Teaching Information Literacy for Life: Addressing the Issues

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TEACHING INFORMATION LITERACY FOR LIFE: ADDRESSING THE ISSUES
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Outline

➢ Background: Let’s clarify--what is information literacy (IL)?

➢ IL as a critical competency for workplace and for everyday life
  ➢ What does it mean in those contexts?
  ➢ How does it differ from school?

➢ What are the issues?

➢ Addressing the issues
Background: What is IL?

Information Literacy

- Informed Learning
- Critical Thinking
- Lifelong Learning
- Information Fluency
- Problem-solving
Background: What is IL?

NARROW CONCEPTION OR BROAD CONCEPTION?

Teaching skills—course success

Teaching range of competencies—life success
Background: What is IL?

Ultimately, information literate people are those who have learned how to learn. They know how to learn because they know how knowledge is organized, how to find information, and how to use information in such a way that others can learn from them. They are people prepared for lifelong learning, because they can always find the information needed for any task or decision at hand.

ALA 1989
A Critical Competency

The ability to seek, find, and decipher information can be applied to countless life decisions, whether financial, medical, educational, or technical.

Obama 2009
A Critical Competency

- Informed community (healthy democratic community):
  - Digital and media literacy widely taught in schools, public libraries and other community centers
  - Citizens active in acquiring and sharing knowledge within and across social networks
  - People can assess and track changes in the information health of their communities
A Critical Competency

• Academic success
  • Core curricula
  • LEAP initiative
    Liberal Education and America’s Promise—AACU)
  • Accreditation standards
  • Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Quality Enhancement Programs
What does IL mean in the workplace?

W. Wayne Booker

http://www.lib.purdue.edu/infolit/bookerChair/wayneBooker
What does IL mean in the workplace?

- Produces positive outcomes for small and large businesses
- Growing # of studies of employers on what employees need and lack:
  - Ability to formulate precise, accurate questions
  - Ability to locate, understand, organize, and use information
  - Use variety of media and formats
What does IL mean in the workplace?

- Ability to assess the credibility of information
- Judgment in sifting for relevant information
What does IL mean in the workplace?

• Ability to use research process to describe, summarize, synthesize information

• Ability to monitor trends and readily adapt to them
What does IL mean in the workplace?

• Critical thinking, problem solving, analytical reasoning, oral and written communication skills

• Social skills, the ability to listen, teamwork, collaboration
What does IL mean in the workplace?

• Willingness and ability to continually learn new skills

• Ability to adopt and adapt, create and recreate, contextualize and recontextualize

Lloyd 2003
What does IL mean in everyday life?

- Examples of health and finances

- Better health outcomes, more empowered patients, less cost

- 36% of adult U.S. population low health literacy (87 million)

- 75% of low health literacy have insurance
What does IL mean in everyday life?

- People with inadequate health literacy:
  - Have difficulty controlling chronic illnesses
  - Are less likely to understand and participate in disease prevention and health promotion programs
  - Are more likely to be hospitalized
  - Have less autonomy in self-care and decision making
  - Are more likely to have bad disease outcomes, mortality
What does IL mean in everyday life?

- **Financial Literacy:**

- College students far more financially literate than high school seniors

- Those who studied science, social science, engineering had the highest financial literacy scores, in spite of the fact that they have had little related course work. Business next.
What does IL mean in everyday life?

- May be related to problem-solving ability rather than possession of time-limited financial facts.

- Knowing how to approach a problem and how to research it are key to making the best personal financial decisions.

  Mandell 2008
What does IL mean in everyday life?

Financial Resources

Standard of Living

Financial Literacy
How does work and everyday IL differ from IL for students?

- Tasks and problems tend to be complex, messy, and open-ended, difficult to analyze.

- Focuses less on identifying information needs—problems often assigned to an employee to resolve.
How does it differ from IL for students?

- Uses different approaches to information seeking and use
- Goes beyond mastery of information-seeking skills
- Tasks are context-specific, not generic
How does it differ from IL for students?

