Creating an Interdisciplinary Community of Practice for Teaching Subject Librarians around the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy

Michigan State University
LIBRARIES

Who we are

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During this session we will ...

- ➔ Introduce a collaborative approach for discussing the Framework
- ➔ Apply the Framework to the unique disciplines
- ➔ Identify disciplinary threshold concepts
- ➔ Discuss how the Framework can work together with threshold concepts
- ➔ Share key takeaways from working in a community of practice

Instruction Community of Practice at MSU Libraries

- Designed for librarians with an interest in teaching and learning who want to strengthen their foundations of learning theory and instructional design to support effective instruction and liaison practices
- First cohort offered September 2014-May 2015
- Held monthly 2-hour meetings
- Nine members of the cohort from a variety of disciplines
- Members had a wide range of teaching experience, from novice to 10+ years
- COP alumni welcome to assist with future cohorts to build a robust community of experts

ACRL Framework for Information Literacy

New Framework
Theoretical background

- Threshold concepts
- Metaliteracy
- Knowledge practices (or abilities) and dispositions

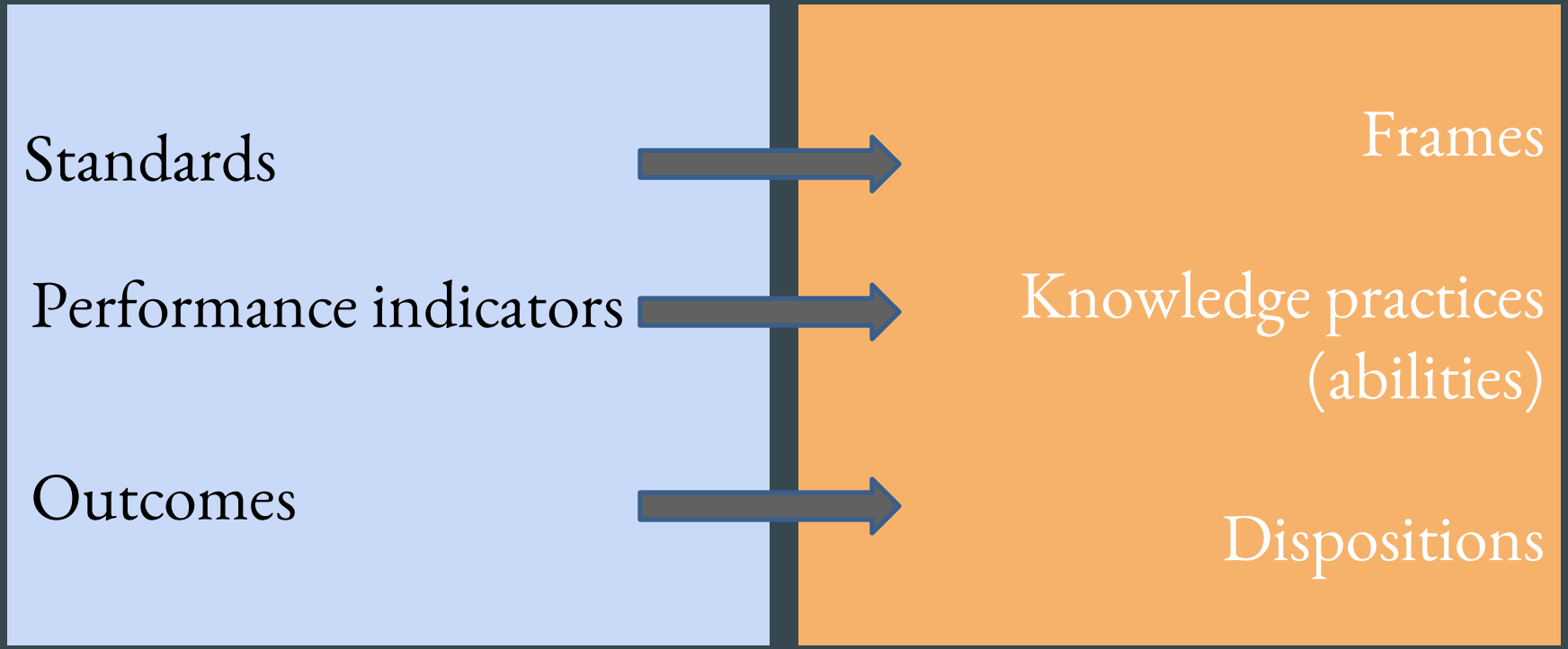
https://www.flickr.com/photos/jurvetson/992509245/

IL Redefined

Information literacy is a set of abilities requiring individuals to "recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information." [1]

Information literacy is a repertoire of understandings, practices, and dispositions focused on flexible engagement with the information ecosystem, underpinned by critical self-reflection. The repertoire involves finding, evaluating, interpreting, managing, and using information to answer questions and develop new ones; and creating new knowledge through ethical participation in communities of learning, scholarship, and practice. [2]

Structural differences



Scholarship is a Conversation

Information Creation as a Process

Research as Inquiry

Searching as Exploration

Authority is Constructed and Contextual

Information has Value

Scholarship is a Conversation

- Scholarship is a conversation refers to the idea of sustained discourse within a community of scholars or thinkers, with new insights and discoveries occurring over time as a result of competing perspectives and interpretations.

