The Critical Information Literacy Leadership Institute as Alternative to the One-Shot: Q & A with a Faculty Partner

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In spring 2021, the Pfau Library and Teaching Resource Center (TRC) at California State University, San Bernardino developed a virtual Critical Information Literacy Leadership Institute, which was meant to introduce the foundations and pedagogical applications of critical information literacy (CIL) so departmental faculty could teach it and advocate for its integration across campus. The institute was a new approach to faculty development at the Pfau Library, as it engaged a multidisciplinary team and incorporated leadership and advocacy training. Though some library-led workshops and activities had been co-sponsored by outside units, they had never been developed and led by faculty or campus leaders other than librarians. Such an approach asks that librarians give up, to a certain extent, "control" over CIL on their campuses. While this might be uncomfortable for those who are understandably concerned about sharing their already miniscule institutional space and power with others, participants can benefit from a collaborative approach that leverages the strengths and experiences of those who are invested in CIL but "live" outside the library. And because Gina Schlesselman-Tarango, a librarian, was an institute co-lead, participants still understood her—and by extension, her colleagues in the library—to be knowledgeable resources on all things CIL.

Below, Monideepa Becerra, professor of public health and then-TRC director, addresses questions to expand on the initiative, illustrating how such an approach can serve as a viable alternative to the one-shot model of library instruction and can allow for the "deeper learning, critical thinking, and inclusive pedagogy" that Nicole Pagowsky argues the one-shot can elude.[1]

Q & A with Institute Co-Lead, Dr. Monideepa Becerra
As a faculty member in public health, how did you first learn about CIL and why did it resonate to the extent that you approached the library to partner on this project?
I first learned about CIL through the Pfau Library's faculty learning community. During this time, discussions on gun control were prevalent, especially in public health classes. A common discussion item, often raised by students, was the lack of evidence to support gun legislation. Several students, with a diversity of personal opinions on gun legislation, often noted that,

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while as public health professionals we strive for evidence based-practices, the push toward legislation without evidence, especially in the form of peer-reviewed literature, seemed contradictory to practice.[2] Fortunately for me, this provided an ideal scope for discussing the information cycle, a concept I explored during the ongoing CIL learning community. This learning opportunity opened the doors to how I looked at information, funding sources, the information cycle itself, from whom and to whom information is shared, and so on. It provided a much-needed context for discussing gun control research and related funding and how that impacts information flow. Immediately, I began to integrate everything I was learning into my graduate classes and then eventually the undergraduate courses as well. Since most of the graduate students were working professionals in the field, this approach created substantial, in-depth discussions in the classroom on the power of information and the social justice foundations of CIL. This further enabled me to choose the best approach to involve undergraduates in discussing the role of the information cycle in public health communication strategies. What I learned during my CIL training completely changed my approach to teaching, and—even to this date—I have had alumni reach out to me and bring up our discussions of CIL. The impact CIL had on my pedagogical approach coupled with the direct impact on how our alumni lead themselves at work were driving factors for this collaboration.

Could you walk us through how the institute was set up?

Five probationary faculty fellows from various departments were competitively selected to participate in asynchronous modules, followed by a synchronous leadership and advocacy training with two college deans. The modules were crafted by you (Gina Schlesselman-Tarango) and me, as well as a campus assessment expert, and they addressed disciplinary approaches to CIL and socially responsible pedagogy,[3] featured examples from faculty who had successfully integrated CIL into existing courses, and highlighted best practices in assessment. In addition to responding to reflection questions and other prompts throughout, fellows submitted a final product detailing how they planned to implement CIL into their course(s) and completed a self-assessment of their leadership skills and action plan on how to advocate for CIL on campus.

What is unique about this approach to faculty development?

Traditionally, faculty development has taken the one-shot approach that is characterized by one or, periodically, a few workshops that introduce faculty to a novel concept. While such a model can inform faculty of new pedagogical approaches, it does little to promote continuation of learning, application of content to practice, or the opportunity to evaluate implemented strategies. Further, even in learning communities where some of these facets can be addressed, the knowledge and implementation of learning remains limited to the participants. With the institute, our goal was to not only provide faculty the opportunity to learn CIL and create a teaching and assessment plan, but also become agents of change on campus. As such, it focused on promoting leadership skills, especially on networking and creating buy-in from other faculty who could spearhead their own departmental and college-level CIL activities, resulting in a snowball impact of the institute beyond those who directly participated. As a result, faculty not only learned key CIL concepts and implementation and evaluation strategies, but they also gained first-hand direct training from campus leadership on strategies to become CIL advocates themselves.[4]

Why do you think it is important that faculty be the ones driving and delivering CIL content in their courses?

