

## Insiders' Perspectives on the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy: An Interview with Trudi Jacobson and Craig Gibson

Jean-Michel Lapointe

Volume 7, 2021

Special Focus on Refusing Crisis Narratives

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1084787ar>  
DOI : <https://doi.org/10.33137/cjalrcbu.v7.37566>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

### Éditeur(s)

Canadian Association of Professional Academic Librarians / Association  
Canadienne des Bibliothécaires en Enseignement Supérieur

ISSN

2369-937X (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

### Citer ce document

Lapointe, J.-M. (2021). Insiders' Perspectives on the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy: An Interview with Trudi Jacobson and Craig Gibson. *Canadian Journal of Academic Librarianship / Revue canadienne de bibliothéconomie universitaire*, 7, 1–16.  
<https://doi.org/10.33137/cjalrcbu.v7.37566>

### Résumé de l'article

Cet entretien avec les deux bibliothécaires américains qui ont coprésidé le groupe de travail qui a mené à la création du Référentiel de littératie informationnelle en enseignement supérieur de l'Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL 2016) revient sur la démarche de création ainsi que la réception qu'a connu ce document depuis sa publication il y a cinq ans. Les auteurs rappellent les principaux débats conceptuels qui ont façonné le Référentiel et proposent une typologie des courants actuels de la littératie informationnelle, donnant ainsi à voir les enjeux qui informent l'évolution des différentes conceptions du rôle pédagogique des bibliothécaires dans le milieu de l'enseignement supérieur d'hier à aujourd'hui. Cet entretien a été traduit en français.

© Jean-Michel Lapointe, 2021



Ce document est protégé par la loi sur le droit d'auteur. L'utilisation des services d'Érudit (y compris la reproduction) est assujettie à sa politique d'utilisation que vous pouvez consulter en ligne.

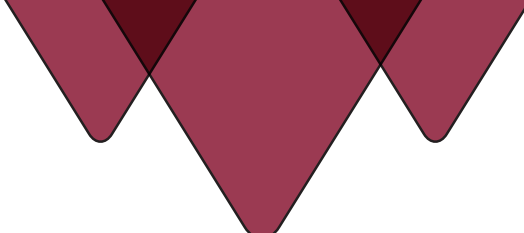
<https://apropos.erudit.org/fr/usagers/politique-dutilisation/>



Cet article est diffusé et préservé par Érudit.

Érudit est un consortium interuniversitaire sans but lucratif composé de l'Université de Montréal, l'Université Laval et l'Université du Québec à Montréal. Il a pour mission la promotion et la valorisation de la recherche.

<https://www.erudit.org/fr/>



# Insiders' Perspectives on the ACRL *Framework for Information Literacy*: An Interview with Trudi Jacobson and Craig Gibson

**Jean-Michel Lapointe**

*Université du Québec à Montréal*

**Craig Gibson**

*Ohio State University Libraries*

**Trudi Jacobson**

*University at Albany*

## ABSTRACT

*This interview with the two U.S. librarians who co-chaired the Task Force that led to the creation of the Association of College & Research Libraries' Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education (ACRL 2016) revisits the process of its creation as well as the reception this document has received five years after its inception. The authors retrace the main conceptual debates that have shaped the Framework and propose a typology of contemporary currents in information literacy, providing insight into the issues that inform the evolution of different conceptions of the pedagogical role of librarians in higher education from yesterday until today. This interview was translated into French.*

**Keywords:** *academic libraries · ACRL Framework · information literacy · metaliteracy*

## RÉSUMÉ

*Cet entretien avec les deux bibliothécaires américains qui ont coprésidé le groupe de travail qui a mené à la création du Référentiel de littératie informationnelle en enseignement supérieur de l'Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL 2016) revient sur la démarche de création ainsi que la réception qu'a connu ce document depuis sa publication il y a cinq ans. Les auteurs rappellent les principaux débats conceptuels qui ont façonné le Référentiel et proposent une typologie des courants actuels de la littératie informationnelle, donnant ainsi à voir les enjeux qui*

informent l'évolution des différentes conceptions du rôle pédagogique des bibliothécaires dans le milieu de l'enseignement supérieur d'hier à aujourd'hui. Cet entretien a été traduit en français.

