

June 17, 2014

Welcome, Once More

Thank you for taking the time to read and respond to the revised draft *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*. The [Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education](#), adopted by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) in 2000, have become an essential document related to the emergence of information literacy as a recognized learning outcome at many institutions of higher education. These, like all ACRL standards, are reviewed cyclically. In June 2012, the ACRL Board of Directors approved a unanimous recommendation that they be a significantly revised.

We co-chair a task force charged with creating the *Framework* and have been working since March 2013. The group reflects some of the best minds in the library profession currently working in the area of information literacy. It also includes experts from other parts of higher education and an accrediting agency. Find out more about the task force members, our charge, our process, and interim reports to the ACRL Board at <http://acrl.ala.org/ilstandards/>.

We have had a great deal of interest in, and response to, the first and second parts of the initial draft *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*, released on [February 20](#) and [April 4](#), 2014. For those of you who reviewed our initial draft, we very much appreciate the time that you have taken to read, reflect, discuss, and respond. The first two parts of the initial draft included:

- Introduction
- Five Threshold Concepts (three in part one and two in part two)
- Glossary
- Bibliography

Members of the Task Force have spent a great deal of time working on the *Framework* since those parts were released. This included a number of online meetings, and an intensive day and a half in-person meeting at the end of April in Chicago. Informed by your feedback, we have made a number of changes that you will see reflected in this revised, complete draft.

There are new pieces:

- A streamlined Introduction that includes a new definition of information literacy (revised from the previous version of the Introduction).
- Suggestions on How to Use this Document, a guide for introducing it on campuses.
- A sixth Frame with the title Threshold Concept Information Has Value.
- An Introduction for Faculty and Administrators.

There are also some revisions here that differ from our previously released documents:

- Each of the six units is now called a Frame. These Frames encompass the definition of the Threshold Concept as well as the accompanying Knowledge Practices/Abilities and Dispositions.
- Two of the Frames have been renamed. Format as Process is now Format as a Process, and Searching is Strategic is now Searching as Exploration.
- The Assignments sections have been moved to a separate, ancillary document. They will be added to a future online sandbox, rather than reside within the *Framework* proper, as they may change over time.
- The Self-Assessments sections have been removed, with some of the items moved, as appropriate, into the Dispositions and Knowledge Practices sections.
- The original Introduction has been extracted from the first draft, revised, and is an appendix called “Setting the Context.”
- A draft of the actions we will recommend the ACRL Board take is included as now an ancillary document so that you can see our thinking and provide your reactions.

Feedback on this new version of the draft *Framework* will be **accepted through 5pm Central on Tuesday, July 15, 2014**, via the form at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WQB3NZ3>. We will hold a [hearing](#) at the 2014 ALA Annual Conference in Las Vegas (Saturday, June 28, 10:30 am - 11:30 am). We also encourage you to share your perspective on the revised, complete draft during one of these upcoming online hearings:

- Monday, July 7, 2014, 11am Pacific/12pm Mountain/1pm Central/2pm Eastern
- Friday, July 11, 2014, 8am Pacific/9am Mountain/10am Central/11am Eastern

Sign up at <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/5080c44abac2f4-online> to attend one of these free events at least one hour in advance as login details will be emailed prior to each hearing. Links to the recorded hearings will be posted afterwards on the task force website. Each session is limited to 1,000 attendees.

We will modify the *Framework* as needed based on this last round of feedback gathered through the in-person and online hearings, as well as responses via the online survey. We expect to submit a final document to the ACRL Board in August 2014 for their consideration and approval in September 2014. Before a final document is ready to submit to the ACRL Board for consideration, two other ACRL groups are charged to review and provide feedback on near final drafts; these groups are the ACRL [Information Literacy Standards Committee](#) and the ACRL [Standards Committee](#). Of course, this timeline may change, based on the feedback we receive, but this is our current intention.

We encourage you to gather a group on your campus to discuss this revised draft Framework and report back to us about your group’s impressions. We suggest you invite colleagues from your library, as well as other campus stakeholders who have an interest. To help guide your thinking, we ask that you provide feedback to these questions:

1. How satisfied are you with the overall *Framework*?
2. If you have followed the development of the *Framework* through the previous draft, please tell us what changes you find most helpful.

3. Does the “Suggestions on How to Use the Information Literacy *Framework*” section, in conjunction with the Frames, help you to engage other campus stakeholders in conversation?
4. How might the *Framework* affect the way you work with students?
5. What one thing do you most want the Task Force members to know about the draft *Framework*?

Again, please provide your feedback **by 5pm Central on Tuesday, July 15, 2014**, via the form at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WQB3NZ3>. We ask that you send us your reactions via that form so it is easier to compile all the comments we expect to receive 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 revised, complete draft of the *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*. We are eager to receive your feedback.

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- and -

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1 Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education

2 Introduction

3 This *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* grows out of a belief that
4 information literacy, as an educational reform movement, will realize its potential only
5 through a richer, more complex set of core ideas. During the fifteen years since the
6 publication of the *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education*,
7 academic librarians and their partners in higher education associations have already
8 developed learning outcomes, tools, and resources which some institutions have deployed
9 to infuse information literacy concepts and skills in their curricula. However, the rapidly
10 changing higher education environment, along with the dynamic and often uncertain
11 information ecosystem in which all of us work and live, require new attention to
12 foundational ideas about that ecosystem. Students have a greater role and responsibility
13 in creating new knowledge, in understanding the contours and the changing dynamics of
14 the world of information, and in using information, data, and scholarship ethically.
15 Teaching faculty have a greater responsibility in designing curricula and assignments that
16 foster enhanced engagement with the core ideas about information and scholarship within
17 their disciplines. Librarians have a greater responsibility in identifying core ideas within
18 their own knowledge domain which can extend learning for students, in creating a new
19 cohesive curricula for information literacy, and in collaborating more extensively with
20 faculty.

21
22 The *Framework* offered here is called a “framework” intentionally—because it is based
23 on a cluster of interconnected core concepts, with flexible options for implementation,
24 rather than a set of standards or learning outcomes, or any prescriptive enumeration of
25 skills. The *Framework* is based upon *threshold concepts*, which are those ideas in any
26 discipline that are passageways or portals to enlarged understanding or ways of thinking
27 and practicing within that discipline. The ACRL Task Force responsible for this
28 *Framework* has drawn upon an ongoing Delphi Study that has identified several threshold
29 concepts in information literacy,¹ but has molded the *Framework* with its own ideas and
30 emphases for the threshold concepts. The Task Force has also added two elements that
31 illustrate important learning goals related to those concepts: *knowledge practices*, which
32 are demonstrations of ways in which learners can increase their understanding of these
33 information literacy concepts; and *dispositions*, which describe ways in which the
34 affective, attitudinal, or valuing dimension of learning can be addressed. The *Framework*
35 is organized into six Frames, each consisting of a threshold concept that is central to

¹ Unpublished Delphi Study in progress, on threshold concepts and information literacy, conducted by Townsend, L.; Hofer, A.; Lu, S.; and Brunetti, K. See also: Lori Townsend, Amy Hofer, and Korey Brunetti, “Threshold Concepts and Information Literacy,” *portal: Libraries and the Academy*, 11/3 (2011): 853-69.

36 information literacy; a set of knowledge practices; and a set of dispositions. The six
37 threshold concepts that anchor the frames are:

- 38 1. Scholarship is a Conversation
- 39 2. Research as Inquiry
- 40 3. Authority is Contextual and Constructed
- 41 4. Format as a Process
- 42 5. Searching as Exploration
- 43 6. Information has Value

44 Neither the knowledge practices nor the dispositions that support each threshold concept
45 is intended to prescribe what local institutions should do in using the *Framework*; each
46 library and its partners on campus will need to deploy these to best fit its own situation,
47 and to design learning outcomes based on the knowledge practices and dispositions for
48 local purposes.

49
50 In addition, this *Framework* draws significantly upon the concept of metaliteracy, which
51 offers a renewed vision of information literacy as an overarching set of abilities in which
52 students are both consumers and creators of information in multiple formats.²
53 Metaliteracy demands behavioral, affective, cognitive, and metacognitive engagement
54 with the information ecosystem; this *Framework* depends on these core ideas of
55 metaliteracy as well, with special focus on metacognition, or critical self-reflection, as
56 crucial to becoming more self-directed in that rapidly changing ecosystem.
57 Because this *Framework* envisions information literacy as extending the arc of learning
58 throughout students' academic careers and converging with other academic and social
59 learning goals, an expanded definition of information literacy is offered here to
60 emphasize dynamism, flexibility, individual growth, and community learning.

