

Talking about information ethics in higher education

by Toni Samek

Democratic societies need educated citizens who are steeped in more than workplace skills and the formal competencies of textual analysis. Henry Giroux

This article is a brief introduction to my experience bringing information ethics to the education table at the University of Alberta and beyond. The work is organized by a thematic chronology that begins with my development of a course on intellectual freedom and social responsibility in librarianship and follows how that act propelled me into explorations of information ethics, intercultural information ethics, global citizenship education, and the rights and responsibilities of academic freedom. I hope that some of my learning shared here and influenced by countless scholars, educators, students and activists (not mutually exclusively) will have meaning for the *Information for Social Change* readership. And because this paper is intended as a practical document, I have included in full text a variety of statements that might be instructive for readers to apply to their local contexts.

Within the circumstance of the North American library and information studies curriculum, in the academic year 2000-2001 I developed a graduate course titled *Intellectual Freedom and Social Responsibility in Librarianship*. It has since run annually, most recently in eClass format. The course holds an important place in the Master of Library and Information Studies (MLIS) curriculum housed in our faculties of graduate studies and research in the university setting, a teaching and learning space where the study of philosophy, ideology, and rhetoric should be as welcome as that of applied ethics. In the course, students individually and collectively analyze, evaluate, and articulate the complexities of intellectual freedom and of social responsibility as multi-dimensional and contested concepts; they consider theoretical frameworks for examining the library as part of a larger network of cultural production, regulation and ideology; they probe how the library and information studies discourse interplays with other discourses (e.g., law, cultural studies, political science, gender, business); they assess the status of professional issues and core values from multiple stakeholder perspectives (e.g., labour, union, and management); and, they negotiate the library and information professionals' roles in promoting and advocating for intellectual freedom and

social responsibility. These efforts often prompt student explorations of the professional lines drawn between advocacy and activism.

Instructor and student selected course topics are abundant. Recent threats to academic librarians and academic librarianship in Canada, for example, compelled me to add a new unit on academic freedom for academic librarians in winter 2009. Because the course draws on broad topics such as cultural production, access, and regulation (everyday subjects treated in the media), students can see immediate course relevance to their lives and labour. And as a result, student contributions have covered richly complex topics, such as 3M RFID contracted library services in the nuclear free city of Berkeley, California; deliberate destruction of cultural and intellectual property during war-time (including in Bosnia and Iraq); international debate of access to information in Cuban library/librarian context; and, information poverty, digital divide, and women's access to information about HIV in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The course and its aims find validation in prominent standards such as the American Library Association's *Core Competences of Librarianship* (applied in the MLIS accreditation process in North America). Despite encoded positions on the value of teaching and learning about intellectual freedom, free flow of information, public good, democratic frameworks, and social justice, counter pressures (including capitalist efficiency) are at play. These offsetting forces are largely what pushed me, as an educator, to explore the terrain of information ethics.

Information ethics is a cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural field concerned with ethical questions examining relationships in society among people, information, recorded knowledge, and the cultural record. The field exposes local, national, and international issues related to the "production, collection, interpretation, organization, preservation, storage, retrieval, dissemination, transformation and use of information" and ideas. (Capurro, Rafael and Hjørland, Birger (2003), *The Concept of Information*, *Annual Review of Information Science and Technology* 37, 389.) Contributions are drawn from disciplines as diverse as computer science, gender studies, law, business, cultural studies, human rights and social justice, and library and information studies. Teaching in information ethics can run a gamut of hot topics including knowledge economy, indigenous knowledge, cybernetic pluralism, post 9-11 surveillance, cognitive capitalism, imposed technologies, public access to government information, information rights, global tightening of information and border controls, and accelerated extinction of languages.