**Mots-clés :** bibliothèques universitaires · compétences informationnelles · littératie informationnelle · métalittératie · Référentiel de l'ACRL

**I**N the midst of working on a research project about the different translations of the polysemic concept of “information literacy” in the French-speaking world, I met Trudi Jacobson, Distinguished Librarian and Head of the Information Literacy Department at the State University of New York at Albany, during the 2019 WikiConference North America in Cambridge, Massachusetts. This was a timely encounter since she co-chaired the Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL) Task Force (2012-2015) responsible for creating the *Information Literacy Framework for Higher Education* (2016), a document I came to believe might suffer from an inadequate translation in its official French version, the *Référentiel de compétences informationnelles en enseignement supérieur* (PCDI 2016). This got our conversation going.

When information literacy relied on a skills-based approach, as was the case with the ACRL *Standards* of 2000, it made sense to translate “information literacy” into French as “compétences informationnelles” (information competencies or skills). Since the *Framework* is built on a different theoretical foundation, one that explicitly moves away from “any prescriptive enumeration of skills,” toward “a richer, more complex set of core ideas” (ACRL 2016), should this translation, as it was originally rendered into French (CREPUQ 2005), be rigorously maintained? Does it accurately convey the evolution of information literacy as the central concept that underpins our educational practices? Or is this wording, as I tend to believe, hindering French-speaking academic librarians from grasping what information literacy has become within the *Framework* context?

In the hope that she could shed some light on my concerns, I asked Jacobson about her work on the ACRL Task Force as well as the debates and ideas that shaped the *Framework* as we know it today. This encounter proved to be very informative and, I felt, deserved to be continued via email a few months later, with the addition of her Task Force co-chair, Craig Gibson, professional development librarian, University Libraries, at The Ohio State. Nearly five years after its formal adoption in January 2016, I asked Jacobson and Gibson to reflect on the process of building the *Framework*, to share their thoughts on its reception, and finally to discuss the future of information literacy within higher education. The interview, presented below in the form of an amalgamation of answers provided by both respondents took place via email during May 2020.

**Question:** *It has been a long haul to come up with the Association of College and Research Libraries' Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education. Could you walk us through the process of coming up with it as well as identifying on the way what were the main challenges you faced while co-chairing the Framework Task Force?*

**Answer:** The challenges facing the ACRL Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education Task Force stemmed primarily from the widely diverging views held by ACRL members about the direction our work should take. Some wanted minor updating to the existing information literacy *Standards*, while others fully supported something new. These tensions would be evident throughout the process. Trudi served on the ACRL Information Literacy Competency Standards Review Task Force (2011-2012), which preceded the Task Force we co-chaired together. This earlier group, chaired by Ellysa Stern Cahoy of Penn State University Libraries, was charged with determining if revisions to the *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education* (ACRL 2000) were needed. The *Standards* were adopted more than a decade earlier and the information environment had changed dramatically since that time. The Review Task Force's charge was to make a recommendation about what should be done—should the *Standards* be retained as is, revised, or rescinded? This group did a great deal of investigation into other models for information literacy, such as the *Standards for the 21st Century Learner* (American Association of School Librarians 2011) and new-at-the-time SCONUL *Seven Pillars of Information Literacy model* (SCONUL Working Group on Information Literacy 2011).

The official recommendation of the earlier Review Task Force was that the *Standards* should be extensively revised, but at the same time, there was a great deal of conversation amongst the Task Force members that alternatively they should be rescinded. The final recommendations for change addressed these areas:

- simplification;
- comprehensible and without library jargon;
- inclusion of affective, emotional learning outcomes;
- acknowledgment of complementary literacies;
- disassociation of information with specific formats;
- inclusion of student role as content creator;
- inclusion of student role as content consumer;
- continuity with the American Association of School Librarians' *Standards for the 21st Century Learner* (ACRL *Information Literacy Competency Standards* Review Task Force 2012).

The new Task Force we co-chaired was charged with:

Updating the *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education* so that they reflect the current thinking on such things as the creation and dissemination of knowledge, the changing global higher education and learning environments, the shift from information literacy to information fluency, and the expanding definition of information literacy to include multiple literacies, e.g., transliteracy, media literacy, digital literacy, etc.

