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Abstract: Drawing on discussions within Composition and Rhetoric, this article examines information literacy pedagogy. It considers how academic librarians can work toward theorizing our profession in such a way that we may ask new questions of it and foster creative, reflective and critical habits of mind regarding pedagogical praxis.

Information Literacy and Reflective Pedagogical Praxis

In his salient article, "Critical Information Literacy: Implications for Instructional Practice," James Elmborg describes how many academic librarians now have faculty status and are active in curricular and instructional programs yet feel unprepared for the pedagogical work they are expected to perform.[1] Elmborg concludes his article noting, "the real task for libraries in treating information literacy seriously lies not in defining it or describing it, but in developing a critical practice of librarianship— a theoretically informed praxis."[2] In this article I want to reiterate Elmborg's insistence for developing a critical practice of librarianship and a theoretically informed praxis but I also want to consider how we might engender these in ourselves, in our libraries, and in our campus communities.

Like Elmborg, whose discussions of information literacy draws on the scholarship related to literacy and critical literacy, and Rolf Norgaard, who describes how recent "theoretical trends and changing pedagogical attitudes in rhetoric and composition make information literacy initiatives especially timely and opportune," I too see important connections between information literacy and Composition and Rhetoric.[3] My intention in this article is not to revisit the terrain deftly covered by Elmborg and Norgaard but to respond to Norgaard's invitation to "join in" his conversation about the rich connections between information literacy and the field of Composition and Rhetoric.[4] To this conversation I want add another strong current within Composition and Rhetoric scholarship—the need for self-reflexivity regarding pedagogical praxis.[5] If we are going to address the issues of librarians' roles within educational endeavors systemically, we, as a discipline, need to foster reflective, critical habits of mind regarding pedagogical praxis within ourselves, our libraries, and our campuses.

When librarians talk about pedagogy, we frequently conflate it with information literacy sessions. Indeed, pedagogy and information literacy sessions are inextricably linked. However, I would like to argue that in order to work toward the theoretically informed praxis Elmborg describes, we need to broaden our definition of pedagogy beyond the teaching of information literacy sessions and think critically about how we describe our pedagogical work. This broader conception of pedagogy is, for me, informed by Amy Lee's argument that pedagogy is "constituted by reflection and action" and that it

> takes place in multiple and sometimes simultaneous spheres of action in the "classroom" (whether that's a public meeting, a committee, a place of worship, a workplace) and outside of it. That pedagogy is teaching, working with students, committee members, colleagues, citizens, and parishioners in specific contexts. And that pedagogy is also thinking about what, how, who and why we are teaching in those specific sites.[6]

Thinking about pedagogy in this broadly conceived way is of particular importance for librarians since a significant amount of the pedagogical work we do happens outside of the traditional classroom setting. When we think about our pedagogical work, we need to include not only the work we do in classrooms but our work in reference situations, collection development, library and campus committees, professional organizations, campus and community groups as well as formal and informal conversations with students, colleagues, peers, administrators and community members.

Despite the fact that librarians are increasingly expected to participate in pedagogical work, data from Heidi Julien's studies of Masters of Library and Information Science (MLIS) programs reveal that "fewer than half of schools graduating librarians are providing preparation in instructional skills."[7] Julien's study offers tremendous insight into why so many librarians

feel unprepared for the instructional and pedagogical work that is increasingly required of them. Further, her data suggests that pedagogy and instruction do not occupy the same status as reference, cataloguing, collection development or any of the other competencies and skills thought to be "standard" preparation for librarians. If training in instruction and pedagogy are not components of MLIS education, "[w]here," asks Julien, "will these graduates gain instructional expertise?"[8] In answering her own question, Julien argues that formal training needs to become a component of MLIS coursework. The inclusion of such courses would undoubtedly help new librarians' sense of preparedness with their instructional roles. However, as educational theory tells us, unless skills, practices and ideas are used in relevant ways and developed in reflective creative environments, instruction and pedagogy courses in MLIS programs may suffer the same fate as decontextualised "one-shot" information literacy sessions.

