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## Values: The Invisible 'Ante' in Information Literacy Learning?

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**Values:**

**The Invisible 'Ante' in Information Literacy Learning?**

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Category:

General Review

Abstract:

**Purpose:** The ACRL Competency Standards related to learners' values and value systems has not been interrogated in relation to information literacy theory or practice. This paper analyzes the inclusion of values in these and other guidelines and seeks evidence of the development of this topic in the literature.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** A comparative review of information literacy standards related to values/value systems was conducted. An analysis of the literature engaging issues related to personal or community values related to information was completed. Suggestions for continued work were based on these findings.

**Findings:** Competency standards related to values/value systems are out of place in guidelines designed to assist in the assessment of information literacy instruction. Instead, it is more likely that information literacy development is a form of values education.

**Research limitations/implications:** Further research is needed to locate specific personal and community values related to information literacy. This research should begin with information-related values of student communities, professional organizations and other groups.

**Practical Implications:** Readers will develop a greater understanding of professional and personal values in relation to information literacy and the standards designed to help librarians and others.

**Originality/Value:** This paper establishes a basis for a comparative analysis of information literacy standards drafted by different groups. The discussion on the place and purpose of values-related objectives in the 2000 ACRL Competency Standards and a review of the literature on this topic are unique to this manuscript.

Keywords:

information literacy, competency standards, values, value systems, value development, community learning

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## Values:

### The Invisible “Ante” in Information Literacy Learning?

#### Introduction

The *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education* published by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) in 2000 includes performance indicators directly related to the issue of value. Competency standard 3 states, “The information literate student determines whether the new knowledge has an impact on the individual’s value system and takes steps to reconcile the difference.” As if asking students to consider their own “value system” in the selection of sources wasn’t enough of a stretch, the standards offer little more than a duo of unhelpful learning outcomes. Located at the “dead center” of the standards, the relationship between information literacy and values is easy to overlook and upon a review the literature, it appears that this tendency extends to professional practice as well.

This paper offers a comparative analysis of the ways that the ACRL standard related to “values and value systems” is interpreted in other iterations of information literacy objectives. Topics in the library and information studies literature are reviewed to determine if/how values has been discussed in relation to information literacy development. Possibilities for greater engagement between information literacy and values development and suggestions for further research are designed to encourage and guide continuing discussions on this topic. While the analysis and suggestions for continued discussion offered may not describe current innovations in information literacy instruction, the potential for such opportunities is evident.

## **Defining Values**

Before an analysis of values and value systems in information literacy theory and practice is possible, a working definition for these terms is necessary. While values and evaluation are encompassed in the same standard, “values” and something that is “valuable” can be perceived in very different ways. Rather like semantic arguments on the differences between morals, virtues, and ethics, “values” can become an embattled term.

As we develop a consensus definition, we must consider the factors that caused values and value systems to be a consideration for information literacy instructors. Bloom’s *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*, a highly influential text in the development of assessable curricular structures, was a guiding influence in the development of the ACRL standards (Association of College and Research Libraries, 2000, p. 4). In the *Taxonomy*, values are defined as ideas or beliefs that hold a specific position in the individual’s system of motivation. At the basic level, an individual may “accept” a value, whereby the individual’s motivation and action based on that value will be tentative (Krathwohl, Bloom, and Masia, 1964, p. 141). Following acceptance, an individual may develop a “preference” for the value. At this stage of valuing, an “individual is sufficiently committed to the value to pursue it, to seek it out, to want it” (Krathwohl, Bloom, and Masia, 1964, p. 145). Finally, when an individual accepts a belief at a high degree of certainty, they have reached what Bloom refers to as “commitment” to the value (Krathwohl, Bloom, and Masia, 1964, p. 149). The *Taxonomy* provides a number of example assessment strategies to determine the level of valuation given to a particular belief.

As an individual becomes committed to a number of ideas on various topics, these values begin to interact and connect with one another. Commitment to one value may encourage a greater propensity to commit to similar values, creating systems of values that can connect and overlap. Systems of values correlate into what Bloom terms an individual's "philosophy of life" (Krathwohl, Bloom, and Masia, 1964, p. 159). During the development of this system, cognitive and affective educational objectives are internalized and realized so that the individual may then act as a global citizen by using the value system as a "mode of conduct" (Krathwohl, Bloom, and Masia, 1964, p. 165).

