

# Information Literacy Skills in Turkey

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**Abstract-** *In our modern times, in which the accumulation of knowledge is rapidly increasing, acquiring and developing information skills through education proves to be a lifelong endeavour. The prerequisite for lifelong learning is information literacy. In the process of education, which needs to continue at every stage of life, it is becoming more important that individuals have a wide variety of literacy skills, the most pressing of which is information literacy. So called skills enable students to learn a language, especially English language effectively.*

*At the forefront of the basic skills that need to be possessed by people these days, is the finding of information, the use of it and the production of it. From the beginning of the twenty-first century, technological factors have been increasing their dominance in the communication of information as well as in the production of it. Therefore, students within the education system began to feel the need to develop different literacy skills. By virtue of the current importance of the subject, information literacy has been analysed in detail and problems relevant to the subject have been noted and solutions have been sought.*

**Keywords-** Information Technology; Language; Learning; Student

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Each innovation brought forth by the century in which we live also reveals just how much the individual and society as a whole needs education. School is the place where education is carried out and primarily caters for children and young people. Nonetheless, the concept of education has transformed into a concept which transcends mere children and young people and has embraced the whole of society by expanding in the last quarter of the twentieth century. According to Tanilli (1996), education which is a multi-dimensional endeavour, begins at the pre-school stage and finds its place in our age in the forms of post-school and continuing education as a human right which is open to all citizens.

Education bears with it the primary responsibility for students gaining research skills. Especially because information spreads rapidly through the internet and the mass media, this has increased the importance of being able to find current and reliable information. This situation has rendered the reaction to information literacy skills (how to define information necessity, how to find it, how to evaluate it, how to use it effectively and how to teach critical thinking skills) to students as of top priority (Breivik, 2005, p.22). For this reason, that students define the information needs, access them, analyse them logically and use them ethically, are important determinants (Al-Issa, 2013, p.6).

According to Kurbanoglu (2010, p.21), the need for information literacy which is accepted as a fundamental skill for lifelong learning is increasing day by day because of the obscurities with regard to the quality of information, the skills of the new generation in terms of looking for information, the ethical problems arising from the use of

information, and that information literacy is beginning to have more importance. While the increase in the need for information in today's societies renders the lifelong learning skill an obligation, information literacy has an important role in the acquisition of these skills and it is necessary to accept information literacy as a fundamental factor with regard to information literacy (Ersoy and Yilmaz, 2010, p.53).

Information and communication technologies are developing constantly and these technologies are being integrated into different fields with each passing day. By virtue of these developments, people can access information from anywhere in the world and establish communication (Çubukçu & Bayzan, 2013).

## 2. INFORMATION LITERACY

The notion of information literacy was initially discussed in 1974 by Paul Zurkowski, the president of the Information Industry Association. Information literacy was evaluated in the initial definition that Zurkowski made into three categories. As the use of information sources in professional life, the techniques and skill to use information tools and primary sources, and being able to use information in solving the problem (Behrens, 1994, p.310). Over time, instead of questions such as "What is information literacy?", "What skills should an information literate individual have?", and the question of "How can the teaching methods of information literacy be applied more effectively?" have gained significance (Walsh, 2011, p.5). Two different approaches are in question when information literacy is being defined. While the first one emphasises what information literacy is, the other

expresses the skills that need to be possessed by an individual who is information literate (Aldemir, 2010).

According to the first explanation, Zurkowski (1974), defined information literates as those who can utilise information resources in their work. According to the second definition, the skills that need to be possessed by information literates have been expressed as 'These individuals possess the skill to reach information using diverse sources and tools in problem-solving and decision-making' by Zurkowski (1974). Doyle (1994), cited in Tosuncuoğlu & Küçükler, (2019), expresses these skills as knowing that the correct data is effectual in decision-making, knowing the requirement for the information, accessing data, making use of computers and other technological devices, assessing and organising the information and using it in problem-solving.

Education directors develop policies for the safe, legal and ethical use of digital information and technology. Teachers develop cultural perception and worldwide cognisance, establishing interaction with their colleagues and learners using the communication and collaboration tools in the digital age. Students on the other hand show personal responsibility for lifelong learning (Alberta, 2012).

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Programme (OECD) is for International Student Assessment (PISA) which started in the year 2000 and every three years it tests 15-year-old students from all over the world, measuring both the students' knowledge and their levels of using what they have learned in the subjects of mathematics, science, reading, problem-solving and financial literacy. The additional skills of the students who are being evaluated are critical thinking, analysis, synthesis and reasoning. PISA places special importance on the concept of 'literacy' in its assessments. PISA contends that students' information potentials should be developed with regard to the subjects of 'finding, using, acknowledging and evaluating written sources of information'. PISA sees the information obtained as skills enabling communication in daily life. In the information age, students are expected to have reached a certain skill level (Kenar, 2016; PISA Turkey, 2018).

When the data of TÜİK (Türk İstatistik Kurumu/The Turkish Statistical Institute) is examined, it can be seen that internet and mobile phone use by the citizens in Turkey is increasing day by day. While mobile phone use at the beginning of the 2000s was around 15 million, this number had increased to over 61 million by the year 2010. Today, the number of citizens using mobile phones has surpassed 76 million, and there is almost no citizen left in the country who does not use a mobile phone.

Some part of these details are specified in the ISTE (The International Society for Technology in Education) formerly the National Education Technology Standards (NETS). NETS specified performance indicators for three different echelons (students, teachers, executives). When these standard groups are examined, it can be seen that digital citizenship finds an important places as a dimension.