While I am not disagreeing with Julien's argument for MLIS coursework in instruction, I believe graduate courses cannot be solutions in and of themselves but must instead be part of a larger endeavor aimed at helping librarians feel more confident in and prepared for their pedagogical work. Further, I believe we need to ensure that we are not only providing librarians with training in the area of instruction but also with training in the area of pedagogy. Sound instructional strategies and techniques are an important part of teaching but they must be informed by an understanding of pedagogical theory and grounded in an understanding of broader educative initiatives occurring on our campuses. Elmborg offers one such example of how theory and practice can work together when he suggests that adopting a literacy agenda in the library might "transform librarianship by challenging current assumptions and providing guiding principles to shape an emerging practice. This will only happen to the extent that library practice evolves by continuing to focus on its educational mission."[9] Elmborg's case for

connecting the work we do as librarians with broader educational missions is one way in which new and established librarians can work toward theorizing our profession in such a way that we may ask new questions of it and move toward fostering reflective, critical habits of mind regarding pedagogical praxis.

What is Information Literacy?

Before discussing the need for reflexivity in information literacy, I'd like to briefly address the question of what is meant by the term "information literacy" since there are central elements within information literacy that lend themselves well to developing reflective, critical habits of mind regarding pedagogical praxis. Although it is easy for discussions of information literacy to get mired in semantics, it is important to unpack the important currents within the term "information literacy." In theory, information literacy is fairly easy to define. For example, the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) offers this straight-forward definition: "Information literacy is a set of abilities requiring individuals to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information."[10] The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) offers a similarly clear definition: "Information literacy is knowing when and why you need information, where to find it, and how to evaluate, use and communicate it in an ethical manner."[11] The National Forum on Information Literacy (NFIL) defines information literacy as "The ability to know when there is a need for information, to be able to identify, locate, evaluate, and effectively use that information for the issue or problem at hand" but also offers definitions of related areas such as business literacy, computer literacy, health literacy, media literacy, technology literacy and, visual literacy.[12] All three of the above definitions are primarily focused on academic environments and predicated upon concepts such as identifying, locating,

evaluating and using information. In this way, these definitions make information literacy seem not only relevant to the educational missions of academic institutions but also possible and manageable.

Information literacy gets a bit messier with documents such as the 2005 "Alexandria Proclamation On Information Literacy And Lifelong Learning."[13] In this document, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) begin by describing how information literacy "comprises the competencies to recognize information needs and to locate, evaluate, apply and create information within cultural and social contexts."[14] The Alexandria Proclamation goes on to make explicit what is implied in the other definitions by emphasizing the democratizing and social justice elements inherent in information literacy. They declare:

> Information Literacy lies at the core of lifelong learning. It empowers people in all walks of life to seek, evaluate, use and create information effectively to achieve their personal, social, occupational and educational goals. It is a basic human right in a digital world and promotes social inclusion of all nations.
>
> Lifelong learning enables individuals, communities and nations to attain their goals and to take advantage of emerging opportunities in the evolving global environment for shared benefit. It assists them and their institutions to meet technological, economic and social challenges, to redress disadvantage and to advance the well being of all.[15]

In this context, information literacy not only incorporates the recurrent concepts of identifying, locating, evaluating and using information but also encompasses engendering lifelong learning, empowering people, promoting social inclusion, redressing disadvantage, and advancing the

well-being of all in a global context. Significantly, the Alexandria Proclamation clearly locates

these goals within the purview of libraries, librarians and librarianship. Libraries are an

"essential element" of information literacy since "they provide resources and services in an

environment that fosters free and open inquiry and serve as a catalyst for the interpretation,

integration, and application of knowledge in all fields of learning."[16] Because of its emphasis on

lifelong learning, empowerment, social inclusion and other social justice elements, the

Alexandria Proclamation's broadly conceived iteration of information literacy is the version of

information literacy that I summon in this article. Documents such as the Alexandria

Proclamation urge us to consider information literacy in contexts broader than our classrooms,

libraries and campuses. Such a broadly conceived vision involves investigations of information

literacy's connections with technology, politics and policy, economics, health, and agriculture to

name just a few areas. These investigations are well beyond the scope of this article but I raise

them as reminders of the vast number of possible dialogues surrounding information literacy.

The Alexandria Proclamation underscores information literacy's connections with

broader social justice ideas and initiatives. Because of these connections, information literacy—

like literacy—is not only educational but also inherently political, cultural and social. As

Rebecca Powell reminds us, "literacy is both a cultural and a social expression, and therefore it is

always inherently political. Literacy practices operate within a sociopolitical context, and that

context is defined and legitimated by those who have the power and authority to do so."[17] For

these reasons, she calls for a "reconstituted definition of literacy" since

> dominant views of literacy tend to diminish our subjective selves, inhibiting our ability to
>
> acquire a critical social consciousness. Literacy as a moral imperative envisions
>
> language as functioning in a transformative way— as a means for seeing the world

differently— so that we might begin to construct a more humane and compassionate society . . . we must embrace a literacy that will illuminate reality so that we might ultimately be able to reinvent that reality[18]

As a form of literacy, information literacy also operates within a sociopolitical context and is thus politically charged. When we limit its potentials to outcomes and standards, we run the risk of minimizing the complex situatedness of information literacy and diminishing— if not negating—its inherent political nature.

