

Cascading Information Literacy in the Kamuzu University of Health Sciences

Aerial view of KCN Lilongwe Campus



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Presentation Outline

- Introduction
- Background information
- Statement of the problem
- Research Methodology
- Study Findings & Discussion
- Conclusion
- References



Introduction

- ❑ Gaining skills in IL & DL is a fundamental aspect of the university experience.
- ❑ People who are information literate are able discern credible information from misinformation or disinformation, use information ethically and skillfully.
- ❑ As the information environment has shifted from paper based to digital emphasis has also shifted towards DL
- ❑ Preskly (2001) argued that *“Today's students are no longer the people our education system was designed to teach.”*

- ❑ Effective use of digital resources in increasingly becoming important in work and business
 - ❑ 77% of the jobs in the UK require IT skills (E-Skills, 2009)
 - ❑ £3.7 billion lost in SME in the UK in 2005 as result of inefficient use of digital information
- ❑ From 2005 in the UK employers expect graduates to know how to locate, assess, and interpret information from a wide variety of sources for both knowledge building and decision making (Julien et al., 2010)

Background Information

- ❑ UNIMA was established in 1964 under the UNIMA Provisional Act, which was replaced by the UNIMA Act of 1974.
- ❑ UNIMA had five constituent colleges: Chancellor College and Polytechnic established in 1965; Bunda College of Agriculture established in 1967; Kamuzu College of Nursing in 1979; and College of Medicine in 1991.
- ❑ In 2019, the Kamuzu College of Nursing and the College of Medicine were delinked from UNIMA to form Kamuzu University of Health Sciences

Statement of the Problem

- ❑ IL & DL are learned in a trial-and-error manner without direct support from educational institutions (White et al. 2012).
- ❑ Only a minority of students use them appropriately and for educational purposes (Luo, 2010).
- ❑ Ability to use Internet as a resource varies significantly based on gender, ethnic identities and socioeconomic backgrounds of the students (Hargittai, 2010).

Rationale for IL

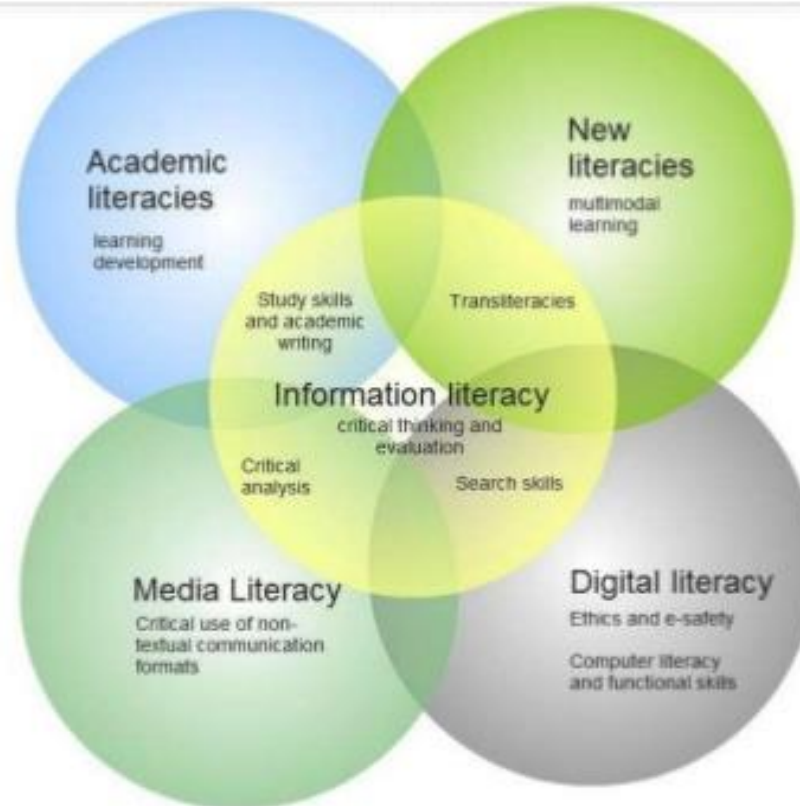
- ❑ **Librarians:** bibliographic instructions to students. Students now bypass librarians and access information (Driscoll, 2010).
- ❑ Librarians need to engage in higher level literacies such as identifying appropriate sources of information, evaluate sources, adhere to copyright issues and effectively communicate without plagiarism (Driscoll, 2010)
- ❑ McGuiness (2007) argues that librarians should incorporate IL and DL skills into the curriculum with the goal of influencing the power structures and help shape the education content.

