

# Effects of Information Capitalism and Globalization on Teaching and Learning





## Chapter 22

# Influence of Globalisation on Teaching and Learning: What is the Stance of Information Literacy in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions?

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### ABSTRACT

*This chapter examines the influence of globalization on teaching and learning and the poor state of Information Literacy skills (IL) of students owing to the neglect of IL programmes in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Conceptualizing IL and situating it within the framework of the Nigerian higher institutions, the chapter discusses the implementation of IL programmes in these institutions and the likely attendant challenges. It concludes on the poor state of IL skills of students, which is due to the lack of implementation of IL programmes in higher institutions of learning in Nigeria. It recommends, among others, that administrators and planners of tertiary education in Nigeria should begin to see IL as more of an academic issue, rather than being a library thing, and urges regulatory agencies of these institutions to become more responsible in embracing contemporary issues like the IL programmes.*

### INTRODUCTION

Globalisation is a multifaceted and multidimensional concept. It involves unhindered flow of information resources as well as sophistications in e-teaching, e-learning and other e-based educational services across geographical borders. Globalisation has led to the emergence of open

source tools, open access resources, online information resources, open educational resources, learning management systems, plagiarism detection systems, and many e-learning platforms on the online environment. These e-based resources are being published every second by formal and informal organisations, government agencies, non-governmental organisations, research and



development institutions, establishments, associations and individuals, thus leading to the present data smog, information gamut and knowledge explosions, across the globe. This is attributed to the Internet, and its services such as the World Wide Web, the social media and other emerging digital gadgets, which are instruments of globalisation. These developments are encouraging the establishment of e-libraries, digital institutional repositories, e-archives, and other domains of e-resources, by tertiary institutions (universities, polytechnics and colleges of education), and other organisations and individuals, that are either legally or illegally operating in the society.

Thus, the proliferation of these resources is posing challenges to stakeholders in the tertiary educational system, especially students, in terms of utilisation. Students may be familiar with the Internet, search engines and social media platforms for searching information and interacting online, as they are seen as digital natives. However, they may not be aware of techniques of identifying real scholarly works, methods of evaluating online resources and application of critical thinking skills, knowledge of synthesizing information and developing new ideas as well as knowledge of adhering and applying ethical principles in the course of using the resources. Therefore, they need the skills on how to identify, access, critically evaluate and synthesize information, create new knowledge and communicate same in ethical and acceptable pattern for the benefit of all in the society. Information literacy (IL) competencies come in as the enabling factors, but the question is: where does IL stand in Nigerian tertiary institutions in this era of globalization of teaching and learning?

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE GLOBALISATION ERA**

Globalization era is characterized by flow of data, information and knowledge mainly via the online environment. Data smog, information glut

and knowledge explosions are manifesting in the teaching and learning system across the globe. Also, communication, collaboration and sharing of information by individuals across countries, regions and continents are now carried out with ease due to ICT availability and accessibility; pointing to the fact that teaching and learning in this era via the information superhighway and other digital gadgets are feasible in spite of geographical barriers, if properly articulated and implemented.

The era of globalization has redefined open and distance education as practiced and executed by some institutions of higher learning. Many reputable and accredited universities and other categories of such institutions all over are now providing e-learning and online educational opportunities to qualified individuals ranging from certificate, diploma, bachelor, masters to doctoral programmes. While most of these programmes are accessible from all corners of the globe, and are 100% online, others require some degree of residency. These online programmes are facilitated with learning management systems, plagiarism detection systems, and Web portals, majority of which are open source programmes, freely available online for tertiary institutions. Students of such online programmes are expected to possess certain skills, among which are excellent knowledge of English language rules, communication skills, ICT knowledge and skills as well as information literacy competencies. Even students of conventional tertiary institutions are also expected to possess the above-stated skills because both categories of students are faced with the same volume of online information resources.

