FIRST THOUGHTS ON IMPLEMENTING THE FRAMEWORK FOR INFORMATION LITERACY

Trudi E. Jacobson
University at Albany, SUNY

Craig Gibson
The Ohio State University

Following the action of the ACRL Board in February 2015 in accepting the *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* as one of the "constellation of documents" that promote and guide information literacy instruction and program development, discussion in the library community continues about steps in implementing the *Framework*. The spectrum of possibilities for implementing the *Framework* encompasses both curricular and co-curricular settings within colleges and universities. At this early stage of implementing the *Framework*, we suggest five curricular and instructional structures that can be thought of as a continuum of deepened engagement with its core ideas. The second half of this article presents two examples that show possible ways to incorporate elements of the *Framework*: a redesigned single instruction session and a course that illustrates a hybrid model blending the unit-based assignments with a course redesign.

Communications in INFORMATION LITERACY

INTRODUCTION

In February 2015 the ACRL Board accepted the *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* as one of the "constellation of documents" that promote and guide information literacy instruction and program development. Following the acceptance, discussion in the library community continues about steps in implementing the *Framework*, through blog postings, Twitter, conference presentations, and discussions among colleagues at many institutions. Much experimentation is underway as evidenced by continued discussion in these forums.

FRAMEWORK IMPLEMENTATION SPECTRUM

The spectrum of possibilities for implementing the *Framework* encompasses both curricular and co-curricular settings within colleges and universities. The concepts identified in the *Framework* can be calibrated to deepen student understanding of scholarship, inquiry, searching, evaluation, publishing, and their rights as creators as well as consumers of knowledge, in a variety of complementary ways that build on introductions to those concepts in first-year courses.

At this early stage of implementing the *Framework*, we suggest that the spectrum of possibilities includes:

- Redesigned single instruction sessions
- Assignments in one course that form a "unit" around one or more of the Frames.
- Redesigned courses, either in general education or in a major field
- Sets of coordinated courses in a major or in an interdisciplinary area of concentration
- Capstone or "synthesis" courses

These curricular and instructional structures can be thought of as a continuum of deepened engagement with the core ideas of the *Framework*, with foundational ideas introduced even in retooled one-shot sessions. Foundational ideas drawn from the *Framework* about scholarly influence, the process of inquiry, and types of authority can serve to "frame" discussions of tools and resources, whether databases, citation manuals, or social media sites, in a more integrated way. Deeper engagement will come through a series of assignments or "course units" co-developed between librarian and faculty member, where student exploration of the core ideas allows them to understand connections among them more completely. Redesigned courses into which one or more of the Frames are woven provide expanded opportunities for self-reflection (metacognition), one of the key elements of the *Framework*, as well as student projects that demonstrate student contributions to the information ecosystem. Coordinated courses allow for the core concepts of the *Framework* to be reinforced in a complementary manner. Capstone courses, if available, present opportunities to integrate the *Framework*'s concepts in wider interdisciplinary ways, with greater opportunities for self-reflection, creating an original product, and understanding the potential application of information literacy in a professional setting, future graduate training, or role as a citizen. The second half of this article presents two examples that

show possible ways to incorporate elements of the *Framework*: a redesigned single instruction session and a course that illustrates a hybrid model blending the unit-based assignments with a course redesign.

To develop a larger program architecture using the *Framework*, information literacy librarians will need to conduct systematic curriculum analyses and design curriculum maps to identify those courses and programs that are the most natural "fit" or homes for the six Frames. Charting "learning pathways" vertically will vary widely from institution to institution. The strategic positioning of Frames within the most typical student pathways within a major, or within required courses, along with required upper-division general education or capstone courses, continues to make sense, just as some librarians have done with learning outcomes independently developed, or based on the Standards. The synoptic view gained from charting these pathways will provide initial guidance for conversations among colleagues within the library as they conduct a coordinated effort to promote the *Framework* with key faculty, curriculum committees, administrators, and student academic support services.

In addition to understanding the formal curriculum through charting these pathways, librarians may discover other possibilities for expanding the reach of information literacy as an educational agenda through co-curricular initiatives. These could include courses with service learning or community engagement projects, student academic clubs and organizations which sponsor public events and student-led programs on research, major topics and new lines of inquiry in a field, or research

expositions. They might also include undergraduate research programs featuring mentored research of student projects, field experiences or internships, student leadership development programs, or study abroad programs. The possibilities here create an arena for students to contribute in their own right to scholarship, as shapers of important questions and topics for investigation across campus, and with their peers on other campuses.

