Journal of Information Literacy

ISSN 1750-5968

Volume 14 Issue 1

June 2020

Article

Nzomo, P. and Fehrmann, P. 2020. Advocacy engagement: The role of information literacy skills. *Journal of Information Literacy*, 14(1), pp. 41–65.

http://dx.doi.org/10.11645/14.1.2695

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Advocacy engagement: The role of information literacy skills

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Abstract

The current research sought to identify what skills, knowledge, and behaviours (SKBs) in advocacy engagement are closely associated with information literacy skills. The paper examines what role information literacy (IL) skills play in making one an effective advocate by drawing on everyday life situations that involve advocacy such as self-advocacy, social advocacy, patient advocacy, parent advocacy, and policy advocacy. A rapid scoping review was completed using articles published within the last ten years (2008–2019). The articles were retrieved from *Academic Search Complete,* a multidisciplinary database. The aim of our initial review was to identify what skills, knowledge and behaviours are deemed essential for everyday life situations that involve advocacy. Charting of the literature was then used to map the skills, knowledge and behaviours mentioned in relation to advocacy to information literacy skills. Results showed how the knowledge component in advocacy engagement is closely associated with various IL skills such as finding information, evaluation of information and sharing information. Implications of the study point towards the importance of emphasising IL instruction in broader contexts beyond higher education and/ or academic libraries. The study shows that IL skills are important in the public realm and in primary (elementary) and secondary (high) school contexts as well. Therefore, public librarians and school librarians should be just as engaged in equipping their patrons/clientele with IL skills that may be needed for different types of advocacy such as self-advocacy, parent advocacy and patient advocacy. The study also has implications for humanitarian research and research that involves situations of information poverty as these contexts will often involve advocacy work as well.

Keywords

advocacy; behaviour; information literacy; knowledge; skills; rapid scoping review

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1. Introduction

Advocacy is increasingly becoming common and important in everyday life, as it is practiced across socio-economic, political and geographic boundaries. Advocacy is also studied and embraced by various professional disciplines, including law, social work, political science, library and information science (LIS) and others in the non-profit sector (Almog-Bar & Schmid, 2014). It is defined as speaking out on issues of concern, pleading or arguing to support a cause or idea, and using persuasive communication and actions to attempt to change policies, positions, and programs. (Arnold, 2016). The role of libraries and LIS professionals in advocacy is well

documented in the literature. Examples include libraries or LIS professionals advocating for causes such as information literate societies (Bundy, 2002; Eckerdal, 2017), open access (Eng, 2017), intellectual freedom (Stripling, 2015) and social justice (Saunders, 2017). Over the years, and going back as far as when the concept of information literacy (IL) was first introduced by Zurkowski (1974), there have been concerted efforts to promote civic engagement and build societies where individuals are information literate. The Moscow Declaration on Media and Information Literacy of 2012 (International Conference Media and Information Literacy for Knowledge Societies, 2012) for example, underscores the importance of building information literate societies:

> In order to succeed in this environment; and to resolve problems effectively in every facet of life, individuals, communities and nations should obtain a critical set of competencies to be able to seek, critically evaluate and create new information and knowledge in different forms using existing tools and share these through various channels (International Conference Media and Information Literacy for Knowledge Societies, 2012, p.1).

The current research seeks to contribute to these efforts by exploring yet another reason for promoting an information literate society: advocacy. The study sought to identify what IL skills are closely associated with the skills, knowledge, and behaviours (SKBs) needed in advocacy engagement. Drawing on everyday life situations that involve advocacy such as self-advocacy, social advocacy, patient advocacy, parent advocacy, and policy advocacy, our paper examines what role IL skills play in making one an effective advocate.

2. Objective of this study

The aim of the study was to determine if there is a relationship between the skills, knowledge and behaviours needed for effective advocacy engagement and IL skills. To explore this objective, the following specific research questions were addressed:

1. What skills, knowledge, or behaviour(s) are deemed important for advocacy work?
2. Is there an association between IL skills and the skills, knowledge, or behaviour(s) needed for advocacy work?

3. Methodology

Advocacy is a complex topic that has been studied in various disciplines with different approaches. The current rapid scoping review aimed at providing a *cross disciplinary* descriptive account of available research on the skills, knowledge and behaviours deemed integral to advocacy engagement.

As guidance for the current study, the authors consulted methodology literature on rapid reviews and scoping reviews: At the general level, scoping reviews, ‘aim to map *rapidly* the key concepts underpinning a research area and the main sources and types of evidence available, and can be undertaken as stand-alone projects in their own right, especially where an area is complex or has not been reviewed comprehensively before’ (Mays et al., 2001, as cited in Arksey & O’Malley, 2005, p.21). A rapid review is a form of knowledge synthesis in which components of the systematic review process are simplified or omitted to produce information quickly (Ganann et al.,2010).

3.1 Definitions

For purposes of this review and in order to support consistency in how the literature was reviewed, it was important to have working definitions of key terminology (i.e., advocacy, skills, knowledge, behaviour and IL skills). To that end, the definitions in Table 1, obtained from the Meriam Webster dictionary and the Oxford English Dictionary, were used to guide classifications of advocacy, skills, knowledge and behaviour.

Table 1: Definition of key terms

Term	Meriam Webster Dictionary	Oxford English Dictionary (OED)
Advocate	One who supports, pleads, promotes or defends the interest of a cause or group of individuals or oneself.	One who speaks in favour of a person or thing/ lends support for a person or cause or recommends a cause.
Skill	A developed aptitude or ability; a learned power of doing something competently	The ability to perform a function acquired or learnt with practice.
Knowledge	The fact or condition of being aware of something or the range of one's *information*.	The act of being acquainted with or an apprehension of fact or truth with the mind.
Behaviour	Anything that an organism does involving *action* and response to stimulation.	The way in which one *conducts* oneself in the external relations of life.

