

**INFORMATION LITERACY COMPETENCIES
OF ENGLISH 10 AND KOMUNIKASYON 2 STUDENTS
AND THEIR PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS
INFORMATION LITERACY AS A GE COURSE**

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Abstract

Determined the information literacy levels of English 10 and Komunikasyon 2 students of UP using the 5 Information Literacy Standards of the ACRL. It also sought their perceptions regarding the inclusion of information literacy as a GE course. The study concludes that although the two courses develop the writing skills of the students, these are not enough to make them information literate.

Introduction

Information literacy is the ability to recognize when information is needed, and how to locate, access, use and evaluate it (Callison, 2006). This ability is very essential nowadays due to “information explosion” where vast amount of information is becoming increasingly available across all formats for free. In addition to this, information literacy is also very important for it entails not only knowing how to use the computer but more importantly, knowing how to access information and analyze it.

Since it is not possible for the educators to teach their students all they need to know, for them to survive and to succeed in life, it is vital to guide them how to learn. Integrating information literacy in the curriculum is seen as one of the effective ways to develop information literate people. As Thompson and Henley (2000) stated, information literacy skills can and should be taught throughout all curriculum areas because they reiterate some of the same skills incorporated in national, state or local curriculum standards.

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In the University of the Philippines (UP) Diliman, the Revitalized General Education Program (RGEP) subsumes and adapts the objectives and framework of the General Education Program (GEP). The RGEP specifically opened more avenues for learning and contributed in molding the students to be globally competitive. (UP Diliman website). It is in this light that this study tried to find out if these General Education (GE) courses, such as English 10 and Komunikasyon 2, were enough to mold the students to be independent information seekers. The study also aimed to know, through the perceptions of the students who took English 10 and Komunikasyon 2 classes, if there was a need for an information literacy course. The study also tried to assess the information literacy competencies of the students who took those courses so that the teachers can focus on areas or aspects of information literacy that need more priority.

Research Design and the Respondents

The study used survey questionnaire in collecting data and based on the data gathered, using some statistical techniques, it studied the frequency of how the respondents practiced the research skills they have learned in their English 10 and Komunikasyon 2 classes. Furthermore, the researcher conducted also an interview to some of the respondents. It is important that the respondents were students who took English 10 and Komunikasyon 2 classes to determine if these classes were enough to prepare students to be information literate and independent information seekers, and to find out on which particular skills they are weak as well as their expectations. The researcher went to the respective colleges of each respondent and sought assistance from the administration office and student council. Two weeks were allotted for the distribution and answering of questionnaires. On the other hand, for the structured interview, the researcher interviewed the respondents separately on the day and time more convenient for them.

Results and Discussion

Out of the 380 questionnaires distributed, 273 were returned, 212 took English 10 and 61 took Komunikasyon 2. The respondents were not characterized according to their age, year level or their college since these were not considered as variables for this study.

This part of the study gave the current level of information literacy of the respondents, the frequency of how they practiced the skills they have learned from their classes, and an analysis of their information literacy skills based on the five (5) Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education by ACRL. Figure 1 shows the graph of information literacy score of all the respondents. The mean, median, and mode of the scores were 142.26, 143, 149, respectively. Based on the graph, the study found out that majority of the respondents got a score ranging from 130 to 150 or just above average. It can be said that most of the respondents, if not all, practiced the information literacy skills from “*sometimes*” to “*often*”. One good reason is that, not all of the necessary skills needed to be an information literate individual are taught in English 10 and Komunikasyon 2 classes.