The open access movements started in 2002 with the aim of projecting, promoting and facilitating free flow of information resources and knowledge assets of man, coinciding with the conceptualization of open educational resources (OER) by UNESCO. These are key features redefining and reshaping teaching and learning in the globalization era. In 2001, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) introduced Open Course Ware (OCW), a free and open digital



publication of educational materials organised as courses. The UNESCO organised a conference in 2002, where the term, open educational resources was coined, and defined as 'the open provision of educational resources, enabled by information and communications technologies, for consultation, use and adaption by a community of users for non-commercial purposes' (Hodgkinson-Williams, Willmers, & Gray, 2009; McNally, 2012; Cobo, 2013). OER are also seen as teaching, learning, and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under the intellectual property right license that permits their free use or re-purposing by others. It includes full courses, course materials, modules, textbooks, streaming videos, tests, software, and any other tools, materials, or techniques used to support access to knowledge (Atkins, Brown & Hammond, 2007).

They are digitized materials offered freely and openly for educators, students, and self-learners to use and reuse for teaching, learning and research and include learning content, software tools to develop, use, and distribute content, and implementation resources such as open licenses (OECD, 2007). Thus, the emergence of OER aims at addressing challenges of access to teaching and learning resources, not only for open and distance learning (ODL) but also for conventional face-to-face educational systems, characterized by inadequate information resources, especially in Nigeria. However, there have been a lot of concerns about OER in terms of content quality, reliability, authenticity, efficiency and cost-effectiveness, thus requiring effective techniques of applying IL competencies for finding, evaluating, synthesizing and using the resources ethically and responsibly.

With these features of teaching and learning in the globalization era, possession of IL skills by students becomes paramount, calling for articulated attention in Nigeria. This call affects all stakeholders in the business of education such as governments, ministries of education, lecturers, librarians, and educational administrators and

planners mainly in universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, colleges of agriculture, vocational and innovation enterprise institutions, for the benefit of students who are regarded as leaders of tomorrow.

## **CONCEPT OF INFORMATION LITERACY**

The concept of information literacy was first introduced in 1974 by Paul Zurkowski, the then president of the United States Information Industry Association, in a proposal submitted to the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS). As a contemporary concept, it took its root from the library instruction, library-use education, user education in libraries, use of library, and bibliographic instruction as the case may be. It is a term that metamorphosed from the then afore-mentioned practices by librarians for facilitating access to user services and the use of information materials by the library users. The emergence and acceptability of IL by stakeholders in the educational sector in the era of globalization is to address the key skills required for training graduates with IL competencies, thereby having all it takes for lifelong learning opportunities and ability to surmount challenges associated with either in working environments or entrepreneurial development.

In this era of globalization, IL is much more than mastering basic library use skills because libraries could no longer claim monopoly of information provision for academic activities, rather sophistications in Internet and other associated components are resulting to too much information thereby requiring certain skills for result-oriented and ethical utilisation. IL is about developing information and technology competencies that foster lifelong learning. Information literate students should be able to find, evaluate, and use information effectively to discover new knowledge, solve problems, make decisions, and



become more informed members of the society (University of Colorado, n.d).

According to the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL, 2000), IL is a set of abilities enabling individuals to “recognize when information is needed, and be able to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information.” It refers to the aggregate of skills, abilities and competencies, which information users need to possess for the determination of their information needs, development of information searching strategies, accessing and retrieving, evaluation and utilization of information resources in all formats in line with ethical and legal issues surrounding use of information. The Middle States Commission on Higher Education (2003) gave an elaborate definition of IL as:

*An intellectual framework for identifying, finding, understanding, evaluating and using information. It includes determining the nature and extent of needed information; accessing information effectively and efficiently; evaluating critically information and its sources; incorporating selected information in learner's knowledge base and value system; using information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose; understanding the economic, legal and social issues surrounding the use of information and information technology; and observing laws, regulations, and institutional policies related to the access and use of information.*

An individual, who is information literate, can:

- Determine the extent of information needed;
- Access the needed information effectively and efficiently;
- Evaluate information and its sources critically;
- Incorporate selected information into their knowledge base;

- Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose; and
- Understand the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information, and access and use information ethically and legally.