There are various definitions, models and frameworks of IL that all bear relevance to this study but for purposes of this study, the Association of College and Research Libraries standards adopted in 2000 (ACRL, 2000), the more recently adopted ACRL Framework (Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education, 2015), and the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), 2018 IL contexts were used to provide a reference point for IL skills and how these could contribute to advocacy engagement. In regard to the old ACRL Standard and the newer ACRL Framework, some scholars have indeed argued that using both continues '…to serve an important purpose for those who require detailed and assessable national standards, similar to other national organizations' educational standards...both approaches offer great value in meeting differing needs' (Grassian, 2017, p.233). The CILIP definition for instance, offers five specific contexts where IL skills are critical: Education, Workplace, Citizenship, Health, and Everyday life. Based on these three sources i.e. the ACRL IL Standards and IL Framework and the CILIP IL contexts, Table 2 shows how the authors interpreted how the different IL skills could apply to advocacy work.

Table 2: IL skills list

ACRL Standards (2000)	ACRL Framework (2016)	CILIP IL contexts	IL Skills and Advocacy
Determines the nature and extent of the **information needed.**	Information Has **Value** Information **Creation** As A Process	IL empowers us as citizens to reach and **express informed views** and to engage fully with society	**Identify** information need. *What* information do I need?
Accesses needed information effectively and efficiently.	**Research** as Inquiry **Searching** as Strategic Exploration	Information related tasks include how to **discover, access** information.	**Finding** information/research skills. *Where* can I find the information?
Evaluates information and its sources critically and incorporates selected information into his or her knowledge base and value system.	Authority Is Constructed and Contextual Information Has Value	IL includes the ability to think **critically** and make **balanced judgements**	**Evaluating** information to separate fact from opinion. *Why* was this information written? *Who* wrote the information?
Individually or as a member of a group, **uses** information effectively to **accomplish** a specific **purpose.**	Research As Inquiry Information Has **Value**	IL concerns the **application** of the competencies, attributes and confidence needed to make the best **use** of information.	**Use** information. *How* do I use this information? *For what* purpose do I use this information? (Self - Advocacy)
Understands many of the **economic, legal, and social issues** surrounding the use of information and accesses and uses information **ethically and legally.**	Scholarship as Conversation Information Has Value	**Share** information so we can engage fully in society. Show an understanding of both **the ethical and political issues** associated with using information.	**Sharing** information. *How* do I share information with individuals being advocated for or collaborators and stakeholders?

3.2 Sources and searches

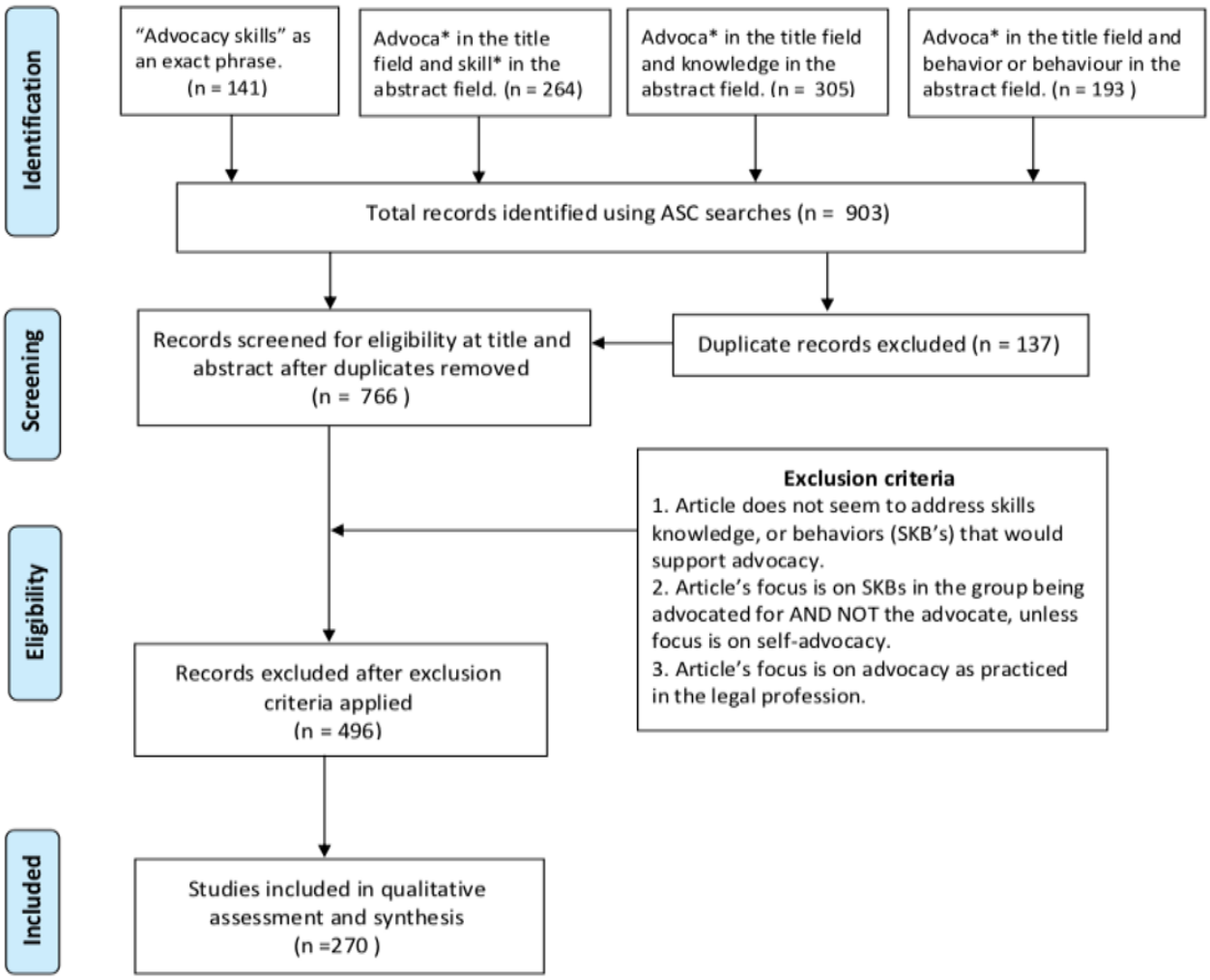
Search approaches frequently noted as supporting higher quality information are those that use scholarly research. In line with that view, the EBSCOhost database Academic Search Complete (ASC), a multidisciplinary database, was used to identify research on advocacy *across all disciplines.* The ASC results were viewed as a basis for developing a picture of skills, knowledge and behaviours associated with advocacy in everyday life.

