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Building information research skills in the Pacific region: The University of the South Pacific Initiative

Reysa Alenzuela, Elizabeth Fong, Jamie Bloss, Vasiti Chambers,

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Building information research skills in the Pacific region

Research skills
in the Pacific
region

The University of the South Pacific Initiative

Reysa Alenzuela

The University of the South Pacific – Emalus Campus, Port Vila, Vanuatu, and

Elizabeth Fong, Jamie Bloss and Vasiti Chambers

The University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji

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Abstract

Purpose – Information literacy (IL) enables individuals to discover new ways of thinking and new knowledge across a range of platforms, tools and media. It hopes to enable them to fit into the world of research and scholarly communication. This paper aims to describe the development and current practices in IL program at the University of the South Pacific (USP). This case study puts emphasis on how IL at USP reflects the educational priorities of the University and the region. Discussions on socio-cultural context hope to provide insights on developing a framework based on global standards that address the cultural aspect within students' learning environment in the 12 member countries.

Design/methodology/approach – This paper mainly used desktop research and document analysis to present the IL model which is cohesively embedded within the University's strategic plan and research skills development framework.

Findings – The results are summarized in three sections: paradigms and models as basis, current content and mode of delivery, methodologies and design for instruction and socio-cultural insights.

Research limitations/implications – At present, this study will cover Fiji (the Main Campus) and Vanuatu (School of Law). Other member countries with USP presence such as Cook Islands, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga and Tuvalu are considered as part of the future design. Ultimately, a comprehensive model that is applicable for 21 other campuses in the ten member countries will be designed. It also hopes to be replicable in the entire Pacific context.

Practical implications – This study provides baseline data to develop future strategies for implementation in the regional level.

Originality/value – This paper deals with definitional issues of IL related to Pacific cultural contexts that goes beyond a single country, one national identity as it deals with 11 countries, a different model for networked paradigm for IL.

Keywords Academic libraries, Information literacy, Library instruction, Research skills, Global perspective, Pacific libraries

Paper type Case study

1. Introduction

The University of the South Pacific (USP) is the premier provider of tertiary education in the Pacific region and an international center of excellence for teaching, research consulting and training on all aspects of Pacific culture, environment and human resource development needs (The University of South Pacific, 2018a). USP is uniquely placed in a region of extraordinary physical, social and economic diversity to serve the region's need for high quality tertiary education, research and policy needs. Established in 1968, USP is one of only two universities of its type in the world. It is jointly owned and governed by 12 Member



Countries: Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. The University has campuses in all Member Countries. The main campus, Laucala, is in Fiji. The Alafua Campus in Samoa is where the School of Agriculture and Food Technology is situated, and the Emalus Campus in Vanuatu is the location for the School of Law. The academic Schools, Institutes and Centers at the USP are organized into three faculties and led by Deans. These are the Faculty of Arts, Law and Education; the Faculty of Business and Economics; and the Faculty of Science, Technology and Environment. Each faculty comprises a number of schools which offer a wide range of academic programs and courses at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The University also offers programs through distance and flexible learning in a variety of modes and technologies throughout USP's 14 campuses.

The multicultural nature of the staff and student body give USP an exceptional character. It is a quality institution producing degrees comparable to those awarded by universities in Australia, New Zealand and the UK. Graduates from USP are found in important executive positions throughout the public and private sectors in all member countries and in numerous countries around the world ([The University of South Pacific, 2018c](#)).

Having an important niche in the development of the country, the University has set a high standard for quality in research as provided in the University's Strategic Plan 2013-21018 where research and internationalization are in the seven priority areas. Under the Strategic Total Academic Review (STAR) process at USP, Working Group 5 (constituting of USP staff) was tasked to determine the best way to incorporate research skills and literacy in USP curricula. Working Group 5 found that, in general, the Research Skills Development (RSD) framework at the University of Adelaide by [Willison and O'Regan \(2013\)](#) was a workable tool that could guide academics in developing and assessing students' research skills in content-rich courses from first year undergraduate to PhD levels. Upon a close study of the RSD framework, the group recommended that the RSD framework is a suitable model to be adapted and implemented at USP ([The University of South Pacific, 2018d](#)).

