Information literacy involves teaching and learning about the whole range of information sources and formats. To be information literate you need to know why, when, and how to use all of these tools and think critically about the information. (UNESCO IFAP, 2006: 12)

Information literacy is:

- the ability to locate, evaluate, and apply information to daily life
- the ability to access, evaluate, organize, manipulate, and present information (including electronic information)
- the skill necessary to locate, access, and use information in today’s society.

(Definitions obtained via Google search: define: information literacy)

Information literacy is required in all student learning to improve a student’s ability to know when there is a need for information, and to identify, locate, evaluate and effectively use the information to address an issue or problem. An information
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A literate person is an asset in the workplace, community and school. Informed decision-making and knowledge creation is a fundamental building block for lifelong learning.

Incorporating information literacy into the curricula – why?

The Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of basic Education (PRIDE) Project seeks to enhance student learning in fifteen Pacific countries by strengthening the capacity of each Ministry of Education to plan and deliver basic education of good quality. The project will result in strategic plans for education in all of the fifteen participating countries. The PRIDE team developed benchmarks derived from the Forum Basic Education Action Plan and the PRIDE Financing Agreement. These benchmarks are to be used in the constructive and collaborative review of each country’s strategic plans and in the development of new strategic plans in the participating countries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benchmark 2</th>
<th>Indicator: Clear statement of promotion of information literacy to ensure access to and use of quality information.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skills for life and work locally, regionally, and globally</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The PRIDE Project Benchmarks, PRIDE, 2006

The inclusion of information literacy (IL) within the benchmarks recognises that it forms the basis of lifelong learning. Evaluation and monitoring of the success of the indicators should see greater emphasis on the ability to use information and knowledge in tandem with increased access to information and information communication technology (ICT).

The Delors Report, *Learning: the treasure within* (1996:22), reaffirms the importance of information, and access to it:

A learning society founded on the acquisition, renewal and use of knowledge. These are three aspects that ought to be emphasized in the educational process. As the development of the ‘information society’ is increasing the
opportunities for access to data and facts, education should enable everyone to gather information and to select, arrange, manage and use it. While education should, therefore, constantly adapt to changes in society, it must not fail to pass on the attainments, foundations and benefits of human experience.

Information literacy is important to the success of many regional and global initiatives including Education for All (EFA), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development 2005-2014 as well as the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat Basic Education Action Plan. In the context of globalisation, new technologies and social issues in the Pacific, information literacy is core.

Through UNESCO’s Information for All Programme (IFAP), governments of the world have pledged to harness the new opportunities of the information age to create equitable societies through better access to information.

Information literacy enables people to interpret and make informed judgments as users of information sources, as well as to become producers of information in their own right. Information literate people are able to access information about their health, their environment, their education and work, empowering them to make critical decisions about their lives, e.g. in taking more responsibility for their own health and education. In a digital world, information literacy requires users to have the skills to use information and communication technologies and their applications to access and create information (IFLA, 2006, section 201).

More emphasis must be placed on ensuring equitable access to information across the Pacific region. All levels of education need to ensure information literacy is included in policy, planning and development initiatives. Recent developments in teacher training and changes to assessment systems have placed a greater emphasis on information and the means to access it. For example, in Fiji the new school assessment system has an increased focus on student-centred learning. However, students need greater access to information and the skill to effectively use it in order to benefit. Many libraries are not properly resourced and students
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are unable to do the work required. The Fiji Library Association has reported on the negative impact of this initiative (FLA, 2006).

Incorporating information literacy into the curricula – how?

For information literacy to be effectively implemented across the curriculum several important conditions are required: a philosophical framework for the Pacific; how information literacy relates to Pacific students and learning; a context (curriculum) in which the information literacy standards can be applied; and guidelines relating specific skills to IL standards. The physical resources required for implementation would include libraries and ICT (Jones, 2006).