Given all that information literacy is meant to achieve, information literacy work can seem overwhelming. Clearly the goals of information literacy as described in the Alexandria Proclamation are larger than any one librarian or library can begin to contemplate. That is not to say, however, that we should dismiss information literacy's lofty goals or cast them aside simply because they are unobtainable. These broadly conceived goals are helpful since they help us to see the big picture of what we are doing when we work with students and design information literacy initiatives. At the same time, the big picture goals cannot supersede the local needs and the quotidian. What I am suggesting is that the dialogues we have surrounding information literacy instruction strive to find a balance the daily and the visionary, the local and the global, the practices and the theories, the ideal and the possible. One of the ways we can begin to do this in our daily teaching lives is to work toward creating habits of mind that prioritize reflective discussions about what it is that we are doing when we "do' information literacy. This means thinking about pedagogy and talking about how we might work toward making the global local, the visionary concrete, the theoretical practicable and, perhaps, the ideal possible. But how can we, as individual librarians, begin to work toward making information literacy ideals possible?

Thinking Outside the Rubric

Faced with top-down demands that we "prove" our information literacy programs are "working," or that our students are acquiring particular skills and competencies, or that our graduates are information literate, administrators often turn to guidelines and rubrics of ACRL standards as a means of quantifying information literacy. On a pragmatic level, we do need to evaluate how our programs and initiatives are working but we also consider the modes by which we judge or quantify our information literacy "successes." Pinning down the effectiveness of information literacy programs is as loaded an endeavor as evaluating literacy. As James Paul Gee has written about literacy, "the common-sense notion of literacy as 'the ability to read and write' (intransitively), [is] a notion that is nowhere near as coherent as it first sounds."[19] Similarly, information literacy is nowhere near as coherent as the ACRL definitions and standards first sound.

Using the ACRL standards to quantify or map information literacy skills or curricula are fraught projects that need to be carefully considered. As Jeff Purdue has argued, the ACRL standards are "an abstraction, and are never meant to represent a lock-step process towards Information Literacy. They don't even claim to represent the totality of research practices."[20] After listing the ACRL performance indicators, Purdue concedes "Although I am an experienced researcher, I have to admit that I've fallen short on nearly every standard listed above."[21] Purdue, a former Composition teacher, reflects that the research process is never systematic but is very much akin to the writing process: "provisional, subject to constant change, and never neatly sequential."[22] Because learning, teaching, researching, writing and thinking are inherently messy processes, the neatness of ACRL-inspired rubrics does possess a certain allure. It is no wonder, then, that administrators turn to them as a way of managing the messiness of pedagogical reflection and curricular evaluation. In these instances, the creative "messy work" of

information literacy becomes neatly compartmentalized into sets of competencies and measurable outcomes with boxes to check with a yes or no. Norgaard calls this the "'off/on' paradigm— one that suggests that information literacy amounts to a toggle switch, signaling something one either has or doesn't have."[23] When discussions and evaluations of information literacy take the form of a generic rubric or de-contextualized form of administrative paperwork, information literacy not only becomes disconnected from pedagogical theories and day-to-day practices, it begins to lose sight of the large global goals outlined in the Alexandria Proclamation. This is not to say that we should not use the ACRL standards or use rubrics: when we use rubrics, however, we need to use them judiciously so that information literacy's tremendous potential for creative, critical, and visionary thinking does not become—literally and figuratively—boxed in and compartmentalized.

The dangers of evaluative rubrics are that they attempt to fix what is fluid and tend toward summative not formative evaluation.[24] Rubrics generally ask summative questions such as "does this assignment teach a particular information literacy skill: yes or no?" or "does this assignment teach this particular outcome: yes or no?" The more open and thus helpful questions are formative questions that cannot be answered with a yes or a no: "how well did this activity work?" "How might we revise this assignment?" "Are there different approaches we could take?" "How does this exercise foster creative critical thinking?"   "Does this assignment help empower learners?" Rubrics ask us to provide summative answers when in reality the very nature of information literacy pushes us to ask formative questions. In asking formative questions, we remind ourselves that evaluative statements regarding information literacy must always be qualified, contextualized, reflexive and dynamic.