During the 2002-2003 academic year I joined the International Center for Information Ethics (ICIE) and added my course to its website as a Canadian contribution. In 2004, I was invited as one of two Canadians (the other Bernd Frohmann) to participate in the ICIE Symposium *Localizing the Internet: Ethical Issues in Intercultural Perspective*, October 4-6, in Karlsruhe, Germany. Volkswagen-Stiftung sponsored this event, which brought together face-to-face the fifty or so earliest members of ICIE. Participants came from many parts of the world. I presented on the subject of progressive librarianship. The direct feedback was very helpful as I ventured further into connecting my work in librarianship, human rights and social justice with the work of information ethicists who were interested in the concept of global citizenship.

Soon after my return to Canada, I delivered a paper titled *An Introduction to Librarianship for Human Rights* at the Educating for Human Rights and Global Citizenship: International

Conference hosted at the University of Alberta on November 12, 2004. Then and there I began to consciously ground my work in more global terms, creating more space for intercultural interpretations of local, national, and international library individuals and groups taking up human rights work related to information ethics (e.g., rights to: education; protection from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; freedom of thought, conscience and religion; and, freedom of opinion and expression). But while the information ethics crowd I met in Germany was sprinkled with library folks like me, I was the only person from library and information studies registered at the global citizenship conference. I quickly saw the opportunity to build fruitful scholar-activist connections.

I asked what is meant by the phrase *global citizenship*. And in the process I got involved with a scholar-activist group at the University of Alberta that has been taking up just that query in education and research. Collectively, we came to define global citizenship as "going beyond international awareness" and moving "towards an understanding and enactment of the rights and responsibilities each person has to contribute to an equitable, sustainable and just world." It is intended to signify "the transformation of national conceptions of citizenship to make space for inclusive and transnational ways for people to participate and make sense of who they are and the rights and obligations each has toward humanity and the environment. Further, it

involves processes of negotiating identities and effecting agency towards the realization of global interdependence that has emerged through globalization. These relationships and processes serve to both reflect and challenge existing social contracts, connecting citizens to one another.” (<http://www.iweek.ualberta.ca/nav02.cfm?nav02=91628&nav01=97262>)

Learning as I went, I next delivered a paper titled *Activism in the Context of Information Ethics* as a panelist for a session on international research and teaching in information ethics at the Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE) 2005 Annual Conference in Boston, Massachusetts on January 13, 2005. (The other panelists were Marti Smith, Toni Carbo, and Pnina Shachaf). While in Boston, I accepted the invitation of these like-minded colleagues to take a lead in helping to form an Information Ethics Special Interest Group (SIG) in ALISE. The SIG was soon formed and in my role as first Convenor of what quickly became the largest SIG in ALISE I gave a new paper titled *Information Ethics Positioning in LIS Teaching and Scholarship* at the next ALISE Conference in San Antonio, Texas on January 18, 2006. By that time I had proposed to our SIG members that we produce a position statement on information ethics in LIS education for ALISE. And with member support I began to tackle a first draft to share with the group for comment. When that draft was ready, we made our intention public, many of us seeking feedback wherever we could on the conference circuit. In Canada, for example, I sought constructive comment via a speech titled *Information Ethics Positioning in 21st Century Librarianship* that I gave at the annual Canadian Library Association conference in Ottawa in summer 2006.

With the special encouragement and support from ICIE founder Rafael Capurro and Paul Sturges (then chair of the Committee on the Free Access to Information and Freedom of Expression Committee (FAIFE) of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA)), the ALISE Information Ethics SIG was successful in producing the ALISE Information Ethics Special Interest Group Position Statement on Information Ethics in LIS Education. The Statement was ultimately ratified at the ALISE Business Meeting held on January 10, 2008. It is included in full text below:

ALISE Information Ethics Special Interest Group:

Position Statement on Information Ethics in LIS Education

Knowledge and understanding of pluralistic intercultural information ethical theories and concepts, including the ethical conflicts and responsibilities facing library and information professionals around the world, are necessary to relevant teaching, learning, and reflection in the field of library and information studies and information-related professions. Many important areas and issues^[i] currently facing library and information professionals can only be understood in light of their ethical contexts. Also, the contributions that library and information studies can make to knowledge societies can be significantly informed by their attention to information ethics.

