

Information Literacy course, evaluation and impact

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Information literacy must be an innovative discipline, adapt to technology and the information requirements of the academic community. Introducing new chapters and then assessing their impact on students and their informational behavior is the best way to improve the content and the way of teaching the course. The authors present a model for investigating a part of the students' perception in Transilvania University of Brasov. The paper was presented at the Romanian Librarians Association Conference in September 2021.

Keywords: information literacy, course evaluation, course impact, Romania

1. Introduction

The first to use the term “Information literacy” was Paul Zurkovski, who described people with information skills as “people trained to apply information resources in the workplace”. (Zurkowsky, 1974)

In the 1970s, the term *information literacy* appeared for the first time. It is the period that is characterised by the rising of the information society, and the awareness of the need to identify the information skills needed in an information society.

There are several stages in the evolution and definition of information culture.

In the 1980s, the concept of information *culture was clarified*, defining its content by determining a set of skills essential to the diversification of information sources and technologies. The most popular is the definition proposed by the American Library Association (ALA) in 1989: “A person who possesses an information culture is able to realize the need for information, to locate, evaluate and use information efficiently”. (ALA, 1989)

Also, we are witnessing the Information literacy growth as a field of research, and recognition of its importance in terms of education in the 1990s. It is the time when the Information literacy becomes an object of study in universities. The first standards in the field are also being developed now. In 1998, the American Association of School librarians (AASL) and the Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT) publish the first standard for information culture for students, and in 2000

Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) adopts and publishes *Standards for*

From Paul Zurkorwski, 1974, to the 1989 definition given by ALA, the concept experienced changes according to methods of retrieval of information and the evolution of intellectual work techniques. The foundation of the concept was made by ALA, who believes that “individuals with an information culture are the ones who have learned how to learn”. (AL, 1989)

The purpose of the Information Culture course is to improve students’ skills to **locate, collect and evaluate** information in any format.

General competences on information culture — *information literacy* — are structured into 3 components: **accessing, evaluating, and using information**.

Within Transilvania University of Brasov, the Information Literacy course is implemented at every specialization. Only the name differs. The author returns the course at the specializations: *Mechatronics — MT, Optometry OPTO, Medical Engineering IMED, Communication and public relations CRP, Digital Media MD in the first half of the second semester*. Within the discipline students will learn the specific competences required in the activity of **documenting** and then **communicating the scientific information**.

The structure of these courses from the point of view of the topic is as following:

- Information society. Informational explosion. Information and communication technology. Organization of information. Types of documents. Library classifications. Bibliographical records.
- Defining a need for information. International standards of information culture.
- Accessing information. Information retrieval tools
- Search strategies. Online catalogs. Search engines.
- Evaluation of information. Information evaluation criteria. Impact factor. Elements of scientometry.
- Information management. Citation standards. Bibliographic references. Computer programs for the development of bibliographies.
- Communication of information. Deviations from the technique of intellectual work. Intellectual property law.
- The plagiarism. Plagiarism detection software. Methods of presenting academic projects.

2. METHODOLOGY

In the academic year 2020-2021, the second half of the course was held online and the laboratories face-to-face.

At the end of the course, students responded online to a course evaluation questionnaire. The questionnaire was generated with the Survey Monkey software, had the title *Evaluation of the Information Culture Course*, and was distributed on the e-learning platform. Each student was informed that this addition represents the agreement to participate in the research. There were 10 questions, 161 students out of 210 students answered.

3. ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

The course had the expected novelty, with 36.5% of students with a high degree of novelty (Fig.1)

