



# Faculty-Librarian Collaborations and Improved Information Literacy: A Model for Academic Achievement and Curriculum Development

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**Abstract:** This article looks at how librarians, who are the experts in information dissemination can collaborate with faculty to effectively teach students basic information literacy skills, integrating information literacy skills into the curriculum and how this process can make students learning experience meaningful and successful. It has become imperative for everyone, in the age of knowledge economy to be skilled in information literacy in the current dispensation of information technology. The authors believe that an effective way to achieve this goal is for faculty and librarians to collaborate and find ways to teach these skills to students, because it is important that students acquire the required skills to evaluate, storage, organization, access, and effectively utilize information. Librarians and faculty members have equal stakes in ensuring that students acquired information literacy skills that will help them succeed not only during their years of university education, but also for their lifelong career choices. The authors specifically examine the faculty-librarian's collaboration, concepts of information literacy, incorporating information literacy into the curriculum, curriculum planning and development, challenges in integrating information literacy, better tips for faculty-librarians collaboration, model for integrated instruction as well as integrated curriculum.

**Keywords:** collaboration, information literacy, Faculty-librarians, integrated curriculum, integrated instruction, academic environment, academic success

## **Introduction**

Educational theorists have promoted collaboration as a method to advance intellectual and practical students' learning. Successful teaching and learning in higher education depends upon building strong collaborative relationship between librarians and faculty members (Lewis & Sincan 2009). Librarians and faculty members ensure that the objective of the parent's body they serve are achieved, by making sure that the students acquire the skills needed to excel academically. Librarians and faculty members have mutual goals and concerns towards students' improved academic success. Both want students to develop a greater understanding of, and respect for books, journals, and other information resources. Lastly, both want to build a vibrant and goal-oriented social and learning community on campus. In order for these mutual goals to be achieved, it is imperative to leverage on the changes in the higher education environment and the paradigm shift in the library and information profession, there is need for collaboration between faculty members and librarians in order to inculcate information literacy skills to students.

Information literacy skills enable students to grasp concepts and apply them in multiple disciplines, their personal and professional lives. Literature has shown that most students depend on Internet materials for their assignments and research work. It is therefore necessary and essential that students acquire the information-literacy skills that will enable them retrieved the relevant information needed. Advancement in information technology, has made

information storage, organization, access, and evaluation critical issues to be embraced by all sectors of our societies. Howard & Jamieson, (2014), opine that faculty and librarian should collaborate to team teach students on information literacy, the aim is to help students succeed in their academic and also in their life-long career choices.

Information literacy skill has to do with students having the knowledge to navigate their world electronically. Librarians has been trained on how to access and retrieved information in any format. For students to acquire these literacy skills, it is important that librarians who are expert in information dissemination collaborate with faculty members in student's information literacy skills. Rockman, (2004) observed that most of information on the Internet are of low quality, the ability to access and retrieved relevant information is critical to students' academic achievement. In today's world, it is only those who are skilled in information literacy that will succeed in the information environment.

There is a growing emphasis on information literacy skills as a component of the twenty-first century learning process. The services librarians provide to students cannot be adequate for them in this era of information age. Librarians need to collaborate with faculty members to integrate information literacy into the curriculum. Many research has been carried out on librarian-faculty collaboration, but the issue or critical trend is on commitment and how to improved integrated approach. It is as a result of this critical trend in information literacy integration that this article emphasizes on the need for improved collaborative interactions in

which the faculty and librarians are partners in the classroom in an integrated process.

### **Literature Review**

Collaboration have been define by different authors, It has to do with two or more individuals coming together with different skills, to complement each other on a subject matter, to create a shared understanding that none had previously possessed (Montiel-Overall, 2005). Faculty and librarians collaboration means both parties working together to identify what students need to know about accessing and retrieving information. It also means when faculty and librarians co-teach students information literacy, assess the students' progress in accessing and retrieving information as well as the end product. Leeder, (2011) states that: collaboration is all about having a trusting relationship with others and the same mind set towards a achieving a common goal that will benefit each other. Collaboration has to do with each party willingness to embrace and having mutual interest that can help each other accomplish goals. It demands an absolute willingness to collaborate with each other, readiness to work as a team and to ability to listen, take corrections, compromise and adjust our expectations based on feedback. When faculty and librarians come together to share their expertise on a particular issue, in order to identify better ways of achieving the tasks, they are demonstrating collaboration.