One might imagine how a learner's development of information literacy mirrors Bloom's description of value systems construction. People are presented with beliefs (or standards) about information access, evaluation, selection and use. Over time and experience, the information literate individual will come to accept these beliefs and become committed to them. As information literacy develops, a system of values is formed, and while this system may not often be thought of as a "philosophy of life," it does outline a philosophy of living within information-rich contexts. Such a move toward information literacy as a philosophy of living has a number of useful benefits. For librarians and other educators, information literacy as a philosophy of life discourages task-based conceptualizations, and helps us to set aside the "information as tool" dynamic in which information is picked up and put down without consequence.

It is indeed possible that in the transition from Bloom's *Taxonomy* to the ACRL *Standards* that the meaning and purpose of values/value systems in the context of information literacy may have changed. However, since the *Standards* and performance indicators for information literacy development are not helpful in defining values in any

other fashion, it is appropriate to proceed with definitions from Bloom's *Taxonomy* in mind.

### **Values/Value Systems in the Competency Standards**

As stated in its introduction, the *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education* provides "a framework for assessing the information literate individual" (ACRL, 2000, p. 5). The standards have been used by librarians and others in a number of different ways since adoption, and they have been vital in suggesting practical methods for teaching information literacy. Aside from varying usage and the benefits discovered through the use of the *Standards*, the main purpose of the document has always been to provide librarians with the means to assess student learning and instructor effectiveness.

In relation to most of the discrete, assessment-oriented standards and outcomes included in the ACRL *Competency Standards*, the management of the topic of values could be interpreted in a number of different ways. Again, standard 3 states, "The information literate student evaluates information and its sources critically and incorporates selected information into his or her knowledge base and value system" (ACRL, 2000, p. 11). Here, the processes of evaluation and selection are intertwined; however, the "selection" indicated in Standard 3 is not related to a final end product in which information has been selected for use or set aside in favor of other information. Instead, the standard specifically states that information literate individuals make selective decisions and identify new information for inclusion in their value systems.

The performance indicators provided for the standard are meant to suggest strategies for the assessment of the standard. Performance indicator 5 under Standard 3

contends that “the information literate student determines whether new knowledge has an impact on the individual’s value system and takes steps to reconcile differences” (ACRL, 2000, p. 12). The outcomes provided with this performance indicator then explain that the information literate individual will “investigate differing viewpoints in the literature” and then “determine whether to incorporate or reject viewpoints considered” (ACRL, 2000, p. 12). Neither outcome describes a change in the individual’s value system, and depending on the situation, these outcomes may relate more to the selection of a source for a particular situation.

This inclusion of values in information literacy learning is entirely new to the 2000 *Standards*, leaving readers with little context or precedent to determine how best to assess, much less teach, this process. To bridge the gap between the new standards and practice, the *Objectives for Information Literacy Instruction: A Model for Academic Libraries* was published in 2001 and acts as a “librarian’s guide” to the *Standards*. The *Objectives* were intended to be used as a “document for guidance in developing enabling objectives for an individual teaching session, or for a course, or when collaborating with a course instructor to incorporate information literacy instruction into a specific course” (ACRL, 2001). However, not all of the performance indicators published in the *Standards* receive consideration in this document, especially in situations when it is expected that teaching faculty will be the primary instructor.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the *Objectives* offer no guidance related to Standard 3, Performance Indicator 5 in relation to values, value systems, and information literacy. While such objectives might delineate the goals of librarians in relation to this standard, or suggest ways that faculty might construct connections between values and



information literacy, their exclusion places the responsibility for considering values/values systems in relation to information squarely on the shoulders of teaching faculty. This move has not been revised in the literature on information literacy practice or theory. However, other standards designed to guide and assess information literacy development have made considerable revision to the standard, outcomes, and indicators related to values and value system.

