Information Literacy Learning Outcomes Among Undergraduate Law Students in Two African Universities*

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This article examines the peculiar structure of legal information resources and the distinctive ways in which such resources are evaluated and used by undergraduate law students of the University of Cape Town, South Africa, and University of Jos, Nigeria.

Introduction

¶1 Advances in information and communication technology and the speed with which information is made accessible often make it difficult to critically evaluate information sources.[1] For educational institutions, the challenge of providing basic twenty-first century information competencies to individuals has become central to the learning process and has made colleges and universities the appropriate venues for instilling and developing the necessary graduate attributes

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    1. Julianne Cheek et al., Finding Out: Information Literacy for the 21st Century 2 (1995).

through information literacy (IL). IL is a well-established principle in user educa-
tion, and in the past few decades its basic elements have become an important tool
in various contexts. Mark Hepworth defines IL as the collection of "thinking pro-
cesses, interpersonal skills, the use of tools and learning of norms and methods
associated with interaction and the creation of data, information and knowledge."[2]

¶2 Applying the concept of "use" to these terms suggests the importance of the
ability to evaluate, manipulate, and analyze accessed information; it also empha-
sizes the need to develop problem solving skills.[3] As indicated by the shift from
teacher-centered to student-centered learning, current research efforts in IL are of
paramount importance in educational philosophy and have provided insights into
student learning and the development of various teaching models that define its
use and application.[4] Also central to IL research is the emphasis on the develop-
ment of critical thinking and independent learning skills aimed at preparing stu-
dents for self-directed lifelong learning.[5]

¶3 This article is based on a comparative research study of the IL skills of
undergraduate law students at the University of Cape Town, South Africa, and
University of Jos, Nigeria.[6] Outcomes from the study reveal the difficulties encoun-
tered by students in conducting legal research and emphasized the importance of
recognizing the unique information structure of legal resources when integrating
IL into the curricula of legal education in higher education institutions.

Information Literacy and the Undergraduate Curriculum

¶4 IL plays an important role in the curricula and educational mission of
higher education institutions.[7] The challenges faced by undergraduate students in
using resources efficiently have necessitated the integration of IL instruction into
the curriculum;[8] a variety of instructional approaches, such as course-related
library instruction, course-integrated projects, online tutorials, and stand-alone
courses, aim to equip students with a conceptual and intellectual framework for

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    2. Mark Hepworth, *Approaches to Providing Information Training in Higher Education: Chal-
lenges for Librarians*, 6 New Rev. of Acad. Librarianship 21, 32 (2000).

    3. Ass'n of College and Research Libraries, *Information Literacy Competency Standards for
Higher Education* (2000), http://www.ala.org/acrl/sites/ala.org.acrl/files/content/standards/standards
.pdf.

    4. Len Sparrow, Heather Sparrow & Paul Swan, *Student-Centred Learning: Is It Possible?, in*
Flexible Futures in Tertiary Teaching (Alan Herrmann & Martjinje M. Kulski eds., 2000), *available
at* https://otl.curtin.edu.au/professional_development/conferences/tlf/tlf2000/sparrow.html.

    5. Renate Motschnig & Andreas Holzinger, *Student-Centred Teaching Meets New Media:
Concept and Case Study*, 5 Educ. Tech. & Soc'y 160, 160 (2002), *available at* http://www.ifets.info
/journals/5_4/renate.html.

    6. Vicki Ladi Lawal, Aspects of Information Literacy with Regard to the Use of Legal Resources:
Case Study of Third Year Undergraduate Law Students of the University of Cape Town, South Africa
and University of Jos, Nigeria (2009) (unpublished M.Phil. dissertation, University of Cape Town)
(on file with the University of Cape Town Library).

    7. Loanne Snavely & Natasha Cooper, *The Information Literacy Debate*, 23 J. Acad. Librarian-
ship 9, 10 (1997).

    8. Abby Kasowitz-Scheer & Michael Pasqualoni, *Information Literacy in Higher Education:
Trends and Issues* (2003), *available at* http://www.ericdigests.org/2003-1/information.htm.

information seeking.[9] Some of the IL components incorporated in these approaches include critical thinking skills, the ability to formulate questions, reason logically, and analyze and evaluate information effectively for problem solving.[10] Ann Grafstein proposes a discipline-based approach to IL, finding that subject-specific courses encourage the development of higher-order thinking skills.[11] Margaret Sallen notes that the information structure of every discipline is strictly related to the complex nature of its resources; as a result, users must have a "linguistic knowledge" of the discipline so that they can transfer acquired skills to novel situations.[12] Thus, the peculiarity of every subject discipline is dictated by its course content and curriculum structure, which in turn influence the design of an effective model for IL instruction.