Information literacy skills can be define as the abilities of students, faculties and researchers to be able to access, evaluate and retrieved the needed information on any format. It

has to do with having the skills or knowledge on the information needed and having the capacity to retrieve such information. (Association of College and Research Library, 2016). Information-literate people are those who can navigate their world that is those who can access information in any format. Information literacy skills have been describes as abilities to:

- know the needed information at the right time
- have the skills to access the needed information
- been able to evaluate the sources of information
- having the capacity to incorporate the needed information into one's knowledge base
- using the information to accomplish a specific purpose
- having knowledge of intellectual property right (Association of College and Research Library, 2016)

Information literacy skills in this research work is used to refer to the ability of students and other researchers to become conversant with, and apply the knowledge of how to recognize relevant information. The authors attempted to demonstrate the importance of incorporating and teaching information literacy as a tool to students' academic achievement.

Acquisition of skills in effective use of information is seen as a necessary requirement for students' optimum performance in academics. The availability of diverse and complicated information resources, occasioned by the advances in information and communication technologies (ICT), has brought about additional

challenges on the students, who have to learn how to obtain and effectively use information from various sources for maximum performance (Igbo & Imo 2017). This has necessitated a shift in the method of teaching from the traditional approach to resource-based approach, requiring the impartation of information literacy skills in students. Igbo and Imo concluded by saying that the complexities of the information and communication technologies (ICT) have brought about the realization that students need to engage with the information environment as part of their formal learning process. That thus entails instructional activities tailored towards helping students to appreciate the rich information resources and learn how to locate access and effectively utilize these sources. For students to be academically successful, they need to have the information literacy skills that will help them to access, evaluate and use information appropriately. Chutima (2012), is of the opinion that librarians and faculty should collaborate in achieving resource-based teaching/learning for students. This is to ensure that students are equipped and rooted adequately with the required skills.

A lot of study have shown that students and researchers rely mostly on internet resources for their research work. Brage & Svensson, (2011), found that most students and researchers use Internet materials for their research and assignments. This is as a result of the fact that Internet is fast and time-saving (Idiegbeyan-ose, Okosun, Eruange and Ojo-Igbinoba, 2005). Howard & Jamieson, (2014) states that the problem with most of

the electronic information is that it receives little or no quality control. Moreover, many students lack the skills needed in searching information on-line, and also the various reference services that librarians can render. There is paradigm shift in educational system, students are supposed to possess the information skills that will make them become great thinkers and self-sufficient citizens who can locate and critically evaluate information. He concluded by saying that information literacy should be promoted by all educational stakeholders.

The advent of information communication technology has made traditional one-shot bibliographic instruction sessions, inadequate in providing information literacy to students. More course-related or integrated instruction sessions have contributed immensely in making students more information literate (Igbo & Imo 2017). Incorporating information literacy into the curriculum, Igbo, & Imo asserts that it is a partnership between stakeholders with pedagogical expertise, subject expertise and expertise in information organization and technology. He also states that in cooperating information literacy into the curriculum and the development of information literacy of students requires the marriage of knowledge (Igbo & Imo, 2017) experience and skills of professional educators, academics and information professionals. He retorts that the above positions limited the incorporation and the development of information literacy in students to the efforts of the information professionals (librarians) and the faculty alone. He states that these two groups are the major key

players in the process as they have the opportunity to interact more directly with students. There are vital reasons while information literacy should be integrated into the curriculum:

