

April 4, 2014

## Welcome, again

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

- Introduction
- Three Threshold Concepts
- Glossary
- Bibliography

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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1 **Threshold Concept**

2 **Authority is Constructed and Contextual**

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

5  
6 **Authority of information resources depends upon their origins, the information need, and  
7 the context in which those information resources were created and will be used.**

8 **Experienced researchers understand that the level of information quality needed for a  
9 particular purpose varies, will use various types of evaluative criteria to match that  
10 purpose, and will trust the authority of that information with an attitude of informed  
11 skepticism, remaining open to new perspectives, additional voices, and changes in schools  
12 of thought.**

13

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

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

### 33 **Knowledge Practices (Abilities)**

34 Learners who are developing their information literate abilities

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

### 45 **Dispositions**

46 Learners who are developing their information literate abilities

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

### 54 **Self-Assessments**

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

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

### 62 **Possible Assignments/Assessments**

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

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

- 72 information need and locating sources). (Lower level; one shot friendly) [Overlaps with  
73 threshold concept: Format as Process]
- 74 • Ask students in a class to each find two reviews of a particular film or book that come to  
75 different conclusions. (Alternatively, these could be provided to students.) Compare the  
76 evidence reviewers cite for their opinions. Is there evidence used by reviewers to come to  
77 different conclusions? (Lower level, but could substitute disciplinary articles for upper  
78 level students; one shot friendly)
  - 79 • Ask students to brainstorm situations when traditional peer review might not accomplish  
80 its purpose. (Upper level)
  - 81 • Have students look at a blog, a video on YouTube, a collection of tweets, or some other  
82 type of social media regarding a contemporary event (e.g., demonstrations at Tahrir  
83 Square during the "Arab Spring" events). Ask them to describe how they would analyze  
84 and evaluate the authority the author(s) of the information. Are there ways to determine  
85 whether the individual was an actual witness or participant in the events? Are there ways  
86 to identify whether the individual or group that developed a collection of information has  
87 a particular political bias? Can they determine whether the author(s) has a particular  
88 status within the group he/she represents or is the individual reporting as an "average  
89 citizen"? (Upper level)
  - 90 • Ask students to create a citation "web" using a citation analysis database, and conduct a  
91 content analysis of the linked authors by affiliation (workplace, academic preparation,  
92 geography, subject expertise). Do authors cite each other? Are there some authors who  
93 are outliers in the web? How do such connections impact information generation?  
94 (Upper level) [Overlaps with threshold concept: Scholarship is a Conversation]  
95

96 **Threshold Concept**

97 **Searching is Strategic**

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

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

108

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

114

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

123

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

132

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

138 **Knowledge Practices (Abilities)**

139 Learners who are developing their information literate abilities

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

149

150 **Dispositions**

151 Learners who are developing their information literate abilities

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

155

156 **Self-Assessments**

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

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

161

162 **Possible Assignments/Assessments**

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

- 180 read and comment on each other's journal, and then draw up conclusions and  
181 recommendations for their peers.
- 182 • Have students create the idea for a new structured system that would assist  
183 researchers/searchers in a particular field or area of interest. They would need to propose  
184 full particulars, including the type of information to be included, the source of that  
185 information, a proposed tagging/indexing system, and a list of search features that would  
186 enhance the experience of users.