

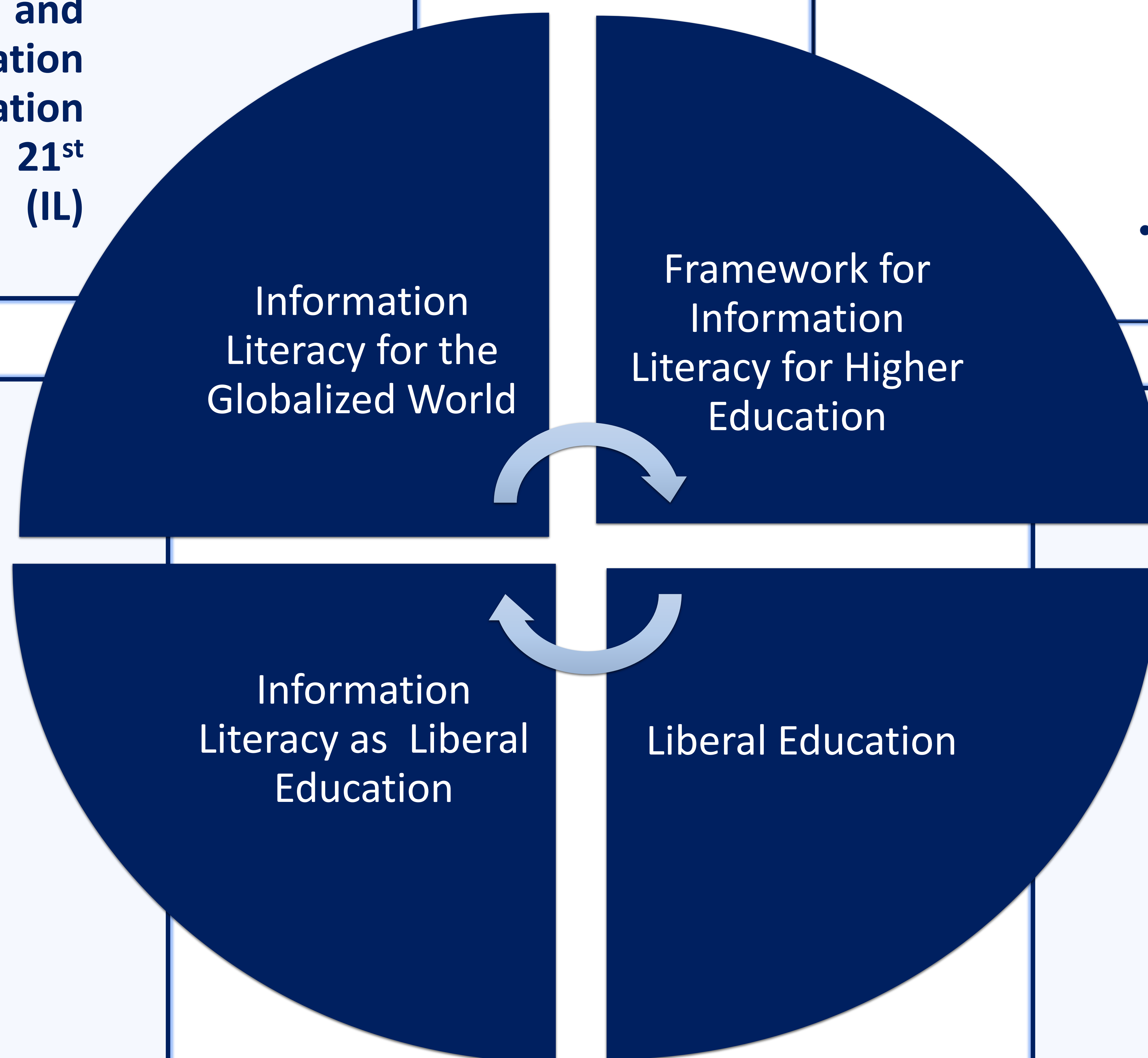
Information Literacy as Liberal Education : Hurdles and Possible Solutions in United Arab Emirates' Context