Education initiatives implemented by the University of the South Pacific (USP), including the PRIDE Project, the Re-thinking Pacific Education Initiatives for and by Pacific Peoples (RPEIPP) and the new Pacific Education Research Foundation (PERF), are creating new opportunities for the integration of Pacific values and beliefs into teaching and learning. An outcome of a regional colloquium on re-thinking Pacific education held in 2001 was agreement on the ‘tree of opportunity’ metaphor which:

... encapsulates the new vision for Pacific education based on the assumption that the main purpose of education in the Pacific is the survival, transformation and sustainability of Pacific peoples and societies, with its outcomes measured in terms of performance and appropriate behaviour in the multiple context in which they have to live. The primary goal of education, therefore, is to ensure that all Pacific students are successful and that they all become fully participating members of their groups, societies and the global community (Pene, Taufe’ulungaki & Benson, 2002: 3).

This realignment of the local with the global creates opportunities to showcase indigenous knowledge and literacies. A good example of the integration of multiple literacies and the convergence of the local and global is The Canoe is the People (UNESCO, 2005a). This multimedia CD-ROM captures Pacific navigators sharing their traditional knowledge and skills. It documents the rich history of Pacific sailing and navigation while using new technology to communicate the seascape, sound and skills. It includes video interviews with master navigators and uses animations
to demonstrate complex navigational concepts. The CD-ROM primarily serves as an educational tool, illustrating the vitality of indigenous knowledge, know-how and identity in meaningful ways for Pacific communities. UNESCO is currently developing a learning resource pack, which will include teacher manuals and student workbooks to accompany the use of the CD-ROM in Pacific classrooms.

A very popular and well known information literacy model, The Big6™ developed by Michael Eisenberg and Bob Berkowitz, can be used whenever students are in a situation, academic or personal, which requires information to solve a problem or complete a task.

The Big6™

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task Definition</th>
<th>Define the task (the information problem).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information Seeking Strategies</td>
<td>Brainstorm all possible sources and select the best source.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location and Access</td>
<td>Locate sources. Find the needed information within the source.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Information</td>
<td>Engage in the source (read, hear, view, touch). Extract relevant information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesis</td>
<td>Organize information from multiple sources. Present the information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Judge the process (efficiency). Judge the product (effectiveness).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The development of Pacific standards would be a useful tool to develop and integrate information literacy into the curriculum. Perhaps, using The Big6™, a Pacific information literacy standard could be developed which would assist in ensuring that indigenous wisdom and knowledge are included in teaching and learning.
Incorporating IL skills into the current curricula: what else is needed?

In recent years, classrooms have changed from teacher-centred to learner-focused environments. Information literacy must be developed in conjunction with research activities integrated into the curricula and engagement in resource-based learning. Teachers need to be empowered to apply IL in their classrooms and teaching. In the changing school environment, increased collaboration between administrators, teachers and libraries is a prerequisite for success. There is also a need for teachers and library staff to receive training in how to apply information literacy standards, skills and resources to support information literacy, both in the classroom and library.

One of the teacher education courses at the USP, *ED27 Literacy Processes*, includes a unit being developed by Paula Jones, lecturer in Library and Information Studies. It is entitled *The school library and information literacy*. This new unit means that for the first time teachers will be taught information literacy and basic school library skills and knowledge by a specialist. Lautoka Teachers’ College (LTC) has also developed a ‘library enrichment’ programme, whereby the library provides an information literacy programme for staff and students. The LTC library itself was enriched through an upgrade project when a custom-built library and resource centre was opened in 2006. With new technology, new staff and assistance from professional school librarians from the Western Australian Department of Education, LTC students and staff have improved access to information and increased information literacy.