As suggested by universal core values promoted by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions^[ii] and other professional organizations and world bodies^[iii] it is our responsibility to participate critically in the global discourse of information ethics, as it pertains to, at least, the following articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

- Respect for the dignity of human beings (Art. 1);
- Confidentiality (Art. 1, 2, 3, 6);
- Equality of opportunity (Art. 2, 7);
- Privacy (Art. 3, 12);
- Right to be protected from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (Art. 5);
- Right to own property (Art. 17);
- Right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Art. 18);
- Right to freedom of opinion and expression (Art. 19);
- Right to peaceful assembly and association (Art. 20);
- Right to economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for dignity and the free development of personality (Art. 22);
- Right to education (Art. 26);
- Right to participate in the cultural life of the community (Art. 27);
- Right to the protection of the moral and material interests concerning any scientific, literary or artistic production (Art. 27).^[iv]

The Information Ethics Special Interest Group of the Association for Library and Information Science Education strongly advocates that information ethics should be encouraged as an important aspect of education, research, scholarship, service, and practice in library and information studies and in other related professions. It therefore advocates that attention to information ethics (either through the curriculum, instructor expertise, resources, or symposia) be considered for development by library and information studies education programs. Schools of library and information studies are encouraged to implement this recommendation. The following suggestions are offered as ways to achieve the desired outcome of attention to information ethics in library and information studies education programs:

1. The curriculum should be informed by information ethics through a unit in the required foundations (or equivalent) course. This unit should appropriately include the following student objectives:

- to be able to recognize and articulate ethical conflicts in the information field;
- to inculcate a sense of responsibility with regard to the consequences of individual and collective interactions in the information field;
- to provide the foundations for intercultural dialogue through the recognition of different kinds of information cultures and values;
- to provide basic knowledge about ethical theories and concepts and about their relevance to everyday information work; and,
- to learn to reflect ethically and to think critically and to carry these abilities into their professional life.

2. One or more courses devoted specifically to information ethics should be offered on a periodic basis. To most effectively achieve the desired impact, such courses should be taught by a qualified member of the faculty and be based on international literatures from a diversity of viewpoints.

3. Information ethics should be included in study and discussion across the library and information curriculum. It should be infused throughout the curriculum in such areas as management, young adult services, information literacy training, and information-technology related courses.

4. There should be ongoing engagement with information ethics, as challenging questions and issues need to be revisited through the lenses of individuals, institutions, and societies.

Notes:

This position statement draws on content produced by the International Center for Information Ethics (ICIE) and on the structure of the Statement on History in Education for Library and Information Science by the Library History Round Table (LHRT) of the American Library Association (ALA).

In this document, the word "should" is used as an "aspirational statement." It is an expression of how a person or group might conduct themselves ethically rather than they are required to conduct themselves ethically. It does not impose a sanctionable requirement.

In this document, the first person plural pronouns refer to LIS practitioners and are therefore inclusive terms. It does not imply an endorsement by ALISE, the SIG, or other organizations. It infers a sense of LIS community

[i] Issues encompass such areas as: intellectual freedom; intellectual property; open access; preservation; balance in collections; fair use; post 9-11 surveillance; cultural destruction; censorship; cognitive capitalism; imposed technologies; public access to government information; privatization; information rights; academic freedom; workplace speech; systemic racism; international relations; impermanent access to purchased electronic records; general agreements on trade and services (GATS) and trade related aspects of intellectual property rights (TRIPS); serving the poor, homeless, and people living on fixed income; anonymity, privacy, and confidentiality; human security; national security policies; the global tightening of information and border controls; transborder data flow, and information poverty. Furthermore, relevant issues in print culture are challenged in digital culture.

[iii] IFLA's Core Values: (1) the endorsement of the principles of freedom of access to information, ideas and works of imagination and freedom of expression embodied in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; (2) the belief that people, communities and organizations need universal and equitable access to information, ideas and works of imagination for their social, educational, cultural, democratic and economic well-being; (3) the conviction that delivery of high quality library and information services helps guarantee that access; and, (4) the commitment to enable all Members of the Federation to engage in, and benefit from, its activities without regard to citizenship, disability, ethnic origin, gender, geographical location, language, political philosophy, race or religion. <http://www.ifla.org/III/intro00.htm>

[iii] See also statements from the American Library Association, the Canadian Library Association, the American Society for Information Science & Technology, the Canadian Association for Information Science, and the United Nations General Assembly 2005 World Summit.