The Library was a part of the RSD component of the STAR project and began incorporating RSD into IRS in 2010. The Library as part of the support sections is considered to have an important part in building skills of students. The University accreditation criteria for review 3.5 states that, the Liaison Librarians support academic staff/faculty and students to achieve course learning outcomes through providing electronic resources and reading materials for the courses. They also assist students in developing information research skills (IRS) both during lecture times when requested by the teaching team and also providing workshops and seminars for students in the Library ([The University of South Pacific, 2018b](#)).

At the USP, information literacy (IL) program is known as IRS to align with student and faculty understanding of the process and the USP graduate attributes. This IRS initiative was framed with higher education approaches in mind. The institution emphasizes that IL is an integral generic skill or graduate attribute in higher education, with many higher education institutions developing IL policies and including IL in graduate attribute policies ([The University of South Pacific, 2012](#)). USP has included IL as a graduate attribute with the view of ensuring that USP graduates are equipped to "hit the ground running" ([Fraser and Thomas, 2013](#)) for the world of work ([Barrie, 2012](#)).

A more streamlined approach is needed to ensure that students must be given repeated opportunities throughout their university years to help graduates and as individuals who have developed lifelong learning skills. The Library proposed another initiative to make IRS a prerequisite to the commencement of postgraduate studies program which was recently

approved. As the IRS program is integrated in the University curriculum, it is worth sharing this initiative to the global community. Hence, this paper is developed to address the following objectives:

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- describe the development of IRS in USP context while adopting global frameworks;
- provide a conceptual map on how IRS contribute to the Institutional RDS framework;
- analyze the socio-cultural context of IL in the Pacific; and
- describe the future strategies for improvement and implementation in the regional level.

2. Literature review

USP's IL found correlation on its current practices from various pedagogical paradigm, international practices and similar studies in the Pacific region. The literature identified in this study is presented for the following purposes:

- find correlation of USPs IL with internationally accepted standards, definition and concepts;
- analyze similar studies published in Asia-Oceania; and
- examine conceptual frameworks and studies that discuss the cultural context of teaching.

There are several conceptual literatures that point out a strong correlation between IL and RSD. The [Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals \(CILIP\) \(2018\)](#) in their report provides a new definition of IL:

IL incorporates a set of skills and abilities which everyone needs to undertake information-related tasks; for instance, how to discover, access, interpret, analyze, manage, create, communicate, store and share information. But it is much more than that: it concerns the application of the competencies, attributes and confidence needed to make the best use of information and to interpret it judiciously. It incorporates critical thinking and awareness, and an understanding of both the ethical and political issues associated with using information.

IL in the academic setting is about building knowledge to become researchers which is one of the graduate attributes fostered by the university. At this age, the mark of scholarship as it contributes to academic competencies, research methodologies and an understanding of plagiarism (Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), 2018). IL equips learners at every level with the intellectual strategies and tools such as adopting a questioning approach to not only solve problems but also frame problems and situations in new and groundbreaking ways ([Head, 2017](#)). IL is essentially fulfilling USP's thrust towards academic excellence by honing learners' capacity for independent critical thinking and self-directed, life-long learning; advanced information and communication technology knowledge and skills and research skills.

USP's IRS is viewed in the lens of RS Research Skill Development Framework (RSDF) in used in New Zealand higher education. RSDF was developed as an outgrowth of the ANZIIL, the Australian and New Zealand Institute for IL framework, which in turn was inspired by the ACRL IL Competency Standards for Higher Education ([Working Group on Global Perspectives for Information Literacy, Student Learning and Information Literacy Committee, 2017a, 2017b](#)). This model draws upon the "what, who, and how" of IL curriculum integration and can be used to map IL programmatic impact. IL is well