- ❑ **Faculty:** a tacit assumption among faculty that they will absorb IL & DL via 'osmosis' i.e. conducting research for course work or following academic advisors (McGuinness, 2003).
- ❑ **Faculty:** they should learn via their motivation, interests and innate abilities rather than the quality and format of the instructional opportunities.
- ❑ IL training, IL conferences, workshops and courses should form part of academic development.

- ❑ **Students:** Integrating IL into the curriculum. However what should be integrated into the curriculum and how should it be cascaded?



Literacies landscape



Models for Teaching IL

1. Compartmentalised Model

- Include credit modules based at academic libraries (Badke, 2008).
- Students need specific training to be able to navigate through information sources and should be credited for doing so

2. Distributed Model

- Course integrated instruction courses
- IL is integrated into courses across many disciplines and spread throughout the academic career (Bell, 2008)

Research Methods

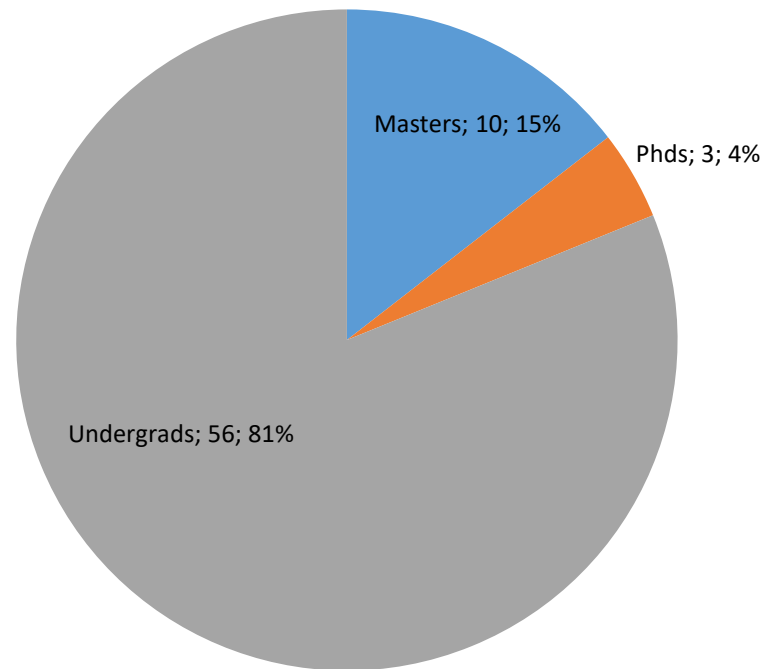
- Data Collection:** From Kamuzu College of Nursing only-the team at College of Medicine stated that they needed more time.
- Target :** **30** Faculty members, **200** (postgraduate and undergraduate students).
- (Total responded=10 (33%) Faculty and 70 (35%) students)**
- Mode:** Online then printed open ended questionnaires upon noting challenges with online tool.

Research Methods

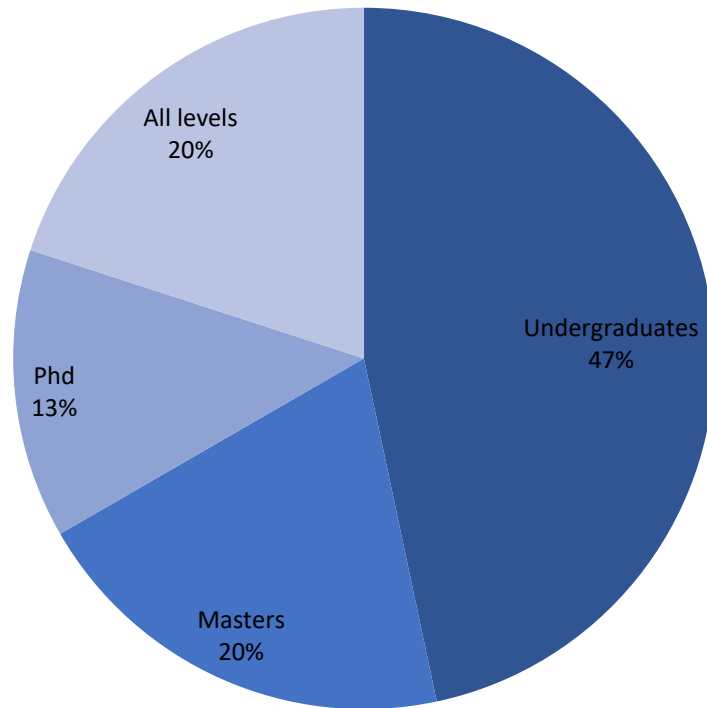
- **Data Analysis:** Data collected through self administered questionnaires were recorded into Google online forms and analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively.