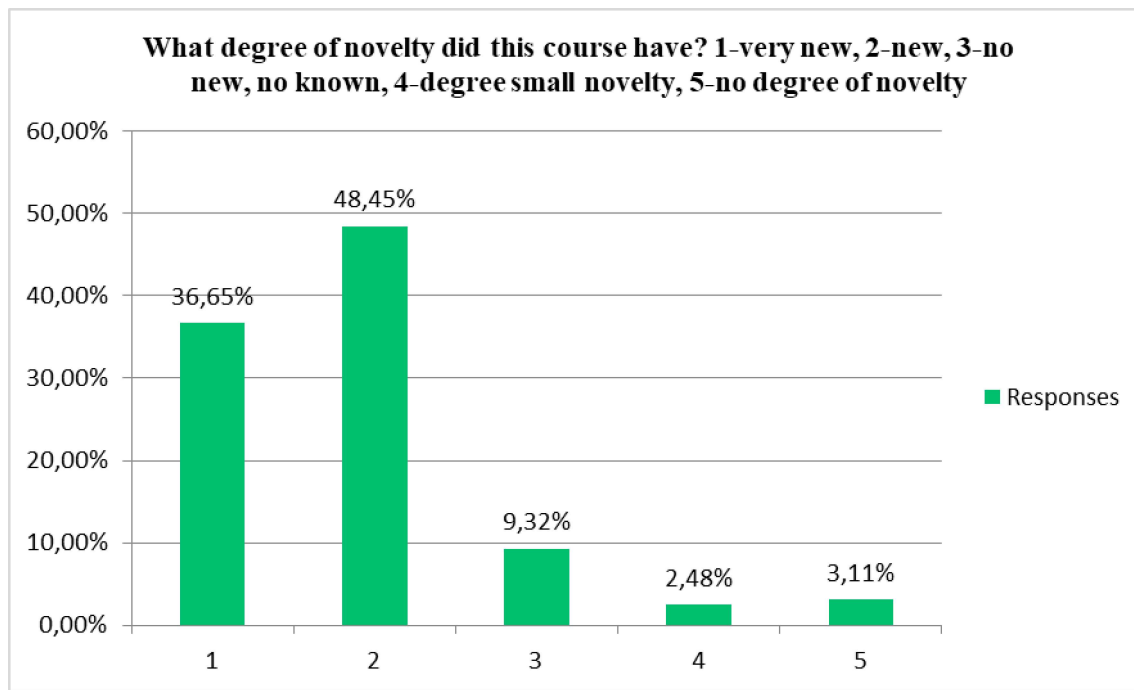


Fig.1: The novelty of the course

The highest degree of novelty was the course on green technologies, the carbon emissions generated by the search for information on Google’s engine, 4.26 out of 5.

It is followed by the Boolean search operators, 4.16 and then by bibliographies generation software, 4.13 and then by Creative Licenses, 4.04. (Fig.2)

