

CRITICAL INFORMATION LITERACY

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WHAT IS CRITICAL INFORMATION LITERACY?

Critical information literacy asks librarians to work with their patrons and communities to co-investigate the political, social, and economic dimensions of information, including its creation, access, and use [and reception]. This approach to information literacy seeks to involve learners in better understanding systems of oppression while also identifying opportunities to take action upon them.

– “Putting Critical Information Literacy into Context” (2016)

WHY DO WE TEACH CIL?

- Learners have agency and are active in their education
- “Making knowledge is a political project, one that critical library educators seek to surface and make evident to all kinds of learners (Drabinski & Tewell 2019)”
 - Connect violence and oppression to knowledge production, dissemination, use, and reception
- In 2017, 172 million Americans (55%) were registered library users and library visits totaled 1.32 billion (IMLS 2020)
- Library Bill of Rights (ALA 2019)
 - Equitable access and collection development, challenge censorship and infringements on freedoms of speech, rights to privacy and confidentiality when learning

LIFELONG PROCESS

- Encourage critical questioning
- Expose learners to a wide-variety of resources
- Create opportunities to practice critical thinking and for discussion
 - Connect to real world issues
- Model critical thinking and information literacy
- Center critical information literacy in all learning

CHANGING INFORMATION LANDSCAPE

- Information we previously relied on is disappearing and modified
 - PubMed and MedlinePlus, future of IMLS and government funding
- Create information sharing networks
 - Data rescue projects, government document repositories, alternative resources, curating resource lists of verified information
- Practice and teach critical information literacy skills

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