61
62 Information literacy is a repertoire of understandings, practices, and dispositions
63 focused on flexible engagement with the information ecosystem, underpinned by
64 critical self-reflection. The repertoire involves finding, evaluating, interpreting,
65 managing, and using information to answer questions and develop new ones; and
66 creating new knowledge through ethical participation in communities of learning,
67 scholarship, and practice.

68
69 The *Framework* opens the way for librarians, faculty, and other institutional partners to
70 redesign instruction sessions, assignments, courses, and even curricula; to connect
71 information with student success initiatives; to collaborate on pedagogical research, and
72 involve students themselves in that research; and to create wider conversations about
73 student learning, the scholarship of teaching and learning, and the assessment of learning
74 on local campuses and beyond.

75

² Thomas P. Mackey and Trudi Jacobson, "Reframing Information Literacy as a Metaliteracy," *College & Research Libraries*, 72/1 (2011): 62-78.

76 **Suggestions on How to Use the Information Literacy Framework**

77 The *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* is a mechanism for
78 guiding the development of information literacy programs within higher education
79 institutions while also promoting discussion about the nature of key concepts in
80 information in general education and disciplinary studies. The *Framework* encourages
81 thinking about how librarians, faculty, and others can address threshold concepts and
82 associated elements in the information field within the context of higher education. This
83 *Framework* will help librarians contextualize and integrate information literacy for their
84 institutions and will encourage a deeper understanding of what knowledge practices and
85 dispositions an information literate student should develop. The *Framework* redefines
86 the boundaries of what librarians teach and how we conceptualize the study of
87 information within the curriculum of higher education institutions.

88
89 The *Framework* has been conceived as a set of living documents on which the profession
90 will build. The key product is a set of Frames, or lenses through which to view
91 information literacy, each of which includes a threshold concept, knowledge practices,
92 and dispositions. The members of the Task Force that developed these Frames
93 encourages the library community to discuss the new *Framework* widely and to develop
94 supplemental resources such as curriculum guides, concept maps, assessment
95 instruments, etc. to supplement the core set of materials in the Frames.

96
97 As a first step, the Task Force encourages librarians to read through the entire
98 *Framework* and discuss the implications of this new approach for the information literacy
99 program of your institution. You may convene a discussion among librarians at your
100 institution or join an online discussion of librarians. In addition, as you familiarize
101 yourself with the Frames, you may want to discuss them with professionals in your
102 institutional center for teaching and learning, office of undergraduate education, or
103 similar departments to see whether there are some synergies between this approach and
104 curricular initiatives at your institution.

105
106 The Frames can guide the redesign of information literacy programs for general
107 education courses, for upper level courses in students' major department, and for
108 graduate student education. The Frames are intended to demonstrate the movement of
109 thinking from novice to expert in a specific area; this movement may take place over the
110 course of a student's academic career. Mapping out in what way specific concepts will
111 be integrated into specific levels of the curriculum is one of the challenges of
112 implementing the *Framework*. The Task Force encourages librarians to work with
113 faculty, departmental or college curriculum committees, instructional designers, staff
114 from centers for teaching and learning, and others, to design information literacy
115 programs in a holistic way.

116
117 The members of the Task Force realize that many information literacy librarians currently
118 meet with students via "one shot" classes, especially in introductory level classes. Over
119 the course of a student's academic program, "one shot" sessions that address a particular
120 need at a particular time, systematically integrated into the curriculum, can play a
121 significant role in an information literacy program. It is important for practitioners to

122 understand that the *Framework* is not designed to be implemented in one, sole
123 information literacy session in a student's academic career; it is intended to be
124 developmentally and systematically integrated into the student's academic program at a
125 variety of levels. This may take considerable time to implement fully in many
126 institutions.

127

128 The Task Force encourages information literacy librarians to be imaginative and
129 innovative in implementing the *Framework* in their institution. The *Framework* is not
130 intended to be prescriptive but to be used as a guidance document in shaping an
131 institutional program. We encourage you to pilot the implementation of the *Framework*
132 in a context that is useful to your institution, assess the results, and share your
133 experiences with your colleagues in the field.

134

How to Use this *Framework*

- **Read and reflect on the entire *Framework* document.**
- **Convene or join a group of librarians to discuss the implications of this new approach to information literacy for your institution.**
- **Reach out to potential partners in your institution such as departmental curriculum committees, centers for teaching and learning, or offices of undergraduate or graduate studies to discuss how to implement the *Framework* in your institutional context.**
- **Using the *Framework*, pilot the development of information literacy sessions within a particular academic program in your institution; assess and share the results with your colleagues.**
- **Add to resources that will be developed to share instructional materials, assessments, etc. with other information literacy librarians.**

135

136 The Six Frames

137 Scholarship is a Conversation

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

141
142 While many questions can be answered by appeal to a single, authoritative source--the
143 capital of a country or the atomic number of an element, for example--scholarly research
144 resists simple answers. Rather, scholarship is discursive practice in which ideas are
145 formulated, debated, and weighed against one another over extended periods of time.
146 Instead of seeking discrete answers to complex problems, scholars understand that a
147 given issue may be characterized by several competing perspectives. Far from a unified
148 body of uncontested knowledge, the scholarly record is better understood in terms of a
149 conversation in which information users and creators come together to negotiate
150 meaning, with the expert adding his or her voice to the conversation. The expert
151 understands that there may not be a single uncontested answer to a query and, hence, is
152 inclined to seek out the many perspectives in a scholarly conversation, not merely the one
153 with which the expert already agrees.

154 Knowledge Practices (Abilities)

155 Learners who are developing their information literate abilities:

- 156 • Identify the contribution that particular articles, books, and other scholarly pieces
157 make to disciplinary knowledge.
- 158 • Summarize the changes in scholarly perspective over time on a particular topic
159 within a specific discipline.
- 160 • Contribute to scholarly conversation at an appropriate level (local online
161 community, guided discussion, undergraduate research journal, conference
162 presentation/poster session).
- 163 • Predict that a given scholarly work may not represent the only--or even the
164 majority--perspective on the issue at hand.
- 165 • Critically evaluate contributions made by others in participatory information
166 environments.
- 167 • Recognize that they are often entering into the midst of a scholarly conversation,
168 not a finished conversation.

169 Dispositions

170 Learners who are developing their information literate abilities:

- 171 • Seek out conversations that are taking place in their area of research.
- 172 • Suspend judgment on the value of a particular piece of scholarship until the larger
173 context for the scholarly conversation is better understood.
- 174 • Recognize that scholarly conversations take place in a variety of venues.
- 175 • Value user-generated content and critically evaluate contributions made by others.
- 176 • See themselves as contributors to scholarship rather than only consumers of it.
- 177 • Understand the responsibility that comes with entering the conversation through
178 participatory channels.

179 **Research as Inquiry**

180 **Research as Inquiry refers to an understanding that research is iterative and**
181 **depends upon asking increasingly complex questions whose answers develop new**
182 **questions or lines of inquiry in any field.**
183

184 Experts see inquiry as a process that focuses on problems or questions in a discipline or
185 between disciplines that are open or unresolved. Experts recognize the collaborative
186 effort within a discipline to extend the knowledge in that field by developing a
187 knowledge base of lines of inquiry, research methodologies, and best practices for
188 conducting research. Many times, this process includes points of disagreement where
189 debate and dialog work to deepen the conversations around knowledge. This process of
190 inquiry extends beyond the academic world to include instances such as evidence and
191 data collected by groups and individuals in communities and the public at large, and the
192 process of inquiry may also focus upon personal, professional, or societal needs. The
193 spectrum of inquiry thus encompasses processes of basic recapitulation of knowledge and
194 data, by the novice, through increasing stages of greater understanding of a discipline or
195 exchanges between disciplines, among more experienced researchers. The novice works
196 to understand foundational ideas, methods, and over time develops the corresponding
197 ability to formulate more advanced research questions and employ a greater repertoire of
198 investigative methods.