When we let rubrics guide our pedagogy, we run the danger of seeing information literacy education as a form of "banking" that Paolo Freire argues against in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*: "Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat. This is the 'banking' concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits."[25] In this scenario, students are turned into containers or receptacles to be filled by the teacher: "The more completely she fills the receptacles, the better a teacher she is."[26] Connecting Freire with information literacy, Elmborg notes

> Perhaps not accidentally, Freire equates the common library functions of receiving, filing, collecting, and cataloguing with the banking concept. In doing so, he poses important challenges to librarians. What is the role of the librarian in the Freireian vision of critical literacy? Is the library a passive information bank where students and faculty make knowledge deposits and withdrawals, or is it a place where students actively engage existing knowledge and shape it to their own current and future uses? And what is the librarian's role as an educator in this process?[27]

Questions like Elmborg's can engender the kinds of reflective conversations that have the power to transform our work as individual librarians and our work as a profession. Thoughtful, creative, transformative reflection can also be related to immediate concerns or observations related to specific pedagogical moments or particular students, assignments, or the socio-cultural moments or events that inform a broadly conceived educative experience.

There are, as Elmborg, Norgaard, Purdue and others have described, many useful

connections that can be made between information literacy and the field of Composition and

Rhetoric. Perhaps the most fruitful intersection between these two areas is the shared connection

with literacy studies. Norgaard contends that scholarship on literacy help us to think about

information literacy in broader contexts: "literacy studies illuminate the ways that individual acts

of writing and reading are connected to larger cultural, historical, social, and political systems.

That is, any literacy is always an embedded or situated cultural practice conditioned by ideology,

power, and social context. Such a framework has several implications for how we might

approach information literacy."[28] Literacy studies also provide us with frameworks through

which we can theorize the work we do and put into practice the kind of work we would like to do

in information literacy. Further, literacy studies also provide examples of what does not work.

For example, as Elmborg describes, "While the academic library community spends a great deal

of energy devising, implementing, and testing the Information Literacy Competency Standards,

literacy researchers from outside the libraries have grown increasingly critical of the effort to

define literacy through standards, and of the research community in Library and Information

Science (LIS) for its inability to engage the literacy literature."[29] Elmborg concedes that

information literacy standards and research models have "been profoundly important in guiding

librarianship toward a student-centered educational philosophy," yet cautions that "without

complementary theoretical perspectives, none of these approaches can generate important critical

questions about [the models' or standards'] own conclusions, assumptions or methods."[30]

Drawing on the work of the New London Group, Elmborg reminds us "Literacy cannot be

described, therefore, in broad terms as a set of universal skills and abstractable processes.

Rather, literacy is in constant flux and embedded in cultural situations, each situation nuanced

and different from others."[31] All forms of learning are always additive, cumulative, iterative and relational: information literacy learning is no different.

Freire's critique of the banking model of education is useful for librarians to consider as they approach information literacy pedagogy. Freire argues that instead of the banking model, education must be "problem-posing": "Banking education resists dialogue; problem-posing education regards dialogue as indispensable to the act of cognition which unveils reality. . . Problem-posing education bases itself on creativity and stimulates true reflection and action upon reality, thereby responding to the vocation of persons as beings who are authentic only when engaged in inquiry and creative transformation."[32] Freire's emphases on dialogue, creativity, reflection and action, inquiry and creative transformation are concepts worth revisiting as we attempt—through our own problem-posing— to put information literacy theories into practice.

While I am not fully convinced by Peter Williams' argument that information literacy is "an idea that has had its time," his article raises some vital points to consider as we think about putting information literacy theories into practice.[33] Perhaps his most salient point is this: "Talking about information in abstract terms holds little appeal for non-librarians. First-year undergraduate computing students are not going to pay much attention to a talk about Boolean searching. However, show them how to find an electronic journal article about Bluetooth and their ears prick up."[34] Williams' statement is a reminder that information literacy cannot be abstract, generic or decontextualized: instead, it needs to be specific, relevant, meaningful and contextualized for the particular learners and their contexts. Any successful theory of pedagogy must, as the New London Group reminds us, "be based on views about how the human mind works in society and classrooms, as well as about the nature of teaching and learning. . . Our view of mind, society and learning is based on the assumption that the human mind is embodied,

situated, and social."[35] One of the major difficulties information literacy practitioners must contend with is how to make information literacy embodied, situated and social for our diverse student body.