Other initiatives throughout the region include the Pacific Library Training Institute (PLTI) run by the Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL) in Hawai‘i. Through annual training for staff working in libraries in the (northern) Pacific, PREL seeks to improve library services across the region. In 2005 the USP Library, with the support of the IFLA, held a workshop for school librarians around the Pacific. This regional workshop was opened by the then USP Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Dr Esther Williams (former USP Librarian). She highlighted the fact that many governments in the Pacific do not give much thought to the importance of good libraries in schools. There is a lack of recognition in practice by regional governments in terms of providing appropriate funding to better resource and equip school libraries (Pa-C-fika, 2006 :1).
IL and the role of libraries

The school library provides information and ideas that are fundamental to functioning successfully in today’s information and knowledge-based society.

The school library equips students with life-long learning skills and develops the imagination, enabling them to live as responsible citizens (IFLA, 2006).

Studies carried out in 1991 and 1999 of primary and secondary school libraries in Fiji showed that the libraries were sadly lacking in almost all areas: facilities, basic equipment, staff, budgets and collection development (Rainey, 1991, 1996). In 2000 the Fiji Library Association submission to the Fiji Education Commission reported that little had changed.

FLA contends that education programmes in Fiji schools are currently under-resourced and understaffed. The poor quality of library facilities is partly because staff have little or no knowledge of how to organise and make accessible library information, teach information skills and promote library services (Jones, Waibuca & Vakasisikakala, 2000: 2).

For information literacy to be successful, improvement in libraries is crucial. The EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006: Literacy for Life, highlights the role of libraries in literacies:

It is very clear that the EFA goals can be met only through the development of literate societies, in which all literate individuals have the means and the opportunity to benefit from rich and dynamic literate environments. Policies to develop rich literate environments—alongside schooling and programmes that ensure that youth and adults become literate—are thus important. Such policies can include support for libraries, local-language newspapers, book publishing, access of adults to school libraries and radio listening groups… Literate environments should enable the free exchange of information and provide an array of opportunities for lifelong learning (UNESCO, 2005b:249).
In this context, Pacific school libraries need proactive, qualified and trained library/information staff; good, relevant collections; and appropriately designed and equipped libraries/learning centres. Current education opportunities like the USP Certificate and Diploma courses in Library/Information studies should be promoted by educators as they focus on how library services are organised and delivered. Like classrooms, school libraries need qualified people, and consideration should be given to ensuring that school libraries in the Pacific have qualified people working in them.

Through access to scholarships, professional teacher librarians (with degrees in library/information and teaching) and professional librarians (with degrees in library/information) can be trained within the Pacific. Workshops and training in information by IFLA, PREL and FLA can promote information literacy and develop effective advocates for libraries.

School libraries and their importance should be articulated in national education strategic plans, and appropriate funding should be allocated for their development. School libraries and their staff need support from education ministries, teachers and school management. Pacific countries that have school library services, such as Library Services of Fiji, should formulate policies and define goals, priorities and services in relation to equipping students with information literacy skills.

Additionally, there needs to be increased opportunities to take part in capacity building education initiatives in the region. The outcomes of the inaugural meeting of the IFAP Pacific Regional Committee, held on 2 May 2006 in Wellington, New Zealand should create new opportunities for collaborative efforts between libraries, associations and governments to build the library profession and libraries in the Pacific.

Collections to support information literacy are essential. Through the support of education ministries and with community assistance, Pacific school libraries are provided with books and training, but much more could be done with increased funding and qualified staff. Support is also available in resources like Guidelines for School Libraries in the Pacific (Jones 2006) and Subject index and Dewey guide for small
school libraries in the Pacific (Jones 2005). In 2005 the FLA published and distributed the FLA Standards for Libraries in Fiji. Often these organisations face resource constraints. However, their work provides examples of literate environments and spaces in the curriculum.

**Examples of information literacy across the curriculum**

*Cultural Mathematics Syllabus – Elementary* (Papua New Guinea, Department of Education, 2003) explains the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that students should achieve. The learning outcomes and indicators provide examples of IL. The outcomes are student-centred and can be demonstrated, assessed or measured. Each learning outcome has an indicator: examples of the kinds of things students should be able to do, know and understand if they are achieving the outcome. The extract on the next page shows the integration of information literacy into the classroom and demonstrates the need for information resources in the classroom and outside.

