Hay muchos Méxicos: A New Approach to Designing International Information Literacy Instruction

abstract: The globalization of campuses has led to increasing numbers of international and exchange students. However, librarians often develop instructional opportunities for students from other countries with little understanding of how academic information literacy (IL) differs around the world. Using Mexico as an example, this study employs survey and focus group methods to examine how Mexican librarians understand and teach for IL within higher education .[1] Findings from this study are subsequently used to explore the design of more culturally appropriate learning experiences for international students in the United States.[2]

Introduction [A head]

How do understandings of academic information literacy (IL) differ around the world, and what are the implications for international student education? An increasingly global campus has catalyzed the rise of literature that tests or discusses international student IL.[3] However, despite a growing recognition that IL forms a complex social practice that is mediated and legitimized through the values of local communities,[4] research has stopped short of examining how IL is understood and taught for within international students' home countries. Such oversights often sideline these students' prior knowledge, a key tenet of constructivist models of education, which hold that learners construct their own knowledge by reflecting on their experiences. A failure to recognize differences in how IL is understood around the world also hampers efforts by host-country librarians to design culturally responsive IL instruction, including creating teaching and learning opportunities that align with intercultural campus learning goals.

This paper uses Mexico as a lens to explore these ideas, drawing from the premise that academic IL is shaped by local information environments as well as community values and

1

priorities. This study employs survey and focus group methods to probe how 22 Mexico City-based library and information professionals position IL within higher education. The understandings gained may be used to inform the design of culturally responsive IL instruction opportunities. To this end, the research questions that this study seeks to answer include:

- How do library and information professionals understand and teach for academic IL in a Mexican context?
- What are the implications of these findings for teaching librarians who work with Mexican international students?

In exploring these questions, the paper provides insights that will be useful for librarians who work with Mexican international students. Researchers also asked about the impact of international students on the librarians in Mexico. The emphasis on the design of intercultural IL instruction may also interest librarians who work with other international populations, including those in study abroad and area studies programs.

Mexico was selected as the basis of this study for several reasons. Each year, Mexico sends over 15,000 international students to study in the United States and receives close to 6,000 North American students on study abroad and exchange programs.[5] These figures indicate the breadth of opportunity for U.S. librarians to work with Mexican students as well as the interconnectedness of IL instructional possibilities. The country's long-standing interest in IL is another reason why Mexico provides a useful focus for this study.[6]

The focus on Mexico also raised questions around the positionality of the authors. One of them is a native Spanish speaker who is AfroCaribbean; the other two authors are native speakers of English who identify as white with Anglo heritage. As IL researchers based in the Global North, the part of the world with the wealthiest and most industrialized countries, the

authors recognize their position as outsiders.[7] While all authors of this paper speak Spanish and have experience collaborating with Mexican librarians in professional contexts, none has ever worked as an instruction librarian in Mexico. The authors' relationship as researchers also has characteristics of insider research, because they share similar qualifications and professional connections.[8] Ultimately, the authors recognize their lack of knowledge about the teaching practices of librarians in countries that send and receive international students. The ongoing use of deficit narratives in literature, which view international student experiences as shortcomings to be remedied rather than assets to be capitalized upon, provides an illustration of the problems caused by this lack of understanding.[9]

Literature Review [A head]

Global Understandings of Information Literacy [B head]

Traditionally, IL was seen as a set of universal skills and understandings that were applicable across the globe. The establishment of shared IL indicators were designed to "allow nations to determine their employment, education and social goals for IL skills and to adjust these over time as need arises."[10] These projects, which were intricately entwined with economic and social development goals, positioned IL as shaped by the same underlying principles, albeit interpreted on a local scale.[11] IL research and practice have started to recognize the situated and contextual shape of information activities,[12] leading to the growth of research that examines how IL manifests within workplace and everyday contexts. Researchers have also started to investigate how IL instruction differs round the world, as exemplified by the ACRL white paper *Global Perspectives on Information Literacy*.[13]

Information Literacy in Latin America [B head]

IL is complicated in Latin America by the variety of terms and influences used to define it. While Jorge Barbosa-Chacón, Patricia Marciales Vivas, and Harold Castañeda-Peña refer to "competencias informacionales (informational competences),"[14] other authors talk about "tecnologías de la información y la comunicación (information and communication technologies)" and "alfabetización informacional (ALFIN—in English, information literacy)."[15] The variety of phrases used to describe IL—Alejandro Uribe-Tirado lists 16 different terms—speaks to the broad array of influences that shape understandings of IL within a Latin American context.[16] Issues are further complicated by the range of IL definitions employed throughout the region, with authors referring to the United Kingdom's Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) definition[17] and that of Spain's REBIUN (Red de Bibliotecas Universitarias Españolas or University Libraries Network) as well as Australian and North American models.[18] Other authors create their own definitions, with IL positioned as "conocimientos, habilidades, actitudes . . . que se movilizan en un contexto determinado, para la solución de problemas de información u otra índole, e inciden en el aprendizaje a lo largo de la vida (contextually shaped knowledge, ability, and attitudes that are employed to solve lifelong information problems)"[19] or the relationship between the beliefs, motivations, and aptitudes that individuals build throughout their life.[20] The use of IL models is equally extensive. Among the most commonly cited are the Big 6, also written Big6, a six-stage process to solve problems using information; the SCONUL (Society of College, National and University Libraries) Seven Pillars, a set of skills and understandings necessary to develop information literacy; and *The Seven Faces of Information Literacy*, a model by the Australian educator Christine Bruce.   In

other research, models developed by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), CILIP, and UNESCO feature more prominently.[21]