We were asked to make recommendations about potential members for the new Task Force. There was a strong effort to represent a broad swath of higher education, so not only were librarians invited to join, but also members of pertinent educational associations (Middle States Commission, Coalition for Networked Information, Institute for Evidence-Based Change) and individuals representing other educational roles (chief technology officer, director of a teaching centre). While some of the non-librarians were unable to participate throughout the whole intensive process, their expertise was nonetheless very helpful. The librarian members represented different geographic areas and types of institutions, as well as different areas of expertise within information literacy. We had one Library and Information Studies/or Science (LIS) faculty member as a part of the team, whose focus was school librarianship. We also added two task force members from four-year institutions some months into our work. Originally, we only had librarians from universities and one two-year institution.

It became obvious to us at an early stage that any new document we might develop would be heavily crowdsourced from within the library profession, particularly from ACRL members. Ideas emerged within the Task Force that were tested first with other Task Force members, then more generally with ACRL members through the drafting process of the *Framework*. The great advantage of this process was using it as an educational process for academic librarians in its own right to surface many assumptions about information literacy concepts and practices and to encourage a robust and healthy debate at times. But the Task Force needed to produce a successor document that would bring order to the many perspectives and viewpoints from hundreds of comments offered by ACRL members. The sheer volume of comments was an ongoing challenge. We received over 700 pages of comments from which Task Force members attempted to discern patterns and common themes. Divergent viewpoints that emerged showed the wide range of conceptions of instructional practices within the profession, and the wide range of teacher identity issues among librarians themselves. At times, a few outspoken critics seemed intent on jettisoning the process altogether, but the Task Force moved ahead in completing crucial phases of its work, soliciting comments throughout the process in as open and transparent a manner as possible.

Task Force members met initially in June 2013 at the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago, had a few in-person meetings as well as open forums at subsequent ALA conferences, and one dedicated two-day meeting in Chicago in April 2014. We primarily met via conference calls and used an online platform for drafts, resource lists, and more. At times it was difficult to sustain the conversation, as there were so many moving pieces. When appropriate, small groups tackled particular sections of the draft or volunteers took on specific responsibilities. For example, one member collated and organized all the feedback we were receiving from so many different sources, including social media.

Early discussions within the group addressed the charge and exactly what it meant—whether a small update to the *Information Literacy Competency Standards* was called for, or whether it should be a more thorough re-envisioning to address wider and deeper changes in the information environment, changing teaching and learning practices in higher education, and more open and inclusive approaches to various stakeholders across the higher education landscape. The co-chairs encouraged the Task Force soon after convening to think more broadly about information literacy and the result was a move at an early stage to expand discussion beyond minor updates to the *Competency Standards* toward a more open *Framework* model.

We also encouraged the group to avail itself of the knowledge and expertise of one of the Task Force members, Lori Townsend. She and several colleagues were engaged in a Delphi study to identify core concepts that were pivotal for students (Townsend, Brunetti, and Hofer 2011). They were using the threshold concepts model for addressing challenges to student learning in the disciplines—a model pioneered by educational leaders in the UK and in other countries (Meyer and Land 2005). Much of the early (and later) discussion within the Task Force, and more generally within the library community, focused on threshold concepts and the challenge of fitting them within existing instructional practices.

We decided upon the framework as the organizing structure and identified *frames* as the building blocks for the big ideas—the threshold concepts—and the knowledge practices and dispositions. We also addressed the importance of metacognition (from the metaliteracy framework developed by Trudi Jacobson and Tom Mackey in 2011), and the increasing role of students themselves as creators rather than as just consumers of information (also from the metaliteracy framework; Mackey and Jacobson 2011).

After some months, we started to meet very regularly, every week or two, and that helped. But it was an extremely complex process because as we were preparing draft materials to share with the library community, we were trying to address feedback

from previous versions, as well as general suggestions about what direction to take. One part of the project that worked very well involved small groups of Task Force members tackling the wording for the different frames. Once drafted, these went to the full Task Force for comment and editing.