STRATEGIES FOR *FRAMEWORK* IMPLEMENTATION

Within these two broad areas for curriculum expansion available at many institutions, some general strategies and suggestions for implementing the *Framework* are now emerging:

1. Build on current successful relationships. If the library has a strong collaborative relationship with an interdisciplinary first-year inquiry course, with writing in the major courses, or with a set of synthesis or capstone courses, redeveloping learning outcomes and assignments around the Frames is an incremental but important first step in implementing the *Framework*.

2. Develop an assignment and course redesign process.
The *Framework* affords a broader, integrated set of "big ideas" about research, scholarship, and information. Librarians can develop sets of model assignments tied to learning outcomes created from the Frames, and offer them to faculty as alternatives to more traditional library assignments. The process of negotiating with faculty about assignments that teach information literacy concepts will, in some cases, shift

awareness to the importance of teaching these "big ideas." Likewise, librarians need to position themselves to participate, when possible, in redesigning courses with faculty using the concepts from the *Framework*. It is less important that the strict terminology of the *Framework* be used in discussions with faculty about assignment and course design than that these core principles be honored: (1) extended student engagement with the big ideas of the *Framework*, (2) students' critical self-reflection on their learning of those ideas, and (3) student creativity in participating in the information ecosystem—whether through a blog, a multimedia project, a digital storytelling session, or participation in a student panel on a topic important on campus. The range of possibilities is great and the assignment and course design process in which librarians need to participate can accommodate much inventiveness in adhering to these three principles.

> IT IS LESS IMPORTANT THAT THE STRICT TERMINOLOGY OF THE *FRAMEWORK* BE USED IN DISCUSSIONS WITH FACULTY ABOUT ASSIGNMENT AND COURSE DESIGN THAN THAT THESE CORE PRINCIPLES BE HONORED: (1) EXTENDED STUDENT ENGAGEMENT WITH THE BIG IDEAS OF THE *FRAMEWORK*, (2) STUDENTS' CRITICAL SELF-REFLECTION ON THEIR LEARNING OF THOSE IDEAS, AND (3) STUDENT CREATIVITY IN PARTICIPATING IN THE INFORMATION ECOSYSTEM

3. Develop learning outcomes aligned with both disciplinary knowledge and the knowledge practices and dispositions of the Framework.

The *Framework* does not enumerate learning outcomes, but offers great freedom for librarians to write their own at their institutions, or to adapt or revise their current information literacy learning outcomes. The knowledge practices and dispositions can be used in combination with discipline-specific knowledge requirements in major courses to make scholarship, inquiry, searching, and authority much more clearly understood.

4. Use assessment methods that present a picture of student progression or learning over time.

Many librarians have asked about appropriate assessment methods to use with a large theoretical model such as the *Framework*. With learning outcomes developed based on the knowledge practices (actions, behaviors) and dispositions (attitudes, beliefs, values) articulated in the *Framework*, librarians can work with disciplinary faculty, teaching and learning centers, and student academic support services to create a variety of action research projects or pedagogical research investigations that widen the conversation across campus about student progress in understanding and applying the core ideas of information literacy in advancing student learning. Action or pedagogical research can include a variety of qualitative methods. They range from the simplest classroom assessment techniques already used (one-minute papers), to concept maps, research journals, research narratives, blogs, postings in discussion boards in learning management systems, and e-portfolios that bring together a range of student work samples demonstrating growth in

understanding of scholarship and research. Just as with the spectrum of instructional options, assessment methods need to be considered in an integrated, programmatic way. Getting the best possible picture of student learning over time using these methods should help identify the recurring difficulties or gaps in understanding so that adjustments can be made in instruction and course design.

The qualitative assessment methods suggested here offer the additional advantage of requiring student self-reflection, another underpinning of the *Framework*.

THE *FRAMEWORK* IN ACTION

Since the first draft of the *Framework* was published, there has been extensive discussion surrounding its adaptability for single instruction sessions. Some of the concerns revolve around the conceptual approach taken by this new model, which contrasts with the more skills-focused ACRL Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education (2000). Some have expressed unease about the interconnected nature of each frame, and the web of relationships between frames, which seemingly requires more extensive contact with students than afforded by a typical one-shot session. Yet another element of concern involves the recognition that students are information creators, rather than primarily information consumers, and the lack of time to address that in an hour or less. And lastly, there is the absence of explicit learning objectives in the *Framework*.