[iv] Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>
(<http://www.alise.org/mc/page.do?sitePageId=58273>)

In the months intervening months the Position Statement submission to ALISE and its ratification by ALISE much related work was accomplished. Most notably, the African Information Ethics Conference on the theme *Ethical Challenges in the Information Age* was held in Pretoria, South Africa, February 5-7, 2007. It was organized by the University of Pretoria, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, USA, and the International Center for Information Ethics. I was the Canadian invitee, however I gave up my spot (which went to Bernd Frohmann) due to scheduling conflicts. Meanwhile, though, I paid close attention to how information ethics was being taken up in different cultural contexts - African and otherwise. Not coincidentally, the growing trend of internationalization in higher education prompted me to delve deeper into information ethics and the teaching of it. Internationalization of higher education, at its best, involves universities and higher education institutions and organizations from countries around the world in debate, reflection, and action on common concerns and policy development. This includes the intercultural exchange of information, experience and ideas, as well as the ethical mobility of students and staff. (<http://www.iau-aiu.net/internationalization/pdf/Internationalisation-en.pdf>)

But at its lowest operational level, internationalization of higher education is simply about the act or process of buying and selling education as product to international markets.

In August 2007, I joined the Canadian Association of University Teachers Academic (CAUT) Freedom and Tenure Committee (on which I still serve). What is meant by academic freedom? CAUT asserts that "academic freedom is the life blood of the modern university. It is the right to teach, learn, study and publish free of orthodoxy or threat of reprisal and discrimination. It includes the right to criticize the university and the right to participate in its governance. Tenure provides a foundation for academic freedom by ensuring that academic staff cannot be dismissed without just cause and rigorous due process." (<http://www.caut.ca/pages.asp?page=140>) From this activist base I developed a new understanding of collegiality, namely that is not about civility but rather participation – as indicated below:

[CAUT Policy Statement on Collegiality](#)

Collegiality refers to the participation of academic staff in academic governance structures. Collegiality does not mean congeniality or civility, it means the participation in the governance of the collegium.

To be collegial, academic governance must:

- (a) allow for the expression of a diversity of views and opinions,
- (b) protect participants so that no individual is given inappropriate advantage (for example, due to power differentials) with respect to decisions, and
- (c) ensure inclusiveness so that all who should be participating are provided the opportunity to do so.

Collegial governance depends on participants being given and delivering their share of the service workload.

Approved by the CAUT Council, November 2005.

(<http://www.caut.ca/pages.asp?page=456&lang=1>)

I used my newfound knowledge to talk on campus (and elsewhere) about the important ethic embedded in the CAUT Policy Statement on International Students, approved by the CAUT Council, November 2008. Key excerpts are as follows:

- 1 The purposes of recruiting international students to Canadian universities and colleges should be to foster the international exchange and development of knowledge, promote cultural diversity and understanding, enrich the educational experience of students and academic staff, and facilitate international cooperation and development.
- 2 There should be no discrimination against international students on any grounds including race, creed, colour, ancestry, citizenship, ethnic or national origin, political or

religious affiliation, belief or practice, sex, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, family relationship and responsibility, personal or social lifestyle or behaviour, or age.

3 The recruitment of international students should not be motivated by financial gain. No differential fees should be applied to international students. Further Canadian universities and colleges should not enter into agreements with for-profit corporations to recruit and enroll international students into their private for-profit colleges.

