A Critical Approach to Information Literacy

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Introduction

- Critical Pedagogy
- Information Literacy
  - Origins
  - Theoretical grounding
  - Skills-based frameworks
- Critical Information Literacy
  - Introduction
  - In practice
- Conclusions
Critical pedagogy “help[s] students to develop a consciousness of freedom, recognise authoritarian tendencies, empower the imagination, connect knowledge and truth to power, and learn how to read both the word and the world as part of a broader struggle for agency, justice and democracy.”

- Henry Giroux (2012, p.116)
If you want to change the world, do something
Problems

THIS IS WHAT DEMOCRACY LOOKS LIKE
Information Literacy

Alberta Model

Seven Pillars

Big6

Guided Inquiry

And more…
“an effort to deny the ancillary status of librarianship by inventing a social malady with which librarians as ‘information professionals’ are uniquely qualified to deal.”

- Foster (1993, p.346)
“Information literacy is not as empowering as the library profession would like to think.”

- Doherty and Ketchner (2005)

“[f]ar from contributing to equitable education outcomes, this [information literacy] framework for school library research masks an exclusionary ideology.”

“hindering the transformation of...students and inhibiting their impact on the world”
- Pankl and Coleman (2009, p.8)

“a limited perception of [information literacy] as a neutral process which is entirely unaffected by any kind of social, political or historical background”
- Špiranec and Zorica (2010, p.142-143)
Charge:

Update the Information literacy competency standards for higher education so that they reflect the current thinking on such things as the creation and dissemination of knowledge, the changing global higher education and learning environment, the shift from information literacy to information fluency, and the expanding definition of information literacy to include multiple literacies, e.g., transliteracy, media literacy, digital literacy, etc.

- ACRL (2013)
Would aim to “reverse trends of exclusion from political participation and enable people to participate in the decisions and events that affect their lives.”

- Whitworth (2009, p.118)
Sharing and dialogue between students

Fostering intellectual curiosity

Research relevant to students’ lives (Pankl and Coleman 2009, p.9)

Challenging authority determined by authorities (Cope 2009, p.25)

Raising awareness of manipulation by outside forces

Contact zone pedagogy (Torrell 2009, pp.89-103)
Conclusions

- Supporting critical abilities
- Increasing political agency
- Strengthening democracy
This work *is* being done – we don’t always know it or have the same name for it

Engagement with the ethical and moral responsibilities of the LIS profession is crucial – to LIS and to society
Neutrality is not an option.

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References & Suggested Reading


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