Dane Ward describes how one of the recurrent problems noted by librarians and instructional faculty is students' lack of engagement with library sessions. The source of the problem, Ward argues, is not necessarily with the students themselves but with the way we address information. Information literacy is, as Ward describes, about being able to think critically about information and evaluate information sources but it is also connected with the "imagination of information, our deepening experience of it, and appreciation for the richness of that vast reservoir of meaning and interior life."[36] Ward declares it is a "fundamental responsibility" for librarians and faculty "to embrace a commitment to a more holistic information literacy that can make a difference in the world."[37] Further, as the New London Group describes, "There is ample evidence that people do not learn anything well unless they are both motivated to learn and believe that they will be able to use and function with what they are learning in some way that is in their interest."[38] While few educators would dispute the need for teaching and learning to be relevant, engaged, embodied, situated and social, starting the conversations about how we might enact those qualities in relation to information literacy is a daunting task.

Information Literacy and Praxis

Of all the questions related to information literacy, I believe the question of praxis is the most urgent and I am certainly not alone in this belief. Elmborg, as quoted earlier, concludes his article on critical information literacy with the statement: "The real task for libraries in treating information literacy seriously lies not in defining it or describing it, but in developing a critical

practice of librarianship— a theoretically informed praxis."[39] Praxis— the interplay of theory

and practice— is vital to information literacy since it simultaneously strives to ground theoretical

ideas into practicable activities and use experiential knowledge to rethink and re-envision

theoretical concepts: "Cut off from practice, theory becomes abstraction or 'simple verbalism.'

Separated from theory, practice becomes ungrounded activity or 'blind activism.'" [40] Reflecting

upon her work with literacy, Powell comments "it is only through conscious reflection and

critique, or what critical theorists refer to as *praxis*, that genuine transformation is able to

occur."[41] In terms of information literacy, if we do not use theory as a means toward critical

self-reflection and contextualization, our daily practices will come to naught. Similarly, all of our

cogent, inspirational theories regarding information literacy will remain "airy nothings" unless

we find "a local habitation and a name" in theoretically informed pedagogical practices. Ward

concludes his discussion of "The other side of information literacy" with "But how do we teach

it?" Here Ward raises what is arguably our discipline's million-dollar question.

When we begin thinking about what an information literacy pedagogy might look like,

Composition and Rhetoric offers many generative starting places. As Elmborg and others have

argued, information literacy can learn a lot from disciplines like Composition and Rhetoric that

have a rich scholarly tradition of discussing critical literacy and critical pedagogy and the

connections between theory and practice. One lesser-explored connection between information

literacy and Composition and Rhetoric is that of praxis-based pedagogy. Particularly useful in

this regard is Shari Stenberg and Amy Lee's "Developing Pedagogies: Learning the Teaching of

English."[42] Although Stenberg and Lee's article is concerned with the teaching of English

(particularly the teaching of writing), much can be gleaned from it as we consider how we might

develop a praxis-based information literacy pedagogy since they engage with Freireian concepts

such as dialogue, creativity, reflection and action, inquiry and creative transformation.

Moreover, some of the limitations Stenberg and Lee have noted about the impediments to praxis

are deeply relevant to librarians' work with information literacy.

Stenberg and Lee cite Maria-Regina Kecht who describes the primacy of reading texts in

English studies: "Having gained some expertise in decoding structures of signification, we

should be intellectually equipped to read our own practices, our institutions, and the world as

text."[43] Stenberg and Lee build on the idea of reading our own practices and argue, "For us, this

practice of critically reading our teaching in the same careful way we've learned to engage

scholarly and literary texts in English studies is crucial. That is, if pedagogy is at once a means

and object of inquiry, we need to develop ways of studying our teaching, of reading our

pedagogical interactions and our pedagogical development (exploration, critique, revision) as

texts."[44] According to Stenberg and Lee, scholarship in English studies and critical pedagogy

"offers many interesting articulations of pedagogy," yet there are very few "*representations* of

scholars studying the texts of their teaching. And, in fact, Jennifer Gore argues that this is

exactly the reason we haven't seen the impact of critical pedagogy in more classrooms:

scholarship has tended to favor abstract social visions over inquiry into how students and

teachers practice pedagogy." [45] Pedagogy, they further argue, "has too often become a new

knowledge body to be theorized about, but not engaged at the level of the classroom. It has

become yet another 'content' to be mastered."[46] What Stenberg and Lee say about pedagogy in

English studies being focused on articulations rather than representations is doubly true in terms

of pedagogy and LIS scholarship. Librarians need to talk about actual classroom practices and

activities not, as Chris Gallagher has described, so that we may present "replicable results" but to

"provide materials for teachers to reflect on and engage."[47] The need, thus, for reading our own

pedagogical practices within the library and within our academic institutions is not only applicable to information literacy, it is imperative if information literacy is to become praxis rather than "simple verbalism" or "blind activism."