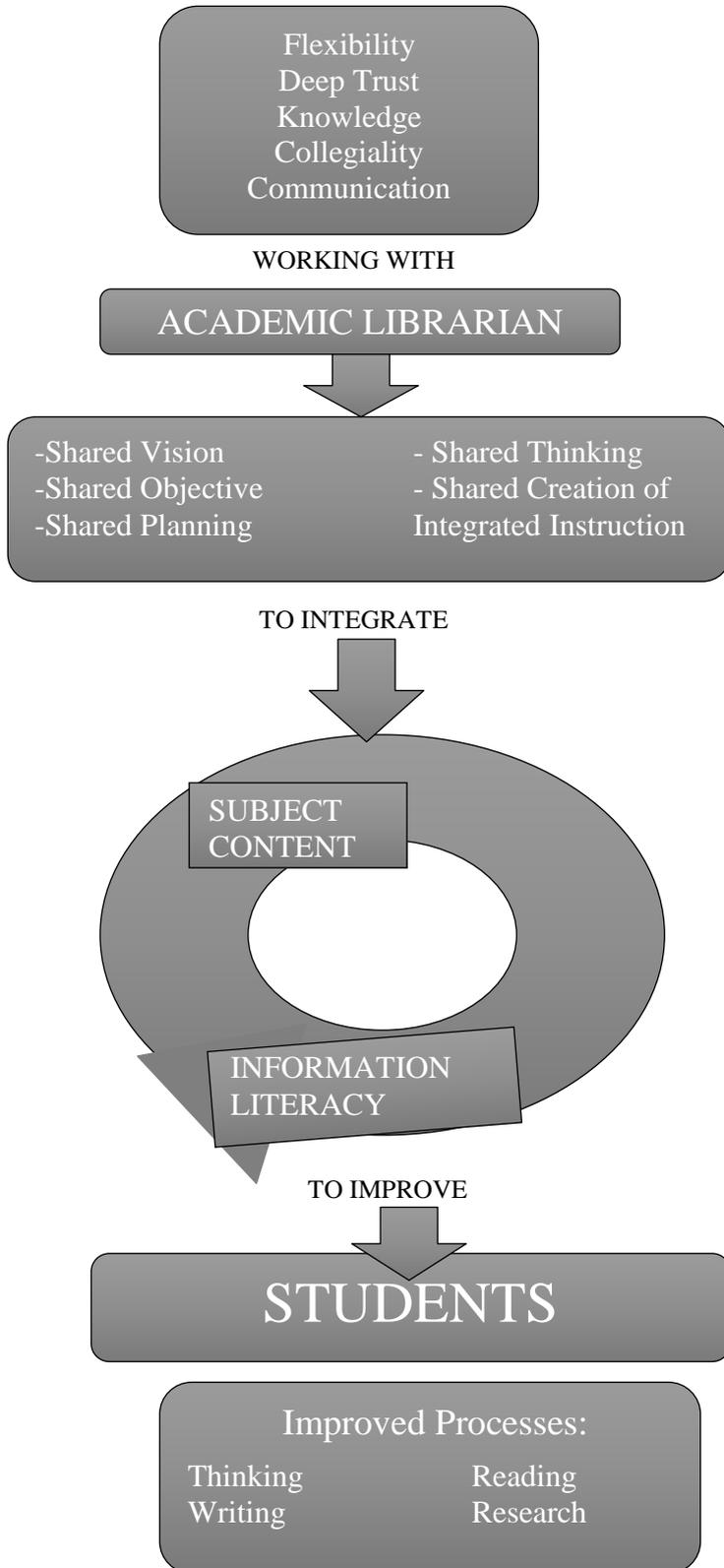
- Information literacy is for all
- Information literacy help in problems solving and decision making.
- Information literacyskills are transferable.
- Information skills are needed for lifelong learning;
- It helps in handle information and new technologies.
- The NUC has made it compulsory for all universities to incorporate information literacy into their curriculum. This is part of the accrediting criteria for higher education institutions; (Erich &Popescu 2012)

In this new resource based education, curriculum development is not only the responsibility of the faculty alone as it was in the past, changes in our educational environment call for changes in curriculum development. Faculty and librarians are actively involved in curriculum planning and development. (Lori, & Beth 2006). The main purpose for this is to inculcate effective information literacy

and independent information utilization by students, faculty and researchers. Lori & Beth suggest that librarians working with faculty are good, but there is need for collaboration which will result in integration of information literacy into the curriculum. Li (2007), is of the opine that students acquire their academic knowledge from the various course thought in their years of study, It is critical and vital that information literacy is part of the curriculum and their learning experience. He concluded by saying that it will only be possible if faculty and librarian collaborate. Montiel-Overall, (2005) developed a model for integrated instruction and integrated curriculum on faculty-librarian collaboration as follows:

**Model a: Integrated Instruction (Adopted from Montiel-Overall (2005).**

Integrated Instruction has to do with faculty and librarians coming together as collaborators and as a team in creating a learning experience for the students that will facilitate their learning resulting to better academic achievement.

