

# Knowledge Societies:

## Learning for a Diverse World

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This chapter will build on the author’s conceptual exploration of critical information literacy (CIL) in the foreign languages to examine what such a program could look like in reality.<sup>1</sup> Inspired by the author’s increasing dissatisfaction with information literacy (IL) models that are decontextualized from broader, multicultural information landscapes, this chapter will present an instructional approach that draws from the experience and assessment of a pilot Spanish IL program at the University of Colorado Boulder (UCB). However, while the chapter will focus specifically on the study of foreign languages, it will be of interest to educators who work with global populations. Changing demographics as well as the evolution of communication technologies means that the capacity to act within multicultural information societies is more important than ever before, and learning for a diverse world is a core goal on many US campuses.

The class was also driven by the author’s recognition of the growing exclusion of cultural knowledge and worldview from our information landscapes. While IL has been credited with empowering people to “locate, evaluate, apply, and create information within cultural and social contexts,” traditional IL standards such as the

Association of College and Research Libraries' (ACRL) *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education* often seem to promote a “single, fixed way of knowing and learning.”<sup>2</sup> In addition, the representation of different voices or cultures on the web is often muted, from *Wikipedia* to specialized systems of scholarly communication. Accessing culturally situated knowledge in information systems that tend to support traditional, global flows of information or established interests is a challenge.<sup>3</sup> While new technologies are often seen as a way to bridge cultural divides—for example, by allowing people to access a diversity of views or opinions—it is clear that in other ways, the Internet actually reinforces existing social biases or divisions. This can be seen most clearly in the design of tools, for example, algorithms that are weighted towards their designers' biases or search engine personalization trends that narrow our information experiences. More subtly, it can also be seen in terms of access to information as the shape and reach of our personal networks mediates our information experiences.<sup>4</sup> These realities complicate our information landscapes and affect our expectations about the world.

A critical approach to IL, however, moves beyond the narrow focus on dominant cultural information practices. A CIL framework questions the “structures, functions, habits, norms, and practices that guide global flows of information.”<sup>5</sup> In this way, it can help meet campus and foreign language curricular goals by enabling an exploration of cultural representations of information. At the same time, CIL also aims to develop the learner's understanding of “who she is (identity) and what she can do (agency).”<sup>6</sup> This enables a reflection on differences between languages, cultures, and communities, core aspects of transcultural and foreign language learning. In this way, CIL can be defined as “engendering lifelong learning, empowering people, promoting social inclusion, redressing disadvantage, and advancing the well-being of all in a global context,” an approach that is ideally suited to the challenges of multicultural information societies.<sup>7</sup>

The chapter will start with an overview of the foreign language information environment, including a brief review of relevant background literature that informs this work. It will then center on describing the CIL framework that was used to design a series of two core advanced Spanish writing classes. The author will subsequently analyze student reflective prompts to explore student learning within SP3010: Advanced Rhetoric and Composition, the second of the two classes. The chapter will end by looking at future objectives for this program as well as exploring how this design could be adapted for other global learning initiatives on campus.

## Background

Several bodies of work inform this study, including foreign language education practices, CIL literature, and work in critical information or Internet studies. A brief overview of each of these areas will serve to situate this paper.

Foreign language educational goals form the driving impetus for this program.<sup>8</sup> The university or college campus is an increasingly diverse location. This can be attributed to changing demographics, including the increase in nontraditional and international students as well as numbers of students who have studied abroad.<sup>9</sup> It can also be linked to the growth of global communication technologies and the subsequent effect on the education system and workplace needs.<sup>10</sup> Either way, internationalization, which refers to the incorporation of “global perspectives into teaching, learning, and research,” is seen as increasingly important throughout higher education.<sup>11</sup> These realities are also gradually starting to influence disciplinary student learning goals as can be seen through the changing priorities of the Modern Language Association (MLA). Traditionally, foreign language education was very hierarchically structured. Lower-division language courses fed into upper-division studies of canonical literature, and language learning was based around the goal of acquiring near-native linguistic competence. Needless to say, few learners ever reached this level, and the foreign languages were seen as increasingly irrelevant in a world where understanding different cultures was more important than ever before.<sup>12</sup> As a consequence, a 2007 report urged departments to reconsider the wider purpose of language study by situating learning goals within broader cultural, historical, and geographic frames. In this way, learning would be reconfigured around transcultural rather than just linguistic competence, focusing on the ability of learners to reflect on the world, their society, and themselves “through the lens of another language and culture.”<sup>13</sup>