### **Comparing the Standards**

Two discipline specific iterations of the *Standards* were published in recent years. The ALA Science and Technology Section's *Information Literacy Standards for Science and Engineering* (2006) is closely aligned with the ACRL *Standards* in most respects; however, there is a clear revision of the standard and performance indicator related to values. Standard 3 in the STS document does not mention values or value systems; performance indicators also exclude the topic. The STS offers what may be considered an interpretation of the intention of the ACRL *Standards* related to value in Standard 3, Performance Indicator 4: "Compares new knowledge with prior knowledge to determine the value added, contradictions, or other unique characteristics of the information" (Science and Technology Section, 2006). Clearly, this is a combination of several performance indicators provided in the ACRL standards, but the word "value" in this case is used in a very different way.

However, the final outcome provided for Performance Indicator 4 then states that the information literate individual "includes information that is pertinent even when it contradicts the individual's value system and includes it without skewing it" (Science and

Technology Section, 2006). Here, there is less an issue of “reconciliation” and there is no mention of selecting or deselecting a source due to values-based judgments. Instead, the information literate individual is able to select and use information even though it “contradicts the individual’s value system.” There is no provision requiring individuals to add or reject information in relation to their value system, only that the individual is able to gauge their own bias and act in an inclusive manner.

In the *Information Literacy Standards for Anthropology and Sociology Students* published in 2008, the specific inclusion of values or value systems only appears in the replication of the ACRL *Standard’s* wording for Standard 3. In the performance indicators and outcomes, specific use of terms related to personal (or community) values are set aside. Following the lead of the Science and Technology Section, this document’s “key behaviors of success” states that the information literate individual “seeks differing viewpoints in alternative databases, books, Web sites, and articles, always evaluating the source of the information or argument, and determines whether to incorporate or reject viewpoints encountered” (Anthropology and Sociology Section, 2008). Incorporation or rejection of information is strictly based on the evaluation of the source, without specific parameters for the relationship between the evaluation process and the individual’s value system.

Another variation on this theme appears in the *Information Literacy Standards for Student Learning* published by the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) in 1998. In this document, published before the ACRL *Standards*, Standard 2 relates to the task of “evaluating information critically and competently” (AASL, 1998, p. 92). The description for this standard states that “the student understands traditional and emerging

principles for assessing the accuracy, validity, relevance, completeness, and impartiality of information” and “uses logic and informed judgment to accept, reject, or replace information to meet a particular need” (AASL, 1998, p. 2). Yet again, in this example reconciliation relates specifically to the selection of information for use in a particular context.

It should be noted that the AASL’s guidelines distinguish three types of learning standards related to information literacy: Information Literacy Standards, Independent Learning Standards, and Social Responsibility Standards. The Independent Learning section includes criteria for the selection and evaluation of information based on “personal interests” (AASL, 1998, p. 4). The extent to what is meant by “personal interests” is not defined, although the open form of this term does leave room for considerations of personal values.

As a close relative to the ACRL *Competency Standards*, the *Australian and New Zealand Information Literacy Framework* includes values as one of a number of “learning dimensions” (Bundy, 2004, p. 7). Specifically, values and beliefs in this context refer to “using information wisely and ethically, social responsibility and community participation” (Bundy, 2004, p. 7). Standard six in the framework correlates with the “values and beliefs” learning dimension: “The information literate person uses information with understanding and acknowledges cultural, ethical, economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information” (Bundy, 2004, p. 22). The second performance indicator for this standard states that the information literate individual “recognizes that information is underpinned by values and beliefs” (Bundy, 2004, p. 23). This is a much milder performance indicator when compared to ACRL equivalents. The

use of the term “recognition” removes decision-making from the activity, although such a term also may have been selected to suggest qualitative assessment measures.

The distinction that information is “underpinned” by values and beliefs is a fascinating, if vague, description of the relationship between values and information. Three tasks related to this ability are offered as outcomes. The information literate individual “identifies whether there are differing values that underpin new information or whether information has implications for personal values and beliefs; applies reasoning to determine whether to incorporate or reject viewpoints encountered; maintains an internally coherent set of values informed by knowledge and experience” (Bundy, 2004, p. 23). Here, the first and third outcomes relate directly to the topic of values in a way that is not seen in previously mentioned information literacy standards. As opposed to becoming less explicit in describing how values and information literacy are related, the outcomes provide greater detail to help define the standard.