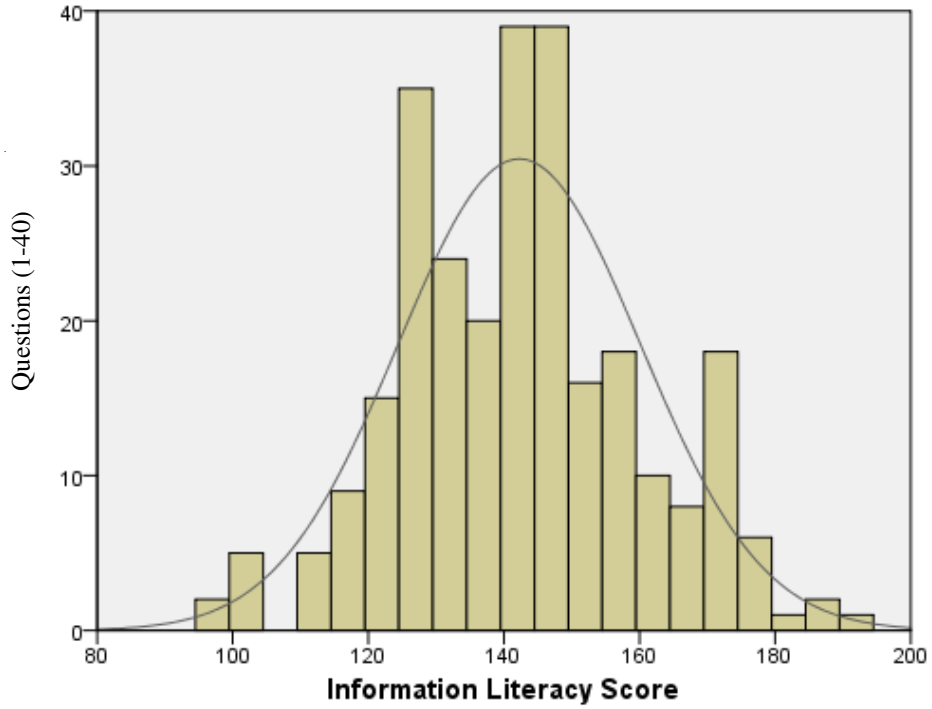


Figure 1
Distribution of Information Literacy Scores of the Respondents

Aside from the total scores of the respondents, this study also analyzed the scores or the frequency of how the respondents applied their information literacy skills according to the five (5) standards set by ACRL. Here is the summary of the distribution of information literacy scores in five (5) standards.

Standard 1

Figure 2 shows the distribution of how frequently the respondents practiced the skills categorized under Standard 1, which examines how an individual determines the nature and extent of the information needed. On the average, the information literacy competencies of the respondents was very satisfactory since from question numbers one to six and nine (1-6 & 9), majority of them (44.17%) practiced the skills much of the time or “often” while numbers seven and eight (7 & 8), majority of them (42.49%) practiced the skills on certain occasions or “sometimes”. It is also important to note that only few students (8.50%) practiced the skills on a “seldom” basis.

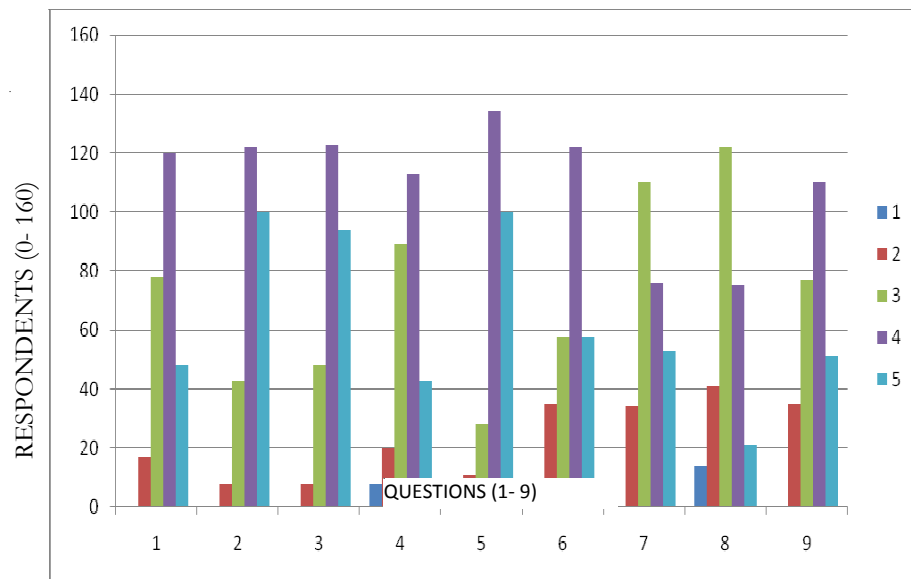


Figure 2. Distribution of information literacy scores in Standard 1*

*Legend: 1 - Never; 2-Seldom; 3-Sometimes; 4-Often; 5-Always

Standard 2

Figure 3 shows the distribution of how frequently the respondents practiced the skills categorized under Standard 2, which examines how an individual accesses the information effectively and efficiently. On the average, the information literacy competencies of the respondents were very poor since majority of the respondents practiced the skills from “seldom” to “sometimes” (60.87%), particularly questions 10-14 and 16. However, it is important to note that in questions 15 and 17, majority (67.03%) practiced the skills from “often” and “always” respectively.