199 **Knowledge Practices (Abilities)**

200 Learners who are developing their information literate abilities:

- 201 • Conduct research through the lens of inquiry in order to enhance the impact of
202 their work.
- 203 • Provide evidence of understanding that methods of research leading to new
204 knowledge creation vary by need, circumstance, and type of inquiry.
- 205 • Formulate questions for research based on gaps in information or data available.
- 206 • Communicate effectively with collaborators in shared spaces and learn from
207 multiple points of view.
- 208 • Engage in informed, self-directed learning that encourages a broader worldview
209 through the global reach of today's information technology.

210 **Dispositions**

211 Learners who are developing their information literate abilities:

- 212 • Value persistence, adaptability, and flexibility, and recognize that ambiguity can
213 be beneficial.
- 214 • Seek opportunities to transform current research-related practices in order to
215 conduct more authentic research.
- 216 • Practice thinking critically when confronting new learning, where lack of
217 familiarity with new methods and approaches requires additional effort.
- 218 • Value intellectual curiosity in developing questions and learning new
219 investigative methods.
- 220 • Recognize that learning is a process and that reflecting on errors or mistakes leads
221 to new insights and discoveries.
222

223 **Authority is Constructed and Contextual**

224 **Authority of information resources depends upon the resources' origins, the**
225 **information need, and the context in which the information will be used. This**
226 **authority is viewed with an attitude of informed skepticism and an openness to new**
227 **perspectives, additional voices, and changes in schools of thought.**
228

229 Experts understand that authority is the degree of trust that is bestowed and as such,
230 authority is both contextual and constructed. It is contextual in that the information need
231 may help determine the level of authority required. For instance, getting a weather
232 forecast before going on a picnic does not require the foremost meteorological authority
233 while a dissertation on the latest weather models may. It is constructed in that various
234 communities may recognize different types of authority. For instance, a religious
235 community may recognize the authority of religious leaders and texts which may not be
236 as highly regarded by others who are not part of the community. Scholars within a
237 discipline may value specific publications or publishers over others. Allowing that some
238 kinds of expertise are more worthy than others can result in privileging certain sources of
239 information unduly.
240

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

251 **Knowledge Practices (Abilities)**

252 Learners who are developing their information literate abilities:

- 253 • Determine how authoritative information should be for a particular need.
- 254 • Identify markers of authority when engaging with information, understanding the
255 elements that might temper that authority.
- 256 • Understand that many disciplines have acknowledged authorities in the sense of
257 well known scholars and publications that are widely considered "standard," and
258 yet even in those situations, some scholars would challenge the authority of those
259 sources.
- 260 • Recognize that authoritative content may be packaged formally or informally, and
261 may include dynamic user-generated information.
- 262 • Acknowledge that they themselves may be seen, now or in the future, as
263 authorities in a particular area, and recognize the responsibilities that entails.
- 264 • Evaluate user response as an active researcher, understanding the differing natures
265 of feedback mechanisms and context in traditional and social media platforms.
266

267 **Dispositions**

268 Learners who are developing their information literate abilities are:

- 269 • Inclined to develop and maintain an open mind when encountering varied and
270 sometimes conflicting perspectives.
- 271 • Motivated to find authoritative sources, recognizing that authority may be
272 conferred or manifested in unexpected ways.
- 273 • Aware of the importance of assessing content critically to the best of their ability.
- 274 • Recognize that there are potential problems with traditional notions of granting
275 authority.
- 276 • Conscious that maintaining these attitudes and actions requires frequent self-
277 monitoring.

278 **Format as a Process**

279 **Format is the way tangible knowledge is disseminated. The essential characteristic**
280 **of format is the underlying process of information creation, production, and**
281 **dissemination, rather than how the content is delivered or experienced.**

282
283 A print source is characterized by its physical structure (e.g., binding, size, number of
284 pages) as well as its intellectual structure (e.g., table of contents, index, references). A
285 digital source is characterized by its presentation, intellectual structure and physical
286 structure (e.g., file format). In many cases, the way that information is presented online
287 obscures not just the format, but also the processes of creation and production that need
288 to be understood in order to evaluate the source fully. Understanding what distinguishes
289 one format from another and why it matters requires a thorough knowledge of the
290 information and research cycles, scholarly communication, and common publishing
291 practices, especially for those who have never experienced the print version of formats.

292
293 The expert understands that the quality and usefulness of a given piece of information is
294 determined by the processes that went into making it. The processes of researching,
295 writing, editing, and publishing information--whether print or digital--can be highly
296 divergent, and information quality reflects these differences. From tweets to magazines to
297 scholarly articles, the unique capabilities and constraints of each format determines how
298 information can and should be used. The expert learns that the instant publishing found in
299 social media often comes at the cost of accuracy, while the thorough editorial process of a
300 book often comes at the cost of currency. Whatever form information takes, the expert
301 looks to the underlying processes of creation as well as the final product in order to
302 critically evaluate that information for use as evidence.

303 **Knowledge Practices (Abilities)**

304 Learners who are developing their information literate abilities:

- 305 • Understand that format and method of access are separate entities.
- 306 • Recognize that different creation processes result in the presence of distinct
307 attributes.
- 308 • Articulate the purposes of various formats, as well as their distinguishing
309 characteristics.
- 310 • Identify which formats best meet particular information needs.
- 311 • Decide which format and mode of transmission to use when disseminating their
312 own creations of information.
- 313 • Transfer knowledge to new formats in unpredictable and evolving environments.

314 **Dispositions**

315 Learners who are developing their information literate abilities:

- 316 • Are inclined to seek out markers for information sources that indicate the
317 underlying creation process.
- 318 • Identify the most effective format in seeking information.
- 319 • Understand that different formats of information dissemination with different
320 impacts are available for their use.

321

322 **Searching as Exploration**

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

328
329 The search for information is ignited by inquiry, the pursuit of which is rarely linear and
330 requires the knowledge and use of a range of source types. It is also a process of
331 discovery, and experts realize that methods employed may be fluid and that any element
332 (including inquiry) of an overall approach can change based on increased understanding
333 of a subject; discovering one source can lead to other sources or avenues of
334 inquiry. Experts also recognize that there are boundaries for research, such as the context
335 of the initial inquiry and time available to pursue it, and that part of the process is
336 determining project scope based on these boundaries.

337
338 A novice researcher may rely on one or two familiar resources while an expert surveys
339 the breadth of information sources to determine where to best obtain the information
340 sought within the project scope. These sources include more than Internet resources,
341 databases, social media, books, journals, etc. They include the knowledge, observations
342 and expertise of people as well. For example, it may become necessary to conduct a
343 formal interview or stop somewhere to ask for directions. Experts use resources that
344 make the most contextual sense to satisfy an inquiry ethically.

345
346 Further, effective use of selected resources is predicated on understanding them. Just as
347 understanding how a system is constructed and works will empower the expert to
348 uncover more relevant results, an understanding of people and effective communication
349 can enable access to their knowledge. The very best interviewers are more effective at
350 teasing out details than beginners, for example. Experts will also spend time learning
351 about their selected resource to better understand it and access needed information as
352 different resources require different methods of access.

353 **Knowledge Practices (Abilities)**

354 Learners who are developing their information literate abilities:

- 355 • Determine the scope of the question or task required to meet one's needs.
- 356 • Identify interested parties that might produce information about a topic and how
357 that information might be accessed.
- 358 • Demonstrate the importance of matching information needs and search strategies
359 to appropriate search tools.
- 360 • Recognize that some tools may be searched using both basic and advanced
361 strategies, and understand the potential of each.
- 362 • Are inclined to discover citation management and sharing features, moving them
363 from searching for information to information management strategies.

364

365 **Dispositions**

366 Learners who are developing their information literate abilities:

- 367 • Show through their searching that they value persistence, adaptability, and
368 flexibility.
- 369 • Understand that first attempts at searching don't always pay off.
- 370 • Are willing to analyze needs at the beginning of information searches.
- 371 • Recognize the value of browsing and other serendipitous methods of information
372 gathering.
- 373 • Reevaluate needs and next steps throughout the search process.

374 **Information has Value**

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

380
381 Experts understand that this value designates information as intellectual property, and
382 therefore, recognizes three important dimensions of value. First, information can act as a
383 commodity, and as such, creators can use their work for financial, reputational, social, or
384 civic gains. These motivations may determine how information sources are shared
385 whether given freely, offered for sale, or leased for temporary access. Information users
386 have responsibilities as both consumers and creators of information based on the work of
387 others. Academic and legal practices such as proper attribution of sources and complying
388 with copyright are a result.

