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Media and Information Literacy in Higher Education

Educating the Educators

Edited by Siri Ingvaldsen and Dianne Oberg



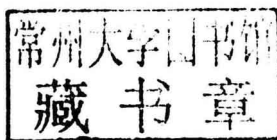
MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Educating the Educators

Edited by

Siri Ingvaldsen

Dianne Oberg



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PREFACE

Media and information literacy (MIL) is increasingly a concept that matters. It is about issues that matter—about health, homelessness, abuse, disasters, migration, as well as about broad socioeconomic benefit. MIL is now widely recognized in policy and practice by governments, education departments, leading world agencies such as UNESCO, libraries, and other information agencies. MIL education is also recognized by many as a professional responsibility. In this climate, understanding what matters in bringing about MIL is crucial; and understanding what matters in bringing about MIL is also central to the purpose of educating the educators who are charged with that professional responsibility.

Empowering others to bring about MIL, deliberately diffusing strategies that work, is a key to bringing about the information-literate society so desperately needed in our digital age. When we consider the possibilities of diffusing innovations associated with educating the educators we start to develop a picture of what it takes to make possible empowering MIL experiences in many spaces: in formal and informal environments, in face-to-face and virtual learning spaces, in workplace, academic and community contexts. Profiling existing innovations for educating educators in one very special context—the higher education sector—is a core purpose of this book.

All the chapters represent contemporary advances in research, practice, or both. They are underpinned by a wide range of theoretical developments, and at the same time have a clear pragmatic purpose. Many are examples of orientation towards evidence-based practice in the field. The authors are deeply interested in learning theories and frameworks. Key ideas such as threshold concepts, inquiry, and informed learning are highlighted. In the chapters that follow, the authors explore the value that sociocultural approaches, social network analysis, and action research can play in building programs and insights important to “educating the educator.” The role of the discipline, the curriculum, the community, and the library all play a part in constituting the environment to be considered.

Overall, powerful educational experiences rest on communication within educational teams, whether those be at colleges and universities, in schools or even our preschool environments, as well as the wider community and workplace context. We continue to need to understand that

colleagues working together do not always share the same view of teaching, learning, or indeed of information literacy. As a consequence they do not always share the same understanding of desired learning outcomes or assessment processes. Overcoming these challenges is always critical in moving forward in any learning design process.

What about my own take on this? Educating the educators has always been a topic dear to my heart. I have always been interested in what information literacy is all about and how it is learned, particularly in terms of how it is experienced by others. People's experiences of information literacy continue to grow and develop. We know that while there are ways of talking about information literacy concepts, constructs, and experiences at a relatively high level of abstraction, to be meaningful these must be contextualized, and our insights into those experiences in different contexts continue to grow. The shape of people's vision of information literacy molds their practice. As visions of information literacy have transformed over the years, whilst remaining true to the original interpretation of information empowering lifelong learning in many contexts, so the chapters in this book reflect these transformations.

Educating the educators in higher education embraces educating the owners, designers, implementers, and supporters of a wide variety of educational environments and programs. It involves educating information professionals and teachers in their initial education. It involves professional development for many groups. Educating the educators embraces information professionals participating in professional development programs for educators, as well as leading segments of those programs. It involves staying abreast not only in developments associated with information literacy, but also in relation to learning technologies, learning theories, and discipline-based developments. It involves participating in, and leading others in, what is known as the scholarship of learning and teaching.

I commend to you the many innovations, representing both research and practice profiled in the following chapters. Each offers a unique lens on the current landscape associated with educating the educators for MIL leadership in higher education.

C. Bruce

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CHAPTER 1

Convergences of and for Media and Information Literacy Instruction in Higher Education

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

The filing on February 2, 2015 of the *Framework for Information Literacy in Higher Education* by the Board of Directors of the American College and Research Libraries (ACRL) section of the American Library Association signaled some convergences in conceptions of media and information literacy (MIL). Two groups within the library sector traditionally have been committed to MIL instruction—school librarians and academic librarians—but in the past their theoretical and practical approaches to this work to a large extent have been quite different, and the developments in each field have been largely invisible to the other sector.

This chapter presents several approaches to MIL instruction: from school libraries, the process approach exemplified by Guided Inquiry (Kuhlthau, Maniotes, & Casperi, 2007, 2012) and from academic libraries, Informed Learning (Bruce, 2008) and the Framework for Information Literacy in Higher Education (ACRL, 2015). Several convergences between these approaches offer opportunities for “educators of educators”—school librarians, academic librarians, K–12 teachers, college and university teachers, and educators of teachers and of librarians—to draw upon and perhaps align their practices with the best in the theories and practices of both sectors.

Practitioners in both sectors of education have much to learn from each other, and the work of practitioners in each sector affects the work in the other sector. My special concern over a long career has been the education of teachers and school librarians, preparing them for their work with children and youth in K–12 schools. Academic librarians have been my partners in this endeavor, and my research on how teachers use libraries in their teaching has shown that they were influenced by their experiences with university librarians during their preservice teacher education (Oberg, 1993).

