Information literacy and learning styles: an overview of resource-based student-centred learning

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Abstract

Information plays a very vital role in the economic and social development of a country. The article is deals with the 'new approaches of Information Literacy and Learning Styles. Information Literacy (IL) has different meaning to different people and is known by different names: Library Orientation; Bibliographic Instruction; User Education; Information Skills Training. All the forms of IL are closely related to each other but information skills training and information literacy concentrated on cognitive and transferable skills such as problem solving, evaluation and communication skills. This set of abilities is called Information Literacy which is actually the vehicle for autonomous and lifelong learning. Resource based learning is a methodology that allows students to learn from their own confrontation with information resources. Such active learning provides a means by which teachers are able to tailor information resources, learning activities, the location of those activities and expected learning outcomes to the needs and abilities of each child. In developing these abilities, teachers and teacher librarians work cooperatively to combine knowledge of the curriculum, knowledge of individual students' needs and competencies and knowledge of information sources, resources and technologies.

Keywords: Information literacy, Resource-based learning, Student-centred learning

Introduction

Today many sources of information are available to teachers & learners. Information society is complex. How students can critically think and become good learner? Information literacy can help educators to facilitate, structure, and validate successful learning for all students. It is necessary part of learning and the foundation of independent and life long learning. 'The link between information literacy and learning is also found in the definition of the information literate person as one who has "learned how to learn" (American Library Association, 1989)'. Every person learns something new everyday in his/her life. All universities and colleges are struggling to develop new style of learning for their students to compete globally. The teachers are aware of the learning strategy and performance of their students. There are multiple dimensions to learning styles. Learning style is function of information processing but student have a great problem over the last many years about the validity and reliability of the learning styles, What type of learning styles need to be improved. One of the basic problem is traditional attitude and method depending on education system on rote learning. In this learning environment, a teacher is an authority in the class, and the students do what the teacher instructs; knowledge in transmitted from teacher to the students (Wang, 2007, p. 149). However, some students learn well with this approach but on the other hand, some can not.

Information Literacy

Information Literacy can be defined in a variety of ways. 'Information Literacy is a set of abilities requiring individuals to "recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information (The Association of College and Research Libraries, 2000)', IL ability to think critically about information, problem solving and the ability to continue learning outside formal education institutions (Lloyd, 2007, p. 398)'. Higher education's greater challenge may be to prepare student finding and using information. 'Information Literacy can be planned as part of the institution's student learning goals (Mbabu, 2009 p.207)'. The information literate learner would be the person who recognizes a need for information and has the skills to identify and retrieve that information.

The need for educational institutions to develop information literacy skills and critical thinking skills is to keep up students with changing information environment. 'In an information literate environment, students engage in active, self-directed learning activities and teachers facilitate students' engagement through a more adventurous style of instructional delivery (Wijetunge, 2008, p.20)'. Information literate students must be confident and comfortable in libraries and with library resources to fulfill their academic goals.

Learning Style

Learning styles are those methods a student prefers to utilize to receive and process information. Today the most problem of students is how individuals learn, every student have different learning style. 'The responsibility for learning is not and should not be the exclusive preserve of formal education institutions. It is

a community-wide responsibility (Martin, 2004, p.87)'. Learning style identify individuals preferences for processing and creating knowledge and experiences. In today's information-exploded world, students need to develop their critical thinking and life long learning skills to be able to access and evaluate information (Wang, 2007, p. 150). Information literate students know preferred learning styles, they show increased academic achievement, improved attitudes toward instruction and increase critical thinking. Learning is the heart of the matter. But it is a high time that we enable and empower our students to shift rote learning to resource-based learning. (Jagtar & Trishanjit, 2008, p.466)

Resource-Based Learning (RBL)

Resources are an important part of human learning (Pea, 1993), RBL mean open access, self directed learning from a large information sources. A good learning resource is one that is "fit-for-purpose". "Fit-for-purpose" is not restricted to the educational aspects inherent in a resource, or to those elements relating to its pedagogical-embedding within course. It must also include those technical issues that influence its ability to be delivered to its intended audience (Calverle & Shephard, 2003 p. 208). RBL affords students the opportunity to access, evaluate, organize and present information from all sources existing in today's information society. Included in these sources are books, journals, television, online databases, radio, community experts, government agencies, the Internet and CD-ROMS, making them learning tools (Breivik, 1998, p. 25). 'RBL' demands that students actively engage with multiple learning resources with well-articulated educational purpose (Armatas: Holt & Rice, 2003, p.144).

Student-Centred Learning (SCL)

SCL is denoted for the basic target of development education system. Activity of the student is an important indicator in learning process. The class room education method important thing is to transfer the knowledge to the students. But in SCL education the learning environment not only classroom, in this method corridors, garden, home etc all of them learning environment. 'Student-Centred learning is the arrangement of learning lives with the emphasis on their interests, knowledge and needs (Gelisli, 2009, p. 470)'.
Arko-Cobbah (2004 p. 264) discuss the following key elements of SCL:
- problem-solving;
- team skills;
- learning how to learn;
- continuous improvement;
- interdisciplinary knowledge; and

- interacting and processing information, with technology as an integral part of learning

The teacher acts as a motivator to encourage divergent answers and develop student critical thinking. In this learning environment, student's independent and reflective thinking skills will be improved. SCL for describing the connection between learning, learning styles, student, teacher. SCL understanding the how individuals learn and share the knowledge created to learning process.

Thus, it can be said that there is a clear link between RBL and SCL both learning systems are based on the principle that students assume responsibility for identifying and securing information for problems and needs, and take concrete action based on that information (Arko-Cobbah, 2004 p.264).

Role of the Librarian and Teacher

Librarians and teachers are key personnel in the implementation of Resource-based Student-centred Learning (RBSCL) programmes. They can design an IL syllabus that matches student capabilities and they have the expertise and knowledge to teach these skills. They are leaders in new Information Communication Technologies (ICT) as well as extended resources across many disciplines. Their experience with information-searching tools gives them a context for the application of new tools such as the Internet and the web. In partnering with teachers, librarians can take responsibility for developing IL skills. They have a vision of how RBSCL must build on these skills and they understand how to sequence learning activities that facilitate their development.
Librarians and teachers can also help students to acquire other goals listed as Common Essential Learnings. The Critical and Creative Thinking skills are developed when students select and evaluate information. Librarians and teachers can teach the following goals of Critical and Creative Thinking:
- To contribute to development of "strong sense" critical and creative thinkers
- To develop an understanding of how knowledge is created, evaluated, refined and changed within subject areas
- To promote both intuitive, imaginative thought and the ability to evaluate ideas, processes, experiences and objects in meaningful contexts
- To enable students to think for themselves, to recognize the limits of individual reflection and the need to contribute to and build upon mutual understandings (Scheirer, 2000).

Conclusion

The rote learning environment is teacher-centred learning approach in which the teacher is viewed as the source of knowledge and students as passive receptacles of this knowledge. The learner receives the

information from teachers by lectures. Resource-based student-centred learning is a useful philosophy so far as it disseminates knowledge from a single source to many. It is sincerely hoped that our plea from this platform to facilitate a shift from rote-learning to resource-based student-centred learning will be taken as a wake up call. Let us make concerted efforts to develop hybrid libraries and institutional repositories to support the resource-based student-centred learning. We need voracious readers, independent learners and critical thinkers to develop India into a leading knowledge economy. Information literacy can go a long way to make our students independent learners and critical thinkers.

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