Although individual instruction librarians

may not need to address all of these areas, one or two might resonate. The following case study of a one-shot session illustrates how elements of the *Framework* might be addressed, and may help to determine if the concerns listed above actually are stumbling blocks specific to the *Framework*.

Teaching librarians have long acknowledged that one, or even two, class sessions are inadequate to introduce students to the breadth of what it means to be information literate. Without the participation of disciplinary faculty members in sustaining the information literacy education process, librarians' efforts will have limited results, whether guided by the Standards, the *Framework*, another model or no model.

The following section provides an example in which the single session and course-based *Framework* unit model are explored. The *Framework* may serve as a stimulus for conversations between librarian and instructor that facilitate adoption of this expanded conception of the traditional one-shot.

REDESIGNED SINGLE SESSION

In this rather typical situation, the librarian is asked by the course instructor to teach her students how to search effectively for an upcoming assignment. She also would like the students to learn to be more discerning about the sources they select. This scenario might play out with a first year, or more advanced, course.

If the librarian were following the Standards, various performance indicators and their component outcomes within

Standard Two—"The information literate student selects the most appropriate investigative methods or information retrieval systems for accessing the needed information"—and Standard Three—"The information literate student evaluates information and its sources critically and incorporates selected information into his or her knowledge base and value system"—would be used to structure the class. Here, for example, is performance indicator #2 with outcomes from Standard 2.

The information literate student constructs and implements effectively-designed search strategies.

Outcomes Include:
   a. Develops a research plan appropriate to the investigative method
   b. Identifies keywords, synonyms and related terms for the information needed
   c. Selects controlled vocabulary specific to the discipline or information retrieval source
   d. Constructs a search strategy using appropriate commands for the information retrieval system selected (e.g., Boolean operators, truncation, and proximity for search engines; internal organizers such as indexes for books)
   e. Implements the search strategy in various information retrieval systems using different user interfaces and search engines, with different command languages, protocols, and search parameters
   f. Implements the search using

investigative protocols appropriate to the discipline (ACRL, 2000)

Even this one performance indicator is too much to tackle in a single class period. The behaviors described in these outcomes are to be mastered over time, as is the case with the *Framework*.

Given the instructor's goals for the session, most librarians would introduce several components: constructing a search strategy, reviewing and refining results, and determining how to find or limit to scholarly sources. Such classes generally focus on retrieving the best sources, using traditional determinations of "best." Viewed in the light of the *Framework*, what is most striking about the outcomes listed above is their behavioral approach, informed by cognition. The *Framework* encourages us to shift our emphasis, away from guiding students to follow set steps to find the product, and towards understanding the creation processes that result in mutable information sources and reflecting upon what implications this holds for the researcher.

Let us consider this class session in the light of the Scholarship as Conversation frame. Might that concept introduce students to more sophisticated understanding and reflection, while meeting the instructor's goals?

In order to maximize student engagement with core components, utilizing an element of the flipped classroom model would be appropriate. Ask the instructor to assign to students tutorials, readings, or other content that address core content for the session. At

[THOUGHTS ON THE FRAMEWORK]

the start of class, assign small groups of students to discuss and then respond to a question related to the Scholarship as a Conversation concept (or whichever Frame is being used). Padlet (http://padlet.com) is the ideal place to do this. It is an easy to use online space where students can share their thoughts on a common question or issue. Students can see other students' comments as they write them, thus allowing for interaction and reflection on their own posts. Informed by the preparatory work, and aided by group discussion, students should be able to tackle the exercise even before any content is presented. The Padlet question might be along the lines of:

> Some scholars now put preprints or even late-stage drafts of their work online in order to solicit comments from other scholars in the field. Why might they do that?

Or, for lower-level undergraduate students:
> When writing scholarly articles, authors include a literature review section in their articles. Why would they do that? What do these sections mean to you as a budding researcher?

The small group discussion will help the students articulate their thoughts, and to hear other opinions. Students then each write their responses on Padlet, and the walls (perhaps each with a different, but related, question) can be shared amongst the other groups. The instructor's engagement and participation in these conversations personalizes the issues for students. While this small creation activity might take 10-15 minutes, it is time well spent. It meets several goals: it engages students; it allows the librarian and the course instructor to

gauge students' understanding of elements of the concept; and it provides points to refer to later in the session, points that will help to illuminate the frame under consideration.

The class might then continue through search strategizing, database searching, and critically examining results. At each pertinent spot, the librarian should tie content to the *Framework*, and discuss some of the dispositions that apply to that frame. As with all teaching, one must keep in mind that students' attention spans are limited, and that providing too much information may mean that students are unable to process or learn it. Teaching through more manageable units of content is preferable. Providing the opportunity to interact with content prior to the session, as well as after it through course assignments, offers the potential to enhance student learning. More extended engagement in a single course, as explored in the next section, is even better.

