

Enhancing Quality Learning Process of Undergraduates in the Faculty of Science by Incorporating an Information Skills Development Programme into the Curricula*

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Information literacy is important to higher education, as it is a part of, and contributor to, life-long learning. While it has become evident that the majority of new entrants are exposed to varying degrees of information prior to university entrance, it was further noted that the majority of them do not exhibit the skills needed in using information for their academic purposes. Hence, in order to empower the undergraduates with information literacy skills the library of the University of Colombo introduced a credit based course to students of the Faculty of Science in March 2010. This research was conducted to identify the effectiveness of the information literacy skills programme in enhancing quality learning process of the undergraduates. The course covered basic information literacy skills under fifteen topics and the course was evaluated by students and the faculty who participated for the course. Initially fifty undergraduates chosen for the course, forty four students successfully completed it. Learning aspects, course delivery methods, assessment methods and the overall quality of the course were evaluated by analyzing questionnaires filled by the course participants. All students (100%) believed that this course helped them to identify new learning methods such as mind mapping and brain storming techniques, note making methods and information searching, evaluating, organizing and acknowledging methods and they also believed that their awareness of the library resources and services have increased dramatically. 93.7% of them declared that they know how to use the library effectively and 68.8% students strongly agreed that what they learned from this programme could be effectively applied to the other subject areas. All students either strongly believed (62.5%) or believed (37.5%) that this programme will help them to upgrade the quality of their academic work during next 2-3 academic years in the university and the feedback given by the faculty suggested that the programme should be made compulsory for all undergraduates in the Faculty and to develop an advanced information literacy course for special degree students.

* Conference on higher education in Sri Lanka "Implementing quality learning for higher education effectiveness" Staff Development Centre (SDC) University of Colombo and Sri Lanka Association for improving higher education effectiveness (SLAIHEE). 13th May 2011, Colombo. Pp. 12