389
390 Second, as intellectual property, information sources are affected by economic,
391 sociological, and political influences. The means of production may privilege some
392 voices over others. Some search systems may privilege some sources over others due to
393 economic incentive. Experts understand the consequences of selecting appropriate
394 research methods (such as applying the correct statistical analysis to data), the limitations
395 of publishing practices (such as scholarly journals' lack of interest in publishing negative
396 research results), and the boundaries to accessing the information ecosystem (such as
397 populations without internet access or obstacles created by paywalls).

398
399 Finally, experts recognize that their online activity and information they contribute to
400 online sites can be used for economic gain by the sites themselves. Such uses may
401 include personal information harvested from social media sites or advertisements placed
402 on "free" web tools or apps. One's online presence is monitored, tracked and, ultimately,
403 monetized.

404 **Knowledge Practices (Abilities)**

405 Learners who are developing their information literate abilities:

- 406 • Give credit to the original ideas of others through proper attribution and citation.
- 407 • Recognize the meaning of intellectual property in the United States.
- 408 • Understand that intellectual property is a social construct that varies by culture.
- 409 • Articulate the purpose and distinguishing characteristics of copyright, open
410 access, and public domain.
- 411 • Know how to find open access materials.
- 412 • Differentiate between the production of original information and remixing or re-
413 purposing open resources.
- 414 • Manage their online presences responsibly.
- 415 • Decide where their information, as knowledge creator, should be published.

416

417 **Dispositions**

418 Learners who are developing their information literate abilities:

- 419 • Respect the original ideas of others and the academic tradition of citation and
420 attribution.
- 421 • Value the creative skills needed to produce information.
- 422 • See themselves as contributors to the information marketplace rather than only
423 consumers of it.
- 424 • Recognize issues of access or lack of access to information sources.
- 425 • Understand that some individuals or groups of individuals may not be represented
426 within the information ecosystem.

427

428 **Sample Assignments that Support the *Framework***

429 This document contains assignment ideas for each of the six Frames. They address
430 diverse teaching situations, and can be used by librarians and disciplinary faculty
431 members either individually or jointly, depending on the situation. Librarians who teach
432 information literacy credit courses, or are integrated in other courses, will find ideas that
433 will work best when there are multiple points of contact with students. Those who teach
434 single-session course-related instruction will find ideas that they can integrate into their
435 own sessions, while other ideas rely upon collaboration with the disciplinary faculty
436 member teaching the course in collaborative assignment design.

437
438 The lists of examples are not exhaustive, nor are they meant to be prescriptive, but are
439 provided to spark ideas for the creation of others. Each teaching situation has its own
440 possibilities and constraints that require attention. The goal is to encourage reflection and
441 creativity on the part of the librarian and course instructor, and to meet the specific needs
442 of institutions or programs. Classroom assessment techniques and methods that work
443 with the flipped classroom model are just two types to of exercises to be found in these
444 sections. This material will move to an online sandbox which will be developed to
445 support this new *Framework*. We envision it as a rich resource for ideas, examples, and
446 answers to questions.

447

448 **Scholarship is a Conversation**

- 449 • Give students in professional or career-focused programs assignments that
450 examine how practice and/or procedures evolve over time. Ask them to consider
451 how the profession shares information.
- 452 • Give students a two-part assignment: one having them trace the development of
453 scholarship on a particular topic using the traditional “information cycle” model
454 with the “invisible college” and print publication outlets; then have them
455 expand/refine that model by tracing changes based on social media forums or
456 online communities.
- 457 • Assign an entire class to conduct an investigation of a particular topic from its
458 treatment in the popular media, and then trace its origin in conversations among
459 scholars and researchers.
- 460 • Have students select a seminal work on a topic, and then identify sources that
461 preceded and continued the conversation, analyzing the impact of the seminal
462 work on the field.
- 463 • Create a timeline to track the evolving threads of a continuing scholarly
464 conversation.
- 465 • Select a topic on which students have some knowledge or experience. Identify a
466 venue (blog, discussion forum, other social media site) in which a scholarly
467 conversation is taking place. Ask students to:
 - 468 ○ Identify key players and their perspectives.
 - 469 ○ Compare a related scholarly article by one of the players to the online
470 conversation.
 - 471 ○ Consider how to involve themselves in the conversation.

472

473 **Research as Inquiry**

- 474 • Students in a first year course reflect upon the steps they went through when
475 researching a major purchase or event in their lives (buying a car, selecting a
476 college, etc.). They identify the steps involved in the research behind such a
477 decision, and confront the importance of such a employing a similar strategy in
478 the academic setting.
- 479 • In an upper level course, students trace the development of a scholar's research
480 agenda following a sequence of presentations, publications (perhaps starting with
481 a dissertation topic), social media presence, etc. The students reflect upon the
482 inquiry underlying these information packages in an e-portfolio assignment.
- 483 • A researcher/guest speaker attends the class and describes a research project from
484 conception to conclusion. Students attempt to diagram the steps reflected in the
485 description, and then work with the speaker to develop a robust conception of the
486 process (recognizing that the process varies from project to project and researcher
487 to researcher). Students then journal about how their research process relates to
488 that of the researcher, and what changes they might make in order to attempt more
489 authentic, knowledge-generating research experiences.
- 490 • Assign students to keep research logs in which they note changes in particular
491 research directions as they identify resources, read, and incorporate new learning.
- 492 • Ask students in professional or career-focused programs to evaluate the role of
493 evidence-based that may move toward changing practice.

494 **Authority is Contextual and Constructed**

- 495 • Provide students with two different information types (with two different goals)
496 on the same topic by the same unnamed authoritative creator/author (for example,
497 scholarly article and blog post). Use as discussion starter with students about
498 context in relationship to authority. Reveal authorship later in discussion.
- 499 • Ask students in professional or career-focused programs to consider who has
500 authority within their areas of study and the origins of that authority.
- 501 • Ask students to find several scholarly sources on the same topic that take very
502 different stands. How was it that the authors came to different conclusions? Does
503 it have to do with authority?
- 504 • Ask students to brainstorm situations when traditional peer review might not
505 accomplish its purpose.
- 506 • Have students look at a blog, a video on YouTube, a collection of tweets, or some
507 other type of social media regarding a contemporary event (e.g. demonstrations at
508 Tahrir Square during the "Arab Spring" events). Ask them to describe how they
509 would analyze and evaluate the authority the author(s) of the information. Are
510 there ways to determine whether the individual was an actual witness or
511 participant in the events? Are there ways to identify whether the individual or
512 group that developed a collection of information has a particular political
513 bias? Can they determine whether the author(s) has a particular status within the
514 group he/she represents or is the individual reporting as an "average citizen"?
- 515 • Ask students to create a citation "web" using a citation analysis database, and
516 conduct a content analysis of the linked authors by affiliation (workplace,
517 academic preparation, geography, subject expertise). Do authors cite each other?

518 Are there some authors who are outliers in the web? How do such connections
519 impact information generation?

520 **Format as a Process**

- 521 • Assign students to identify several different applicable information sources that
522 arise from different creation processes, and to communicate the unique values of
523 each. (in collaboration with instructor and course assignment) .
- 524 • Student will identify the format of the sources they find for a given research
525 project and articulate why the chosen formats are appropriate for the information
526 need.
- 527 • Student will find sources about the same topic in two divergent formats, e.g.
528 newspaper movie review and literary journal movie review or scholarly article
529 and a researcher's blog. Students will compare and contrast the type of
530 information found in each format, as well as articulate the processes underlying
531 the creation of each format.
- 532 • Have students research the impact of digital formats in scholarly publication,
533 including Open Source initiative.
- 534 • Ask students to transform information they have created in one format to another
535 format, and to write a reflection on what they needed to consider as they went
536 through the process.

537 **Searching as Exploration**

- 538 • Ask students to brainstorm possible sources that might have relevant information.
539 What tools will they need to locate those resources?
- 540 • Assign students to identify and use subject headings after conducting a keyword
541 search; after which they write a paragraph on the differences between subject and
542 keyword searching.
- 543 • Students must identify one or two important databases for the project they are
544 working on and analyze why they consider them to be an effective resource for
545 their research.
- 546 • Ask students to choose a topic, develop key search terms, and use two different
547 search engines to locate information on their topic. Have them compare the results
548 in terms of quantity, types of sources (e.g., government, educational, scholarly,
549 and commercial), order/sequence of results, and relevance. Pair students who used
550 the same search engine with different topics to compare results.
- 551 • Ask students to write an I-Search paper, whereby they journal their searching
552 processes, including key terms, tools used, and resources/results at each step.
553 They should note how they evaluated their resources, and what information was
554 extracted. Their journal should also reflect their feelings: success, concern,
555 frustration, pride, etc. Pair up students, and ask them to read and comment on
556 each other's journal, and then draw up conclusions and recommendations for their
557 peers.

