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# INFORMATION LITERACY INSTRUCTIONAL CLASSES AS A PART OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAM

*The purpose of the paper is to define the place and the role of the Information Literacy teaching courses organized at academic libraries to instruct the students to perceive the curricula included into academic programs, and reviews the issues related with the teaching of these types of courses within the institutional framework in order to enhance and optimize the library-information services to community members, to stay abreast with the requirements of the modern era and to arm the library users with necessary information searching methods and tools. Desing / methodology / approach. Main part of the research conveys the generalized experiences covered in related literature and open source materials, statistics retrieved from annual reports of the ADA University Library, and also conclusions derived from communications with field librarians.*

*On the course of the research it is concluded that only one library and/or the librarian is not enough to carry out the task of teaching information literacy to students and sometimes to Faculty. All librarians should be involved in these library activities through self-development and lifelong learning. Research limitations / implications. Comparing the results of the Information Literacy activities in local environment would enrich the research output, but unfortunately this type of activity is not widely spread in academic libraries of Azerbaijan. Further implementation and application of the results of the current study is recommended. Originality / value. In terms of describing Information Literacy activities in Azerbaijan, it would be interesting source for librarians and information professionals. This papers also provides valuable sources of information on basic skills and knowledge required to understand the essence of Information Literacy.*

***Key words:*** *information retrieval, library-information services, information literacy, information searching, information quality, copyright issues, plagiarism.*

## Introduction

In today's environment, which is characterized as an information society, the large number and often irregularity of information resources complicate their retrieval and usage.

One of the important tasks of modern librarianship is to instill in students and other participants of the educational process the ability to choose the right direction in the ever-expanding information space. In this regard, as one of the new types of library and information services, training courses called "Information Literacy", organized and taught mainly by academic libraries, are important.

As it is known, "Library, as a social, scientific, informational, cultural and educational institution, collects and protects printed works and other information carriers, organizes their systematic public use, and serves for the development of intellectual and spiritual potential of society" [8]. Among the functions listed here, the education function expresses both the intention of users to continuous education and self-development, as well as enlightens the role of information professionals.

In library trainings, sometimes called "bibliographic instruction" and often "information literacy", professional librarians instill in users the skills of searching, selecting, evaluating, and using information [6].

In this regard, the formation of three main features in users is necessary:

− Ability to articulate the search;
− Ability to build a search strategy;
− Ability to understand the concept of reliable information [11].

Each of these general directions is divided into more specific sub-directions and, as a whole, forms a single system.

**Main aspects of teaching Information Literacy**

The choice of sources of information and specific types of information stems from the need for information. Therefore, the proper use of information requires, first of all, a clear definition of information needs. In higher education most of the students begin their research with general topics that give them a general bibliographic framework or starting point. Such general topics should be clarified in the form of questions based on the required information with specialization. Customizing a topic and putting a search into a question helps to find relevant information that answers that question [2].

A number of problems have been identified while analyzing the course works of the students, who do not have the necessary information literacy knowledge and skills and are confident only in the reliability of the information obtained from Internet sites. These problems include:

– Mistakes in identifying copyright issues;

– Relevance – incorrect date of publication or loss of relevance of the source used;

– Biased approach – based on the opinion of only one site;

– Audience – students are not interested in the fact that the site was designed for a specific audience;

– Style and expression style – grammatical and spelling mistakes made on the site content, are repeted in the research works as well;

– Quality of content – lack of documentation makes it impossible to evaluate the quality of sites;

– Organization of information – some sites are very simple, some of them are difficult to find home pages;

– Publisher, source, owner – links to some fan sites, personal websites and even high school projects;

– Information stability – about 30% of referenced sites are inaccessible due to incorrect URLs or sites no longer work, etc. [9].

