

Information literacy in India and Germany – university libraries as activators of life long learning

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The paper highlights the role of academic libraries in promoting and developing information skills of students in modern automated and hybrid libraries and their role in developing a knowledge society. It defines information literacy and major information literacy skills required by students. The paper explains information literacy initiatives in India particularly the role of agricultural universities in imparting information literacy courses embedded into course curriculum. It discusses the information literacy programs of German universities and basic models of teaching information skills by subject librarians at some German universities. The article also mentions difficulties into incorporating IL across the curriculum.

Introduction

Information literacy (IL) forms the basis for life long learning, and libraries play a fundamental role in providing these skills. Information literacy has gained importance world wide over the last decade. It is being increasingly realized that for an effective functioning of the democratic world the citizens have to be information literate and they have to be able to take right decisions for the development of their society with the objective of transforming the world into a knowledge society.

Information literacy is a life long learning process that starts at the younger age and proceeds until post work stage where each individual/citizen requires different kinds of information in different phases of life. At a younger stage individuals acquire knowledge through secondary and higher education. The teachers and library professionals impart information literacy competency through various academic programs. Besides the formal education they acquire knowledge through several informal ways and update their existing knowledge in their fields of interest. An information literate person is able to recognize and locate when information is needed and is able to use information suitably to generate wealth and welfare for themselves and their living.

The subsequent politicization of the term information literacy has been broadly in connection with “life long learning” agenda. A subset of wider social, economic and cultural issues at the heart of information society (IS) or knowledge society debate that allowed IL movement to take root and flourish. However life long term has

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become internationally synonymous with economic development and social inclusion in reports and policy documents which set out agenda for development of an equitable information society³.

Information literacy has broader perspectives and applications. Although information literacy embraces related concepts like user education, library instructions, bibliographic instructions and library research, libraries alone cannot address IL. This is an educational and societal issue, and cooperative efforts of the government, non governmental organizations, educational institutions, community information centers and academic/professional associations are to be involved.

Whereas historically libraries focus on the search-process, IL also involves the basis of every search viz. formulating a topic and formulating the right questions to answer the actual information need. Preparation of a search is very important to decide whether found information are useful or not. IL also focuses on the effective use of found information, e.g. writing an article or giving a lecture.

As libraries are involved in a number of ways in supporting teaching and research in terms of resourcing, reading material, facilitating use of these materials and providing collaborative focus for partnership with other institutions they play an important role in promoting information literacy of the students and staff members.

The focus of this paper is the role of academic libraries in teaching information literacy skills to the students in particular.

What is information literacy?

The first public use of the term “information literacy” occurred in 1974 (Bruce 1997; Webber & Johnston 2000) when Paul Zurkowski suggested the establishment of a ten year strategic framework for achieving nation wide “information literacy” in his report to the US National Commission on Libraries and Information science in what is now perceived as seminal moment in the history of information literacy. However, the widespread use of information literacy followed after the publication of ALA final report of the presidential committee on information literacy in 1989 which set the agenda in the US for the activities that followed and provided a definition of IL which is commonly quoted in reports and papers to this day⁴.

Bruce (1997) observes that it was the emergence of the information society, characterized by rapid growth in available information and accompanying changes

³ Delors, J. et al (1996). Life long learning for all. OECD publications. France.

⁴ American Library Association. (1989). A progress report on IL : an update on the American Library Association presidential committee on Information Literacy Final Report (March 1998) <http://www.ala.org/acr/nili/nili.html>

in technology used to generate, disseminate, access and manage that information, which allowed the IL movement to take root and flourish⁵.

Information literacy can be defined as the ability to know, to be able to identify, locate and evaluate information sources. In other words it is the ability to access, process and use information effectively.

The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) defines information literacy as a set of abilities requiring individuals to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate evaluate and use effectively the needed information⁶.

Why information literacy?

The concept of information literacy has its root from user instruction or user education. In large academic institutions the readers were oriented to the library services or user services by guided tours to library services or demos and written instructions. As the librarians with open access became more advanced with several types of publications, besides books for example (maps, typographic sheets, different types of reports, microfiche etc) and other technicalities in publications like merging and splitting of journals etc. the users needed additional knowledge and skills in retrieving the various types of literature scheduled in open stacks of the library and in using the reference information, especially the catalogue in an effective manner. Therefore large academic libraries began to offer courses for library users.