558 **Information has Value**

- 559 • Time is money. Ask students to blog for a week about their life of information,
560 noting their information needs and the associated costs of getting that information.
561 What are the associated costs if they cannot find the information, and what are the

- 562 cost benefits of getting the information? For example, if a student cannot find a
563 FAFSA form in time, or how to complete it, or the details to provide within the
564 form, they lose out on scholarships.
- 565 • Ask students to find several images that would enhance the project or paper on
566 which they are working. Then ask them to determine which can be used without
567 asking permission. What would they need to do to use this material?
 - 568 • Assign students to read a timely article connected to information ethics in the
569 field of study as a discussion starter.
 - 570 • Ask students in professional or career-focused programs to consider what
571 individuals or organizations make money distributing information relating to that
572 profession or career. Have students discuss the usefulness and potential risks
573 behind this information.
 - 574 • Discern between the economic processes behind different types of information,
575 e.g. newspaper articles vs. 24-hour TV news, edited academic volume vs. popular
576 title on a top 10 list.
 - 577 • Ask students to determine what information they can find about themselves or a
578 relative online, and to assess whether steps should be taken to control this
579 personal information.
- 580

581 **Glossary**

582 Dispositions—Generally: A tendency to act or think in a particular way (Merriam-
583 Webster dictionary). More specifically: A disposition is a cluster of preferences, attitudes,
584 and intentions, as well as a set of capabilities that allow the preferences to become
585 realized in a particular way. (Salomon, 1994)

586
587 Knowledge Practices—The proficiencies or abilities learners develop as a result of their
588 comprehending a threshold concept.

589
590 Metacognition—Awareness and understanding of one’s own thought processes (OED). It
591 focuses on how people learn and process information. It also takes into consideration an
592 individual’s awareness of how they learn. (Livingston, 1997)

593
594 Metaliteracy—Metaliteracy expands the scope of traditional information skills
595 (determine, access, locate, understand, produce, and use information) to include the
596 collaborative production and sharing of information in participatory digital environments
597 (collaborate, produce, and share). This approach requires an ongoing adaptation to
598 emerging technologies and an understanding of the critical thinking and reflection
599 required to engage in these spaces as producers, collaborators, and distributors. (Mackey
600 and Jacobson, 2014)

601
602 Threshold Concepts—Core or foundational concepts that, once grasped by the learner,
603 create new perspectives and ways of understanding a discipline or challenging knowledge
604 domain. Threshold concepts produce transformation within the learner; without them, the
605 learner does not acquire expertise in that field of knowledge. Threshold concepts can be
606 thought of as portals through which the learner must pass in order to develop new
607 perspectives and wider understanding. (Land, Meyer, and Baillie, 2010)

608
609 Transformative Learning—Transforming the frames of reference that are the basis of a
610 learner's interpretations, beliefs, or points of view. A learner's frame of reference is
611 transformed through a critical reflection on his or her assumptions. Educators can
612 facilitate the transformation by helping learners to become aware of and reflective about
613 their assumptions, beliefs, or points of view. (Mezirow, 1997)

614

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680

681 **Appendices**

682 **Appendix 1**

683 **Setting the Context: The Framework for Information Literacy in Higher**

684 **Education**

685 The changes in higher education, coupled with a more complex information ecosystem
686 than existed at the end of the last century, demand new engagement with the concept of
687 information literacy. This Introduction explores the reasons for the dramatic shift from
688 standards to a framework; discusses the key elements upon which the new *Framework*
689 rests, threshold concepts and metaliteracy; and includes the components of the
690 *Framework* that help to move it from a conceptual rendering to a full-fledged, living
691 entity upon which to develop collaborative programs suitable for unique situations. The
692 concluding section acknowledges the stakeholders and community who are engaged in
693 this conversation.

694 **Shifts in Higher Education Landscape Since 2000**

695 It is difficult to characterize changes in higher education as a whole in recent years.
696 There are variations, in particular, among types of higher education institutions and sub-
697 groups of the student population. The most popular major in the United States is
698 business, and the proportion of students who are the first in their family to attend college
699 and/or are above traditional college age (18-22) is increasing.

700
701 As institutions begin conversations around this *Framework for Information Literacy for*
702 *Higher Education*, they need to take into account the demographics of their institution
703 and its academic culture. Given the highly diverse landscape of higher education in the
704 United States, this section focuses on a selective set of trends that may inform
705 conversations about this *Framework* on campuses.

706
707 Some particular trends that are important to understand in the context of this *Framework*
708 are the rise of collaborative student work and the increase in students as creators and
709 participants in research and scholarship. Many programs, for example in business or
710 communications, believe that a key aspect of preparing students for professional work is
711 to develop students' ability to work in teams. Information literacy programs can take
712 advantage of this trend in encouraging new types of multimedia assignments since such
713 projects are most frequently developed by teams of students.

714
715 A number of colleges and universities are developing programs for undergraduate
716 research, which frequently pair undergraduates with faculty members in science labs and
717 can result in students co-authoring papers or presenting at national conferences. Students
718 in the humanities and social sciences are also engaging in new types of digital projects
719 along with their faculty members, such as creating interactive maps of cities where
720 authors worked or annotating and linking classic texts. These students need to navigate
721 information systems, use data sources, and integrate various technology applications to
722 learn ways of thinking and practicing within disciplines.

723

724 Some colleges and universities are placing a greater focus on integrative learning. In
725 some cases, this is developed as a learning communities program where a cohort of
726 students takes a set of courses together in the early years of their college program. Such
727 programs often emphasize cross-disciplinary critical thinking and communication skills.
728 A related trend, interdisciplinarity, seeks to leverage the methods and perspectives from
729 more than one discipline in order to approach problems in new ways.

730
731 An area that has not received much attention in the context of information literacy is the
732 rise in professional masters degrees at many institutions. Students in these programs, who
733 may have full-time employment while completing their programs, have particular needs
734 for efficient mechanisms for accessing and producing information.

735
736 The role of information technology in pedagogy in higher education has also received
737 much attention in the period since the development of the *Information Literacy*
738 *Competency Standards for Higher Education*. Blended learning, which combines in-
739 person teaching along with online components, has become a popular mode of pedagogy,
740 especially in large public institutions. MOOCs (massive open online courses) have been
741 much in the news in recent years; librarians have been working to understand how to
742 integrate information literacy into these classes as well as provide information resources
743 to support the courses. The concept of the “flipped classroom,” in which students in
744 effect get the traditional lecture component of a course outside of class (via videos and
745 readings) and then use class time for collaborative, active learning assignments,
746 facilitated by faculty, has documented success in improving student outcomes in many
747 courses and institutions. This focus on active, collaborative learning is a key development
748 in recent U.S. higher education pedagogy.

749
750 Greater need for sense-making and metacognition in a fragmented, complex information
751 environment requires the ability to understand and navigate this environment holistically,
752 focusing upon intersections. These intersections may be between disciplines, between
753 academic major and employment, between sets of projects, or between academic pursuits
754 and community engagement, to name just a few. All of these intersections are
755 underpinned by the need to engage with information and the communication of
756 information. To do so effectively, students must understand the intricate connections
757 between knowledge, abilities, and critical dispositions that will allow them to thrive.

758 **Refocusing the Current Standards: Creating a Framework**

759 The *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education*, developed by an
760 ACRL Task Force in 1999-2000 and first published in 2000, have advanced discussion
761 about information literacy as an educational reform agenda during the past 14 years. They
762 have enabled some colleges and universities to position information literacy as an
763 essential learning outcome in general education programs, and in some cases have
764 promoted linkages with service learning, problem-based learning, evidence-based
765 learning, and other pedagogies focused on deeper learning within, and beyond, the
766 classroom. Regional accrediting bodies and the American Association of Colleges and
767 Universities (AAC&U) have employed the *Standards* to create benchmarks, guidelines,
768 or rubrics in order to integrate information literacy into the curriculum as an essential
769 learning outcome. In addition, various discipline-specific associations and organizations

770 have adapted or rewritten the *Standards* to best fit disciplinary concepts and methods (in
771 such fields as music and political science).

