The Quarterly Interview: Clarence Maybee

Purdue University
-Edited Transcript-

LOEX: *Where do you work? What is your job title and what are your main responsibilities?*

Maybee: I have worked at Purdue University's Libraries and School of Information Studies (LSIS) since 2011. Founded in 1869, Purdue is Indiana's land-grant institution, and a large research university that has a major focus on engineering, technology, and agriculture. As of fall 2018, Purdue had 9,795 graduate students and 32,672 undergraduates. The LSIS on the West Lafayette campus includes six subject-oriented libraries, the Hicks Undergraduate Library, and the Virginia Kelly Karnes Archives and Special Collections Research Center. I am the Information Literacy Specialist for LSIS. In this role, I work with the Purdue community in a number of ways to advance information literacy. I also conduct research into how students, instructors, and librarians' experiences with information literacy, and the findings inform my work on campus. I believe that reaching students in a way that is scalable requires integrating information literacy in courses across the curriculum. Therefore, I lead several campus efforts to train-the-trainer through workshops and events aimed at enabling Purdue instructors to address information literacy in their courses.

You recently won the Librarian Recognition Award from the ALA Library Instruction Round Table, due in part to your work with the IMPACT program at Purdue University. Could you describe the IMPACT program and its goals?

IMPACT, which stands for 'Instruction Matters: Purdue Academic Course Transformation,' has been a major part of my work at Purdue. The goal of IMPACT is to work with classroom instructors to redesign courses to make them student-centered. Each semester, teams comprised of three instructors, staff from Purdue's teaching center and teaching with technology unit, and a Libraries faculty or staff member, get together weekly to discuss how each course can be made more motivating and engaging for students, while maintaining academic rigor. Since 2013, between eight and ten teams have participated in IMPACT every semester.

All the team members collaborate to enhance the courses, and the librarians also work with the instructors to integrate information literacy into the coursework. For example, I worked with a biology professor to strategize about how her introductory students might better see a connection between their own lives and the kind of problems that are studied by biologists. Students were asked at the beginning of the course to work in small groups to each determine a topic they were personally interested in that they thought could be informed by biological information. Students picked a wide variety of topics, such as herbal medicine (the student had always been interested, but felt that such topics were taboo in academia), and the biological effects of alcoholism (the student's uncle had this disease). Throughout the semester, students studied their topics and presented what they learned in a poster session at the end of the course.

IMPACT got a lot of attention in 2018 when the *Chronicle of Higher Education* named the program one of six innovators in higher education. That was an awesome day! It was also the year that my book, *Impact Learning: Librarians at the Forefront of Change in Higher Education,* about LSIS's involvement in creating and facilitating IMPACT came out. Using IMPACT as an example, the book argues for academic libraries to adopt a train-the-trainer model to integrate information literacy into disciplinary courses across the curriculum.

What has been the effect of IMPACT on instructional design and assignment design at the course and/or program level?

IMPACT has really influenced how instructors at Purdue go about designing their courses. There is much more of a focus on learning outcomes, which must be aligned with assessments and learning activities. 348 IMPACT instructors redesigned 325 courses during the program, and several have gone on to make changes to 295 additional courses after completing IMPACT. In the last two years, Purdue librarians involved in IMPACT have created a number of spinoff projects. For example, we offered a one-day workshop for classroom instructors to develop information literacy assignments to be implemented into their courses the following year.

Your dissertation was focused on informed learning. Could you define informed learning?

The central idea of informed learning is that students need to learn to use information while they are learning about something else, such as facts, concepts, or theories within a disciplinary or professional context, such as biology, history, or nursing. Informed learning was developed by Dr. Christine Bruce, who authored a book about it in 2008. Dr. Bruce and her research group conducted several projects to investigate students and teachers' ex-

periences with information literacy. From this research, she determined different ways that learners go about using information. She recognized that while some learners were only focused on discrete tasks, such as using a specific database or applying an evaluative rubric to information sources, others were engaged in more complex activities in which using information was tied to learning, such as developing a knowledge base or applying what one has learned to effect positive change in the world. Informed learning is a pedagogic approach to information literacy that aims to help learners use information in more sophisticated ways—ideally experiencing the entire spectrum of ways information can be used within a particular learning context?

How might you suggest that librarians introduce concepts of informed learning into their instructional practices?

A very basic example of informed learning is when librarians design their instruction to prepare students to complete an assignment. For example, librarians who know students need to make a certain kind of argument in an assignment could design opportunities to help the students understand how the sources they choose may (or may not) inform the argument they need to make. Adopting an informed learning approach requires having access to course curricula to know what students are learning about in the course, which allows us to determine how they need to learn to use information. While students might be producing something very traditional, such as a paper or academic poster, informed learning asked that we consider and support all the ways students may need to use information. For example, in a technology course students may be asked to collect and analyze interview information gathered from clients to inform their design ideas. The main work of informed learning is to figure out what students are learning in a particular course, e.g., facts, concepts, etc., and then determine the information practices they need to use to learn those facts or concepts. One outcome of my dissertation work was to develop 'informed learning design,' an instructional design model that leads people through steps to help them create informed learning environments in their classrooms. Anyone interested in using informed learning in their instruction should check out an article my colleagues and I wrote on the design model that was published in 2019 in *Higher Education Research & Development*.

What do you wish that academic librarians would change about the way they think about and teach information literacy?

For me, information literacy isn't a set-of-skills that one learns and then applies to their work in biology, or their writing course, or whatever. Instead, it is how we use information to learn and accomplish things in a particular context. So, we need to teach students how to use information within different contexts, such as in their disciplines or professions they are entering. When we teach about information ethics, for example, we should contextualize how to use information ethically in one's field, work, class, or other situation. I believe we need to start by considering what students are learning or trying to do in their courses or program, and then determine the ways they need to learn to use information to enable them to know or do those things.