**Question:** *Metaliteracy is an important conceptual leap to help us expand upon what information literacy is or can be. Could you unpack this theory and tell us what elements of it were incorporated into the ACRL Framework?*

**Answer:** One of the starting points for the Task Force we chaired was the list of recommendations from the first Task Force. Four of recommendations were addressed, in part or in whole, by metaliteracy's foundational elements:

- inclusion of affective, emotional learning outcomes
- acknowledgment of complementary literacies
- disassociation of information with specific formats
- inclusion of student role as content creator

The role of Web 2.0 and the social media components of the information environment spoke to the recommendation that a move away from format was important. Metaliteracy was developed, in large part, because of a frustration with the lack of alignment between the ACRL *Information Literacy Competency Standards* and the then-current information environment around 2010. Tom Mackey and Trudi Jacobson (2011) described metaliteracy as:

an overarching, self-referential, and comprehensive framework that informs other literacy types. Information literacy is the metaliteracy for a digital age because it provides the higher-order thinking required to engage with multiple document types through various media formats in collaborative environments. Many of the information literacy characteristics are central to multiple literacy perspectives, defining a literacy framework about literacy. Metaliteracy provides an integrated and all-inclusive core for engaging with individuals and ideas in digital information environments. (70)

A second article stressed the importance of metacognition within metaliteracy:

Metaliteracy requires us to think beyond discrete skills development in one-shot library sessions and embed metacognitive reflection in dynamic and collaborative learning activities. Metaliterate learners continuously reflect on their own thinking to expand their knowledge and adapt to evolving technologies. (Jacobson and Mackey 2013, 90)

There was a good deal of agreement in the Task Force on the importance of elements from metaliteracy, but less agreement on how to incorporate them. We started with a real blending of content from threshold concept theory and practice and concepts from metaliteracy. This can be seen in the first draft of the *Framework* where we wrote:

The Framework consists of the following interconnected elements that produce a coherent whole:

- core understandings about the evolving information system (threshold concepts);
- a set of practices that demonstrate increased credibility within that ecosystem, as both consumer of information and creator of knowledge (knowledge practices, metaliteracy);
- a way of thinking that develops more expert “moves” within that dynamic information ecosystem (dispositions, self-assessments);
- metacognitive strategies and critical reflection (metaliteracy, self-assessments)

There was also a separate section in the introduction focusing on metaliteracy:

Another important anchoring element in the new Framework is metaliteracy. Metaliteracy builds upon information literacy’s traditional core components by emphasizing new roles and responsibilities brought about by emerging technologies and collaborative communities... It is important for individuals to view themselves as information producers, both individually and collaboratively, and to recognize that they join many others in this role.

Metaliteracy’s learning objectives recognize that individuals call upon multiple domains when participating fully in the evolving information environment. These domains include the cognitive, affective, behavioral, and metacognitive. Metacognition, or consciously reflecting about one’s thinking and learning, is critical to metaliteracy, but certainly not unique to it. Also called self-monitoring and self-regulating, metacognition first was used in the psychology literature, and later in the educational psychology field (Fulkerson, Ariew, and Jacobson 2017). As Fulkerson, Ariew, and Jacobson note, “self-regulating learners have an enhanced awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses, are more resilient in adapting new tactics for problem-solving, and are more adept at overcoming obstacles” (25).

Within each threshold concept (later to be called a frame), the first draft also included sections of related metaliteracy learning objectives, self-assessments, and assignments/assessments, as well as the two sections that remained in the final version, knowledge practices and dispositions. The metaliteracy learning objectives were present to make explicit the connections between metaliteracy and this new information literacy framework. The self-assessments and assignments/assessments sections were designed to clarify and help address comments from those who wanted to know how to implement each threshold concept. They were solely meant to provide examples, not to be prescriptive. Elements from metaliteracy were woven into these two sections as well.



**Question:** *Is there any example of these types of changes that comes to mind?*

**Answer:** For example, Scholarship as Conversation, in this early version, included the following three sections that were removed from later drafts:

*Related Metaliteracy Learning Objectives*

Learners who are developing their information literate abilities:

- identify social media outlets that present new contributions to scholarship and supplement traditional scholarly communication channels;
- value user-generated content and critically evaluate contributions made by others: see self as a producer as well as consumer, of information.