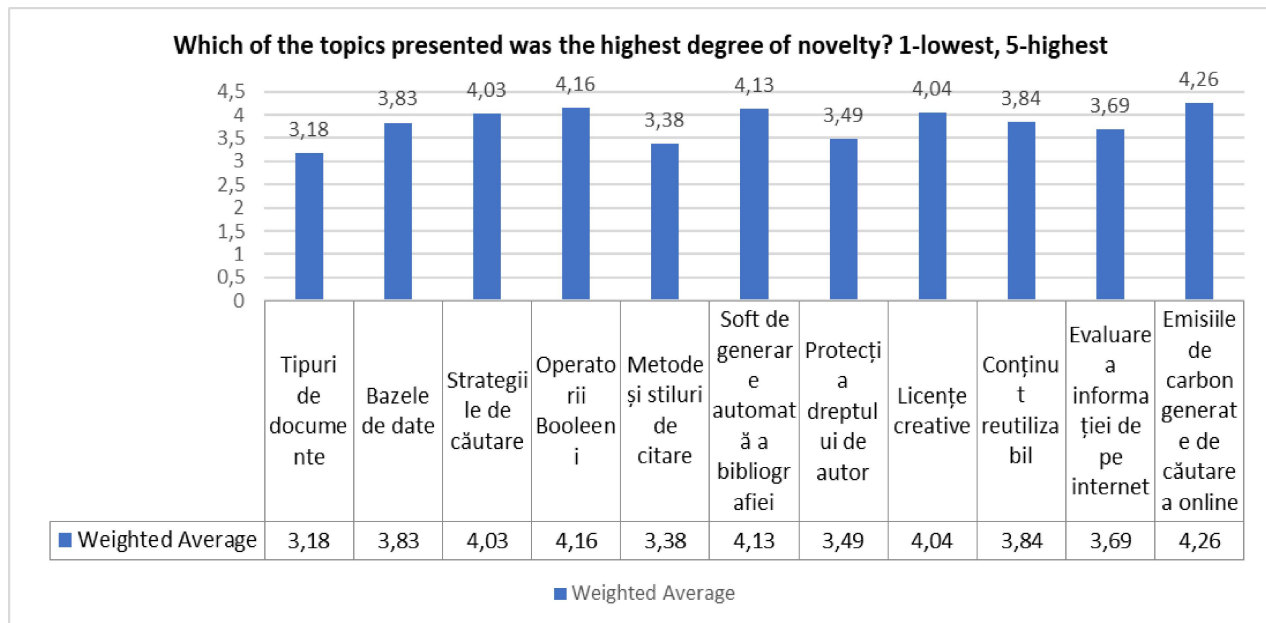


Fig. 2: Topics with the highest degree of novelty

Regarding the interest of students on these subjects, Soft had the greatest interest in generating bibliographies, then the Information Search Strategies, followed by Copyright Protection and Creative Licenses. (Fig.3)

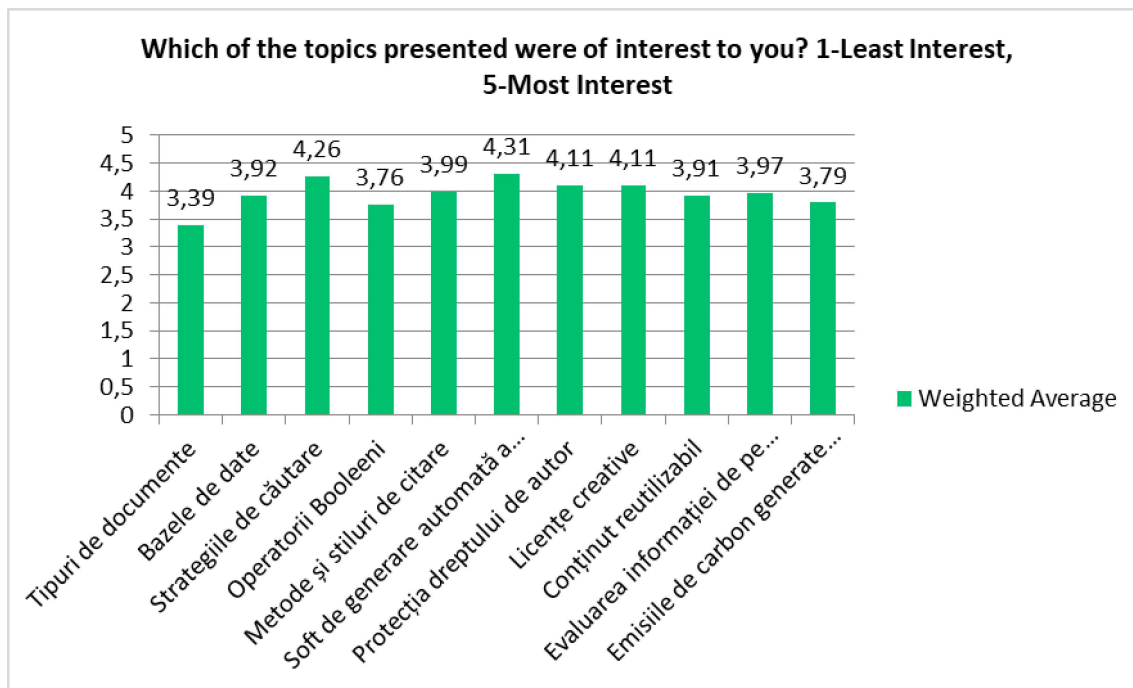


Fig. 3: Students' interest in the subjects presented

The teaching pedagogical approach has been assessed as sufficiently explained as being interactive benefiting from modern methods.