Information Literacy in Mexico [B head]

Mexican scholars have been concerned with IL almost since the inception of library science programs, with Alicia Perales Ojeda indicating as early as 1959 that teaching qualities are part and parcel of the work of a librarian.[22] Since then, Mexico has played a prominent role in the development of IL programming, hosting the first Spanish-speaking information literacy conference in Ciudad Juárez in 1997 as well as successive conferences throughout the 2000s.[23] These meetings subsequently led to the creation of the "Ocho Normas" (eight standards), which were based on the ACRL Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education.[24] The Mexican standards, which were the "first and only adopted standards in the Ibero-American region,"[25] formed a significant milestone. Early influences also led to the establishment of a research group focused on IL instruction at the Centro Universitario de Investigaciones Bibliotecológicas in Mexico City in 1992 and the creation of IL instruction programs in El Colegio de México, the Universidad Autónoma de San Luis Potosí, the Universidad de Quintana Roo, and the Universidad de Colima, among other institutions.[26] Focusing on the need to educate faculty members as well as students, these programs were also designed to prepare learners for increasingly international "transborder" workplaces.[27]

Since 1992, IL has developed widely in Mexico. The terminology has expanded to include "alfainfo" and "desarrollo de habilidades informativas (development of information skills)" as well as the more commonly used "alfabetización informacional," abbreviated as ALFIN; in English, "information literacy."[28] While the development of IL programs has continued to evolve slowly, with Uribe-Tirado noting that only 13.5 percent of Mexican

university libraries offered instruction by 2012,[29] the programming reaches increasing numbers of Mexican students. Johann Pirela Morillo and José de Jesús Cortés Vera estimate that 35,000 students have taken the IL class offered at the Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez.[30] Most recently, IL instruction has started to move online. Mexico's long-standing IL heritage has led to the creation of enduring educational programming and a focus within Mexican LIS education on training librarians who "piense y actúe en relación con lo que conlleva la satisfacción de las necesidades sociales del ser humano (think and act to satisfy the social needs of the individual and the community)."[31]

Internationalization and Information Literacy [B head]

Internationalization has long been a topic of interest for libraries in the Global North.[32] A significant proportion of LIS literature to date has been directed at supporting international students within English-speaking countries, including the United States and Australia.[33] Although research has started to grapple with aspects of internationalization that go beyond domestic borders, such as the establishment of international campus libraries,[34] there has been far less emphasis on IL within international settings. Literature that explores study abroad experiences, for example, tends to focus on the mechanics of delivering instruction at a distance,[35] rather than exploring what is taught while students are overseas. Research has further emphasized the contributions that home librarians can make to international education, including preparing students for their time overseas[36] or developing curricular interventions,[37] instead of studying the role that international understandings of IL can play within global learning opportunities. IL has been similarly sidelined within research that explores staff exchange programs[38] and literature that explores the activities of study abroad students from host librarian perspectives.[39]

Methods [A head]

Research Design [B head]

This study employs a qualitative research design to explore how library and information professionals understand and teach for IL in a Mexican context. The complexity of this topic as well as the authors' insider-outsider status led to the selection of a questionnaire and focus groups as the most appropriate means to carry out this research. The initial questionnaire was designed to establish an initial understanding of IL in Mexico and deployed via Google Forms to ensure users in Mexico could access it. The questionnaire totaled 18 demographic and open-ended questions (see Appendix A). It was written in Spanish and tested with Spanish-speaking information professionals before it was deployed.

Focus groups formed the primary method of data collection. The focus groups were designed to build upon the questionnaire to generate a more complete understanding of how IL is understood and taught for in a Mexican context (see Appendix B). Focus group questions examined how participants think about and teach for IL, as well as the impact of international students upon their teaching. Questions asked librarians to talk about institutional and national approaches to IL as well as their own instructional techniques in the classroom.

The authors shared the Institutional Review Board-approved recruiting material, the list of questions for the focus groups, and the verbal consent forms with teaching librarians in their institution. This approach facilitated discussions around the purpose of the visit and allowed possible participants to decide whether to take part in the research. Focus groups took place on the campuses of the institutions that agreed to participate. The groups were led by two of the researchers, who audio recorded the sessions and took detailed notes. Participants included teaching librarians, many of whom also do research, speak and present at national and

international conferences, or teach at library and information science programs in Mexico. Each focus group session lasted between 24 minutes and 94 minutes, for an average of 56 minutes.

Recruitment and Sample [B head]

The questionnaire was sent to Mexican librarians by a professional contact to e-mail lists such as those of AMBAC (Asociación Mexicana de Bibliotecarios, or, in English, Mexican Association of Librarians) and CNB (Colegio Nacional de Bibliotecarios, or National College of Librarians). It was also posted as an open link to relevant social media in Mexico, such as a Facebook group for Mexican professional librarians. The questionnaire was open for two months and employed a "survey termination" element to ensure that participation was limited to academic librarians.

The researchers employed a purposive sampling method to recruit participants for the focus groups, using their professional network of colleagues to approach higher education institutions that might be interested in taking part. Because of travel constraints, the authors focused data collection on institutions in Mexico City. Five institutions agreed to take part. They varied in size and included both private and public colleges. The institutions were in different areas of the city, had different academic strengths, and served diverse student populations. While this sample is by no means representative of institutions of higher education in Mexico, it provides a variety of perspectives regarding IL. The focus groups ranged in size from 1 to 8 participants, for a total of 22 participants. In all, the researchers collected over five hours of audio recordings.