In the Spring of 2018, and then as our update from 24 July to 4 August in 2019, we used the following four searches in ASC, all limited to publication date 2008-2019:

1. 'Advocacy skills' as an exact phrase (141 search results).
2. Advoca* in the title field and Skill* in the abstract field (264 search results)
3. Advoca* in the title field and Knowledge in the abstract field (305 search results)
4. Advoca* in the title field and behaviour or behaviour in the abstract field (193 search results)

3.3. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Papers were included as potential sources to chart if, in accordance with the definitions chosen for this study, they seemed to have sections that were clearly describing skills, knowledge, or behaviours that would support advocacy. Papers were excluded if the title or abstract did not seem to address skills knowledge, or behaviours (SKB's) that would support advocacy. In addition, papers were excluded that described advocacy SKB's in the population being advocated for and not in the advocate, unless the focus was on self-advocacy. Moreover, papers were excluded if they were referring to advocacy as practiced in the legal profession. The workflow showing results of our search and screening is shown in Figure 1.



*****Search and screening flow adapted from: Moher et al., (2009).

Figure 1: Search, screening and assessment flow

3.4 Data analysis and coding

Content analysis was used to screen for words that described characteristics related to the skills, knowledge and behaviour needed for advocacy according to the definitions set forth in the methodology section and the results of that screening recorded on an Excel spreadsheet with the categories shown below. Attention was given to the context surrounding the words to ensure the usage was relevant to the context of this study. The first stage of the analysis consisted of an initial general thematic categorisation of the studies using a broad coding template. As

preliminary searches were examined during the initial screening, a pivot table in Excel was developed iteratively to give the following categories:

- Author
- Advocacy type
- Methodology
- Region
- Advocate
- Advocacy Cause
- Skill
- Knowledge
- Behaviour

3.5 Parsing the literature

The example in Figure 2 shows how the abstracts and full texts were parsed for information on the SKBs necessary for effective advocacy. The excerpt in Figure 2 is from an article that listed key considerations that were put in place in order to build a strong foundation for advocating for public libraries in Ontario (Abram, 2017, p.97). The excerpt is colour-coded by skills (green), knowledge (yellow) and behaviour (red). The authors also drew on the definitions in the methodology section to determine the different classifications and then parsed several texts together in order to ensure concordance.

Do we have enough information to move forward with power? Do we have supportable statistics on the size and activities of our sector? (Quantitative) Do we have measurements that show how our direct and in direct activities make an impact on moving us forward for our residents and communities within the context of their dreams and goals?(Qualitative) Can we express these in ways that engage, communicate and move minds? (Visuals) Can we map what is happening throughout Ontario on a collaborative basis (Maps) Can we prioritize these "numbers" as proofs that speak to clarity and power? (Focus) Do we have the access to and relationships with key opinion leaders and decision makers to gain understanding and support for our initiatives? (Networks) Can we drive a narrative that tells the story and engages our funders and communities in support of our common goals? (Storytelling) Do enough of the right people have the right skills to advocate? What do we want to say? And why? What is our "ask"? What is our role and product portfolio?	

Figure 2: Article excerpt (Abram, 2017, p.97)

3.6 Inter-coder reliability

As a means of training and for an initial assessment of coding consistency, the authors independently coded a set of self-advocacy characteristics as skills, knowledge or behaviour (Izzo, 2011, Slide 18). The rate of inter-coder reliability was high at 98%. There was total agreement between the coders on 21.5/22 of the characteristics; in the one case of slight discordance, author one coded 'assertiveness' as behaviour while author 2 coded it as *both* behaviour and skill.

4. Results

Before presenting our findings for advocacy types, we provide brief observations on the origins of and methods used for the advocacy scholarship that we identified. Of the 270 articles reviewed, 139 (51%) covered studies done or advocacy as practiced in the United States exclusively. This was not surprising given the amount of scholarly research that originates from the United States. It is also important to note that in looking at the history of advocacy, it is an American concept that first occurred in 1969 (Ionascu, 2015). Advocacy is also often linked to

free speech, and research shows that nations with increased censorship will have less advocacy. Recent research by the Pew Research Center ranked the United States as the top nation in support of free speech, press freedom and internet freedom (Wike & Simmons, 2015).

Of the 270 studies, 189 (70%) had a methodology section. Out of those, 49% used qualitative methods exclusively; 2% used quantitative methods exclusively; 31% used mixed methods; and 18% were indeterminate or opinion pieces. The fact that most papers used qualitative methods or were opinion based may point towards the fact that advocacy can be based on anecdotal evidence that is experientially based and not necessarily grounded in empirical research.

4.1 Advocacy types

The most frequently mentioned advocacy type was health advocacy. Additionally, there was often overlap between patient advocacy, health advocacy and self-advocacy. Self-advocacy was also mentioned in the context of education advocacy (special education). Other categories of note were legislative and public policy and well as social justice and social policy. Given the ubiquitous nature of advocacy, there were many other forms of advocacy mentioned in the literature, albeit less frequently. These forms of advocacy were grouped under the 'other' category. Figure 3 summarises the different advocacy types that appeared in the literature reviewed

