

*Full Length Research*

# **An investigation of students views on the use of information literacy skills in secondary schools: a study of Olokoro girls' secondary school, Umuahia South, Abia State**

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**This study examines the views of students and teachers in Olokoro Girls Secondary school Umuahia, on the students' use of information literacy skills. The students were provided with information literacy models. The study demonstrates the existence of a range of understanding amongst students about the value of information literacy skills; such as brainstorming, concept mapping, reading for information and understanding, note taking and writing an assignment. It also reviews that students have different views on what they perceive as the value of learning and applying information literacy skills. The study provides some insight into students' feelings about confidence in their ability to produce good work and also their feelings about the efficacy of some of the suggested strategies given to them by the teachers. Results show that most students viewed the existence of a scaffold and the PLUS model booklet as being beneficial to them. Evidence from students' show that they prefer electronic sources of information to printed sources. Teachers' views support the use of scaffold and the PLUS models as being beneficial to most students.**

**Keywords:** Information literacy, brainstorming, concept of mapping, Reading for Information and note taking.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **What Is Information Literacy?**

Evidence of a lack of agreement on the meaning of information literacy can be seen in the plethora of definitions of information literacy. Langford (2001) expresses anxiety about information literacy stating, "It was frustrating because one's understanding of the concept [information literacy], depended on what end of the elephant you had in your grasp." Langford (2001) states that Doyle's (1994) definition of information literacy should be seen as an excellent starting point for debating information literacy. Doyle (1994) defines information literacy as "the ability to access, evaluate, and use

information from a variety of sources, to recognize when information is needed, and to know how to learn” but also identifies some attributes of an information literate person. The National Forum on Information Literacy (2004) defines information literacy as “The ability to know when there is a need for information, to be able to identify, locate, evaluate, and effectively use that information for the issue or problem at hand.” Moore (2002) states that information literacy is a “dynamic concept which extends basic reading, writing and calculating skills for application in information and technologically rich environments for the purpose of learning or solving problems.”

Herring (2004) defines information skills as “the skills which pupils [students] use to identify the purpose of, locate, process and communicate information concepts and ideas and then reflect upon the effective application of these skills.” Abilock (2004) takes a wider view of information literacy arguing that “Information literacy is a transformational process in which the learner needs to find, understand, evaluate, and use information in various forms to create for personal, social or global purposes.” Other definitions of information literacy or lists of attributes of an information-literate student have been examined in Information Power (AASL/AECT 1998) and by such authors as Kuhlthau (2004), Loertscher and Woolls (2002), and La Marca and Manning (2004).

### **Research Evidence of Information Literacy Teaching and Learning**

It was observed above that there is a vast literature on information literacy in schools, but much of the writing on information literacy, while informative and of use in a contextual manner, is not based on empirical research. The work of Kuhlthau (2004) is highly respected and the most cited in the literature. Kuhlthau’s (2004) research in schools focused not only on students’ knowledge of and views on assignment related information literacy skills but also on the affective features of students’ learning and Kuhlthau presents evidence of how students went through a range of emotions when planning and completing curricular assignments. The review of information literacy research and the information literacy literature by Loertscher and Woolls (2002) is a valuable contribution to the area and covers such aspects of information literacy as the research process, key issues, information literacy strategies, and information literacy models. The current work of Henri and Asselin (2005) includes significant reviews of the information literate school community and information literacy research by Limberg (2005), who stresses the need for students to have a “repertoire of understandings of information seeking and use.” There have been a range of research studies in information literacy in schools, including such subject-related research as Lewis (1999) on science teaching and information literacy and Maxwell (2000) on aspects of information literacy in a year 7 science program. Moore and Pouloupoulos (1999) studied teachers’ knowledge and practice of information literacy. Ryan and Hudson (2003) examined aspects of secondary school students’ understanding of information literacy, while Barranoik (2001) investigated high school students’ views on “meaningful assignments.” Particular elements of information literacy have been researched by Wolf, Brush, and Saye (2003) who evaluated the Big Six as a scaffold for students and concluded that “when students are provided metacognitive support during information problem-solving activities, they may be able to manage complex tasks and subject matter content.” Harada (2002) examined students’ journal writing and information literacy and noted that students “had taken the first steps in articulating new conceptions and new feelings about the information search process.” Gordon (2000) and Gordon (2002) focused on students’ use and understanding of concept mapping and one of the conclusions of the studies was that “mappers were more sensitive to the electronic environment” than students who did not use concept mapping. In the educational field, Kinchin and Hay (2000) argued that “concept mapping can be a helpful metacognitive tool” although they did not examine concept mapping as part of information literacy teaching in the school. Fisher, Frey, and Williams (2002) examined note taking and concluded that note taking often “leads to deeper student engagement and reflection.” Other research studies include Fitzgerald (2004) on information literacy of students going from high school to higher education and McGregor (1998) on plagiarism.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