In other words, information literate students from tertiary institutions should be able possess the following:

- Information needs identification skills;
- Information accessibility skills;
- Information evaluation and critical thinking skills;
- Knowledge of synthesizing information; and
- Knowledge of principles of information ethics and their application in the course of information utilisation. Such ethical principles are plagiarism, intellectual property, copyright and fair-use policies, online bullying, and the likes.

Gaining IL skills multiplies opportunities for students' self-directed learning as they become engaged in using a wide variety of information sources to expand their knowledge, ask informed questions, and sharpen their critical thinking abilities for the future. Information literate students necessarily develop some ICT skills, which are interwoven with and support IL, because it augments their competency in evaluating, managing, and using information effectively and efficiently (Van't Hof, Sluijs, Asamoah-Hassan & Agyen-Gyasi, 2010). The information literate students are individuals prepared for lifelong learning. That is why IL is for all disciplines, for all learning environments and for all levels of education, especially higher education institutions that are producing prospective managers and administration of the economy.



## **INFORMATION LITERACY PROGRAMMES IN NIGERIAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS**

There are justifiable facts to prove that IL is a key ingredient missing at all levels of education in Nigeria, especially the tertiary level. Empirical studies have shown that students of Nigerian higher education institutions (HEIs) have poor IL skills (Issa, Amusan & Daura, 2009; Nwalo & Oyedum, 2011; Adeyomoye, 2012; Igwe & Esimokha, 2012; Babalola, 2012; Ilogho & Nkiko, 2014). This is attributed to the neglect of IL instructions in the curriculum of tertiary institutions in Nigeria (Ojedokun, 2007), thus, IL programmes are neither embedded in the curricula of these HEIs nor provided as a standalone compulsory course for all students. In addition, librarians in these tertiary institutions still rely on teaching traditional use of library or library-use education to students (Ogunmodede & Emeaghara, 2010; Ottong & Ntui, 2010; Baro & Zuokemefa, 2011; Aliyu, 2011; Okoye, 2013), without aligning it with the demands of comprehensive IL competencies in the present globalization era.

Use of library or library-use education course tends to limit students to knowledge of information resources and services in the institution's library alone, which was inadequate enough to meet the contemporary IL skills requirements of students for their academic pursuits and lifelong learning in the present era (Dulle, cited in Ojedokun & Lumande, 2005; Kaur, Sohal & Walia, 2009). Meanwhile, to consider a library orientation or user education a course engendering IL skills is misleading, as such only focused on the ways of locating information or the instrumental aspects of retrieval in libraries. They do not cover the broader contextual elements and the higher-level analytical skills necessary to effectively mine and utilize information in a manner, which will withstand scrutiny (Behrens, 1990), as addressed in IL programmes. This implies that equating IL programme with teaching students how to use a

library is as short-sighted as assuming that driving a car simply requires that a person knows how to step on the gas pedal (Badke, 2010). Some individuals still think that IL is about using the library and finding information, however it is not only that (Coonan, 2011; Martin, 2013), but much wider than the acquisition of traditional information skills.

If comprehensive IL programmes are solution to poor IL skills of students and by extension, ill-equipped graduates of Nigerian HEIs without lifelong learning capabilities as well as competencies to function productively in present knowledge-driven organisations, then there is an urgent need for a paradigm shift. Therefore, what does it take to implement holistic IL programmes and what are the likely challenges?

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF INFORMATION LITERACY PROGRAMMES IN HEIS IN NIGERIA**

Information Literacy Programmes are policies, standards and strategies formulated and executed by HEIs, either through or in collaboration with librarians, for the delivery of IL instructions and inculcation of IL skills in students. The programmes encompass library user education, information skills training and education, and those areas of personal, transferable or 'key' skills relating to the use and manipulation of information in the context of learning, teaching and research in higher education (Streatfield & Markless, 2008), mostly as it affects online information resources that are accessible to all in the educational sector.