The advent of Internet and other electronic and digital resources, besides, application of information and communication technologies in automation of libraries and house keeping operations has highlighted the need of information literacy to a larger extent. The use of these automated libraries and digital resources became difficult without guidance and basic skills, therefore, user instruction became mandatory to readers to provide necessary skills for best exploitation of digital resources.

According to a study by Kathryn Ray and Joan Day in students attitude towards electronic resources (1998) found it apparent that large number of students are leaving university without the necessary transferable skills to cope in an information based society⁷. Therefore, the students need to be trained to be information competent. Some of the major information skills required by the students as defined by SCONUL institutions in UK⁸ are:

⁵ Mac Guinness, Claire.(2003) Information literacy in Ireland : A hidden agenda, In. Information Literacy in Europe : A first sight by Carla Basili. Roma publications. p 150-151.

⁶ Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) (2000). Information Literacy Competency standards for higher education. <http://www.ala.org/acrl/ilconstan.html> (accessed on 11 Feb 2006)

⁷ Ray, Kathryn and Day Joan. (2008). Students attitude towards electronic resources. Information Research 4(2) available form <http://www.shelf.ac.uk/~is/publications/Infers/papers54.html>.

⁸ Singh, N. (2006). Restructuring LIS user education courses in Universities of agriculture Sciences : A study. Annals of Library and Information Studies. vol .53, September, p134-142.

1. The ability to recognize a need for information
2. The ability to distinguish ways in which the information “gap” may be addressed (e.g. kinds of resources print and non print)
3. The ability to construct strategies for locating information:
 - articulate information need and be able to match against resources
 - understand the principle of construction and generation of databases
4. The ability to locate and access information
 - Develop appropriate searching techniques. (e.g. use of Boolean logic
 - Use information and communication technologies effectively , academic Networks and online databases .
 - Use appropriate indexing and abstracting services, citation indexes etc .
 - Use current awareness methods and tools to keep up to date.
5. The ability to compare and evaluate information
 - awareness of bias and authority issues
 - awareness of peer review process of scholarly publishing
 - retrieve information matching the information need
6. The ability to organize, apply and communicate information to others in ways appropriate to the situation. For example:
 - be able to cite bibliographical references in project reports and theses
 - communicate effectively using appropriate mediums
 - understand issues of copyright and plagiarism
 - be able to construct personal bibliographical system
7. The ability to synthesize and build upon existing information; contribute to creation of new knowledge

A course on information literacy integrated into the core curriculum is perhaps the best way to provide information skills to the university students. This will ensure that they leave the university as information literate citizens.

Information literacy: the world scene

The role of academic institutions in particular the academic libraries in promoting information literacy is quite encouraging in the developed countries. In UK the report of National Committee of enquiry into Higher Education (the Dearing Report, 1998) had emphasized the importance of skills which are key to future success of graduates on what ever they intend to do later in life. The committee identified a list of four skills; the communication skills; numerology; the use of information technology and learning how to learn⁹.

The institutes of higher learning in UK have shown evidence of impressive growth of activity in the area of information skills development. In 1998 Society of College

⁹ Information Skills in Higher education : A SCONUL Position Paper. p 2-3.

National and University Libraries in UK (SCONUL) executive board prepared a task force in information skills for higher education students.

In US an influential report by the American Library Association (report of the presidential committee 1989) emphasized the need for all people to become information literate which means that they are able to recognize when information is needed and are able to identify locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information¹⁰. A national forum for information literacy has been established with representations from wide range educational organizations. The land grant pattern universities in US already have courses on developing information competency of students integrated into their course curriculum. Besides there are good examples of IL programs at California State University, Florida International University, University of Wisconsin etc. Initiatives have also been made in other universities viz. Syracuse University (New York), Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Yale University, Stanford University etc.

In Australia there are examples of initiatives in universities towards a strategic approach to information literacy development in particular for e.g. the work of Griffith University in developing information literacy blueprint called the "Griffith Blueprint". The document states that effective information literacy education depends upon co-operation between information specialist and discipline experts to achieve curriculum innovations which foster information literacy¹¹.