*Self-Assessments*

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

- select a seminal work on a topic, and then identify two sources that reference that work from different perspectives;
- develop a list of current events that shape the discourse surrounding a topic of interest;
- create a timeline to track the evolving threads of a continuing scholarly conversation;
- select a topic on which they have some knowledge or experience. Identify a venue (blog, discussion forum, other social media site) in which a scholarly conversation is taking place. Identify key players and their perspectives;
- determine, in the scenario above, how to involve themselves in the conversation;
- Use a concept map to express how a topic is treated within the larger historiography of a given discipline (advanced).

*Possible Assignments/Assessments:*

- give students a two-part assignment: one having them trace the development of scholarship on a particular topic using the traditional “information cycle” model with the “invisible college” and print publication outlets; then have them expand/refine that model by tracing changes based on social media forums, or online communities;
- assign an entire class to conduct an investigation of a particular topic from its treatment in the popular media, and then trace its origin in conversations among scholars and researchers;
- create an online community for a class where students post their findings from a research project in order for them to understand how research and scholarship

work among practicing researchers (Association of American Colleges and Universities 2014).

The inclusion of all three sections was contentious, but for different reasons. Some community commentators felt that the self-assessments were too specific, the assignments would soon be dated, and the metaliteracy components were too confusing or extraneous. One person felt that metaliteracy was already covered by information literacy. There were readers of this early draft who did, however, welcome the inclusion of some or all of these sections. One recommendation from an early adopter of metaliteracy was to use components of metaliteracy without naming it, a route that was ultimately followed, for the most part, by the Task Force. This commentator felt that the inclusion of metaliteracy was important, but it was not fully integrated in the way the threshold concepts were. In each section, they noted, “metaliteracy feels a bit tacked on while yet articulating important things” (Witek 2014).

In the next draft, the Related Metaliteracy Learning Objectives were incorporated into the knowledge practices and dispositions. The elements of metaliteracy within the frames themselves have certainly been diluted without the coherence that would have been provided by a more complete encapsulation of the metaliteracy framework. The metacognitive and affective learning domains have lost much of their impact by being scattered and pared down. When the metaliteracy sections were removed, much of the focus on metacognition disappeared as well (Fulkerson, Ariew, and Jacobson 2017, 32). Recognition of learner as content producer and the affective learning domain remain only as vestiges. The sole remaining mention of metaliteracy occurs in the Introduction. The diminution of metaliteracy in the final document addresses a number of the concerns that readers of the drafts expressed. However, it remains a major disappointment to us, as metaliteracy brought critical components to the conversation that reflect the wider literacy knowledge set demanded by today’s information environment.

***Question: Five years after the publication of the Framework, how do you appreciate its reception within the library community? What are the underlying trends that seem most relevant to you?***

***Answer:*** Five years after the release and approval of the *Framework*, we see great promise in its use as a vehicle for collaboration within the academy and for enlarging librarians’ role as educational leaders. This promise blossomed quickly at some institutions (for example, St. Edwards University in Austin, Texas), with extensive collaborations in curriculum planning, course design, and assignments between the

library's information literacy and writing programs. Those involved in collaborations at some institutions have understood that the *Framework* opens up new spaces for conversation and shared instructional goals by providing a new shared language for partnership. At the same time, progress in using the *Framework* within the library community is still uneven. The most frequently noticed pattern that we have seen is reverting to a standards mentality in using the *Framework*—to force it into existing instructional models and time constraints of single instructional sessions. The big ideas of the *Framework* can only be addressed within large architectural structures of courses, units, or throughlines of course or curricula. The Task Force was clear in this message during discussions of drafts of the *Framework* and upon its release.

In this sense, the *Framework* revealed the liminal space that many in the profession are still traversing—in thinking of their professional identity differently, not as occasional guest presenters who are invited into faculty members' classes, but as instructional partners and educational leaders on their campuses, fully engaged in understanding student learning, instructional design, teaching strategies, and the larger language that faculty use in their disciplinary conversations. This extended liminality as a profession shows that the use of threshold concepts in the *Framework* may indeed have been, as one of our Task Force members, Lori Townsend, asserted, a threshold concept for the library community. The reversion to the standards mindset as a familiar place parallels what students themselves do in learning challenging new concepts—they revert to simpler or more naive notions before moving unevenly through the liminal space. In a way, the entire *Framework* experience for the library profession has been an educational process, one that has involved sustained conversations, disagreements, debates, questions, and ongoing searching for new ways of thinking about what information literacy really is and how it connects to scholarly inquiry, information inequalities, identity as information consumers and creators, and its place within larger campus and community learning conversations. The very openness of the *Framework* creates opportunities for newer conceptions of what information literacy is and places it, at least potentially, more centrally in many “small significant conversations” (Roxå and Mårtensson 2009, 555) where real changes in teacher identity and curriculum change happen.