The redefined goals provide an interesting challenge for librarians because traditional IL practices often seem to fail to structure these disciplinary aims. The emphasis that established IL standards and research place on identifying commonalities in information practices, for example, makes it hard to design IL instruction that allows students to acknowledge and reflect on difference.<sup>14</sup> In addition, the typical focus on developing efficient information retrieval skills leaves little space for students to develop broader language awareness such as considering the sociopolitical nature of language use.<sup>15</sup> In this way, it is clear that a more extensive approach to IL is needed in order to design integrated disciplinary instruction. CIL is one such approach. Drawing from

critical pedagogy and literacy studies, CIL is hard to define yet can be seen as an approach to IL that is grounded in the development of a student's critical consciousness or disposition in and with complex information landscapes. On the one hand, this means that CIL engages learners with the broader social and cultural contexts of information questioning, "how knowledge is defined, by whom and for whom, and how these processes contribute to the reproduction, mediation, or transformation of power relations."<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, it indicates that CIL supports a personal approach to learning, drawing from the learner's past experiences to develop their ability to "critically construct, shape and negotiate knowledge, practices, and identities."<sup>17</sup> This focus on scaffolding the learner's personal development within broader cultural narratives does not just demonstrate that CIL can support the educational goals of the foreign languages; it also means, more importantly, that CIL can become "a key part of a student's knowing process in the foreign languages," thereby creating an opportunity for thoughtful instructional practice.<sup>18</sup>

While CIL literature helps to frame the course, class content is informed by literature that explores the political, social, and cultural dimensions of information practices. This literature is not commonly addressed in IL, yet studies that explore the hidden subcontexts of common research tools can help librarians consider the resources that they are teaching in a more critical light. These questions are especially important in foreign language studies because, as Project Information Literacy notes, students tend to rely on the same set of tried and true resources.<sup>19</sup> However, as students seek to reflect on the world and understand themselves as a member of a society that is foreign to others, the perceived universality of English language tools that are typically used as research starting points can be troublesome. Although a full exploration of all these fields is beyond the scope of this paper, the author will highlight various studies of search engines, *Wikipedia*, and library systems that helped her question foreign language information landscapes, which, ultimately, drove her IL instruction design.

One of the most relevant areas of interest for the foreign languages is research into the search engine, the starting point for much academic and personal research. Search engines have rapidly become our window onto the world, yet this can be problematic in a foreign language context. Although search engines "house and surface the long tail information that goes beyond the mass taste of the public," the parameters that humans set for indexing or algorithmic ranking mean explicit editorial choices are made.<sup>20</sup> This can decrease access to minority language or cultural materials as search engines seek to maximize

search success by catering to majority interests.<sup>21</sup> Liwen Vaughan and Yanjun Zhang found that US sites were more likely to be indexed on Google than sites from China, Taiwan, or Singapore.<sup>22</sup> At the same time, Google defends these ranking and indexing choices as “an objective reflection of reality.”<sup>23</sup> This supposition causes issues in foreign language information environments because it fails to consider cultural context as the experiences of journalists from Sahara Reporters whose reports about police brutality in Nigeria were censored demonstrates.<sup>24</sup> It can also promote offensive racial or cultural stereotypes about women of color as Safiya Umoja Noble and Latanya Sweeney describe.<sup>25</sup> Access to culturally relevant materials is further complicated by current trends for search engine personalization or customization, which can limit access to results based on location, past search history, or what is deemed “newsworthy.” In turn, this restricted presentation of information can influence “our expectations and information about the world” as the search engine becomes “a means to know what there is to know and how to know it.”<sup>26</sup>

*Wikipedia*, a common research resource, is another problematic tool in foreign language research. Issues, however, go beyond the typical preoccupation with credibility and center around how contributors and the *Wikipedia* structure affect access to foreign language information and knowledge. On the surface, *Wikipedia* prides itself on its low barriers to access and create knowledge. However, research into country-specific versions of *Wikipedia* shows that contributors from countries with higher levels of development participate more frequently in *Wikipedia*. This causes problems as local or country specific knowledge remains “largely left out of one of the world’s most important and visible sources of information.”<sup>27</sup> In turn, these skewed contributor demographics (who are also predominantly male and young) affect what counts as knowledge as the deletion of the entry on Makmende, a Kenyan meme that was not considered important enough for the English *Wikipedia*, demonstrates.<sup>28</sup> Further issues that affect the representation of knowledge in *Wikipedia* can be seen in an examination of geotagged entries. Research has shown that in large swathes of Africa, local people write fewer than five percent of *Wikipedia* edits, meaning that some populations are almost exclusively represented by foreigners.<sup>29</sup> This overrepresentation of topics of Western concern may then skew datasets or search engines. Lastly, *Wikipedia* is a predominantly textual source that relies on Western concepts of sources and citations. In this way, its very structure can be hostile to representations of indigenous or oral culture as well as “nuanced understanding of local notability” and the use of local sources.<sup>30</sup>