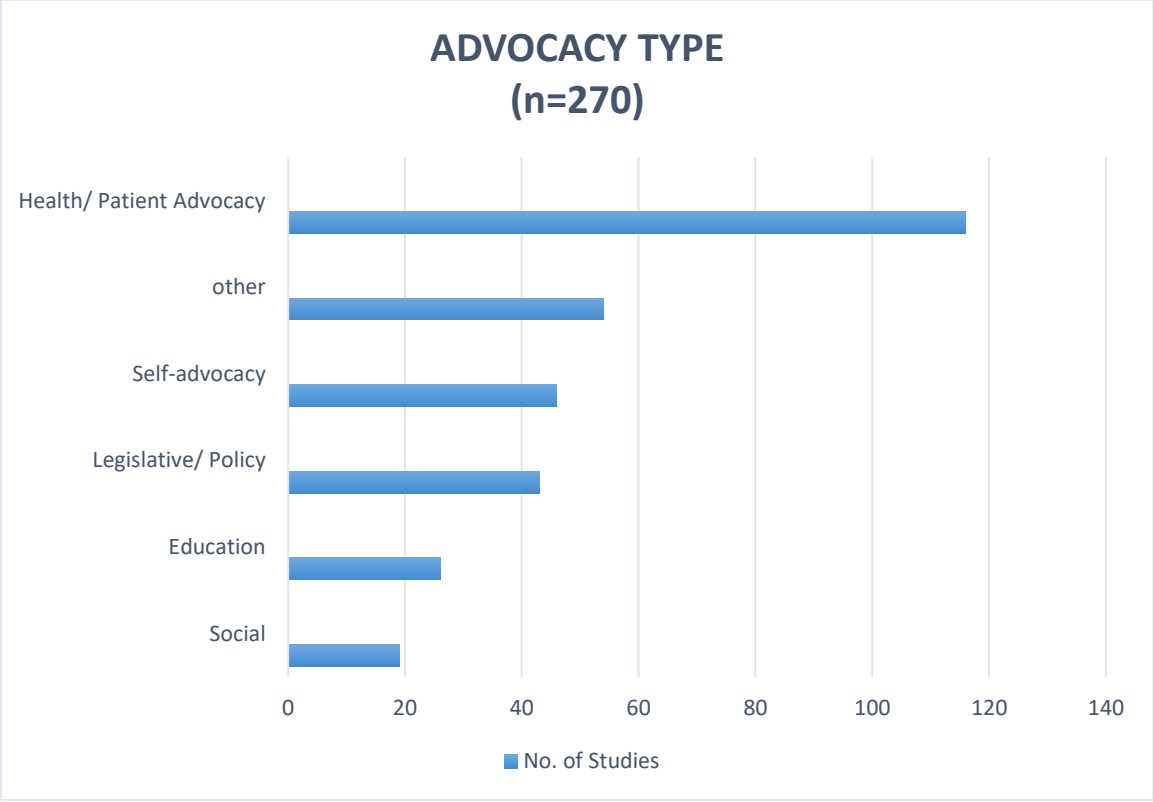


Figure 3: Number of studies by advocacy type

Our study also found that the advocacy types mentioned in Figure 4 seemed to mirror the IL Contexts outlined in the CILIP model of IL (i.e., Health, Ciztenship, Education, Everyday Life and Workplace). This reinforces the argument that IL skills are a valuable asset for engaging in advocacy for the various causes mentioned above.

4.1.1 Health

In Health contexts for instance, in order for patients to be engaged in their care and make informed decisions about their care, IL skills are crucial, similarly, in order to advocate for their loved ones or patients under their care effectively, caregivers and health professionals need to possess good IL skills. Additionally, while advocating for health IL, some studies have shown how health literacy plays an important role in addressing the social determinants of health (Nutbeam, 2000).

4.1.2 Citizenship

Advocacy is of prime relevance as far as becoming an engaged citizen: in a world where heightened political opinions are the norm, IL skills are needed to recognise bias, misinformation, and disinformation. This could in turn lead to effective advocacy for legislative and public policy.

4.1.3 Education

The link between education advocacy and IL is an obvious one, given that librarians and educators are well known for their education advocacy and consequently, their advocacy for IL. In the literature we reviewed, while education advocacy was mainly related to special education (e.g. Rehm et al., 2013; Sebag, 2010; Wright & Taylor, 2014) the literature was also replete with examples of advocacy for IL in educational contexts (Lloyd, 2010; Jackson, 2012; Tewell, 2013).

4.1.4 Everyday Life

The current study found that self-advocacy is a category that often transverses the other advocacy types; it could therefore fit in any of the IL contexts mentioned in the CILIP definitions, but most notably in the category on IL in Everyday Life contexts. The definitions of self-advocacy seemed to reinforce this. Wright & Wright, 2019 for instance, define self-advocacy as:

> ...learning how to speak up for yourself, making your own decisions about your own life. Learning how to get information so that you can understand things that are of interest to you, finding out who will support you in your journey, knowing your rights and responsibilities, problem solving, listening and learning, reaching out to others when you need help and friendship, and learning about self-determination. (Wright & Wright, 2019, para.1).

4.1.5 Workplace

Similarly, the IL in the Workplace context could be applicable to all the advocacy types as they all involve different professions while self-advocacy could be applicable to individuals in their work life situations. Some previous studies have argued that because of the nature of their work, professional social workers tend to be more politically engaged than the general public, with as many as 90% of social workers reporting advocacy as a key part of their professional role (Ezell, 1994) and 60% reporting some contact with government officials (Hamilton & Fauri, 2001). However, an analysis by profession in our study showed that health professionals (e.g. nurses, doctors, therapists) were the most engaged in advocacy work, perhaps mirroring the finding that health advocacy was the most prevalent form of advocacy.

4.2 Skills, Knowledge & Behaviours (SKBs) associated with advocacy work

4.2.1 Skills

The skill most mentioned in the articles was communication. While knowledge was the most frequently mentioned category, communication was the most frequently mentioned among

characteristics in all three categories (skills, knowledge and behaviour). Communication is deemed an important skill in self-advocacy, allowing an individual to stand up or speak up for their rights or needs, or to communicate with stakeholders regarding the cause they are advocating for (Kratzke et al., 2018; Wehmeyer et al., 1998). Story telling as a skill was also a recurrent theme, especially in relation to self-advocacy.