Coding and Analysis [B head]

The authors used OpenRefine, an application for data cleanup, to aid in cleaning and organizing the survey data. Focus group findings were analyzed using an iterative and emergent coding process. All three researchers participated in the coding and analysis process. Working from the

audio recordings and focus group notes, the authors each individually coded the focus group findings using an open-coding process. They listened for agreement and disagreement between participants, as well as attempting to distinguish the intent behind off-hand comments. All three researchers then reviewed these codes and refined them in a focused coding process to establish overarching categories. This process facilitated agreement and consensus among the researchers and ensured that the themes represented the opinions of the various groups rather than those of only a few participants.

Limitations [B head]

Since the questionnaire was sent to professional organization e-mail lists and posted on Facebook, this recruitment method excluded instruction librarians who do not belong to these groups. The authors' reliance on professional groups as a means of recruitment meant that respondents had also already self-selected as interested in IL. The sample for the focus groups was also limited; the institutions were all in Mexico City, which may not be representative of the entire country.

The researchers' outsider-insider role in this study may have caused focus group participants to self-censor their answers, depending on their perception of the researcher's intentions. Throughout the writing of this paper, the authors employed a variety of checks and balances to mediate the impact of their perceived role. By using focus groups, the authors sought to let their fellow professionals guide them as they looked to understand how librarians in Mexico approach IL instruction. They also allowed participants to opt out at any time. The authors endeavored to communicate that their interest in the topic emerged from a position of respect and esteem as they looked to learn from and integrate the achievements of these teaching practitioners into their own work. The first draft of the paper was subsequently sent to the

interviewees to facilitate a member-checking process, thus increasing the credibility of the

authors' research.[40]

Questionnaire Findings [==A head==]

The questionnaire initially received 56 responses. However, the study's focus on academic

librarians meant that this number was reduced to 35 after responses that did not meet these

criteria were excluded. As participants could select more than one response or to skip questions,

response rates vary from question to question.

Questions that explored the mechanics of IL instruction in Mexico noted that instruction

takes place in various settings, with 27 respondents (77 percent) teaching in library classrooms

and 10 (29 percent) delivering instruction in other classrooms on campus. Nineteen respondents

(54 percent) carry out individual teaching consultations, and only eight (23 percent) teach online.

The context of library instruction differs considerably, with 13 respondents (37 percent)

reporting that their teaching is linked to an academic course and 11 (31 percent) carrying out

instruction as part of an orientation session. On average, 14 respondents (40 percent) teach more

than 16 instruction sessions per year, 6 (17 percent) teach between 11 and 15 sessions, another 6

(17 percent) teach 6 to 10 sessions, and 8 (23 percent) teach fewer than 5 sessions per year. In

terms of user groups, 27 respondents (77 percent) indicated that they focused their attention on

graduate students, 23 (66 percent) work with professors, and 21 (60 percent) teach

undergraduates. Work with researchers and the public also takes place, albeit far less commonly.

Only 11 respondents (31 percent) report that they teach international students, with 1 (3 percent)

teaching classes exclusively composed of international students.

Questions that asked how respondents learned to teach revealed that most learned on the

job (28 or 80 percent), with just under half (16 or 46 percent) reporting that they had taken a

course in IL or teaching methods as part of their LIS education. Support for professional development was variable; while 18 (51 percent) reported that they attend webinars, only 12 (34 percent) stated that they had the funds to attend conferences. Finally, the authors asked why librarians and information professionals teach for IL. The 35 respondents gave a wide range of answers. Twenty-two (63 percent) said they teach because the institution's curriculum requires it, and 19 (54 percent) indicated that disciplinary faculty requested such instruction. Just over half, 19 (54 percent), teach because of personal initiative. These figures provided the authors with a nuanced yet limited understanding of how Mexican librarians and information professionals understand IL. The high numbers of librarians who teach because they enjoy it or think it important further helped to direct the emphasis of the subsequent focus group questions.

Focus Group Findings [A head]

Findings from the focus groups revealed that the Mexican librarians studied as part of this research positioned IL in three major ways: (1) making up for lost time, (2) upholding standards, and (3) investing in the future. The authors subsequently drew out inferences from these three categories to create an overarching category for the study, cultivating society.

Making Up for Lost Time [B head]

One of the most important ways in which the librarians in this study positioned academic IL was as the means to make up for lost time or to compensate for a lack of prior opportunity. In the United States, most students encounter some sort of IL instruction before college, whether in a school or public library setting. In Mexico, however, a lack of contact with libraries—"No han tenido ese . . . contacto directo con las bibliotecas (They have not had . . . direct contact with libraries)" and a lack of focus on IL in public libraries "No creo que [alfabetización informacional] está sucediendo en bibliotecas públicas (I don't think [information literacy] is happening in public libraries)"—means that many students arrive in college without having had the opportunity to develop information skills:

> Llegan aquí usuarios de nivel licenciatura que se quedan sorprendidos tan solo por la estantería. (Bachelor level users that arrive here are surprised just by the stacks.)

> Ellos no se dan cuenta que realmente no saben cómo manejar Internet. (They don't realize that they don't really know how to use the Internet.)