There have been several projects world wide in information literacy particularly the UNESCO co-sponsored information literacy colloquia and meeting (Prague 2003, Alexandria 2005, and 2006) attended by over 100 experts from different countries in the world. Besides several universities in particular large academic libraries have undertaken information literacy projects to develop information literacy skills of their students. The Library of Chinese Academy of Sciences has done impressive work on information literacy and has wealth of experience. In New Zealand, the Library and Information Association of New Zealand Aotearoa (LIANZA) has been working with the concept of information literacy since the 1990's and developing existing user education programs to achieve broader outcomes. In 1998 LIANZA developed a task force on IL to identify core issues, challenges and opportunities facing LIANZA in area of IL and how this could be accommodated in the LIANZA structure. There have been several notable initiatives and influences within the library profession of New Zealand. The move from user education to information literacy involves two fold approach from librarians. Internally user education programs had been refined and developed and externally librarian are looking to

¹⁰ American Library Association (1989). A progress report on IL : An update on the American Library Association presidential committee on Information Literacy Final Report (March 1998) <http://www.ala.org/acr/nili/nili.html>

¹¹ Griffiths University. (1994). Division of Information Services. Information Literacy Blue Print.

form partnership that will create broader information literacy outcomes¹². Understanding the philosophy of user education and its purpose is being broadened and promoted thus moving from an internal library focus to more collaborative approaches focused on learner needs.

In Germany information literacy is quite a new topic of discussion for the German academic libraries. Few pioneers raised the topic in late 1990's but the community remained silent. Some universities for example the University Library of Konstanz started a Project in 2003 entitled "Informationskompetenz I" a prototype course for teaching information literacy at undergraduate level was formulated. Besides a set of online tutorials using ILIAS an open source platform was also developed. Another project "Informationskompetenz II" was undertaken in 2006 a cooperative project with Chinese Academy of Sciences with objective to analyze graduate information competencies; to find appropriate ways to inform and teach them¹³.

Others see IL as the follow-up of the concept of key qualifications (Schlüsselqualifikationen) established in Germany in the 1970s by Dieter Mertens. He described competencies every working individual should have in addition to the specialized knowledge of one's subject. He marked the following key qualifications necessary: the ability to communicate, the ability to cooperate, the ability to manage conflict, empathy and media literacy. The concept of key qualifications mentioned media literacy and fundamental problem-solving ability, the most important aspects of IL, long before the term "information literacy" was used in German libraries.

According to a research by Anthi Katsirikou on instruction literacy, the state of the art in Greece indicates that 45% of the libraries had already established special programs offered to users on library instruction. The difficulties some libraries pointed out for negative response include few staff, the low budget and lack of skilled staff. Librarians believed that these initiatives legitimately have first place in library services but significantly depends on organizations senior manager. Besides all responders agreed, that they would be willing to be taught by the teaching library in order to gain the skills¹⁴.

Information literacy initiatives in India

In India the initiatives to make the country an information literate society have already been made in the year 2005 with the setting of a National Knowledge Commission (NKC) with a mandate to transform India of 21st century in to a

¹² User education and information literacy in New Zealand: A country paper. Prepared for the COMLA seminar 2000 : User education for user empowerment Christchurch New-Zealand, 19-20 October 2000.

¹³ Kohl Frey, Oliver. (2007). Information literacy for advanced users : A German Perspective public services quarterly 3-4. p7-8.

¹⁴ Anthi Katsirikou . (2003) Instruction Literacy: The state of the art in Greece. In Information Literacy in Europe. A first sight by Carla Basili. Roma Publications, p 147-150.

knowledge society. The government has clearly recognized public libraries playing a pivotal role in dissemination of knowledge. Academic institutions with libraries being the institutions having information resources and staff trained in managing information sources are best centers for developing information literacy skills of the students and staff.

Although the role of academic libraries in particular traditional and conventional universities has been limited to orientation and library instruction few libraries have integrated into their course curriculum. Agricultural libraries are already ahead with their user education programs focused on teaching information literacy skills to students in particular the PG students and PhD students.

The user education in agricultural universities of India had its beginning from the land grant colleges of American universities of agricultural sciences. The agricultural universities in India had their roots from these colleges and follow the land grant pattern of imparting education. User education was considered important and was made part of the curricula to teach the students on use of library and its resources and to develop their information skills.

Agriculture universities started teaching library skills way back in 1970's with Indira Gandhi Krishi Vishvidhalaya Raipur (MP) being the first university followed by G B Pant University of Agriculture and Technology in 1976, and Marthwada Agriculture University Maharashtra. Annexure I gives the list of universities teaching library and information skills to post graduate and PhD students. These courses are generally of one or two credit hours and integrated into the academic curriculum. The prime objective of offering these courses to the post graduate and PhD students is due to the cause that they are likely to be more dependant on information resources for their research work.