4.2.2 Knowledge

Knowledge was often discussed in the context of having knowledge or information about the cause one is advocating for and/ or knowing one's rights. For example, in legislative and policy advocacy, knowledge of the legislative process for example how a how a bill becomes a law was often mentioned as being desirable in becoming an effective policy advocate. In another study that explored APRN's (Advanced Practice Registered Nurse)'s experience with patient advocacy, Hanks et al. (2019) found that medical knowledge was positively correlated with advocacy ability in that increased medical knowledge led to increased advocacy ability. (Hanks et al., 2019). Knowledge was also discussed often in the context of knowledge translation that is, being able to talk about the cause in language that could be understood by lawmakers, or the persons being advocated for. As Frain (2012) notes, 'Effective advocacy requires the translation of what we know into information more directly and clearly linked to the welfare of individuals and/or communities' (p.8). Knowledge was presented as 'information' with some studies making the argument that information, data-based research and facts are needed for effective advocacy (Semivan & White, 2006; Kratzke et al., 2018). In the context of self-advocacy, knowledge was discussed as being essential to making informed decisions after collecting and analysing information from multiple sources (Allen et al., 2008). Another study also referenced 'knowledge transfer', noting that being an effective advocate means sharing information or telling a compelling story to stakeholders (Abram, 2017). Similarly, Nagro et al. (2018) point out that 'dissemination of information is critical to advocacy' and is an important skill for future leaders who wish to be change agents in the special education field (Nagro, et al., 2018, p.68).

4.2.3 Behaviour

Donaldson and Shields (2009) posit that it is possible to come up with a clear definition of what constitutes advocacy behaviour. They argue that unlike abstract concepts that are open to subjective interpretation, advocacy behaviour is an 'observable construct that can be objectified to represent quantifiable actions' (p.9). However, for the current study, other psychological constructs were included in the behaviour category, such as attitudes, and values as well cognitive states. Examples of characteristics often mentioned in behaviour were passionate, motivated, confident, self-awareness, and risk taker (Stewart et al., 2009). In order to achieve concordance and consistency, the authors consulted often and agreed on how to classify these characteristics.

The interplay between Skills, Knowledge and Behaviour meant that these categories were not mutually exclusive, and as many scholars point out, they are interdependent. The example below illustrates how information (knowledge), passion, motivation, a calm demeanour (behaviour) and sense of purpose, persuasion, communication (skills) all work together to make one an effective advocate.

> While it is important for advocates to maintain a clear sense of purpose and to remain calm in the face of dissenting views, passion about a particular issue can be contagious. Motivation and information work best together. Information without motivation can appear dull and unimportant; motivation without information may not be persuasive, and fall flat on the intended

audience. Together, though, they help social and political decision makers to see both the facts about an issue and why those facts matter.'

(Caldwell, 2017, as cited in Goodman et al., 2018 p. 35).

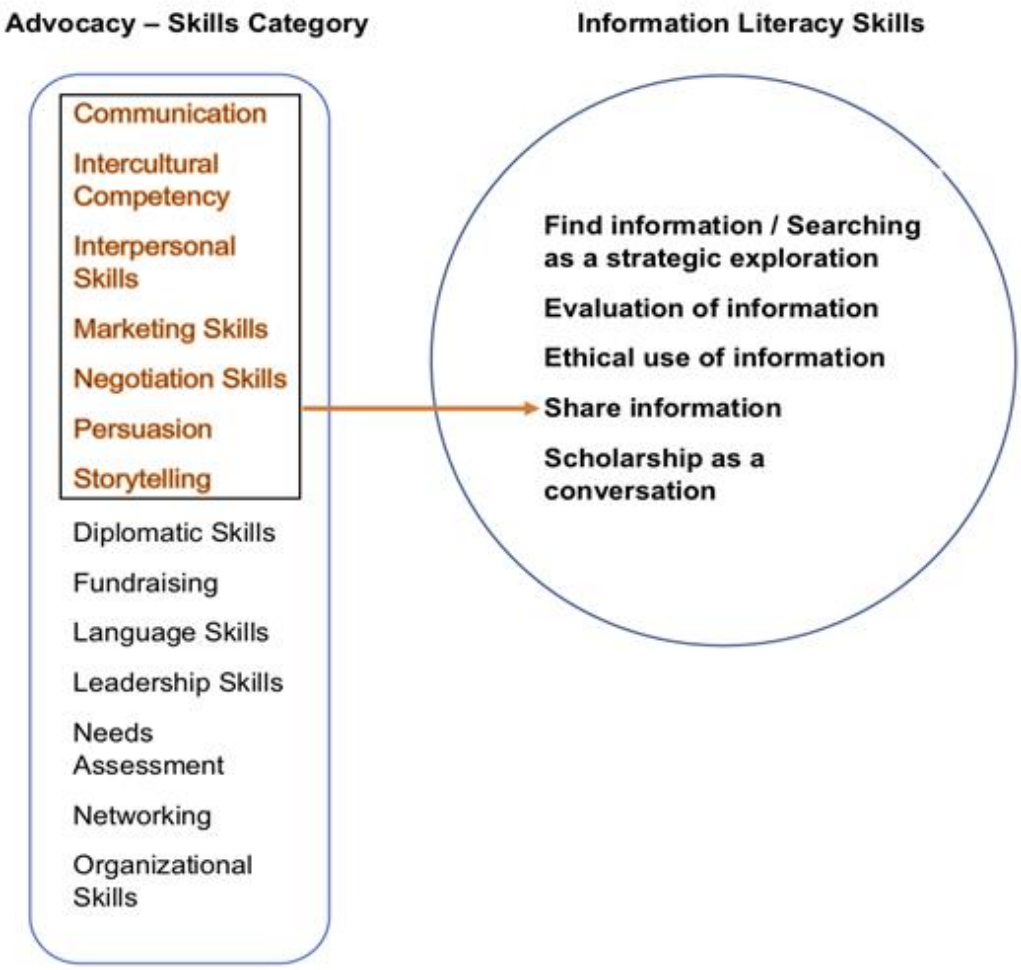
Table 3 shows examples of SKBs characteristics mentioned in the reviewed literature. The list is arranged alphabetically with no order of importance or frequency. Word frequency was not used as part of the analysis because the content analysis required a fair amount of interpretation, often necessitating an analysis of the context around the word in order to avoid cases of KWOC (Keyword Out of Context).