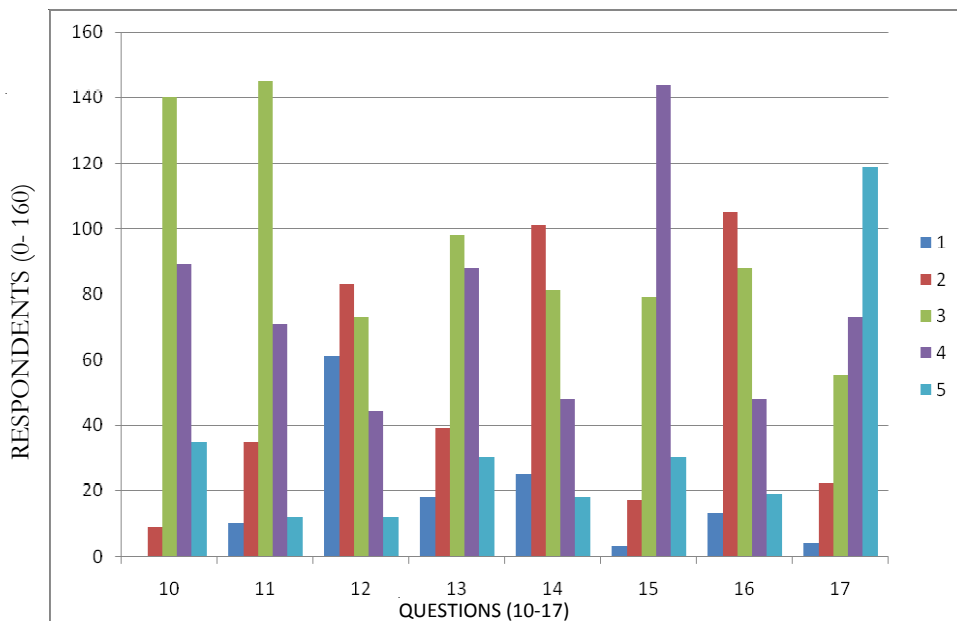


Figure 3. Distribution of information literacy scores in Standard 2*

Standard 3

Figure 4 shows the distribution of how frequently the respondents practiced the skills categorized under Standard 3, which examines how an individual evaluates information and its sources critically, and incorporates selected information into his or her knowledge base and value system. On the average, the information literacy competencies of the respondents were satisfactory since most of the respondents’ answers (73.92%) on how frequently they use such skills is from “sometimes” to nearly “often” basis. However, it is

important to note that majority of the students rarely practice or “*seldom*” practice skills in questions 25 and 28 (42.86%).