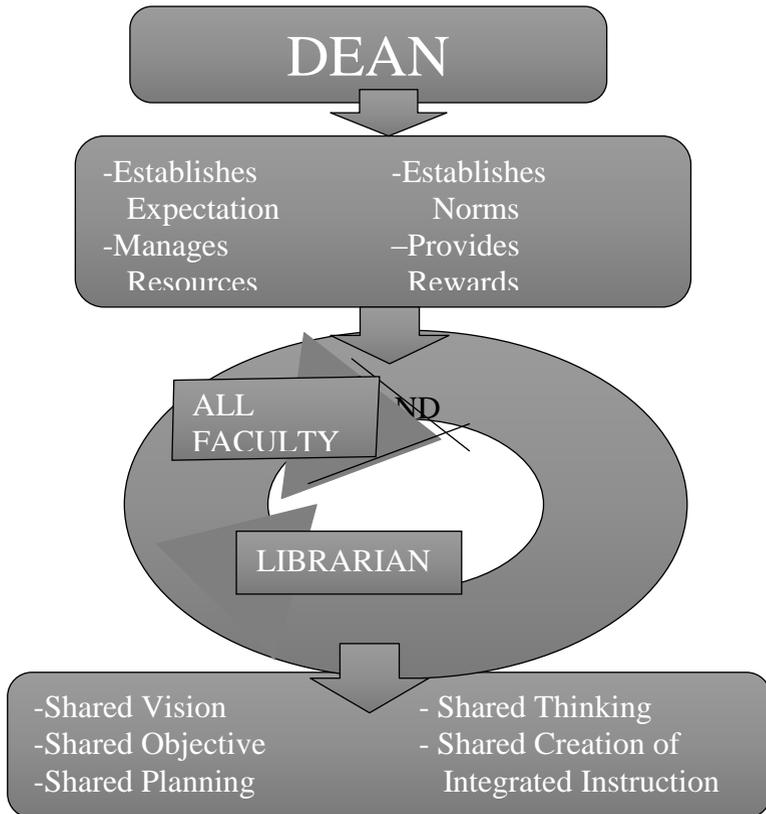


LEADS TO

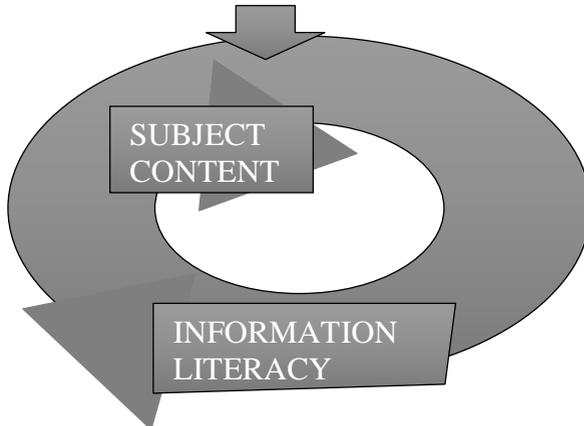
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT



**The Modelb: Integrated Curriculum (Adopted From Montiel-Overall (2005)).** Integrated Curriculum involves all the elements of collaboration that occurs in model A. Faculty and librarians working together to integrate subject content and information literacy in all grade levels. .



