April 4, 2014

Welcome, again

Thank you for taking the time to read and respond to this second part of the draft *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*. We hope by now you have had the chance to read the first part of the initial draft, released February 20. The first part included:

- Introduction
- Three Threshold Concepts
- Glossary
- Bibliography

This second part of the draft *Framework* includes two additional threshold concepts.

Feedback on these first two parts of the draft *Framework* will be **accepted through 5pm Central on Tuesday, April 15, 2014**, via the form at https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/JCVY3GW.

We also encourage you to share your perspective on the initial draft during one of these upcoming online open forums:

- Friday, April 4, 2014, 11am Pacific/12pm Mountain/1pm Central/2pm Eastern
- Thursday, April 17, 2014, 8am Pacific/9am Mountain/10am Central/11am Eastern

Register at http://www.signupgenius.com/go/5080C44ABAC2F4-online1 to attend one of these free events **at least one hour in advance** as login details will be emailed prior to the forum. Links to the recorded forums will be posted afterwards on the task force website. Each session is limited to 500 attendees.

We encourage you to gather a group in your library to discuss both portions of the initial draft *Framework* and report back to us about your group's impressions. To help guide your thinking, we ask that you provide feedback to these questions:

1. In what ways will the focus on threshold concepts help you to generate conversations with other campus stakeholders (such as disciplinary faculty partners, members of the general education curriculum committee, and academic support services staff)?
2. How do the sections for knowledge practices and assignments/assessments provide helpful guidance when considering implementing the new *Framework*? What else would you want to see in these sections?
3. We plan to include additional materials in a subsequent phase (described below). What other elements would you find helpful that aren't mentioned in our plans?

Based on everything we hear from you, we will make revisions and release a second draft in early June. We will promote this more fulsome, complete draft to the broader community of higher education stakeholders to solicit their reactions (and yours again, too). The June version will contain the components listed above along with these additional elements:

- One (or possibly more) additional threshold concepts
- Scenarios that provide ideas for how a threshold concept might integrated into an instructional opportunity or program
- An executive summary
- An introduction to the *Framework* meant to be shared with faculty members, administrators, and other constituencies
- Mapping the *Framework* and the 2000 ILCSHE.
- Mapping the *Framework* and the American Association of School Librarians Standards for 21st Century Learners.
- Concept maps of the threshold concepts and their intersections.
- Possibly an online sandbox where the community can share approaches to using the *Framework.* (If you are interested in access to such a sandbox, please leave comments to that effect in your response due by April 15)

We will hold a hearing at the American Library Association's Annual Conference in Las Vegas (Saturday, June 28, 10:30 am - 11:30 am) as well as online hearings in June. We will continue the iterative process, modifying the *Framework* based on feedback we receive then. We expect to submit a final document to the ACRL Board in August 2014 for their consideration and approval in September. Of course, this timeline may change, based on the feedback we receive, but this is our current intention.

Again, please provide your feedback **by 5pm Central on Tuesday, April 15, 2014**, via the form at https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/JCVY3GW. We ask that you send us your reactions via that form so it is easier to compile all the comments we expect to receive on and ensure we don't overlook any comments in an email gone astray. We are also happy to connect with you on a personal level, and you should feel free to be in touch with either of us by email to discuss your reactions to the draft.

Thank you again for your interest in this draft *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*. We are eager to receive your feedback.

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Threshold Concept

Authority is Constructed and Contextual

(This concept was identified through an ongoing Delphi study being conducted by L. Townsend, A. R. Hofer, S. Lu, and K. Brunetti.)

Authority of information resources depends upon their origins, the information need, and the context in which those information resources were created and will be used. Experienced researchers understand that the level of information quality needed for a particular purpose varies, will use various types of evaluative criteria to match that purpose, and will trust the authority of that information with an attitude of informed skepticism, remaining open to new perspectives, additional voices, and changes in schools of thought.

