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# LILG 2019: Learning Information Literacy across the Globe

**Kirsten McCormick, Academic Librarian, Glasgow Caledonian University. Email: [Kirsten.mccormick@gcu.ac.uk](mailto:Kirsten.mccormick@gcu.ac.uk)  
Twitter: @KirstenMcCorm11**

You may have missed [Learning Information Literacy across the Globe 2019](#) (LILG) among the many fantastic learning and networking opportunities available on this year's conference calendar. It's certainly not one that was high on the radar among my own network but perhaps that's because this is not an annual conference but an output from an Erasmus+ funded project to develop a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) in information literacy (IL). [Project Information Literacy Online \(ILO\)](#) is due to complete in August this year and deliver the MOOC under open licence. This multiplier event was built in to the project plan to promote and disseminate the intellectual outputs. Hosted by one of seven partner Universities involved in the project, the conference took place on 10<sup>th</sup> May at the German Institute for Educational Research (DIPF) located in the stunning campus grounds of Goethe University in Frankfurt.

Other partner institutions are the universities of Barcelona (Spain), City University (London), Hildesheim (Germany), Ljubljana (Slovenia), Zada (Croatia), and Graz (Austria) in the coordinating role. Defining goals of the project include outputs that incorporate good practice in IL teaching; are aimed at HE students but accessible and reusable in other contexts; include self-assessment and are available in several European languages. This ambitious project has been running since 2016 and the timescale is reflective of a robust and selective literature review (Robinson & Bawden, 2018), technical challenges and content production for differentiated skill levels, languages and cultures (Libbrecht, Dreiseibner, Buchal, & Polzer, 2019).

Stefan Dreiseibner of Graz University delivered a keynote presentation and overview of the project from background and planning to structure and content. His obvious commitment to the project and enthusiasm for the benefits of the MOOC approach had the participants eager to explore the content and assess whether and how they might use it in their own environment. It is possible to register for a draft version of the course in English on the [ILO website](#) with localised versions scheduled for release later this year. Given the amount of resource that we dedicate to IL at my own institution I have myself registered and will work through the six modules to ascertain how they might fit with our current IL teaching.

The differentiated cultural facet of the MOOC will be of particular interest – there are existing multilingual IL MOOCs and digital resources but it is hard to identify any that accommodate the cultural challenges of expressing IL concepts. Personally, I've had a number of conversations with postgraduate students in the health disciplines that are fluent in English but really struggle with the concepts of phrase and Boolean searching in particular. It's difficult to know whether such difficulties are linguistic, digital, experiential or cultural, and indeed it could be any combination of these. Robinson & Bawden's (2018) review acknowledges these challenges and while the language outputs that are currently planned for the ILO MOOC don't match the linguistic profile of my own institution, the review has highlighted for me some essential reading in this area.

In fact, the papers that accompany the project may be as useful as the MOOC itself. The workflow paper (Libbrecht, Dreisiebner, Buchal, & Polzer, 2019) for example contains detailed information about the technical objectives and the tools and methods used to deliver the project. You can find links to all of the conference papers on the website (presentations, graphics and videos will be uploaded soon) and other papers associated with the project on the [ILO blog](#). Another valuable output from the project are the raw data files, including text, picture and [video content](#) which have been stored on GitLab and are available for re-use with a creative commons CC-BY-NC license.

Additional keynotes, parallel sessions and workshops were delivered on broader research and experience associated with IL and covering in particular: digital learning resources for IL, teaching IL within a disciplinary context and IL in connection with other literacy concepts. Jannica Heinström opened the morning with a keynote talk on emotional aspects of information literacy and how young people experience the everyday information environment. Jannica raised the question of whether (or not) we should build this in to our IL instruction. With young people's mental health high on the agenda at many European educational institutions this is probably an issue that we all should consider. As an opener this keynote declared a conference programme that would be filled with food for thought.

With regards to IL in connection with other literacy concepts, Trudi Jacobson and colleagues from the [Metaliteracy Learning Collaborative](#) delved deep into the nature of the pedagogical and skills challenges that emerging technologies present for traditional IL instruction. Defining metaliteracy as 'an overarching, self-referential, and comprehensive framework that informs other literacy types' (Mackey & Jacobson, 2011, p.62) and acknowledging the inadequacies of standard IL definitions for 'the revolutionary social technologies currently prevalent online' (p.63), the work of the collaborative has produced reading and resources that I will be compelled to explore much further.

Jan Schneider, postdoctoral researcher at DIPF, must take the prize for the most energetic presentation of the day. Focusing on digital tutoring using sensors to capture a learner's environment, physiological state and performance, Jan demonstrated the 'The presentation Trainer' – a digital tool developed to support public speaking. His captivating presentation style would suggest that techniques incorporated within the tool could indeed be very effective, especially the impressive manner with which he managed a minor technical hitch – we've all had them.

The concluding panel session brought together speakers from three continents and so provided a broad perspective on what we mean by information literacy but the discussions were by no means restricted to the familiar territory of definitions. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Andrew Whitworth, Director of Teaching and Learning Strategy at Manchester Institute of Education, provided a politicised contribution. In light of the fake news fallout from Brexit and leave voting statistics by age and education, he questioned whether some governments actually want a truly information literate populace and also whether the terminology itself is problematic.

I've only been able to provide a tiny snapshot here of a programme jam-packed with riches. Luckily ThinkPen were in attendance and have produced some lovely graphic recordings of the day and, alongside the full contents of the conference website, are licensed under Creative Commons 4.0 Attribution.

In the absence of ECIL this year, this was an unexpected opportunity to connect with the international IL community. There's nothing quite like exchanging experiences and learning with colleagues from across the globe to reignite passions for supporting fundamental literacies. It was also a great privilege to be welcomed onto the grounds of the very beautiful campus. Many thanks to Paul Libbrecht, Coordinator of technology based assessment, for taking the lead in

organising a very enjoyable event with an impressive range of informed and inspiring speakers.

## References

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