¶5 In the discipline of law, studies indicate that the content, mode of teaching, and assessment strategies of the legal education curriculum must be designed in ways that foster critical thinking and problem-solving skills so that graduates are prepared for the changing legal workplace.[13] Examples of such studies include a study by Natalie Cuffe and Christine Bruce on the information and information technology used by law students in four Australian universities.[14] The study pointed to the need for a curriculum model that inculcates skills training and problem-solving skills in the curricula of legal research training and legal education.[15] Susie Andretta's work on a credit-bearing class of undergraduate law students provided a detailed explanation of the development of IL at the University of North London.[16] A study by Jackie Davies and Cathie Jackson at Cardiff University also analyzed the challenges of integrating IL with legal research, information technology, and other legal skills training into a coherent module.[17] Similarly, Rosemary Kuhn's study, aimed at designing and assessing the feasibility of an active learning approach to a legal research module at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, provided a comprehensive theoretical and practical framework for developing IL in legal education in

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9. MICHAEL B. EISENBERG, CARRIE A. LOWE & KATHLEEN L. SPITZER, INFORMATION LITERACY: ESSENTIAL SKILLS FOR THE INFORMATION AGE 133 (2d ed. 2004).

10. Hannelore Rader, *Information Literacy and the Undergraduate Curriculum*, 44 LIB. TRENDS 270, 271 (1995).

11. Ann Grafstein, *A Disciplined Approach to Information Literacy*, 28 J. ACAD. LIBRARIANSHIP 197, 197 (2002).

12. Margaret Sallen, *Information Literacy in the General Curriculum of Education: A Requirement for the 21st Century*, 51 J. GEN. EDUC. 115, 126 (2002).

13. Natalie Cuffe, Law Student's Experiences of Information Literacy and Information Technology: Implications for Legal Information Literacy Curriculum Development, Paper Presented at the Australian Association for Research in Education Annual Conference (December 2002), *available at* http://www.aare.edu.au/data/publications/2002/cuf02169.pdf.

14. Natalie Cuffe & Christine Bruce, *Information and Information Technology Use in Undergraduate Legal Education*, in CONCEPT, CHALLENGE, CONUNDRUM: FROM LIBRARY SKILLS TO INFORMATION LITERACY: PROCEEDINGS OF THE FOURTH NATIONAL INFORMATION LITERACY CONFERENCE 76–88 (1999), *available at* http://eprints.qut.edu.au/62331/1/ILCONF99.pdf.

15. HILARY HUGHES ET AL., INFORMATION LITERACY RESEARCH IN AUSTRALIA 2000–2005, http://eprints.qut.edu.au/2832/1/BdesB_submission.pdf.

16. Susie Andretta, *Legal Information Literacy: A Pilot Study*, 102 NEW LIB. WORLD 255, 255 (2001).

17. Jackie Davies & Cathie Jackson, *Information Literacy in the Law Curriculum: Experiences from Cardiff*, 39 LAW TCHR. 150 (2005).

South Africa.[18] All these studies have made significant contributions to an understanding of the importance of IL in the legal education system.

Theoretical Framework

¶6 The theoretical framework that anchored the present study is the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education 2000.[19] The ACRL Standards emphasize IL as the foundation for lifelong learning in all disciplines, environments, and levels of education, enabling learners to master content, become more self-directed, and assume greater control over their own learning.[20] The Standards have been used as a baseline for implementing IL concepts into the curriculum of higher education in various countries.[21] The broad scope of the Standards provided a framework for understanding information literacy processes among undergraduate law students of the two institutions being studied and provided a means of assessing the students' learning outcomes.

Research Methodology and Methods

¶7 Methodological considerations for the study combined the attributes of both qualitative and quantitative methods to obtain the desired outcomes. An instrumental case study method was used to provide better insight into the institutions under study. The study population was limited to third-year undergraduate law students of the University of Cape Town (UCT), South Africa, and the University of Jos (UJ), Nigeria, who were considered suitable for determining the appropriate year to integrate information literacy into the curriculum.

