

Moving Beyond the Threshold:

Next Steps in Critical Information Literacy



LIRT President's Program – LIRT Forum Saturday June 23rd, 2018 | 1:00-2:30 PM

There is little doubt of the importance of critical information literacy and the role of librarians, but many librarians are asking themselves, what should come next? Recently, academic, school, and public librarians have been working tirelessly to document, articulate, and discuss, our progressively challenging role in cultivating social responsibility within our communities and amongst our students, in order to frame the conversation for growth. Join leading experts to hear how librarians can better engage library users in information literacy and lifelong learning.

Featured Speakers

Ian Beilin (he/him/his) is Humanities Research Services Librarian at Columbia University. Ian is on the editorial board of the open access, open peer-reviewed journal *In the Library with the Lead Pipe* and is co-editor of the forthcoming book *Reference Librarianship and Justice: History, Practice, and Praxis* (Library Juice Press, 2018). He has written and presented on topics in critical librarianship, critical library instruction and critical information literacy, including “Critical Librarianship as an Academic Pursuit,” in Karen Nicholson and Maura Seale, eds., *The Politics of Theory and the Practice of Critical Librarianship* (Library Juice Press 2018), “Student Success and the Neoliberal Academic Library,” *Canadian Journal of Academic Librarianship* (2016), and “How Unplanned Events Can Sharpen the Critical Focus in Information Literacy Instruction,” in Nicole Pagowsky and Kelly McElroy, eds., *Critical Library Pedagogy Handbook* (ACRL 2016).

Amita Lonial (she/her/hers) is currently the Learning, Marketing and Engagement Principal Librarian at San Diego County Library. She also serves as co-chair for PLA's inaugural Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Taskforce. Prior to becoming a librarian she spent 8 years in the non-profit sector organizing for racial and economic justice. She is deeply committed to exploring how libraries can create racially just and equitable communities through public programs and services.

Tiffany Whitehead, the Mighty Little Librarian, is the Upper & Middle School Librarian at Episcopal High School in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. She has served as the President for ISTE's Librarians Network and was recognized as one of ISTE's 2014 Emerging Leaders. Tiffany is National Board Certified in Library Media and was named one of the 2014 Library Journal Movers & Shakers. She was the 2016 recipient of the Louisiana Library Media Specialist Award.

Abstract & Further Readings

Ian Beilin: My presentation will offer some observations regarding recent developments in critical information literacy, particularly in the context of academic libraries. In particular, I will focus on some of the drawbacks and problems associated with the term's increasing acceptance within established library institutions and discourses. The chief hazard is to lose the foundation, and therefore the goals, of CIL. Practitioners must retain the imperative of working for the radical transformation (or abolition) of oppressive structures, rather than to be incorporated into them. Also needed is a greater understanding of the intergenerational struggle for social justice – to link critical information literacy to previous efforts to promote a critically informed and activist library work – in the 1990s, 1960s-70s, 1930s, and even earlier. In other words, critical information literacy's 'next steps' should be in part taking a step back, to better understand what and who preceded us (and who we may have forgotten), and then to link our efforts with ideas and movements beyond librarianship proper so that we can better insure the permanence of our efforts within it.

Suggested Readings:

- Baer, Andrea. "Critical Pedagogy, Critical Conversations: Expanding Dialogue about Critical Library Instruction through the Lens of Composition and Rhetoric." *In the Library with the Lead Pipe*. December 7, 2016.
- Ettarh, Fobazi. "Vocational Awe and Librarianship: The Lies We Tell Ourselves." *In the Library with the Lead Pipe*. January 10, 2018.
- Hudson, David James. The Whiteness of Practicality. In *Topographies of Whiteness: Mapping Whiteness in Library and Information Studies*. Gina Schlesselman-Tarango, ed. Pp. 203--234. Sacramento: Library Juice Press, 2017.
- McElroy, Kelly and Nicole Pagowsky, eds. *Critical Library Pedagogy Handbook*. vols. 1 & 2. ACRL, 2016.
- Saunders, Laura. "Connecting Information Literacy and Social Justice: Why and How." *Communications in Information Literacy* 11, no. 1 (2017): 55-75.
- Tewell, Eamon. "Putting Information Literacy into Context: How and Why Librarians Adopt Critical Practices in their Teaching." *In the Library with the Lead Pipe*. October 12, 2016.

Amita Lonial: Opportunities to engage in critical information literacy are changing as rapidly as public libraries are changing themselves. As traditional reference transactions have decreased, meaningful hands-on and participatory learning spaces are increasing for all users. With this trend the possibility exists for public libraries to create and nurture decentralized and decolonized learning spaces, where inquiry and information interrogation are practiced collaboratively. Part of the pathway to creating these spaces is librarians reframing or rejecting traditional information literacy pedagogy, and engaging our communities in programming that centers them as creators and knowledge sources, not just as consumers. The challenge comes as we face an increasingly overwhelming and distressing media environment building urgency for libraries to rethink and expand their media literacy offerings. Strides towards understanding and embedding racial equity and social justice into our institutions, as well as acknowledging our historical legacy in upholding white cultural dominance, serve as a critical foundational steps towards envisioning public libraries as places where we make meaning of information around us, critically evaluate ideas, and deeply interrogate and shift power.

Further Readings:

- Tewell, Eamon. "Putting Critical Information Literacy Into Context: How and Why Librarians Adopt Critical Practices Into Their Teaching," In *The Library With The Lead Pipe* (Oct. 12, 2016), accessed May 4, 2018
- Hamilton, Buffy. "Library as Sponsors of Literacy and Learning: Peeling Back the Layers." *Digital Media and Learning Research Hub* (Dec 13, 2013), Accessed May 4, 2018
- Shah, Mimosha. "Civic Lab." *Programming Librarian* (Apr 30, 2018), accessed May 4, 2018
- Schlesselman-Tarango Gina. *Topographies of Whiteness: Mapping Whiteness in Library and Information Science*. (September 18, 2017).

Tiffany Whitehead: Teaching news literacy is more necessary and challenging than ever in a world where news is delivered at a constant pace from a broad range of sources. Since social media and filter bubbles can make it challenging to access unbiased, factual information, we must equip students to be critical as they access news sources for a variety of purposes. This lecture-style session will give an overview of the phenomenon of fake news going viral and tools educators can use to help students develop news literacy skills.

Further Readings/Resources:

- Brown, Damon, TEDEd: How to choose your news
Checkology
Common Sense Media News & Media Literacy Toolkit
Newseum Ed Tools
NBC News, Fake News: How A Partying Macedonian Teen Earns Thousands Publishing Lies
Shuster, Kate, Speaking of Digital Literacy...
Stony Brook University School of Journalism's Center for News Literacy
University of Virginia Library, The Source Deck
Wineburg, Sam and McGrew, Sarah and Breakstone, Joel and Ortega, Teresa. (2016).
Evaluating Information: The Cornerstone of Civic Online Reasoning. Stanford Digital Repository. Available at: <http://purl.stanford.edu/fv751yt5934>
Zimdars, Melissa, My 'Fake News List' Went Viral. But Made-up Stories Are Only Part of the Problem