Faculty have direct and sustained access to students and, in turn, students' perceptions and performance related to new content and pedagogical approaches. As a result, faculty-focused initiatives can provide opportunities for authentic student learning that other approaches—like the one-shot—may not. This is especially true for CIL, which seeks to critically analyze existing norms of information flow, the role of power and privilege, and how these intersecting factors impact the general population. Faculty have direct access to a diversity of students and the experiences that these students bring to the classroom. As such, they are in an ideal position to create a safe space for students to discuss CIL, address societal barriers to the equitable flow of information, and more. By participating in the development of faculty to teach CIL rather than solely delivering one-shot instruction sessions, librarians can be true collaborators and partners in the curriculum development process rather than support staff or mere "helpers and assistants, and sometimes even, sadly, babysitters."[5] As for the institute, while we are confident participants understood that they would be teaching all CIL content in their courses, in the future we can be more explicit that, in their advocacy efforts, fellows should too celebrate librarians as collaborators rather than (perhaps unintentionally) as "helpers" who can deliver a decontextualized one-shot.

Any advice for others involved in faculty development who want to offer a CIL workshop, institute, or the like?

There is no one center or one person who knows everything about pedagogy or faculty development. While centralization of the process of delivery can help with logistics, it is important to remember that faculty directly impact students. To train the next generation of interdisciplinary leaders, faculty too must be open to learning from fields with which they are perhaps unfamiliar. Those providing faculty development opportunities should be open to such collaborations as well. Often, our hierarchical approach to academic leadership can limit cross-collaboration and/or willingness to practice shared governance. But to truly ensure faculty are provided holistic training opportunities, it is critical that those involved be open to letting go of their position, their authority, and, in turn, their perception of power and be willing to work with others who have valuable resources to provide.

Notes

1. Nicole Pagowsky, "The Contested One-Shot: Deconstructing Power Structures to Imagine New Futures," *College & Research Libraries* 82, no. 3 (2021): 301.

2. Kristen Weir, "A Thaw in the Freeze on Federal Funding for Gun Violence and Injury Prevention Research," *Monitor on Psychology* 52, no. 3 (2021); Sheryl Gay Stolberg, "Can New Gun Violence Research Find a Path around the Political Stalemate?" *New York Times* (March 27, 2021), https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/27/us/politics/gun-violence-research-cdc.html; Christian Heyne, "Think Elections Don't Matter? Congress Finally Funding Gun Violence Research," *The Hill* (December 22, 2019), https://thehill.com/opinion/healthcare/475369-think-elections-dont-matter-congress-finally-funding-gun-violence-research; Paige Winfield Cunningham, "The Health 202: Gun Violence Research by the Government Hasn't Been Funded in Two Decades; But That May Soon Change," *Washington Post* (February 22, 2018), https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/powerpost/paloma/the-health-202/2018/02/22/the-health-202-gun-violence-research-by-the-government-hasn-t-been-funded-in-two-decades-but-that-may-soon-change/5a8dc13e30fb047655a06856/; "As Gun Policy Debate Rages, Scientists Make the Case for Funding Firearm Research," *The Hub* (March 10, 2018), https://hub.jhu.edu/2018/03/20/funding-gun-research/.

3. Core texts guiding the authors' development of module 1 included "Decoding the Disciplines," http://decodingthedisciplines.org/ [accessed 11 February 2022]; David Pace, *The Decoding the Disciplines Paradigm: Seven Steps to Increased Student Learning* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2017); Joan Middendorf and Leah Shopkow, *Overcoming Student Learning Bottlenecks: Decode the Critical Thinking of Your Discipline* (Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, 2018); Sara D. Miller, "Diving Deep: Reflective Questions for Identifying Tacit Information Literacy Knowledge Practices, Dispositions, and Values through the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy," *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 44, no. 3 (2018); *Critical Library Pedagogy Handbook* (2 vols.), eds. Nicole Pagowsky and Kelly McElroy (Chicago, IL: ACRL Press, 2016); Eamon Tewell, "A Decade of Critical Information Literacy: A Review of the Literature," *Communications in Information Literacy* 9, no. 1 (2015); Sakina Laksimi-Morrow, "Developing a Socially Conscious Pedagogy: Lessons in Teaching, Learning, and Unlearning," *Visible Pedagogy* (blog, May 16, 2018), https://vp.commons.gc.cuny.edu/2018/05/16/developing-a-socially-conscious-pedagogy-lessons-in-teaching-learning-and-unlearning/; Nicole A. Beatty and Ernesto Hernandez, Jr., "Socially Responsible Pedagogy: Critical Information Literacy and Art," *Reference Services Review* 47, no. 3 (2019); Marilyn Cochran-Smith, *Walking the Road: Race, Diversity, and Social Justice in Teacher Education* (New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 2004); Karen Doss Bowman, "Social Justice Pedagogy: A Conceptual Framework for All International Educators," *International Educator* (2021); Kari Kokka, "Social Justice Pedagogy for Whom? Developing Privileged Students' Critical Mathematics Consciousness," *Urban Review* 52 (2020).

4. See Andrea W. Brooks, Lynn Warner, and Jane Hammons, "Information Literacy Leadership: The Traits We Didn't Know We Had," *College & Research Libraries News* 82, no. 6 (2021) for an example of another faculty development approach that incorporates information literacy advocacy.

5. Pagowsky, "The Contested One-Shot," 304.