

Journal of Information Literacy

ISSN 1750-5968

Volume 16 Issue 2

December 2022

Editorial

Hicks, A. 2022. Turning point: Going beyond a learner-centred focus. *Journal of Information Literacy*, 16(2), pp. 1–4.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.11645/16.2.3313>



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Turning point: Going beyond a learner-centred focus

Over the last few years, there has been considerable interest in the ‘turns’ of library and information science (LIS); shifts in the theoretical, methodological and practical understandings of a field as well as its intellectual projects (Hartel, 2019). Turns do not necessarily upset the underlying focus and emphasis of a field, as in a paradigm shift, but they often generate intense interest, including special issues of journals, panels at conferences, and the offering of professional development opportunities. Within the wider LIS discipline, recent turns have been considered to include the everyday life turn, when attention started to focus on information use outside of academic and work contexts as well as the embodied turn, when the corporeal began to be foregrounded within information work (Hartel, 2019). As a field within the wider LIS discipline, information literacy (IL) has contributed to a number of these turns; the social constructionist turn may be familiar to anyone interested in the role that discourse plays in shaping IL practice while the embodied turn is often credited as emerging from IL research thanks to the work of Annemaree Lloyd. However, as part of this, it is also interesting to think what the smaller, nano-turns within IL may be—both in a practical and a theoretical sense. How is our field developing, in what direction are we going, which areas are becoming more or less in vogue, and where do the gaps remain? Turns are normally established through more rigorous analytical work (and will be the topic of a future JIL Special Issue), but it is interesting to reflect on how we see our field.

One potential shift that I have noticed recently is growing interest in the impact of IL instruction on the teacher, librarian or instructor. This is a topic that my students regularly bring up in class and stems, I believe, from recent work examining burnout and emotional labour within librarianship (e.g. Accardi, 2015; Emmelhainz et al., 2017). It may also be linked to the more prominent role that mental health is playing on campus and in our wider COVID society as well as growing engagement in trade union activities or even the rise of ‘quiet quitting’ culture, which involves meeting the demands of your job without going beyond (Formica & Sfodera, 2022). Either way, it is an interesting transition from the fervent learner focus of the 2010s. At that time, scholars and librarians (including myself!) were so focused on pushing back against the generic and universal emphasis of earlier IL models that the learner became the sole priority—from the semantic shift that emphasise learning over teaching (Limberg et al., 2008) to the pedagogic shift that brought Backwards Design into our orbit (Everhart, 2007) or the cultural shift that centred the impact of context (Tuominen, Talja & Savolainen, 2005). However, somewhere along the way, the impact on the librarian or teacher became lost—the learner was the lynchpin that, naturally, over-rode all other concerns. Looking back, it is quite chilling to see the lack of consideration that was paid to the material conditions of teaching; an oversight that could, perhaps, be linked to an earlier push for professional legitimisation (itself another potential turn within the field).

There’s no reason why both the learner and the librarian or teacher can’t both be emphasised, of course. Ensuring that both of these voices are heard seems likely to make for the design of a far richer learning opportunity or IL research study. On the flipside, it may also unsettle work by highlighting different tensions or dynamics. The ongoing problematisation of IL is always a benefit in my eyes, but I recognise that this may also complicate issues at a time when time, motivation and salary may be in short supply. It’s also interesting to speculate on why now, especially as, with a few exceptions (Sobel & Evans, 2020), much of the literature related to these issues dates from pre-COVID. Julien and Genuis (2009), for example, wrote about emotional labour in 2009, while Browndorf centred burnout in 2016 and Arellano Douglas and Gadsby focused on gendered labour in 2017. Perhaps, then, it takes a while for themes to become cemented within the profession, an idea that raises further questions about how turns are enabled and constrained. For the time being, I hope we may see more consideration of how

ideas evolve within our field of study, as well as the impact that this work has upon both our theory and practice.

And now on to the work that is being published within the current issue! I have to confess that this editorial was not a build up to a special issue on the labour of instructional librarianship. Instead, the topic of the editorial was sparked by the very few project reports that we received for this issue, a phenomenon that may, perhaps, be linked to workload issues in the post-lockdown era. However, there are several other interesting and recognisable themes within this issue, and I hope that you are able to take some timeout from the busyness of the term/semester/quarter/season to enjoy these articles, project reports and reviews.

We start the research article section with a fascinating deep dive into the IL practices of the Kente-weaving landscape in Ghana. Written by Franklin Gyamfi Agyemang and Noline Wessels, this paper takes an ethnographic approach to examine how experienced and apprentice weavers engage with information to make traditional hand-woven materials. Focusing, in particular, on the role of the body within this work, Agyemang and Wessel's study combines a strong theoretical framework with rich detail in an underexplored area of research. This paper was copyedited by Harriet David.

The second research article in this issue turns to faculty development with the premise that librarians must understand the faculty developer context to ensure that models such as Teach the Trainer (TTT) are effective. Explored through a literature review of faculty development literature, this paper argues that the TTT model is effective and that there is considerable potential for a TTT model within IL instruction. Raising interesting questions about identity and workload, the author, Jane Hammons, also reflects upon the potential for greater collaboration between the two areas of study. This paper was copyedited by Rebecca Wray.

The third paper in this section, which is written by Heidi Julien, Melissa Gross and Don Latham, examines the work of community college librarians, who are roughly equivalent to Further Education librarians in the UK. Noting that this is a population that is underexplored within literature, this study set out to establish how members of this group approach their teaching roles. Interviews demonstrate that community college librarians often feel underprepared for their teaching work and may experience role conflict with administrators and other members of the teaching faculty. This paper was copyedited by Harriet David.

The fourth research article of this issue is a paper by Joel Burkholder and Kat Phillips. Within this paper, which is centred on the concept of bias, the authors examine the interdisciplinary heritage and meaning of the term before proposing their own definition and conceptualisation of key ideas. Written at a time when the concept of bias is becoming increasingly weaponised all over the political spectrum, this paper provides a useful basis for understanding how the term is and could be used within the field, particularly related to the teaching of disinformation. This paper was copyedited by our newest JIL member, Andrea Brooks.

Moving onto the Project Report section, where authors Jane Secker and Libby Tilley present findings from their project exploring student academic reading preferences. Centring on pulling out the implications for teaching librarians, this project report also presents insight into changes wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic, as learners adjusted to increased screen time. This project report was copyedited by Harriet David. Finishing off the issue are four reviews of the LOEX conference. Written by authors Kelli Herm, Allison Faix, Sarah Norrell and Jade Squires, these reviews present fomo-inducing highlights of this North American instructional conference that was held in person earlier this year. These reviews were copyedited by Sae Matsuno, Kirsten McCormick, Tom Peach and Amber Edwards respectively. We also have two reviews of recent information literacy titles, *The Qualitative Landscape of Information Literacy Research* and *Using Context in Information Literacy Instruction*.

Thanks go, as ever, to Meg Westbury for wrangling all the peer reviewing for these sections as well to Ian Hunter for his work with the book reviews.

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