

Due to its interdisciplinary nature, the field of library and information science provides countless ways to attempt to understand both the world and the field itself. There have been longstanding debates within the field regarding what its underlying philosophy should be—social epistemology, critical consciousness, philosophy of information, structuralism and poststructuralism, or something else entirely (Nethercutt, 2023). While this debate is certainly important, what is more important when defining my philosophy of practice would be the understanding I have of my own personal professional identity, which both “provides an idea of how to behave while engaging in occupational work” and “creates a broader awareness of the professional’s role in society” (Burgess, 2016, p. 163). In other words, how do I translate my understanding of the world through the lens of library and information science into action.

As I’m currently pursuing positions at academic libraries, much of the occupational work that I’m hoping to accomplish is focused on strengthening information literacy skills among students currently attending institutions of higher education, providing subject area research assistance, creating LibGuides, and assisting in the promotion of scholarly communication and open access initiatives. All of these are in addition to numerous other responsibilities and tasks that I’m excited to learn and master. In my completion of all of these tasks and others, I’ll be adhering to not only the professional code of ethics as articulated by ALA and IFLA, but also my personal code of ethics by actively advocating for policies that promote, and personally demonstrating, values such as equity, inclusion, diversity, access, and compassion (IFLA, 2019; ALA, 2021).

Beyond just codes of ethics, however, one of the main reasons I’m entering the field of librarianship is because I owe a debt to the library as an institution. The acceptance of all members of their communities demonstrated by many practitioners in the field, and their

willingness to help make the community a better place has helped me through tremendously difficult times. I want to promote those same principles and intend to do so by building an inclusive environment by drawing on students' funds of knowledge to help teach critical metaliteracy skills, by using universal design learning and iterative design-thinking to increase access, and by assisting with the creation of interdisciplinary research projects that can make the world a better place (Bacon & Bayfield, 2019; Dale & Harlow, 2024; Johnson et al., 2021).

These are just the ideas related to occupational work, though, I also need to address my understanding of the "broader awareness of the professional's role in society" (ibid.). While being aware of the dangers of vocational awe in promoting unfair power systems, I do believe in the importance of the field of library and information science in things like strengthening democracy by addressing information disorders and promoting civic literacy (Yap et al., 2024). One of the reasons the field of library and information science is so important is because it recognizes the value of both stories and information. This makes the field especially valuable during the current political and epistemological crisis ongoing in the United States in addition to the ecological and technological polycrisis occurring globally.

It would be dangerously optimistic, bordering on naïveté, to think that library and information science will save the world, but I'm reminded of a story I heard involving science fiction author, Octavia Butler. After clarifying that she wasn't predicting the future, just looking at the problems that already existed and extrapolated, a student writing an article for the student newspaper asked her what the solution was. She told him, "There isn't one," before clarifying that she meant "there's no single answer that will solve all of our future problems. There's no magic bullet. Instead, there are thousands of answers—at least. You can be one of them if you choose to be" (Butler, 2000, p. 165). Library and information science is certainly not a magic

bullet, but my guiding principle is to choose to try to make my practice in the field be one of the thousands that will be necessary to try to solve problems both current and future.

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