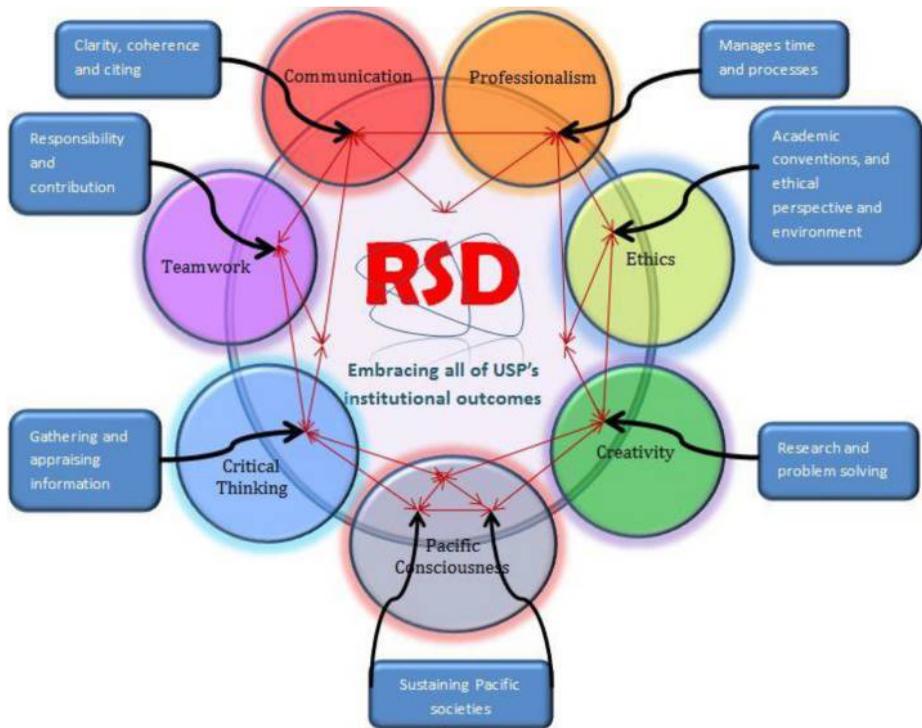


Figure 1.
Relationship between
RSD and the
University graduate
outcomes

Source: The University of South Pacific (2018e)

integrated into higher education curricula throughout New Zealand and Australia and that future developments in this region include a greater focus on building student skills with regard to future employability (Wang, 2011).

Furthermore, USP's IRS is essentially adopting various pedagogical concepts having teaching and learning attributes, modes of delivery, instructional design and teaching methods as among the crucial elements that are always looked into. As IL becomes embedded, its relation to institutional teaching and learning strategies (Pretorius *et al.*, 2013; Corral, 2007) and graduate attributes (Fraser and Thomas, 2013; Stracke and Kumar, 2014; Barrie, 2012) became a focal point of studies. Modes of delivery (Weightman *et al.*, 2017; Graham *et al.*, 2013; Wang, 2011) and teaching methods (Hayes, 2017; Reichart and Elvidge, 2015; Koufogiannakis and Wiebe, 2006) are also integral in the discussions.

Bawden and Robinson (2018) in a metastudy and metasynthesis on the current best practices in IL looked into the models, content, context, learning materials and multicultural and multilingual aspects. Similarly, USP's IRS endeavors to integrate some of the concepts in this literature in its ongoing review and development of the program.

In the context of IL in the Asia-Oceania, a few references can be found in a white paper developed by ACRL (2016). The implementation of IL in the Pacific was described in Dornier's book chapter on Working Group on Global Perspectives for Information Literacy, Student Learning and Information Literacy Committee (2017a, 2017b) that mentions the

initiative at USP. Dorner (2018) described, “as far back as 2006, Murgatroyd and Calvert noted that USP’s Laucala Campus Library in Suva, Fiji, had identified IL as “a major priority area and [...] implemented structured programs that are integrated into the degree course structure for face-to-face students” (Working Group on Global Perspectives for Information Literacy, Student Learning and Information Literacy Committee, 2017a, 2017b). Moreover, in 2014, the University Librarian of Fiji National University has published an article on “Enhancing Students’ Skills through Technology (ESST): a one-to-one computer solution at Fiji National University.” The University has already introduced IL as a mandatory course to all students of the university through its COM 501: Information and Communication Literacy emphasizing the need for providing ICT and enhanced IL skills through SDL (Jayasundara, 2014). With the scarcity of discussion in the region, none of the literatures have delved deeper into the instructional design and IL models that have been fully adopted.

More important to note in the framework is the need to put the IL in the cultural context. Dorner (2012) provides a conceptual model that focused on the cultural milieu as he emphasized that the librarian/faculty/student relationships in the teaching and learning environments in countries such as Vietnam and Sri Lanka are very different from the relationships that are assumed in the ACRL Standards and the critiqued tools. In these countries, IL librarians usually work in isolation from faculty when developing new activities or adapting to an existing activities to suit their student’s needs and their local situations.

