You got transformative learning in my critical pedagogy!

Connecting two theoretical perspectives to inform our instructional identities & praxis

LOEX 2023

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Learning outcomes

**Define...**
- critical librarianship,
- critical information literacy, transformative learning, and perspective transformation

**Explain...**
- how we can connect transformative learning theory to critical librarianship and critical information literacy in meaningful ways

**Identify...**
- (at least) one concept you can integrate into your praxis with the goal of promoting transformative learning experiences
Transformative Learning Theory can shape Librarians’ teaching identities which can facilitate Learners’ transformative experiences around critical concepts.

Critical Information Literacy
Expectation

Reality
Critical Information Literacy
When it comes to critical information literacy...

- I'm a newbie!
- I know a bit about it.
- I'm an expert in it.
- I know it so well, I can teach others about it!
Critical Information Literacy: Core Concepts for Our Purposes

- Focused on developing “critical consciousness about information” (Elmborg, 2006, p. 198)

- A way of thinking about information literacy that:
  ○ Rejects the idea that information is neutral or apolitical
  ○ Considers power dynamics present in information production and dissemination (Downey, 2016, p. 173)
  ○ Addresses social, political, economic, and cultural facets of academic research (Downey, 2016, p. 173)

- Praxis at the heart of critical information literacy – “reflection in action” (Jacobs, 2016, p. 5)
Critical Information Literacy’s Roots

Interrogating systems of power, privilege, and oppression

Interrogating libraries’ role in perpetuating systems of power, privilege, and oppression

Interrogating how library instruction / teaching perpetuates systems of power, privilege, and oppression

Interrogating how systems of power, privilege, and oppression impact our information ecosystem and shape our information-seeking behavior
Transformative Learning Theory

Critical Information Literacy
When it comes to transformative learning...

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I'm a newbie!

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I know a bit about it.

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I'm an expert in it.

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I know it so well that I can teach others about it!
Transf ormative Learning: Core Concepts

- Introduced by Jack Mezirow in the 1970s
- As adults, we have unchecked / un-evaluated ways of thinking about ourselves and the world
  - Family environments
  - Cultural, social, religious communities
- When we encounter events that challenge our ways of thinking, we may:
  - ignore / dismiss them (more common), or
  - try to make sense of our beliefs, attitudes, and experiences in light of these events (more difficult – and meaningful!)
Transformative learning involves revising the cognitive structures we use to interpret the world so they’re more authentic, flexible, and in line with our values.
How Mezirow defines these cognitive structures:

Frames of Reference
How we make sense of the world

Habits of mind
Our internal assumptions

Points of view
Our external actions

Others’ beliefs and perspectives inform

Our experiences shape
When we transform, we...

reconsider our habits of mind
revise our points of view
reconstruct our frames of reference

which allows us to...
which leads us to...
which means we have...

This process is perspective transformation!
Perspective Transformation Phases

1. **Disorienting dilemma**
   - Explore options
   - Develop competence & confidence

2. **Self-examination**
   - Develop a plan of action
   - Reintegrate with changed practices & perspectives

3. **Critically assess assumptions**
   - Acquire knowledge & skills

4. **Recognize shared experiences**
   - Try out new roles
How we might think about these two ideas in relationship to each other:
Transformative Learning Theory can shape Critical Information Literacy can shape Librarians’ teaching identities
When it comes to my teaching identity...

0 0 0 0

I'm a newbie to this concept!
I've thought a bit about it.
I'm an expert on the topic!
Not only am I an expert, but I can help others!
Teaching identities: How we think about and enact our roles as educators
Academic Librarians’ Teaching Identities

- First – as a facet of our professional identities (Walter, 2008)
- Since then:
  - How they can evolve over time in beliefs and practices (Baer, 2021)
  - How they develop through engagement in SoTL (Hays & Studebaker, 2019)
  - In connection to assessment practices (Detmering, McClellan, & Willenborg, 2019)
  - How different factors influence librarians’ perspective transformation in their teaching identities (Nichols Hess, 2018, 2019a, 2019b, 2020a, 2020b)
How can we connect librarians’ teaching identities with critical information literacy and perspective transformation?
Do you...

- Critically assess your own teaching practices and instructional assumptions?
- Engage in self-reflection?
- Think about the broader systems and structures that influence your teaching practices?
- Use critical assessment and reflection to change how you think about instructional interactions?
- Take changed mindsets about teaching and put them into practice?
- Try to change the systems and structures that impact your teaching practices / learning environments?
How we might think about these three ideas in relationship to each other:
Transformative Learning Theory can shape Librarians’ teaching identities can facilitate Learners’ transformative experiences around critical concepts

Critical Information Literacy
Wearing the title, or moniker, of a transformative educator... means asking yourself, Am I willing to transform in the process of helping my students transform?

This means taking the position that without developing a deeper awareness of our own frames of reference and how they shape practice, there is little likelihood that we can foster change in others.

By transforming our teaching identities, we can more effectively facilitate transformative learning experiences for others.
Strategies to Use Critical Concepts and Facilitate Transformative Learning:

- Disorienting dilemma?
- Self-examination?
- Critically assess assumptions?
- Recognize shared experiences?

Problem-Posing / Reflection / Dialogue

- Explore options?
- Develop a plan of action?
- Acquire knowledge & skills?
- Try out new roles?

Dialogue / Concept Mapping / PBL or case-based learning

Teaching / training others

- Develop competence & confidence?
- Reintegrate with changed practices & perspectives?
Five Minutes to Reflect & Respond:

Talk with someone, write down your thoughts, or add ideas to Padlet: https://bit.ly/LOEX23-learn

- What critical information literacy concepts do learners find most disorienting? How can we help them deal with that disorientation?
- How do you facilitate learning interactions where students can push past self-examination and onto meaningfully connect with others?
- What strategies can we use to help learners gain skills, knowledge, competence, and confidence to make sense of critical information literacy ideas in their own learning?
- What evidence would demonstrate learners’ “reintegration” with changed practices and perspectives about critical information literacy concepts?
Facilitating transformative learning experiences around critical information literacy: NOT limited to students!
Using Train-the-Teacher to Integrate CIL & Perspective Transformation:


Providing Space / Guidance / Connection

Explore options? → Develop a plan of action? → Acquire knowledge & skills? → Try out new roles?

Offering Structures / Strategies / Learning Approaches

Develop competence & confidence? → Reintegrate with changed practices & perspectives?

Lots of concrete ways to observe this!
What critical information literacy concepts could disciplinary faculty find disorienting? How can you connect with them around this disorientation?

Does the idea of training-the-teacher in critical information literacy prompt a disorienting dilemma for you? Why or why not?

What strategies can we use to help disciplinary faculty gain skills, knowledge, competence, and confidence to meaningfully integrate critical information literacy ideas in their instruction?

What would demonstrate faculty’s “reintegration” with changed practices and perspectives around critical information literacy?
Wrapping Up: Have we...

**Defined...**
critical librarianship, critical information literacy, transformative learning, and perspective transformation?

**Explained...**
how we can connect transformative learning theory to critical librarianship and critical information literacy in meaningful ways?

**Identified...**
(at least) one concept you can integrate into your praxis with the goal of promoting transformative learning experiences?
What piques your interest about transformative learning experiences and critical information literacy?

Consider where you might go from here - teaching identity-wise, or with learners / faculty.
Questions & Discussion


Thank you!

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