Disciplinary Literacy and Information Literacy: Parallels and Paradigms

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DISCIPLINARY LITERACY AND INFORMATION LITERACY: PARALLELS AND PARADIGMS

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Define literacy.
What does it mean to be literate?

- Comprehend
- Critique
- Consume
- Create
DEFINITIONS:

**Content Area/Disciplinary Literacy:** Content-Area literacy focuses on students’ ability to use reading and writing in order to learn the subject matter in a content area classroom. It emphasizes reading strategies that are generalizable for reading informational texts across multiple content areas. **Disciplinary literacy**, on the other hand “emphasizes the unique tools that the experts in a discipline use to participate in the work of that discipline” (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008).

**Information Literacy:** “Information literacy is a set of abilities requiring individuals to ‘recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information.’...Because of the escalating complexity of this [contemporary technology] environment, individuals are faced with diverse, abundant information choices--in their academic studies, in the workplace, and in their personal lives...... Increasingly, information comes to individuals in unfiltered formats, raising questions about its authenticity, validity, and reliability. In addition, information is available through multiple media, including graphical, aural, and textual, and these pose new challenges for individuals in evaluating and understanding it. The uncertain quality and expanding quantity of information pose large challenges for society. The sheer abundance of information will not in itself create a more informed citizenry without a complementary cluster of abilities necessary to use information effectively” (ALA, 2018).
*What role do you play? How does your understanding of this issue impact your interactions with learners (either in P-12 or higher education...)?
LITERACY IS MORE THAN KNOWING THE TOOLS AND THE TERMS...

Evaluating the source:
Facebook, 2018 and Email from Madison County 911 Dispatch Center
SO HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO DISCIPLINARY LITERACY?

1. What text is being reviewed?

2. Who authored the text? What are their credentials for publishing this information? How current is the text? What other qualities — within the discipline — would make this information credible?

3. *Provide examples of trustworthy and untrustworthy sources.

TRUSTWORTHY: http://www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/journals/ed_lead/el_198903_render.pdf

QUESTIONABLE: https://leecanter.weebly.com/
LITERACY IS MORE THAN KNOWING THE TOOLS AND THE TERMS...

Comprehending the material (remember that disciplinary lens!)

1. Use Previewing/prereading techniques (including review of text structure and text features).

2. Confirm that students have an appropriate purpose for reading.


4. Use post-reading discussion/follow up to insure that students have comprehended the text.
LITERACY IS MORE THAN...

Considering the purpose and the message:

Does someone or an organization benefit from this information?

Does this information sound biased toward one side or another? What does biased information look like in varied disciplines?

Can you tell if the author has an opinion?

Does the heading or headline match the information in the body?

Does the information conflict with something the student knows to be true?

(Unpacking biases in LIS can often lead to more questions than answers. Do I want students to leave my instruction questioning the world around them? Absolutely. Once aware of pervasive biases and inequities in information, students can more fully understand the creation of information and authority. Ross provided further expertise on bias that we can incorporate into our teaching. He described how after the first step of becoming aware of bias comes practices to transforming your everyday life. People need to become more self-reflective, and realize that their own biases can be part of a system of oppression (Ross, 2014). We can also acknowledge that uncertainty and awkwardness are okay. Remind students that conflict should never be reason to stop a conversation, rather it can inspire them students to engage with information and more critically understand it.)

(Paul Worrell, Pressbooks, “Wake Up and Smell the Bias”)
YOUR TURN:

* Consider the implications of having students read varied—and biased—texts:

Should students be asked or encouraged to read conflicting texts? Why?
LITERACY IS MORE THAN KNOWING THE TOOLS AND THE TERMS...
Incorporate selected information into one’s knowledge base

*Understand the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information


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