# "Information and Learning"

## Research at the Interface between Information Science and the Learning Sciences

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**Abstract**

What role does the form of information play in the way we learn? How relevant are the specific information-related behavioural patterns of different social groups or "knowledge cultures" to the didactic design of teaching and learning processes? The idea of this panel is to provide an opportunity to explore and discuss different ideas on the relevance of "Information" as the core category of information science and of research perspectives of information science to the context of teaching and learning processes. The goal is to encourage discourse and networking between scholars working at the hitherto neglected interface between information science and the learning sciences.

**Keywords:** information; learning; information didactics; learning sciences; information literacy; information-related behaviour; information behaviour research; information sociology; epistemic cultures

## 1    Introduction

While the analysis of information behaviour is a well-established research field in information science, the application of this research to the analysis and development of didactical processes is still fairly unusual within the dis-

cipline (Hobohm, 2015). But with the emerging relevance of the fostering of lifelong learning skills both within the educational process and (as a reaction to this) in the field of information literacy studies, this focus is developing into a matter of crucial importance within the information sciences. Alongside the increasing complexity of the information landscape as a result of digitalization and globalization there has been a corresponding increase in the relevance of the implementation of information literacy as part of teaching and learning processes (Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education, 2015).

Yet the transfer of knowledge between the information and learning sciences is rudimentary. "Information" has not yet been established as an independent category within existing didactic concepts and models (Ballod, 2007). Instead, concepts and methods for teaching and learning processes are based on the *content* to be transferred or (at least in Germany) on the *media form* (Kron, Jürgens & Standop, 2014: 25).

However, in order to benefit from teaching and learning methods beyond existing disciplinary boundaries, it is worth pursuing the analysis of the particular *forms of information* as well as the *practice of obtaining this information* within the different "epistemic cultures" (Knorr Cetina, 2002) for two reasons (Michel, 2016).

First, in order to be aware of discipline-specific differences within teaching and learning processes. Familiarity with the way each discipline typically approaches these concepts is fundamental to the design of study courses. However this particularly applies to those aiming to develop successful advisory and teaching resources in professional fields related to information practice since practitioners in these information-related fields do not usually share the same knowledge culture as their customers.

Second, to explore similarities which could be used not only to adapt and extend teaching and learning methods beyond existing disciplinary boundaries but also to develop interdisciplinary learning strategies. The increasing importance of complex interdisciplinary relationships between fields in our high tech environment (Langemeyer, 2015) underlines the urgent need for the further development of interdisciplinary learning strategies. This clearly indicates how much the learning sciences could profit from an analysis of the category "information" in relation to teaching and learning processes.

But how relevant is an analysis of the role played by information and "obtaining information" within learning processes for the information sciences themselves? First, this kind of research at the threshold of the information

sciences and learning sciences could potentially be further developed to provide adequate didactic models for practical information literacy teaching and learning processes, as stated above. Second, by extending the fundamental relevance of "information" (as a core category of the information sciences) to teaching and learning processes, a contribution could be made to the interdisciplinary profile of the information sciences. And thirdly, the very act of describing what is considered as "information" in the various knowledge culture branches and how the practice of "obtaining information" is organised offers empirical access to the widely discussed definition of the category "information" (cf. for example Hjorland, 2015).

## 2      Aim of the ad hoc panel

The goal of this panel is to encourage discourse and networking between scholars working at the hitherto neglected interface between information science and the learning sciences. This is the reason the event has been organised as an ad hoc panel. It means that there is as yet no definitive list of contributors. Scholars wishing to introduce and discuss their fields of interest in the form of a short presentation (approx. 15 min.) are invited to contact Antje Michel in advance (michel@fh-potsdam.de).

## 3      Panel organisation

1.  *Introduction* (20 minutes)
    Antje Michel will present the thematic focus of the workshop, explain general organisational details relating to the panel and introduce the participants. To make sure the audience's core areas of interest and expertise are fully integrated into the discussions a survey will be conducted during the introduction using an electronic voting system.
2.  *Panellist Presentations* (50 minutes)
    Each panellist will present his or her approach to the thematic focus of the panel in a short talk of 10–15 minutes. Immediately following the

talks there will be time for the audience to ask any short questions they may have on points of comprehension.

3. *Concluding discussion between panellists and audience* (20 minutes)
   The impulses generated by the presentations and the electronic voting results will be incorporated into a concluding discussion between all participants, in which the audience is invited to participate.

# 4    Potential thematic focus of the panel

The potential topics have been deliberately formulated as broadly as possible so as to maximise the accessibility of the new focus of the threshold between information sciences and learning sciences to existing potential research areas. The panel is an opportunity both to present completed or current research projects pertaining to the thematic focus and to define areas urgently needing research or develop new theories.

Potential fields of interest could include, but are not limited to:

- the role played by information search methods, processing and dissemination in learning and teaching processes
- didactic models and their use in the teaching of information literacy
- information behaviour patterns in different epistemic cultures and their relevance for teaching processes
- the role of information behaviour patterns in the development of (lifelong) learning skills

# 5    Panel chair

Antje Michel is Professor of Information Didactics and Knowledge Transfer at Potsdam University of Applied Sciences (FHP). The main focus of her research and teaching activity at FHP is on developing the new research field of information didactics, combined with the interdisciplinary integration of the related concepts and research results into academic teaching and knowledge transfer. She studied sociology at Göttingen University and the Freie

Universität in Berlin and was awarded a doctorate in sociology by the Freie Universität Berlin in 2003. After gaining a postgraduate qualification in academic librarianship she held posts at the Max Planck Digital Library and Munich University Library.

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