The New Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education

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Students’ experience of research
Describe students’ research skills in one sentence

(photo courtesy of UCD School of Medicine)
Learners in Today’s Info Environment

- Students are overwhelmed, uncertain about “starting points” for academic research
- Students often do not understand the nature and scope of academic research assignments
- Students report being confused about the “open-endedness” of the research process—how to know when to conclude an assignment without precise instructions?

Learners in Today’s Info Environment

- Students use “tried and true” tools and resources (Google, Wikipedia, a small set of databases)
- Students may not expand their repertoire because of familiar assignment types (standard research paper)
- Students carry over to college many of their high school routines and practices for research

Learners in Today’s Info Environment

Context

The single most important missing element for today’s learners in becoming information literate

- **The “Big Picture”** (summary, background, overview)
- **Information Gathering** (finding and securing relevant sources)
- **Language** (understanding the meaning of words)
- **Situational** (knowing the expectations of assignments, the surrounding circumstances)

The Framework
From Standards to Framework

Determine extent of information need

Access/Search

Evaluate

Use/apply

Consider ethical/legal/social issues

Scholarship

Inquiry

Searching

Authority

Information Creation
Thinking about a New Way of Framing Information Literacy

- Focus on the information landscape or ecosystem
- Help students to understand the “why”
- Transcend particular skills and resources
- Focus on the human processes of knowledge creation, searching, reporting, writing, presenting instead of just the artifacts of these processes
Publishers

Community organizations, experts

Copyright

Peer review

Search Engines

Social Media

Open Access

Repositories

Databases

Books, Journals, Papers

Scholarly practices

OERs

Media organizations
Publishers

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Media organizations
Goals for the Framework

- A flexible system of learning information literacy concepts that can be tailored to individual settings

- Recognizes the participatory, collaborative information environment: learners as content/knowledge creators, not just consumers

(Mackey and Jacobson, “Reframing Information Literacy as a Metaliteracy,” C & RL, 72 (1) 2011, pp. 62-78)
Goals for the Framework

• Importance of metacognition (thinking about one’s own thinking)
  (Mackey and Jacobson, “Reframing Information Literacy as a Metaliteracy,” *C & RL*, 72 (1) 2011, pp. 62-78)

• Recognition of affective factors (dispositions/habits of mind)
Major Elements of the Framework

Frame

- Habits of mind
- Dispositions
- Knowledge Practices
- Threshold Concepts

Behaviors demonstrating understanding

Underpinning ideas
Threshold Concepts

http://www.organicgardening.com/learn-and-grow/design-pro-thresholds-passages
Threshold Concepts

• Early decision to use as the underpinning of the new Framework

• Based on work emanating from the United Kingdom: Meyer and Land, economics

• For information literacy, work by Townsend, Hofer, Brunetti and Lu
Threshold Concepts

- A passage through a portal or gateway: gaining a new view of a subject landscape
- Involve a “rite of passage” to a new level of understanding: a crucial transition
- Require movement through a “liminal” space which is challenging, unsettling, disturbing—where the student may become “stuck”
The Liminal State

The novice, beginner, initiate, apprentice

Confusion, Anxiety, Uncertainty

Difficult ideas
Counterintuitive ideas
New vocabulary
Unfamiliar ways of thinking

Transformation, Integration, Shift in perspective
Learner Progression for a Threshold

Initial State

Basic (mis)Understanding

Through continued exposure in courses or other experience

Progression toward more sophisticated understanding

Via librarian, professor, or experience

Over the threshold

Traversing the threshold

Through continued exposure in courses or other experience
Threshold Concepts

Transformative

Integrative

Irreversible

Bounded

Troublesome

Hofer, Townsend, and Brunetti, 2012, 387-88, quoting Meyer and Land
## Threshold Concepts in Disciplines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Concept</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geology</td>
<td>the scale of geologic time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>opportunity cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounting</td>
<td>depreciation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>no unitary account of the past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing/rhetoric studies</td>
<td>audience, purpose, situated practice, genre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>photosynthesis</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Threshold Concepts for IL