The value of pedagogical inquiry, Stenberg and Lee argue, is this: "By deliberately slowing down and freezing particular moments in various 'teacher development' sites, and by performing a reading of these moments as 'texts,' we want to call attention to the possibilities and challenges of becoming and developing as critical pedagogues."[48] As a way of pushing pedagogical thinking within English studies, Stenberg and Lee posit, "What might it mean to replace teacher training with pedagogical inquiry?"[49] This question, it seems to me, is both timely and highly adaptable to information literacy: what might it mean to foster pedagogical inquiry within LIS course work and within information literacy initiatives?

As we ponder the best ways to prepare librarians to teach, it is important to remember, as Stenberg and Lee describe, "What prepares one to teach isn't mastery, but a willingness to give up the very notion, to make learning— on the part of the students *and* the teacher— the center of the classroom."[50] At the core of Stenberg and Lee's conception of pedagogical inquiry is a central tenet "that teaching can never be learned finally and totally. As we see it, work with ever-changing students, new subject matter, and teaching colleagues allows us to continually reflect on our pedagogical values, assumptions, and practices. Enacting pedagogical inquiry requires an ongoing process of discovering—and responding to— revisionary possibilities."[51] Just as Stenberg and Lee remind us "we will never find answers to the question of 'how to teach students to read,'" we in libraries will never find answers to the question of how to teach information literacy. Like information literacy itself, the teaching of information literacy can never be "mastered" since both are always in flux, always contextual, always in process, always

evolving. For these reasons, I resist offering answers, solutions or methods to questions about how to engage theory and practice within information literacy initiatives. At the same time, I acknowledge that refusing to provide answers to questions such as "how do I teach information literacy" or "how do I become a reflective pedagogue" or "how might I foster a reflective pedagogical environment in my library" often seems evasive and counter productive.   Rather than offering answers, methods or solutions, I will offer a starting point: creative, reflective dialogue.

As Freire explains in his discussion of problem-posing education, "Through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with students-teachers. The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach."[52] Creative, reflective dialogue can happen in a numerous ways and in different forums. Lee and Stenberg's article offers one model of what reflective pedagogical dialogues might look like between teachers. Their aims for their dialogues about teaching were not to become "one 'kind' of pedagogue" but rather to begin "working to move from teaching to *pedagogy*."[53] Their move from teaching to pedagogy enabled them "to think reflexively and critically about our teaching, to make visible and careful choices, and to be able to talk about why and how we came to them."[54] Within LIS scholarship, Rolf Norgaard similarly describes the potential benefits of creative, reflective dialogue between librarians and faculty: "We would do well to listen attentively to each other's voices. . . We need each other more than both of us may think."[55] Ward's article also looks toward the dialogues that can happen between librarians and students when we live and love the question: "To teach students about personally meaningful information and non-analytic information processes means first and foremost to create a space where the

inner life can be nurtured, where creativity can emerge, where students can love the questions."[56] Summoning Rilke, Ward emphasizes "the importance of not jumping too quickly to the answers" and integrating questions into our lives because "Information literacy is not a set of competencies; it is a way of being that comes from living the question."[57] All three of these articles are responses (formally or informally) to what Freire describes as the need to "abandon the educational goal of deposit-making and replace it with the posing of the problems of human beings in their relations with the world."[58] All three of these articles show the authors' shift from being the "teacher-of-the-students" to the "teacher-student with students-teachers." In terms of information literacy pedagogy, one of the best ways for us to encourage students to be engaged learners is for us become engaged learners, delve deeply into our own problem-posing and embody the kind of engagement we want to see in our students.[59] By modeling that we too are learning and "living the questions," we can help students learn and live questions as well.

Perhaps the first set of questions we need to consider is what we —both as individuals and as a profession—can do to foster the kinds of dialogues that can chip away at the teacher-student dichotomy and work toward the "teacher-student with students-teachers" model Freire describes. Further, how might we facilitate or nurture problem-posing education on our campuses in regard to information literacy? How might we facilitate problem posing for our students and encourage them to find problems related to themselves in the world and with the world so that they will feel increasingly challenged and obliged to respond to those very real challenges?