The assessment for this session will take place in the following week. After students locate, assess, and select three scholarly sources for their course project, they will write a page that analyzes the scholarly conversation as shown in these articles. Are any of the same sources cited? For the same reasons? Does age of the sources play a role? Based on this analysis, what one additional article should be located and read, and why?

REDESIGNED COURSE WITH FRAME-SPECIFIC ASSIGNMENTS

This example focuses on a first-year living-learning course. The students take several related introductory courses as a cohort in

addition to this one, whose theme is human identity and technology, using psychology and sociology as lenses. The instructor of the course has long partnered with a librarian to incorporate information literacy components into the class. This partnership has resulted in two sessions: one focused on finding and evaluating information, the second concentrated on assessing information needs for the final project. The instructor is open to the idea of incorporating one of the new Frames into the course, and after some discussion, she and the librarian select Information Creation as a Process as a course theme, though elements of other Frames will be included. This instructor has, for some time, assigned a creative but demanding final project. Each student must imagine and develop a course for first-year students that emanates from the topics of the course for which they are doing this assignment. They are responsible for all elements of a typical syllabus, including the course description, learning objectives, readings, and assignments. They use at least three of the same films and books discussed in class, but reinvent them via their own theme and enquiries for the project. Students in this course are themselves creating information, but can only do so after assessing the goals of the course they are taking, what they learned, and how those learning opportunities might best be presented to others. As the instructor describes her goals, "they learn to be teachers, to reflect, to critically engage materials from the course" (M. Forte, personal communication, May 30, 2015).

This assignment and the incorporation of a Frame aligns exceptionally well with the core principles described earlier in this article: (1) extended student engagement with a selection of the big ideas of the *Framework*, (2) students' critical self-reflection on their learning of those ideas, and (3) student creativity in participating in the information ecosystem.

The instructor and librarian conceive of a number of ways to focus on this Frame. While some components will involve instruction by the librarian, others will be embedded into the course in a seamless manner throughout the semester. Together, they identify three key components that will focus students' attention on Information Creation as a Process while advancing existing course goals:

- A worksheet that will encourage students to reflect on the creation process of information sources that they encounter in the course, the capabilities and constraints of that process for each source, how those processes or products might be judged by others, and each source's actual value based on the student's immediate information need;

- A journal, in which students will reflect on the information entered on their worksheets, discuss what they have learned about different methods of creating and presenting information, and how they might best utilize their new knowledge. One additional piece of the journal assignment, due near the end of the course, is to have students relate their new awareness of this concept with the dispositions listed in the Frame;

TABLE 1—EXAMPLES OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

Knowledge Practice	Learning Outcome
Articulate the capabilities and constraints of information developed through various creation processes	Students will accurately express the capabilities and constraints of specific sources in their worksheet entries
Assess the fit between an information product's creation process and a particular information need	Students will apply their assessment of the information creation process and students' needs through the resources selected for use on their final project, a course syllabus

- The syllabus assignment described at the beginning of this section. A new element will be a gloss in which students relate the assigned readings for the course with their increased awareness of the information creation process.

The instructor and librarian decide to use the Knowledge Practices with minor modification as learning outcomes for the first iteration of the revised course. Two examples are shown in Table 1.

While this second example requires an enhanced commitment on the part of the course instructor, she also saw strong linkages between her course objectives and the *Framework*. Although this Frame was ultimately chosen, she saw applicability of all six, and elements of others will also be featured in the course.

CONCLUSION

The authors encourage readers to use the principles and strategies presented in this article in their own information literacy initiatives. The *Framework* is specifically designed to be flexible and adaptable, both for curricular and co-curricular opportunities. This article focuses on the former, with just two examples from the spectrum of possibilities presented. We encourage and challenge our colleagues and those they work with to explore possible connections between the *Framework* and specific courses, programs, and majors. We anticipate extremely fruitful collaborative ventures will ensue. Find opportunities to share your initiatives, as they are bound to spark ideas at other institutions.

REFERENCES

Association of College & Research Libraries. (2000). Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education. Retrieved from: http:// www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ informationliteracycompetency

Association of College & Research Libraries. (2015). Information Literacy Framework for Higher Education. Retrieved from: http://www.ala.org/acrl/ standards/ilframework

[THOUGHTS ON THE FRAMEWORK]