- Authority is Constructed and Contextual
- Information Creation as a Process
- Information Has Value
- Research as Inquiry
- Scholarship as Conversation
- Searching as Strategic Exploration

The concepts were identified through an ongoing Delphi study being conducted by L. Townsend, A. R. Hofer, S. Lu, and K. Brunetti, though the Task Force took some of them in new directions.
Research as Inquiry

Scholarship as Conversation

Authority is Constructed and Contextual
Frame: AUTHORITY IS CONSTRUCTED and CONTEXTUAL

Information resources reflect their creators’ expertise and credibility, and are evaluated based on the information need and the context in which the information will be used. Authority is constructed in that various communities may recognize different types of authority. It is contextual in that the information need may help to determine the level of authority required.
AUTHORITY IS CONSTRUCTED and CONTEXTUAL

Knowledge Practices

Learners who are developing their information literate abilities do the following:

• Define different types of authority, such as subject expertise (e.g., scholarship), societal position (e.g., public office or title), or special experience (e.g., participating in a historic event).

• Use research tools and indicators of authority to determine the credibility of sources, understanding the elements that might temper this credibility.

• Understand that many disciplines have acknowledged authorities in the sense of well-known scholars and publications that are widely considered “standard”. Even in those situations, some scholars would challenge the authority of those sources.
AUTHORITY IS CONSTRUCTED and CONTEXTUAL

Dispositions

Learners who are developing their information literate abilities are:

• Inclined to develop and maintain an open mind when encountering varied and sometimes conflicting perspectives.

• Motivated to find authoritative sources, recognizing that authority may be conferred or manifested in unexpected ways.

• Aware of the importance of assessing content with a skeptical stance with a self-awareness of their own biases and worldview.
Another, similar, Model . . .
Backward Design (Wiggins & McTighe)

3 Stages of ("Backward") Design

1. Identify desired results
2. Determine acceptable evidence
3. Plan learning experiences & instruction

- Worth being familiar with
- Important to know and do
- Enduring understanding
Potential of the Framework
Curriculum Design Considerations

- Want students to stay in liminal state long enough to learn (B. Fister)
- Design with your colleagues who teach
- Work with faculty to develop assignments
- Position frames strategically across the curriculum
- Align threshold concepts with learning outcomes (or create new learning outcomes)
Curriculum Design Considerations

- Design learning activities or lessons around threshold concepts
- Allow for confusion and uncertainty
- Revisit the concept more than once
- Revise learning outcomes if necessary

Curricular Positioning

Scholarship as a Conversation

- Synthesis or Capstone Courses
- Research Methods or Writing Intensive Courses
- Freshman Inquiry Courses
Co-Curricular Positioning

Courses in Major

Field Experience
- Research as Inquiry
- Searching as Exploration

Service Learning
- Authority is Constructed and Contextual
- Information Creation is a Process

International internships
- Information Has Value
- Scholarship as Conversation
Starting to Think about Assessment

Megan Oakleaf

“A Roadmap for Assessing Student Learning Using the New Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education”

http://meganoakleaf.info/framework.pdf
Learning Outcomes

Write learning outcomes (ideally, locally)

Follow precepts of the Understanding by Design Model (Wiggins and McTighe, 2005), in which outcomes drive the design of pedagogy and assessment
Ideas from the Roadmap

Oakleaf cites Meyer and Land (2010):

Need to avoid assessments that allow mimicry

Rather, declarative approach where students represent their knowledge, such as concept maps, portfolios, logs, blogs, diaries
Intermediate Thinking Processes

Blogs, digital stories, video documentaries, posters, journals, wikis, LMS discussion boards, interviews with experts → E-Portfolios → Digital Badging

Authentic tasks

Collections of evidence

Moving Forward

- Encourage conversations/educational efforts amongst librarians who teach
- Start conversations with faculty AND students
- Find key allies in administration
- Enlist support from teaching and learning centers
- Develop communities of practice
- Don’t hesitate to try out what you’ve created/heard today
Lingering thoughts or questions?
Resources not already cited

ACRL Framework website http://acrl.ala.org/ilstandards/

