

**2014 ALA Annual Conference**  
**Instruction and Information Literacy Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Saturday, June 28 2014, 4:30pm to 5:30pm**  
**Bally's Director's Room**

Co-chairs:

Adam Beauchamp (Tulane University)

Rui Wang (Central Michigan University)

1. Welcome & Introductions
  - a. Reminder that Adam Beauchamp's 2-year term as co-chair is ending. Call made for volunteers to fill this position. Interested parties may follow up directly with continuing co-chair, Rui Wang ([wang1r@cmich.edu](mailto:wang1r@cmich.edu)).
  
2. ANSS webpage dedicated to reference & instruction resources
  - a. Adam Beauchamp will continue as a member of this committee after his term as co-chair, and will focus on building out the current "Guides to Subject Literature" webpage on the ANSS website. The goal is a more robust collection of resources to support reference and instruction.
  
3. Discussion of proposed ACRL Framework for Information Literacy
  - a. Adam led a discussion of what the committee members think of the new framework, how it impacts our work as subject librarians, and how the Framework compares with existing general and subject specific standards.
  - b. A summary of the discussion was circulated on the ANSS listserv, and is attached to the minutes.
  
4. Reminder for those interested in serving as co-chair to contact Rui Wang.
5. Adjourned.

Note: Apologies to those who tried and failed to attend virtually. The assigned room for this meeting was changed, and did not support wireless Internet access.

## **Notes from Discussion at ALA Annual**

### *On the Frameworks conceptual underpinnings:*

Discussants expressed concern about the new jargon introduced in the Framework, especially *Metaliteracy*, which was the subject of much criticism in earlier drafts, and has since been de-emphasized in the latest version.

Use of library jargon is always problematic when working with our broader communities, but discussants were even skeptical that metaliteracy as a concept was useful at all.

As for *Threshold Concepts*, the driving force behind the Framework, discussants expressed some ambivalence. While the six frames that have emerged seem useful and an improvement over the "old" [2000 Standards](#), the theory behind threshold concepts is a bit weak. It's hard to find much criticism of threshold concepts in the literature, but there are a few examples that take a more critical approach. ([Rowbottom 2007](#); [Wilkinson 2014](#)).

### *Change for the good*

Despite some concerns about its theoretical foundations, discussants had a favorable opinion of the Framework as a means to refresh our instruction in a changing information environment.

The new Framework is less linear than the Standards, which may be helpful in teaching about research, a decidedly non-linear process.

The new Framework focuses less on the mechanics of searching and moves into more conceptual thinking, supportive of our efforts to get past database demonstrations and into critical thinking and complex understanding of information production and value.

Discussants thought the more abstract Framework would make it easier to integrate information literacy into the social sciences. The broad concepts provide more flexibility to adapt to disciplinary research needs. Assessment may be more challenging, though, since broad concepts would need to be broken down locally into measurable outcomes tailored to the individual instruction method or lesson plan.

### *Outreach to faculty*

As with the old standards, the new Framework is a document written for librarians that must be "translated" locally when working with faculty and other institutional partners. Library jargon should always be avoided, and instead librarians should adopt the language used by our partners when talking about information literacy concepts.

The one-shot instruction session, which still dominates the library instruction landscape, presents a difficult fit with the Framework. All six frames are broad in scope, and can't possibly be taught fully in one 50-minute session. But that was true of the old Standards as well, and it behooves us to work with faculty to integrate information literacy in their teaching outside the library, and throughout the curriculum.

Our ability to suffuse the local curricula with the information literacy Framework will necessarily require working within our local structures, and [curriculum mapping](#) is one approach to strategically deploying information literacy instruction across the curriculum (Booth 2011).

When constrained by the one-shot format, we must work with faculty to identify the most critical concepts on which to focus our teaching, and make choices on where we can have the most impact on student learning.

We can also work with faculty not only in the library classroom, but in the course syllabus to help design research assignments that support information literacy learning. Librarians are uniquely positioned to help bridge the gap between faculty assumptions and student needs. For example, research practices for an expert already familiar with the scholarly conversation are very different from those of a novice who isn't yet fluent in academic writing styles, literature reviews, publisher quality, or even the disciplinary vocabulary. Librarians can use the Framework to make those differences visible and effect pedagogical change.

#### *What it all means for ANSS librarians*

On the last page of [ACRL's Framework document](#), the Task Force recommends the old Standards be sunsetted, and that ACRL's discipline sections "use the Framework to operationalize their learning goals." In other words, we may be asked to rewrite our ANSS information literacy standards document to reflect the new Framework. If and when that happens, surely the Instruction & Information Literacy Committee will lead those efforts, and seek plenty of input from the ANSS membership.

In the meantime, how can ANSS librarians implement the Framework in their roles as disciplinary liaisons? Discussants noted that the broad nature of the frames, and the inherent flexibility they provide may in fact make it easier to adapt them to library instruction in anthropology, sociology, criminology, and other fields.

One participant noted that "threshold concepts" resembles the concept of liminality, which will be especially familiar to anthropologists and other social science faculty. Professors have already passed through this transformative "rite" and may have difficulty relating to students who have not yet done so. By framing information literacy and learning to research as a rite of passage, liaison librarians may be able to use disciplinary vocabulary to better communicate our information literacy goals to faculty. Another interesting metaphor brought up in discussion was "library session as field work," a part of the data gathering process integral to research as inquiry. For example, students engaged in ethnographic research may need to engage with primary source materials for analysis. Even the gathering of secondary sources for a literature review could be framed as ethnographic, a form of observing and interpreting the research culture of scholars working on a given topic.

While the Framework seems to create opportunities for greater creativity in the library classroom, discussants did notice a lack of emphasis on the ethics of information use. Ethics are mentioned in the

core definition of information literacy, and gets passing mention in the “scholarship as inquiry” frame, but there is no frame dedicated to ethics. This may be an area where ANSS and other disciplinary sections can elaborate on the Framework, adding an important dimension to information work as it relates to research with human subjects, privacy and data security, and other ethical issues common to social science research.

Overall, discussants viewed the proposed Framework for Information Literacy positively, and appreciated the need for change in our information literacy efforts in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Works Cited**

ACRL Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education Task Force. 2014. “Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education: Revised Draft.” Retrieved July 8, 2014

(<http://acrl.ala.org/ilstandards/>).

Booth, Char. 2011. “Project Curve, Part Four: Mapping (concept to Curriculum).” *info-mational*.

Retrieved July 8, 2014 (<https://infomational.wordpress.com/2011/08/18/project-curve-part-four-mapping-concept-to-curriculum/>).

Rowbottom, Darrell Patrick. 2007. “Demystifying Threshold Concepts.” *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 41(2):263–70.

Wilkinson, Lane. 2014. “The Problem with Threshold Concepts.” *Sense & Reference*. Retrieved July 8, 2014 (<http://senseandreference.wordpress.com/2014/06/19/the-problem-with-threshold-concepts/>).