Table 3: List of advocacy skills, knowledge and behaviours (SKBs)

Skills	Knowledge	Behaviour	SKB
Communication Diplomatic skills Fundraising Intercultural competency Interpersonal skills Language skills Leadership skills Marketing skills Needs assessment Negotiation skills Networking Organisational skills Persuasion Risk management Storytelling	Critical thinking Information engagement Information sharing Information skills Interpreting laws Knowledge of legislative process Knowledge of public policy Knowledge of rights Knowledge of special ed Knowledge of workplace rights Knowledge transfer Knowledge translation Making sense of information Media literacy Objectivity Organisational skills Problem solving Research skills Resourceful Strategic planning	Altruistic Assertive Calm Capacity building Caring Compassion Courage Empathy Honest Influential Interdependency Listening skills Modelling Motivation Non-violent civil disobedience Nurturing Openness Passion Patience Perseverance Professional Realistic Relationship building Responsible Self- determination Self-awareness Social support Teamwork Trust	Campaigning Collaboration Emotional Goal-Oriented Lobbying Mediation Networking

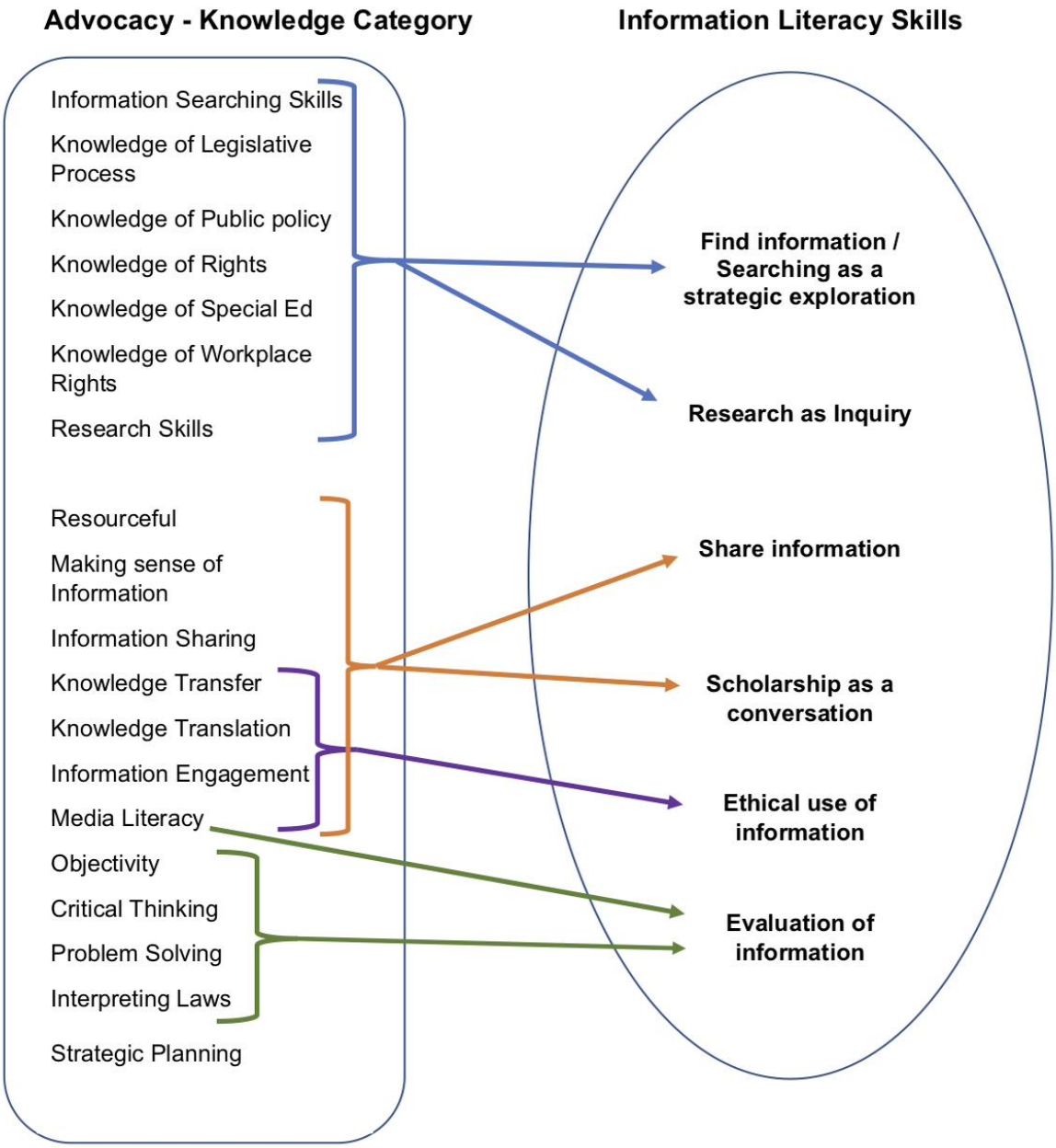
5. Discussion

An association was found between IL skills and many of the skills knowledge and behaviours necessary for engaging in advocacy work. As is shown in the mapping between IL and each of the categories in Figures 4, 5, and 6, the association was strongest with the knowledge component.