Examples of such change can be identified through the literature. One of the conversations about the *Framework* is whether it is meant to design instruction directly, or if it might be used to encourage student reflection on the ideas in the *Framework*. An instance of the latter use includes over 1 900 students at the University of Notre Dame drawing upon their reading of the *Framework* (admittedly, in a condensed version) when writing a discussion paper in their first-year experience course. The results of the study found that “students demonstrated an understanding

of the themes and concepts of the *Framework* based on this assignment” (Harden 2019, 51).

A number of professional development resources have been created to support librarians and others in their use of the *Framework*. Several of these involve the sharing of assignments or course materials: *The ACRL Framework for Information Literacy Sandbox* and *Project CORA: The Community of Online Research Assignments*. Another early resource, *23 Framework Things*, was a low-stakes online resource, with open enrollment for the library community, to understand parts of the Framework and collateral issues. At this point, other opportunities await librarian involvement, or collaboration with faculty colleagues: *the NILOA Assignment Repository* for discipline-based assignments, and participation in the *NILOA Assignment Design Charrettes*; greater participation in projects resulting from the Transparency in Learning and Teaching framework (TILT); and greater participation in Scholarship of Teaching and Learning projects with disciplinary faculty and contributions to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning using the *Framework*, and presenting at such conferences as the PODNetwork and ISSOTL.

A notable opportunity for librarians in the future is more extensive collaboration with centres for teaching and learning (CTLs) and faculty learning communities on their campuses. Such collaboration in the past is not extensively documented in the literature. Given that both librarians and educational developers in CTLs work on interdisciplinary teaching issues and in the interstices of curriculum and program development, they have much in common and can forge new partnerships to support larger learning goals on campus. At this stage, such collaborations using the *Framework* are rare. In a 2019 study, Mader and Gibson surveyed CTL directors at 388 institutions, followed up with interviews of 12 of those directors, and found that only three of them had heard of the *Framework*. All of the directors were uniformly positive about interactions with their library colleagues and saw them as partners with potentially even more impact, but the omission of the *Framework* in their interactions was revealing (Mader and Gibson 2019).

**Question:** *Let's now turn toward the future. Knowing information literacy means different things to different people, how do you think it can or should evolve within the higher education landscape in the upcoming decade?*

**Answer:** Anticipating the future of information literacy in uncertain times for higher education, in the continued impact of social media and technology-mediated learning, in the global destabilization of authoritative information sources and the distrust of expertise, and in the attendant lack of habits of critical thought among

large sectors of the population, make for a challenging future for information literacy as an educational change agenda. Indeed, many of the lingering debates about library instruction versus information literacy versus newer conceptions of other literacies—digital, visual, data, media, and primary source—are now further complicated by the accelerating trends of distrust in experts, loss of contextual and in-depth understanding of knowledge ecosystems, cognitive distortions and biases, and affective affiliations with particular identity groups as bases of knowledge. These deeper cultural fissures produce a fractured landscape for information literacy education which implicitly overlaps other educational agendas. As well, there remains, as a legacy of library instruction, an underlying skills-based core that lacks a firm conceptual foundation.

The epistemology of information literacy itself persists as a challenge for designing information literacy programs, and for the identities of instruction librarians. For forty years, the status of instruction as a professional activity within academic libraries has evolved from that of marginal or add-on skill-building of students in using information sources toward a more critically reflective, conceptual approach. The trajectory of information literacy instruction is now towards introducing students to critical inquiry and understanding of research, scholarship, and the information landscape itself, with more focus on the myriads of formats, data sources, and asking novices or students to see themselves as researchers.