Several papers discussed the need for a holistic reflection on the nature of IL within intercultural settings (Hicks and Lloyd, 2016), seeing IL as a complex socio-cultural practice that is shaped through the negotiated meaning-making of a community (Lloyd, 2005; Tuominen *et al.*, 2005) emphasizing a culturally relevant paradigm (Houlihan *et al.*, 2017; Minkov and Hofstede, 2012). The importance of cultural and social context on developing a new approach to IL learning design is a major issue (McNicol and Shields, 2014). Špiranec (2017) as cited in Bawden and Robinson (2018) suggests that the ACRL Framework should be considered as a support rather than being prescriptive while Petermanec and Šebjan, (2017) proposed allowing local variations in evaluating the students success.

Culture is a critical component, and in educational context, local and national culture, as well as academic culture, affects the learning environment (Dorner, 2012). Dorner and Gorman (2006) also discussed how cultural context affects the curriculum development and program delivery. At the end of the discussion, based on the study in countries such as South Korea and Thailand, the authors proposed to reflect on how cultural dimensions of a country, region or community affect the manner in which the students learn to be information literate. As to pedagogical strategies, it was left open for those who need to create the initiative on how individual cultures will teach IL.

3. Information literacy at the University of the South Pacific: definition, frames and context

The USP IRS program was based originally on the ACRL IL competency standards. Since 2016, the program was enhanced integrating the ACRL Frames, specifically, focused on “authority is constructed and contextual” to try to get students to understand where information is generated from and which items are most suitable for academic writing. “Research as inquiry” and “searching as strategic exploration” are the other frames where the initiative makes reference on most of the instructions offered for both undergraduate and postgraduate students. For many, these types of concepts are completely new; hence, a discussion of authority and the research process as well as developing a search strategy are found to be essential. The other frames such as “scholarship as conversation” are more

taught in the DG400, SC400 and AL400 classes where the work is more on the actual information seeking behavior and developing search skills. However, explaining what a peer-reviewed paper and other frames like “scholarship as conversation” take place during the IRS sessions. Based on these, several modules were developed for undergraduate sessions, and in-class sessions based on demand for different courses are also provided. These modules include “Search Tips,” “Evaluating the Information You Find” and “Planning Your Search Strategy”.

UU100 is a prerequisite but often taught by the faculty although the second part is the library component. Second and third year students (200 and 300 levels) ongoing information RSD is currently addressed in response to requests and in collaboration with faculty. As Dorner (2012) pointed out, the need for librarian–faculty cooperation for successful IL efforts has been a prominent theme. At USP, the instructions are facilitated by Liaison Librarians which is very dependent on the support and understanding of the value of IRS by academics. These are complemented by voluntary walk-in sessions for all levels of students.

3.1 Modes of delivery and instruction content

A wide variety of methods of teaching IL has been written, but good practice for IL has sought to combine various approaches (Bawden and Robinson, 2018). IL training is effective and well received across a range of delivery formats (Weightman *et al.*, 2017; Koufogiannakis and Wiebe, 2006).

In USP, the mode of delivery is aligned with the course offering. Aside from teaching methods, mode of delivery becomes diverse to fit into the levels of students, availability of resources and location. At the Foundation level or Pacific TAFE (Technical and Further Education), the instruction is mostly one shot sessions taught in a computer lab or tutorial room for an hour or two. Classes are very basic such as library catalog searching, one database, and referencing which all instructors usually need us to cover.

For undergraduates, there is UU100b which is an online course, can also be blended and a mandatory course for all students to take. The first half talks about ICTs and the second about IL. The main contact from the library for UU100 is one Librarian from Alafua (Samoa Island) campus who works with the coordinator. These courses are run entirely over Moodle although library tours are also offered so students can come to the physical library space and learn about the resources from a library staff member.

For UU204, there is a libguide the students can use, but since the coordinator has changed there is no coordination with UU 204 and UU 200 level courses. Hence, at this level the Library offers walk in sessions for undergraduates every other week, two sessions per week. The classes on these two courses emphasize the use of scholarly sources and proper referencing but there is no way for librarians to know or monitor the instruction as it is handled by teaching instructors.