TO INTEGRATE



## IMPROVE

## STUDENTS

## Improved Processes:

Thinking	Reading
Writing	Research

LEADS TO  
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

There are numerous challenges encountered in integrating information literacy in the curriculum. Curzon, (2004) opines that the major challenge is on how faculty will create time to incorporate information literacy into their courses. Research has proved it that information literacy is vital and important in student's academic success. From the various literature reviews, it is clear that student's information literacy can only be achieved through faculty-librarians collaboration. The greatest challenge according to Curzon, (2004) is on how to make information literacy an integral part of the university curriculum. A lot of suggestions have been made by various researchers on how to overcome these challenges of integrating information literacy in the curriculum. MacConald (2000), suggests that library instruction program should be on how to access and retrieved and used information. This can be achieved by integrating credit-bearing courses in information literacy in the curriculum. Rockman, (2004) observed that faculty-librarians collaboration have improved students learning and also assisted faculty in establishing learning priorities that enable students to be equipped with information literacy skills.

Faculty-librarians collaboration in the information literacy is critical for student learning process. Faculty and librarians must collaborate to help students create opportunities and be able to evaluate the quality of the information they obtain. Bennett, & Simning (2010) observed that faculty and librarians are not the ones who work independently and in isolation, because both have mutual goals towards student's academic achievement. They need to collaborate in teaching students information literacy in the new learning environment. Howard & Jamieson, (2014), argues that the teaching of information literacy should be the responsibility of faculty and librarians, rather than limited to the library. The importance of information is what has transformed the world into a global village, and also a knowledge based economy. It is on this premises that Rockman ( 2004), emphasizes that Information literacy is not just a library issue, but it is an educational and global issue. In order for everyone to be information-literate librarians and faculty at various institutions of learning should ensure that education and skills needed in the information age is been provided.

Effective collaboration between faculty and librarians is not easy in practice. Many authors have giving guidelines on how to achieve faculty-librarians collaboration. Bruce (2018), states the Following as tips on strengthening faculty-librarian collaboration:

- 1. Take the initiative:** This means that librarians should take the lead in originating ideas on how to collaborate with the faculty. They should learn about what has worked elsewhere and how they can apply it.
- 2. Seize opportunities:** This has to do with librarians utilizing every opportunity to educate students and faculties on how to apply their literacy skills in their assignment and research work. Librarians should educate faculties on various services and information resources available for them.
- 3. Be open-minded:** Librarians should be open-minded when dealing with the faculty in various areas, to achieved students basic information literacy skills, and help them build a solid foundation of research skills for their academic work.
- 4. Be purpose driven:** Faculty and librarian should know the purpose while they are collaborating and been driving by that purpose, and not necessarily a matter of librarians vs. faculty who is viewed as more important by students and others.
- 5. Break down silos:** Silos will make faculty and librarians collaboration not to be successful. It is advisable that faculty and librarians break down silos, so that they can

collaborate effectively for the benefit of the students.

### Conclusion

Having seen from the various literature reviews, how important it is for faculty and librarian to collaborate in teaching and integrating information literacy in the curriculum, it is expected of them to pave the way for successful information literacy in the new educational environment. Institutional management, and all the stakeholders, including faculty and librarians should concentrate on how information literacy can be integrated and taught in higher education, because it has become a critical issue to acquire and equip students with information literacy skills for academic success in our educational system. Although print resources abound in libraries, technology presents enormous opportunities for the promotion of collaborative environment in higher education. In the present era of Information age, electronic resources in every subject area have become popular and globally embraced by all library clientele of tertiary institutions as they complement the traditional information resources. There is need for faculty and librarians' collaboration to ensure that students' grasp the skills needed to survive in this digital age. Information literacy can be said to be part of user education programmes. It is designed to teach users, specifically students in their educational pursuit. Thus they become competent in the ability to search for information on their own in any aspect of knowledge and can satisfy their information needs.

## Recommendations

- 1 Faculty members and librarians should collaborate to draw up teaching modules to be used in one on one classroom, as well as on-line teaching.
- 2 It is suggested that institutions should integrate information literacy course in their entire curriculum.

- 3 Institutional and administrative support to information literacy should be adequately provided for it to be fully implemented.
- 4 It is imperative for faculty and librarians to ensure that students acquire the information literacy skills that will enable them recognise and solve information problems for academic success.

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