But there are several braided strands of this information literacy epistemology. The strands include:

- information literacy as technocratic skill-building for course and career success;
- information literacy as liberal art encouraging interdisciplinary understanding;
- information literacy as knowledge-building within specific disciplines and practitioner specialties;
- information literacy as civic literacy for participation in social and cultural institutions;
- information literacy as a social and political change agenda; and
- information literacy as an emergent meta literacy that unifies other literacies and provides the touchstones for self-empowerment throughout the totality of the information landscape.

These strands each have champions who have developed theories and associated pedagogical uber-practices that best realize the particular epistemology underpinning it. For example, while the “information literacy as technocratic skill-building” strand/epistemology is the least-theorized of all of these models, it has grown out of the “wisdom of practice” tradition described by Shulman (2004),

where knowledge of the “discipline” of information literacy was realized tacitly through the regular teaching practices of thousands of reference and instruction librarians and bibliographers over decades, with sharing of the skills-and-tools pedagogy at conferences and among colleagues. The “information literacy as liberal art” epistemology is based upon a surge of interest in critical thinking and of interdisciplinary, broader approaches to searching and source evaluation (Ward 2006). “Information literacy as knowledge-building within disciplinary contexts” is found most prominently in the informed learning model developed by Bruce (2008) and others. This strand features substantial changes in courses and curricula, and with multiple groups of academic experts brought together in conversation to examine knowledge within a particular course and how it should be taught. “Information literacy as civic literacy” and “information literacy as social and political change agenda” overlap but present two parts of a continuum. The former focuses on the individual’s growth in understanding of information as a citizen and on participation as an informed citizen; whereas the latter grows out of the recent burgeoning interest in critical pedagogy and a reframing of information literacy as “critical information literacy” with investigations of power, privilege, oppression, and marginalized groups’ participation or non-participation in education. Finally, the “meta” literacy epistemology draws on psychologies of learning that emphasize learner agency through increasing self-regulation and metacognitive growth over time, in multiple media environments, and in using multiple sources for academic and workplace success.

These strands are distinct within the overall braid of information literacy education, but all contribute to its growing influence in higher education pedagogy and communities of practice around pedagogy. Each reflects a particular *register* of concern, a specific voice that aligns with larger communal voices within higher education, from the vocational, student-success register, to the interdisciplinary learning register, to the disciplinary practices register, to the social activism/social justice register, and to the student-as-contributor register. The various registers are found in articles, blogs, books, conference presentations, workshops, course design institutes, and in everyday discussions among faculty, administrators, librarians, and students themselves.

The challenge for information literacy education in the future is to bring greater harmony among these registers, which in fact reveal different assumptions about what information literacy is, what it can be, and how it can not only empower individual students, but also build communities of faculty around pedagogy and change conversations about teaching at an institutional level. Some of the registers are based on the assumption that the individual student is the focus of learning,

through gains in self-efficacy, self-regulation and increased agency. The “meta” literacy model and the informed learning model especially focus on individual student agency. Others are more community- or social-focused. Especially noteworthy here is the critical information literacy movement, allied with critical pedagogy, which seeks to infuse questions about systems of power and oppression into education, based on identity groups. This conception carries a greater ideological valence than the other registers, generally with an unwillingness to acknowledge neutral ways of knowing or understanding—that is, it insists that all knowledge is refracted through systems of power or privilege, or that all knowledge is socially constructed and carries identity-based markers in its essence.

Finding a new, more coherent theoretical model for information literacy is the next stage in its development. Our view is that the *Framework for Information Literacy*, with metaliteracy elements enriching it, offers the most compelling model for future program development, instructional practices, curriculum planning, and formation of communities of practice for information literacy pedagogy. The informed learning model, with its focus on the use of information itself to learn, offers a complementary research-based approach to investigating learning in disciplines where information strategies and resources become central to inquiry (Bruce 2008). We need a more comprehensive model for information literacy education that coalesces the big ideas of the *Framework* and their associated knowledge practices and dispositions with a more thoroughgoing focus on the student as creator, as a participant in academic conversations as an apprentice scholar, and as a self-reflective learner who gains control of his/her learning in multiple information environments—the metaliteracy model. The *Framework* and metaliteracy models, combined with informed learning’s focus on course redesign to accelerate deeper learning in disciplinary ways of thinking, offer a more complete information literacy agenda for the future than any of these models by itself. In addition, the critical information literacy movement offers a powerful perspectival modulation of information literacy concepts that gives information literacy instructors ways of aligning those concepts more integrally with discussions of diversity in all forms, when collaborating with disciplinary faculty.