772
773 The new *Framework* addresses some limitations of the current *Standards* in a number of
774 areas that have become more important in higher education in recent years. The
775 *Framework* moves beyond the *Standards*' conception of information literacy, which
776 provides a limited, almost formulaic approach to understanding a complex information
777 ecosystem. The organization of the *Standards* document in a hierarchy of standards,
778 performance indicators, and learning outcomes conveys a fixed conception of how
779 information literacy can be realized in varied curricula. The *Standards* also focus
780 attention on the objects of scholarship as mostly textual ones, reflecting the time in which
781 they were written. Although the *Standards* pay some regard to other modes of
782 scholarship and learning (visual, data, multimedia), the explosion of these modes and the
783 increasingly hybridized, multi-modal nature of learning and scholarship require an
784 expanded conception of information literacy learning and pedagogy beyond the mostly
785 text-based focus of the *Standards*. In the proposed *Framework*, we hope to provide
786 spaces for creative, integrative, flexible thinking about the dynamic information
787 ecosystem in which all students live, study, and work.

788
789 The *Standards* also valorize the “information literate student” as a construct of imagined
790 accomplishment, at the endpoint of a set of learning experiences, without the involvement
791 of peers, tutors, coaches, faculty advisors, or other collaborators. While individual
792 student learning and initiative are always important, learning and scholarship also involve
793 others, whether through face-to-face discussions, virtual communities, debates and
794 dialogues in blogs, conference presentations, community or citizen meetings, or through
795 solitary but active reading of, and grappling with, the ideas in challenging texts. The
796 *Framework* focuses more attention on the vital role of collaboration and its potential for
797 increasing student understanding of the processes of knowledge creation and scholarship.
798 The *Framework* also emphasizes student creativity and participation, highlighting the
799 importance of their contributions. Students' intelligent, engaged use of the information
800 environment for learning occurs within a wider circle of participation and enlarged
801 understanding made possible through many formal academic experiences as well as many
802 daily non-academic experiences.

803
804 The need for “sense-making” within the evolving information ecosystem means that the
805 whole learner must be engaged, transcending purely cognitive skills. Educational
806 researchers are paying increasing attention to affect as a driver for critical thinking, to
807 which all conceptions of information literacy pay homage. Critical thinking is an ongoing
808 educational mission for all levels of education; it has ancient roots and has been carried
809 forward into the discussions of information literacy for the past two decades as an
810 educational goal, despite the many challenges of defining it in a way that satisfies various
811 disciplinary specialists. However, critical thinking, as identified in the *Standards*, focuses
812 almost exclusively on cognition, ignoring the vital aspect of attitudes, emotion, and
813 dispositions (tendencies or preferences to learn in certain ways) in creating the
814 willingness to learn difficult new concepts, and to develop self-efficacy. The lessons that
815 we have learned from Carol Kuhlthau's research on the role of affect in the search

816 process are crucially applicable now,¹ as students must “make meaning” of an extremely
817 mutable set of information resources and processes, and must tolerate ambiguity within a
818 learning environment in which fixed reference points are becoming less “fixed.” The
819 engagement of all of students’ capacities, whether cognitive, affective, volitional, or
820 value-based, in learning communities broadly defined, offers the greatest potential for
821 institutional change in information literacy programming, rather than focusing only on
822 cognitive learning outcomes in scattered academic courses. The proposed *Framework*
823 seeks to address the great potential for information literacy as a deeper, more integrated
824 learning agenda, focused on academic courses, undergraduate research, service learning,
825 digital projects showcasing student research, and through other initiatives at local
826 institutions that span the formal academic and co-curricular and field learning
827 experiences of novices (first-year students), students in undergraduate majors, as well as
828 graduate and professional students.

829 **Information Literacy: A New Definition**

830 ACRL’s previous definition of *information literacy* describes it as a set of skills or
831 competencies that are uniform among all learners. This conception is based on an
832 inventory of competencies assumed to operate one-dimensionally across all disciplines
833 and contexts. Other conceptions growing out of the research of Bruce, Lupton, Lloyd,
834 and Limburg identify the limitations of this skill- and- individual-attribute-based
835 conception.^{2,3,4,5} The commonalities of these researchers’ findings emphasize the highly
836 relational, context-specific nature of information literacy, and the varied circumstances in
837 which individuals and groups activate these competencies and describe them to
838 researchers. Clearly, the experience of studying, working, and living in a complex
839 information environment produces a variety of potential models for information literacy
840 learning across a variety of disciplines, domains, contexts, and work environments.

841
842 The creation of this new *Framework* suggests an expanded definition of information
843 literacy, one that goes to the heart of learning itself, while allowing for varied
844 manifestations of what information literacy means for students, faculty, administrators,
845 and a range of academic specialists in a variety of academic institutions. The following
846 definition underpins the *Framework*:

847
848 Information literacy is a repertoire of understandings, practices, and dispositions focused
849 on flexible engagement with the information ecosystem, underpinned by critical self-
850 reflection. The repertoire involves finding, evaluating, interpreting, managing, and using
851 information to answer questions and develop new ones; and creating new knowledge
852 through ethical participation in communities of learning, scholarship, and practice.

853
854 The *Framework* is based on concepts about the information ecosystem; practices for
855 increasing expertise within it; particular ways of thinking about it and behaving within it;
856 and general strategies for learning from it. The *Framework* consists of the following
857 interconnected elements that produce a coherent whole:

- 858 1. *Core understandings* about the evolving information system (threshold
859 concepts).

- 860 2. *A set of practices* that demonstrate increased credibility within that
861 ecosystem, as both consumer of information and creator of knowledge
862 (knowledge practices).
863 3. *A way of thinking* that develops more expert “moves” within that dynamic
864 information ecosystem (dispositions).
865 4. *Metacognitive strategies* (critical self-reflection, metaliteracy).

866 **A New Framework for Information Literacy: Using Threshold Concepts**

867 An expanded conception of information literacy calls for the creation of a more open
868 framework to allow for wider and deeper integration of information literacy within the
869 formal academic curriculum and beyond it, in co-curricular contexts, where students
870 themselves increasingly assume leadership roles in campus projects involving astute
871 information use and the creation of scholarship.
872

873 This new *Framework* addresses foundational or core concepts in information literacy that
874 coalesce some of the subordinate or more granular concepts and skills usually taught in
875 library instruction; such concepts should position information literacy on a higher plane,
876 as an integral part of the learning process within disciplines, and across them. Such core
877 concepts should address the “bottlenecks of understanding” or challenges that students
878 face in learning to maneuver expertly within the information landscape. These gaps or
879 “bottlenecks” are best addressed through threshold concepts. Threshold concepts grow
880 out of pedagogical research in the United Kingdom, originating with the work of Meyer
881 and Land,⁶ in the field of economics; the theory behind these concepts has since been
882 adopted by faculty in disciplines as varied as biology, geology, management, accounting,
883 history, philosophy, engineering, design, and nanoscience. Growing interest in the library
884 field in threshold concepts as a different way of framing information literacy is evident in
885 the research and writing of Hofer, Brunetti, and Townsend. An ongoing Delphi study
886 conducted by these authors and others has, in fact, informed the work of the Task Force
887 that has developed the *Framework* presented here.⁷
888

889 Threshold concepts are those challenging “gateway” or portal concepts through which
890 students must pass in order to develop genuine expertise within a discipline, profession,
891 or knowledge domain. Meyer and Land identified several characteristics of threshold
892 concepts, among them: *transformative; integrative; irreversible; bounded; and*
893 *troublesome*.⁸ While some faculty and pedagogical experts have discussed these
894 characteristics within their disciplines for a decade, the library community is just now
895 examining threshold concepts and their potential for teaching information literacy for the
896 first time. This *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* will focus on
897 these characteristics of threshold concepts in order to clarify, among numerous potential
898 concepts that could be considered essential, the ones that are truly “portals” to
899 understanding. The same characteristics identified by Meyer and Land apply to the
900 domain of information literacy. That is, the *Framework* includes core concepts that offer
901 the potential to *transform understanding* of the information environment so that more
902 granular ideas and skills make greater sense (answering the “Why”? question for students
903 who might otherwise see information literacy skills as pointless); to *integrate various*
904 *concepts* relating to the information ecosystem into a network of concepts and
905 understandings, so that more coherence is possible in developing curricula for