Implementation of IL programmes in HEIs involve developing IL competencies course; incorporating IL across the university curricula; developing IL teaching methods; collaboration of librarians, faculty and administrators; budgeting for the acquisition of information resources and equipment; personnel training and development; as well as monitoring and evaluating the



IL programme regularly (ACRL, 2000; CAUL, 2001). Essentially, a successfully implemented IL programme will:

- Focus on a conceptual understanding of the research process;
- Lead students to use academic resources of high caliber;
- Focus on class-specific research skills;
- Enable students to produce better researched papers;
- Develop more efficient information seeking and retrieval habits;
- Encourage students to evaluate information systematically;
- Provide a mechanism to address plagiarism and other un-ethical academic practices;
- Contribute to student success and student retention; and
- Provide the basis for lifelong learning. (Brock University, n.d)

In the context of Nigeria, for result-driven IL programmes to be implemented, the following are expected to be carried out:

- Formulation of IL policy in the institutions that will guide the implementation of IL programmes. Such policy should stipulate, include and encompass the following:
  - Clear mission, goals and objectives in line with that of the institutions and reflects the roles of user groups. It should also include expected IL competencies of students, standards, performance indicators, learning outcomes, and methods of delivery. System of periodic assessment and evaluation of the programmes based on established benchmarks will also form part of it.
  - Creation of IL framework or preferably adoption/adaptation of existing models like IL Competency

Standards of Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), of the American Library Association (ALA); Society of College, National and University Libraries (SCONUL) UK; Australian and New Zealand Institute of Information Literacy (ANIL) and Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL), to suit the information environment in Nigeria.

- Planning for resources, which include human, financial, infrastructural, learning and information resources for the implementation and sustenance of the programme. The human resources are mainly librarians (who are key IL instructors), lecturers, and instructors, and they need to collaborate for result-oriented programme. Designation of subject and liaison librarians for various faculties/colleges of the institutions should be better for such programme. Then, institutional administrators are to ensure adequate budgetary provision and allocations for the programme.
- Integration of IL programmes in the curriculum of the institutions, either as standalone courses or embedded in the courses of various departments. Also, involved is reviewing existing library-use education course content to reflect expected up-to-date IL skills and learning outcomes and then changing the course title to IL Instruction/Programme (ILP), which is the contemporary nomenclature globally. The course should have at least two-credit units and made compulsory for all undergraduates in the first semester of their first year of study and second semester in the third year of their study. Also provi-



sions for the course should be made for postgraduate students.

- Creation of interactive Website, (preferably hosted by the institution's library) where IL content, tutorials, competencies and assessment mechanism will be uploaded; there by allowing for comments from users regarding IL.
- Creation of a Centre for IL in the various institutions and the appointment of a director to coordinate and lead an IL committee for holistic implementation. Such director should be a librarian with strong interest and passion for IL delivery.

## **CHALLENGES TO IMPLEMENTATION OF INFORMATION LITERACY PROGRAMMES IN NIGERIAN HEIS**

There are various factors that could impede the implementation of holistic IL programmes in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Although academic departments are always very supportive of the idea of enhancing students' IL skills, they are reluctant to fully embed these competencies into the curriculum. Thus, if high-level information handling skills are crucial to the academic mission, and if IL is fundamental to learning in all contexts, why does IL not form a significant element in the academic curriculum of tertiary institutions (Coonan, 2011) especially in Nigeria? There is:

- Lack of understanding of IL by administrators and lecturers;
- Confusion of IL with ICT competency; and
- Students' misconceptions that they know how to search the Internet, especially Google, and therefore they believe they are information literate (Coonan, 2011).