The idea of offering user education embedded in course curriculum was to make them information literate and acquaint them with various scientific sources of information, knowledge classification and retrieval techniques and also develop their skills and competence to be confident and self reliant in searching and retrieving information. The libraries and information centers of agricultural universities are thus discharging the function of teaching library as well administrative functions of managing information and library services.

One of my studies, N Singh (2006) on user education and information literacy programs of 19 agriculture universities in India found that the course content offered to the students has been devised basically to developed the information competency skills of students. The course content has been organized into two parts, one part deals with educating users on information retrieval techniques, use of catalogues and OPAC, classification, arrangement of books, use of national and international agricultural databases, library networks and web resources; library rules, type of

libraries and its services. The other part deals with research skills like preparing dissertation and reports, writing scientific references, knowledge of compiling bibliographies, technical jargons like use of abbreviations, footnotes etc.¹⁵

Most of the agricultural universities follow semester system – except the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) New Delhi follows trimester system – and offer the course in the first or second semester. The courses are compulsory except for few universities like G B Pant University of Agriculture & Technology where the course is optional. In most of the agricultural universities the course is graded in the final examination. The only deficiency in these courses is lack of uniformity, while some universities have emphasized on library and information science subject matter others have given more emphasis to technical writing. Therefore there is a need to bring some kind of an uniformity in the course curriculum and updating in view of the latest developments in libraries getting hi-tech and complex in nature and resources.

The traditional universities are yet to come with a concrete curricula based user education program for developing information skills of their students in higher education in order to meet the twin dimension of competent students and the information literate person. With National Knowledge Commission (NKC) emphasizing on educating citizens to be information literate, the libraries and information centers of traditional or conventional universities have to be proactive in formulating information literacy courses for their students based on patterns from developed countries in particular UK, US and Australia where considerable work has already been done in this regard.

Libraries require large investments and students have the right to draw maximum benefit by exploiting the resources fully. Information literacy courses make this possible. It is high time that academic libraries of conventional universities too realize their new role of teaching. However, the proposed development of the idea of information literacy requires a collaborative and integrated approach to curriculum design and delivery based on close co-operation between academic library and staff development colleagues.

Besides the academic libraries focusing on students the efforts made by publishers and producers of electronic resources and library associations in promoting information literacy is quite encouraging.

Information literacy for academic staff members

Unlike information literacy course for students in universities and colleges there are no formal courses for teaching/upgrading information literacy skills to teaching and

¹⁵ Singh, N. (2006). Restructuring LIS user education courses in Universities of agriculture Sciences : A study. *Annals of Library and Information Studies*. vol .53, September, p 134-142.

support staff. The universities and research institutes have access to several digital resources on consortium or individual bases. The publishers or producers of these electronic resources train the information professionals through user training programs who in turn train their students to access and use databases effectively. Some vendors like Indian Medallars Centers of National Information Centers (NIC) conduct user training program from time to time on their products and services like MedIND open access journal literatures, UNcat union catalogue databases etc. Besides many academic staff colleges have been established in the universities with ideas to organize regular orientation/refresher courses for teachers and information professionals to upgrade their skills in changing environment. Some national institutes of technology like IIT's and documentation centers like National Social Science Documentation Center (NASDOC) and National Institute for Science Communication and Information Resources (NISCAR) erstwhile INSDOC play important role in training the information professionals in the country to acquire and upgrade their skills on retrieval techniques form time to time.

Library associations in promoting information literacy

Library associations both at national and the state level have been promoting information literacy in particular for the working professionals. The Indian Library Association (ILA) organized the 51st all India conference on librarians, information literacy and life long learning in December 2005. In this conference ILA also recommended to form a National Information Literacy Mission and a National Information Literacy task force to implement information literacy competency program throughout the country¹⁶. Another international information literacy workshop was held at the Punjabi University, Patiala in India in October 2005, to promote information literacy in South and South East Asia growth with support from UNESCO and other partners.