Students' Levels of Study



Faculty Members Levels of Teaching



Study Findings

- ❑ All student participants indicated to have undergone basic IL training sessions e.g. in
 - ✓ Using the catalogue and resources databases
 - ✓ Structuring an effective search
- ❑ 75% of Faculty members aware that students have ever been taught IL, 25% not aware
- ❑ 50% of Faculty members at all levels-students don't demonstrate the search and usage of information from credible sources e.g. PubMed, HINARI

How Respondents Rated Various IL Skills

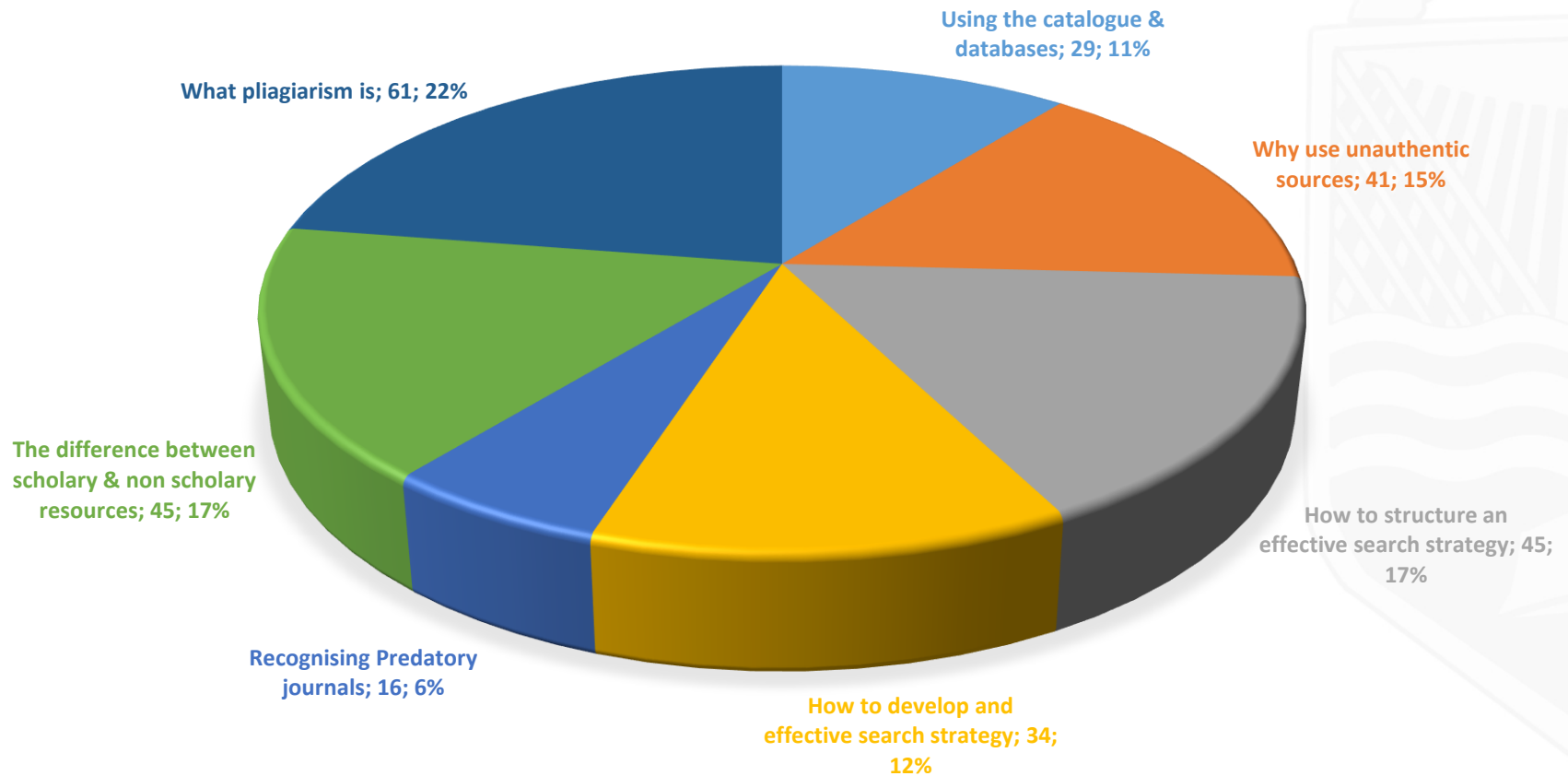
All respondents rated as **extremely important**;