Lastly, a critical examination of academic search tools shows that the library too can be problematic in foreign language research. The scarcity of foreign language scholarly resources in libraries is a known problem.<sup>31</sup> Many common databases have very narrow representations of foreign language materials and index few non-Anglophone journals.<sup>32</sup> However, this is further complicated by documented problems that non-Western or Anglophone scholars face when they try and publish in major English-language disciplinary journals, including prejudice about what counts as locally and globally relevant knowledge.<sup>33</sup> While the growth of open access materials in many countries is helping to mitigate issues, invisible exclusionary practices have a significant effect on the production, funding, and visibility of broad academic knowledge. Access to and representation of foreign language material may also be limited by the classification systems used in the library. As Hope Olson points out, language choice in “universal” classification systems invariably reflects the biases of the creator; in the case of the Dewey Decimal System, this is based on the presumptions of Western philosophies.<sup>34</sup> Through the “systemic effect of continuing to privilege colonizers over colonized,” this impacts the placement of topics as well as terminology issues and omissions.<sup>35</sup> It also affects the representation of minority materials as well as making foreign language material inaccessible to various groups and cultures.

In sum, scholars are starting to examine global flows of information, both in terms of production of and access to information as well as the representation of different voices or cultures on the web. Through these studies it is clear to see that in Anglophone-dominated environments, foreign language information landscapes are highly complex. Nonetheless, a critical approach to IL can help reveal these issues, thereby helping learners develop deeper cultural and linguistic competence. The remainder of this chapter will explore what this might look like.

## Course Planning

The paper will now move to examine the pilot foreign language IL program that was introduced at UCB. A brief outline of the series of two classes that form the program will situate the paper before the author focuses more extensively on SP3010, the second of the two classes.

## Context

At UCB, Spanish majors are required to take two three-credit advanced Spanish writing classes, SP3000: Advanced Spanish Skills and SP3010: Advanced Rhetoric and Composition. SP3000, the first course, is a transitional class that focuses on writing skills as well as introducing students to courses that tend to be offered in the department such as Iberian and Latin American literature, cultural events, and topical issues. Within SP3000, students write a five to seven page research paper in Spanish that relies predominantly on Spanish sources. While topics vary, many students write about contemporary current affairs topics that draw from their personal or study abroad experience. As part of this course, the Spanish librarian conducts one 50-minute seminar for each class section. Designed to introduce students to Spanish research, learning outcomes center round being able to carry out research in a Spanish context. More specifically, this involves developing an understanding of everyday and academic research tools that are used by Spanish speakers as well as being able to work within these tools, for example, constructing an appropriate search strategy. Although students have considerable experience doing research in English by the 3000 level, assessment data demonstrates that students have rarely undertaken any research in Spanish before this class and that they are extremely nervous of the process.

SP3010 builds upon SP3000 to develop student writing through the lens of social justice. This includes the study of Iberian and Latin American culture, linguistics, sociopolitical and economic reality, and literature and criticism. Within this class, students are expected to produce five pieces of written work, of which the *reseñas y comentarios de recursos* (summary and commentary of sources) paper and the *exposición* (exposition) paper have to include at least three to four credible Spanish sources. Topics are varied but tend to focus around social problems in Spain and Latin America such as trash collectors, access to education, or natural resource exploitation. Due to the number of prerequisite modules that need to be taken before this class, the course is normally taken in a student's final year of study.

## Goals

SP3010 is driven by several jointly developed librarian and instructor teaching goals, which entwine foreign language and CIL in powerful pedagogical practice. Drawing from the MLA recommendations that linguistic competence should be developed through the analysis of a variety of cultural narratives, this

class positions IL as a way for students to develop deep cultural knowledge. In this way, the primary goal of SP3010 is to develop the student's linguistic and transcultural competence through a critical engagement with Spanish information environments. As the previous section explained, the complexity of foreign language information environments is often obscured by our reliance on common English language research tools. Accordingly, questions about the political economies of information or knowledge ownership and control, for example, can help students develop their knowledge of the foreign language societies they are studying, a core foreign language learning goal. This will also help them understand the background realities that underpin Spanish cultural narratives. At the same time, the research process can be used as a bridge point where students can compare and contrast English and Spanish information practices.<sup>36</sup> By juxtaposing student experiences in the native culture as well as the foreign one, neither culture is positioned as dominant or universal. Instead, the librarian is enacting a process targeted at understanding rather than exotifying foreignness. In turn, this can help learners consider the position and role of cultural knowledge in their own societies, core aspects of transcultural learning goals.

This goal of linguistic and transcultural competence is supported by the class focus on real world information scenarios instead of academic goals. High levels of globalization and immigration mean that Spanish is growing increasingly important for a wide range of traditional information-seeking positions in the US, including the communications, medical, and legal professions.<sup>37</sup> Yet while workplace IL is highly distinctive, IL within higher education tends to be developed around academic goals with the expectation that this will be transferable to the workplace.<sup>38</sup> In this way, and recognizing the importance of Spanish IL in the workplace, the class focuses on facilitating critical engagement with the information systems and practices that students may encounter in their future careers. This enables learners to develop the independent habits of a lifelong learner who is positioned to step out and act in a variety of information environments. In addition, by structuring the class around the open web or asking students to grapple with concepts of trust and credibility rather than relying on checklists, the librarian positions the student to engage more profoundly in the information environment. This enables the development of a more sensitive knowing of the language and culture, a core goal of the foreign languages.