Information literacy in German universities

German libraries also went through a process of fundamental change initiated by information and communication technologies. The orientation towards user expectation and user services had taken place in German libraries as a result of democratic movement and educational reforms in the seventies. The opening of formally closed stacks and expansion of reading rooms required knowledge and skills of retrieving literature shelved in open stacks and using catalogue in efficient way as a result large academic libraries started offering user education courses. After acquiring some experiences it became obvious that apart from existing expert knowledge the librarians needed pedagogical qualifications and organizational conditions to ensure efficient courses. Recommendations for these tasks were developed in a project at the end of 70's, however there had not been enough resources and initiative for a systematic and sustainable development of teaching

¹⁶ Indian Library Association. (2005). Resolutions at the 51st All India Conference. New Delhi : Indian Library Association. retrieved 1st May 2006 from <http://internet.unib.ktu.it/chemija>

task. During 80's the activities in the field of user education were reduced in nearly all libraries of Germany due to the reason of missing staff resources; for systematic development of teaching activities; neglect of users expectations and perspectives especially in forming and providing information concept; missing adult education course for those willing to take pedagogical task etc.¹⁷

New discussions and activities started at the beginning of 90's as a reaction to increasing demand for support during the introduction of new electronic information system like OPAC, bibliographical databases on CD-ROM etc. This led to the expansion of user education courses and these were pragmatic and object oriented. They were pragmatic because they were not integrated in a pedagogical concept with broad education target and object oriented because their focus was providing skills required to handle OPAC or a database. Often the course structure was derived from the hand book of the publishers or producers. These courses were self contained entities of one or two hours without any relation to other courses in methodology of content

Realizing shortcoming new activities were started at the end of nineties with focus on new pedagogic concepts and foreign developments influenced by curriculum theory; Anglo American models of information literacy; online learning methods and techniques etc. A lot of teaching activities in German universities are now based on smaller curricula and learning target especially in big academic libraries. Anglo American models of information literacy are of significant relevance for extending the content and methodology of new approach in German user education¹⁸. However the discussion on IL in Germany during the last few years has concentrated almost exhaustively on teaching undergraduates due to the reason that IL was quite a new topic of discussion for German academic libraries¹⁹. Although few pioneers tried to raise the topic in late 1990's the community did not show much interest²⁰.

Bibliographic instruction took place in a very tool oriented way for example at University of Konstanz. Stand alone sessions were offered called "Using the local catalogue" or "Introduction to databases". These sessions were not well attended by students and the libraries were not content. This description seems to represent most German university libraries²¹.

¹⁷ Homann, Benno. (2003). A new task for German Libraries : Teaching Information Literacy In. Information Literacy in Europe : A first sight by Carla Basili. Roma Publications. p 104-105

¹⁸ Homann, Benno (2003) A new task for German Libraries : Teaching Information Literacy In. Information Literacy in Europe. A first sight by Carla Basili. Roma Publications. p 104-105

¹⁹ Kohl-Frey, Oliver (2007) Information Literacy for advanced users: A German perspective. Public Services quarterly 3/4

²⁰ Dannenberg, D. (2000). Wann Fangen Sie an? Das Lernsystem Informationskompetenz als praktisches Beispiel . teaching library. Bibliotheksdienst 34(7/8) 1245-59.

²¹ Lux and Suehl-Strohmenger, W (2004). Teaching library in Deutschland. Wiesbaden: Dinges und Frick. p 36-38.

The situation changed when Bologna²² process seeks to harmonize the higher education system of the participating European Union state with vision of European higher learning education system by the year 2010. The idea of harmonizing the European system is to allow students switch between countries and universities and to improve mobility in European higher education²³.

In Germany the students had to work for 5-6 years for their first academic degree which was a Diploma (Diplom) and Magister (magister artium). A shorter degree course such as bachelors and masters was not known. The Bologna process aims to define and implement a two level study structure similar to the one already existing in Anglo American world in the undergraduate level a bachelors degree of three years qualifying students to enter a job that could be followed by masters or doctoral.

The implementation of Bachelor and Master degree at universities of applied sciences in Germany has lead to a bizarre situation: The duration of study mostly was shortened from eight semester (Diplom) to six semester (Bachelor). The aim was to harmonize courses of study in all European countries and to make it easier for students to change the university and to change the country. So contents of teaching and the curricula had to be worked over. In fact contents of the curricula were just deleted. For instance some universities of applied sciences deleted phases of practical learning. When at that time librarians insisted on integrating information literacy skills into new Bachelor curricula, deciders often rejected any suggestions. The Bologna idea of harmonizing led to studies at a lower level in general and at a lower level concerning information literacy skills in particular. Whereas the need for information literacy skills was provoked and intensified through the development of the so called information society. Apart of that the idea of information literacy has not yet reached the bigger part of higher academic levels and professors in Germany.

