Recognizing the Discipline of Information Literacy
Implications for Research and Practice

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Title: Information Literacy Handbook: Charting the Discipline

Sections

1) Introductory Chapters
2) Information Literacy Community
3) Tradition and History of Inquiry
4) Specific Modes of Inquiry
5) Ethical Values
6) Information Literacy Knowledge and Curricula
7) Communications Networks

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Information Literacy is a Discipline (ILIAD) Group

Group of international researchers began meeting beginning March 2021

Core Group
Christine Bruce
John Budd
Bill Johnston
Karen Kaufmann
Clarence Maybee
Sheila Webber

Conferences
Western Balkans 2022
LILAC 2022
ACRL 2023
LOEX 2023
ECIL 2023
Information Literacy as a discipline (Sheila)

Meets most of the indicators for a discipline (Becher & Trowler, 2001; Trowler, 2014) e.g.

- Dedicated journals, conferences and associations
- Doctoral students and scholars identifying with the discipline
- Knowledge base - research and practice
- Different "practice clusters" and "sets of discourses" but also common understandings, feelings and motivations
- "common background knowledge about key figures, conflicts and achievements"
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Describe your initial thoughts on IL being recognized as a discipline.
Panelists’ Positionality

Sheila - Academic, Library and Information Science Educator

Clarence - Librarian at a Research Institution

Bill - Educationalist/Researcher

Karen - Academic Librarian in Transition
Panelist Question 1

What are the implications of recognizing information literacy as a discipline?
Academic, Library and Information Science Educator (Sheila)

If we all name and own IL as a discipline

- Gives us more confidence when talking to others about IL
- More obvious connection with IL evidence base
- Able to provide a more joined-up perspective on IL (e.g. teachers recognise "IL" from it being called that in uni)

Owning the discipline - can be a challenge: Have to be willing to own and display expertise
Librarian at a Research Institution (Clarence)

- Provides a framing that is understood by institutional stakeholders
- Promotes discourse amongst librarians about the scope of our teaching
- Encourages exploration of librarian research outside of educational settings
**Educationalist/Researcher (Bill)**

- Opens doors to other disciplinary communities
- Illuminates how other kinds of disciplines work and the complexities of disciplinary identity within and across institutional structures
- Strengthens capacity to contribute to understanding of and influence over wider social changes
- Balances influence of other socially oriented disciplinary formations like media and cultural studies
Academic Librarian in Transition (Karen)

- Disciplinarity makes the conversation easier across departments & institutions
- It is a disciplinary position versus an explanation conversation
- There is a shared understanding of the discipline
Academic Librarian in Transition (Karen)

IL theory informing practice, and practice informing theory
Panelist Question 2

How does the recognition of information literacy as a discipline help us advocate for more institutional resources to develop new information literacy curricula and promote research?
Library and Information Science Educator (Sheila)

Have to be robust and visible in staking territory and seeing new opportunities

- Scholars eager to appropriate subject areas with potential for funding, publication, impact
- Sometimes deliberately ignore LIS research & practice, as often just ignorant of it

Information Literacy (with LIS) unusual in having such a motivated, aware, networked profession connected to the discipline - we should leverage it more!

Not just "LIS academics' ego" - if squeezed out

- Impacts librarians - work ignored, not included in initiatives
- Impacts research quality - the non-IL people doing the research reinvent wheel, don't build on existing knowledge
- Impacts practice and policy, and citizens - specifically information dimension invisible (as opposed to tech, sociological dimensions etc.): problems embedded in that dimension not addressed
Librarian at a Research Institution (Clarence)

- Development of curricula
- Scholarly engagement

Examples

- Purdue Libraries offers curricula
- Institute for Information Literacy at Purdue
Educationalist/Researcher (Bill)

- Advocacy grounded in discipilinarity knowledge, methodologies and networks strengthens bids for funds and ensures scholarly outputs from research and curriculum projects.

- Over time a portfolio of successful projects contributes to sustained development of the discipline.
Librarian Transitioning to Academic (Karen)

Using a new lens as a discipline:

● What if we used the lens of IL as a discipline for future conversations as researchers, academics and practitioners?

● What happens when we converse using the lens of IL as a discipline?
Please rate the notion of IL as a discipline.
In a few words, describe your initial thoughts on IL being recognized as a Discipline.

Wordcloud Poll  38 responses  19 participants

- Challenging
- Opportunity
- Thought provoking
- Important
- Research time
- Restrictive
- Thank God
- Standing on the edge
- Societal impetative
- Heady
- Exciting
- Tentatively hopeful?
- Empowering
- Transformational
- Good
- Oh dear
- It is transdisciplinary
SLIDO Responses from Conferences

ACRL Conference
March 2023

What do you see as shifts within the MLIS curriculum in having IL as an academic discipline?

- moving profession forward
- Evolving librarianship
- takell.Seriously
- pedagogy
- More research
- Research focus
- Adding criticality
- Engagement
- Interdisciplinary
- Required course
- More theory
- Power
- Information seeking behav
- Visibility
- ownership
- SoTL
- influential
- teaching faculty equality
- more scholars in the field
- Inquiry Based Learning
In a few words, describe your initial thoughts on IL being recognized as a discipline.

Wordcloud Poll  
54 responses  
46 participants

Finally

Exciting

Potential competition with other disciplines
Student training concerns
Show IL as lens to view world
the right next step
finally get some respect
intrigued and full of questions
Not sure this will give us more time on instruc...

Important
Oberdue
Powerful
Uplifted
trying to fit in?
Unsure
Legitimate
Yay
Skepticism

Interest
Discussion

Thank you!
References
