THE EMERGING DISCIPLINE OF INFORMATION LITERACY:
A CONVERSATION
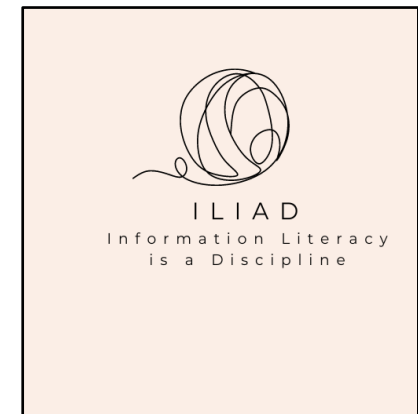
ILIAD
Information Literacy
is a Discipline

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ALA LRRT Webinar April 5, 2024

Agenda

Introduction – How this conversation got started

Background - IL Elements of a Discipline

IL as a Discipline and Implications for Practitioner-Researchers

Information Literacy Research and Ethics

Questions & Discussion

INTRODUCTION

Conversations
ILIAD Group
IL Handbook
Presentations

What might change about information literacy (IL) educational practice if IL was recognized as a discipline rather than as a set-of-skills or concepts?

Webber, S., & Johnston, B. (2017). Information literacy: conceptions, context and the formation of a discipline. *Journal of Information Literacy, 11*(1), 156-183. https://doi.org/10.11645/11.1.2205

Group

- Meetings: 2021-2023
- Named the Group "ILIAD" -Information Literacy is a Discipline
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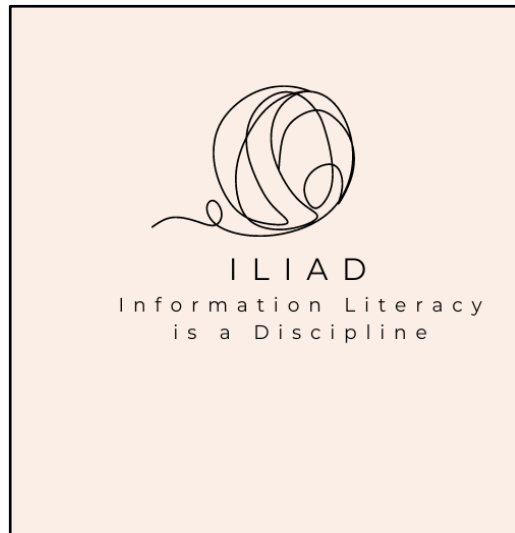
Book

- Facet Publishing
- *Information Literacy Handbook: Charting the Discipline* (expected 2025)

Presentations

Conferences
- LILAC March 2022
- Western Balkans 2022
- ACRL 2023
- LOEX 2023
- ECIL 2023
- GA IL Conference 2024
- WILU 2024

Webinars
- Big Ten Academic Association 2022
- Association of FL Colleges 2023
- Academic Libraries of Indiana (ALI) 2023
- Library Educators Action Forum (LEAF)University of Saskatchewan 2024

BACKGROUND

Elements of a Discipline – Clarence

WHAT IS A DISCIPLINE?

Defining a discipline…

" a particular branch of learning or body of knowledge whose defining elements—i.e., phenomena, assumptions, epistemology, concepts, theories, and methods— distinguish it from other knowledge formations."

Repko, 2008, p. 4

Nature of different disciplines

- Hard pure: chemistry, physics, etc.
- Hard applied: civil engineering, horticulture, etc.
- Soft pure: English, political science, etc.
- Soft applied: nursing, teacher education, etc.

Biglan, 1973

THE DISCIPLINE OF IL

Nature of the Discipline

- Soft applied discipline

- Focus on teaching

Relationship to Other Disciplines

- Takes shape within other disciplinary environments, e.g., communications chemistry, etc.

- Faculty in other disciplines do not use the term IL (Hicks, et. al, 2022)

ELEMENTS OF A DISCIPLINE

ELEMENTS	EXAMPLES
Community of scholars	Professional organizations; conferences
Communications networks	Journals, conferences; academic publishers
Code of ethics	Methods for ensuring research veracity; pedagogic integrity
Traditions and history	Origin stories; historical events
Specific modes of inquiry	Theories, methods, and research approaches
Shared expectations of what constitutes knowledge	Curricula, standards, models