If we look to the first edition of the *Framework* published in 2001, we find these identical outcomes. However, at that time the standard for which these outcomes were drafted correlated more directly with the wording of the ACRL *Standards*: “The information literate person determines whether new information has implications for democratic institutions and the individual’s value system and takes steps to reconcile differences” (Council of Australian University Librarians, 2001, p. 19). In a comparison of the two drafts of the *Framework*, there is a definite shift between the standards related to values. Ultimately, the drafters of the *Framework* moved away from wording provided in the ACRL’s *Competency Standards* in their initial draft, and to an even greater degree in the most recent version published in 2004.

While variations between instructional and assessment objectives held by different organizations is to be expected, there are very clear differences in the drafting and interpretation of standards, indicators, and outcomes related to values and value systems. Some organizations have excluded this consideration, and others have revised to be either increasingly vague or (irrevocably) clear. These variations reflect not only the intention to improve upon prior standards, but to comment and respond to earlier iterations. However, if one then turns to the professional literature, it is clear that such direct engagement and discussion on the topic of values and value systems and information literacy learning has been limited.

### **Values and Value Systems in the Professional Literature**

Bruce Harley of San Diego State University is one of few writers to provide academic librarians with a strategy for dealing with the intersection of information literacy and value systems in a direct manner. In “Freshmen, Information Literacy, Critical Thinking, and Values,” Harley describes and analyzes the results of a First-Year course that required students to consider their personal values in relation to information sources. Assignments asked students to “assess their personal values and to explore the meaning and value of being literate and thinking critically in the context of not just their own values but those of their peers as well” (Harley, 2001, p. 304). Harley contends that the integration of personal values and analysis of values held by other individuals and communities with information literacy development offers greater connectivity between the personal and the academic. Further, such a move speaks to the establishment of lifelong learning processes. Harley’s description of the SDSU course offers strategies to

better understand students' "abilities, struggles, accomplishments, hopes, and concerns," an insight that assists interactions with students and increases engagement in learning (2001, p. 305).

With school librarians as an audience, Katie Eller's "A Basis for Evaluation: Integrating Values Education and Information Literacy in the School Library Media Center" advocates information literacy instruction as a way of teaching values. While Haley's work describes how information literacy instruction can reveal values and the development of personal value systems, Eller's lesson plans are designed to make information literacy instruction a means to instill good values in students' lives. While Eller does not pinpoint specific values, the intention of such instruction is to encourage "moral development" by connecting values education and ILI (Eller, 2003, p. 48). The author also refers to character education as a synonym for instruction related to values.

There is an interesting dilemma here for academic librarians, since such activity comes close to directing students toward specific values. Professionally, our tendencies have directed us to set aside our beliefs about user's interests and behaviors, and just make certain that they receive the information that they seek, that they are able to evaluate it for quality and worth, and then use the information in an ethical way. To actually locate or encourage values for students by showing them how information supports a particular position or way of thinking is a very distinctive take on information literacy instruction.

While Harley and Eller offer us the only practice-based analyses connecting information literacy and students' values, there are a number of discussions in the

literature where connections can be intimated. An extensive review of the library and information studies literature would more than likely uncover many examples of implicit or indirect discussions on the connections between individual/community values and information literacy learning, since it has already been stated that the literacy itself is grounded in a system of values. Recent publications related to critical information literacy, information literacy and discursive practice, and “higher order” information practices seem particularly relevant.

### ***Critical Information Literacy***

Critical theory has been a major movement in the education literature for a number of decades, and critical professional practice in libraries can be traced back to the 1930s (Samek, 2007, p. 57). Critical theory, most often associated with the work of Paulo Freire, characterizes the educational process as a liberatory practice, whereby the marginalized or underprivileged find voice and agency. Acknowledging this, educators take activist positions as embodied learners and socio-political agents as well. A recent resurgence of interest in critical theory in library and information studies is reasonable, considering the rejuvenation of library instruction programs due to the need for information literate searchers, concerns about the digital divide, and revised perspectives on library users. No more are they passive “patrons” and instead are understood to be “lifelong learners.”