Therefore, in today's information-rich society, all kinds of materials do not cover all the information we need. But how to determine the most relevant information? The basis of information literacy is the sorting of a large number and variety of documents and sources of information (a book, a journal article or a website page), their evaluation and selection of materials that best meet the information needs. When information on a topic is found and obtained, it is important to assess its quality. To do this, it is necessary to consider the extent to which this information answers the following questions:

– What kind of information is this?

– Who is the author of the information found?

– Who is the information provider of the author?

– What is the purpose of providing information?

– To whom is the information addressed?

– Where is the source of information?

– What kind of publication is the information presented in?

– How relevant is the information?

– How accurate is the information? [3].

From this point of view, students with some knowledge of information literacy already know that information sources are created on the basis of different conditions and requirements, depending on the type. For example, reviewed articles:

– written by expert researchers;

– is addressed to the scientific audience (faculty, master students, etc.);

– explains the original research in detail or based on the findings of other researchers;

– checked by experts before publication;

– reflects field terminology;

– provides the list of references [4].

This assessment of information by users has a direct impact on the direction of research and the overall development of education and research in terms of quality.

The most convenient way to integrate information literacy trainings with the curricula of higher education institutions is to develop teacher-librarian cooperation. There are four main strategies in this direction:

– Identification of employees;

– Carrying out awareness-raising activities on information literacy issues;

– Avoiding the traps of cooperation;

– Using collaboration to teach information literacy [11].

This collaboration between teachers and librarians can be carried out in many forms. The main directions of successful cooperation are defined as follows:

– Identifying common interests, such as students' use of Google;

– Discussion of terms. For example, if the teacher uses only the term "search", the librarian may use the term "search strategy";

– Discussion of the studied topic (object);

– A sincere acknowledgment of whether you are aware of any issue;

– Collaborative task planning for students;

– Discussion of the extent of cooperation activities;

– Informing other staff members about this activity [7].

Increasing the contribution of academic library professionals to educational programs can be done in a number of other ways:

– Replacing online teaching tools with individual face-to-face lessons;

– Strengthening the role of librarians as consultants;

– Embedding individual librarians to different faculties and departments;

– Giving librarians the value they deserve [2].

In this regard, library professionals should work closely with the university community, including students and faculty, to formulate institutional policies for the study and implementation of international experience and the use of information resources.

In addition to these ideas, academic library training should also promote information security, plagiarism, copyright and intellectual property issues.

There are a number of non-profit companies working hard to identify plagiarism, one of which is JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee), which provides technology for Turnitin, an electronic plagiarism detection service. In 2008, it was estimated that more than 80% of higher education institutions in the UK use this service [5].

**Local experience**

Despite the fact that information literacy training courses have been widely used in world librarianship since the early 1990's, the local Azerbaijani libraries

lags behind in this area. The positive activity of the ADA University Library in this direction can be noted. Thus, in order to facilitate the use of print and electronic information resources provided to users, to "arm" students and faculty with information retrieval methods and techniques, ADA University Library, directly the Library's Research and Instructional Services Unit has been organizing Information Literacy courses adjusted to education programs (bachelor, master) taught at ADA University. The course was first proposed as a project at the I International Scientific Conference on "Exploring Best Practices in Library and Information Science", organized by ADA University and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism on April 1–2, 2014. After about one year, the project was started to be tested in practice. At present, these training courses are successfully implemented, and provide students with information retrieval, selection, evaluation, usage and other necessary information knowledge and skills [10].

When comparing indications of the past 3 years, it can be seen that the number of Library introductory sessions, and Information Literacy classes taught at the ADA University Library has abruptly dropped in 2020, which is directly related with the emergence of Covid-19 pandemic. However, library staff could manage to organize number of classes with the help of virtual teaching/learning and communication tools [1].