• Different for different types of jobs
  
  • Vocational workers, occupation
  
  • Managerial used more primary sources (like internally-generated information) than secondary (important in academic work)
  
  • Networked to gather information
  
  • Needed time management, social networking, organizing internal information such as emails
What are the issues?
Addressing the issues…

• Think about what you can do…
• Professionally, societally, personally
What are the issues?

• Many people are not transferring/applying IL skills to different contexts

• 21st century workplace and everyday literacies not well understood or sufficiently researched yet

• Need research on how to prepare college students and develop employees with IL
What are the issues?
What are the issues?

- Who should teach information literacy for the workplace and everyday life? How and when should this teaching occur?

- Most employers surveyed thought that K-12 schools, 4-year colleges and universities, or employees themselves were responsible.
What are the issues?

• Managers believed it was easier to develop these skills in students than in experienced workers.

• Individual coaching and mentoring were the most effective methods to improve employee skills in these areas.
What are the issues?

- College training in digital literacy is rare, though it was identified as a critical challenge.

- Academic librarians tend to teach IL skills for course-level success

- Are libraries models for workplace and everyday IL?
Addressing the issues…

• Work together as a community by engaging stakeholders in IL

• Plan education as a progressive continuum through life rather than as segmented courses, modules, learning outcomes to be mastered and forgotten

• Consider the transitions between pre-school, elementary, secondary, higher education
Addressing the issues…

• Develop institutional missions that prepare students for the next phase

• Develop better understanding of relationship between IL in the formal educational process and the workplace and everyday life—Internship Project

• Develop empirical evidence on the cost of lack of IL; case studies of how IL affects decisions and problem-solving
Addressing the issues…

- Establish policies about IL expectations in job; develop strategies for teaching and assessing
- Provide professional development opportunities on IL
- Develop recognition programs that will help to publicize innovation and models
Addressing the issues…

• Do a reality check for yourself and your organization:
  • Do you use research process to describe, summarize, synthesize information?
  • Do you monitor trends and readily adapt to them?
  • Do you use a variety of media and formats to gather info for your job?
  • Are you and your co-workers willing and able to continually learn new skills?
  • How capable are you in critical thinking, problem solving, analytical reasoning, oral and written communication skills, social skills, the ability to listen, teamwork, collaboration?
  • What about your everyday literacies?
Addressing the issues…

- Informed communities need public policies that:
  - Support production, dissemination of relevant, credible information
  - Enhance capacity of individuals to engage with information
  - Promote people’s engagement with information and with one another
Addressing the issues…
Policy and NFIL

• Series of summits—lifelong learning, competitiveness
  
  • Prague Declaration, 2003
  • Alexandria Proclamation, 2005
  • American Competitiveness in the Internet Age, Washington, 2007
  • October 2014, Washington
Addressing the issues…
Policy and NFIL

- Information Literacy Proclamation Project

  - Need for recognition of IL as societal issue, not just library or school issue
  - Increase visibility of IL outside of libraries
  - Give policy makers notice about an emerging issue
  - Annual recognition of IL
By His Excellency Dannel P. Malloy, Governor: an Official Statement

WHEREAS, information literacy provides the tools and skills to find, evaluate, and use credible information from all sources in our constantly evolving world; and

WHEREAS, the ability to search, find, decipher, and analyze different forms of information is a key component in effective decision-making across various financial, medical, educational, and industrial fields; and

WHEREAS, information literacy, as taught in schools and libraries, is a crucial part of education and will expose students to analytic and research practices that will better prepare them for changing technologies; and

WHEREAS, individuals who are comfortable working with digital information are better able to seek highly skilled jobs and compete at high levels in the global economy; and

WHEREAS, information literacy encourages individuals to draw conclusions, make informed decisions, apply knowledge to using new technology concepts, and supports creative thinking that may develop innovative products and processes using technology; and

WHEREAS, using information acquired through technology to understand human, cultural, and societal issues promotes an informed and engaged citizenry; now

Addressing the issues…

What can you do?

Email your idea to sweiner@purdue.edu

Or write on paper and collect in your row
References

Achieve. 2008. Out of many, one: Toward rigorous common core standards from the ground up.
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References


References


Thank you!

Questions and comments…