In the 300 level, the instructions librarian communicate with the lecturers of the classes with research requirements and go into these classes for a one shot session on database searching and referencing. These classes have 60-100 students and are held in a lecture hall and not hands-on. Only an hour is given for IL in this large class which has inhibited instructions librarian to do more learning activities with them besides a demonstration.

At the 400 level (postgraduate) and above, students are required to do the 14.5 h course.

A combination of lecture and hands-on practical with a program/subject focus are provided in face-to-face sessions. In the undergraduate level, it is either taught by the librarian in a one-shot session or the online component is placed in Moodle. No specific hours are required for undergraduate courses besides the UU100b module but a total of 14.5 h for post-graduate is compulsory. For postgraduate students, the full program may be completed

over two consecutive/non-consecutive full days or in consultation with the Coordinator completion can be done over the semester. At present, there are two Librarians assigned for instruction at the main campus. Liaison librarians for the colleges are also encouraged but not all have instruction background, a need to enhance capacity is needed. In the region, only in Samoa and Vanuatu have professional librarians and they all deliver IRS instruction in coordination with the faculty. For other libraries, the library assistants who have training also provide IRS training.

The traditional face-to-face instruction is found most effective; however, as there are distance learning modules, online self-directed modes are also made available. Aside from random observations made by instructions librarians which is the basis of adopting the most effective mode of delivery USP has not completely embarked into a study to see the impact of IRS in various platform (online/self-directed or traditional/active learning/learner centered), observations on how students learn and develop skills are always considered in the design and on-going revisions of the instructions. It has been recognized by researchers that good methodologies and validated research tools would enrich evidence base and contribute to the growth of knowledge about effectiveness of particular teaching methods (Koufogiannakis and Wiebe, 2006).

3.2 Instructional design and pedagogical models

IRS has not explicitly adopted any instructional design or pedagogical model; however, key concepts of scaffolding (Pretorius *et al.*, 2013), use of higher order thinking skills (Dorner, 2012), teaching approaches are the underlying principles in the IRS delivery. An attempt to incorporate backward design and review of other methods is still ongoing.

The sessions provide a simple task – evaluating a website according to some criteria or finding five articles in a single database that will apply to their research topic. Over time, we could give a more complicated research task. However, to start librarian instructors try to break it up into lots of pieces. Often some information is initially provided – say explaining what “subject headings” are – then the instruction librarians have them search for their topic in the LOC subject headings and then use them in the catalog or try using the thesaurus in ProQuest- first demonstrating then giving them time to explore on their own as the instruction librarian walks around and assist them with their individual research topics. Theoretically, the students will become increasingly knowledgeable about IL, building up their understanding of and abilities to use IL’s component concepts by engaging in learning activities selected or created by the IL educators (Dorner, 2012).

The last thing librarians want is for them to find nothing on their topic and get discouraged. If a student comes across a particular insight, the instructor will often address the class again and have them share what worked and what didn’t, and if someone asked a good question during the times that they are searching on their own or in groups, the instructions librarian share it with the class without pointing out who asked the original question. Having this activity is essential, as group learning has been observed to be effective for students. This confirms Phan’s (2010) observation that there is credence to suggest that Pacific Islander students hold strong beliefs in the notion of communal learning and sharing in a collective society.

Sessions would usually start with a brief explanation then a hands-on exercise. IL session which is divided into two parts starts with an initial didactic presentation followed by an active learning component (Bawden and Robinson, 2018). During in-class activities, such as referencing, students are given a book or an article and generate a reference from it. First, instructions and handouts are distributed. Then a brief explanation is provided and after which they are left to practice individually or as a group. Then, the session will resume with

a discussion together as a class again. Enabling the students to work independently and as group encourages them to be a part of a group and also gives them a chance to work alone. Some students are timid and would never speak in big groups. [Phan's \(2010\)](#) observation on respect for authority figures as a norm when it comes to learning process is very visible in IL classes as well. As observed in classes conducted in USP, many times the students would rather prefer the answers to constructing a good search query be modeled by the teacher or be given some example rather than be called upon in class and put on the spot to come up with their own search keyword terms.