Through teaching for IL, these librarians attempt to rectify inequitable or inconsistent educational programming. These ideas are grounded in a vision of IL as an equalizer or a way of compensating for structural issues rather than just an academic exercise. The focus on groundwork means that IL is further viewed as a way to help students make the most of their higher education or to ensure that past inadequacies are not repeated. The recognition that librarians only have a short time in which to make up for past educational failures means that IL is also infected with a sense of urgency that adds pressure to their work:

> Es insuficiente el tiempo y la oportunidad que tenemos para poderlos contagiar y convencer de lo imperativo que es utilizar estos recursos. (The time and opportunity we have [are] insufficient to be able to infect [them] and convince them how imperative it is that they use these resources.)

Demonstrating the connections between IL and the broader educational mission of the university, these activities position IL as a common good that should be available to all, as well as both empowering and positive. They also provide a first indication of the sense of compassion and justice that runs throughout these librarians' understandings of academic IL practices.

Upholding Standards [B head]

A second way in which these librarians position IL is as a means to uphold standards or to meet the responsibilities that come with participation in academic information environments. These standards include norms of scholarly behavior, such as the need to uphold legal rules that govern responsible information use, "que utilicen la información de forma ética porque también hay una unidad de derecho de autor (that they utilize information in an ethical way because there is also a lesson on copyright)."

IL is also positioned as the upholding of academic standards of quality and integrity, as evidenced by the need to find and use information sources that are appropriate and meet principles of academic rigor:

> Seleccionar . . . información que esté mayor valorada que tenga todos estos criterios . . . parámetros de calidad . . . (To choose . . . information that is better valued, that includes all these criteria . . . quality parameters . . .)

> Utilizar esta materia para incidir en la calidad académica . . . (To utilize these resources to stress academic quality . . .)

Centering questions of intellectual property, authorship, and authority, the emphasis on the ground rules of academic and social discourse positions IL in terms of compliance as well as the values and principles of community engagement.

Librarians interviewed for this research also viewed IL as the upholding of national and international IL standards, including the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher

Education, the CILIP Seven Pillars of Information Literacy, and the Mexican IL standards, the "Ocho Normas":

> Hay mucha consulta sobre qué están haciendo en otros países. El referente principal de la mayor parte es lo que está haciendo, lo que propone ACRL, los estándares. (There is a lot of examination of what other countries are doing. The principal reference is what ACRL is doing, the standards.)

> . . . y directrices de Europa, directrices de EEUU . . . Siento que, dada la cercanía que está nuestro país con EE.UU. y la influencia que tenemos de las bibliotecas, por ejemplo, en este caso, la Biblioteca de Congreso de Washington, sus investigadores, todos los desarrollos que ha tenido, ése es el modelo que permea hacia América Latina en general. (. . . and the guidelines from Europe, and guidelines from the USA . . . I feel that, given the proximity of our country to the USA and the influence that we have from their libraries, for example, the Library of Congress in Washington, their researchers, all their developments, that is the model that has permeated Latin America in general.)

> Yo tomo las del ACRL, yo tomo las del [A]ASL, yo tomo todas las asociaciones que ustedes [EE.UU.] han generado. A lo mejor las de España son muy buenas. (I use those of ACRL, I use those of the ASL, I use all the associations that you [in the USA] have generated. Maybe the ones from Spain too, they are very good.)

Demonstrating the wide range of influences that underscore these librarians' understandings of IL, the variety of national documents that these librarians list illustrates how they view upholding standards as an international rather than just a national endeavor. At the same time, their wish to support guidelines and codes of practice does not supersede an understanding of local conditions or of the students with whom these librarians work:

> Pero en el momento de instrumentarlas, si tú no sabes a quien quieres formar, no te va a servir de una caramba. (But in the moment of utilizing them, if you don't know who you want to teach, they are not going to be worth a damn.)

The focus on local issues complicates an emphasis on international standards as well as raising broader questions related to whether a national approach to IL is either desirable or possible. At

the same time, the concern for local issues also provides another example of the sense of care that runs through these librarians' understandings of IL.

Investing in the Future [B head]

Librarians position IL is as a means to invest in the future and prepare students for life beyond academia, including the workplace. Centering attention on learner engagement in wider institutions and structures, and emphasizing progression or movement to the future, position IL as playing a key role in the professionalization of society as well as in the improvement and enjoyment of everyday life. For many of these librarians, these aims are manifest in their desire to teach skills and personal habits that will equip students for life beyond the classroom. Along these lines, IL is positioned as the means to "aprender de una manera autónoma (foster self-sufficiency)" and to promote "formación autónoma de un lector crítico (the independent development of critical readers)" as well as the lifelong ability to reflect on and analyze information:

> . . . que cuente con estos elementos de reflexión, de análisis, de selección, para que lo ponga en práctica. (. . . that they can count on those elements of reflection, of analysis, of selection, so that they can put it into practice.)

> En una siguiente fase viene la parte que eso que ya localizaron y que les puede servir, cómo lo pueden administrar para sus trabajos futuros. (In a following step comes the part of what they found, and they could use, how they can manage it in their future works.)

Investment in the future is also reflected in the important role that IL plays in nonacademic contexts. Thus, IL is seen to inspire learners to "ser ciudadanos críticos (be critical citizens)" and also enhance what one respondent labeled as "situaciones afectivas (affective situations)." Moving beyond a focus on real-time information practices, participants see IL as contributing to a variety of social goals, including within professional and community settings.

Cultivating Society [B head]

Making up for lost time, upholding standards, and investing in the future are subsequently linked under the overarching theme of cultivating society, which positions IL as the means to enhance and enrich the society in which these librarians live. These librarians' efforts are ultimately directed at the goal of transforming Mexican social realities by improving educational achievement as well as preparing students for the workplace and other continuous learning opportunities. The overarching theme of cultivating society links IL to economic, personal, and social development and gives it a key role in the advancement of societal change.

