Is Information Literacy Enough for a Knowledge Worker?

Associate Prof. Katarzyna Materska
University of Warsaw, Poland
Information Science and Book Studies Department

European Conference on Information Literacy (ECIL)
Istanbul, Turkey 22-25 October 2013
Information literacy in the workplace research

- Not a heavily studied area – limited literature
- WORKPLACE INFORMATION LITERACY
- KNOWLEDGE LITERACY
- INFORMATION/KNOWLEDGE FLUENCY

https://sites.google.com/a/dpi.wi.gov/disciplinary-literacy-in-fine-arts/
Aims of the presentation:

• To introduce an alternative way of thinking about IL in the workplace

General questions:

• What is the information landscape in which knowledge workers operate?

• Do the skills we impart (via information literacy instructions) extend to the workplace? Are they the skills that employers want and employees need?
Information literacy in an educational setting

- educational concept - information and knowledge as accessible through the attainment of a systematic set of procedures or competencies,

- the acquisition and development of a set of skills - closely to library literacy (library research skills) or computer /IT/media literacy programmes and a way of learning in formal contexts,

- literacy as a tangible and assessable set of skills or processes which underpin access to information through text and information and communication technology (ICT),

- text as the primary source of information and knowledge for learning.
Every year we live in a very different information world

(The SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information Literacy, 2011)

- progression in IL each year
- it is problematic to present a single conception of IL as „truth”
- context creates difference
Workplace/knowledge workers lens

- a very specific workplace - knowledge-based organizations
- the role of IL in learning outside educational settings
The organization as a “knowledge ecosystem”

• Interactions between people, process, technology and content.

• **Knowledge emerges through connections, dialog and social interaction.**

• **Social sources of information and knowledge in organizations** play significant role in knowledge production/development.

• **Physical and social information aspect of knowledge** (non-codified forms of knowledge in the work environment).
Knowledge-base organizations

- As a workplace of knowledge workers, information literate people

- Organisations need people who can both collect and connect information literate people operating in a knowledge management environment.

- Learning in the workplace is a form of social interaction

70 : 20 : 10 model
The 6 Pillars of The Digital Workplace
Knowledge workers

• well educated,
• develop knowledge through long practice (41%) or a combination of long intensive study, long practice and special talent (39%),
• need not only codified knowledge,
• use both tacit and explicit knowledge for their work (57%),
• only 15 % mostly use explicit knowledge,
• the results of their work are non-material (65%),
• 67% prefer the combination of teamwork and individual work,
• understand broader context of their knowledge.

(L. Mládková, 2011)
Knowledge workers

- **COGNITIVE APPROACH** (evaluation, analysis, application, comprehension, knowledge)

- **SKILLS** (exposure, acquisition, application automatic use); **problem-solving** skills that enable individuals to process information effectively and work within complex, ever-changing environment

- **PERSONAL CONSTRUCTION** (receiving, responding, valuing, organizing, internalizing)

*Knowledge-related work requires thinking!; being creative, always questioning, interpreting, understanding situations, adapting to changes *

Information needs are not always identified or evaluated by the worker
Knowledge workers

• not only “homo oeconomicus”
• important mental and emotional states that human individuals and groups go through in the course of their everyday activities.

http://wiki.dickinson.edu/
The "Iceberg" metaphor describes the relationship between Explicit & Tacit Knowledge.

C. Kuhlthau model
Information literacy and KM

- Information literacy and the fostering of an information literate workforce are **key components** in any KM initiative.

http://www.jarche.com/pkm/
Conclusions

• IL as context specific and context sensitive

• People are the principal source of information.

• It is essential to recognize the **key role of human relationships in the development of information literacy in the workplace.**

• From information literacy to knowledge literacy?
THANK YOU

katarzyna.materska@gmail.com

http://infolit.org/about-the-nfil/national-information-literacy-awareness-month-is-october/