## Chart. Comparative statistics of ADA University Library classes/sessions
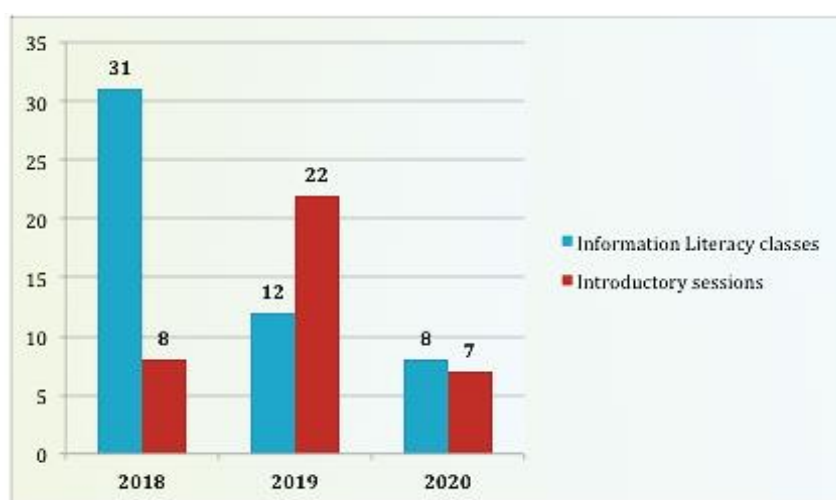


**Conclusion**

In order not to be satisfied with the achievements and to benefit from the world experience in this field, librarians, especially library professionals directly involved in teaching training courses, should constantly work on themselves, follow the latest literature in this field, participate in self-study seminars and webinars, including local, and they should not miss the opportunity to participate in international trainings and conferences.

Other activities should include:

− Getting memberships to professional associations;

− Becoming a member of a local public or field library;

− Finding out about local organizers offering training courses for adults;

− Visiting other libraries to exchange views and monitor the activities of colleagues;

− Getting together with a group of like-minded librarians with similar experience in the field;

− Continuing vocational education – registration for part-time or online courses that provide degrees for the purpose of academic professional development, etc.

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**Мамедова В. Навчальні заняття з інформаційної грамотності як частина програми вищої освіти**

*Мета статті* – визначити місце та роль курсів із навчання інформаційної грамотності, що органі-зуються в академічних бібліотеках, для навчання студентів сприйняття навчальних планів, включе-них до навчальних програм, та розглянути питання, пов'язані з викладанням цих видів курсів у рамках академічних бібліотек, інституційну основу для покращення й оптимізації бібліотечно-інформаційних послуг членам спільноти, щоб йти в ногу з вимогами сучасної епохи й озброювати користувачів бібліотек необхідними методами й інструментами пошуку інформації. *Методологія / підхід.* Основна частина дослідження передає узагальнений досвід, відображений у відповідній літературі та мате-ріалах із відкритих джерел, статистику, вилучену з річних звітів університетської бібліотеки ADA, а також висновки, отримані в результаті спілкування з польовими бібліотекарями. *Результати.* У результаті дослідження робиться висновок, що однієї бібліотеки та/або бібліотекаря не досить для виконання завдання навчання інформаційної грамотності студентів, а іноді і викладачів. Усі біблі-отекарі повинні брати участь у цій бібліотечній діяльності шляхом саморозвитку та навчання про-тягом усього життя. *Отримані результати.* Порівняння результатів діяльності з інформаційної грамотності в місцевому середовищі збагатило б результати дослідження, але, на жаль, цей вид діяльності не набув поширення в академічних бібліотеках Азербайджану. Рекомендується подальше впровадження та застосування результатів цього дослідження. *Оригінальність / цінність.* З погляду опису заходів з інформаційної грамотності в Азербайджані це було б цікаве джерело для бібліотекарів та спеціалістів у галузі інформації. У цих документах також містяться цінні джерела інформації про основні навички та знання, необхідні для розуміння сутності інформаційної грамотності.

*Ключові слова:* інформаційно-пошукові, бібліотечно-інформаційні послуги, інформаційна грамот-ність, пошук інформації, якість інформації, питання авторського права, плагіат.