At the same time, the inequality that many of these librarians note as characteristic of Mexico, often depicted as "hay muchos Méxicos (there are many Mexicos)," means that the desire to cultivate society also emerges from a sense of social justice. Thus, one of these librarians spoke to how IL can create a common vocabulary or bridge differences between people on all points of the social spectrum:

> El chico que es de la Sierra Madre de Chiapas, el indígena pueda también comunicarse y saberse comunicar con alguien de Suiza, de Italia, de Holanda, alguien de Estados Unidos, sin ningún problema. Que puedan tener la misma capacidad y los dos pueden reconocer las mismas . . . tengan las mismas oportunidades. (The person from the Sierra Madre in Chiapas, the indigenous person can also communicate and know how to communicate with someone from Switzerland, from Italy, from the Netherlands, and someone from the United States, without any problems. That they may have the same capacity, and the two can recognize the same . . . that they may have the same opportunities.)

The recognition that many parts of society have been excluded from attempts to develop library instruction programs provides a further example of these librarians' belief in the emancipatory power of IL teaching:

La parte crítica, esta parte que es distinta, no se toma en cuenta. Pero también los otros grupos que nos hacen falta. Ya dijeron primaria y secundaria, pero también los otros grupos vulnerables los que son minorías, los que son excluidos socialmente los ciegos, los débiles visuales, las personas en situación de calle, las amas de casa, los migrantes . . . los refugiados. Es decir, tampoco es que al ALFIN haya llegado o haya permeado a toda la república, o se haya utilizado para todas bibliotecas pública[s], no es verdad. O bibliotecas fronterizas . . . Tampoco han tenido una función importante que tu digas 'bueno vamos a rescatar esto que están enseñando en las fronteras. (The critical part, this part that is different, is not taken into account. But also, other groups are missing. They have already said primary and secondary [school students], but also the other vulnerable groups, those that are minorities, those who are socially excluded, the blind, the visually impaired, unhoused people, the housewives, the migrants . . . the refugees. That is to say, it is not that information literacy has arrived or has permeated the entire republic, or has been used in all public libraries, it is not true. Or border libraries . . . Nor have they had an important function that would make you say, "Well let's reclaim what they are teaching at the borders.")

The emphasis on social justice does not, however, mean that existing models of IL instruction are always seen as suited for these purposes. These librarians' recognition of the need to engage with culturally responsive pedagogy highlights ongoing challenges in the design of IL teaching opportunities:

Esto de paternalismo, que "yo sé y yo te voy a enseñar." Partíamos de que tú estabas anulado . . . y frente a esa anualidad "Yo, que tengo todos los conocimientos, aplasto todo lo que tú tienes." (It's paternalistic, that "I know and I am going to teach you." We started off from "you are void" and against that nullification "I have all of the knowledge; I crush everything that you have.")

These Mexican librarians' goals for IL instruction are tied up with a personal commitment to addressing systemic social inequality and a focus on inclusion, which highlights the complexity of putting these motivations into practice.

Intriguingly, cultivating society is also shaped through these librarians' engagement with international students and their expectations about library collections and services, which enables them to reflect on and compare their own practices as well as student achievement. Thus,

understandings about IL are also shaped through the disparities that these librarians perceive between domestic and international students' attitudes and approaches to dealing with information:

> Sí, hay una diferencia, con estudiantes internacionales más avanzados, que la biblioteca finalmente a lo mejor esté a pasos atrás y no puede caminar con ellos en términos del aprovechamiento de la información. (Yes, there is a difference with international students that are more advanced. Maybe the library is a bit behind, and you cannot walk alongside them in terms of information use.)

> Los estadounidenses que tenemos aquí, es gente que viene de intercambio, ya por sí . . . tienes cierto perfil, es gente que se arriesga más, que busca más experiencias diferentes, contra el resto que tenemos acá, que está en una situación de confort en la casa, de mamá y papa. (The Americans that are here, are people who come on exchange, as it is . . . they have a certain profile, they are people who take risks, they look for new experiences; compared to the ones we have here who are in the comfort of their parents' home.)

International exchange also validates these librarians' engagement in teaching. The Mexican librarians' relief that not just Mexican students demonstrate "nonstandard" ways of engaging with information, which surfaces in conversation with the interviewers, illustrates how understandings of IL are also shaped through the feedback that international encounters provide:

INTERVIEWER. Me parece que eso es típico de todos los sitios. (It seems to me that is typical of all places.)

LIBRARIANS. ¿También? ¡Qué consolador! (Really? What a relief!)

LIBRARIANS. ¿Ustedes también tienen este problema o nada más nosotros? (You also have this problem or is it just us?)

INTERVIEWERS. ¡Si! Es común . . . ¡Aquí no hay sorpresas! (Yes, it is common . . . There are no surprises here.)

Hinting at broader questions related to professional identity, the benchmarking by these librarians' demonstrates an unexpected outcome of the internationalization of campus that is not seen in English-language research. The emphasis on comparison also draws attention to the reciprocal influence of global education structures between these Mexican librarians and international students.