- ✓ Academic integrity,
- ✓ Citation & referencing,
- ✓ Data management
- ✓ Finding & Evaluating information
- ✓ Academic writing

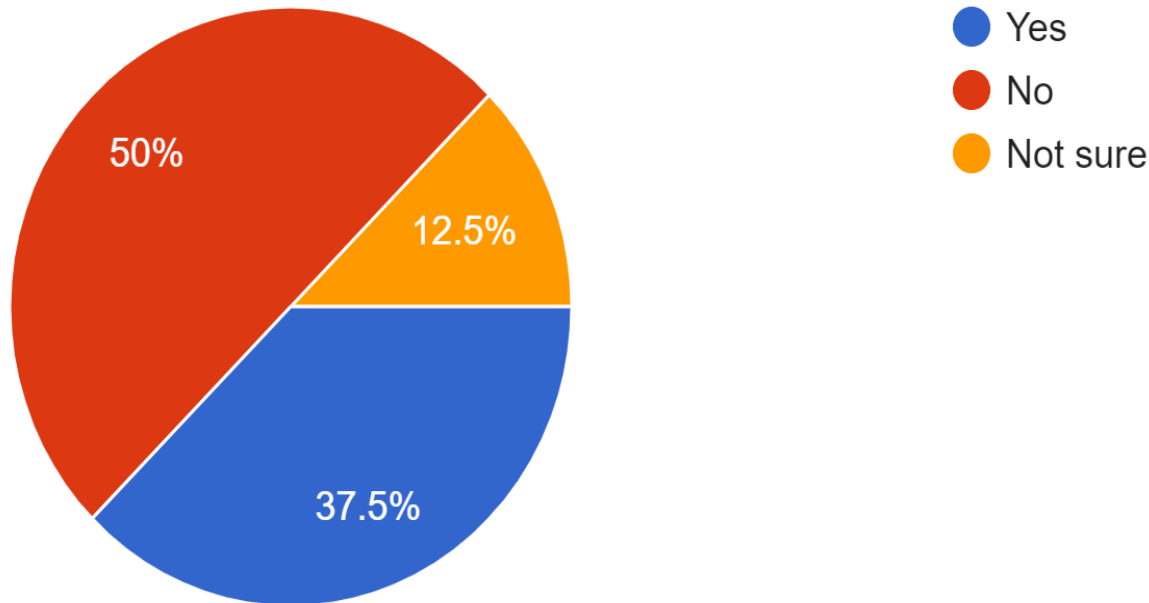
BUT students found

- ✓ Searching of OPAC and use of reference management software **less important.**