The experienced researcher understands that authority is the degree of trust that is bestowed, and as such, authority is both contextual and constructed. It is contextual in that the information need may help determine the level of authority required. For instance, getting a weather forecast before going on a picnic does not require the foremost meteorological authority while a dissertation on the latest weather models may. It is constructed in that various communities may recognize different types of authority. For instance, a religious community may recognize the authority of religious leaders and texts that may not be as highly regarded by others who are not part of the community. Scholars within a discipline may value specific publications or publishers over others. Allowing that some kinds of expertise are more worthy than others can result in privileging certain sources of information unduly.

An understanding of this concept enables learners to critically examine all evidence – be it a Wikipedia article or a peer-reviewed conference proceeding – and ask relevant questions about origins, context, and suitability for the information need of the moment. Thus, the learner both respects the expertise that authority represents, while remaining skeptical of both the systems that have elevated that authority and the information created by it. The experienced researcher knows how to seek authoritative voices, but also recognizes that unlikely voices can be authoritative, depending on need. The novice researcher may need to rely on superficial indicators of authority such as type of publication or author credentials where experienced researchers recognize schools of thought or discipline-specific paradigms.

Knowledge Practices (Abilities)

Learners who are developing their information literate abilities

- Determine how authoritative information should be for a particular need.
- Identify markers of authority when engaging with information, understanding the elements that might temper that authority.
- Understand that many disciplines have acknowledged authorities in the sense of well-known scholars and publications that are widely considered "standard," and yet even in those situations, some scholars would challenge the authority of those sources.
- Recognize that authoritative content may be packaged formally or informally, and may include dynamic user-generated information.
- Acknowledge that they themselves may be seen, now or in the future, as authorities in a particular area, and recognize the responsibilities that entails.

Dispositions

Learners who are developing their information literate abilities

- Develop and maintain an open mind when encountering varied and sometimes conflicting perspectives.
- Are motivated to find authoritative sources, recognizing that authority may be manifested in unexpected ways
- Recognize the importance of assessing content critically to the best of their ability.
- Are conscious that maintaining these attitudes and actions requires frequent self-monitoring.

Self-Assessments

In order to determine their level of understanding of this threshold concept, learners may

- Review information sources they propose to use, recognize how they are determining the authority of each work and its suitability for the need at hand.
- Challenge themselves to find sources whose authority may be conferred in different ways.
- Challenge themselves to determine potential problems with traditional notions of granting authority.

Possible Assignments/Assessments

(Note: In response to some of the feedback the Task Force has received on part one of the initial draft, we are trying something new with this threshold concept. In this section, you will find indicators of level and type of instruction, and connections with other threshold concepts or topics of instruction. We encourage your feedback on this trial as it will help us with the next draft.)

- Provide students with two different information types (with two different goals) on the same topic by the same unnamed authoritative creator/author (for example, scholarly article and blog post). Use this as a discussion starter with students about context in relationship to authority. Reveal authorship later in discussion (might lead to lesson on

information need and locating sources). (Lower level; one shot friendly) [Overlaps with threshold concept: Format as Process]

- Ask students in a class to each find two reviews of a particular film or book that come to different conclusions. (Alternatively, these could be provided to students.) Compare the evidence reviewers cite for their opinions. Is there evidence used by reviewers to come to different conclusions? (Lower level, but could substitute disciplinary articles for upper level students; one shot friendly)
- Ask students to brainstorm situations when traditional peer review might not accomplish its purpose. (Upper level)
- Have students look at a blog, a video on YouTube, a collection of tweets, or some other type of social media regarding a contemporary event (e.g., demonstrations at Tahrir Square during the "Arab Spring" events). Ask them to describe how they would analyze and evaluate the authority the author(s) of the information. Are there ways to determine whether the individual was an actual witness or participant in the events? Are there ways to identify whether the individual or group that developed a collection of information has a particular political bias? Can they determine whether the author(s) has a particular status within the group he/she represents or is the individual reporting as an "average citizen"? (Upper level)
- Ask students to create a citation "web" using a citation analysis database, and conduct a content analysis of the linked authors by affiliation (workplace, academic preparation, geography, subject expertise). Do authors cite each other? Are there some authors who are outliers in the web? How do such connections impact information generation? (Upper level) [Overlaps with threshold concept: Scholarship is a Conversation]

Threshold Concept

Searching is Strategic

(This concept was identified through an ongoing Delphi study being conducted by L. Townsend, A. R. Hofer, S. Lu, and K. Brunetti.)