Very few students found it boring. (Fig.4)

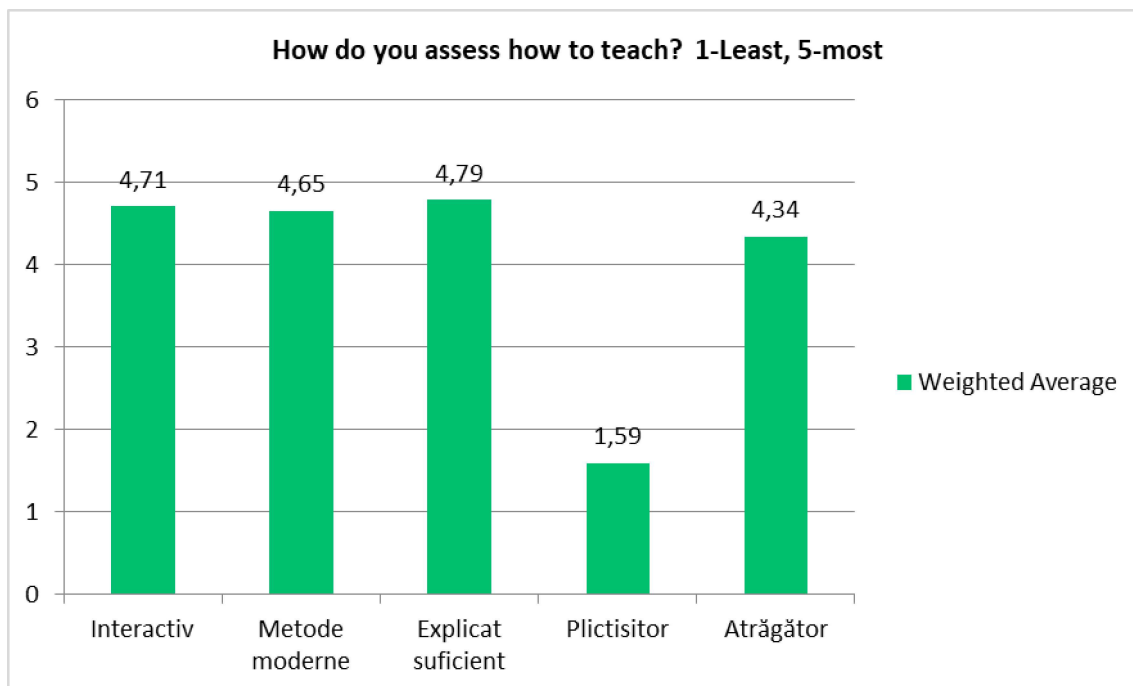


Fig. 4: Assessment of how to teach

The carbon print generated by search engines access greatly influenced informational behavior in 29.19% students, and to a large extent at 51.55% students. (Fig.5)