What books or articles have influenced you?

- Bruce, C. (1997). *Seven Faces of Information Literacy*. Adelaide: Auslib Press.

When I was working on my masters in library and information science degree at San Jose State University in the early 2000s, I enrolled in a course on information literacy with Dr. Mary Somerville, who was a library administrator at CalPoly (now the university librarian at the University of the Pacific), and an adjunct teacher at San Jose. I was very interested in information literacy, so I asked Dr. Somerville if there was anything I should read to prepare for taking the course. She told me to read Dr. Bruce's book. I remember feeling that the book was pretty difficult for me—reporting on a major research study that used a methodology called 'phenomenography,' which focuses on how people 'experience' something, in this case how educators experience information literacy. But I stuck with it!

When Dr. Somerville asked me what I thought of the *Seven Faces*, I told her it all made sense to me, but I suspected that undergraduate students would NOT experience information literacy in the same way as teachers and librarians. Her response was, "Well, let's find out." She arranged for me to go to CalPoly and replicate the study by interviewing roughly 20 students there. This was my first research experience. As I began analyzing the interview data, I came to realize that my assumption that undergraduates would experience information literacy differently than their teachers was totally wrong! In fact, the two groups had very similar experiences. This outcome made me believe in the power of the phenomenographic research method, which I have used regularly since.

To return to the question of whether to teach Sci-Hub, a close read of our professional codes of ethics is a good starting point. You won't find any easy answers, but these codes will help you to weigh the relative merits of teaching Sci-Hub. If you are still looking for some middle ground in this dilemma, it is certainly possible to teach Sci-Hub without advocating for or against it. Problem-based learning is an effective, student-centered pedagogy. Introducing students to the ethical problems of using Sci-Hub can easily segue to deeper conversations about intellectual property and equitable access to information.

Suggested Additional Readings

Shadow Libraries: Access to Knowledge in Global Higher Education. Joe Karaganis. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018.

"Sci-Hub, a Challenge for Academic and Research Libraries." Llarina González-Solar and Viviana Fernández-Marcial. *El Profesional de La Información*, vol. 28, no. 1, Jan. 2019, pp. 1–12.

"Who's Downloading Pirated Papers? Everyone." John Bohannon. *Science*: Vol. 352, Issue 6285, Apr. 29, 2016, pp. 508-512.

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ALA "Copyright: An Interpretation of the Code of Ethics" Jan. 29, 2019. http://www.ala.org/tools/ethics/copyright

Bohannon, John. "Who's Downloading Pirated Papers? Everyone." *Science*. 2016, v. 352, n. 6285, pp. 508-512.

Eger, Thomas and Marc Scheufen. *The Economics of Open Access: On the Future of Academic Publishing*. Edward Alger, Northampton, MA, 2018.

"Elsevier Fact Sheet." MIT Libraries. https://libraries.mit.edu/scholarly/publishing/elsevier-fact-sheet/

Graber-Stiehl, Ian. "Science's Pirate Queen." Feb. 8, 2018. *The Verge*. https://www.theverge.com/2018/2/8/16985666/alexandra-elbakyan-sci-hub-open-access-science-papers-lawsuit

Himmelstein, Daniel S., et al. "Sci-Hub Provides Access to Nearly All Scholarly Literature." *ELife*, 2018. *EBSCOhost*, doi:10.7554/eLife.32822.

International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA). "Code of Ethics for Librarians and other Information Workers" 2012. https://www.ifla.org/publications/node/11092

Oakley, Meg. "Online Piracy: Why Sci-Hub is Disrupting Scholarly Publishing." Georgetown University Library. https://www.library.georgetown.edu/sites/default/files/sci-hub-intro.pdf

Office for Intellectual Freedom. *Intellectual Freedom Manual*. ALA Editions. Chicago. 7th edition, 2009.

Schiermeier, Quirin. "US court grants Elsevier millions in damages from Sci-Hub." Jun. 22, 2017. Nature. https://www.nature.com/news/us-court-grants-elsevier-millions-in-damages-from-sci-hub-1.22196

Shu, Fei, et al. "Is It Such a Big Deal? On the Cost of Journal Use in the Digital Era." *College & Research Libraries*, vol. 79, no. 6, Sept. 2018, pp. 785–798.

"UC and Elsevier: Overview." Office of Scholarly Communication University of California. https://osc.universityofcalifornia.edu/open-access-at-uc/publisher-negotiations/uc-and-elsevier/

United Nations. "Universal Declaration of Human Rights." https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/

Van-Noorden, Richard. "Alexandra Elbakyan: Paper Pirate." *Nature*, v. 540, n. 7634.

Weingart, Peter and Niels Taubert. *The Future of Scholarly Publishing: Open Access and the Economics of Digitisation*. African Books Collective, 2017.

- DiAngelo, R. & Dyson, M. E. (2018). *White Fragility*. Boston: Beacon Press.

This book kicked my butt, which is good, as I think that is what it was trying to do. As a white person who didn't think of myself as a racist, this book was pretty eye opening to the ways I benefit from white privilege, but also the ways I perpetrate it by not actively trying to disrupt it. White supremacy is so ingrained in society that I found myself arguing with the ideas presented in the book quite a lot, only to have an epiphany a day or two later. I do believe that we (white Americans) need to start understanding how we perpetuate white supremacy, and how we can work to disrupt it, and… keep at it, and keep at it, and keep at it. It all makes a difference. I really thank these authors for creating such a brave and challenging and wonderful book!