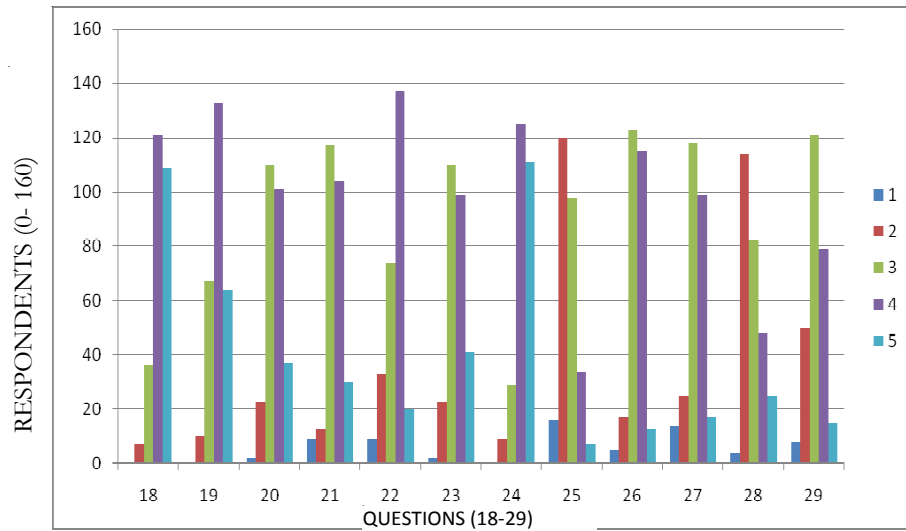


Figure 4. Distribution of information literacy scores in Standard 3*

Standard 4

Figure 5 shows the distribution of how frequently the respondents practiced the skills categorized under Standard 4, which examines how an individual uses information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose. On the average, the information literacy competencies of the respondents

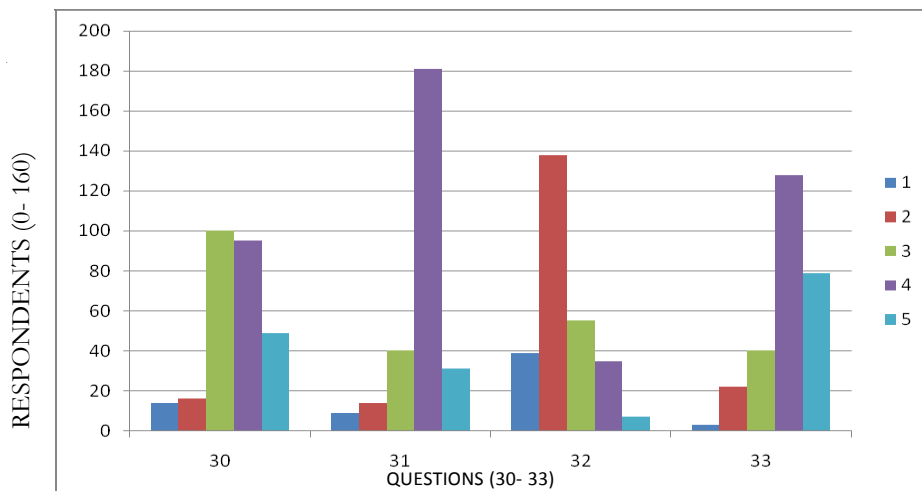


Figure 5. Distribution of information literacy scores in Standard 4*

were satisfactory since most of the respondents' answers on how frequently they do such skills was from "sometimes" to "often" (61.36%).

Standard 5

Figure 6 shows the distribution of how frequently the respondents practiced the skills categorized under Standard 5, which examines how an individual student understands many of the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information and accesses and uses information ethically and legally. On the average, the information literacy competencies of the respondents were almost excellent since from questions 35-39, majority of the respondents (76.63%) practiced the skills from "often" to "always", while on questions 34 and 40, majority of them practiced the skills in certain cases or "sometimes" (37.73%).

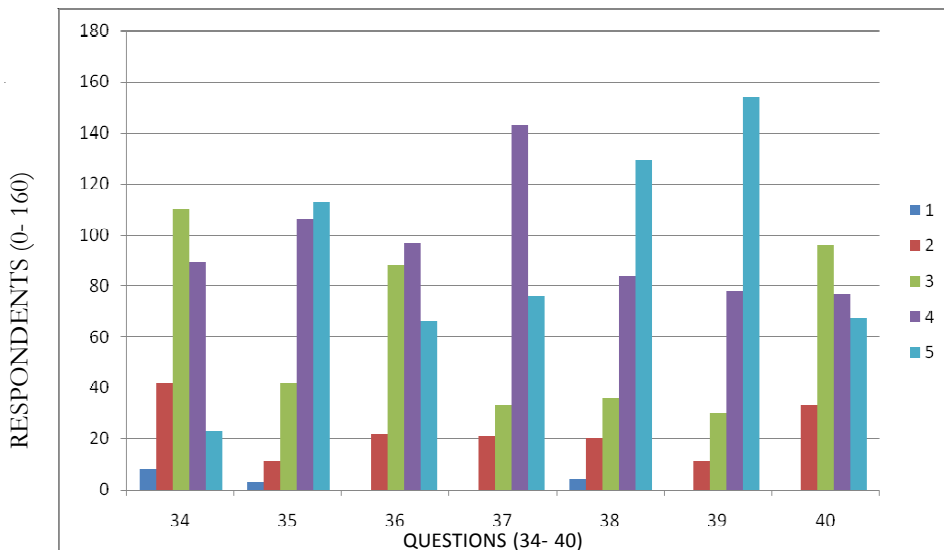


Figure 6. Distribution of information literacy scores in Standard 5*

Findings

The following sections presents the principal findings of the study.