Conclusion

If we use the Alexandria Proclamation definition of information literacy, we can see that providing information literacy sessions is, in fact, a politicized if not political act: "[i]nformation

literacy enhances the pursuit of knowledge by equipping individuals with the skills and abilities for critical reception, assessment and use of information in their professional and personal lives." Such a definition of information literacy foregrounds the central connections between information literacy and thinkers such as Paulo Freire and John Dewey[60] and makes explicit the relationships between information literacy and critical pedagogy. It is important to keep the connections between information literacy, critical pedagogy and progressive education in mind because as Darder, Baltodano, and Torres argue, "[u]nderstanding critical pedagogy [and, I would add, information literacy] within a long tradition of progressive educational movements and ongoing struggles offers a possible safeguard against the temptation to inadvertently reify and reduce critical pedagogy [and information literacy] to a teaching 'method."[61] When we think about the multifarious work we do as librarians on a day-to-day basis, it is easy to lose sight of the fact that the work we do—be it cataloguing, collection development, reference work or systems librarianship— all contributes to that "free and open inquiry" and the environment that serves "as a catalyst for the interpretation, integration and application of knowledge in all fields of learning."[62] For librarians working directly with information literacy programs, it is particularly easy in the midst of a busy teaching load to lose sight of the fact that what we are doing goes far beyond Boolean searching and Library of Congress Subject Headings. The work we do is part of a broader educative project that works to empower individuals both locally and globally.

1 James Elmborg, "Critical Information Literacy: Implications for Instructional Practice,"
Journal of Academic Librarianship 32 (2): 192.

2 Ibid., p.198.

3 Rolf Norgaard, "Writing Information Literacy: Contributions to a Concept," *Reference & User Services Quarterly* 43 (2): 125.

4 Ibid., p.125.

5 The terms "instruction" and "pedagogy" are often conflated or used interchangeably. Indeed, the line between the two concepts is in many ways an artificial division but the distinctions between the terms are worth noting. Instruction is, for the most part, primarily practical and is concerned with instructional strategies and classroom practices. Pedagogy is more theoretical and is concerned with the "meta" level questions about teaching, learning and education. Ideally, the instructional practices and the pedagogical theories inform and are informed by each other to create praxis— a theoretically informed practice and a practice informed theory.

6 Amy Lee, *Composing Critical Pedagogies: Teaching Writing as Revision* (Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English), p. 9.

7 Heidi Julien, "Education for Information Literacy Instruction: A Global Perspective," *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science* 46 (3) (Summer 2005): 214.

8 Ibid., p. 211.

9 James Elmborg, "Critical Information Literacy," 193.

10 Association of College and Research Libraries, "Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education." Online. Available:

http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlstandards/informationliteracycompetency.cfm (Accessed August

    1, 2007).

[11] Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, "Information Literacy:

    Definition." Online. Available:

    http://www.cilip.org.uk/professionalguidance/informationliteracy/definition/ (Accessed

    August 1, 2007).

[12] The National Forum on Information Literacy, "What is Information Literacy?" Online.

    Available: http://www.infolit.org/ (Accessed August 1, 2007).

[13] "The Alexandria Proclamation on Information Literacy and Lifelong" LearningOnline.

    Available: http://www.ifla.org/III/wsis/BeaconInfSoc.html (Accessed August 1, 2007).

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Rebecca Powell, *Literacy as a Moral Imperative: Facing the Challenges of a Pluralistic*

    Society (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999), p. 4.

[18] Ibid., p. 20-21.

[19] James Paul Gee, "What is Literacy?," in *Rewriting Literacy*, edited by Candace Mitchell and

    Kathleen Weiler. (Westport CT: Bergin and Garvey, 1991): 7

[20] Jeff Purdue, "Stories, Not Information: Transforming Information Literacy," *portal: Libraries*

    and the Academy 3 (4) (2003): 655.

[21] Ibid., p. 654.

[22] Ibid., p. 655.

[23] Rolf Norgaard, "Writing Information Literacy," 126.