Another example of information literacy across the curriculum is PREL’s 2004 *Pacific voices: integrating multimedia, technology and culture into education / a curriculum resource*. This is a cooperative effort among educators in American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM: Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, and Yap), Guam, Hawai‘i, the Republic of Palau, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI). The network includes teachers, administrators, librarians, curriculum specialists, college instructors and parents.

*Pacific Voices* has identified technology integration projects, provided training and support, and documented projects. In their project implementation, *Pacific Voices* works towards achieving a number of literacy, cultural and educational technology goals. Each participating team received a *Pacific Voices* technology kit, which included a DV iMac computer, a Sony digital video camera with tripod and microphone, a printer and scanner, art supplies, and multimedia and educational software. The manual and examples of implementation can be found online at [http://www.prtec.hawaii.edu/4_CURRICULUM/inde.html](http://www.prtec.hawaii.edu/4_CURRICULUM/inde.html).
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**Learning outcomes**

Numbering of learning outcomes

Each learning outcome is numbered with three digits, such as 1.1.1. The first number refers to the grade level, the second number refers to the strand. The third number refers to the outcome in the strand. Thus, 1.1.1 refers to an outcome at Elementary 1, strand 1 and outcome number 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strand</th>
<th>Elementary Prep</th>
<th>Elementary 1</th>
<th>Elementary 2</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Space</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.1.1</td>
<td>Follow and give simple directions for moving in a space</td>
<td>1.1.1</td>
<td>Follow and give directions to move from place to place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.1.2</td>
<td>Identify locally known shapes by their visual appearance</td>
<td>1.1.2</td>
<td>Compare and group shapes in the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Measurement</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.2.1</td>
<td>Measure the length, weight and capacity of things using their own informal measuring units</td>
<td>1.2.1</td>
<td>Measure, and compare the length, weight and capacity of things using local informal units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.2.2</td>
<td>Measure how much space is covered by objects using their own informal units</td>
<td>1.2.2</td>
<td>Compare and measure an area using local ways of measuring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.2.3</td>
<td>Use time markers</td>
<td>1.2.3</td>
<td>Tell and use time in traditional ways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.3.1</td>
<td>Count objects in vernacular using local number systems</td>
<td>1.3.1</td>
<td>Count groups of objects in vernacular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.3.2</td>
<td>Describe the four operations using simple vernacular words</td>
<td>1.3.2</td>
<td>Use number symbols that mean the same as vernacular number words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.3.3</td>
<td>Solve simple problems using concrete materials</td>
<td>1.3.3</td>
<td>Solve problems using two-digit numbers to 20 or closest to 20 in vernacular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.3.4</td>
<td>Describe traditional money and Papua New Guinean money</td>
<td>1.3.4</td>
<td>Use different amounts of money to make up various sums of money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2.1.1</td>
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<td>2.1.2</td>
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<td>2.3.4</td>
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Conclusion

Evidence exists that there is an emerging integration of information literacy into Pacific classrooms and reveals the need for information resources in the classroom and outside. However, much more needs to be done. Across the Pacific it can be said that school libraries are generally not adequate for the information needs of pupils or teachers and that Pacific library and information systems are underdeveloped. There is also a lack of information specialists and librarians and little awareness or promotion of information literacy policies and programmes.

Pupils (and teachers) are not educated about the nature of information, nor about ways to access and effectively use information to promote lifelong learning. As a result, pupils are not leaving school ‘information literate’. This must be addressed, given that information literacy is gaining recognition as a critical factor in achieving the higher-level goals of Education for All.
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The challenge for the Pacific is to ensure that, at the national level and within the context of national education strategic plans and curriculum frameworks, information literacy and school libraries are put on the agenda. Information literacy and the improvement of school libraries must be fast-tracked if the Pacific is to realise the potential of knowledge-based societies, informed decision-making and information for all.

References


