

Spring 2025 MILEX Conference: Equity Mindset and Information Literacy Instruction

Attendees: Pending sign in sheet

Introduction

Speaker

Lunch

Workshop on Mindset

Business – MILEX Award

Concerns are rising around DEIA and its use on campuses, concerns about the targeting of our students. Speaking with us on this topic is Amanda Folk.

Amanda Folk is from Ohio State University – DEI office was dismantled just before we contacted her for presentation, Head of Teaching and Learning at OSU

Pre-read of her chapter here, <https://crl.acrl.org/index.php/crl/article/view/17822/19663>

Equity Mindedness and Information Literacy: Some Thoughts

<https://go.osu.edu/milex2025> -- PDF of PowerPoint and Word doc with notes and references

<https://go.osu.edu/milex2025map> -- Padlet

<https://go.osu.edu/milex2025qa>

Ohio legislation has been passed to stop discussions of DEIA topics

Agenda

Conceptual assumptions

Equity and Equity mindset

Practical considerations

Conceptual assumptions

What are your assumptions about info lit, about teaching practices, etc.

We must be willing to challenge ourselves and questions our assumptions

Information literacy is a sociocultural construct

Information lit: Both the term, concept and set of values was developed by humans, for humans

How it is interpreted and enacted will vary from context to context and evolves over time

Most likely developed and maintained by those who have the power and privilege

Information lit is made of practiced epistemic communities Tuominen et al. 2005

Approaches for seeking, analyzing, using, and evaluating knowledge

The sites where people learn and share insights and form and negotiate meanings, values, and

Information lit is a way of knowing as said by Lloyd, 2012

A practice that is enacted in a social setting

It is composed of a suite of activities and skills that reference structured and embodied knowledge and way of knowing relevant to context

Information literacy is a way of knowing

Info lit is really about knowledge and what we're doing with knowledge and data. Do students have any voice in the knowledge creation and use – Folk 2025

The Framework represents ways of knowing

Threshold concepts represent how experts in a profession, field, or discipline think about or make sense of the world or phenomena

Novice-expert gap

Speaking two different languages

“Coping strategy” Leckie, 1996 – don't develop the skills they need but find a way to cope in their work, lose the ability to control

Conversation: use the number of sources you need, about how many sources?

Students use the number of sources to help judge the time they need to complete the assignment. Beginning students are still developing the skills needed for research – professors don't remember that they are dealing with students in this developmental

stage. It is a very steep learning curve for new students; grad students and professors have already gone through it.

The instructor in the conversation has missed the actual student's question – which is what are you expecting me to do and how? Students are being asked to do a very artificial task; none of us write with the minimum number of citations.

Research as a transactional piece of work versus researching to learn about a topic we're interested in. The grade is important to the student, they may not have interest in the course content, but the student needs the grade to continue their educational degree

Gloria Leike, desperately teaching citations – article title?

Socialization

Communities of practice Lave and Wenger, 1990

Legitimate peripheral participation – new members of the community, recognized as novice members of the community, but still outsiders become members of the community through

Situated learning theory – acquiring knowledge about acceptable ways of communicating and behaving through participation in the community – research assignments are this type of learning

Acquiring knowledge about acceptable ways of communicating and behaving through participation in the community

Reflective: What does situated learning related to information literacy look like for students in our institutions?

Cultural & Social Capital (Bourdieu, 1986)

Cultural capital – the way you dress, speak, whether your home had books or newspapers, did you go to museums or zoos. Often held by most powerful or privileged

Understanding(s) about the community

The rules that govern who belongs and who does not

Often tacit or unsaid

Social capital

Relationships that provide learners “with information about how to act within or navigate and educational institution based on the community’s culture and values” (Folk, 2023,)

Reflective: Where do you see cultural capital and social capital coming into play in the earlier scenario about sources?

Info Lit is cultural capital (Folk, 2019) and undergrads do not often sit in a position of power in an educational setting. Instructors may not know how to make the process of gaining knowledge explicit. Learners have very little power to change the instructor's approach. Currently the epistemology being used is white Euro centric, it is a legitimate epistemology, but it is one of many. Students that struggle the most are often traditionally less privileged both in social and cultural capital

Equity mindedness

Tree problems>Forest problems

One dead tree is an individual problem, but many dead trees bring up problems and questions about what we can change. This is what we need to do, stop focusing on the single tree and look to a solution for the forest.

Cognitive frames and organizational learning, adapted from Bensimon, E.M. (2005)

Deficit Diversity Equity

Deficit

Focus on stereotypes

Blame students or their backgrounds for achievement gap

Remediation

Fix the student

Students take remedial courses that do not count towards their degree, but they have to pay for these courses. We can make these types of solutions with the best intentions, but we need to stop and think about how the solution affects the students from start to finish.

Diversity

Focus the representation/frequency of differences

Celebration of diversity coupled with color-blindness

Workshops, sensitivity training

Fix the worker(s)

Professors make sure that their courses include a wide range of resources from different cultural experiences. Workshops and other trainings may be done to help the professors to recognize where their biases are and how to not let those biases affect their classroom teaching.