Bushra Parveen Muzzaffar Hussain, Dubai Medical College for Girls, bushra@dmcg.edu

Abdul Aleem, University of Sharjah, abdulaleem506@gmail.com

- Higher education has been reconceptualized to prepare students as productive global citizens in 21st century world
- Additional engagement with the social, cultural, economic and political contexts of information access, retrieval, use, and creation is required for teaching of 21st century information literacy (IL) (Kutner and Armstrong, 2012)

- The American College of Research Libraries' (ACRL) Information Literacy Competency Standard got criticism over reducing a complex set of learning processes into a much-simplified list of skills (Kutner and Armstrong, 2012)
- In 2015, ACRL Adopted the framework for information literacy for higher education in which information literacy instruction focuses less on skill acquisition and more on helping students develop a broader, more critical understanding of information (Mackay and Eva, 2019)
- The framework naturally connected information literacy and liberal education concepts.



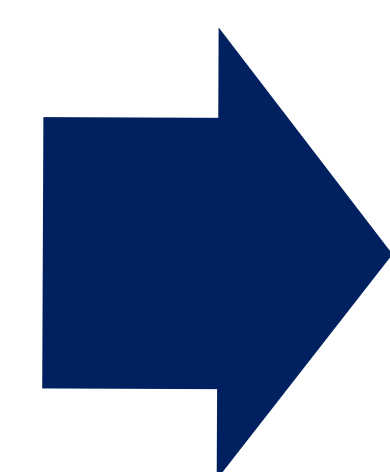
- Information literacy is multidisciplinary in nature which underlies all other disciplines much like liberal education itself
- At the philosophical level information literacy is a fundamental part of students' broader skill set that will help him or her to be effective and responsible users and creators of information both in college and beyond (Wiebe, 2016)
- Wiebe also explicitly notes the connection between information literacy, liberal education, and lifelong learning – all linked to the critical thinking skills needed to evaluate information not just for academic purposes, but for life.
- In today's era of 'fake news', information literacy is a skill as critical to today's citizens as reading or writing.
- Critical thinking skills taught in a liberal education are mirrored in the evaluation skills needed to be information literate, and to live a successfully informed life (Moyo and Mavodza, 2016)

- Liberal education helps students develop a sense of social responsibility, strong and transferable social and practical skills as analytical, critical thinking and problem-solving skills and demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and skills in real-world settings (Robbins, 2014)
- Critical thinking with broad analytical skills and learning how to learn are two of the important outcomes of liberal arts learning found in the book, A New Case for the Liberal Arts: Assessing Institutional Goals and Student Development (Winter, McClelland, & Stewart, 1981 cited in Haberberger, 2017)
- At the University of Lethbridge, the four pillars of liberal education are outlined as: breadth across disciplines; the ability to connect and integrate knowledge; critical thinking and problem-solving skills; and civic engagement (Mackay and Eva, 2019)

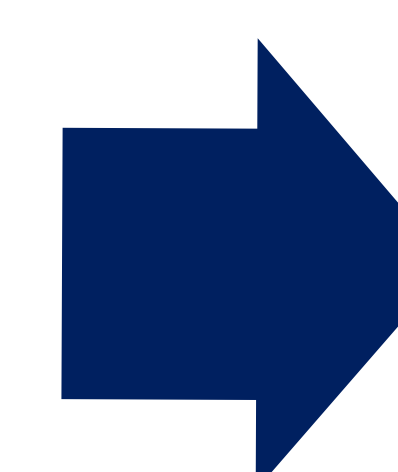
UAE Context



- IL not as Learning Outcome
- Expat Librarians
- Less reading encouragement
- Emphasis on using web effectively



- Cultural factors missing while developing IL curricula
- Librarians are non academic faculty
- Little incentive
- No collaboration with fellow academics



- IL as learning outcome
- ACRL framework
- Cultural factors to be considered
- Academic Librarians

For references please contact the authors