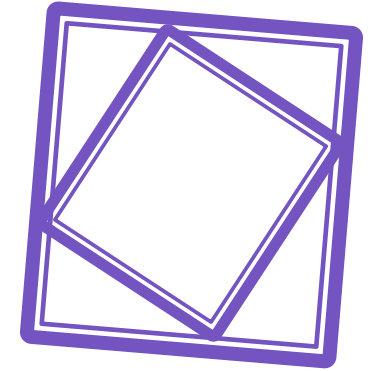


# Frames within Frames:

An Exploration of the Assumptions  
Implicit in the Association of College  
and Research Libraries'



## *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education<sup>1</sup>*

Presented by Melissa Svendsen

<sup>1</sup>. The frames discussed here are adapted from the Association of College and Research Libraries' *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* (ACRL MW15 4.1). Retrieved from <http://acrl.ala.org/ilstandards/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Framework-MW15-Board-Docs.pdf>



## **The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL)**

- **is a division of the American Library Association.**
- **sets information literacy standards for academic libraries in the US and also in Canada.**



## ***The Framework for Information Literacy***

- **supersedes the ACRL's *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education*.**
- **consists of six interrelated “frames” through which information literacy can be viewed.**
- **is *very* ambitious, with a focus on higher order skills.**



## ***The Framework for Information Literacy***

- **assumes a particular kind of student, with a particular set of pre-existing dispositions.**
- **reflects an education system that is designed for students who share a sociocultural background with their professors.**
- **must be adapted to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student population.**



If we are to serve *all* of our students, and in particular our international students, it is critical that we:

- uncover the implicit assumptions that underlie the *Framework*.
- be prepared to teach these assumptions directly.



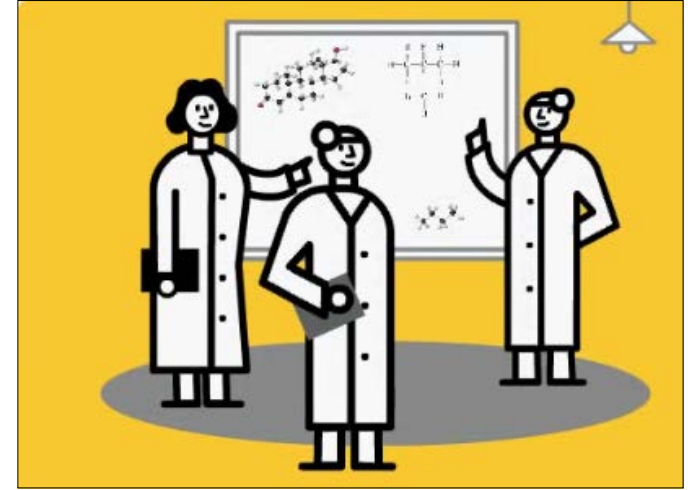
**In this talk, I will:**

- **discuss each frame in turn, attempting to uncover the implicit assumptions that underlie it.**
- **argue that, to the extent that we are able to make these implicit assumptions explicit, we will better serve our international students.**

## Frame 1

# Authority is constructed and contextual.

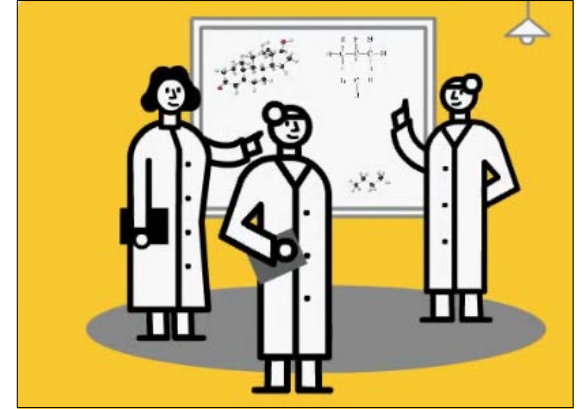
- Authority is *constructed* in that different communities recognize different types of authority.
- Authority is *contextual* in that different information needs require different levels of authority.



## Assumption:

### Authority is contested.

- Authority is *contested* in that reasonable people can disagree on the assignment of authority, both within and among communities.
- Asserting that an authority figure is mistaken is not necessarily a sign of disrespect.





## Frame 2

# Information creation is a process.



- Information creation is a process that occurs within a particular context.
- The iterative process of researching, creating, revising, and disseminating information varies, and the results reflect these variations.

## **Assumption:**

# **Information creation is contingent.**



- Information creation is contingent upon social, cultural and economic factors.
- If these factors were different, then the information created would be different.

## Frame 3

### Information has value.

Information has value:

- as a commodity.
- as a means of influence.
- as a means of education.
- as a means of understanding the world.



# Assumption

## Information varies in quality.



- Information sources vary in currency, completeness and reliability.
- Information sources of various degrees of quality serve various purposes.

