

Information Literacy: Information Sharing, Democracy and Life-long learning

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Abstract: Information Literacy (IL) is becoming an increasingly important skill in today's technology driven world. This paper examines some typical definitions of IL . Three specific models of IL, the Inquiry Learning Model, The Sconul Seven Pillars of IL Model, and the Digital Information Fluency Model, are then explored. The Junior Cert School Programme (JCSP) , a functional and information literacy programme directed at young people deemed at risk of leaving school early, is discussed using details of correspondence between the author and Kathleen Moran, Senior JCSP Project Librarian. Finally, Information Literacy in relation to copyright, with emphasis on the recently published consultation paper of the review committee of the Copyright and Related Acts 2000 (CRRA) is discussed.

Keywords: Copyright, Democracy, Digital Literacy, Information Literacy (IL), Digital Literacy, Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP).

Introduction

The role of libraries as central institutions of a democracy has long being established. This democratic role was a role of the early libraries established in the United States of America during the 1930's: In the fourth volume of the first issue of *The Library Quarterly*, published in January 1934, J. Perlam Danton, in his article entitled 'Our Libraries- The trend toward Democracy' emphasises the value of the democratic role of 'the library' in a period of 'universal economic uncertainty' (Danton, P. (1934). p. 16), a phrase that has been echoed many times in the media and among the ordinary public during recent years. Yet, in this time of increasing access to information, the democratic role of libraries in providing equal access to that information, for all members of their communities, is becoming increasingly important. Information Literacy is also becoming an essential skill and librarians must take

it upon themselves as information professionals to assist their library's user groups to develop their information literacy skills.

Defining Information Literacy

The concept of Information Literacy (IL) has been known since 1985 when Patricia S. Breivik described IL as an integrated set of skills and the knowledge of tools and resources (Grassian, Esther S., Kaplowitz, Joan R. (2001) p.5). Information Literacy had its roots in the Library Instruction Movement which began in early academic libraries in the early 1960's. (ibid, p. 14). At the first ALA Conference in 1876, Melville Dewey said 'the library is a school and the librarian is in the highest sense a teacher..' (ibid). It was not until the 1980's however, as technology was becoming more important in libraries, that Patricia Breivik reconceptualized the concepts and goals of library instruction as "information literacy" (ibid, p.20), and it is Breivik's definition of IL which is still widely used today.

Another definition, developed in December 2004, is that provided by the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), which defines Information Literacy as: 'knowing when and why you need information, where to find it and how to evaluate it' (<http://www.cilip.org.uk/get-involved/advocacy/information-literacy/pages/definition.aspx>). The *Scnul Working Group on Information Literacy* defines an information literate person, as opposed to Information Literacy in general, stating: "Information literate people will demonstrate an awareness of how they gather, use, manage, synthesise and create information and data in an ethical manner and will have the information skills to do so effectively" (SCONUL *Working Group on Information Literacy*, 2011, p.3).

Models of Information Literacy

The three differing models of Information Literacy which will be examined and evaluated in this presentation are: the Inquiry Learning Model of Information literacy (developed by Trevor Bond (MEdAdmin hons), the SCONUL Seven Pillars Model and the Digital Fluency Model.

The Inquiry Learning Model of Information Literacy (IL) (figure 1.0) is the first Model of Information Literacy which is to be examined in this paper. The principal elements of the Inquiry Learning model are that students list key words and phrases relevant to the task they are required to carry out (<http://ictnz.com/sauce-resources/SAUCE-description2.htm>). The student then writes key research questions using the key words and phrases which they have selected. This stage in the model is called 'setting the scene'. The student then selects and acquires the information relevant to his/her research questions. This also involves illuminating irrelevant information. The student then validates the information he/she has acquired and utilizes it in tasks and subtasks which he/she needs to complete in order to answer his/her research question. Finally, the student then evaluates the information he/she has acquired and evaluates the extent to which his/her research question has been answered

effectively. The model is cyclical and demonstrates that information literacy learning is a continual process.

The SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information Literacy model (figures 1.1 and 1.2) is perhaps the most widely known model of Information Literacy. It was first published in 1999 and has been recently revised in 2011 to reflect the changing information world in which we live. This model defines the core skills and competencies (ability) and attitudes and behaviours (understanding) at the heart of information literacy development in higher education (SCONUL Working Group on Information Literacy, 2011). The key skills and competencies of an information literate person identified in the Seven Pillars Model are: Managing, Evaluating, Presenting, Gathering, Identifying, Planning, and finally Scoping Information. The main attitudes and behaviours of an Information Literate person identified in the Seven Pillars Model are: understanding the gaps in his/her personal knowledge; developing a learning habit so new information is being actively sought all the time; the ability to use different search tools, while recognising the disadvantages and advantages of different search tools and understanding the value of controlled vocabularies and taxonomies in searching. I would make one addition to the above list of attributes of an information literate person and suggest that the understanding of folksonomies should be added here, as folksonomies are playing an increasingly important role in the library & information studies sector.

In the 1999 Seven Pillars Model, 'the first strand describes a competent student who is able to function effectively as part of the academic community in terms of basic library and IT skills' (Gavin, C. (2008). p. 45). The second aspect of the 1999 SCONLU Model is defined as information skills, such as awareness and understanding of the way in which information is produced and critical appraisal of the content and validity of information (ibid). The main differences between The 1999 Seven Pillars of Information Literacy and the 2011 Seven Pillars Model of Information Literacy.

Like the earlier Inquiry Learning Model of Information Literacy, the circular nature of the 2011 Seven Pillars Model demonstrates that becoming information literate is not a linear process (SCONUL Working Group on Information Literacy. (2011). P 4.) This particular model of IL thus is best suited for the Holistic Learner who 'approaches problems globally and ...would probably prefer to freely examine the system or resource to be learned on their own in order to figure out how it works' (Grassian, E and Kaplowitz, J. (2001).p. 63). The 1999 Seven Pillars of Information Literacy was, in my opinion, best suited to the 'serialist learner', a learner who typically prefers to 'work through tasks incrementally, preferring to work though problems step by step' (ibid).

The Digital Fluency Model of Information Literacy (DIF) (figure 1.3) focuses, as the name might suggest, specifically on non-print forms of information, such as websites and blogs. Digital Information fluency is described as 'the ability to find, evaluate and use digital information effectively, efficiently and ethically

(<http://21cif.com/resources/difcore/>). Digital Fluency, or digital literacy, may also be defined as ‘the ability to appreciate the potential of ICT to support innovation, industrial, business and creative processes (Ministry of Education, (2003). p. 5 in Madigan, D. & Martin, A. (2006). p. 19). The Digital Information Fluency Model was developed in 2001 when the Science and Mathematics Academy of Illinois embarked on the 21st Century Information Fluency Project.

The Science and Mathematics Academy of Illinois received US Department of Education to research and develop training in the largely unexplored field of online information literacy (<http://21cif.com/resources/difcore/>). The developers of the Digital Information Fluency Model attest that Digital Literacy is not as broad a concept as Information Literacy and includes aspects of both Information Literacy and Technology Literacy (<http://21cif.com/resources/difcore/>). According to David Bawden in his chapter in *Digital Literacies Concepts, Policies and Practices* (Knobel Michele, Lankshear, Colin (2008)) , there are a plethora of conceptions of Digital Literacy (Bawden.(2008) in *Digital Literacies Concepts, Policies and Practices*, p. 4). Concepts of digital literacy range from those that centre on mastery of ideas and insist on careful evaluation of information and intelligent analysis and synthesis, to those that provide lists of specific skills and techniques that are seen as necessary for qualifying as digitally literate (ibid). The Digital Information Fluency Model incorporates the former concept of digital literacy, focusing on the mastery of ideas such as, locating Information efficiently; evaluating information effectively and using information ethically .

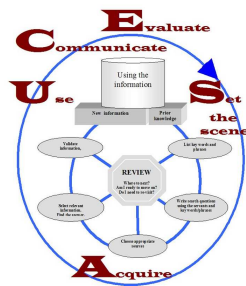


Fig. 1.0
The Inquiry Learning Model



Fig 1.1
The Sconul Seven Pillars Model (2011)

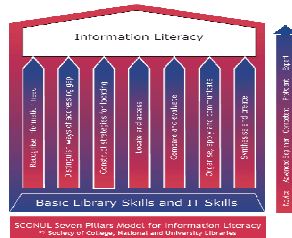


Fig 1.2
The Sconul Seven Pillars Model (1999)