4 Admission to universities and colleges in Canada should be based on criteria and judgment of academics.

(<http://www.caut.ca/pages.asp?page=279&lang=1>)

My ongoing work in information ethics blended well with my rising voice on internationalization. And I was invited to join the newly formed University of Alberta Global Citizenship Curriculum Development project (and its Working Group) in 2007. This is a joint initiative of the University of Alberta International and Faculty of Education (specifically the International Office and the Center for Global Citizenship Education and Research). A lot of our initial work has been to draw a distinction between internationalization and global citizenship, so that the two concepts are not reductively conflated. Our core work is described below:

University of Alberta Global Citizenship Curriculum Development Project Position Statement

Over the past three years, we have conducted extensive research to find out how students, Faculty and administrators understand global citizenship and what kinds of curricula would support this understanding. In conjunction with our literature review and consultation with the Working Group and Advisory Group, we have surfaced the following guiding concepts and terminology to carry this work forward.

Guiding Concepts/Terminology

What do we mean by global citizenship? Global citizenship goes beyond international awareness and moves towards an understanding and enactment of the rights and responsibilities each person has to contribute to an equitable, sustainable and just world. It signifies the transformation of national conceptions of citizenship to make space for inclusive and transnational ways for people to participate and make sense of who they are and the rights and obligations each has toward humanity and the environment. Further, it involves processes of negotiating identities and effecting agency towards the realization of global interdependence that has emerged through globalization. These relationships and

processes serve to both reflect and challenge existing social contracts, connecting citizens to one another.

What do we mean by global citizenship education (GCE)? Global citizenship education is a response to the need to rethink the role of individuals and communities within the context of global social, economic and political relations including differences and inequities. GCE goes beyond a knowledge base of global issues, and includes knowledge of how to reflexively understand and interact with those issues. It is a broad based systemic approach to learning, which extends disciplines, demands critical thinking, deep engagement, and the generation of creative and socially just approaches to understanding the complex questions of the contemporary global context.

Global citizenship education involves linking local and global issues and perspectives and may include such topics as human rights, social justice, and citizenship education, sustainable development, and globalization. It engages all levels of students in a study of the global challenges and achievements based on a common humanity, a shared planet, and a shared future.

Guiding Values Include:

- Commitment to equity, diversity and social justice
- Reciprocity, respectful recognition, mutual exchange
- Universal access, enfranchisement and agency

Global Citizenship Education Foci:

- Focuses on rights and responsibilities of citizenship and the local and global implications for these
- Teaches about diversity- including bio-diversity, economic diversity, political diversity, and human diversity (including race, gender, class, sexual orientation, ability, culture and religion) with the understanding that diversity is necessary for life
- Focuses on active global citizenship, whereby students are not only aware of their rights, but are able and eager to act upon their agency
- Presents multiple perspectives including respect for multiple knowledge systems (for example, indigenous) as well as multiple historical perspectives

Global Citizenship Education Practices:

Practices necessary for global citizenship education include, but are not limited to the following:

Ability to think critically and reflexively about one's own place in the world

Understanding that we share a common humanity and shared planet

Ability to act for the common good with regard for local and global consequences

(<http://www.iweek.ualberta.ca/nav02.cfm?nav02=91628&nav01=97262>)

Coincidentally (or not) in the fall of 2007, I was named the surprise winner of the debut *Library Journal* Teaching Award – a result of my fusion of librarianship and human rights in my teachings. This recognition of the politics in information work prompted one negative talkback/feedback comment to *Library Journal* that I preach, not teach. Of course, this further fuelled my schooling in academic freedom. Because I could see how scholar activism is contested on some of our campuses despite the acceptance of public intellectualism in our communities. I have been told since that I am a responsible educator for giving attention to such topics as unions, strikes, lockouts, and protests in my library teachings. I have also been told that my teaching is radicalization of students. (To be fair, how often is workplace speech taught at library school – from any point of view?)