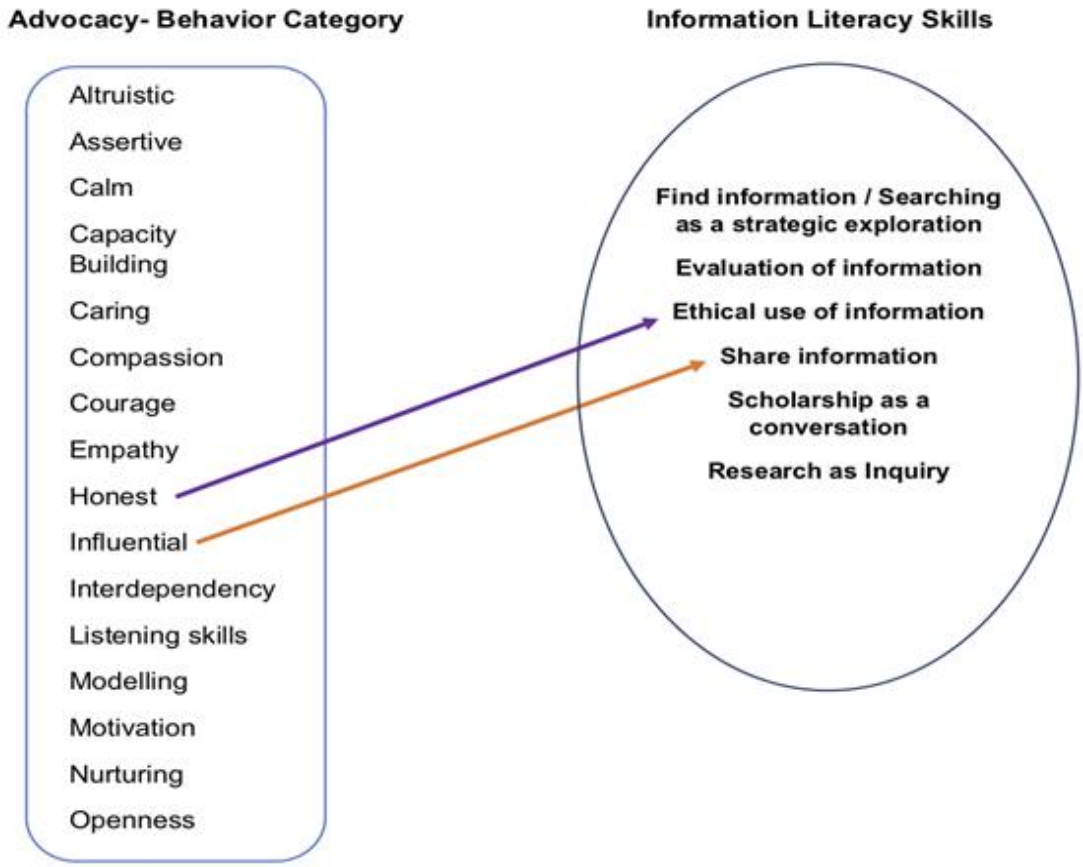
The characteristics in the skills category were mainly connected with the information sharing skills in IL.

Figure 4: Advocacy skills and connection to IL



Nearly all the characteristics in the knowledge category mapped to one or more specific IL skills.

Figure 5: Advocacy knowledge characteristics and connections to information literacy



In the Behaviour category, very few characteristics were connected with IL skills.

Figure 6: Advocacy behaviour characteristics and connections to IL

In the literature that was reviewed, the knowledge component seemed to be a foundational requisite for effective advocacy engagement. Being *knowledgeable* about the cause being advocated for and *knowing,* the rights associated with the cause as well as a knowledge of the legislative process or policy-making process were frequently mentioned in the literature. Additionally, the authors found that many of the characteristics mentioned under skills and behaviour were also closely associated with the knowledge component. Skills such as communication and storytelling require that one is knowledgeable about the message they wish to convey. Similarly, the most frequently mentioned behaviours such as confidence; assertiveness and persuasion are closely associated with being knowledgeable and well informed about the issue for which one is advocating. In an opinion piece on advocacy for individuals on the autism spectrum, Bolton, (2018) aptly points out that advocacy efforts need to be anchored in both 'scientific research and knowledge' and 'lived in experiences' (Bolton, 2018 p.980). Not only were knowledge characteristics the most frequently mentioned in the literature, but also the knowledge component was identified as the basis or groundwork upon which advocacy efforts are built. This finding corroborates the results of a study by Goldman et al. (2019) that explored the perceptions and goals of special education advocacy trainees, where participants were asked to identify the attributes of a successful advocate. This study found that knowledge was the most frequently mentioned advocacy attribute by the participants.

In a number of studies, direct reference to IL skills was made in the use of certain phrases as shown in Table 4:

Table 4: List of Studies Referencing IL Skills

IL Skill	Studies Referencing IL skill
Analysing information	Allen et al., 2008
Application of information	Hearne, 2008
Critical thinking skills	Lane et al., 2019; Roberts & Kreeger, 2019; Young & Goodman, 2015
Dissemination of information	Nagro et al., 2018
Evaluation of information	Hagan & Donavan, 2013; Keselman et al., 2019; Smith & Boster, 2009; Vessey & Miola, 1997.
Information engagement	Hagan et al., 2018
Information gathering	Hawley et al., 2016
Information management	Hagan & Donovan, 2013
Information seeking skills	Hagan & Donovan, 2013; Kratzke et al., 2018
Information sharing	Bloodgood & Clough, 2017; Scharff et al., 2018; White et al., 2010
Interpreting information	Lane et al., 2019
Knowledge transfer	Abram, 2017
Media literacy	De Castro & Levesque, 2018
Research skills	Cless, Dyster, Reves, Steele,and Goff, 2019; Farrer et al., 2015; El Ansari et al., 2009; Ritter et al., 2018; Zorwick & Wade, 2016; White et al., 2010.

Another study's definition of self-advocacy amongst individuals with disabilities was unequivocally similar to a definition of IL: self-advocacy was defined as '… the ability to seek, evaluate and use information to promote one's health' (Vessey & Miola, 1997, p.53 as cited in Hagan & Donavan, 2013). Krueger et al. (2019) also make a direct reference to IL skills by defining advocacy as 'implementing research to improve quality of life or to provide solutions' (Krueger et al., 2019, p.146) A connection between the knowledge component and IL skills is also evident when one considers how a skill, knowledge or behaviour is acquired and subsequently used or manifested: the acquisition of knowledge and its use are usually linked with IL skills. By contrast, it is possible to acquire some skills and behaviour without IL skills.