On the other hand, information professionals and librarians are now discussing pedagogical issues and didactics. Instruction and information literacy as well as aspects of life long learning are now part of most information/library related studies in Germany. So there is an new young generation of information professionals and librarians growing up with knowledge on (library) didactics and ways of teaching and learning. Also the number of trainings for working librarians on pedagogical issues and didactics is increasing since the last one or two years. And if librarians get the chance to apply what they have learned during their studies or trainings, even

²² Bologna Process : Named after the Northern Italian city of Bologna, where the treaty was signed in 1999 by Ministers of Education from 29 European states. To harmonies higher education of the European Union States and to allow students to switch between counties and universities and to improve mobility in European Higher Education.

²³ Reinalda, B., and Kulesza E. (2005). The Bologna Process : Harmonizing Europe's Higher Education . Opladen : Budrich

mostly doubtfully professors start to recognize the worth of information literacy – not only for their students, but also for themselves.

After five semesters of testing and discussing, the library of Hochschule Ostwestfalen-Lippe University of Applied Sciences now achieved a first success: a semester-long training on information literacy developed by a university librarian is now implemented into the new Bachelor curriculum. It is a required course every student on landscape architecture has to complete (annexure II).

At the University of Konstanz (Southern Germany) which I visited and interacted with the senior LIS professionals, I was informed that the debate on information literacy started in 2002 when first bachelors curricula were designed and some department requested the subject librarians for teaching. It was than thought that this was a unique chance to develop librarian position towards a more research and teaching oriented focus and to improve library standing in the university. Although there had been some bibliographic instruction before a new era started at this point.

In the last few years the integration of IL in certain undergraduate curricula has been incorporated in the University of Konstanz. This has led to three basic models of teaching IL at this level²⁴:

1. Ninety-minute stand-alone sessions in subject-specific resources are still offered in most subject, but attendance remains low.
2. Course-integrated arrangements allow the subject librarians to teach 90 or even 180 minutes sessions in a seminar run by the faculty. This is the case in subjects of sports science, ancient history or political science. The subject specialist can only show some of the most important resources, so teaching remains predominantly tool-oriented.
3. A completely new approach is a subject oriented full semester information literacy credit course that may be integrated in the curriculum. This model is already followed by five of the ten subject specialist, who cover a range of approximately twelve field of study (annexure III).

The courses in social sciences and humanities are offered in the first year whereas in sciences, the courses are scheduled in the second or 3rd year because of the different ways the students learn to work during their time at university. The underlying structure of the course agenda is similar in most course and covers the whole range of information literacy from research strategy via catalogue, database, Internet and fact retrieval to evaluation citation, bibliographic management software etc.²⁵.

²⁴ Kohl-Frey, Oliver (2007) Information Literacy for advanced users: A German perspective. Public Services quarterly 3/4

²⁵ Dammeier, J (2006) Informationskompetenz mit blended learning: Ergebnisse des Projekts Informationskompetenz I der Bibliothek der Universitaet Konstanz. Bibliotheksdienst 40 (3) 314-330

The information literacy program of the University of Konstanz Library has been appreciated by the university faculty and viewed as teaching support in the field of research and information seeking skills. With this step the library made clear the importance of teaching information literacy as a new task for subject librarians and for the libraries as a whole. This has led to a certain change over from collection development to a more research and teaching oriented position of the subject librarian.

Besides the undergraduate courses the University Library of Konstanz from 2006 started a semester long credit bearing course for masters students of politics and management. The course of four credits is included in the study regulation and is mandatory for all masters students. The course content for example political science students includes full range of basic information literacy viz. research strategy, knowledge of and searching relevant information sources in political sciences, evaluation, citation, bibliographic management software etc.

In the year 2003 the University of Konstanz started a project "Informationskompetenz I", a prototype course for teaching information literacy at undergraduate level was developed as well as set of online tutorial using ILIAS an open source platform. The university started another project "Informationskompetenz II", funded by DFG in cooperation with Chinese Academy of Science to analyze graduate information competency and to find appropriate ways to inform and teach them²⁶.

The situation of information literacy at the University of Konstanz can not be generalized for all the German universities. There are still a variety of different approaches between universities and libraries in teaching IL from stand alone presentations to course embedded sessions and complete credit courses. For example the University of Applied Sciences in Hanover, and the Hanover University (Lower Saxony) which I also visited and interacted with the professionals, the course for teaching information literacy has not been integrated in the course curriculum. However, the discussions are still in progress to include the same into regular course curriculum of the undergraduates and post graduates students.