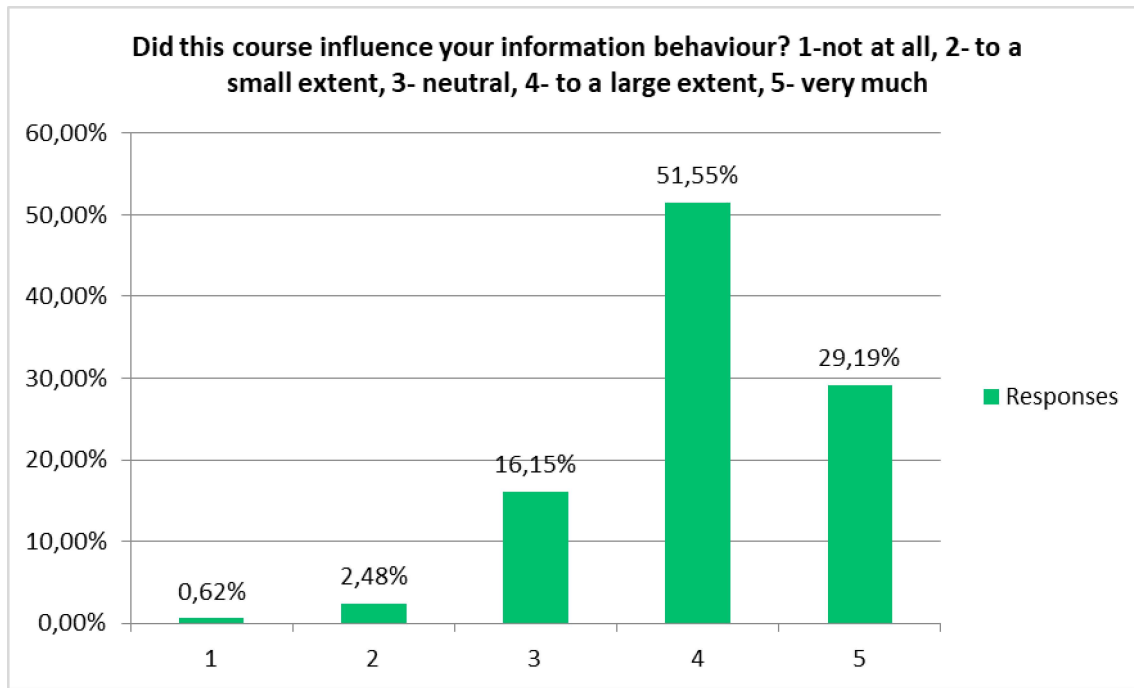


Fig. 5: Influence on informational behavior

The sample consisted of 78.8% women and 21.2% men. (Fig.6)

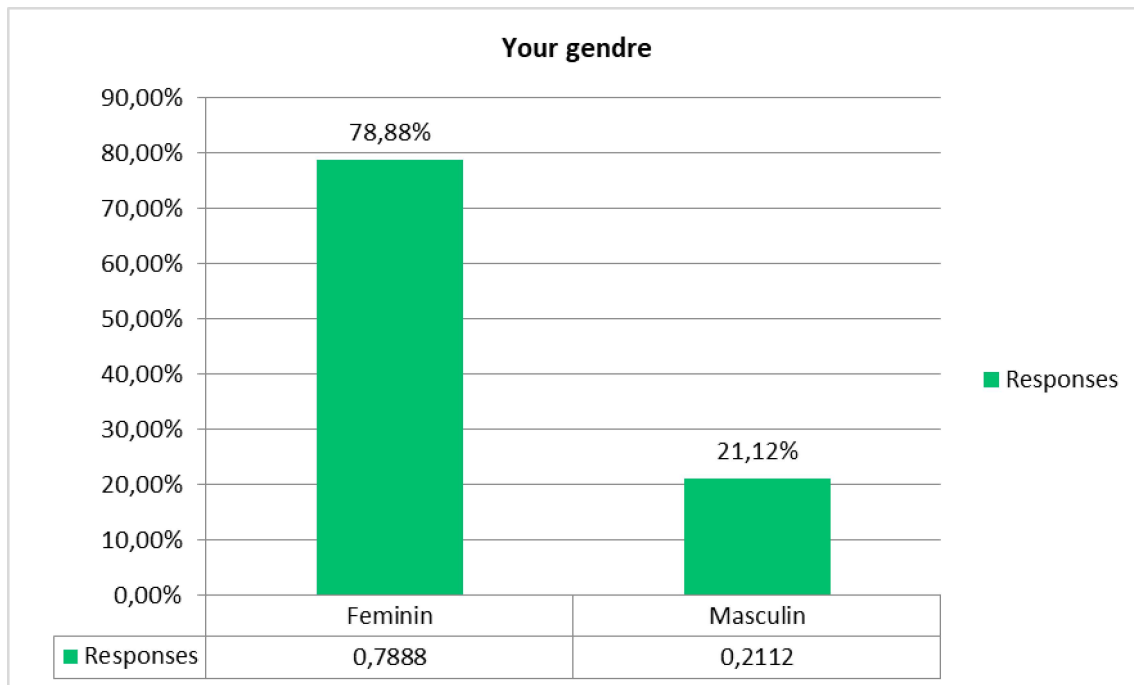


Fig. 6: Gender characterization of the sample

The distribution of the sample by specialization of students is represented in Figure 7.

