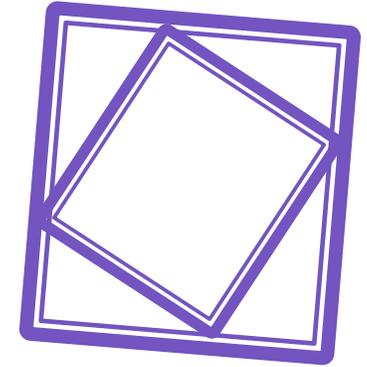


Frames within Frames:

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



Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education¹

Presented by Melissa Svendsen

¹. 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.



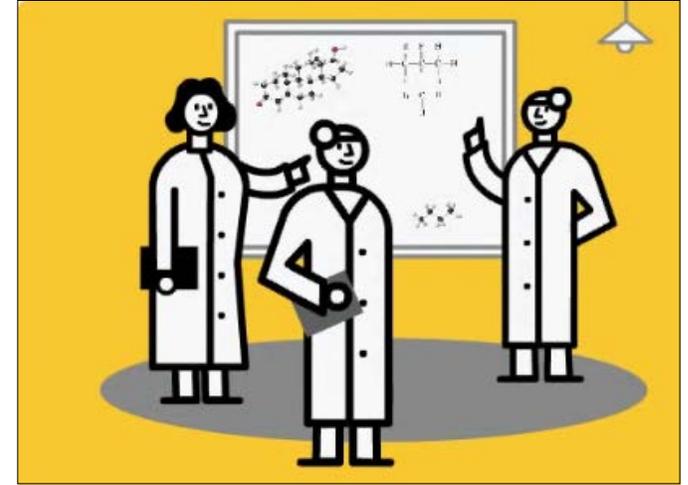
In this talk, I will:

- **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.

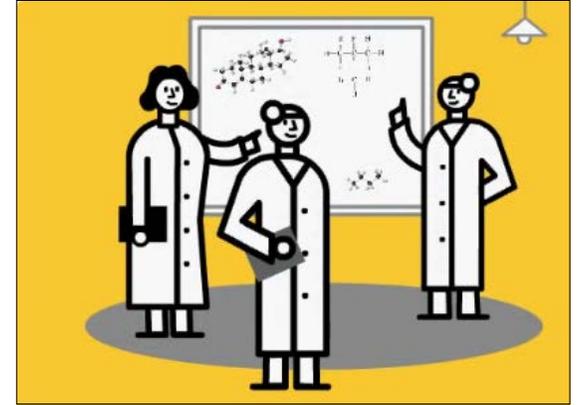
- Authority is *constructed* in that different communities recognize different types of authority.
- Authority is *contextual* in that different information needs require different levels of authority.



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.

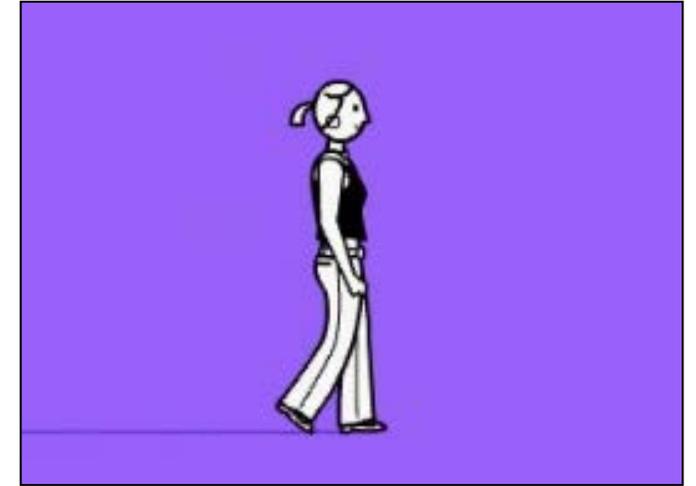


- **Asserting that someone is mistaken is not a sign of disrespect.**
- **Honest mistakes are an inevitable part of the process of creating knowledge, so being wrong does not necessary involve loss of face.**

Frame 6

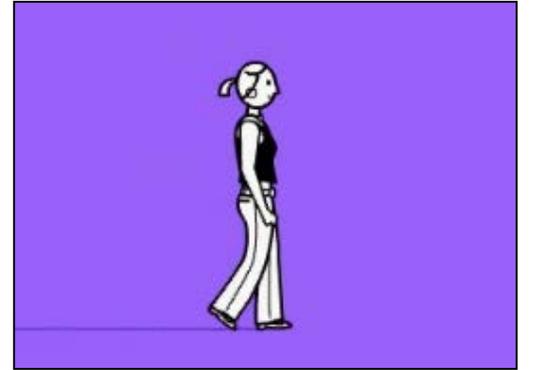
Searching is strategic exploration.

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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