The librarian and the instructor's focus on slowing down the research process also supports transcultural learning goals. Students often see research



as a confusing and procedural exercise. As Barbara Fister points out, “By making it sound as if the point of the paper is to find and use sources, we’re practically *begging* them to patchwrite.”<sup>39</sup> In addition, the focus on expert formal scholarship practices means that academic investigation can be considered unapproachable.<sup>40</sup> However, by focusing on scaffolding intermediate steps in the research process, students are deliberately given time to reflect on their process and their understandings of the research experience in different cultural contexts. This is particularly important when students encounter scenarios and questions that they may not have considered before, for example, the role of social and political systems in knowledge production. In addition, this shift from “a final product to the experience of inquiry” also allows students to see research as a dynamic conversation that they can enter, thereby reinforcing the goal of helping them become more deliberate in their actions as well as more aware of what they are becoming.<sup>41</sup>

## **Structure**

Librarian engagement in SP3010 is structured around a research seminar and the administration of three reflective surveys. The in-person, hands-on research seminar is designed to initiate a more critical understanding of Spanish information environments. Held just before the second writing assignment is due, the librarian draws from pre-class survey answers to briefly revise elements introduced at the SP3000 level. However, the majority of class time is spent on engaging students in deeper, more problematic questions, such as access to and use of information in Spanish contexts, rather than the mechanics of the research process.

The first half of the class focuses on using the open web to find Spanish resources. Individually or in groups, students find one resource related to their topic, recording their choice on an online form. As they find this information, students are asked to make a note of how they found the source, including successful search techniques, tools, and evaluation criteria. After 10–15 minutes, the class comes back together to build a list of successful tips and strategies on the whiteboard. Through the ensuing discussion, the librarian facilitates further reflection on these findings, including probing for information that students expected to find but didn’t or how their search strategies differed in a Spanish context. The conversation then moves on to discuss how the class chose and evaluated this information. The librarian builds a similar list of criteria that can

be used to evaluate information on the whiteboard. She further probes student answers, for example, focusing the discussion on search personalization or the *Wikipedia* editing process. The second half of the class repeats the same exercise using the library webpage. A new list of tools, techniques, and evaluation criteria are added to the whiteboard as the librarian facilitates further reflection around these findings. She also probes for differences that students have noticed between doing English and Spanish research on the library webpage before pushing students to reflect on differences between research on the open web and the library webpage. While the class discussion varies according to student responses, students are provided with a handout of guiding questions to help start the reflective process (see Appendix 10A).

In this way, the class is structured around helping students to explore Spanish information environments critically. Instead of being presented with a checklist of differences, however, the class draws from personal experiences. This approach has several benefits. By compiling lists of resources and techniques as a group, the class draws from each student's knowledge to create a much wider and deeper understanding of Spanish information landscapes. This active approach creates a practical list of takeaway approaches and strategies for future research needs. More importantly, however, it also acknowledges students' prior knowledge and participation, thereby making the research process more meaningful and creating more opportunities for critical analysis. Ensuing discussions about differences between Spanish and English research are equally participatory. By engaging students in reflection about differences between their native and the foreign language culture, the class pushes students to think more broadly about their own world and society rather than simply marveling at the exotic. This is also far more inclusive in a class that could consist of native English speakers as well as heritage and native Spanish speakers from around the world. And, while the short amount of time allows only basic observations to be made, the reflective surveys are designed to build on these concepts to push students to develop their thinking even further.

The three reflective surveys are designed to inform both teaching and learning needs (see Appendix 10B). While they are optional, surveys are seen as an integral part of the class, and students are given class time to reflect on their process beyond the one-shot seminar format. Design of the prompts draws heavily on the work that the author and three colleagues did at a UCB Assessment Institute as well as the work of Troy Swanson and Claire Kramsch.<sup>42</sup>

The first survey is delivered before the research seminar to assess student needs and prior knowledge. In this way, it helps students begin to articulate and reflect on their goals and process. The questions also help to remind students of some of the complications of doing research in Spanish, thereby preparing them for class. At the same time, prompts that look at student topics and knowledge of Spanish information realities aim to help the librarian understand learner needs and guide plans for the upcoming seminar.