In addition, Badke (2010) went further stating that IL has been rendered "invisible" within the academia by a number of causes:

*Because it is misunderstood, academic administrators have not put it on their institutions' agendas, the literature of information literacy remains in the library silo, there is a false belief that information literacy is acquired only by experience, there is a false assumption that technological ability is the same as information literacy, faculty culture makes information literacy less significant than other education pursuits, faculty have a limited perception of the ability of librarians, and accrediting bodies have not yet advanced information literacy to a viable position in higher education.*

The confusion and misunderstanding of IL with IT competency is an issue that has been addressed well and clearly in the literature of library and information science. Information technology skills are 'increasingly interwoven' with IL, but that ILs 'have broader implications for the individual, the educational system, and for society' and that IL abilities 'may use technologies but are ultimately independent of them' (ACRL, 2000). According to Bruce (cited in Coonan, 2011) the distinction between IL and IT literacy is "the difference between the intellectual capabilities involved in using information, and the capabilities required for using technologies that deliver or contain 'information'.

Other factors affecting IL programmes in Nigerian tertiary institutions are:

- Attitude of administrators of tertiary institutions towards library services, of which IL programmes are central to users' service delivery and level of satisfaction in this globalization era.



- Institutional administration's level of knowledge of the essence, importance, academic and lifelong impact of IL on students.
- Perceptions of academic staff, such as lecturers, instructors, head of departments, deans of faculties and directors, about library services such as IL.
- State of teaching and learning resources in Nigerian universities.
- Factors associated with librarians in tertiary institutions, who should be the key IL instructors and main facilitators of IL programmes. Some of the factors include level of their IL competencies, their perceptions about IL programmes, their attitudes towards sharing knowledge and ideas about IL, and the total number of available professional librarians in an institution that can comfortably deliver IL programmes with expected outcomes.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

There is no doubt that IL has taken a centre stage in all affairs of man in the universe. Nations are progressing to knowledge economies and IL competencies are required by the citizens of nations to remain active players, and Nigeria cannot afford to be left out. Its higher educational institutions should put machinery in place for the production of information literate and lifelong learning citizens. As emerging technologies continue to develop, thereby moving globalization to a greater level, with continuous explosions of online resources, especially many that are vanity press publications, the essence of IL programmes and the need for its holistic implementation continues to arise, thus, calling for the urgent attention of administrators and planners of tertiary education system in Nigeria.

It is thus recommended that administrators of tertiary institutions should see IL as an academic issue, and not a library thing. The regulatory agencies such as National Universities Commission, National Board for Technical Education, and National Commission for Colleges of Education should rise up to their responsibilities and embrace contemporary issues like IL programmes that are calling for urgent implementation in their various institutions.

Librarians in various tertiary institutions are expected to know that a key responsibility for them in the nearest future will be delivery and implementation of IL programmes. It may likely not only be for students alone, but also faculty and other stakeholders in the academic community. They are therefore expected to fortify themselves with contemporary IL competencies and issues. In addition, they should continuously attend workshops and seminars to enhance their skills, and implement same to sensitize their academic community on the essence, benefits and other issues associated with IL.

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## KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

**Information Ethics:** A set of principles such as plagiarism, copyright, fair use policy, intellectual property, censorship, intellectual freedom, citation and referencing styles, acknowledgement of sources, respect for the ideas of people, appropriate and responsible use of the Internet devoid of cyber-bullying and cybercrimes, cyber-ethics and the likes which information users should have knowledge of and adhere to in course of using information resources.

**Information Literacy Instructors:** Professionally trained individuals, especially librarians that are shouldered with the responsibility of delivering information literacy programmes in tertiary institutions for the inculcation of IL skills in students and other members of the university.

**Information Literacy Models:** Frameworks formulated by organisations and institutions to serve as guide for the implementation of information literacy programmes. Examples are Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education by ACRL, SCONUL and ANZIL Frameworks.



**Information Literacy Programmes:** Policies, standards and strategies formulated and implemented by universities, either through or in collaboration with librarians, for the delivery of information literacy instructions, inculcation of information literacy competencies in students and evaluation of the programmes in line with the learning outcomes.

**Information Synthesis:** A set of evaluation abilities and critical thinking skills for organising and integrating information resources from different sources with strict adherence to information ethics thereby constructing ideas and creating new knowledge.