The University of Applied Sciences Hanover offers five credits course for engineering students recognizing the fact that Informationskompetenz (in German) or information literacy is an important key qualification for efficient and effective supplement to their main study (engineering sciences) as well as central resources

²⁶ Kohl-Frey, Oliver (2007) Information Literacy for advanced users: A German perspective. Public Services quarterly 3/4

like library which will help in future for job entrance and work place²⁷. The course content focuses on ability to recognize the need of information, to formulate search strategy, locate right information, evaluate and use effectively for problem solving.

At the Hanover University Library, and the National Library of Science and Technology (the TIB), I was informed by the coordinator of information literacy program that inclusion of information literacy into the core course curriculum was under active discussion with the faculty and to offer through blended learning by integrating into e-learning mode. At Hochschule Ostwestfalen-Lippe University of Applied Sciences the situation is different, although information literacy is one of the key competencies for learners there are difficulties in getting implemented into regular course curriculums for the reasons of common consensus among the faculty members. Out of nine departments the course is integrated into only one department i.e. of landscape architecture and environmental sciences. The situation of IL in other German university libraries are into different phases of implementation and needs to be further explored. The universities are in transition to implementing the Bologna process of harmonizing the higher education system to define and implement a two level study structure of bachelors and masters degrees to students. As already existing in Anglo American world. Some universities, for example the University Library of Konstanz recognized the possibility of including IL as a key competence at a very early stage of the process.

New challenges are arising these days. The problem of plagiarism is reinforced by the possibilities of information technology and the Internet. Students tend to search a topic on the Internet first. As we all know you will always find "something". The computer makes it then easy to copy a text and paste it into your own writing. Information literacy programs have to react on the problem of copy & paste. On the one hand copyright issues and ethic use of information have to be addressed. That also leads to citing and formals in academic writing. On the other hand IL programs have to teach students how to find reliable (i.e. scientific) information and how to evaluate the found information. And as you will always find "something" on the Internet, students also need the ability to judge whether their search results are useful for their topic or not. And they need the persistence to go on searching if search results are whether reliable nor useful.

Conclusion

Teaching information literacy (IL) is not a new role for the working library professionals in India. The librarians have been doing so in a very general way by orientation or user instruction at the beginning of the academic session. Although the concept of IL has roots from these user oriented programs, it has not gained much

²⁷ Course Content, Informationskompetenz, fuer Wirtschaftsingenieure Maschinenbau, University of Applied Sciences , Hanover, Germany

attention or interest from the working LIS professionals in particular the traditional or conventional universities, and other engineering and management institutes. The situation of agricultural universities in India is different, as these universities had their roots from American land grant pattern universities. Teaching library or user education had been integrated into the course curriculums. However, these courses now require more refinement, owing to the growth of electronic information and the internet besides, the changing socio economic and educational demographics. It is also just not sufficient for the users to be able to use the libraries and the information they provide. They must be information literate with skills to be able to identify, locate and use all kinds of information as per their need even after leaving the university.

The university libraries in Germany are into different phases of implementing IL course into their UG and PG course curriculums. While some universities like the University of Konstanz Library has made clear the importance of teaching information literacy as a new task for subject librarians and library as a whole. This has lead to a certain change from the role of information managers to more research and teaching oriented position. The situation at the university of Konstanz cannot be generalized for other German university libraries. Many universities viz. the Hanover university and university of Applied Sciences are in the process of active discussions on getting the course integrated into the regular course content.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the following LIS professionals from universities in Germany for sharing their experience and knowledge in information literacy and the course contents of their IL programs.

1. Mr. Horst Ferber (Director Library) and Ms Andreas Schiller (Subject Librarian) from University of Applied Sciences Hanover, Lower Saxony.
2. Mrs. Petra Hatcher (Director Library) and Mr. Bernd Schmid-Ruhe (Subject Librarian) University of Konstanz , Konstanz. Baden Wurttemberg.
3. Mrs. Margaret Plank, Coordinator Information literacy, Hanover University Library and National Library of Science of Technology.