Digital Information Fluency Model



Fig 1.3
Digital Information Fluency (DIF) Model

Examples of Information Literacy Programmes

Four critical components of an Information Literacy Programme cited by Christine Susan Bruce in her paper entitled *Information Literacy as a Catalyst for Educational Change A Background Paper* (Bruce, Christine, 2004) in *Proceedings "Lifelong learning: Whose Responsibility and what is your contribution?"*, the 3rd International Lifelong Learning Conference, pp. 8-19, Yeppoon, Queensland. These are: Resources to facilitate the learning of specific skills; Curriculum that provides the opportunity to learn specific skills, either early in a course or at point of need, Curriculum that requires engagement in learning activities that involve on-going interaction with the information environment and finally, a curriculum that provides opportunities for reflection and documentation of learning (Bruce (2004), p. 14).

One Information Literacy Programme which does not incorporate a specific Model of Information Literacy, such as those cited above, is the Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP). I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ms. Kathleen Moran who is the Senior Project Librarian for the JCSP. She was very helpful in providing me with information regarding the JCSP. The Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP) originated in a number of projects initiated by the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee (CDVEC) through its Curriculum Development Unit (CDU). The projects were concerned with identifying potential early school leavers and devising a programme suitable to their needs (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) (NCCA. (2010). p.5).

While the majority of settings providing the JCSP are post-primary schools, the JCSP is also offered in Special Schools, Children Detention Schools, Traveller Training Centres and Youth Encounter Projects (ibid). The programme offers schools and teachers a more flexible approach than a traditional subject-based curriculum (ibid.) *"The JCSP does not incorporate a particular model of Information Literacy into its programme as such models are deemed to be more appropriate to higher levels of information literacy Teaching and Learning.*

JCSP students are taught basic Information Literacy skills by the programme's librarians" (Ms. Kathleen Moran, Senior Project Librarian for the JCSP). I also asked Kathleen Moran what role she felt librarians and libraries have to play in facilitating and promoting Information Literacy. Her response was that *"The JCSP libraries and librarians have a very significant role to play in teaching, facilitating and promoting information literacy to the JCSP students in their schools. As the teaching of information literacy skills is not a requirement of the Junior Cycle curriculum, most JCSP students in non-library schools receive little or no training in this area. Therefore those students who attend schools with JCSP libraries and librarians have a distinct advantage in this area"* (Ms. Kathleen Moran, Senior JCSP Project Librarian, in correspondence with the author, 21 February 2012).

I also asked Ms. Moran whether, as the JCSP Programme operates in over 240 schools throughout the country, in which areas of the country, or in which schools, did she feel the JCSP has had most impact on the Information Literacy Skills of students who partake in the programme. The answer she gave was: *'While the JCSP is operational in over 240 schools, only 30 of these have a Project Library and Librarian. While Information Literacy is taught in all of the Library Project Schools, this is not necessarily the case in the non-library JCSP schools. Where Information is taught, there is no difference on student impact across different schools or different areas of the country'* (Ms. Kathleen Moran, Senior JCSP Project Librarian, in correspondence with the author, 21 February, 2012).

There are also Information Literacy Programmes run by the Ballymun Library, Dublin, such as the Junior Book club, the Adult Reading Group and the Citizens Information Centre. Dublin City Public Libraries also provide a four module course on developing web skills: the components of the course include: introducing computer basics to individuals and enabling them to identify particular parts of the computer, accessing the internet and moving between websites and using the internet to buy goods on-line or book flights on line (http://www.dublincity.ie/RecreationandCulture/libraries/Library%20Services/learning_with_your_library/Pages/websmart.aspx).

Copyright

In a world where increasing emphasis is placed on Information Literacy Skills, where does the role of copyright fit in? I wish to return for a moment to the definition of Digital Fluency which is incorporated in the Digital Information Fluency Model referred to earlier: their definition of Digital Fluency is as follows: 'the ability to find, evaluate and use digital information effectively and ethically (<http://21cif.com/resources/difcore/>)'.

Incorporated in the Digital Information Fluency Model, therefore, is an awareness and knowledge of copyright.

Probably the first copyright dispute in Ireland took place between St Columba or Colmcille and St Finian in the 6th Century (Hedley, Steve., McGovern, Patricia., O'Neill, Dr. Eoin. (2012). *Copyright and Innovation : A Consultation Paper*, p. 124). Colmcille had borrowed a Palster and surreptitiously made a copy of it, when Finian found out he demanded the copy (ibid). Colmcille refused and the matter went to arbitration at the court of High King Diarmuid, who decided in favour of St Finian with the famous ruling 'To every cow its calf, to every book its copy' (<http://www.oracleireland.com/Ireland/history/battle-culdema.htm>).