To identify students views on information literacy skills

To ascertain students level of confidence in doing their school assignment, with the use of information models

To examine students positive and negative views on brainstorming and concept mapping

To know students reasons for preferring the use of web sites in doing school assignments

Information Literacy Models

There exist a great number of information literacy models that have been planned in different countries. The use of many of the models in schools is unclear, but research has been conducted in relation to Kuhlthau's ISP model (Kuhlthau 2004 and Kracker 2002); Eisenberg and Berkowitz's Big Six model (Wolf, Brush, and Saye 2003) and Herring's PLUS model (Herring, Tarter and Naylor 2000 and 2002). There is anecdotal evidence of the use of Ryan and Capra's ILPO (Ryan and Capra 2001). Stripling (2004) presents a model for inquiry learning and Oberg (2004) reports on a model developed for Canadian teachers and teacher librarians. There are a number of reviews of information literacy models, such as those by Loertscher and Woolls (2002), Shannon (2002), Branch and Oberg (2003), and Callison (2002).

The two previous studies of the PLUS model (Herring, Tarter, and Naylor 2000; 2002) focused on students' views of the use of the elements of the model—purpose, location, use, and self-evaluation. The model is intended to be an iterative and not a linear model that students can use as scaffold to do their assignments, but also as a reflective tool to enhance their learning. In the completed studies, students were generally positive about the use of the model, indicating that they benefited from the use of tools, such as brainstorming and concept mapping in the purpose stage, but that they also used the results of brainstorming and concept mapping when searching, evaluating information and ideas, and when writing the assignment. Some students indicated they had no need for such a scaffold and were reluctant to use a model as they preferred their own methods. Interviews with the class teachers and the teacher librarian showed that these students were the more able students in the class and that most students had clearly benefited from using the model. Improvements in students' quality of assignments, in their use of a range of information resources, had contributed to a general improvement in students grades although this was not fully tested in the studies.

Green (2004) takes a critical look on information literacy models, stating that "many of the existing information skills models don't meet the needs of the learner as well as they should." A general criticism which can be made of all information literacy models is that they do not take into account individual students' learning methods and that they may appear as a one-size-fits-all approach to learning. The use of a model in a school can be adapted by the SLMS and teachers for individual students or those individual students can be offered the model not necessarily as a sine qua non for completing an assignment but more as an option which can be modified to suit their own use. In a recent, as yet unpublished, study by Herring and Hurst, it was observed that students could be viewed either as recipients of a model or scaffold, where they were required to integrate elements of a model or scaffold into their completed assignment, or as consumers of a model or scaffold, where they could choose to use or ignore elements of the model or scaffold.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was employed for the study. The population of the study is 96 students in Olokoro Girls Secondary School. Complete census sampling technique was used since the population is manageable by the researcher. The instrument used for data collection is questionnaire. Data collected was analyzed using mean. A total of 96 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents through their class teachers and were correctly filled and returned. 2.50 was used as a bench mark.

Keys: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree, Remark = Accepted and Rejected

**Table.1.** Mean response of students' views on the use of information literacy skills = 96

S/N	Item Statements	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	RMK
1	Helped to identify keywords	55	21	12	8	3.03	Accepted
2	Helped to find Right Inf.	48	30	12	6	3.25	Accepted
3	Helped in note taking	15	20	45	16	2.35	Rejected
4	Helped to do assignments	18	22	48	8	2.52	Accepted
	<u>Cluster Mean</u>					<u>2.79</u>	

The result of data analysis in table 1 shows that the cluster mean of the students' confidence at the Start of assignment among students in Olokoro Girls Secondary School is 2.79, which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.50 on a four point rating scale. This shows that students had confidence at the start of assignment.