¶8 The sampling method for the study involved obtaining a complete list of registered third-year undergraduate students at both universities and drawing a random sample of 100 students from each institution. The research instrument used in a study by Natalie Cuffe was adopted since that study also sought to determine law students' awareness of legal resources and to test their IL skills.[22] Critical changes, however, were made to the questionnaire to adapt it to the legal systems of South Africa and Nigeria. At the University of Cape Town, 150 questionnaires were administered, and 44 students (29%) responded. At the University of Jos, 150 surveys were administered and 92 students (61%) responded.

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18. Rosemary Kuhn, Designing and Assessing the Feasibility of an Active Learning Approach to the Teaching of Legal Research (2008) (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa), *available at* http://146.230.128.141/jspui/bitstream/10413/187/1/Thesis%20DVD%20complete.pdf.

19. Ass'n of Coll. & Research Libraries, Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education (2000), *available at* http://www.ala.org/acrl/sites/ala.org.acrl/files/content/standards/standards.pdf.

20. Edward Owusu-Ansah, *The Academic Library in the Enterprise of Colleges and Universities: Toward a New Paradigm*, 27 J. Acad. Librarianship 282, 287–89 (2001).

21. Ass'n of College and Research Libraries, *supra* note 3, at 130.

22. Cuffe, *supra* note 13.

Research Questions and Objectives

¶9 The main objective of the study was to investigate the implications of integrating IL into the curriculum of legal education and to reinforce the importance of legal research as a key aspect of legal education in the two institutions. The following research questions framed the study:

1. Does the structure of legal information provide special problems for the retrieval of information?
2. How can the level of students' awareness in accessing and retrieving legal resources be evaluated?
3. How are they able to use accessed information for problem solving?
4. What is the students' perception of the importance of information literacy?

Discussion and Analysis of Findings

¶10 The analysis below presents the results of findings on the research questions of the study.

Demographic Information

¶11 In comparing the two data sets, differences were noted particularly with the demographic compositions, as analyzed in the tables that follow.

¶12 As shown in table 1, compared to UCT respondents, UJ respondents included more undergraduate students in the older age categories, that is, ages 26 to 29 and ages 30 and above, which may suggest that some of the UJ respondents are working while studying to obtain their qualification.

Does the Structure of Legal Information Provide Special Problems for the Retrieval of Information?

¶13 Several writers have commented that the structure of legal information often influences the way its users obtain information. Legal materials make a strong distinction between primary and secondary sources: using these sources has often

Table 1

Age Group and Gender

	University of Cape Town (n = 44)			University of Jos (n = 92)		
	Male	**Female**	**Total**	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**
Under 20	0	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	0	0	0
20–25	13 (30%)	27 (61%)	40 (91%)	27 (29%)	32 (35%)	59 (64%)
26–29	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	2 (5%)	24 (26%)	4 (4%)	28 (30%)
30 and above	1 (2%)	0	1 (2%)	3 (3%)	2 (2%)	5 (5%)
No response	0	0	0	0	0	0

presented a major challenge to the researcher in terms of understanding the complex system in which they are variously organized in any particular area of law.[23] In answering this question, respondents were requested to indicate if they had received training on the use of legal information sources.

¶14 The organization and format of legal information is reflected in how it is taught and understood by the user and enables the contextualization of a legal issue within a conceptual framework for the purpose of addressing a case at hand.[24] Table 2 shows that 91% of students at UCT received legal research training compared to 41% of the students at UJ.

Table 2

Legal Research Training: All Students

Legal Research Training	University of Cape Town (n = 44)	University of Jos (n = 92)
Yes	40 (91%)	38 (41%)
No	0	28 (30%)
No response	4 (9%)	11 (12%)
Don't know	0	16 (17%)

¶15 These findings indicate that it is important in legal education that the unique information structure of the various formats of legal information resources are taken into consideration in developing an appropriate pedagogical model for integrating legal research skills in the curricula. The integration of IL instruction in the legal education curricula will help address issues of deficiency in legal research skills.

How Can Students' Level of Awareness in Accessing and Retrieving Information Resources Be Evaluated?