The second survey is administered immediately after the research seminar. Like the first survey, prompts about the research process help students reflect on their learning by articulating new strategies or approaches that they have adopted after the seminar. Answers also help the librarian assess comprehension and application of concepts, thereby helping her to understand what parts of the seminar work or are meaningful to students. These responses also allow the librarian to decide if further clarification is needed. The last reflection is delivered at the end of semester. This allows students to consider their research process holistically and reflect on their experience over the whole semester. At the same time, questions that probe the transferability and application of this knowledge help the librarian gauge whether students have retained these concepts. Responses also allow the librarian to decide whether she needs to make changes to her teaching in future semesters.

## Results and Discussion

This class has been offered in three different semesters, starting in Fall 2012. Overall, 71 Spanish students have taken this class (Fall 2012: 20; Spring 2013: 20; Fall 2013: 31). While demographics of each class were not collected, as an illustration, in Fall 2012, there were 323 declared Spanish majors at UCB, of whom 71 percent are female and 21 percent have a minority race or ethnic status. Due to the number of prerequisites needed for this class, most students take the course as a senior. Student reflective prompts are analyzed during the semester to provide necessary feedback and follow up for student needs. In Fall 2013, the librarian combined and coded data from all three semesters to conduct a thematic analysis and draw broad conclusions. She also obtained IRB approval to quote from the reflective prompts in order to assess student responses to this course.

## ***Pre-Class Survey***

In the pre-class survey, most students indicated that they were at a very early stage of research. Their topics were still fairly broad, and they had a fairly superficial understanding of the issues and the people who would be interested in their area of research. Nonetheless, for the most part, students displayed a mature understanding of the steps that they felt they would need to take to be successful in this assignment. As most students who take the class are graduating seniors, these answers are not unusual. The comfort that students showed regarding the research process, however, was not borne out by their understanding of Spanish information environments. Only a few students demonstrated the experience or knowledge that they would need to interpret difference or to be successful in different cultural contexts. For instance, while most students recalled at least one method to find Spanish results in Google (for example, using the advanced search to specify the region or language), an even larger proportion indicated that they also expected to find significant material on sites that had worked in the past for English language research papers such as EBSCO or JSTOR. In fact, some students expressed mild frustration at the thought of having to attend the workshop because they “already know how to navigate the library webpage.” In this way, it is clear that while students enter the class feeling comfortable doing research, few demonstrate extensive experience of carrying out research in a Spanish context.

## ***Post-Class Survey***

The second survey was administered a week after the research seminar. However, at this stage, and in direct contrast to the pre-class survey, student answers are more likely to be characterized by frustration as unexpected hitches and problems mar their research progress. Students quickly discover that few academic publications investigate the Latin American social justice issues, such as trash collectors, that are the topics of their papers. In addition, even if this information exists, the library does not always provide easy access to it:

Algunos de los retos incluyen: la falta de información sobre América Central y basura, También, los sitios de web como Ethnic Newswatch que nos recomienda no funciona. (Some of the challenges were: the lack of information about Central America and trash, also, websites like Ethnic Newswatch that you recommended don't work.)

Furthermore, students see that this lack of information is not just limited to the academic sphere. Typical Google searches, for example, fail to pull up the amount of information to which students are accustomed:

Algunos de los retos de mi investigación son que mi tema es algo muy complicado—hay muchas causas y efectos—pero no hay mucha información académica en la internet para países específicas. (Some of the challenges of my research were that my topic is quite complicated—there are many causes and effects—but there is not much information in the Internet about specific countries.)

While students are obviously frustrated, these answers demonstrate that they are making important progress in their growth as a Spanish researcher. The failure of expected successful search strategies as well as encountering the surprisingly limited visibility of Spanish information means that students are starting to recognize common pitfalls. In turn, this will help them develop a far more meaningful understanding of Spanish information landscapes. Interestingly, of all these challenges, student responses demonstrate that they struggle the most with the relative lack of academic sources. Accustomed to relying on databases as an indicator of credibility, students worry about using non-scholarly sources in their paper as well as the challenges of evaluating and integrating nontypical sources into their papers such as government websites, NGO reports, or social media. The discomfort that students feel working with this type of information also validates the decision to base the class around real world information environments.

At the same time, frustration forces the students to think more deeply about these problems and develop strategies to combat difficulties. One major strategy includes becoming more aware of keyword choices, especially the need to think about regional vocabulary:

Hay muchas diferencias entre países de america latina, así que cuando busco en español ahora sé que tengo que tomar en mente que la palabra que conozco tal vez no la usan en otro país y debería de buscar otro. (There are many differences between Latin American countries, so when I search in Spanish, I know that I have to take into

consideration that the word that I know may not be used in another country and I need to look for another.)

Another major strategy that students employ is rethinking their evaluation process, moving from trusting information because of its place of publication towards looking more critically at the concepts within the work:

Tengo confianza en información que yo encontré en otros fuentes. También, no estoy de acuerdo con un pedazo de informacion si no puedo encontrarlo en otros fuentes. (I trust information that I also find in other sources. Also I don't agree with a bit of information if I can't find it in other sources.)