Equity

Focus on structures or process that create inequity

Institutional responsibility for systemic racism

Institutional accountability for equity

Fix the culture

Students with less cultural capital does not mean they are less capable but need assistance; their unique experiences are part of their learning. Work is being done to address institutional systems that have traditionally held back or punished students for being different or not having the same privileges that other traditional students have access to.

The framework can help with breaking down a variety of issues throughout higher education

“Low-income students come to college unprepared for the demands of academic work, so we need to get them up to the speed as quickly as possible” -- Deficit, but also diversity

“In my course, I try to incorporate perspectives from many different cultures and geographical regions as a way to create an equitable learning environment.” Diversity, this alone does not change the hidden curriculum or bridge the novice-expert gaps

“I noticed that a lot of students were having trouble synthesizing the sources that they were reading and am thinking about how to explain why this is important how and give them practice doing this kind of work.” Equity, self-reflective of a teaching practice at the classroom level, but could become a larger university wide change

Reflection: Do you have other examples you'd like to share?

The Cognitive Frames and Our Practices

How might we think about some of our common practices to support teaching and learning using these frames? One shot, reference questions, research consultations, embedded librarianship, teaching professional development, curriculum mapping, course or assignment design support, Others?

Remediation is not necessarily bad, but only as long as we do not push it on the student as being at fault

One Shots are not actually as helpful as we want them to be, and it wouldn't give us the leverage to make changes – they are scalable or sustainable

Asynchronous resources: They can be hard to categorize a resource, it can put some burden on the student, but they are intended to demystify the resources for students and can be very helpful. Ensure that we don't use jargon, or expect prior knowledge, is the resource meeting the needs of the students or addressing issues that professors are seeing?

What can we do?

We might not be framing it as equity minded work – intentionally or not

We try, we experiment, and we go back to the drawing board

Librarians as discourse mediators (Simmons, 2005)

“Our unique position that allows mediation between the non-academic discourse of entering undergrads and the specialized discourse of disciplinary faculty” due to being “simultaneously insiders and outsiders of the classroom and of the academic disciplines in which [we] specialize”

Focus on instructors

Meaningful inquiry

Discuss equity gaps at the national level and local university

- Introduce the framework

- Decoding the Disciplines to uncover learning bottlenecks

- How meaningful assignments can increase student motivations

- Transparency in learning and teaching

<https://go.osu.edu/meaningfulinquiry/>

Decoding the framework

Identify a learning bottleneck

Use an overview of the framework to identify which of the six threshold concepts is most relevant

[Go.osu.edu/ilinfo](https://go.osu.edu/ilinfo)

[Go.osu.edu/frameworkconcepts](https://go.osu.edu/frameworkconcepts)

Go into the framework and review the dispositions and knowledge practices

Which ones seem important to the bottleneck?

TILTING research assignments

Creating our own frameworks

Purpose – why this assignment

Tasks – how to complete the assignment, why these tasks are necessary

Criteria – create-analyze- apply-understand-remember and back to create. Review assignments and tilt them to meet actual needs. Information Literacy Taxonomy (Folk et al., 2024)

Instructors need to know what the first-year student needs to know and then scaffold up and how to get the student to the point of being able to scaffold up. That doesn't mean reducing expectations but providing an understanding of what the instructor needs to cover so that students can achieve

Crossing information Literacy (Foldk, 2025)

A work in progress

Combines epistemological development models with info lit as threshold concepts

Crossing Information literacy thresholds

4 different stages representing

Novice

Pre-liminal, in the driveway

Liminal, at the front door

Transitional, in the foyer

Expert

Contextual, in the living room

Nature of knowledge – see slides

Pre-liminal: knowledge is fixed, absolute or uncontestable

Epistemic justice

Critical info lit and critical pedagogy are useful and happening in the library world in the US. But not enough on epistemic justice, Canada is looking into undoing colonization? And how they are applying that kind of work and teaching. -OER on this topic is coming this year

Critical research and program evaluation

Center voices and experiences from student populations that we often haven't cantered or heard from

Look at learning experience of how students make discussions in authentic ways and how they feel about all of that

ALA publications Special Reports

Narratives of (Dis)Enfranchisement

Narratives of (Dis)Engagement

From Equity Talk to Equity Walk McNair, Bensimon and Malcom–Piqueux 2020

How to teach equity when it is a bad word at the moment?

Adapt, but make sure that we do not become a tool of the oppressor. How can we still help students that have been traditionally suppressed. We know those we can't talk about, but we can still focus on other groups that will allow us to continue the work (first gen=disabilities, minorities). Push Universal Design supports all learners and not just specific populations. It doesn't feel good but adapt will allow us to do our work and support the best we can.

Amanda Folk is host some upcoming webinars that may be of interest.

Keynote DeBrief

Why is an equity mindset in information literacy instruction especially relevant today?

How might we use an equity mindset to re-imagine aspects of our instructional practices?

How might we gather evidence of the impacts of our equity mindset in information literacy instruction?

Which of our instructional practices have already been shaped by our equity mindset? Do we have evidence yet of our impact?