¶16 The usage of information resources is presumably associated with the level of awareness of those resources. This research question focused on students' awareness of the nature and forms of legal information resources and on the training they received to use those resources. Results from both institutions are shown in tables 3 and 4.

¶17 Respondents from UCT, where training is compulsory, reported receiving training in a number of areas. The highest proportion of students were trained by taking a library tour (89%), followed by those trained in researching case law (84%) and researching legislation, secondary sources, and use of databases (80%). This response reflects how the integration of credit-earning IL skills training at UCT has encouraged student learning experiences.

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23. J. Myron Jacobstein, Roy M. Mersky & Donald J. Dunn, Fundamentals of Legal Research 10 (6th ed. 1994).

24. Richard Danner, *Legal Information and the Development of American Law: Writings on the Form and Structure of Published Law*, 99 Law Libr. J. 193, 224, 2006 Law Libr. J. 13, ¶ 65.

Table 3

Legal Research Training: UCT Students

Type of Training (n = 44)	Yes	No	Don't Know	No Response
Law library tour	39 (89%)	1 (2%)	0	4 (9%)
Using the library catalog	28 (64%)	6 (14%)	5 (11%)	5 (11%)
Researching case law	37 (84%)	0	1 (2%)	6 (14%)
Researching legislation	35 (80%)	1 (2%)	2 (6%)	6 (14%)
How to use databases	31 (80%)	6 (14%)	2 (6%)	5 (11%)
How to use the Internet	14 (32%)	19 (44%)	3 (7%)	8 (18%)
Legal citation	32 (73%)	2 (6%)	3 (7%)	7 (16%)
Researching secondary sources	31 (80%)	5 (11%)	1 (2%)	7 (16%)
Researching laws from overseas jurisdictions	32 (73%)	2 (6%)	5 (11%)	5 (11%)
Legal reasoning and writing	14 (32%)	16 (36%)	8 (18%)	6 (14%)

Table 4

Legal Research Training: UJ Students

Type of Training (n = 92)	Yes	No	No Training at All	Don't Know	No Response
Law library tour	21 (23%)	6 (7%)	10 (11%)	11 (12%)	44 (48%)
Using the library catalog	25 (27%)	4 (4%)	6 (7%)	3 (3%)	54 (57%)
Researching case law	23 (25%)	5 (5%)	58 (63%)	0	6 (7%)
Researching legislation	14 (15%)	12 (13%)	7 (8%)	0	59 (64%)
How to use databases	3 (3%)	16 (17%)	9 (10%)	11 (12%)	53 (58%)
How to use the internet	10 (11%)	13 (14%)	9 (10%)	14 (15%)	46 (50%)
Legal citation	25 (27%)	2 (2%)	7 (8%)	9 (10%)	49 (53%)
Researching secondary sources	20 (22%)	6 (7%)	6 (7%)	8 (9%)	52 (57%)
Researching laws from overseas jurisdictions	7 (8%)	15 (16%)	8 (9%)	0	62 (67%)
Legal reasoning and writing	20 (22%)	6 (7%)	5 (5%)	8 (9%)	53 (58%)

¶18 At UJ, where training is not compulsory, respondents painted a different picture. As shown in table 4, the highest proportion of students were trained in using the library catalog (27%), legal citation (27%), researching case law (25%), and researching secondary sources and legal reasoning and writing (22%). Notably, the majority of respondents (63%) reported receiving no training in researching case law.

¶19 An evaluation of these findings suggests that the nature of legal research training received has a commensurate impact on student's level of awareness and IL skills. The degree of their awareness determines by implication their ability to access, retrieve, and interpret various forms of legal information, thereby helping them to develop critical thinking and evaluative skills. The methods of teaching (lectures, demonstration, or hands-on) and assessment strategies are significant in enabling the student to learn to see connections between the discipline and its information sources, thereby encouraging the development of higher-order thinking skills.

How Successful Are Students in Using Information for Problem Solving?

¶20 This question aimed at investigating the success rate of students in using legal information for problem solving. Respondents were asked to rate their level of success in using common research tools and performing a variety of legal research activities involving both print and electronic resources. The results for UCT students are presented in table 5 and for UJ students in table 6.

