. This represents only a small portion of what should be actually taught based on the components of the various information literacy models.

Information literacy at the tertiary level

At the tertiary level, things are much better as most institutions have come to recognise the importance of information literacy for learning. In the academic year 2011–2012, all teachers' colleges on the island were asked to incorporate information literacy instruction into their curriculum. The teachers in training had to complete a stand-alone course in their first year of studies. This move later found its way into the University of the West Indies curriculum in 2014 where in the Faculty of Humanities and Education, final year students had to complete a course in information literacy instruction in order to graduate. The UWI, Mona Main Library also has an Information Literacy Unit dedicated to instructing students and faculty in the details of information management skills. Currently, in most tertiary institutions, students have either a stand-alone course of information literacy instruction or an integrated one taught either by the librarian or in conjunction with faculty members. While some progress has been made in this direction, much remains to be done for information literacy to become fully integrated into the education system at all levels as recommended by UNESCO.

Information Literacy and the Curriculum

Information literacy models are seen as roadmaps for the information seeking process. In other words, they show the ideal path to follow when seeking to find, analyse and use information. These models serve as guidelines for developing the information skills curriculum for integration in classroom teaching. Information literacy models foster the development of research, problem-solving and meta-cognitive skills through the collaboration of the classroom teacher and the teacher-librarian. These models inform students of the problem-solving process and provide a context for the assignment at hand. There are many different

information literacy models used across the world, however, the most commonly used are Kuhlthua's (Initiation, Selection, Exploration, Formulation, Collection, Presentation) Information Search Process Model; the Big6 (Task Definition, Information Seeking Strategies, Location and Access, Use of Information, Synthesis, Evaluation) Information Process Model; Stripling and Pitts' Research Process; and Marland's Nine Steps Model. The common feature of all information literacy skills models is that they cover a process that commences with establishing the information need and proceeds to the point where the new information is integrated into the personal sphere of users' knowledge.

Despite the differences in titles and the number of steps, the information literacy skills models all cover the same ground, thus providing a solid basis on which a curriculum can be created. A general idea of the contents of this curriculum can be seen when the two leading information literacy skills models – the Big6 Research Process Model and Marland's Nine Steps Model – are closely examined. According to Chambers-Lyn (2012, 1–90), the major areas that all the models cover are usually information retrieval, processing, organising, creating and sharing information. Task definition is the first stage of the Big6 research process model where students are required to 'identify and define' the exact nature of the information problem to be solved. Here, students will begin to question what the teacher is expecting them to do. This step is comparable to Marland's first question: 'What do I need to do?' This is where students begin to formulate and analyse the need for information. At this initial stage, both models are intended to question and identify key words on the topic at hand in order to locate the root of the problem to be solved.

'Information seeking strategies' is the second step to the Big6 process model. At this stage, students will begin to list and determine the possible information sources to consult then narrow it down to the best ones that will seek to answer the information problem identified at step one. This stage is compared to Marland's second question: 'Where could I go?' At this stage, students need to acquire the skill of identification and appraisal of likely sources. For both models, it is where consideration is being put in place as to which source of information is the best to consult so as to answer the information problem identified.

Once the information sources are identified, students would move on to the third step of the Big6 process model which is 'location and access'. This is where students not only find the sources of information but also find the information within the sources. This stage is compared to Marland's third and fourth questions which are: 'How do I get the information?' and 'Which resources shall I use?' Here,

students have learnt the skills of tracing and locating individual resources and examining, selecting and rejecting individual sources.

The next step to the Big6 process model is ‘use of information’. At this stage, students would read through the information found and extract relevant information. Simply put, students would skim and scan through the information in front of them, then jot down what they think would be of use to them, and then summarise to make sense of what they have recorded. This stage is being compared with Marland’s fifth and sixth questions: ‘How shall I use the resources?’ and ‘What should I make a record of?’ At this stage, students have garnered the skills of interrogating resources and recording and storing information.

Step six of the Big6 process model speaks about synthesis. This is where students begin to put together and organise their findings as well as present the information in an acceptable format assigned by the teacher. This step is being compared to Marland’s seventh and eighth questions which are: ‘Have I got all the information I need?’ and ‘How should I present it?’ Here, students will acquire the skills of interpretation, analysis, synthesis, evaluation and presentation, and communication. At the final step of the Big6 process model which speaks of ‘evaluation’, students are required to judge their work for effectiveness and efficiency. It is where they question themselves if they have done their best. This can be compared to Marland’s ninth question: ‘What have I achieved?’ This is where the skill of evaluation is learnt. Since there is no formal curriculum for teaching information literacy and there is the need for uniformity throughout the school system, it is recommended that the Marland’s Nine Step models should be officially adopted, since the nine questions are easy to internalise even at the elementary level. The Big6 model is suitable for the tertiary level.