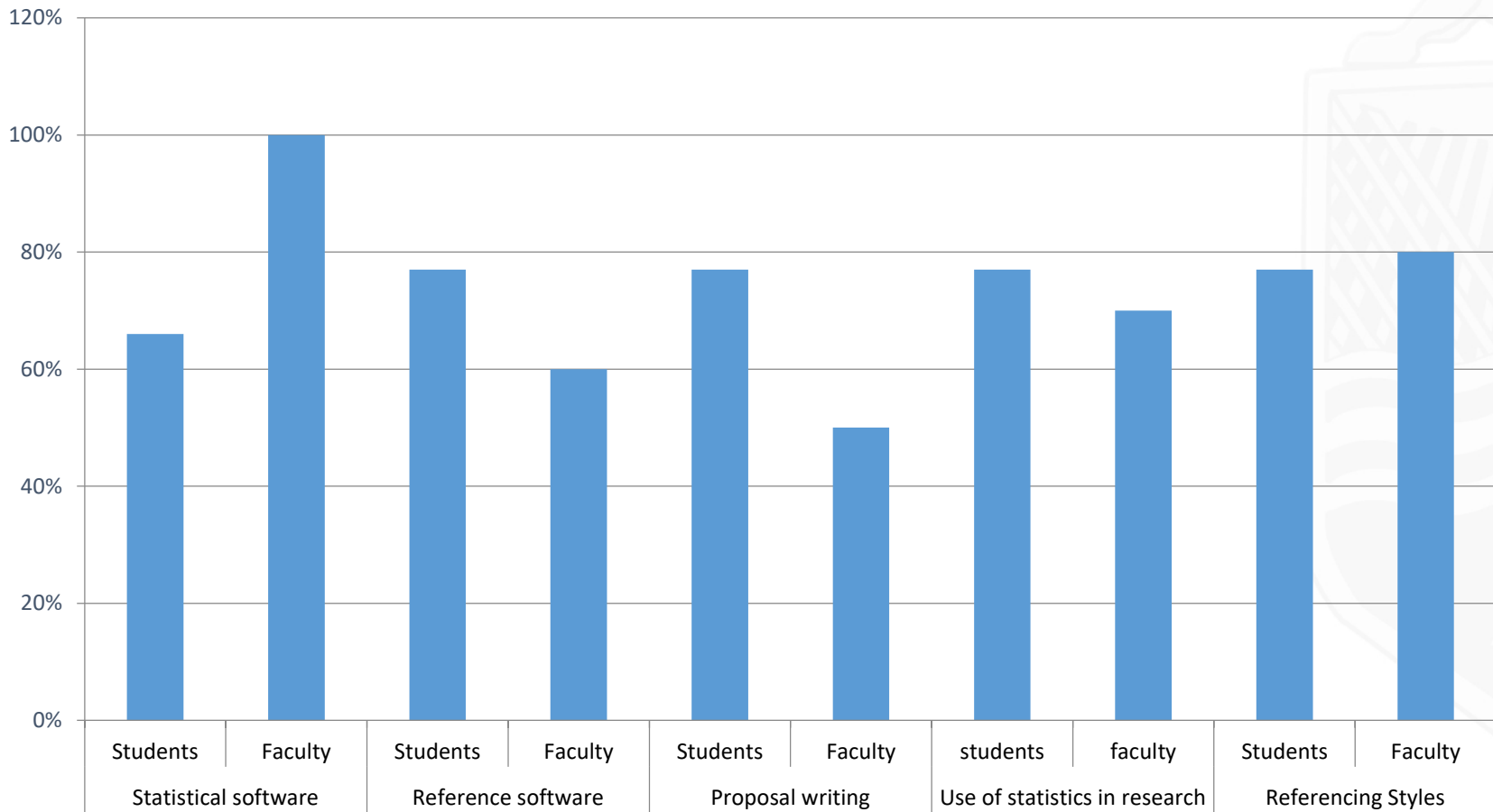
Basic IL Skills Previously Learnt



Report by faculty on evidence of the usage of credible resources by students



Proposed New IL Skills

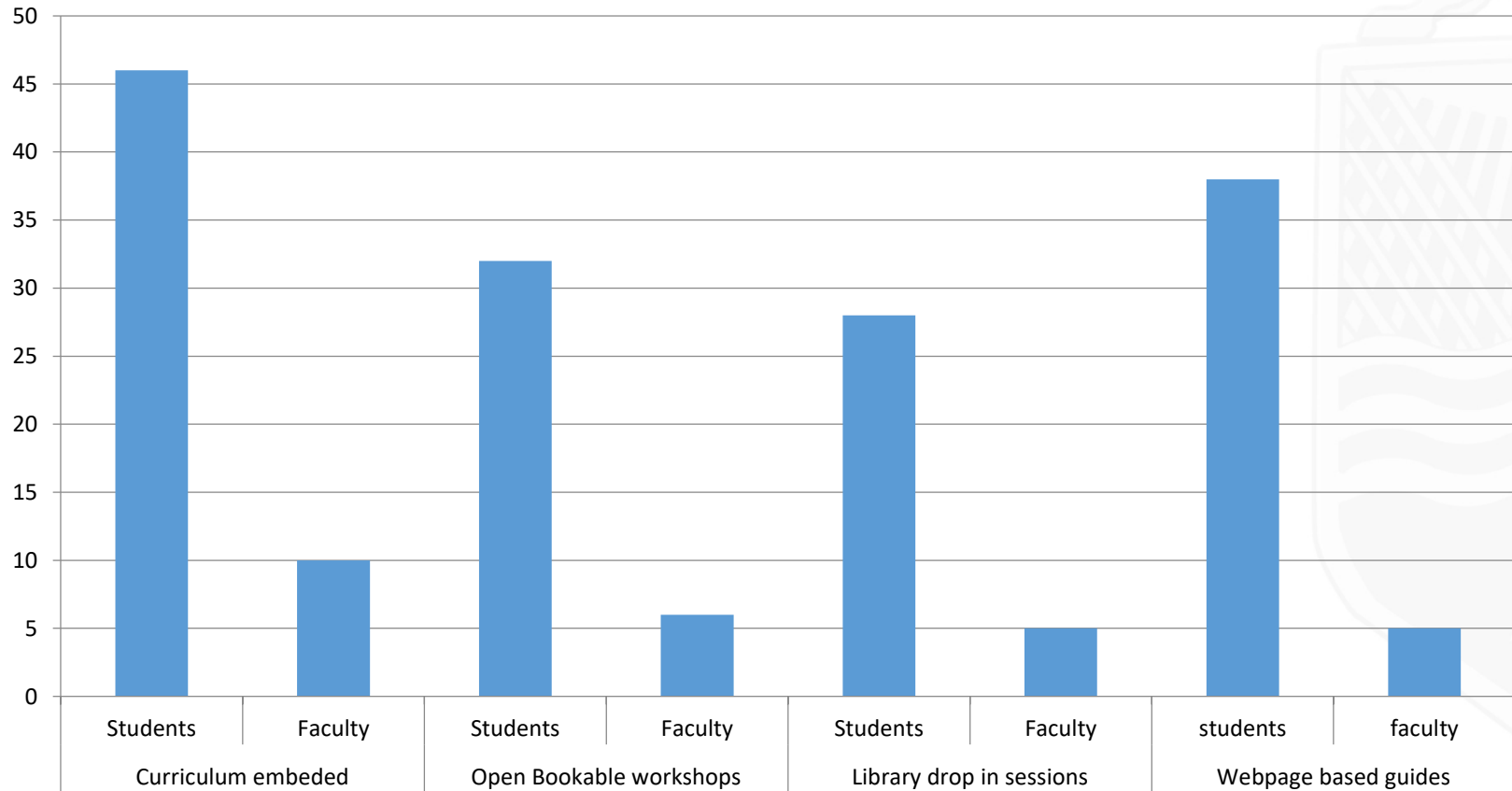


Challenges Demonstrated by Learners in their Academic Work

100% of lectures reported extreme challenges in

- Critical writing
- Avoidance of plagiarism
- Usage of reference management software (Zotero).

Respondents Preference for IL Delivery



Skills Postgrads Wished were Acquired During their Undergraduate Studies

The following issues kept coming up among all.

- Using Citation and reference software such as Zotero.
- Citation and referencing
- Decision making skills
- Academic writing and critical reading
- Academic integrity and avoiding plagiarism
- Finding and evaluating information

Comments about IL

‘We should have some sessions on how to search for information from some reliable websites e.g. HINARI and PUBMED’

‘The college should teach students how to search for information on HINARI, Google scholar in the first year’

‘Teach students in first year first semester so that they should not find it hard when progressing’

‘I feel i have limited knowledge on information literacy and there is need to allocate more time to information literacy orientation for the coming groups’

‘To improve on access to internet because most of the times there are challenges to access to that or even slow net’

‘Add more computers in the library for most students to use them when searching for information’

‘It is very nice and we would like to encourage management that they should increase time frame for information literacy since it is a very important module but it has been allocated very few hours’

‘Special lessons prior to research module at third year on how students can use databases for searching for information’

‘Needs to be taught as basics before end of first semester’

Advice To Postgrads & undergrads wanting to develop their IL Skills

‘We need IL skills right at the beginning of the course’

‘They should seek skills on information literacy from library personnel’

‘If they have a chance, let them not miss it as it is helpful’

‘Need to be taught academic writing first few weeks on campus’

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

- Faculty and students aware what IL is and appreciate the benefits.
- Evidence of grave existing IL skills challenges at all levels.
- Current demand driven approach not yielding highly sought after benefits.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

- Curriculum based IL preferred
- Need for adequate time
- Current crop of lectures need IL too in order to become advocates.
- More IL at undergraduate level might lessen need for more of the same at higher levels.

END OF PRESENTATION

Thanks for Your Attention