The concept of “educators of educators” in the title and content of this book reflects the awareness that MIL instruction can be initiated in many different ways, by individuals and by groups, carrying out many different roles in teaching and learning. Most often, the phrase “educators of educators” brings to mind university faculty members responsible for preparing university students for professional practice as teachers and librarians, but in the area of MIL education, this is not always the case. For example, students in a college class experiencing difficulty with the library searches necessary for completing an assignment might ask for help from their instructor who then accesses help for the class from the library staff. School librarians often provide informal professional development in MIL for their school leadership staff as part of initiating a whole-school approach to curriculum-integrated MIL instruction (Oberg, 2009). University faculty may reach out to academic librarians to discuss making improvements to a course assignment (Shorten, Wallace, & Crookes, 2001). College accrediting bodies may require that colleges give evidence of student achievement of information literacy outcomes in the college curriculum, which brings academic librarians and teaching faculty together to revise, implement, and evaluate information literacy-based curricula (Thompson, 2002).

1.2 MIL INSTRUCTION IN SCHOOL LIBRARIES

What is regarded as exemplary MIL instruction in school libraries has changed over the years: a source approach, during the 1960s and 1970s; a pathfinder approach, through the 1980s; and a process approach, beginning in the 1990s. The process approach has been implemented over the past 25 years under many different “labels” in the school libraries field; information literacy, MIL, inquiry-based instruction, and Guided Inquiry are just a few.

The process approach to teaching MIL emphasizes thinking about information and using information within a problem-solving perspective. It does not discard the knowledge from earlier approaches, such as the knowledge of tools, sources, and search strategies, but it does emphasize that this knowledge is to be developed within the teaching of thinking and problem-solving (Oberg, 1999, 2004).

The process approach is theory-based and grounded in research from the fields of education and of library and information studies (LIS). From education comes learning theory, and from LIS, information seeking behavior theory. For example, from education comes the knowledge that

learners vary in the level of abstraction that they can handle, depending on their cognitive development and their prior knowledge and experience. Also from education come the constructivist concepts of learners actively building or constructing their knowledge and of learners experiencing changes in feelings as well as changes of thoughts as they use information. From LIS comes the knowledge that users of information progress through levels of question specificity, from vague notions of information need, to clearly defined needs or questions, and that users are more successful in the search process if they have a realistic understanding of the information system and of the information problem. From both education and LIS comes the understanding that students learn more about MIL when MIL instruction is connected to and integrated with disciplinary content and assignments.

The work on MIL instruction in the school libraries sector has been strongly influenced by the seminal research of Carol C. Kuhlthau whose doctoral work investigated the experiences of high school seniors completing library-based research assignments. Kuhlthau brought to her research a deep understanding of student learning, beginning from her early career as a kindergarten teacher and a school librarian. Kuhlthau's Model of the Information Search Process showed the affective, cognitive, and physical changes that learners experience as they complete a research project from task initiation to presentation. The process approach to inquiry goes beyond the location of information to the use of information, beyond the answering of a specific question to the seeking of evidence to shape a topic. It considers the process of a search for information as well as the product of the search. It calls for an awareness of the complexity of learning from information: learning from information is not a routine or standardized task, and it involves the affective as well as the cognitive domains. Throughout the process, learners benefit from support in dealing with the feelings, thoughts, and actions that are part of their information search process.

The goal of instruction is "to instill in students a sense of the process of learning from a variety of sources of information" (Kuhlthau, 1995, p. 1). This is true for college and university students as well as K-12 students; it is also true for professionals who engage in information use for solving problems—see, e.g., research into the use of information by financial analysts and judges (Kuhlthau, 2003). By providing opportunities for information users, whatever their age and stage of life, for reflecting on their feelings, thoughts, and actions throughout the process of learning through

the use of information, information users develop an awareness and understanding of their own personal learning experience as well as an awareness and understanding of their new content knowledge. This metacognitive aspect of the process approach to MIL is critical to developing abilities related to self-directed learning, lifelong and life-wide.

1.2.1 Instructional Models in the K-12 School Library Sector

Kuhlthau's Model of the Information Search Process is the basis of the Guided Inquiry Model (Kuhlthau et al., 2007). Guided Inquiry is a model to guide MIL instruction in K-12 schools; the model is based on six principles:

- Children learn by being actively engaged in and reflecting on experience.
- Children learn by building on what they already know.
- Children develop higher-order thinking skills through guidance at critical points in the learning process.
- Children have different ways and modes of learning.
- Children learn through social interaction with others.
- Children learn through instruction and experience in accord with their cognitive development (Kuhlthau et al., 2007, p. 25).

Guided Inquiry offers a process model for teaching content and information use in an integrated and meaningful way (Table 1.1).

Instructional models support teachers and librarians in providing opportunities to develop students' metacognitive abilities. As demonstrated in the *Focus on Inquiry* model (Alberta Learning, 2004), developed

Table 1.1 Phases of the Guided Inquiry process (summary)

Open	Invitation to inquiry, open minds, stimulate curiosity
Immerse	Build background knowledge, connect to content, discover interesting ideas
Explore	Explore interesting ideas, look around, dip in
Identify	Pause and ponder, identify an inquiry question, decide direction
Gather	Gather important information, go broad, go deep
Create	Reflect on learning, go beyond facts to make meaning, create to communicate
Share	Learn from each other, share learning, tell your story
Evaluate	Evaluate achievement of learning goals, reflect on content, reflect on process

Kuhlthau et al. (2012, pp. 1–6).