**Table 2.** Mean response of students on their level of confidence in doing their school assignment With the use of information model = 96

S/N	Item Statements	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	RMK
5	Very confident at the start of assignment	55	25	10	6	3.34	Accepted
6	Quite confident at the start of assignment	50	30	12	4	3.31	Accepted
7	Some students were more confident than others at the start of assignment	56	24	13	3	3.39	Accepted
8	Students' confidence led to good performance	62	18	10	6	3.42	Accepted
	Cluster Mean					3.37	

The result of data analysis in table 2 shows that the cluster mean of the students' positive views on brainstorming in Olokoro Girls Secondary School is 3.37, which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.50 on a four point rating scale. This shows that students had a positive view on brainstorming

**Table 3.** Mean response of students on their Views in the use of Brainstorming and Concept Mapping = 96

S/N	Item Statements	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	RMK
9	Identified keywords	57	23	10	6	3.36	Accepted
10	Finding Right Information	50	30	11	5	3.30	Accepted
11	Taking note	54	26	9	7	3.32	Accepted
12	Taking dictation	48	22	18	8	3.15	Accepted
	Cluster Mean					3.28	

The result of data analysis in table 3 shows that the cluster mean of the students' negative views on brainstorming and concept mapping in Olokoro Girls Secondary School is 3.28, which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.50 on a four point rating scale. This shows that students had a positive view on brainstorming.

**Table 4.** Students Views on Note taking = 96

S/N	Item Statements	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	RMK
13							
14	I write note into my jotter	50	26	16	4	3.27	Accepted
15	I make use of words/Notepad in taking note	56	24	10	6	3.35	Accepted
16	I make use of cutting and Pasting in note taking	26	26	36	8	2.73	Accepted
17	Record note with my phone	24	26	35	11	2.66	Accepted
	Cluster Mean					3.00	

The result of data analysis in table 4 shows that the cluster mean of the students' views on note taking in Olokoro Girls Secondary School is 3.00, which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.50 on a four point rating scale. This shows that students had a positive view on note taking.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Based on the results of data analysis, the study:

- 1) Identified that student's views on the use of information literacy skills is that it helped them to identify keywords, helped them to find right information, helped them in note taking and also helps them in doing their assignments.
- 2) Identified that students were very confident at the start of assignment, quite confident at the start of assignment, and that student's confidence led to good performance.
- 3) Ascertained that the students' views on the use of brainstorming and concept mapping is that it helps them to identify keywords, helps them in finding right information, helps them in taking note and dictation.
- 4) Also identified that the views of students on note taking is that they write their note into their jotter, make use of words/notepad in taking note, make use of cutting and pasting in note taking and record note with their phones.

## DISCUSION OF FINDINGS

Discussion of findings of the study is presented as follows:

### **Research Question 1: Views of student on the use of information literacy skills in Olokoro Girls Secondary School**

The study revealed that the following are the views of students on the use of information literacy skills by students of Olokoro Girls Secondary School: It helped them to identify keywords, helped them to find right information, helped them in note taking and also helps them in writing their exams. The findings of the study agree with that of Green (2004), who found that information literacy skill helped students to do their assignments.

### **Research Question 2: Students' level of confidence in doing their school assignment with the use of information model**

The finding of this study revealed that students were very confident at the start of assignment, quite confident at the start of assignment, some students were more confident than others at the start of assignment and students' confidence led to good performance. level of confidence in doing their school assignments with the use of information model. This finding agrees with that of Herring, Tarter, and Naylor (2000 & 2002) their findings revealed that students can use information literacy models to do their assignments.

### **Research Question 3: Students' views on the use of Brainstorming and Concept Mapping**

The study further found that identifying keywords, finding right Information, taking note and taking dictation are students' views on the use of brainstorming and concept mapping. This finding conforms to that of Kinchin and Hay (2000) who reported concept mapping can be a helpful metacognitive tool in doing school works.

