

Critical Information Literacy & Outcomes Assessment: Mutually Supportive, Not Mutually Exclusive

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The more experimental and radical our instruction, the more willing we may be to accept that the changes we wish to affect may not take place until well after the student has left the classroom. Though this approach may be tempting, or even liberating, it hurts the ability of librarians to advocate for their instructional goals and practices. Further, effective assessment of critical information literacy (CIL) outcomes builds a case that the values, best practices, and information strategies engaged in critical pedagogy should be institutionalized as standard learning outcomes. An effective strategy librarians can employ to capture examples of student engagement with critical pedagogy is backward design. Specifically, librarians can work backward from degree or program level outcomes in areas such as social justice, critical consciousness, political efficacy, and journalism to create outcome language that captures measurable, observable instances of learning in CIL contexts.

"FAKE NEWS"

Fake news can be broken down into four categories. These categories can be roughly defined as "fake, false, or regularly misleading websites that are shared on Facebook and social media," "websites that may circulate misleading and/or potentially unreliable information," "websites which sometimes use clickbait-y headlines and social media descriptions," and "satire/comedy sites." The term has political connotations that may load the subject in classrooms, but the prevalence of the term in the information space warrants examination and tools/best practices for critical reading and responsible writing.¹

Program Level Outcomes → STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO...

"EXPRESS a critical understanding of the contextual factors that shape the media message in a diverse, globalized media landscape."²

PRESENT an analysis of an article that identifies geopolitical context, authority, story order, and other observed sources of bias.

"DEMONSTRATE an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity."³

WRITE an article summary examining both included and excluded voices. **OUTLINE** how the individual or corporate author's perspective may influence a reader's conclusions.

"UNDERSTAND concepts and **APPLY** theories in the use and presentation of images and information."³

FIND a Creative Commons image and **CREATE** a corresponding caption that persuades the viewer to take an action. **CITE** the image using the appropriate attribution.

CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS & POLITICAL EFFICACY

Critical consciousness "allows people to define themselves in an affirmative way, despite oppression and the asymmetrical distribution of desirable material resources. In other words, people are able to "... define themselves."⁴ "Political efficacy is a person's perceived ability to affect social and/or political change, or to dismantle oppressive systems. From the student's perspective...it's the belief that 'I can change the system."⁵

Program Level Outcomes → STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO...

"ARTICULATE the way their social identities impact their engagement with others."⁶

MIND MAP your individual social identities in small groups. **COMMUNICATE** ways that your identities, and community, inform your research process.

"PARTNER with community members to **IDENTIFY** a community problem."⁷

IDENTIFY two organizations in the community that advance causes related to your research topic using library resources. **SHARE** how individuals can help these groups.

"DEVELOP a plan of action to address this community problem; make ongoing connections to social justice groups."⁷

ACCESS library resources to **RETRIEVE** articles that demonstrate a need in our community. **PRESENT** a slide that communicates the need and an associated action plan.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

"Social justice generally refers to the pursuit of and realization of political, legal, economic, and social equality among peoples. Embedded in a sense of equality are notions of fairness (equal opportunity) and respect (equal dignity), though emphasis on equality of opportunity or outcomes differs by context. While few would reject the desirability of social justice outright, there is considerable variation regarding the domains of social life in which equality should exist and the level of society in which equality should be embedded, as well as the amount of inequality tolerable in order for social justice to be present and the paths to take to engender and maintain the presence of social justice."⁸

Program Level Outcomes → STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO...

"ANALYZE the effects of bias, stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination, and oppression on individuals and groups."⁹

COMPARE two articles or sources that examine a current or historical social justice issue. **DISCUSS** how the narrative of each could impact outcomes in our community.

"CONSIDER issues from multiple perspectives."⁷

SHOW the absence of marginalized or underrepresented voices in two articles that relate to a current social justice problem. **CITE** and **PRESENT** your findings.

"ASSESS and **COMMUNICATE** how social welfare research...can both empower and oppress communities they are purported to serve."¹⁰

SHARE and **CITE** empirical data from scholarly sources that demonstrate how research can hinder or support social welfare policies or social justice causes.