ANNEXURE-I

List of agricultural universities offering curriculum based courses on teaching information literacy

Name of the University	Title of the Course	Year of Starting	UG/PG/ Ph.D.	Compulsory/ Optional	Credit Hours
Acharya Narendra Dev University of Agril. & Technology, Faizabad.	Use of Scientific and Technical Literature	-	PG & Ph.D.	Compulsory	1 (1+0)
Assam Agriculture & Tech University, Jorhat	Technical writing and Library Use (TWL)	1983	PG	Compulsory	Non credit
C C S Haryana Agril. University, Hisar (HAU)	Library Science and Technical writing	1982	PG & Ph.D.	Compulsory	1(1+0)
Dr.Panjab Rao Deshmukh Krishi Vidhyapeeth, Akola	Scientific Report Writing and use of Library AG, Extn-613	-	PG	Compulsory	1 (1+0)
Dr Y S Parmer Univ. of Horticulture & Forestry, Solan	Literature and Technical writing -501	1985-86	PG & Ph.D.	Compulsory	1 (1+0)
G B Pant University of Agril. & Technology, Pantnagar	Storage and Retrieval of Scientific Information- 610	1976	PG	Optional	1 (1+0)
Himachal Pradesh Krishi Vishwavi. Palampur	Literature and Technical Writing -501	1982	PG	Compulsory	1 (1+0)
Indian Agriculture Research Institute (IARI) New Delhi	Agriculture Information System (AIS)	1982	PG	Compulsory	1 (1+0)
Indira Gandhi Krishi Vishwavidhyalaya Raipur	Biological Literature and Reference work	1970	PG	Compulsory	1 (1+0)

Jawaharlal Nehru Krishi Vishwav. Jabalpur	Agril Information System (AIS)	-	PG	Compulsory	1(1+0)
Rajasthan Agriculture University, Bikaner	Library and Information Usage	-	UG	Compulsory	1 (1+0)
Sardarkrushinagar Dantiwada Agril.Univ. Banaaskantha Gujrat	Scientific and Technical Writing	-	PG	Compulsory	3 (3+0)
Shere Kashmir University of Agriculture Sciences &Technology, Shalimar	Library Science & Technical Writing (LIB 601)	1999	PG	Compulsory	1 (1+0)
Sher-e Kashmir University of Agriculture & Technology, Jammu.	Library Science & Technical Education	1982	PG	Compulsory	1(1+0)
University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharward.	Introduction to Library Sc. (Lib-14)	-	PG	Compulsory	1 (1+0)
University of Agriculture Sciences, Bangalore	Orientation course on Utilization of Library facilities	-	UG & PG	As per requirement	-
Kerela Agriculture University, Trissur.	Use of Library RM (610)	1996	PG / UG	Compulsory	3(2+1)
Marathwada Agriculture University Parbhani	Scientific Report Writing	1997	PG	Compulsory	-
Punjab Agriculture University	Technical Writing & User Education (TW 501)	1978	PG	-	2(1+1)

ANNEXURE-II

Information literacy for landscape architects at Hochschule Ostwestfalen-Lippe University of Applied Sciences (Germany)

lesson (90 min.)	topic
1	academic work (basis)
	define information literacy
2	library tour
	preparing search
	know information need
	search terms
3	basic search strategies
	publication types
4	bibliographic data
	library catalogue (OPAC)
5	digital libraries
	meta-search
	inter-library-loan
6	databases
	other specific information resources
7	internet searching and search-engines, specific use
8	choosing adequate information
	evaluation of search results
	reading techniques
9	MindMaps
	writing
	elements and setup of academic works
10	citation
	bibliographic description
	bibliography
	copyright
11	web 2.0
12	presentation

ANNEXURE-III

Undergraduate information literacy courses at the University of Konstanz* (Germany)

Subject	Course offered	Time per week	Credits
Germanic studies	Every summer semester	2 hours	3
Romanic Studies	Every other winter semester	2 hours	3
Slavonic studies	Every other summer semester	2 hours	3
Linguistic	Every other winter semester	2 hours	3
Media science	Every other summer semester	2 hours	3
History**	Every semester	2 hours	3
Philosophy**	Every semester	2 hours	3
Politics & Management	Every summer semester	1 hour	2
Economics	Every summer semester	2 hours	3
Biological sciences	Every summer semester	2 hours	2
Life sciences	Every winter semester	1 hour	1
Chemistry	Every winter semester	1 hour	

(Kohl Frey, Oliver: Information literacy for advanced users: a German perspective, Public services quarterly 3-4,2007)

* The different number of credits is based on decisions of the respective departments. As the information literacy course have approximately the same workload per weekly hour, the idea of measuring workload with credits is somehow contradicted.

** Mandatory courses