In Doherty and Ketchner’s “Empowering the Intentional Learner: A Critical Theory for Information Literacy Instruction,” the authors offer practical examples of ILI that seek to cast learners as empowered and intentional. Contending that librarians must

“relinquish control of their students’ learning to the student herself,” Doherty and Ketchner recast common information literacy learning objectives in terms that resist oppressive, teacher/teaching focused classrooms (Doherty and Ketchner, 2005). While the topics of personal or community values are not discussed in a direct way, it is clear that the authors encourage teacher-librarians to understand and access the prior knowledge and independent intentional learning of individuals, activities that would be likely to reveal relationships between learning processes and value systems.

In “Librarians as Disciplinary Discourse Mediators: Using Genre Theory to Move Toward Critical Information Literacy,” Michelle Holschuh Simmons makes direct reference to ACRL standards for information literacy learning to suggest pathways into critical literacy theory. With a focus on the final standard, Simmons contends that students must ask “reflective question *about* information: ‘Who owns and sells knowledge?’ ‘Who has access to information?’ and ‘What counts as information (or knowledge)?’” (Simmons, 2005, p. 300). The author uses genre theory, specifically, as a practical means to connect critical theory and information literacy instruction, asserting that “by highlighting the social nature of disciplinary discourses and practices, librarians can emphasize to students that disciplinary ways of communicating are not static but rather are fluid and changing and very much sites of contested power” (Simmons, 2005, p. 302). Disciplines and disciplinary discourse communities are also sites of value creation and dissemination.

Interest in critical theory as a philosophical and pedagogical foundation for information literacy instruction has and will continue to encourage spirited professional discussions and experimentation. In his argument that democratic theory has been



marginalized in library and information studies literature, John Buschman writes that LIS has “flattened librarians and information systems/products into objective and neutral entities...without reference to context or power” (Buschman, 2007, p. 1492). Buschman claims that greater facility with democratic perspectives on information use encourages a more informed and engaged citizenry, a claim similar to arguments posed by critical theory advocates.

As a community of educators, we must be careful to refrain from the conflation of these ideologies, as if any theoretical perspective exhibiting a socio-political consciousness can be conflated with others. Still, critical theory, democratic theory, and others share a number of attributes and may encourage similar professional responses and resistance. As librarians teach with greater knowledge of learners’ values and desires, their own activities as social and political operatives may become more pronounced in their professional identities. In the end, it may be that librarians also become primary beneficiaries of the influence of critical theory in our professional practice and teaching and may encourage revised perspectives on our community’s shared values.

### ***Information Literacy Development in Discourse Communities***

The interrelation of information and discursive practices in communities is not new in information studies, but is relatively new as it is being applied to information literacy development. Increasingly, librarians and information professionals are making connections between “individual” information literate activity and the communities with

which the individual is associated. Collaborative learning and the location, evaluation, and use of information by varying media have problematized cognitive theory-based notions of the autonomous, solitary, “individual” as learner.

In the introduction to a special issue of *Library Quarterly* that highlights research on discursive practice in information use, Talja and McKenzie contend that “discursive approaches to information practices view information needs, seeking, and use as part of or as embedded in cultural, social, or organizational practice and question the validity of models that ‘de-domain’ information practices” (Talja and McKenzie, 2007, p. 101). Viewing the information practitioner in this context “is oriented toward gaining a deeper understanding of how groups organize their work practices through interacting with texts, coworkers, technologies, and other objects of the material world” (Talja and McKenzie, 2007, 101). Such a move into the context of information literate activity necessarily involves the preferences and values that help to define a group of individuals as a group or community.

Talja has also written that one must be careful when making assumptions about the relationship between individual/group values and information practice. In such situations, the diversity of practice and the impermanence of group characteristics often complicate efforts to define individual/group values outside of time and context (Talja, 1997, p. 74). It would seem that a basic openness to searcher diversity is necessary for the information professional. “If the users are seen as uncertain people who need help, there is a risk that the objective of helping the users is implicitly grounded on a faith in objective expert knowledge existing outside history, social relations and contradictory interests” (Talja, 1997, p. 77). Clearly, the delineation of group values is a tenuous

activity, a characteristic that must be considered when faced with values-based educational objectives.