Information literacy can help with the expansion of knowledge and creation of new knowledge, whether it is for educational or personal reasons. Chambers-Lyn (2012, 1-90) states that the American Association of School Librarians developed a set of standards for information literacy and student learning from as far back as 1998. These standards sought to establish the levels of competence that students would need in order to become lifelong learners, independent learners and inquiry-based learners.

“Information literacy and lifelong learning have a strategic, mutually reinforcing relationship with each other that is critical to the success of every individual, organization, institution, and nation-state in the global information society.” They are inextricably intertwined. Information literacy is a ‘set of skills’ that can be learned depending on the individual’s needs, while lifelong learning is a good habit

that must be acquired and accompanied by the adoption of a positive frame of mind. It can be defined as “learning that continues throughout a lifetime.” In becoming lifelong learners, students will be able to effectively seek information, choose information sources well, evaluate and select information, be comfortable in using a range of media to their best advantage, have an awareness of issues to do with bias and reliability of information and be effective in transmitting information to others.

According to Hepworth and Walton (2009), “the ability to learn independently within a rapidly changing world is seen as a valuable asset” (5). Independent learning and inquiry-based learning are quite similar in that they aim at producing students who can access and utilise information all by themselves. Inquiry-based learning has been recognised as a powerful tool for learning how to learn as it helps individuals to develop their independent learning skills. With this, students will learn how to find things out, assemble, process, evaluate, manage, and communicate information. They are encouraged to go beyond the ordinary reading lists and recommended texts to discover and exploit information on their own. Greater emphasis has been placed on inquiry-based learning to be brought across the primary and secondary curricula because the skills being developed have proven to be an effective method to engage and motivate learners.

Learners have to believe that information literacy is relevant to them and that it will help to solve their informational problems if they are to engage with it fully. The goal of teaching these skills is to engage all students at all levels across the curriculum in information literacy skills and provide experiential opportunities to explore the multi-layered aspects of information seeking, gathering and creating. It is to enhance independent learning and contribute to the development of future knowledge workers. Students would then be forced to see that information literacy is the link to becoming a successful active, participant of any domain. It must be realised that information literacy education is not meant to be short-lived, but that a long-term, continuous teaching approach should be taken. This approach should be well integrated within the school curriculum thus ensuring that students are equipped with information literacy competencies.

The acquisition of information literacy skills in society is now becoming a serious issue. Individuals who are unprepared to participate in this information-rich society are at an increasing disadvantage. It is therefore crucial for information literacy skills to be integrated into the curriculum at all levels. According to Interaction Design Foundation (2019), “we all suffer from information overload. We are surrounded by information, but we can never seem to find what we want, when

we want it, and in a form we want it so that we can use it effectively” (para. 2). People engage in information seeking holistically, with interplay of thoughts, feelings and actions. Therefore, teaching information literacy skills must go beyond simply preparing students to assess sources or write bibliographies.

Studies have shown that students are entering colleges and universities without the fundamental research and information literacy skills. Students may have garnered the skills of sending an email or downloading an application but not the skill to effectively locate information, evaluate, synthesise and integrate ideas, use information in original work or give proper credit for information used. Faculty wants to see students becoming more confident in their ability to complete assignments, carry out research projects and become active, independent learners. According to Dorvlo and Dadzie (2016, 1–66), university students need to be information literate in order to carry out their learning tasks and to prevent them from reinventing the wheel. The best way of ensuring that students acquire these skills at any level is by incorporating information literacy instruction into the curriculum, programmes, and other administrative services and also by the collaborative efforts of the faculty, librarians and administrators.

Improving the State of Information Literacy Skills Instructions in Jamaican Schools

Information literacy is an essential commodity for success at every stage of a person’s academic, professional and personal life. The goal of teaching these skills is to engage all students at the different educational levels across the curriculum in information literacy skills instruction and to provide experiential opportunities to explore the multilayered aspects of information seeking, gathering and creating. With information literacy instruction being provided at all levels in the education system in developed countries, students progress naturally from one phase to the next as they go through the various levels of the education system. This reduces the likelihood of them being unprepared for learning tasks at any level. On the contrary, in Jamaica, research has shown that students arrive at university without a good grasp of these basic learning skills. This makes it quite a challenge for the university and college librarians who at the time have to teach them the most basic skills for managing information.