[24] For a discussion of the distinction between summative and formative evaluation see Brooke

K. Horvath, "The Components of Written Response: A Practical Synthesis of Current

Views," *Rhetoric Review* 2 (2) (January 1984): 137. Horvath writes: "Determining a paper's

grade and writing comments to explain or to justify that grade; deciding how well a paper

measures up to one's expectations, fulfills the requirements of an assignment, meets certain

criteria of good prose; in short, passing judgment, ranking: this is summative evaluation,

which treats a text as a finished product and the student's writing ability as at least

momentarily fixed. Formative evaluation, on the other hand, is intent on helping students

improve their writing abilities; it approaches a paper 'not in terms of what has been done, but

of what needs to be done, what can be done. . . not to judge, but to identify problems and

possibilities' (McDonald 1978). Formative evaluation treats a text as part of an ongoing

process of skills acquisition and improvement, recognizing that what is being responded to is

not a fixed but a developing entity" (137). Horvath's concern here is responding to student

writing but there are useful parallels to be made with information literacy assessments

whether on an individual or programmatic basis.

[25] Paolo Freire, trans. Donald Macedo, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York, NY:

Continuum, 2002), p. 72.

[26] Ibid.

[27] James Elmborg, "Critical Information Literacy," 193.

[28] Rolf Norgaard, "Writing Information Literacy," 126.

[29] James Elmborg, "Critical Information Literacy," 193.

[30] Ibid., p. 194.

[31] Ibid., p. 195.

[32] Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, pp. 83-84.

[33] Peter Williams, "Opinion: Against Information Literacy," Update (July/ August 2006).

Online. Available:

http://www.cilip.org.uk/publications/updatemagazine/archive/archive2006/july/williams.htm

(Accessed August 1, 2007).

[34] Ibid.

[35] New London Group, "A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures" in

Multiliteracies: Literacy Learning and the Design of Social Futures, edited by Bill Cope and

Mary Kalantzis (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 30.

[36] Dane Ward, "Revisioning Information Literacy for Lifelong Meaning," *Journal of Academic

Librarianship* 32 (July 2006): 398.

[37] Ibid.

[38] New London Group, "A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures," p. 33.

[39] James Elmborg, "Critical Information Literacy," 198.

[40] Antonia Darder, Marta Baltodano, and Rudolfo D. Torres, "Critical Pedagogy: An

Introduction" in *The Critical Pedagogy Reader* (New York and London: Routledge Falmer,

2003), p. 15.

[41] Powell, *Literacy as a Moral Imperative*, p. 4.

[42] Shari Stenberg and Amy Lee, "Developing Pedagogies: Learning the Teaching of English,"

College English 64 (January 2002): 326-347.

[43] Ibid., p. 328.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid., pp. 328-329.

[47] Chris W. Gallagher, *Radical Departures: Composition and Progressive Pedagogy* (Urbana,

IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 2002), quoted in Stenberg and Lee,

"Developing Pedagogies," 329.

[48] Stenberg and Lee, "Developing Pedagogies," 329.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Stenberg and Lee, "Developing Pedagogies," 333 (emphasis mine).

[51] Ibid., p. 340.

[52] Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, p. 80.

[53] Stenberg and Lee, "Developing Pedagogies," 338.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Rolf Norgaard, "Writing Information Literacy," 125.

[56] Dane Ward, "Revisioning Information Literacy," 398-399.

[57] Ibid., p. 399.

[58] Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, p. 79.

[59] The question of how to go about enacting this creative, reflective dialogue is undeniably pressing. In response to this piece, an anonymous reviewer asked a crucial question: "am I simply to include more problem based learning into my teaching of information literacy, or do I need to start from scratch and sit alongside the classes I work with, understanding how they think, and walking with them on their path to critical thinking and information literacy. God please give me the time for this." The reviewer concludes, "However, this is perhaps the nature of the reflective activity the author is recommending." Indeed, the answer the reviewer provides to his or her question is the answer I too would offer. The act of asking questions such as the ones quoted above is precisely the kind of reflective activity I am advocating. Pedagogical reflection does not mean we need to dismantle and rebuild our information literacy classes, programs and initiatives from the ground up (though we may, after reflection,

choose to do so). Instead pedagogical reflection means that that we ask questions like the ones quoted above of ourselves and our teaching and that we think critically and creatively about the small and large pedagogical choices we make.

[60] For a cogent discussion of Dewey's connections with information literacy see James Elmborg, "The Other Dewey: John Dewey's Democracy and Education And Information Literacy," in *Student Engagement and Information Literacy*, edited by Craig Gibson. (Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2006): 1-15.

[61] Darder, Baltodano, and Torres, "Critical Pedagogy," p. 20.

[62] "The Alexandria Proclamation on Information Literacy and Lifelong" LearningOnline. Available: http://www.ifla.org/III/wsis/BeaconInfSoc.html (Accessed August 1, 2007).