Becher and Trowler, 2001; White and Hitt, 2009

ELEMENTS OF THE IL DISCIPLINE

DISCIPLINE ELEMENTS	SELECT EXAMPLES
Community of scholars	▪ LOEX ▪ ACRL Instruction Section ▪ ALA LIRT
Communications networks	▪ *Journal of Information Literacy* ▪ *Communication in Information Literacy*
Code of ethics	▪ Effective pedagogic practice ▪ Student-centeredness ▪ Focus on ethical and equitable use of information
Traditions and history	▪ Paul Zurkowski (1974) coining the term "IL" ▪ Prague Declaration (2003)
Specific modes of inquiry	▪ Emphasis on qualitative data ▪ Humanistic focus
Shared expectations of what constitutes knowledge	▪ Educational materials, courses, pedagogies ▪ Research into IL practices

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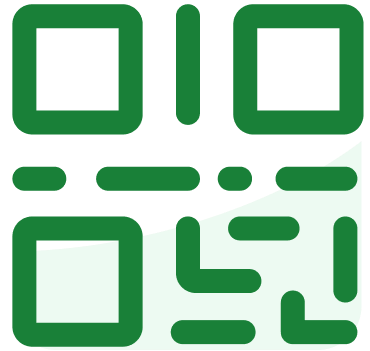
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In a few words, describe your initial thoughts on IL being recognized as a discipline.

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IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTITIONER-RESEARCHERS

❑ Build on the research base
  ▪ Unique base of practitioner-research, plus academic research
  ▪ Drawing on roots in Librarianship and Information Science
  ▪ International

❑ Recognise and assert the distinctiveness of this perspective

❑ Take it into research-related conversations (e.g. SoTL)

❑ Be willing to think that faculty in other disciplines who "don't know what IL is" have a knowledge gap, are territory-grabbing, or are territory-defending

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If IL is a discipline, list one or two ways this might change or impact your practice?

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INFORMATION LITERACY RESEARCH AND ETHICS

Ethical Use of IL
Research conversations

NEW IL RESEARCH MODELS

Student Learning Outcomes- Inquiry about/research into what students are learning - IL

John's research assessing IL instruction across 3 institutions in the same semester- post framework/pre-COVID - same pre/post questionnaire pointing to the disciplinary nature of IL

Future outcomes on IL and AI in higher education

SOME PREVIOUS WORK

Several years ago, Sheril Hook (U. of Toronto), Paulette Rothbauer (Western U.), and I (U. of Missouri) surveyed students in an information literacy course. Questionnaires were distributed at the beginning and the end of courses that embodied the emerging discipline model.

PREVIOUS WORK

At the beginning, students tended to look upon libraries as storehouses and information as "factual." At the end, they saw libraries as resources, librarians as experts, and information as something that could be nuanced.

CHANGES IN PERCEPTION

When students are presented with the notion that information literacy is a discipline in itself they tend to have a more expansive idea of libraries and information. They are more attuned to looking for evidence for informational claims, more skeptical of the claims, more inclined to look for confirmation/refutation of claims. They are aware of the matter of truth, but less trusting of the claimants.

EIGHT ETHICAL GUIDELINES

1. Treat students with respect and dignity as individual learners and information seekers.

2. Acknowledge the role of *teacher* for instructors, critically engaging students and information seekers in being informed.

3. Instill in students and information seekers a commitment to intellectual integrity.

4. Admit to the tension between speech by people with knowledge and speech by people who espouse ideologies.

5. Recognize the complexities underlying the infosphere and the learning environment.

6. Make certain that students are fully cognizant that artificial intelligence and algorithms are human products and, so, can lead to errors of fact and of omission.

7. Ensure that students understand that the production of all information (popular and scholarly) is controlled by relatively few actors.

8. Be aware that scholarly information can tend to amplify established voices and approaches to knowledge growth and can limit access to underrepresented groups and perspectives.
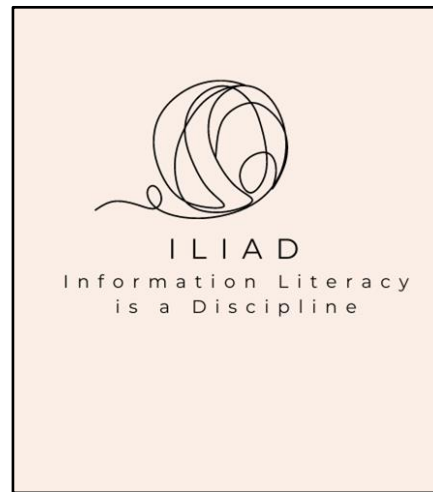
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Please rate the notion of IL as a discipline.

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THANK YOU!
QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

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