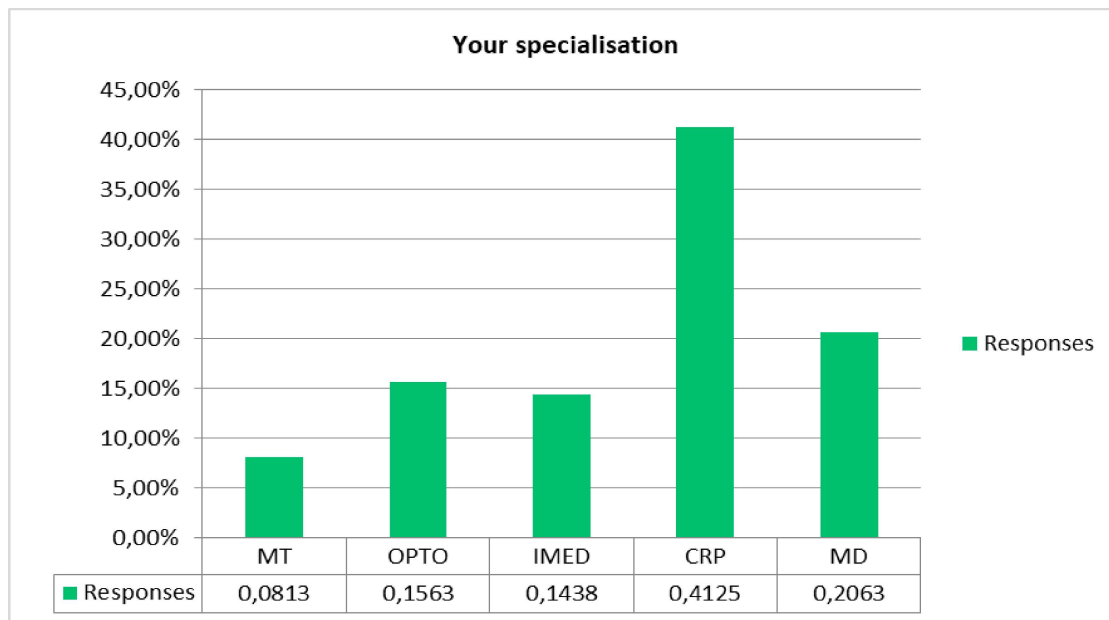


Fig. 7: Sample distribution by student specialization

To the question of what was good about this course, we can tell you a few answers:

- The simplicity to which the information was delivered; the Kahoot games that were useful to recap course material.
- Through the ppts, I understood the information presented much better and more clearly. I liked that we conducted tests to verify our knowledge, we had a great degree of interaction, and because of the themes we had to do, we learned a lot of new things.
- I really liked the game of Kahoot that tested us both the intellect, but also the spirit of competition.
- The interrelation perspective I've had most of the time. I've certainly learned a lot!
- We were able to do the lab homework directly in the classroom, which helped to contain them even more; the fact that I could work with other colleagues.
- The way of teaching supported by support, video images, course themes that fixed the information and made me retain a good part of it, the teacher's friendly attitude, access to various information.
- Teaching and evaluation methods.
- Teaching mode, work at the end of classes, Kahoot game.
- The way and methods of teaching, interaction with students, the fact that our opinion mattered.
- Interactive teaching mode.
- I really liked that it was interactive. The Kahoot idea is super good, very attractive.
- Interaction and style of teaching new information.
- How to teach.

To the question of what was wrong with this course, we can tell you a few answers:

- The fact that the class was fixed after physical hours and sometimes not all colleagues managed to reach the course in due time.
- I do not think that the theme of "Copyright" has been sufficiently thorough.
- Location where it was taking place.
- I have nothing to object to.
- I wish we had more lab hours, and the course was physical.
- Few hours of laboratory.
- I have nothing to reproach. It was a cool class!
- In "breakout rooms" I would have preferred to have 2-3 minutes more time.

4. Research limits, conclusions

The research was carried out only in Transilvania University of Brasov, only at one of the courses concerning Information Literacy. This is one of the limits of research. The research was conducted under restricted conditions, the course being online and the laborers face-to-face, another limit to the research.

The course had attractive elements through the novelty of the topics and the interactive way of teaching. The presentation of the topic green libraries, green practices, carbon footprint has had a great impact. Using Kahoot, interactive online test attracted students. Creative licenses, the use of reusable resources, the methods of finding these sources were also highly appreciated by students.

The article wants to present a method of interaction with students to succeed in improving the course. The questionnaire can be replicated, and the topics as well.

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