906 information literacy; to *make irreversible the learning* of deeper features of the
907 information ecosystem, precluding a return to more simplistic notions about information
908 sources and processes; to demarcate concepts in the field of information literacy from
909 other, related fields, through *boundedness*; and to *address troublesome, difficult, or*
910 *counterintuitive aspects* of the information ecosystem so that diagnostic work can occur
911 in identifying “bottlenecks in understanding” of various features of the ecosystem,
912 through formative assessment and redesign of learning experiences and information
913 literacy programs and curricula.⁹

914

915 A vital benefit in using threshold concepts as one of the underpinnings for the new
916 *Framework* is the potential for collaboration among disciplinary faculty, librarians,
917 teaching and learning center staff, and others. Creating a community of conversations
918 about this enlarged understanding should create conditions for more collaboration, more
919 innovative course designs, more action research focused on information literacy, and a
920 more inclusive consideration of learning within and beyond the classroom. Threshold
921 concepts originated as faculty pedagogical research within disciplines; because
922 information literacy is both a disciplinary and a transdisciplinary learning agenda, using a
923 threshold concepts framework for information literacy program planning, librarian-
924 faculty collaboration, and student co-curricular projects, should offer great potential for
925 curricular transformation.

926 **Metaliteracy**

927 The conception of information literacy as a metaliteracy informs the *Framework*.
928 Metaliteracy builds upon information literacy’s traditional core components by
929 emphasizing new roles and responsibilities brought about by emerging technologies and
930 collaborative communities. “Metaliteracy empowers learners to participate in interactive
931 information environments, equipped with the ability to continuously reflect, change, and
932 contribute as critical thinkers.”¹⁰ It is important for individuals to view themselves as
933 information producers, both individually and collaboratively, and to recognize that they
934 join many others in this role. As both producers and consumers of information content in
935 an ever-changing variety of formats and modes, learners must recognize that in adapting
936 to these changes, they must interact with, evaluate, and share information effectively and
937 flexibly. Metacognition, or consciously reflecting about one’s thinking, is critical to
938 metaliteracy. The learning objectives that have been developed for metaliteracy recognize
939 that individuals call upon multiple domains when participating fully in the evolving
940 information environment. These domains include the cognitive, metacognitive, affective,
941 and behavioral.

942 **Organization of the Framework**

943 The *Framework* is organized into a set of six Frames, each consisting of a threshold
944 concept, as well as a set of knowledge practices and dispositions that support learning
945 goals for each threshold concept. In addition, assignments supporting each of the Frames
946 are available in another section of this document.

947 **Knowledge Practices (Abilities)**

948 Each threshold concept includes a section entitled Knowledge Practices (Abilities). This
949 terminology is used in order to emphasize that the focus is not on learners simply

950 acquiring skills. Rather, their mastery of these transformative threshold concepts leads to
951 new knowledge, which brings with it the ability to engage in the described practices. A
952 selection of expected knowledge practices is provided for each threshold concept. These
953 provide a foundation for a more extensive set determined by the unique situation of each
954 learner.

955 **Dispositions**

956 This *Framework* includes a set of dispositions for each of the threshold concepts.
957 Students and others learn best when they use more than their cognitive faculties. It is
958 important that they be open to the experience and substance of what they are learning.
959 This is particularly true with threshold concepts, which, by definition, are troublesome.
960 The Dispositions section provides a guide that will assist instructors and learners alike.
961 While it is provided for instructors to design learning experiences that will encourage
962 students to consider their attitudes and feelings about the new concepts, it might also, in
963 appropriate situations, be shared directly with students to promote self-reflection.

964
965 “Dispositions in Action” is a section in each of the four areas in the American
966 Association of School Librarians’ *Standards for the 21st-Century Learner*.¹¹ The
967 presence of this component in both documents provides continuity in learning
968 experiences from K-12 to higher education.

969 **Assignments**

970 Each frame includes a selection of activities that can be used as, or inspire assignments or
971 activities. These assignments are to be found in an ancillary document, and will
972 eventually be moved to an online sandbox, once it is created. The sandbox will be a rich
973 resource for ideas, examples, and answers to questions, and will include other possible
974 assessment and assignment ideas.

975 **Stakeholders**

976 A strong community has developed around the *Information Literacy Competency*
977 *Standards for Higher Education*, published in 2000. Librarians around the country, and
978 in fact around the world, have worked to include the *Standards* in overall educational
979 requirements for their institutions. Some accrediting bodies for U.S. higher education
980 regions have promoted the use of the *Standards* in institutional reviews. However, in
981 many institutions, the *Standards* have been implemented in a librarian-driven process,
982 often without explicit buy-in from academic departments. The intent of this *Framework*
983 is to encourage conversations among a broad group of stakeholders who will craft an
984 information literacy program that meets the needs of their institution. Disciplinary faculty
985 members have a primary role in this conversation because of the need for students to
986 develop specialized information skills in their majors. While some information skills are
987 generic and transferable, students should develop more sophisticated skills in areas of
988 particular relevance to their major area of study. For example, history majors should
989 work closely with primary sources (in special collections or born digital collections) and
990 science majors should develop some expertise with accessing and managing large data
991 sets. Conversations between librarians and disciplinary faculty are essential for
992 developing a robust information literacy program that is integrated into the academic
993 work of students.

994 While it is likely that librarians will convene campus conversations about information
995 literacy, they should seek institutional partners who have a particular interest in
996 pedagogy, information technology, and assessment. Individuals from a campus center for
997 teaching and learning, an undergraduate education office, or a student success office can
998 inform discussions about innovations in curricula within the institution, can assist with
999 understanding local teaching and learning trends (for example, are more departments
1000 experimenting with blended learning or the “flipped classroom”), and can help librarians
1001 focus on pedagogical objectives that are important to the broader institution. They may
1002 also provide liaison with specific programs that could benefit from an infusion of
1003 information literacy content.

1004
1005 The role that academic computing professionals play in teaching and learning varies
1006 greatly from institution to institution. Understanding where there are opportunities for
1007 collaboration with these professionals, whether in a central information technology unit
1008 or embedded in colleges or departments, is important for developing a holistic
1009 information literacy program. For example, in some institutions, computing professionals
1010 have taken the lead in assisting faculty with developing new kinds of multimedia
1011 assignments for courses and for implementing workshops and other services for students
1012 involved in multimedia production. This *Framework* views the integration of accessing
1013 information and developing new types of information products as a holistic process and
1014 realizing this concept may involve developing new partnerships between and among
1015 information technology professionals, librarians, and faculty.

1016
1017 As institutional teams rethink their implementation of an information literacy program in
1018 the context of this *Framework*, they should be developing an assessment plan that will
1019 provide evidence of the impact and outcomes of a new program. Working with
1020 assessment professionals on campus, whether in an assessment office, undergraduate
1021 education office, student success program, or planning office, can provide the expertise
1022 needed to develop robust assessment instruments. In addition, the information literacy
1023 program may be able to embed some of its data collection into existing campus
1024 instruments or correlate some of its data with other sources of data being collected by
1025 others.

1026
1027 Librarians have the opportunity to play the leading role in bringing together partners and
1028 stakeholders to shape information literacy initiatives on campus. Even within libraries, at
1029 times the silos of departments and roles isolate librarians who could be working together
1030 to develop new focuses for information literacy. For example, librarians whose specialty
1031 is “big data” can partner with information literacy librarians along with disciplinary
1032 faculty to shape new initiatives to develop students’ skills in this area. Librarians on
1033 many campuses have reached out to faculty to encourage their interest in information
1034 literacy. With this *Framework*, the intent is for librarians to launch conversations that
1035 focus on curricular needs and the information access, management, and production needs
1036 of students within that context.

1037

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- 1070

1071 **Appendix 2**

1072 **Introduction for Faculty and Administrators**

1073 Refocusing the Current Standards: Creating a Framework

1074 Changes in higher education, coupled with a more complex information ecosystem than
1075 existed at the end of the last century, demand new engagement with the concept of
1076 information literacy. The Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL) has
1077 played a leading role in promoting information literacy in higher education for decades.
1078 The *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education*, first published in
1079 2000, enabled colleges and universities to position information literacy as an essential
1080 learning outcome in the curriculum, and promoted linkages with general education
1081 programs, service learning, problem-based learning, and other pedagogies focused on
1082 deeper learning. Regional accrediting bodies, the American Association of Colleges and
1083 Universities (AAC&U), and various discipline-specific organizations employed and
1084 adapted the *Standards*.