This legend suggests that Ireland was the first country in the world to protect copyright (Hedley, Steve., McGovern, Patricia., O'Neill, Dr. Eoin. (2012). p. 124).

On May 9th 2011, The Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Richard Bruton T.D established the Copyright Review Committee, the purpose of which was to examine the current Copyright legislative framework, in particular the Copyright and Related Acts 2000, to identify any areas of the legislation that might be deemed to create barriers to innovation (http://www.djei.ie/science/ipr/copyright_review_2011.htm). The copyright review committee was established in part due to a perception in certain industries that national copyright legislation does not cater well for the digital environment. (http://www.djei.ie/science/ipr/copyright_review_2011.htm). The membership of the Committee is Dr Eoin O'Dell (Trinity College Dublin) (Chair), Patricia McGovern (DFMG Solicitors, Dublin), and Prof Steve Hedley (University College Cork).

The copyright review called on submissions for proposed amendments to the current Copyright and Related Acts (CRRA) of 2000, which it received on the 4th July 2011 at a public meeting in Dublin. On foot of the submissions, the review committee published a Consultation Paper. The committee was awaiting further submissions to its consultation paper up until 13th April of this year. Chapter 9 of this consultation paper deals specifically with heritage institutions, including museums, archives and libraries. It was submitted to the Copyright Review Committee that sections 59-70 of the CRRA, which relate to libraries and archives, were not well adapted to the digital age. In particular, it was argued that heritage institutions should be able to make digital reproductions of protected works for archival and preservation purposes (Hedley, S. et al. (2012). P. 96). Many of the exceptions to copyright in both CRRA and European Union Copyright Directive (EUCD) relate to educational purposes in general, and to heritage institutions in particular (ibid. p 104). Indeed, the terms libraries, archives and museums were substituted in some cases with the term 'heritage institutions'. For example, one proposed submission, section 69A, which addressed the issue of the display of a protected image to make a presentation to students or others attending an educational event at a public gallery or other heritage institution is as follows:

‘ 69A. *Fair dealing by heritage institutions.*

(1) The communication by a heritage institution to individual members of the public of reproductions of works in the permanent collection of the institution, by dedicated terminals on the premises of the institution, shall constitute “fair dealing” for the purposes of section 50(1).

(2) The brief and limited display of a reproduction of an artistic work, during a public lecture in a heritage institution shall constitute “fair dealing” for the purposes of section 50(1).

(3)

(b) accompanied by a sufficient acknowledgement’ (ibid, p. 112).

The Copyright Review Consultation paper addresses digital copyright in terms of material which is first made available in the state: Section 198A of the consultation paper reads as follows:

‘ 198A *Digital Copyright Deposit*

The publisher of any digital publication first made available in the State after the commencement of this section or, in the case of the authority specified in section 198(1)(a), the publisher of any digital publication made available in the State, shall, within one month of the date on which the digital publication is first made available, deliver, at his or her own expense, copies of the digital publication in the format in which it is published to the Boards and authorities referred to in section 198 (1).’ (ibid. p. 171).

The development of a Council, incorporating a digital copyright exchanged and an alternative dispute resolution service, is one of the possibilities which is explored in the Consultation Paper (ibid, p. 124).

4. Conclusions

According to The Labour Party’s Literacy Policy, one in ten Irish children has serious difficulty with reading and writing, or almost 50,000 primary school pupils. This rises to as many as one in three children in some disadvantaged schools (The Irish Labour Party.(2011). P.3). The Labour Party Literacy Policy lays out how literacy levels will be improved through measures such as specific inductions for teachers, through building on the existing Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme to provide a comprehensive, regularised and universal preschool year, and through providing dedicated funding to stock school libraries (ibid, p. 6). The Irish Labour Party policy on Literacy therefore emphasizes functional literacy, which may be defined as ‘the ability to read and use written information, to write appropriately in a variety of contexts and to recognize numbers and basic mathematical signs and symbols’ (Langford. (1998) in Madigan, D, and Martin, A. (2006). P. 52). The above measures are all worthwhile, yet nowhere in the literacy policy is Information Literacy mentioned. If literacy levels are to be improved, functional literacy must be taught in tandem with Information

Literacy.

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