In “Information Literacy Landscapes: An Emerging Picture,” Annemarie Lloyd writes that individuals must pass through two value-loaded phases to become information literate. In Lloyd’s first phase, the individual become acclimated to a community environment before they are able to “engage in the complex problem solving that characterizes authentic practice” (Lloyd, 2006, p. 575). Engagement occurs in the second phase, in which individuals use social, historical, and experiential context to understand how information relates to a community and how it operates between community members. Much of Lloyd’s work focuses on information literacy in professional groups, where precedence, communicative strategies, and the objectives and values of that community all work together in characterizing information literate activity. A different context, where individuals are bound by different group activities, objectives, or value systems, would exhibit varying foci or interests in terms of information literate practice.

Further work is needed to better understand how all communities, as locations of personal and group development and communication, exist as learning communities. Lloyd’s ethnographic approach suggests a path for understanding how community-held (created, transmitted, etc.) values relate to learning and the uses of various forms of information by community members. Ultimately, we should expect to see connections between the information-related values of similar and varying types of populations, making it possible to make more broad claims about information-related values that are shared across communities.

### ***Information Literacy and the “Higher Order”***

Hierarchical constructions of human life satisfaction often incorporate value systems, along with information seeking, retrieval, and use. In a hierarchy such as Maslow’s oft cited five (actually, seven) tier model, the “basic” needs of life reside on the bottom level of the hierarchy. Achievement of basic or “lower order” needs allows people to focus attention on “higher order” needs.

Christine Bruce has identified a relationship between information and value systems in her *Seven Faces of Information Literacy in Higher Education*. For Bruce, this integration takes place at the highest hierarchical level of achievement in information literacy development, Category Seven (“the wisdom conception”). Bruce writes that “when information is seen within a larger context and one’s life experience it can then be used in qualitatively different ways. A consciousness of personal values and ethics is needed to enable information to be used in this way” (Bruce, 1997, p. 149). Bruce contends, then, that a cognizance of values and ethics must be in place to guide the individual’s “wise” processes and relationships with information.

In “Information and the Higher Things in Life,” Karl and Hartel contend that if “information science has paid any attention to context, it has almost without exception done so by implicitly or explicitly focusing on *lower things in life*, which are...experienced as neutral or even negative and often superficial phenomena” (Karl and Hartel, 2007, p. 1132). The authors believe that higher order motivations are primary factors in shaping information practice (Karl and Hartel, 2007, p. 1136). For example, Karl and Hartel would contend that a focus on information literacy development related to students completing a course assignment would be considered an “everyday” activity,

a “lower order” task where information practice is association with work, with a requirement, or with negative connotations. Librarians may facilitate negative perspectives on information literacy acquisition with diagnoses of students as lacking experience, as deficient searchers, or as limited information practitioners in terms of skill. As opposed to viewing information literacy as a means of correcting these deficiencies, information literacy instruction could be revised to view information practice and development in a positive light, “as a want to strengthen and develop one’s knowledge” (Karl and Hartel, 2007, p. 1140).

Mirroring Christine Bruce’s beliefs that place the interrelation of information practice and value systems at a higher point in hierarchies of needs and motivations, Karl and Hartel believe that “information research...has valued the scientific model, which entails the tendency to eradicate value-laden goals” (Karl and Hartel, 2007, 1139). As connections between the personal and the disciplinary or professional are made, and as values-loaded instruction is perceived as a way to achieve such connections, greater balance will be seen between objectivist scientific models of research and qualitative, personalized methodologies.

### **Engaging Values**

After considering the standard and outcomes related to values and value systems in information literacy development, and upon reviewing other standards and areas of the literature that may relate to the topic of individual and community values, there are a number of directions that may be taken as librarians consider future instruction and

research practices. The most obvious option would be to remove any specific discussion of values and value systems from the standards, outcomes, et al. In this case, Competency Standard 3 would be revised to focus on the evaluation of sources, in terms of the source itself and in relation to the information need. Clearly, this has already occurred in much of the available literature on practice and theory, and may provide greater clarity to the evaluation standard.

As opposed to a complete excision, the standard could be revised to use language that expresses similar objectives in terms that are more concrete or less open to interpretation. Information literacy standards drafted by other bodies have adopted this strategy, whereby the connection between information literacy and values *can be made* but is not explicitly stated. Such revisions would then make it possible for librarians and others to consider values if they choose, but would not dictate that values-based outcomes were appropriate or feasible for assessment projects.