1085
1086 It is now time for a fresh look at information literacy. An ACRL Task Force has
1087 developed a new *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*. The
1088 *Framework* focuses attention on the vital role of collaboration and its potential for
1089 increasing student understanding of the processes of knowledge creation and scholarship.
1090 The *Framework* also emphasizes student creativity and participation, highlighting the
1091 importance of their contributions. The proposed *Framework* seeks to address the great
1092 potential for information literacy as a deeper, more integrated learning agenda, focused
1093 on academic courses, undergraduate research, service learning, digital projects
1094 showcasing student research, and through other initiatives at local institutions that span
1095 the formal academic and co-curricular and field learning experiences of novices (first-
1096 year students), students in undergraduate majors, as well as graduate and professional
1097 students. In the proposed *Framework*, we hope to provide spaces for creative, integrative,
1098 flexible thinking about the dynamic information ecosystem in which all students live,
1099 study, and work.

1100
1101 The *Framework* is developed around a set of threshold concepts, which are those
1102 challenging gateway or portal concepts through which students must pass in order to
1103 develop genuine expertise within a discipline, profession, or knowledge domain. Each
1104 threshold concept includes a Knowledge Practices (Abilities) section that is used to
1105 demonstrate how the mastery of the threshold concept leads to new knowledge and the
1106 ability to engage in the described practices. Each concept also includes a set of
1107 dispositions, which addresses the affective areas of learning. In addition, each threshold
1108 concept includes a selection of activities that can be used as, or inspire, assignments or
1109 assessments.

1110 **For Faculty: How to Use the Framework**

1111 A vital benefit in using threshold concepts as one of the underpinnings for the new
1112 *Framework* is the potential for collaboration among disciplinary faculty, librarians,
1113 teaching and learning center staff, and others. Creating a community of conversations
1114 about this enlarged understanding should create conditions for more collaboration, more

1115 innovative course designs, more action research focused on information literacy, and a
1116 more inclusive consideration of learning within and beyond the classroom. Threshold
1117 concepts originated as faculty pedagogical research within disciplines; because
1118 information literacy is both a disciplinary and a transdisciplinary learning agenda, using a
1119 threshold concepts framework for information literacy program planning, librarian-
1120 faculty collaboration, and student co-curricular projects, should offer great potential for
1121 curricular transformation. Faculty can:

- 1122 • Investigate threshold concepts in your discipline and gain an understanding of the
1123 approach used in the *Framework* in the discipline you know
 - 1124 ○ What are the specialized information skills in your discipline that students
1125 should develop such as using primary sources (History) accessing and
1126 managing large data sets (science)?
- 1127 • Look for workshops at your campus Teaching and Learning Center on the flipped
1128 classroom and consider how such practices could be incorporated in your courses
 - 1129 ○ What information and research should students be accessing outside of
1130 class to arrive prepared to apply concepts and experiment on collaborative
1131 projects?
- 1132 • Partner with IT and librarians to develop new kinds of multimedia assignments
1133 for courses.
 - 1134 ○ What kinds of workshops and other services should be available for
1135 students involved in multimedia production?
- 1136 • Help students view themselves as information producers, both individually and
1137 collaboratively
 - 1138 ○ In your courses and academic program, how do students both produce and
1139 consume information content in a variety of formats and modes? How do
1140 they interact with, evaluate, and share information effectively and
1141 flexibly?
- 1142 • Consider the Dispositions, Self-Assessments, and Assignments in each
1143 information literacy threshold concept for possible integration into your own
1144 courses and academic program
 - 1145 ○ How might you and a librarian design learning experiences that will
1146 encourage students to assess their own attitudes, strengths/weaknesses,
1147 and knowledge gaps related to information and how might you
1148 collaboratively design assignments for your courses?

1149 **For Administrators: How to Use the Framework**

1150 The *Framework* differs substantially from the ACRL *Information Literacy Competency*
1151 *Standards for Higher Education*; it is a genuinely new model. Through reading the
1152 *Framework* document and discussing the new model with librarians in your institution,
1153 administrators can begin to focus on the best mechanisms to implement the *Framework*
1154 in their institution. Administrators can:

- 1155 • Host or encourage a series of campus conversations about how the institution can
1156 incorporate the *Framework* into the curriculum.
- 1157 • Encourage committees working on planning documents related to teaching and
1158 learning (at the department, program, and institutional levels) to include concepts
1159 from the *Framework* in their work.

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- Promote partnerships between faculty, librarians, instructional technologists, information technologists, and others to develop meaningful ways for students to become digital content creators, especially in their disciplines.
 - Provide resources to encourage assessment of information literacy of students at various levels at your institution.

1165

1166 **Appendix 3**

1167 **Draft Recommendations to the ACRL Board of Directors**

1168 When the final version of the *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*
1169 is submitted to the ACRL Board of Directors (anticipated in August 2014), the Task
1170 Force will include a set of recommendations for the Board’s consideration. While that
1171 document is not yet written, we want to share our intentions with readers of this draft.

1172
1173 The *Framework* has been developed to guide librarians on the areas that are essential
1174 for student understanding, and that help us to conceptualize the study of information
1175 within the curriculum of higher education. It is also meant to stimulate conversations
1176 with our partners in higher education, including faculty members, academic
1177 administrators, curriculum committees, teaching centers, and others.

1178
1179 1. RECOMMEDATION: The Task Force recommends that the Board approve the
1180 *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* as written.

1181
1182 BACKGROUND: The Task Force used a transparent process throughout the
1183 development stages. Feedback has been sought and incorporated into the
1184 *Framework*: in-person forums were held at the 2014 ALA Midwinter Meeting in
1185 Philadelphia, and the 2013 ALA Annual Conference in Chicago and a hearing
1186 was held at the 2014 ALA Annual Conference in Las Vegas. Five online forums
1187 were held in October 2013, November 2013, and April 2014. Two online hearings
1188 were held in July 2014. A total of x# individuals logged in (some logins were for
1189 groups).

1190
1191 The June draft, like the two earlier parts, was promoted broadly, including within
1192 the higher education community. A visiting program officer specifically help us
1193 identify and reach organizations that work with faculty, accreditors, library and
1194 information science educators, and administrators to promote the revised,
1195 complete June draft. We provided discussion questions to prompt input and
1196 solicited responses via an online questionnaire. A total of x# people responded to
1197 the spring and summer questionnaires and their feedback helped us refine the
1198 *Framework*.

1199
1200 We also sought input on near final drafts from the ACRL Information Literacy
1201 Standards Committee and the ACRL Standards Committee. All of this
1202 community feedback to the drafts was invaluable in helping us hone and refine
1203 the final *Framework* we present to you now. Some of the notable changes we
1204 made to the *Framework* in response to feedback include:

- 1205 • Creating a new Brief Introduction
- 1206 • Including a practical guide on how to use the *Framework*

1207
1208 *(Note: This recommendation will be updated to include more highlights and # of*
1209 *people responding after we receive feedback to June draft and hold July online*
1210 *hearings.)*

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2. RECOMMENDATION: The Task Force recommends that the *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education* be sunsetted one year after the approval of the new *Framework*. This will allow librarians, programs, and institutions that use or have formally adopted the *Standards* to begin to transition to the *Framework*. The *Framework* better reflects the changed education and information environment than the *Standards*, and we feel it is inadvisable to have two documents available from which a choice can be made.
3. RECOMMENDATION: The Task Force recommends that the Board charge a new Task Force with managing the transition from *Standards* to *Framework*. We envisage this as a small, nimble group. Potential members might include two members of the current ACRL ILCSHE Task Force, one or more members of ACRL discipline sections, a member of the Information Literacy Standards Committee, and one member of the Instruction Section. Their charge would include working with a half-time ACRL staff member to design continuing education opportunities, providing feedback on the online sandbox, providing guidance to the discipline sections, developing a range of educational materials to smooth the transition, and working with higher education associations such as the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U).
4. RECOMMENDATION: The Task Force recommends that the Board encourage ACRL's discipline sections to use the *Framework* to operationalize their learning goals. The Women and Gender Studies Section is poised to serve as a model in this regard, and their work might assist other sections that undertake this project.