At the same time, students acknowledge that their lack of cultural experience adds to their difficulties in working out how to trust information:

Creo que todo esta bien, porque busque cada hecho en varios fuentes para verificar. Como yo no estoy familiar con la Ciudad de México y no sé realmente que esta pasando estaba muy nerviosa que la información sería incorrecta. Algunas veces los periódicos daban información en conflicto, por eso era difícil saber la verdad. (I think it's ok because I have looked for each fact in several sources to verify. Because I am not familiar with Mexico City and I don't know really what is happening, I was nervous that the information would be incorrect. Sometimes newspapers give conflicting information, so it's hard to know the truth.)

In sum, these responses show that although students are challenged by the requirements of this class, they also start to develop sophisticated strategies to overcome these problems. This indicates that students are starting to demonstrate a growing sense of their own agency within information landscapes, for example, by evaluating information critically and independently. These habits will be particularly useful in the workplace and throughout their personal and professional lives. Answers also show that students are starting to develop a much

broader understanding of the Spanish information environment. However, this understanding goes beyond being able to name or navigate core tools in the field towards starting to reflect on differences between English, Spanish, and Latin American information realities, for example, concerning publication, access to information, and its availability in an Anglophone setting.

## ***End-of-Semester Survey***

By the end of semester, when the third survey was administered, responses show that students have developed a far more critical understanding of the Spanish information landscape. This can be seen in the increasingly sophisticated analysis that marks student reflections on the information environment and their research process. For instance, beyond recognizing differences in academic and popular publishing, students also reflected at length on web publishing and its role in giving voice to minorities:

Mucha de la gente, los pobres o los que no tienen acceso a educacion o tecnologia, no puede publicar sobre un tema. Sus historias son importantes pero ellos no tienen voces. La gente que puede publicar sobre un tema es la gente que normalmente tienen dinero y tiempo para acesar algunos recursos. Las voces de los profesores, y la gente academica estan incluidos, mientras las voces de los pobres estan excluidos. (Many people, the poor or those who don't have access to information or technology, can't publish on a topic. Their stories are important, but they don't have a voice. The people who can publish on a topic are the people who normally have money and time to access some resources. The voices of the teachers and academic people are included, while the voices of poor people are excluded)

At the same time, some students also recognize that access to technology is not enough and that information systems are sometimes stacked subtly against specific groups:

La gente excluido son la gente que no sabe las reglas de la academia o no entiendan las reglas. (The excluded

people are the people who don't know the rules of the academy or don't understand the rules.)

This increasingly sophisticated perspective is carried over into students' ability to evaluate information as they learn to critique sources in increasingly insightful ways.

- Es bien aceptar la información que ve en las noticias a un punto cierto, sin embargo, la gente debe que preguntar todo y ser crítico. (It's good to accept the information you see in the news up to a certain point; however, people should question everything and be critical.)
- Buscas por los dos lados de todas historias. (You look for the two sides of all the stories.)

The previous failure of the students' usual research process means that students have had to engage more fully with information instead of merely accepting sources because they were published in a librarian-approved source. This ensures that they have to think more deeply about how they work with information, which also provides them with valuable experience for IL practices beyond the academic sphere.

The final question in the reflective survey aimed to encapsulate the student's transcultural learning experiences by requiring students to move away from their native culture and demonstrate their understanding of research from an outsider's perspective.<sup>43</sup> Answers showed that, for the most part, students have developed an ability to see the world through another person's eyes while also remaining aware of their own identity, key aspects of transcultural competence. Key differences that students highlighted included comments about the relative visibility of English and Spanish information in knowledge and research systems:

Para mí, una investigación española requiere que uno busca más en el internet que los otras fuentes de información. (For me, Spanish research requires one to look more in the Internet than other sources of information.)

This can also be seen through the strategies that students recommend using to be successful in information environments:

Les diría que debieran usar sinónimos cuando buscan información. Por ejemplo, si les gustarian decir "casa"



en su busqueda, pueden tambien usar la palabra “hogar.” (I would tell that they should use synonyms when they look for information. For example, if they like to say “house” in their search, they can also use the word “home.”)

In this way, it is clear that by the end of the semester, students are far more comfortable with the research process. Their insightful analysis of information practices shows the students have developed a deeper knowing of Spanish information environments. The students’ ability to evaluate a wide range of sources demonstrates growing confidence in their agency within these environments. Lastly, student reflections on the differences between English and Spanish information environments show their capacity to think about the world in a different way, one of the primary goals of this class.

## Program Review

This program was established as a pilot in order to start to examine what a critical approach to IL could look like in the context of foreign language education. Accordingly, while student responses demonstrate that this approach had significant success, other aspects of the pilot did not accomplish their original aims. This section will attempt to analyze the reasons for this as well as outlining plans for the future.