Several information literacy skills curricula have been developed on a regional and international scale but not on the national scale. The move of developed countries to institute national policies for the teaching of information literacy at

all levels of the educational system, is largely in response to UNESCO's declaration of information literacy as a human right and the need for it to be integrated into the educational system of all countries. In order to produce lifelong learners, the Jamaican government should not only insist that information literacy skills be taught as early as at the infant school level but should also seek to develop a curriculum that caters for students from their earliest years to the tertiary level. This would ensure that no student is left behind regardless of which level of the system he/she is, and that a culture of learning how to learn is fostered. In addition, there would be uniformity and standardisation in what is being taught at all levels.

Transitioning to Tertiary Institutions

Varlejs, Stec and Kwon (2014, 1–23) from Rutgers State University, conducted a study where they looked at the reasons behind the poor usage of academic library resources. This, from observation, they assumed was either because information literacy skills were not developed in high school, or because students were not successfully transferring these skills to tertiary studies. According to them, as cited from a similar study done by Purcell et al, very few students (20%) used library resources when conducting research for assignments. They instead tended towards the use of Google and other electronic sources.

The study highlighted the importance of collaboration between the school librarian and teachers if information literacy skills were to be successfully taught to students. However, school librarians complained that teachers acted in ways that prevented them from impacting student learning while often they themselves were information illiterate. Some librarians indicated that they valued information literacy for tertiary level success while others did not expect very much from the students. Many felt that students were not committed enough for the deep, independent learning which information literacy requires. In the conclusion of the study it is stated that, “while teachers are the ones who most directly influence the success or failure of the librarians’ information literacy programs, teachers’ behavior can be attributed to their professional education and to the policies and culture of their schools, as determined by the administration” (Varlejs, Stec and Kwon 2014, 19). This means that administrators need to become integrally involved if the Information Literacy Programme is to be a success in schools so that students will easily transition to tertiary studies.

Generally, there are gaping holes in the Jamaican public school system. These holes can only be filled by the intervention of the Ministry of Education, Jamaica,

through a move towards formalising and standardising information literacy instruction in public schools.

Conclusion

Information literacy forms the basis for students to master lifelong learning, independent learning, critical thinking, and the process of inquiry. Developed countries have been making serious efforts to ensure that their citizens are information literate, but the same cannot be said of developing countries like Jamaica. While there might be many justifiable reasons for this, it does not remove the fact that this lack can and will affect national development, as a country's best asset is its people. It is hoped that the government of Jamaica will come to realise the importance and value of information literacy for future development, and so will move to enact the types of policies and make the provision for it to be effectively taught at all levels of the education system. This will ensure a seamless transition from one level of the education system to the next.

Whatever information literacy model is preferred, the teaching and learning process should reflect the essence of information literacy. In short, when students receive information literacy skills instruction, they will conduct better research, improve on their information discovery skills, improve their evaluation of information, and learn about plagiarism prevention.

There is no denying the importance of information literacy in the education system worldwide. While developed countries seem to have grasped this idea and made provisions for it to be fully integrated into their education system at all levels, this is still not the case in many developing countries for many reasons. In Jamaica, the government is yet to make the type of policy decisions that will give information literacy its rightful place in producing the kind of students who can transition from high school to tertiary institutions, and the kind of citizens who can successfully function in the information and technological age. Various ad hoc programmes exist, usually at the initiative of the librarians and with varying degrees of support from the educational administrators. The situation seems more desperate at the primary and secondary school levels which affect the preparation of students for the tertiary level and is bound to put a greater burden on librarians at that level to bring their students up to the standard needed for advanced studies.

Recommendations

The key is to so prepare students that their transition into tertiary institutions will be seamless. As a matter of urgency, all Jamaican primary and secondary schools need to be outfitted with a well equipped, automated library, at least one trained teacher-librarian and a library technical assistant. The teacher-librarian should be recognised as a specialist teacher who will be responsible for administering the Information Literacy programme throughout the school. Such a programme should be integrated in the school curriculum, supported by a national primary school/secondary school curriculum supplied by the Ministry of Education, Jamaica. This will bring about standardisation to the content and delivery of information literacy instruction. Further to this is the need for an Information Literacy policy for schools which will act as a guide to administrators, teacher-librarians and other key stakeholders. An Education Officer for Information Literacy also needs to be appointed to see to the optimal delivery of IL instruction in schools across the island.

Students from grades 10 to grade 13 (4th to 6th forms) should be immersed in intensive IL sessions geared towards preparing them for tertiary studies. This should include field trips to libraries in tertiary institutions, hands-on IL training sessions, the creation of primary sources of information through their own research and internal examinations in Information Literacy. Also, there is place for a Caribbean Secondary Examination (CSEC) examination in Information Literacy.

Note

1. Rodney-Wellington (2014): 73–100. SBA is the acronym for School-Based Assessment which constitutes a number of assignments that students complete according to guidelines provided by CXC. These are graded by the class teacher using criteria provided by CXC. The SBA score contributes to the candidate's overall examination grade.

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