3.3 *Threshold concept*

Instruction librarians also find value in the threshold concept at USP. Lessons build on their understanding of the concept to enable them to be more readily able to integrate disconnected facts and information related to that concept ([Gibson and Jacobson, 2014](#)). Taking as example some practices at USP:

- The idea of scholarly literature as a conversation – once students understand what different sources of information are and how they are produced their understanding broadens greatly. Expecting them to understand what a scholarly journal is from the start does not ease the anxiety of students coming back to do postgraduate work or undergraduates learning these concepts for the first time ([Mark and Jacobson, 1995](#)).
- Many refer to a journal article just as a “journal” they do not understand serials or how they are different from a book, who writes them or how they are produced. Once we start explaining to them about journals and news articles and the difference or how peer-review works it is like a lightbulb turns on.
- Classifying written information is a very Western concept when the culture here was originally based in oral traditions of information being passed down. Hence, learning subject headings/controlled vocabularies, using Boolean operators and how a database functions can be difficult for students to grasp at first. Even in Western cultures students have a difficult time with controlled vocabularies according to [Antell and Huang \(2008\)](#) who cite subject searching as the most problematic of all search types. Explaining it in terms of hashtagging (as a folksonomy) and then explaining how the controlled vocabulary is like tagging except you can't make up your own seems to help. Database searching offers a great opportunity to provide students with concept-oriented instruction and introduce ideas like controlled vocabularies to the students ([Dreifuss, 1982](#)).
- On citations and referencing and explaining why and how it is done – it is always an issue with students all over the world. Explaining that you are giving authors proper credit and preventing plagiarism seems to resonate with students. Then you can explain citation chaining and other related concepts – which goes back to scholarship as conversation – so you can use these examples to explain how researchers are writing and bouncing off of each other.
- Instruction librarians also work a lot on evaluation of information. Checking on Facebook in Fiji, a lot of reposts of fake news or false links or old links (even fake weather news regarding cyclones) show that people in general do not think critically about what they are sharing and repeating. When lessons on evaluating websites, e-mails and other information resources started, the students realize that they should think critically about emails sent to them or what articles are being shared on Facebook which becomes a transformative experience for them – giving them the power to decide and evaluate what is relevant for their learning experience.

3.4 Inclusivity and cultural context

Integrating the cultural perspective of learning in the Pacific region, [Phan \(2010\)](#) posits that learning takes place in many levels, notably cognitive, cultural and social. Social and cultural learning approaches call for personalized, historical and derived methods of investigation. In the case of IL, instruction librarians are keen on the activity provided to students. Some groups are quiet and some are active. The activity ensures that everyone has a way to share their voice.

As to cognitive processing, it is common for the Pacific students to always rely on the notes, the copy of the PowerPoint Presentation. Older students from the region, commonly from the centers which are located outside the capital, who have low digital skills, always take down notes. They need more encouragement and ample time to explore. They only stick to what has been taught.

One size does not fit all for students in the Pacific and there are distinct culture differences between all of the different campuses and countries. Implementing on a level works one country does not work in the other. It is essential for instructions librarian to know the student's learning styles and the level of autonomy the students with their IL skills first. Lack of libraries in schools or lack of instruction on how to use the library at the high school (college) level leads to a huge learning curve once students hit the university. This problem on the ability to grasp skills and concepts is true even for postgraduate students. Aside from exposure to technology, the fact that some students may have been out of school for a while is also a factor.

Cultural practices are also very important. Gestures like communicating with eyebrows (Ni-Vanuatu) to show they learned or crossing the brows to express they are confused are very common. Other groups are more elusive and it takes more cultural knowledge for librarians to be able to translate their need. For example, the students nod their heads and do not ask questions. It is imperative that no one wants to be called out or even admit they are not following along. It has been observed that in some communities, people are not used to standing out and they pretty much always work as a group; librarian-instructors are aware that the students do not want to shout out answers in class or ask questions.

Another area to be taken into consideration is the subcultures. In Fiji, there are two groups: iTaukei Fijians and Fijians of Indian descent would have some differences in the way they learn/interact in the classroom. For Ni-Vanuatu, on the other hand, the way the students learn, interact, share ideas, process information differ based on which island they came from. Students from the capital city (Port Vila) and students from Tanna or Malekula or Province of Tafea or Shefa responds based on their culture. Socio economic status and academic exposure is also an interesting part of the subculture. Students who have some overseas experience, e.g. have studied in New Zealand or Australia are usually more informed and know already, what a database is and how to use it. They have a better idea of how to strategize their research processes. They may have attended IL sessions overseas that gave them a bit of a head start on other students.