Discussion and Implications [<mark>A head</mark>]

Findings from this research have demonstrated that these Mexican librarians position IL as a means to make up for lost time, to uphold standards, and to invest in the future. Together, these findings are drawn together under the overarching theme of cultivating society. For these Mexican librarians, IL instruction is inseparable from the desire to address broader questions of social justice and inequality. These findings may seem unsurprising given the emphasis on social needs that Felipe Meneses Tello identifies within Mexican LIS education.[41] Jesús Lau, in his overview of the field, further corroborates the impact upon Mexican understandings of IL of strong focuses on constructivist educational theory, which centers the learner, and on critical pedagogy, which supports the development of social consciousness.[42] Changing social conditions have tripled student numbers since the 1990s and may form another reason why questions of access and opportunity appear at the forefront of these Mexican librarians' educational practices.[43] The emphasis that these librarians place on the learner and the role that information plays in shaping learning opportunities also stood out; the authors were struck by the compassion and care that underscored professional teaching practices. Access to information and social responsibility have long been recognized as professional values within North American librarianship.[44] Now, however, IL has begun to focus more prominently on uneven distributions of power and privilege, as exemplified by the turn to sociocultural and critical approaches to

instruction.[45] The emphasis on cultivating society is also interesting to ponder as less critical English-language approaches to IL continue to be mired in questions of efficiency, value, and quality assurance.[46]

The important role that social inequality plays within this study means that its findings contribute to a growing awareness of the role that IL plays within questions of social justice. While various studies have explored the connections between IL and social justice within a North American context,[47] this study facilitates English-speakers' insight into social justice-oriented teaching practices in other geographical regions. At the same time, this study complicates these ideas by highlighting tensions in global IL narratives. Normative and universal models of IL have previously been critiqued for their imperialistic overtones, and links between IL and social development have been positioned as simplistic as well as exporting a culturally specific vision of social reality.[48] However, findings from this study suggest that the ideas of development that lie at the center of prominent international models of IL can also be traced within academic IL programming in Mexico. Future research should explore these tensions in more detail, including local responses to global information documents as well as broader questions related to the role and shape of power relationships within educational and developmental contexts. Research should also investigate the impact of national IL documents on instruction; are Mexican librarians constrained or liberated in their efforts to enact social justice through the absence of a widely accepted national model of IL?

Beyond questions of social justice, this research adds another dimension to literature that explores the internationalization of campus. International education has frequently been positioned as a way for students to experience and reflect upon different educational models as well as prepare for an increasingly global workforce.[49] However, the recognition that Mexican

librarians use an increasingly international campus to adapt their own teaching and learning initiatives suggests that globalization also impacts how librarians carry out their professional practice. These ideas raise questions about how differences between international and domestic students shape local ways of understanding in a global or multicultural context. Future research should explore the implications of this study's findings for the development of international curricular models as well as for the design of transcultural learning opportunities. The significance for librarians' professional practice means that future research could also examine how the identities of Mexican teaching librarians are formed and maintained in practice as well as the impact of professional learning opportunities on the development of teaching and learning methods.

These findings, which speak to the complexity of IL teaching practices, are interesting in themselves. However, a primary motivation of this research was to develop insights into how the authors could design more appropriate intercultural instructional interventions. Mexican students who arrive in the authors' libraries as well as students that the authors send on study abroad programs to Mexico may encounter these socially focused understandings of IL. Recognition of these facts has led the authors to think more carefully about how they practice librarianship. One approach that occurs to them is to use the instruction classroom as a "third space," a welcoming space other than home or work, in which IL forms the point of contact between two cultures.[50] IL instruction that has been designed for culturally diverse populations has traditionally centered on the transmission of knowledge.[51] However, the recognition that IL practices are understood and enacted in different ways within diverse cultures calls for the creation of learning opportunities that help learners to interpret and negotiate any differences rather than merely ignoring them. In reorienting teaching upon a comparison of the ways in which information is valued and used

within specific cultural contexts, IL instruction becomes centered on helping instructors and learners to reflect upon their own cultural norms and procedures as well as those of others.[52] In further helping learners to build a broader understanding of the cultural narratives that structure local ways of knowing, IL instruction also becomes focused on the development of alternative ways of seeing, feeling, and understanding as well as the ability to operate between differences in meaning and worldview.[53]

Inspired by the work of their Mexican colleagues, the authors also started to incorporate some social justice principles into their classrooms. While daunting, the task proved easier to accomplish than expected; for example, one author began to incorporate simple discussions with students about what stories or histories are visible or easy to find in the library resources and which are missing and why. This seemingly small point led to a rich conversation about how the catalog and databases can function as systems of oppression. Librarians could also point to derogatory language in subject heading descriptors. To honor students' linguistic identities and ways of knowing, another author facilitated a project with a Spanish instructor to allow students to translate the interactive campus map to reflect the varieties of Spanish spoken in local communities, incorporating the expertise of students' families, especially parents who may have immigrated to the United States and learned to navigate a new context.

Beyond these specific interventions, findings from this study have renewed the authors' commitment to honor student experiences, identities, and perspectives in their teaching. The immense care that these Mexican librarians express for their students has reaffirmed the need to accord learners the time and energy to support their transition into what may be culturally unfamiliar academic ways of knowing.[54] The growth of critical information literacy, an educational approach that encourages a questioning attitude toward information, especially its

political, social, and economic dimensions, has helped give a name to the culturally inclusive dialogue that the authors have attempted to promote. Findings from this study also reinforce the need to work with students to recognize their own points of entry to academic systems. Librarians can serve as the bridge that validates students' previous experiences and knowledge while also supporting their development from student to scholar in their fields. Students may find a safe space in the authors' offices and classrooms to process the unfamiliar demands of graduate school. At the same time, the authors also recognize the claims that these goals place on librarians' daily lives, particularly in the case of librarians of color. The next step is to recognize ways in which caring can be balanced against "burnout" as well as broader questions of emotional labor.[55]

The discussion of Mexican librarians' teaching practices has also illustrated how the authors need to become more purposeful in their own teaching. The instruction librarians at one of the focus group institutions hold weekly meetings in which they support one another. This practice reminds the authors of the need to take time for themselves as well as to become more generous in sharing with and learning from their peers. The opportunity to discuss approaches to instruction among colleagues is a valuable way to learn and enrich one another's practice. Inspired by this example, one author worked with a colleague to start a professional development program called "Instruction Conversation" at their institution. The objectives of the program are to facilitate conversations around instruction with the purpose of building capacity in-house. Another author is reminded by this research to remain student-focused as she navigates stakeholder conversations within the libraries, with other campus units and programs, and with the campus administration.