Over the course of the semester, students developed a critical understanding of Spanish information environments. Three important factors can explain this success: the librarian-instructor partnership; the librarian-program integration; and the librarian’s push to think more broadly about Spanish information landscapes. The librarian-instructor partnership is one of the biggest reasons for the success of this course. Over a period of four years, the librarian and the instructor have worked together to design for and develop two language classes. This has led to the creation of a supportive relationship that encourages experimentation and research into teaching practices. Each of us pool expertise and experience developed from our own fields, which, combined with an openness to change, prove to be highly complementary for redesigning the class. More importantly, however, the success of the partnership can be linked to the shared premise that IL is the responsibility of both the librarian

and the instructor. In this way, research components of the course are designed collaboratively, and the instructor reinforces IL at key points throughout the class. This understanding has also supported the evolution of course goals and learning outcomes, in particular, the wish to slow down the research process and to focus on research in the real world.

Another reason that the partnership has been successful can be linked to the librarian and the instructor's attempts to understand each other's environment better. This is exemplified by the librarian's sharing of relevant literature with the instructor, for example, the accessible Project Information Literacy reports. At the same time, the librarian has also developed her understanding of the foreign language disciplinary context. Her participation in language pedagogy and technology workshops as well as reading more broadly about foreign language education has enabled her to develop a deep understanding of what constitutes IL in the field. This knowledge has allowed her to take a holistic approach to IL that adapts instruction to the disciplinary context rather than merely focusing on tools and resources.

While the establishment of a supportive relationship such as this may not be unusual in IL literature, the worth of this partnership should not be understated in the foreign languages. The traditional rigid divide between language and content courses in foreign language departments means that most foreign language support has been focused on upper-division literary courses taught by tenure track faculty rather than instructor or graduate student taught lower-division language courses.<sup>44</sup> However, as the 2007 MLA report points out, neither the one-sided focus on literary studies nor the two-tiered system of education is beneficial for foreign language students.<sup>45</sup> As the library also moves from serving as a warehouse of traditional scholarship to a focus on lifelong learning and inquiry, it is important that IL is not confined to traditional "content-based" foreign language courses. Instead, this chapter highlights the value of building IL instruction throughout the curriculum as well as the importance of reaching out to language instructors to fulfill this goal.

The librarian-programmatic integration is a second reason for the success of this course. While this chapter has focused on the SP3010 course, it is clear that this class would not have been as successful if the librarian had not worked extensively with Spanish majors at the SP3000 level too. The one-shot seminar format has been widely criticized within the library literature, yet demands of time and the curriculum as well as scalability issues mean that it remains a common feature of academic instruction. While the librarian is hopeful that

the close relationships that she has built up with the Spanish department may eventually result in the further redesign of Spanish research assignments and one-shot seminars, her in-person involvement in both SP3000 and SP3010 currently remains limited to one class session. Notwithstanding, she has worked with the Spanish department to maximize this contact time by mapping the curriculum and ensuring that she is integrated into the department's structure at the most appropriate points. This means that she can sequence and scaffold increasingly complex learning goals over the two courses while also ensuring that students can fulfill the mechanics of the assignment for each class. This approach also has the added benefit of forming a baseline for other advanced Spanish content classes.

Lastly, the success of this course can be linked to the librarian's ability to think beyond traditional IL literature and practices. The field of foreign language IL is relatively underdeveloped, perhaps due to the more typical focus on collection development. Literature that explores CIL went a long way to fill this gap. It is clear that CIL, with its focus on multiple ways of knowing, forms a useful approach for scaffolding foreign language learning goals of transcultural competence. However, beyond this literature, the author found that it was equally important to draw upon research in the field of critical Internet studies. While this type of research is rarely mentioned in LIS, it forms a vital part of investigation into the changing implications of information landscapes and knowledge societies in the digital, global age and proved to be highly influential on the librarian's thinking.

Although this class has been successful on a number of levels, the librarian encountered several challenges and problems that require future research or work. The reliance on the typical research assignment that forms the heart of the course is one such area that the librarian is working on changing. Often seen as a procedural exercise, the traditional research assignment does little to introduce students to the dynamic nature of inquiry in global knowledge societies. While librarians are starting to design alternative research assignments that focus on the research process as much as the product, their implementation requires a modification of course and support structures that may be intimidating for instructors.<sup>46</sup> In future, the librarian will continue to attempt to integrate more meaningful research assignments into these courses.