### **Research Question 4: Students views on note taking**

The finding of the study revealed that students' views on note taking include the following: writing note into jotter, making use of words/Notepad in taking note, making use of cutting and Pasting in note taking and recording note with phone. This finding is in agreement with Igun and Adogbeji (2007), his finding revealed that solution to the challenges of utilizing information resources in MOUAW library is to make available library information resources to the users.

## SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study examined the views of students and teachers in Olokoro Girls Secondary school Umuhia, on the students' use of information literacy skills. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. Population of the study is 96. The complete census method was adopted. s

The instrument used for data collection is a structured questionnaire. The instrument was captioned Investigation of Teachers and Students Views on the Use of Information Literacy Skills Questionnaire (ITSVUILSQ). The instrument was validated. The validity of the questionnaire was determined by experts in the department of Library and Information Science, NRCRI, Umudike. Data for the study was collected by the researcher with the help of the class teachers through face to face administration.

The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics method such as means to answer the research questions. Results of data analysis identified the following as students' views on the use of information literacy skills: it helped them to identify keywords, helped them to find right information, helped them in note taking and also helps them in doing their assignments.

Also identified as Students' level of confidence in doing their school assignment with the use of information model are: students were very confident at the start of assignment, quite confident at the start of assignment, and that student's confidence led to good performance.

Students' views on the use of brainstorming and concept mapping as identified by the study are that it helps them to identify keywords, helps them in finding right information, helps them in taking note and dictation.

Identified as the views of students on note taking are that they write their note into their jotter, make use of words/notepad in taking note, make use of cutting and pasting in note taking and record note with their phones.

## CONCLUSION

From the results and findings obtained in this study, the following major conclusions were drawn:

- (1) Students' view on the use of information literacy skills is that it helps them to find the right information.
- (2) Students' level of confidence led to good performance
- (3) Student's views on the use of Brainstorming and Concept Mapping is that it assists them to identify keywords
- (4) Student's view on note taking is that they use words/notepad in taking their notes.

## IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The findings of the study have implication for the management of secondary schools in Abia State who are directly responsible for the implementation of literacy skills in teaching and learning. They must ensure that literacy skill is implemented in teaching and learning to ensure good academic performance of students.

However, the findings of the study on the students' views on the use of information literacy skills are that it helps them to find the right information; It helped them to identify keywords, helped them in note taking and also helps them in writing their exams

This has an implication on the academic performance of students which reflects on the quality of students that graduate from the school. Therefore, since proper use of literacy skills can lead to good academic performance of students, management of secondary schools should ensure that literacy skills are adequately implemented to enhance teaching and learning in secondary schools.

The findings of this study on student's level of confidence in doing their school assignment with the use of information model are that students were very confident at the start of assignment, quite confident at the start of assignment, and that student's confidence led to good performance. This implies that there is need to implement literacy skills in teaching and learning by the management of secondary schools to avoid falling standard of education.

The findings of the study on the students' views on the use of brainstorming and concept mapping are that it helps them to identified keywords, helps them in finding right information, helps them in taking note and dictation. This implies that there is urgent need for the government and other authorities concerned to implement information literacy skills in secondary schools for improved teaching and learning to avoid the falling standard of education in secondary schools.

Government as the financiers or funding authorities of the universities in the country should ensure that information literacy skills are implemented in the secondary school system if students are to perform well in their studies. This study has revealed the need for adequate implementation of literacy skills in secondary schools to the government and other relevant authorities; it is now left for them to implement information literacy skills in secondary schools to improve teaching and learning.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations have been made based on the findings, discussions and implication of the study:

1. The management of secondary schools should ensure that literacy skills is implemented in note taking and assignment.
2. Students should be discouraged from the use of phone in taking notes.

## LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The findings of the study were limited by the following factors: The inability of the researcher to extend this study to other secondary schools in Abia State due to time and economic issues.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

In view of the limitations of the study, the following suggestions are made for further research:

1. A study on the implementation of information literacy skills in Girls and Boys Secondary Schools in Abia State, Nigeria.
2. A comparative study of the implementation of information literacy skills in polytechnics and universities in Abia State.

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