Findings from this study have also illustrated the value in broadening IL conversations beyond national and linguistic borders. The authors were embarrassed to see how uninformed they were initially about IL in Mexico, especially when the Mexican librarians in the focus groups were knowledgeable about IL models and documents from the United States, the United Kingdom, and Spain, as well as national initiatives. The authors were similarly affected by the discovery that international students are often used to benchmark librarian activities, an approach that the authors had not seen in English-language literature. These findings, which caused the authors to further reflect uncomfortably on their own blind spots, form a reminder of the need to ensure that intercultural IL work remains centered on and inclusive of diverse perspectives, rather than driven by English-language priorities and goals.

Conclusion [A head]

This study has provided insight into how a group of academic librarians in Mexico City position, understand, and teach for IL. Expanding understanding of the connections between social justice work and IL, findings from this research have also surfaced important tensions related to the impact of globalization upon professional librarian activities as well as the role that IL plays within social development initiatives. More importantly, this study has helped the authors to think more carefully about how they design IL instructional opportunities for culturally diverse populations. Creating a basis from which the authors could reflect on difference as well as on how pedagogy can help learners to mediate discontinuity and change, this research has also led to the integration of more caring and person-focused teaching practices in the authors' own work.

Findings from this study also have implications for future research. On the one hand, the study's limited sample points to the need to continue exploring IL as it is understood in Mexico,

particularly outside the capital city. The recognition that this study is restricted by the authors' insider-outsider role further speaks to the importance of designing future research projects in conjunction with local librarians and researchers. On the other hand, future research could examine the implications of this study for international students more broadly, including how this framework could be used to explore IL discourses within other national, social, or cultural contexts. While findings from this study are not generalizable to other international student populations, future research could examine how librarians can build IL teaching and learning opportunities that recognize and scaffold a wide range of cultural contexts. Future studies could also explore how greater collaboration between area studies, instruction, and international student librarians could contribute to sponsoring and supporting these important learning goals.

Acknowledgments [A head]

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Appendix A

Survey Questions

Section 1

1. ¿En qué sector trabaja como bibliotecario/a o profesionista de la información? (In which sector do you work as a librarian or information professional?)

    a. Archivos (Archives)

    b. Bibliotecas (Libraries)

    c. Centro de documentación/investigación (Research or documentation center)

2. ¿Cuántos años de experiencia tiene en su campo profesional? (How many years professional experience do you have?)

    a. 0–1 año (0–1 year)

    b. 1–5 años (1–5 years)

    c. 6–10 años (6–10 years)

    d. 11–20 años (11–20 years)

    e. Más de 20 años (More than 20 years)

3. ¿Qué idiomas habla Ud.? (What languages do you speak?)

4. Indique el máximo nivel educativo alcanzado: / Indicate the maximum educational level reached:

      a. Primaria (Elementary school)

      b. Secundaria (Secondary school0

      c. Preparatoria/bachillerato (High school)

      d. Licenciatura (Undergraduate degree)

      e. Maestría (Master's degree)

      f. Doctorado (Doctorate)

5. ¿En qué disciplina obtuvo su licenciatura (si corresponde)? (If applicable, what was your undergraduate major?)

6. ¿En qué disciplina obtuvo su maestría o doctorado (si corresponde)? (If applicable, in what subject did you receive your master's or doctorate?)

7. En el caso de que sea bibliotecario/a, ¿en qué tipo de biblioteca trabaja? (If you are a librarian, what type of library do you work in?)

      a. Pública (Public)

      b. Académica (Academic)

      c. Escolar (School)

      d. Otra (Other)

Section 2

8. ¿Tiene o ha tenido la responsabilidad de enseñar alfabetización informacional (ALFIN o IL por sus siglas en inglés) en un salón de clases o en línea? (Do you have [or have you ever had] responsibility for teaching information literacy in a classroom or online?)

      a. Sí / Yes

b. No / No

9. ¿Dónde enseña alfabetización informacional? Seleccione todas las que correspondan. (Where do you teach? Select all that apply.)

    a. En un salón de clase dentro de la biblioteca (In a classroom in the library building)

    b. En un salón de clase en otro edificio de la universidad (In a classroom elsewhere on campus)

    c. En consultas de investigación individualizadas (In individual consultation)

    d. En línea (Online)

10. ¿En cuál de los siguientes ámbitos enseña alfabetización informacional? (In which of the following areas do you teach information literacy?)

    a. Con algún curso en particular (In a specific course)

    b. En consultas de investigación (es decir, en su oficina con uno o dos usuarios únicamente) (During individual consultations [meaning, in the office with only one or two users])

11. ¿Cuantas sesiones de alfabetización informacional enseña en un año en promedio? (How many information literacy classes do you teach each year on average?)