Within the class structure, the librarian plans to develop further components that look more closely at concepts of trust and source evaluation. Experience has showed her that students are often able to parrot lists of "approved" evaluative

criteria yet are often unable to put this knowledge into practice. Future iterations of the class will concentrate more explicitly on these topics. The librarian also hopes to continue revising the course structure. Designing, teaching, and writing about this class was not a comfortable process for the librarian. Through writing this chapter, she has finally come to terms with the positive yet out-of-control feeling that characterized her experiences in these classes. At the same time she also realized that she was too ambitious in the initial scope of the class, trying to do too much all at once. CIL is exciting, but the passion that it often engenders means that it can also be overwhelming. In addition, the relative lack of literature about the integration of CIL into the classroom means that any instructional approach has to be developed haphazardly or by trial and error. In future, while the librarian's interest and belief in this approach remains undiminished, she will endeavor to narrow the scope of the class to expand its impact. In this way she hopes to use these experiences to keep building on these promising beginnings, thereby enacting her own lifelong learning process.

## Conclusion

This chapter set out to explore what an IL program that focuses on preparing students for global knowledge societies could look like. Recognizing the unique realities of foreign language information landscapes as well as the need to integrate IL into the disciplinary context, the author explored how IL is constituted in Spanish knowledge societies. She then demonstrated how librarians, in conjunction with instructor and departmental goals, could draw from CIL literature to prepare students to act in rich multicultural information futures. Student responses over the semester demonstrated a growing awareness of how information works in Spanish contexts, moving from knowledge of specific sources to reflecting critically on broader differences between English and Spanish research.

While the chapter has focused on IL for foreign language students, it is clear that transcultural competence is a core goal of many institutions of higher or further education. As campus and workplace become more globalized, students must be able to function in multicultural societies. Accordingly, further research must be done to see whether the concepts outlined in this paper could be adapted to related IL programs such as those focused on international students, international affairs, or global studies. More research should also be done to

investigate whether these concepts could be adapted for bilingual societies, for example, in Canada or Wales. It is also unclear what effect this course has on students' familiar or everyday information practices, whether in Spanish or in English. Future research could endeavor to carry out in depth follow-up interviews in subsequent semesters to try and engage with these broader questions. This program forms one librarian's attempt to design IL around core goals of diversity and multiculturalism, and it is to be expected that this topic will only grow more important in the future.

At the same time, it is clear that traditional IL, with its focus on one way of knowing, cannot help students meet these goals. Instead, an approach that is based on CIL can create a more appropriate and meaningful experience. Yet, CIL cannot merely be adopted as a set of alternative ACRL standards. Instead, librarians need to work to develop their own critical consciousness before they can effect transformative change. This involves recognizing biases, beliefs, and privileged positions in the classroom. It also involves moving beyond the functional view of IL and of librarianship to re-professionalize our positions from the "de-skilled technician" who can be replaced by Google to the transformative intellectual who strives for educational advancement and personal transformation.<sup>47</sup> More succinctly, our teaching can no longer center on database demonstrations; our research can no longer just focus on library tools. IL is a core capacity for the digital age, and librarians, as critical information professionals, are ideally suited to scaffold these needs.

## Appendix 10A: Class Lesson Plan

In your group:

- Find a Spanish resource on the web and record it in this online form.
- As you work in your group, consider the following questions:
  - Search strategies
    - How did you find this resource? How did this differ from English searching?
    - What keywords did you choose?
    - When you were looking at the list of results, what type of resources did you find? What didn't you find?
    - Who can publish on a specific topic?
    - Who can't? And why?
    - What tips do you have for your classmates (e.g., a great webpage, search tip, etc.)?
  - Evaluation
    - Why did you choose that resource?
    - How did you evaluate the results?
- Find a Spanish resource on the library webpage and record it through this form.
- As you work in your group, consider the following questions:
  - Search strategies
    - How did you find this resource? How did this differ from English searching?
    - What keywords did you choose?
    - When you were looking at the list of results, what type of resources did you find? What didn't you find? How did this differ from the web search? Who can publish on a specific topic? Who can't? And why?
    - What tips do you have for your classmates (e.g., a great webpage, search tip, etc.)?
  - Evaluation
    - Why did you choose that resource?
    - How did you evaluate the results? Did this differ from your web search?
- On the whiteboard, build up a list of search strategies for the class and a list of criteria to evaluate resources.

# Appendix 10B: Reflective Surveys

## Survey 1

- What do you already know about your research topic?
- What do you need to know about your topic?
- Where might you discover this information?
- If you wanted to find information about, for example, solid waste in Guatemala, where would you look?
- When you use Google, how would you look for information in Spanish?

## Survey 2

- What changes did you make to your initial searches in order to improve results?
- What prompted you to make those changes?
- What are some of your research challenges? How have you dealt with them or what do you need help with?
- Thinking about the information sources you have found so far, what information do you trust? What causes you to disagree with a piece of information?

## Survey 3

- Who can publish on a specific issue? Who cannot and why? Whose voice is included/excluded?
- What information is trusted by society? Do you agree?
- What takeaways from this project or process will you use in your future career or studies?
- You have been offered a position teaching English in Costa Rica. You have two sessions to teach students who are about to study abroad how to conduct research in the US. What points will you emphasize, knowing what you know about the differences between Spanish and English research?

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