### **3. METHOD**

Literature review has been conducted for this study. Collecting information and data by investigating the substantial sources and documents is called literature review. Literature review helps research hypothesis to be picked and understood and research to be placed in a historical perspective and not so long ago, a growth has been found in the scientific articles that give importance analysis as part of their methodology (Karasar, 2005; Xu & Croft, 2017).

### **4. CURRENT INFORMATION LITERACY ASSESSMENT IN TURKEY FROM DIFFERENT ASPECTS**

#### **4.1. Student**

The information literate student has independent learning skills. Skills such as determining the subject, method and plan; forming the search words; using the library catalogue; using printed and electronic information sources; using search engines on the internet; choosing the relevant articles among information sources; choosing the most reliable information; writing the research report; referencing and citation; presenting and sharing what is learned and evaluating the process of research. That the information literate student occupies the central position of the 'Information Literacy Model In Turkish National Education System' which we have developed in our study, is the expression of the fact that all of the studies are oriented towards the information literate student.

#### **4.2. Teacher**

It should be kept in mind that good education is enabled through good teachers and quality education is enabled through qualified teachers (Çelikten, Şanal & Yeni, 2005, p.230-234). Particularly alongside the use of technologies such as the internet, computers and interactive whiteboards, the necessity has arisen for students and teachers to be competent in these technologies. According to Özçelik and Kurt (2007), teachers whose computer self-efficacy is high can teach with more varied techniques during their lessons and can provide learning opportunities for every student. It is easier for teachers whose computer self-efficacy is high to overcome problems when they are encountered (Karsten & Roth, 1998).

Teachers take on the task of playing an educative and directive role for the student in the education system. This is why the qualification of the teacher is an important factor for increasing the quality of the student in the learning-teaching process. Teachers have an important place in the reflection of information literacy skills to their students. Teachers are expected to redound the skills of identifying information source types and properties; determining research/homework subjects; using information search techniques; applying the methods of library use; using databases; using the internet; having knowledge of legal and ethical issues and citing and referencing to students. Teachers are to evaluate teaching

programmes oriented towards information literacy, their own skills and students' skills in line with the 'Information Literacy Model In Turkish National Education System'.

### 4.3. Programmes of Instruction

The Turkish Ministry of National Education endeavours to popularise science, art and culture centres, laboratories and educational environments such as libraries, in which research and project works are to be carried out. In addition, advisory jurisdiction has been taken which is oriented towards creating environments where studies are to be exhibited, popularising e-books through the MEB (Turkish Ministry of National Education) website and the ethical use of information technology. When the policy documents are examined, the subjects on providing media literacy and health literacy education, emphasising students' higher level thinking skills, carrying out activities oriented towards reading culture and the rendering of programmes of instruction compatible with the changing necessities have been identified. Information literacy and the relevant concepts, and the teaching of the types of information literacy all increase the necessity for the presence of information literacy courses. Libraries are seen as necessary for the redounding of reading habits. For as long as planning fails to be carried out concerning the subjects in question within the teaching programmes, it does not appear possible to have lasting or effective results.

In addition, pre-service teachers need to have adequate knowledge in terms of information literacy and teaching applications. Pre-service teachers are prepared for the profession by taking courses on formation and practicing in schools throughout the internship process, in a short span of time with a wide range of professional knowledge and skills. Therefore, according to Feiman-Nemser (2001), it is of paramount importance that pre-service teachers have the facts regarding information literacy before their service commences.

## 5. DISCUSSION

There are various problems regarding the teaching profession in our country. Aydın (2016) postulates, "Another problem area of today's foreign language teacher training programmes is that teachers prove inadequate in following and applying the special branches that are quite dynamically being developed and modernised, as well as technological, professional and methodological developments". The reasons for this can vary. Firstly, the teachers who enrol in the relevant departments with the wish to become a teacher, initially go through the anxiety of being stationed. In addition to this, while it is easier for teachers in branches such as form teaching, the culture of religion and knowledge of ethics, and English, to be stationed around the times of instatement, much higher scores are needed for other branches. Besides, teacher admissions do not arise for certain branches if they are not needed. In other respects, teachers demand additional

indicators of 3600 and improvements in their working conditions.

It is asserted that the information literacy issue needs to have a significant place at every level starting from elementary school (Akkoyunlu & Kurbanoglu, 2002). On the other hand, while there are positive effects of the developed and developing technologies on education, abuse of the internet and computers inside and outside of school is increasing each day (Kaya and Kaya, 2014). In this situation, the necessary education needs to be provided to the students in order for them to more consciously utilise the internet and other technology.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The subject of information literacy is one that gains more importance each day especially in the field of English language learning. In the actualisation of implementation and the regulations oriented towards redounding students with the skills of information literacy within the education system, the problems encountered and expectations for their solution is an important point of departure. The studies to be done on this subject will provide important contributions to society for raising future generations. When viewed from this aspect, university students, teachers and instructors should be information literate and employ information and communication technology to the maximum. Courses regarding information literacy need to be compulsorily given to preservice teachers during their university education.

All teachers need to be supportive on the subject of information literacy. Learning outcomes regarding information literacy need to be shared, evaluated and discussed. By verbalising teacher problems and competencies which teachers need to have on all kinds of platforms and in which the education system in Turkey is managed, attention can be drawn to existing issues that are being encountered.

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