Demonstrating the Value of Critical Information Literacy: One Library’s Critical Information Literacy Laboratory

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This presentation demonstrates how librarians at California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB) have tapped into the digital environment to create an online teaching and learning space, the Critical Information Literacy (CIL) Lab. The CIL Lab serves as a teaching resource for graduate assistants, instructors, and faculty, allowing librarians to strategically share the gospel of CIL with a wide audience. In addition to a slate of tutorials and assessments that can be incorporated into a variety of classroom assignments, the CIL Lab houses discussion prompts, activities, and a variety of additional resources that accompany each of CSUSB Pfau Library’s information literacy program-level student learning outcomes.

The presenter describes how creating an online laboratory of teaching and learning objects with a decidedly critical approach to information literacy has allowed for librarians to introduce and advocate for CIL on their campus. The CIL Lab, created in the midst of a rearticulation of campus General Education outcomes, has been a tangible example of what librarians mean when they talk about CIL (an approach that is sometimes difficult to verbalize to the unfamiliar). By directly connecting the CIL Lab to the campus’s revised information literacy outcome, librarians have been able to demonstrate the value of a CIL approach. Additionally, by using the lab as a way to promote the many instructional services offered, this online space allows librarians to cultivate value for the library as a site of learning and librarians as knowledgeable campus resources and CIL disciplinary experts.
Demonstrating the Value of Critical Information Literacy

CSUSB’s Online Critical Information Literacy Laboratory for Faculty

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About the Critical Information Literacy Laboratory

About

The Critical Information Literacy Laboratory for Faculty replaces and extends the Pfau Library’s skills-based online tutorials, reflecting the evolution of information literacy pedagogy to an approach that balances both concepts and skills. Anyone with a regular Internet connection can access the CIL Lab.

The Instructor’s Corner contains teaching resources (discussion prompts, activities, etc.) for instructors. These resources are aligned with our student learning outcomes (see CIL at the Pfau Library) and are meant to assist you in helping your students think critically about how information works. These teaching tools can be tailored to your class assignments and student needs in a variety of ways. You will find that some of the higher-level prompts and activities are great ways to differentiate instruction in your classroom.

The Video Tutorials component for students is a series of YouTube videos, which include audio and closed captioning. Each tutorial concludes with an online assessment.

For assistance with integrating CIL into your courses, see Library Instruction Options.

http://library.csusb.edu/cillab
The Value of the Lab for Us

- Define & advocate for CIL
- Allows us to connect our SLOs to General Education outcome
- Position ourselves within the academy: assert our values and librarian expertise
- Librarian: student ratio doesn’t allow for us see every student
- Librarians use lab for instruction
The Value of the Lab for Others

- Adjunctification is real on our campus
- CIL Lab is OA
- Provides guidance but isn’t prescriptive
  - Allows for easy modification for various courses and teaching styles, differentiated instruction
How We’re Promoting It

• Professional development for faculty, graduate teaching assistants, instructors
• Front and center on our website
• Strategic linking
• CIL Grant for Faculty
The A Word

• Heavy use by first year seminar instructors
  • Look at artifacts that meet CIL learning outcome for this course
  • Compare those that used tutorials/quizzes to those that did not
• Informally
  • Constantly adding content & revising based on feedback
• Students and faculty are using CIL language on campus
Challenges

• Tutorials haven’t (and likely won’t) become a mandatory component of any course

• # of site visits doesn’t tell us much

• Narrow representation of CIL because organized around our SLOs

• Concepts get simplified (e.g. OA)

• Institutionalization of critical librarianship (Seale, 2016)
References