  – Knowledge practices (abilities):

Identify the contribution that particular articles, books, and other scholarly pieces make to disciplinary knowledge.

  – Dispositions:

See themselves as contributors to scholarship rather than only consumers of it.

Frames taken from February 2015, ACRL Framework

Research as Inquiry

- Research as Inquiry refers to an understanding that research is iterative and depends upon asking increasingly complex questions whose answers develop new questions or lines of inquiry in any field.

  - Knowledge practices (abilities):

Provide evidence of understanding that methods of research leading to new knowledge creation vary by need, circumstance, and type of inquiry.

  - Dispositions:

Value intellectual curiosity in developing questions and learning new investigative methods.

Authority is Constructed and Contextual

- Authority of information resources depends upon the resources' origins, the information need, and the context in which the information will be used. This authority is viewed with an attitude of informed skepticism and an openness to new perspectives, additional voices, and changes in schools of thought.

  - Knowledge practices (abilities):

  Identify markers of authority when engaging with information, understanding the elements that might temper that authority.

  - Dispositions:

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

Information Creation as a Process

- Information in any format is produced to convey a message and is shared via a selected delivery method. The iterative processes of researching, creating, revising, and disseminating information vary, and the resulting product reflects these differences.

  - Knowledge practices (abilities):

Recognize that different creation processes result in the presence of distinct attributes.

  - Dispositions:

Are inclined to seek out markers for information sources that indicate the underlying creation process.

Searching as Exploration

- Locating information requires a combination of inquiry, discovery, and serendipity. There is no one size fits all source to find the needed information. Information discovery is nonlinear and iterative, requiring the use of a broad range of information sources and flexibility to pursuit alternate avenues as new understanding is developed.

  - Knowledge practices (abilities):

Demonstrate the importance of matching information needs and search strategies to appropriate search tools.

  - Dispositions:

Show through their searching that they value persistence, adaptability, and flexibility.

Information has Value

- Information has Value acknowledges that the creation of information and products derived from information requires a commitment of time, original thought, and resources that need to be respected by those seeking to use these products, or create their own based on the work of others. In addition, information may be valued more or less highly based on its creator, its audience/consumer, or its message.

  - Knowledge practices (abilities):

Articulate the purpose and distinguishing characteristics of copyright, open access, and public domain.

  - Dispositions:

See themselves as contributors to the information marketplace rather than only consumers of it.

Framework Activity

Threshold Concepts

Threshold concepts are ...

Transformative

Once understood, a threshold concept changes the way in which the student views the discipline.

Troublesome

Threshold concepts are likely to be troublesome for the student. Perkins [1999, 2006] has suggested that knowledge can be troublesome e.g. when it is counter-intuitive, alien or seemingly incoherent.

Irreversible

Given their transformative potential, threshold concepts are also likely to be irreversible, i.e. they are difficult to unlearn.

Integrative

Threshold concepts, once learned, are likely to bring together different aspects of the subject that previously did not appear, to the student, to be related.

Bounded

A threshold concept will probably delineate a particular conceptual space, serving a specific and limited purpose.

Liminal

Meyer and Land have likened the crossing of the pedagogic threshold to a 'rite of passage' (drawing on the ethnographical studies of Gennep and Turner in which a transitional or liminal space has to be traversed

Flanagan, M. (2015) Threshold Concepts: Undergraduate Teaching, Postgraduate Training and Professional Development : A short introduction and bibliography (http://www.ee.ucl.ac.uk/~mflanaga/thresholds.html)

Threshold Concepts

Examples

in disciplines

physics: heat transfer, gravity

chemistry: atomic structure, phase equilibria

mathematics: complex numbers, linearity

economics: opportunity cost, elasticity

history: narrative and fact, sources

structural engineering: governing mode of failure

political science: sovereignty, the state

biology: adaptation, variation

law: precedent, *ratio/obiter*

medicine: clinical reasoning, professionalism

Threshold Concept Activity

Outcomes & Takeaways

The main benefit/takeaway from participating in the community of practice was engaging with the framework and hearing about other librarians' perspectives on individual frames. Practically speaking I was able to take a real instruction project that I was working on over the course of a whole semester and turn that into my instructional scenario for feedback. It was an excellent resource for me as a new instruction librarian without any formal teaching training or experience...[Many of the members] already knew from experience the application of information literacy within their disciplines, while I on the other hand lacked the practical experience and had much more to gain from the discussions of how practitioners find, share, and value information.

Eric Tans, Environmental Science Librarian

Outcomes & Takeaways

I found the threshold concepts most helpful in thinking through information literacy in my discipline(s), especially in articulating what has come to be the fairly unstable of idea of what was formerly "authoritative" and is now contextual. Though the academy (in the humanities) is still holding on to traditional forms of scholarship and ways of communicating the ACRL framework concepts ... when one asks how these concepts *really* play out in the early 21st century, provide an interesting and productive way of framing all of these issues. I plan to use these frameworks in my instruction sessions, especially for advanced/career-track students (such as research methods classes).

Michael Rodriguez, Humanities Collections Coordinator

Thank You to the Other Members of Our COP!

Sara Miller
Librarian for Interdisciplinary Teaching and Learning Initiatives

Heidi Schroeder
Sciences Collections Coordinator & Accessibility Coordinator

Thomas Padilla
Digital Scholarship Librarian

Eric Tans
Environmental Science Librarian

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