¶21 Results from the analysis of responses in tables 5 and 6 indicate higher success rates with basic applications such as using word processors (17%) and e-mail (15%) and downloading information (25%) than with more cerebral processes such as using South African sources (7%) and evaluating legal information (11%). Similarly, the UCT responses to finding legislative history and debate (second reading speeches) in Hansard (0) indicated a lack of awareness of the material or of its importance in legal research.

¶23 Analysis of the UJ students' responses in table 6 shows a similar pattern with UCT but indicates lower success rates in the more technical aspects of legal research, such as listing key words (15% for UJ vs. 25% for UCT), finding treaties

Table 5

Degree of Success in Using Information Technology: UCT Students

Task Analysis (n = 44)	Always Successful	Usually Successful	Seldom Successful	Not Used at All	No Response
Using South African sources	3 (7%)	16 (36%)	6 (14%)	14 (32%)	5 (11%)
Using case citators	13 (30%)	24 (55%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	5 (11%)
Using library catalog	14 (32%)	23 (52%)	2 (6%)	4 (9%)	1 (2%)
Evaluating legal information	5 (11%)	25 (57%)	4 (9%)	6 (14%)	4 (9%)
Listing keywords for research	11 (25%)	20 (45%)	7 (16%)	2 (6%)	4 (9%)
Finding second reading speeches in Hansard	0	6 (14%)	4 (9%)	11 (25%)	23 (52%)
Finding treaties relating to South Africa	9 (20%)	16 (36%)	4 (9%)	7 (16%)	8 (18%)
Using databases of cases	10 (23%)	11 (25%)	5 (11%)	8 (18%)	10 (23%)

Table 6

Degree of Success in Using Information Technology: UJ Students

Task Analysis (n = 92)	Always Successful	Usually Successful	Seldom Successful	Not Used at All	No Response
Using word processor	16 (17%)	19 (21%)	16 (17%)	20 (22%)	21 (23%)
Downloading information from WWW	23 (25%)	21 (23%)	20 (22%)	14 (15%)	14 (15%)
Using email	14 (15%)	8 (9%)	8 (9%)	49 (53%)	13 (30%)
Using Nigerian sources	13 (30%)	14 (15%)	26 (28%)	27 (29%)	12 (13%)
Using case citators	23 (52%)	29 (32%)	14 (15%)	10 (11%)	16 (17%)
Using library catalog	38 (41%)	32 (35%)	8 (9%)	6 (7%)	8 (9%)
Evaluating legal information	14 (15%)	24 (26%)	15 (16%)	16 (17%)	23 (25%)
Listing keywords for research	14 (15%)	14 (15%)	16 (17%)	15 (16%)	33 (36%)
Finding 2nd reading speeches in Hansard	9 (10%)	9 (10%)	8 (9%)	24 (26%)	42 (46%)
Finding treaties relating to Nigeria	7 (8%)	19 (21%)	21 (23%)	19 (21%)	26 (28%)
Using databases of cases	11 (12%)	6 (7%)	13 (30%)	25 (27%)	37 (40%)

relating to a country (8% for UJ vs. 20% for UCT), and using databases (12% for UJ versus 23% for UCT). This analysis further underscores the importance for integrating IL instruction with the process of training in legal research at the University of Jos.

What Is the Students' Perception of the Importance of Information Literacy?

¶24 The objective of this research question was to enable the researcher to assess respondents' understanding of the importance of assuming responsibility for their own learning through IL instruction.

¶25 As shown in table 7, 75% of UCT respondents and 57% of UJ respondents place a high value on legal research. Responses to this question also suggest the need to foster collaboration between librarians and teaching faculty in improving access to legal information and establishing a context for promoting IL and lifelong learning.