On inclusivity, there are two major challenges that are very explicit – the subculture and unequal opportunity. Those living in the region does not have librarians, less facilities (e.g. no library space for instruction or even overhead projector), slower internet access. Some students just had their first experience using the computer during the session. Then, they go back to remote areas without internet access. The next time they access the Web and to their assignment on a short period where they go back to the main campus. Some students who are also taking online courses at the centers do not have computers and has no basic IT

skills even using the mouse for navigating through the documents. It is a struggle for regional librarians to facilitate more than just meeting the required number of hours. In the region, ensuring that no one is left behind is very important amidst limitations. The ultimate goal of IRS is to be taught all throughout the region. However, the instructions are still a work in progress in terms of faculty collaboration and standardization of the core modules. A more streamlined approach is needed to ensure that students must be given repeated opportunities throughout their university years to acquire the graduate attribute as a lifelong learning skill.

4. Rethinking the initiative: the cultural context

At this time, no formal assessments are being done besides an informal survey. Students do mark on the surveys if they would like further sessions on the topic. Based on how many people respond instructions librarians infer from the responses in the activities if they understood the topic or need some more reinforcement. I think this is something needed to move towards doing in the future and working more closely with lecturers to see if the program did improve either on referencing/citations or what types of sources they are finding for assignments and if the resources found were actually applicable to the assignment topics – or if they just picked random sources with keywords in the title but no direct application to the topic they are supposed to write on.

A bigger challenge is implementing IL in the region. Each campus has students coming from other Pacific countries. Taking the case of the Emalus Campus, this is where the School of Law is situated but there are also students taking arts, education and sciences. Looking at the cultural integration, the school is not only dealing with students from Vanuatu or Fiji. Fijian students are more confident in expressing themselves in English compared to students from Vanuatu who speak French or Bislama (National Language of Vanuatu) who are more hesitant to speak. There are also students from Solomon Islands, Tonga and other places. These students face more challenges as they consider themselves a minority. What is more interesting to note is the development of IL skills of students in the centers. From the major campuses in different countries, there are also centers in other islands. Taking again as an example the case of Emalus Campus in Vanuatu, it has centers in Malampa (Malekula Island), Tanna Island, and Espiritu Santo Island. Malampa center have students where there is no presence of a librarian who can guide in the instructions. As Dorner (2012) noted, “culture is a critical component, and in an educational context, local and national culture as well as academic culture affect the learning environment”.

The students jump into activities provided in the online lessons without understanding the whole concept of the content. Although they take courses where IL is embedded, they do not understand the concept of developing skills to find, locate, evaluate and share information. They are also observed to have no confidence with technology, particularly, the older students who are taking diploma or certificate courses who are returnees. The lack of opportunity, the interaction with librarians and instructors create a gap in understanding the lesson.

Before implementing a definitive program for IRS or IL, instruction librarians need to take time to learn the students and the campus. Trying out a few different one-shot instruction sessions with students or simply making a few visits to existing courses giving a 30-min talk first will suffice, then overtime, once the instructor become more familiar with the students and the campus, that is the time to develop the content.

5. Conclusion

IL in the Pacific region is an application of generic paradigms and models in teaching as well as internationally adopted principles in IL. As Pacific consciousness has always been a thrust of the institution, cultural context and personalistic approach are equally important. The insights from firsthand experience of how USP librarian–instructors deal with multi-diversity of learners can be a perspective to look into when dealing with audience of diverse cultural background. Its implication to multicultural setting is that, learners should be viewed as an aggregate of his personal attributes and cultural orientation. IL requires cultural knowledge of librarians to effectively deliver the instructions. It is also essential that librarians have an in-depth knowledge of learning pedagogies and building on the skills of instruction librarians to adopt to various learning styles is essential to embark successfully into the program.

Further study that integrates the circumstances of other regional campuses can be the second phase of the project to develop a framework truly applicable in the Pacific.

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Corresponding author

Reysa Alenzuela can be contacted at: reysa.alenzuela@vanuatu.usp.ac.fj