Like my favourite educators (Henry Giroux at the top of my list) I have always subscribed to the idea that education is intended to provoke. My teaching and learning in information ethics and global citizenship at the University of Alberta (Canada) has become an ongoing and deep immersion in the rights and responsibilities of academic freedom. For one thing, it has prompted me to speak about the dangerous praxis and areas of tension in the internationalization of higher education. In so doing, academic freedom is by far the most singularly important teaching tool I use to explore such urgent topics as a climate of regulation exemplified by new campus behaviour codes and respectful workplace policies that fuel culture wars by promoting the idea of one voice and even one tone; self-censorship and fear of controversy - “the chill”; security costs required to sustain free speech on campus; politicized context of tenure cases emergent in the USA (e.g. in Israel Palestine studies); expectation of loyalty to administrative leadership, cabinet solidarity, management rights or commitment to a team by administrators; external pressures (e.g., government) on universities; and, intolerance of challenge and critique that is embedded in ubiquitous misinformation about the meaning of “collegiality” in academic context. Perhaps most importantly, I began to address the global contingent worker model because of how the causalization of the teaching workforce in higher education is severely limiting academic freedom.

To these ends, I delivered a lecture titled *Appropriating Re-imagining the University to the Advantage of Global Citizenship Education* at our group’s first conference – the Global Citizenship Education Conference, sponsored by University of Alberta

International, and held in Edmonton, Alberta on October 25, 2008. Here I began to more publicly engage in discussion of many ethical issues arising from the interplay that information and communication technologies have on the world's cultures and how these were coming into local, national and global discussions. I was able to share how ICIE (and other) scholars interested in these interplays were introducing intercultural information ethics to discourse and literature – new spaces “where the cultural presuppositions of the world's cultures are seen as an important factor in consideration of ethical theorization and the search for ethical guide-lines.” (http://www.i-r-i-e.net/call_for_papers.htm) By example, a recent call for papers in intercultural information ethics by the *International Review of Information Ethics* (the journal of ICIE) lays out the area of study nicely. It called for papers that pose the following questions: “How are we to come to terms with the age-old philosophical problem of universalism and particularism? In other words, are values embedded in the use of information and communication technologies culture specific or are they universal? Or are there some values that are specific to time, place and culture, and are there some others that are more universal? Does the term ‘universal’ admit of degree, so that one can be more ‘universal’ than another? Other theoretical formulations are also needed. As the various parts of the world are undoubtedly being bound together more tightly, one part can certainly learn from others. Thus [we are seeking] papers that investigate how, for example, Confucianism or Buddhism, or any other ancient tradition, could provide novel insights into intercultural information ethics. ... We also invite the investigation of “cultural res-ponses to new technologies, such as robotics, nanotechnology, human cognitive and physical en-hancement technologies, bioinformatics, and so on. These technologies depend on information in one way or another and they are making their presence known very forcefully, thus accentuating a need for consideration of their social and ethical impact on the world's cultures. Hence, a paper that focuses, say, on the Japanese attitude on robotic technology and compares that to the attitudes of the Europeans or Americans, suggesting how both could learn from the other in terms of ethics and how we human beings should view the emerging autonomous robots would be interesting. But of course papers that deal with other technologies and focus on other cultural traditions would be appropriate too.” (http://www.i-r-i-e.net/call_for_papers.htm)

I next spoke in this area at the University of Alberta on November 17, 2008 on a panel titled *Internationalization and the University*. I was one of five speakers in this

interactive seminar hosted by the Faculty of Education who presented their views on what drives internationalization, what we do in the name of internationalization, and what key issues need to be considered when we engage in internationalization. (My co-panelists were Lynette Shultz, Markku Jahnukainen, David Smith, and, Anna Kirova). Each of us were outspoken about the need for more mutuality in internationalization and the problem of scholars at risk. I contextualized my words to underscore new and emergent threats to academic freedom.

At the August 2009 meetings of the Canadian Association of University Teachers Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee , CAUT Executive Director Jim Turk indicated that the three top academic freedom issues of the year were: (1) new civility codes appearing on our campuses, (2) custody and control of records (e.g. email), and (3) systematic attacks on academic librarians and librarianship. As I shared with my colleagues at those August meetings, this tripartite cannot be seen as a coincidence. Academic librarians, with their ethic of intellectual freedom and their relevant education and experience, should be understood to be key academics on campus to consult about both the relationships between civility, academic freedom, and intellectual freedom, as well as about records management, privacy, confidentiality, and access to information. How ironic it is that our campus librarians should be devalued just at the time when these issues are rising to the surface of university life and labour. These are the kinds of concerns that I have been speaking to regularly in my service on the University of Alberta Global Citizenship Curriculum Development Committee. Because to support such educational initiatives in the academy, academic freedom and a free flow of information surface as paramount conditions for success. This is an important time to understanding of information ethics to the broader teaching table.

