Evidence Based Library and Information Practice

Evidence Summary

Refugee Youth Leverage Social, Physical, and Digital Information to Enact Information Literacy

A Review of:
Lloyd, A., & Wilkinson, J. (2017). Tapping into the information landscape: Refugee youth enactment of information literacy in everyday spaces. *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*. Advance online publication. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0961000617709058

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Abstract

Objective – To describe the ways in which refugee youth use everyday information to support their learning.

Design – Photo voice technique, a process by which the population under consideration is provided with cameras and asked to visually document an aspect of their experience.

Setting – Social agency in New South Wales, Australia

Subjects – Fifteen 16-25 year old refugees resettled from South Sudan or Afghanistan

Methods – Three workshops were conducted. In the first, participants learned how to use the cameras and the protocols for participation. Between the first and second workshops, participants took several photographs of places, sources and types of information that were personally meaningful. In the second workshop, participants were first split into small groups to share and discuss the five images that they selected as their most important information sources and later reconvened as a large group in which participants again shared and discussed their images. In the third and final workshop, the authors shared their findings and analysis with the participants and invited discussion. The authors analyzed both photos and group

transcripts from the workshops using Charmaz's constant comparative method.

Main Results – Refugee youth use digital, vernacular, meditational, and visual literacies in everyday settings in to order to understand and create their new information landscapes. Information literacy enactment is agile and responsive to context.

Conclusion – Engaging with digital, vernacular, and visual information in a variety of contexts is central to how young refugees (re)form their information landscapes.

Commentary

This grant-funded paper continues the authors' previous work on refugee youth learning in everyday spaces (Lloyd & Wilkinson, 2016). Lloyd and Wilkinson are academics affiliated with Library and Information Science and Educational Leadership programs, respectively. Their collaborative research is situated within community informatics and not librarianship. The approach is interdisciplinary and much of the literature cited is from wide-ranging disciplines, including refugee studies and education. The authors noted a gap in the literature on how refugee youth interact with information and identified the work of Fisher, Yefimova, and Yafi (2016) is an exception; those authors studied how young refugees use information to help their own refugee community.

Lindsay Glynn's EBLIP Critical Appraisal Checklist (2006) provides questions that will be used to evaluate the methodology and reporting of this article. The study's small population of fifteen young refugees were recruited via local social agencies. Participants were excluded based on their facility with English language and comprehension; participants were asked to discuss the study details after having the study described to them. The authors indicated that the participants are from "Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds (CALD)" but do not provide further discussion of CALD. All participants reported their country

of origin as South Sudan or Afghanistan. The study was approved by the University ethics committee, but there is no description of the consent obtained.

Data collection methods were clearly described and the photo voice technique was especially appropriate considering that English was not the native language of study participants. The description of the second and third workshops lacked details, which would make this study difficult to replicate. It is unclear, for example, what role the authors played in both the large and small group sessions in workshop two. There was also no description of how the discussions in the third workshop informed the results or ensured accuracy.

The primary theme identified through analysis was "tapping in," or the ways to "recognize, locate and draw information from the host community or country" (Lloyd & Wilkinson, 2016). The findings section effectively quoted study participants to explain how they "tapped in" to various information sources. The article focuses on information behavior; the use of the phrase "information literacy" in the title might be misleading for librarians anticipating an article more closely related to the American Library Association definition of information literacy.

Many practitioners will not have the opportunity to work with or offer services to refugee youth. This article's positive contribution to the literature is the successful application of photo voice technique within information science. This methodology could be used to study and improve user experience design, among other library and information science applications.

References

Fisher K. E., Yefimova, K., &Yafi, E. (2016). 'Future's butterflies': Co-designing ICT wayfaring technology with refugee Syrian youth. In: *IDC '16: Proceedings of the 15th International ACM CHI Conference on Interaction Design and Children.* (pp.25–36). New York: ACM.

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