¶26 Within the questionnaire, the category that appears central for a comparative analysis of the data with respect to IL instruction is the question that sought to determine the years in which legal research training occurred. Table 8 shows the timing and frequency of legal research training for years 1, 2, and 3 for each group of students. The greatest proportion of UCT students (39%) received training in all three years of their studies, followed by 18% for those who received training only in year 3, and 14% in either year 1 or years 1 and 2. Among UJ students, the greatest proportion (21%) received training in years 1 and 2, 20% in years 1 and 4, and 17%

Table 7

Student Perceptions of the Importance of Legal Research

Degree of Importance	University of Cape Town (n = 44)	University of Jos (n = 92)
Very important	33 (75%)	52 (57%)
Moderately important	7 (16%)	4 (4%)
No response	0	0
Don't know	4 (9%)	36 (39%)

Table 8

Year of Legal Research Training

Year	University of Cape Town (n = 44)		University of Jos (n = 92)	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Year 1	6 (14%)	38 (86%)	16 (17%)	76 (83%)
Year 1, 2	6 (14%)	38 (86%)	20 (21%)	72 (78%)
Year 1, 2, 3	17 (39%)	27 (61%)	0	0
Year 3	8 (18%)	36 (82%)	8 (9%)	84 (91%)
Year 1, 4	2 (4%)	42 (94%)	19 (20%)	73 (79%)
No training at all	0	0	11 (13%)	81 (88%)
No response	5 (11%)	39 (89%)	18 (20%)	74 (80%)

in year 1. It is also interesting to note that 13% of the UJ respondents received "no training at all" in legal research.

¶27 The analysis shows that 9% of the UJ respondents have had legal research training in year 3 only compared to 18% in UCT and that 41% of the UJ respondents received at least two years of legal research training. Although the percentage in UCT in year 1, 2, & 3 is higher, the analysis does not provide sufficient evidence to conclude that legal research training frequency has a significant effect on academic performance: more data may be needed to make any conclusive statement about this relationship.

¶28 Respondents were also asked about their preferred timing and positioning of legal research training within the law curriculum. This question was aimed at determining their perception of the importance of legal research training in legal education. Respondents were at liberty to make more than one choice from the options, which were not arranged in any particular order.

¶29As shown in table 9, only 25% of UCT respondents preferred IL as a separate first-year course, while 25% wanted it as an elective course. Thirty-nine percent preferred that it be integrated within one subject in each year and 50% said they would like to see it integrated with another first-year subject. The lowest percentage recorded was 2% for those who wanted it included as a separate final-year subject.

Table 9

Preference for Legal Research Training in the Curriculum: UCT Students

Preference for Legal Research Training (n = 44)	Separate First-Year Course	Elective Course	Integrated Within One Subject in Each Year	Integrated with Another First-Year Subject	Separate Final-Year Course
Yes	11 (25%)	11 (25%)	17 (39%)	22 (50%)	1 (2%)
No	23 (52%)	20 (45%)	15 (34%)	13 (30%)	28 (64%)
Don't know	10 (23%)	13 (30%)	12 (27%)	9 (20%)	15 (34%)
No response	0	0	0	0	0

Table 10

Preference for Legal Research Training in the Curriculum: UJ Students

Preference for Legal Research Training (n = 92)	Separate First-Year Course	Elective Course	Integrated Within One Subject in Each Year	Integrated with Another First-Year Subject	Separate Final-Year Course
Yes	30 (33%)	10 (11%)	21 (23%)	8 (7%)	9 (10%)
No	19 (21%)	39 (42%)	27 (29%)	40 (43%)	39 (42%)
Don't know	20 (22%)	24 (26%)	12 (13%)	22 (24%)	26 (28%)
No response	23 (25%)	19 (21%)	32 (35%)	22 (24%)	18 (20%)

¶30 For UJ students, the greatest proportion preferred it as an elective course (42%) and 43% as integrated with another first-year subject. Compared to UCT students, a lower percentage (42%) preferred its inclusion as a separate final-year subject, perhaps because of the amount of accumulated course work during the final year.

¶31 Observations from a general analysis of the data show that less than the expected response rate was obtained in both cases, particularly at the University of Cape Town. In the case of University of Jos, even though a larger response rate was obtained, the analysis of the questions recorded a low output of respondents' views.

Implications of Findings and Recommendations

¶32 The theoretical and practical implications of the findings of the study are central to the core issues of IL within the context of higher education and, specifically, as it relates to the teaching of legal research and its integration to the curriculum. Of primary importance is the need for educational reform in student learning: specifically, the responsibility of the two institutions for creating a relevant structure for developing IL and lifelong learning abilities. Other studies have provided evidence that the design of the curriculum is a determining factor in implementing IL programs and should be made in accordance with the recommendations of the adopted ACRL literacy standards to achieve the set educational objectives.