## **Frame 4**

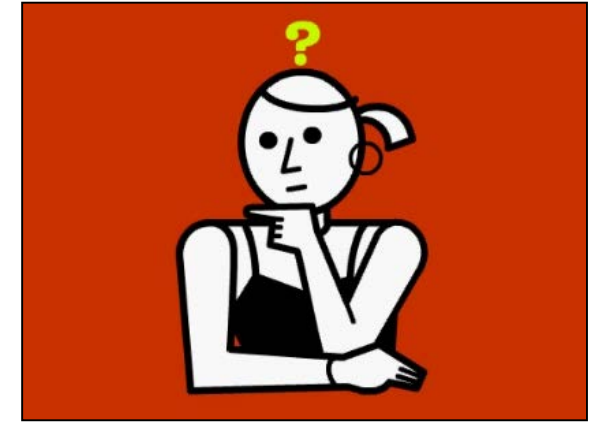
**Research is inquiry.**

**Research is an iterative process that involves asking new and/or increasingly complex questions that develop additional lines of inquiry.**



## **Assumption:**

**Asking questions and finding answers are important parts of acquiring knowledge.**



- Knowledge must be actively constructed by individuals using many sources.
- It is unlikely that all of the answers to a question will be found in one place.
- Individuals' opinions matter and may even influence the answers that they find.

## **Frame 5**

**Scholarship is a conversation.**

**Communities of scholars engage in sustained discourse that results in new insights and discoveries emerging over time.**



## **Assumption:**

**Reasonable people can disagree.**



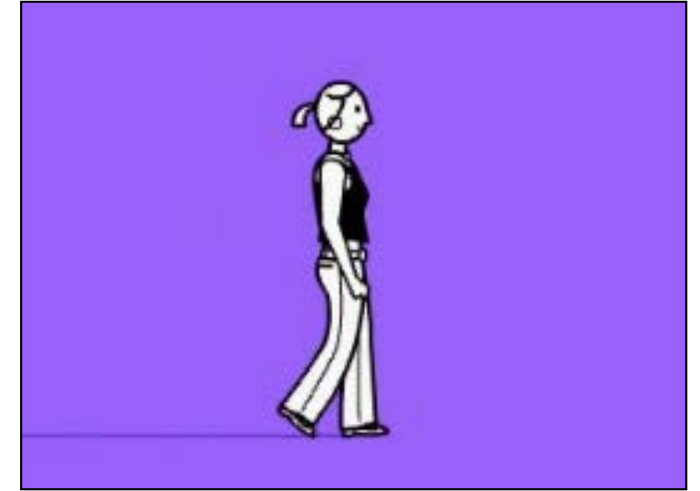
- **Asserting that someone is mistaken is not a sign of disrespect.**
- **Honest mistakes are an inevitable part of the process of creating knowledge, so being wrong does not necessary involve loss of face.**



## Frame 6

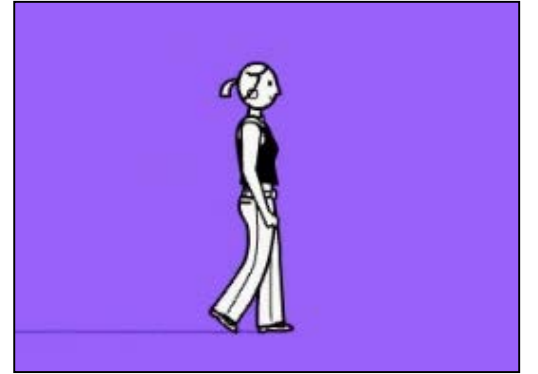
**Searching is strategic exploration.**

**Searching for information is an iterative process that requires the evaluation of information sources and the ongoing pursuit of new sources.**



## **Assumption:**

**Understanding the world requires a skeptical attitude and an open mind.**



- **It is not enough to master a set of facts about the world as presented by an authority figure.**
- **All human knowledge is incomplete and therefore subject to ongoing re-analysis.**

# Citation and Plagiarism

International students often introduce a fact or concept with:

“Everyone knows that...”



or

“There is no disputing that ...”

**Because authority is contested, it is important that scholars be clear about exactly whose authority they are invoking.**



**Because information varies in quality, it is important for scholars to show that they have selected high quality sources.**



**Because scholarship is a conversation in which reasonable people can disagree, it is important to keep track of the individual voices.**



**The reader needs to know which ideas are the author's own and which have been borrowed from other people.**



# **Beyond International Students...**

- **Aboriginal students dealing with the legacy of residential schools.**
- **First generation university students unfamiliar with the norms of academic discourse.**
- **Students raised in families with authoritarian parenting styles.**
- **Students who come from high schools where rote memorization is emphasized over inquiry.**

# Summary

The following assumptions underlie the *Framework*:

- Authority is contested.
- Information creation is contingent.
- Information varies in quality.
- Asking and answering questions is important.
- Reasonable people can disagree.
- Understanding the world requires openness and skepticism.





# Questions?



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