Use of AI may encourage and reinforce disparities and giving up their critical thinking skills by using AI? -- Ask students why they are using AI, how they're using it, in many ways we need to have pre-session. We need to take a more critical lens to our practices. We must think of AI in the same way that we think of any 'bad' practice that we now incorporate into our instruction. We need to incorporate in a way that doesn't compromise the skill set we are trying to teach.

A reckoning will happen, soon, because students are failing when using AI. Students are using AI to do things they don't know how to do but that can take away the skill building of the students.

Brandy's college is developing seminar courses that will be anti-thetical to classes, and introduction to AI workshops that can teach about the reality of using AI for both faculty and students.

We're in a weird third space and we can work on reaching out to instructors. Students are using AI to budget time and so they don't see a point to putting in the effort. Students are existing inside of the Higher Education's restructuring. Adjuncts are also teaching and may not have the time or ability to rewrite assignments to help students learn through AI usage. There are structural issues that we know about; we are not teaching in the best ways, and we are struggling to change this but getting profit-driven pushback.

Research consultations are a great way to have a back and forth to really teach students and then use those to put information in group sessions to help more students at once. Having explicit learning outcomes that we want students to have and having them listed in the syllabus or in the description of a session with you so that the student knows what they are going to learn.

Interlibrary loan becomes 'get a scan to reduce the need for social capital'. You can have conversations around ILL to help students build their social capital.

Learning is slow and relational, and efficiencies are not always conducive to learning
We need a coherent policy for AI usage in the university.

It is difficult to gather impacts of our work on equity at the institutional level. The focus on qualitative data can be hard to get, quantitative data can be easier to get but we must interview. We can use NPS surveys, though we need to figure out how to structure those. Un-grading which allows for improved feedback. Numbers are not always in our favor – 200 students does not allow for additional feedback

Humble inquiry – helping and receiving is a social process, tension between the need to belong and being independent. To mitigate that the person in power needs to perform humble inquiry, ask open ended questions, avoid rushing to answer a question. Acknowledge your dependence on other people. It can be done in a classroom, but it can be harder, acknowledge the knowledge that the students have

Threshold concepts are troublesome; how do you tell students that unless something is hard you won't learn. It can be communicated but you need to let them know and that in succeeding it is worth more. Let the students know that it is an iterative process, it is a process. Undergrads struggle because they are taught that it is a linear process and it is not. Be willing to throw out the lesson plan, don't make any assumptions about the student skills

Owning the struggle and coming at it at the front of the classes is important

Workshop on Mindset

Mindset Cards:

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1HcaZR2cqM22qSYejzDim5RhzvMTNM_VR7dArVPVIKfY/edit?slide=id.gf4d4118839_0_0#slide=id.gf4d4118839_0_0

Walking the walk

Alignment/realignment

Decisions about improvement strategies, transparency, and trust-building?

Makes clear what the policies are, expected

Clear transparency – verbiage matters, ethical transparency is important

No one needs all the same information at the same time, but it needs to be shared appropriately and at an appropriate time for different audiences. The information also needs to be communicated in multiple ways

Availability of information – people need to learn what they don't need to know just because they want to know

What do we need to be transparent about? How does that vary based on your position: student, faculty, staff, or other.

For changes must happen in concert with all sides of the university ecosystem: faculty, administrators, and students must talk and listen to each other

Supporting adaptive change

What new knowledge or skills are needed? How to get it?

Training with quiz – be firm, understand that not everyone has the skills so teach them

Resources at point of need – team/group resource

There can be a battle between the course design team and faculty

Universal design – can help but people need to be trained and gently enforced until it becomes the norm

Building capacity – this is where we run into trouble. Example: Federal mandate to make everything accessible, people don't come to training. Cultural problems are part of the problem. Who has ownership of the problem?

Institutional responsibility

How do you see your role in institutional responsibility to your students?

Current climate, universities giving in to the political issues,

We are working on engaging students, malicious compliance, keep doing what we're doing until we're told to stop

Continue the good work, be ready for underground avenues. Relationship building in order to have community support.

Academic libraries are not good at the community support creation, we need to leverage our supports better

Institutional responsibility

What can we take back to our institution?

The Threshold Concepts and TILT work to help reduce faculty angst over student assessment, learning objectives for every assignment so students understand what is expected of them, focus on faculty workshops for how to talk about research with their students, try to put yourself in a situation where you are a new learner so that you can remember what that is like and you can help with the emotional aspects of learning that students can run into, language can shape reality but we can keep doing the equity work even if we have to use a different name, disciplinary framework, librarians should talk more about why than how. Why are we doing something and what does that mean? Why, especially in relation to values, is there value in the library? 'Why' affects equity a lot.

Business – MILEX Award

MILEX would like to help our library students via an award, unfortunately, we have not had any submissions. Please review the current call for proposals and let us know what we might be able to change?

Decisions: Agree that the current call is very good, but maybe open the award to new librarians, not just students. Creates a larger pool but also helps newer librarians get their feet wet in professional presentations.

Next meetings are June 13th (in person) and July 11th (Zoom).