¶33 In the case of legal research, the integration of IL within a disciplinary context helps promote an attitude of critical inquiry in the learning process; such process-oriented pedagogies as problem-based, resource-based, and web-based learning approaches can be used as vehicles for IL instruction in the legal education system. These methods have been used in different contexts and help students to think critically and analytically within the specified context.[25] By being taught the conceptual models for handling information through an integrated and incremental approach during their legal training, students are provided with a broad context for understanding the different forms, sources, and structures of information, which also ensures the transferability of acquired skills to the workplace.[26] This study suggests that IL be integrated in a consistent and progressive manner into the mainstream of the curriculum of legal education.

¶34 Issues of determining outcome assessment and evaluation have constituted a problem in most higher education institutions, particularly in developing countries where IL standards are not yet set. Diana Rosenberg observes that in some African countries, even though there seems to be general agreement that the integration of IL courses into the curriculum in ways that are assessable and credit-bearing is necessary for success, feedback from students and implementation efforts do not always seem to reflect the real picture due to lack of IL standards.[27] To address problems of IL education in Africa, there is a need for the development of a continental or regional approach to IL standards, as is the case with the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia.

¶35 Policy implications that have emerged from the study include the following:

- the need to address IL as an educational objective in the academic curricula;
- the need for an adequate and sustained financial base for the implementation of IL programs, especially in terms of staff recruitment and infrastructure development; and
- the need to highlight the role of the information professional in encouraging and stimulating the development and implementation of various IL programs through advocacy.

¶36 All these issues point to the importance of developing an institution-wide policy that recognizes the value of IL in legal education. At the University of Jos, IL initiatives have remained on the margins of the educational process because of limited support by government and stakeholders in higher education. In contrast, Peter Underwood has noted that in South Africa, the promulgation of the National Plan for Higher Education by the Ministry of Education in 2001 demonstrates the government's awareness of the strategic role of IL in ensuring outcome-based edu-

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    25. *Id.*

    26. Martha J. Whitehead & Catherine C. Quinlan, Canada: An Information Literacy Case Study (2002).

    27. Diana Rosenberg, *Foreword, in* User Information Literacy: Case Studies from University Library Programmes in SCANUL-ECS Region xi–xiv (Elizabeth Kiondo & Jangawe Msuya eds., 2005).

cation.[28] This support further buttresses the view that the implementation of IL requires all stakeholders in higher education and government to help establish a system that effectively integrates IL concepts in the higher education institutions.[29] Christine Bruce has also noted that international, national, and institutional policies and guidelines are vital in supporting and directing the adoption of IL education.[30]

¶37 Outcomes from the study also emphasize the importance of collaborative execution of IL programs in the learning process. The imperatives of the digital information age have implications for the perceived roles and responsibilities of academic librarians in helping academic faculty incorporate elements of IL in instructional programs to enhance student learning experiences. The responsibility for IL in legal education must therefore be shared within strategic partnerships at various levels, including curriculum design, policy development, staff development, and classroom teaching.

Conclusion

¶38 The research findings from this study suggest important factors in IL education that could inform policy and practice within the context of higher education in Africa. These findings emphasize the need for benchmarks to guide the placement of legal IL in the curriculum of legal education, specifically in Nigeria. Even though the findings of the study are limited to a set of comparative case studies, it is hoped that they provide some evidence of the current understanding of the phenomenon in similar contexts and contribute to an understanding of the relationship between IL and learning in the legal field.

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28. PETER G. UNDERWOOD, SOUTH AFRICA: A CASE STUDY IN DEVELOPMENT THROUGH INFORMATION LITERACY (2002) (on file with the African Studies Pamphlet Collection of the University of Cape Town Library).

29. Charles B.M. Lungu, *An Analysis of Information Literacy Related Programmes at the Copperbelt University, in* USER INFORMATION LITERACY: CASE STUDIES FROM UNIVERSITY LIBRARY PROGRAMMES IN SCANUL-ECS REGION 203 (Elizabeth Kiondo & Jangawe Msuya eds., 2005).

30. CHRISTINE BRUCE, INFORMATION LITERACY AS A CATALYST FOR EDUCATIONAL CHANGE: A BACKGROUND PAPER [12] (2002), *available at* http://arizona.openrepository.com/arizona/handle/10150/106385.