12. ¿A quién enseña? Seleccione todas las que correspondan. (Who do you teach? Select all that apply.)

    a. A niños de primaria o secundaria (Middle school or high school students)

    b. A estudiantes de pregrado (Undergraduate students)

    c. A estudiantes de posgrado (Graduate students)

    d. A investigadores (Researchers)

e. A profesores (Professors)

f. Al público en general (General public)

g. Otro (Other)

13. ¿Da clases a estudiantes internacionales? (Do you teach international students?)

a. Sí / Yes

b. No / No

14. En caso afirmativo / If yes

a. Da clases a estudiantes internacionales SOLAMENTE (You teach international

students ONLY)

b. Da clases a estudiantes internacionales y mexicanos juntos (You teach International

students and Mexican students together)

Section 4

15. ¿Qué tipo de apoyo está disponible para el desarrollo profesional sobre la

alfabetización informacional en su entorno? (What kind of support is available for

professional development on information literacy in your environment?)

a. Fondos para asistir a conferencias (Funding to attend conference)

b. Seminarios web (Webinars)

c. Grupos de apoyo/discusión (Support/discussion group)

d. Otro (Other)

16. ¿Cuál de las siguientes opciones describe mejor su preparación profesional para

enseñar? Seleccione todas las que correspondan. (Which of these options best describes

your professional preparation for teaching. Select all that apply.)

a. Una clase específicamente enfocada en la alfabetización informacional (A specific

course focused on instruction in information literacy)

  b. Experiencia adquirida en mi desempeño profesional (On-the-job training)

  c. Por medio de desarrollo profesional (conferencias, seminarios web, etc.) (Through

   professional development [conferences, webinars])

  d. Investigación personal (Personal research)

  e. Otra (Other)

17. ¿Por qué enseña alfabetización informacional? (Why do you teach for information

literacy?)

  a. Se requiere según las pautas del plan curricular de la institución para la que trabaja

   (It is required according to the curriculum guidelines of the institution for which

   you work)

  b. Los profesores lo solicitan (Professors request it)

  c. Iniciativa personal (me gusta, o pienso que es importante) (Personal initiative [I

   like it or I think it is important])

18. ¿Hay algo más que desea compartir con nosotras sobre la alfabetización

informacional? (Is there anything else you would like to share with us about information

literacy?)

Appendix B

Focus Group Questions (indicative)

Alfabetización informacional (Information literacy)

  1. ¿En tu opinión, que es la alfabetización informacional? ¿Qué significa para ti la frase

"alfabetización informacional"? (In your opinion, what is information literacy? What

does the phrase "information literacy" mean to you?)

2. ¿Cómo se ve el ALFIN en el contexto mexicano? / What does information literacy look like in a Mexican context?

    a. ¿Cómo le explicarías el concepto de ALFIN en México a un colega de otra disciplina? (How would you explain information literacy to a colleague?)

    b. ¿Hay algún modelo o definición de ALFIN que sea usado en las bibliotecas mexicanas? ¿Qué piensa sobre este modelo o definición o la falta de modelo/definición? (Is there a model or definition of IL that is used or referred to in libraries in Mexico? What are your thoughts on this model, definition, or lack of model/definition?)

    c. Describa su primera introducción al concepto de ALFIN. / Describe your first introduction to the concept of information literacy

Estudiantes internacionales (International students)

1. ¿Ha notado un cambio en el número de estudiantes internacionales en la biblioteca? ¿en referencia a su enseñanza? ¿Qué impacto ha tenido en las bibliotecas? ¿Ha cambiado su manera de enseñar? ¿pensar en el ALFIN? / Have you noticed a change in numbers of international students in the library? For teaching? What impact has there been on the library? Have you changed the ways in which you teach? Think about IL?

2. ¿es la internacionalización un enfoque tu su universidad? ¿Qué recursos le ha dado su universidad para apoyar la internacionalización? (Is internationalization a focus of the university? What support has the university given you to support internationalization?)

3. En su experiencia, ¿qué oportunidades o barreras existen para la internacionalización, el ALFIN o las actividades de la biblioteca? (In your experience what are the opportunities/barriers of internationalization and information literacy/library activities?)

La enseñanza de la alfabetización informacional (Teaching information literacy)

1. Describa como primero aprendió a enseñar ALFIN. (Describe how you first learned to teach for information literacy.)

2. Describa una lección típica sobre el ALFIN. (Describe a typical lesson you teach.)

    a. ¿Qué métodos o técnicas utiliza en el salón de clase? (What teaching methods or techniques do you use in your instruction?)

    b. ¿Qué tipo de actividades utiliza para involucrar a los alumnos en su clase? (What types of activities do you prefer to engage students in the classroom?)

    c. ¿Cómo se asegura que los estudiantes entienden las lecciones impartidas? (How do you check that students understand the concepts you are trying to teach?)

    d. ¿Qué tipo de evaluación utiliza y cuándo? (What types of assessment do you use and when?)

    e. Describa cualquier tipo de recursos físicos o digitales (hojas de trabajo, etc.) que les da a los estudiantes. (Describe any physical or digital resources [worksheets, pathfinders] you give to students.)

Notes

1. The authors chose the phrase "teaching for information literacy" to reflect and align with their constructivist approach to teaching as well as their recognition that information literacy is shaped and situated by the social context. Including "for" also recognizes that learning is a process of meaning-making rather than assimilation, and that our role is to coach, mentor, or guide learners to make connections and build upon their past experiences rather than to deposit knowledge in them.

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