Throughout the advocacy literature, information, which is closely associated with the knowledge component, was also a recurrent theme. About policy advocacy, for instance, Caldwell, 2017 aptly sums it up as follows:

> In many policy discussions, information is currency. Arguments are won or lost, and policies are supported or scrapped, based on the best information in front of social (i.e., hegemonic influencers) and political decision makers at the time. The more information one can bring to the table about the nature and scope of a particular problem, and why a suggested solution is likely to work, the more successful an initiative may be.
>
> (Caldwell, 2017, as cited in Goodman et al., 2018 p.33*).*

Concerning special education advocacy, some studies show how a lack of access to information can be a hindrance to effective advocacy. Rude et al. (2005) for instance, show how parents in rural areas face barriers to advocacy due to a lack of access to information. Other studies have revealed that culturally and linguistically diverse parents face difficulty in advocacy because special education documents, including legislation, are frequently only available in English (Albrecht et al., 2012; Shapiro et al., 2004).

Similarly, White et al. (2010) make the case for the connection between IL skills and health advocacy by noting that nurses, who want to be involved in advocacy need to know how to search for health information on the internet, evaluate and share it to stakeholders. The article contends: '… mastering the fundamentals of searching the Internet for health policy information is essential for nurses' successful political involvement. Relevant facts, analyses, and explanations of health policy issues at the fingertips of nurses are powerful tools for influencing healthcare system change' (White et al., 2010). Butson and Pauly (2013) illustrate the importance of librarians in health-related communications by showing how the intervention of a librarian could help improve patient-provider communication and stimulate patient question-asking while simultaneously improving health education and patient self-advocacy (Butson & Pauly, 2013).

6. Implications

This study bears implications for providing IL instruction beyond the higher education/academic libraries contexts: since advocacy is practiced in everyday life contexts, health contexts, workplace contexts as well as other general education contexts, IL skills could be helpful in these contexts as well. Therefore, public librarians and school librarians need to be involved in equipping their respective populations with these skills so they themselves can become effective advocates in these different contexts. The study corroborates findings of other studies that have advocated for IL instruction in public libraries (Hall, 2010; Harding, 2008; Julien & Detlor, 2020; Jerkov et al., 2015). In regard to school libraries, some studies have alluded to starting to teach IL skills, earlier on, in primary (elementary) and secondary (high) school settings (Mertes, 2014; Lenart & Lewis, 2019; Loertscher, 2014; Zervas et al., 2019). Specifically, in the case of this study, implications point towards IL skills being beneficial for pre-college students who want to engage in self-advocacy.

At the higher education level, the study points towards teaching IL beyond the skills required for college success that often emphasise research skills only, to offering courses or instruction that emphasises IL skills needed for the workplace and everyday life. Kent State University's Information School for example, offers two separate IL courses at the undergraduate level, one for first year students, *Information Fluency for College Success,* and one for upper level undergraduate students, *Information Fluency for the Workplace and Beyond* (Kent State University, 2020). IL has largely been a concept that is limited to the LIS field; This study, in concurrence with earlier studies, shows that it is imperative that LIS professionals continue to make the case for the relevance of IL in workplace contexts (Bruce, 1999; Cheuk, 2008, Crawford & Irving, 2009; Foster, 2017; Lawler, 2003, Lloyd, 2010) and everyday life contexts

(Agosto & Hughes-Hassell, 2006; Martzoukou & Abdi, 2017; Matteson & Gersh, 2019). This study makes a contribution to that argument, that is, that IL skills can indeed be useful in other contexts outside of LIS.

The current study also has implications in particular for LIS humanitarian research and research involving information impoverished communities. Very often, this type of research is interspersed with advocating *for* information services and resources for the communities the researchers are involved with (Chatman, 1996; Fisher et al., 2017; Lloyd, 2017; Pollak, 2016) Implications for the current study would involve passing on IL skills to the populations being researched. Skills that would in turn help these populations to self-advocate, thus bridging the IL divide caused by a lack of IL skills.

6.1 Limitations

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of a scoping review such as this one. These include challenges in comprehensiveness due to bias in article selection pertaining to the identified scope and missed information due to a more limited use of exhaustive search strategies (e.g., choice of key words and original quick scanning of abstracts only). The authors also acknowledge that the studies included are not necessarily indicative of advocacy engagement as is practiced, but were only used to generate the skills, knowledge and behaviours as conceptualised in the literature. Also, the review did not seek to address very specific research questions or assess the quality of included studies. Even though some studies may have been excluded from this review, the authors wish to note that data saturation was also reached by the end of the analysis of the 270 articles as the authors were not finding any new information especially regarding skills, knowledge and behaviours needed for effective advocacy engagement. Rather, the same SKBs that had already been identified kept recurring in the texts.

7. Conclusion and further research

In today's knowledge-based society, the role that IL skills play is becoming more pre-eminent. IL is perceived as a prerequisite for various functions: lifelong learning, personal growth and empowerment (American Library Association,1989), 'active, effective and responsible citizenship' (Correia, 2002, p.1), civic engagement (Norris, 2001; CILIP, 2018), patient engagement (Coulter & Ellins, 2007; CILIP, 2018); self-actualisation (Boekhorst, 2003), social inclusion (Bundy et al., 2004) as well as student engagement and active learning (Kuh et al., 2008; CILIP, 2018). The different types of advocacy mentioned in this paper are inherently linked to these different functions. For example, civic engagement and active and effective citizenship are linked to political and policy advocacy, while self-actualisation, personal growth and empowerment are linked to self-advocacy. The literature reviewed in this article clearly makes the case for the significant role of IL skills in advocacy engagement. In the review of the literature, the authors found an abundance of literature regarding advocacy for IL, but none of these studies explored the integral role that IL skills themselves play in advocacy work. This study offers valuable insights into that role, thus providing yet another reason to advocate for IL. Advocacy work is increasingly becoming an important component of the role that libraries and LIS professionals play in society. As a follow up to this study, the authors intend to carry out further research regarding the involvement of libraries, library associations, and LIS professionals in advocacy work. The research will involve surveying and interviewing LIS professionals to find out what causes they advocate for, and what skills, knowledge and behaviour they draw on most in their advocacy work.

Acknowledgement

The authors wish to acknowledge Kristin Yeager for her help in proof reading and statistical consultation.

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