I went on to give a paper titled *Academic Freedom as a Condition for Global Citizenship Education* for the University Teaching Services (UTS) at the University of Alberta on October 15, 2009. I followed this with a national keynote address titled *Academic Freedom and the Responsibility of Librarianship* at the CAUT Librarians Conference on the theme Negotiating for Parity: Closing the Librarian/Faculty Gap in Ottawa on October 23, 2009. I have kept up such work with more recent presentations like *Revolutionary Librarians: The Global Information Justice Movement* (for the University of Alberta International Week on February 3, 2010) and *Dangerous Praxis in Citizenship Education Panel*, with Mojtaba Mahdavi and Kent den Heyer for the Centre for Global Citizenship Education and Research on March 9, 2010. In spring 2010, the Faculty

of Education officially launched its new Centre for Global Citizenship Education and Research (CGCER). I was invited to serve as a Research Fellow and Advisory member. This is a very exciting venue for me to help foster interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary dialogue about how global information ethics fuses so well with global citizenship education. (A good example is Marti Smith's groundbreaking work on global information justice.)

I am also engaged in activism around workplace speech for library workers, which I spoke about in my Endnote Address titled Expressiveness Within One Voice: Establishing Equity and Diversity in Library Culture at the Saskatchewan Library Association Conference in Regina on May 8, 2010. This speech highlighted the importance of not confusing constructive engagement with obstructiveness in the library workplace, especially in an age of global market fundamentalism. Our library labour voices, I urged, are highly valuable on any number of broad social issues (e.g., copyright and concerns over anti-circumvention, limits to fair use, personal liability; constraints on public domain; wireless policies and concerns over filters; removal of database content by publishers; access to government records; assistive technologies for equitable access to information for peoples with disabilities; provision and protection of public sphere space for free speech; advocacy on Trade agreements, GATS, WTO, trade investment and labour mobility; and, disinformation, missing information, media manipulation; destruction and excision of public information).

This brings me up to the present, where I am currently pondering a profound piece of writing, "Making Democracy Matter: Academic Labor in Dark Times" by Henry Giroux. I share now an excerpt from that work in order to bring close to this article with some overarching lesson. Giroux asserts: "Understanding higher education as a democratic public sphere means fully recognizing the purpose and meaning of education and the role of academic labor, which assumes among its basic goals promoting the wellbeing of students, a goal that far exceeds the oft-stated mandate of either preparing students for the workforce or engaging in a rigorous search for the truth. Harnessed to the demands of corporate and military interests, higher education has increasingly abandoned even the pretense of promoting democratic ideals. The needs of corporations and the warfare state now define the nature of research, the role of faculty, the structure of university governance, and the type of education offered to students. As federal and state funding for higher education is cut, universities are under more pressure to turn to corporate and military resources to keep them afloat. Such partnerships betray a more instrumental

and mercenary assignment for higher education, a role that undermines a free flow of information, dialogue and dissent. When faculty assume, in this context, their civic responsibility to educate students to think critically, act with conviction, learn how to make power and authority accountable, and connect what they learn in classrooms to important social issues in the larger society, they are often denounced for politicizing their classrooms and for violating professional codes of conduct, or worse, labelled as unpatriotic. In some case, the risk of connecting what they teach to the imperative to expand the capacities of students to be both critical and socially engaged may cost academics their jobs, especially when they make visible the workings of power, injustice, human misery, and the alterable nature of the social order.”

(<http://www.counterpunch.org/giroux03112009.html>)

For these well –stated reasons, I have found it very necessary to talk about information ethics. I invite you to join me in the conversation – if you have not already!

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