Experts use an overall strategic approach in designing searches, considering and selecting a system to search, and reviewing search results. They understand that searching and locating information involves defining an information need; knowing the universe of possible tools, collections, and repositories that may be useful in locating information; using appropriate search vocabularies and protocols to design specific search strategies or questions for using systems, databases, and other organized collections of knowledge; and refining and adjusting search strategies during the process of investigating the research topic.

Expert researchers understand that finding relevant results is predicated on knowing where to search and understanding the basic constructs of the system being searched. Coupled with the context of information need, this knowledge and understanding drives the strategies the expert employs when searching for information through the information systems selected and used. Experts also identify search vocabularies that best match the database or system they search.

Expert researchers understand that no single system works well for all research needs. In contrast, the novice researcher may revert to searching familiar systems without regard to context. While some systems are highly organized (such as databases and online catalogs) others (such as the Internet) are less structured. Determining which system to search is part of the research process. Expert researchers understand that information is created in different ways and that there are alternative sources of information, such as open access journals; this understanding will require the novice researcher to learn how to develop an overall approach to searching beyond the information systems with which he or she is most familiar.

Likewise, expert researchers understand not all information systems (tools) are constructed the same way. Novice researchers are often unaware of the elements or protocols of the information systems they are searching and will employ the same search strategy regardless of the system being searched. Once a search tool selection is made, the expert searcher quickly learns the organizational construct of the system and designs search strategies that manipulate the structure of the system to yield relevant results. Novice researchers will need to develop the understanding that not all information systems are constructed the same way; they will need to use more than one system to find the information they need.

Recognizing the structure and degree of specificity (or generality) of a system's content (both in terms of subject matter and resource type) is key to making choices that serve to locate relevant results efficiently within the context of a specific information need. For the novice researcher this knowledge leads to a moment of discovery when optimal resources are identified.

Knowledge Practices (Abilities)

Learners who are developing their information literate abilities

- Recognize that information on a topic may be generated by a number of different entities, each with distinctive characteristics.
- Select an appropriate search tool based on discipline and task at hand.
- Construct a search based on variants of their search question -- using basic (Boolean and truncation) to sophisticated (keyword v subject) search strategies and are able to condense or expand as necessary using search string and facets.
- Are able to recognize the sophisticated features of a database including citation management and sharing features. This moves students from searching for information to information management strategies.

Dispositions

Learners who are developing their information literate abilities

- Value persistence and are comfortable with brainstorming
- Are willing to analyze needs
- Recognize that attention to detail pays off when engaged in searching

Self-Assessments

In order to determine their level of understanding of this threshold concept, learners may

- Be able to identify interested parties that might produce information about a topic
- Require themselves to identify and search in several different resources in order to find the best results

Possible Assignments/Assessments

- For a research project, have students brainstorm all the possible sources of information that might have relevant information. What tools will they need to locate those resources?
- Have student identify subject headings after conducting a keyword search and write a paragraph on the differences between subject and keyword searching.
- Ask students to identify one or two important databases in their majors or for the project they are working on and note why they consider them to be effective resources for their research.
- Ask students to choose a topic, develop key terms to search with, and use two different search engines to locate information on their topic. Have them compare the results in terms of quantity, types of sources (e.g., government, educational, scholarly, commercial), order/sequence of results, and relevance. Pair students who used different search engines with the same topics to compare results.
- Ask students to write an I-Search paper, whereby they journal their searching processes, including key terms, tools used, and resources/results at each step. They should note how they evaluated their resources, and what information was extracted. Their journal should also reflect their feelings: success, concern, frustration, pride, etc. As an extension, students can make a timeline of efforts and reflections. Pair up students, and ask them to

read and comment on each other's journal, and then draw up conclusions and recommendations for their peers.

- Have students create the idea for a new structured system that would assist researchers/searchers in a particular field or area of interest. They would need to propose full particulars, including the type of information to be included, the source of that information, a proposed tagging/indexing system, and a list of search features that would enhance the experience of users.