Others may argue that since there has been little harm in including values and value system related objectives in the *Competency Standards*, there is little reason to make a revision. Ultimately, the vague character of the discussion on values/value systems and information literacy leaves a wide berth for local interpretations and may spur new topics and issues in teaching practice and research. While this has yet to happen, the “dead center” of the standards may provide opportunities to future teachers and researchers. If Competency Standard 3 continues to include objectives and outcomes related to values, librarians and others should be more diligent to connect individual/community values and information literacy development in our teaching, professional practice, and research.

One strategy to engage students' value systems and information literacy development is to look to other disciplines that create assignments and curriculum that integrate student learning with values. Of course, differences in instruction across disciplines may require that strategies be revised or reconsidered in light of the demands and challenges of information literacy instructors' goals. Still, these strategies may be useful as we develop practices that recognize links between literacy, learning, and both personal and community-based values.

Librarians should also locate and recognize opportunities to weave discussion on student values into other information literacy standards and outcomes. For example, another performance indicator for Standard 3 on evaluating sources asks students to access prior knowledge as they evaluate and select information sources. Activities that consciously seek to access and deploy the prior knowledge of learners have also received minor focus in the literature on information literacy instruction, and yet it is a highly practical avenue for pedagogical development.

As always, information literacy instructors will want to seek out local opportunities that hold potential for value-loaded learning experiences. Mapping possible locations across the curriculum may be the most obvious strategy, allowing instructors to connect information literacy and individual/group values in pre-established contexts. Classes that deal with values, either explicitly or in general, are ideal situations for exploring the impact of information, research sources, and outside communications on value systems. Research methodology courses, where students might receive instruction on dealing with authors, arguments, and information that may stand in opposition to their own beliefs is another possible location. Following Harley's

illustration, first-year courses focusing on students' transitions into the academy or similar courses designed to develop academic literacy may be additional options.

While we may choose to assign certain topics and components related to information literacy development to teaching faculty members in other disciplines or professions, librarians should remain involved in these efforts and encourage greater development of these topics in the classroom. Indeed, at a time when information literacy programs are seeing wider integration within curricular design, the identification and cultivation of locations where the engagement topics that are difficult to cover in one-shots and library-focused sessions should continue to be one of our primary objectives.

### **Conclusion**

In early stages of inquiry, it was expected that this exploration of “values” and “value systems” in information literacy standards would conclude that these considerations are not helpful to instructors and that they appear completely out of place. Assessment measures are not adequate to make this a reasonable inclusion in standards designed for the assessment of literacy development. However, it appears that there may be bigger questions to consider beyond how values came to be included in information literacy standards and what can be done about it now. How is information literacy, as a set of abilities and also a consciousness about information, a value system in itself? If one considers the various stages of information literacy development and the activities and competencies expected of the information literate individual, isn't it true that



numerous values related to information location, selection, and use are integrated into a system of beliefs?

While students bring their values to the classroom, into the library, and into every learning situation, librarians also carry their personal and professional values and their commitment to the belief that information literacy is a necessary component of the times in which we live. As Lisa Hinchliffe contends, librarians must “demonstrate an information literacy approach to life,” offering a model thought and practice for students and other learners (Hinchliffe, 2001, p. 95). When librarians “live information literacy in the presence of students,” they enact Bloom’s concept of the value system as a philosophy of life and elevate information literacy beyond an activity or the performance of various skills (Hinchliffe, 2001, p. 96). Information literacy then becomes a way of living, a habit of mind (Hinchliffe, 2001, p. 95).

For those who maintain that values and similar issues should be of less concern than learning outcomes related to skill-based activities, the interrogation of professional benchmarks should continue. As James Elmborg writes, “...these standards and models have been profoundly important in guiding librarianship toward a student-centered educational philosophy, but without complementary theoretical perspectives, none of these approaches can generate important critical questions about its own conclusions, assumptions, or methods” (Elmborg, 2006, p. 194). Educational needs and trends change, along with our student and faculty communities. Our standards will change as well.

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