Information Literacy Competencies

The over- all information literacy competency level of all the respondents was just above average. Most of the respondents practiced information literacy skills from "sometimes" to "often" only.

The information literacy competencies of the respondents in Standards 1 and 5 of ACRL Standards was significantly high or they practiced the skills from "often" to "always". With regard to Standards 3 and 4, the information literacy competency of the respondents was just average or satisfactory for

Information literacy competencies of English 10 and Komunikasyon 10 students

they practiced the skills from “*sometimes*” to “*often*”. Among the standards, Standard 2 marked the lowest because most of the respondents practiced the skills from “*seldom*” to “*sometimes*”.

Location, Evaluation and Use of Information

In terms of how the respondents locate, use, and evaluate information, the study showed, through the interview, that the respondents were just above average because most of them were weak in making a journal with their research; relied so much on the use of Internet; not all of them know how to formulate key terms and concepts in searching; do not limit their search in terms of year of publication; are not aware of the controlled vocabulary used by subject in OPAC; do not assess the quality and quantity of their search; and do not review their search strategies. The results of the interview paralleled the results of the questionnaire because again, the respondents also marked low in Standard 2, which discusses locating, using, and evaluating the information.

Information literacy as a GE course

As for the perceptions of the respondents in integrating information literacy as a GE course, the respondents reacted positively since most of them, if not all, agreed that information literacy should be part of the curriculum. They all agreed with all the components of information literacy course and they wanted to learn and enroll in that class.

Priority information literacy skills

With regard to which priority information literacy skills needed to be developed in an information literacy course, the study showed that it must focus on Standard 2 of ACRL Standards, Performance Indicators which deals with accessing the needed information effectively and efficiently, particularly in constructing research strategies, selecting controlled vocabulary in information retrieval, using various classification schemes such as call number and index in locating information sources and creating a system for organizing the information. In addition to this, the respondents were also weak in designing realistic research plan, testing theories with discipline- appropriate techniques, seeking expert opinion, making a journal of their activities and selecting appropriate documentation style.

Conclusions

Being information literate is very important nowadays. Information can be found and accessed in various format, thus there is a need to educate individuals in determining which and when an information is needed. They should possess the ability to access, locate, use, and evaluate information effectively and efficiently.

On the basis of the findings of the study, it is therefore concluded that English 10 and Komunikasyon 2 classes are able to achieve its course objectives in developing skills in writing for general academic purposes and imparting to the students the basics of research such as introducing the sources of information, kinds of sources, and documentation. However, these skills are not enough to make an individual information literate. There are some skills in an information literacy course that are not being taught in English 10 and Komunikasyon 2 classes.

In addition to this, the respondents' positive responses on the components of information literacy course showed that even students who took process-centered approach writing classes feel the need for an information literacy course and think that English 10 and Komunikasyon 2 classes are not adequate to make them information literate.

Recommendations

In view of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are advised:

1. Information literacy course should be integrated in the curriculum as a GE course to enhance and fill in the necessary skills not being taught in English 10 and Komunikasyon 2 classes to be an information literate individual.
2. If and when the information literacy course is integrated, an analysis or another study should be made, after five years, for it would give a very evident illustration of the development of information literacy competencies of the students.
3. Considering that the study is confined to the UP undergraduate students who already took English 10 and Komunikasyon 2 classes, there should be a nationwide study of the information literacy competencies of college students so that information literacy course would be a pre-requisite or required subject across all curricula in the college level.

4. In integrating information literacy course, the professors should focus on and prioritize the skills identified on this study where the students were weak in and components which were not covered by English 10 and Komunikasyon 2 classes.
5. The UP School of Library and Information Studies (SLIS) together with UP Main Library could work hand-in-hand in teaching information literacy course since most of the skills that need to be learned are library- oriented.

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