Three other educational movements offer opportunities to push information literacy education more deeply into the curriculum and beyond. One, the open education movement focuses on students as creators and shapers of assignments and courses, as co-owners with faculty of the curriculum, and with expanding the visibility of student academic work on and beyond campus. Open education offers multiple opportunities for librarians to find possibilities for positioning a metaliteracy approach—to assignment design, in varied student projects using multiple media, and to cultivating students themselves as new scholars in the academic conversation. Secondly, a related and still emerging educational agenda,

the students as partners movement, takes multiple forms but seeks to bring the student voice more centrally into discussions of course design, pedagogical practices, and research agendas. Its general aim is to shift relationships and power in higher education toward a more balanced approach where reciprocity in learning among students and faculty becomes more of the norm. Both the open education and the students as partners movements create more opportunities for communities of inquiry and investigation where the generativity of the *Framework* and co-learning roles of students along with faculty can flourish. Thirdly, along with these two movements, the faculty learning community movement and other educational development relationships, such as mentoring programs for faculty, SoTL (Scholarship of Teaching and Learning) teams, teaching circles, and other cohort-based groups, emphasize faculty's continuing role as learners themselves. These loosely affiliated groups, sponsored by centres for teaching and learning and similar offices, afford librarians opportunities to engage in many "significant conversations" (Roxå and Mårtensson 2009, 547) with colleagues on a wider scale to make information literacy the broader and deeper educational change agenda that many have aspired to for decades. Through the enhanced avenues for librarians to form their professional identities afforded by the *Framework* and metaliteracy models, the informed learning design process, the perspectival values of critical information literacy, and participation as true partners in educational programs, librarians can create a richer register that joins the chorus of voices for student agency, communities of learning, and quickened, intellectually vibrant campuses everywhere. In these uncertain times for higher education itself, tuning up that chorus can be a crucial role for librarians as educational leaders.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Jean-Michel Lapointe is a librarian and PhD candidate in communication studies at Université du Québec à Montréal. He is also a sessional lecturer at the Université de Montréal's school of library and information sciences.

Craig Gibson is Professor and Professional Development Coordinator at The Ohio State University Libraries. He was co-chair of the Association of College & Research Libraries Task Force that created the *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*.

Trudi Jacobson, Distinguished Librarian, is the Head of the Information Literacy Department at the University at Albany. She co-chaired the Association of College & Research Libraries Task Force that created the *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*. With Tom Mackey, she co-developed metaliteracy.

#### REFERENCES

American Association of School Librarians. 2011. *Standards for the 21st-Century Learner*. <https://studentsatthecenterhub.org/resources/american-association-of-school-librarians-standards-for-the-21st-century-learner/>.



- Association of American Colleges and Universities. 2014. *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education. Draft 1, Part 1. Working Paper*. <https://web.archive.org/web/20140404193514/http://acrl.ala.org/ilstandards/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Framework-for-IL-for-HE-Draft-1-Part-1.pdf>.
- Association of College & Research Libraries. 2000. *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education*. <https://alair.ala.org/bitstream/handle/11213/7668/ACRL%20Information%20Literacy%20Competency%20Standards%20for%20Higher%20Education.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.
- . 2016. *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*. <https://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework>.
- Association of College & Research Libraries Information Literacy Competency Standards Review Task Force. 2012. *Task Force Recommendations. Working Paper*. <https://alair.ala.org/handle/11213/8657>.
- Bruce, Christine. 2008. *Informed Learning*. Chicago: Association of College & Research Libraries.
- Fulkerson, Diane, Susan Ariew, and Trudi Jacobson. 2017. "Revisiting Metacognition and Metaliteracy in the ACRL Framework." *Communications in Information Literacy* 11, no.1). <https://doi.org/10.15760/comminfolit.2017.11.1.45>.
- Harden, Melissa. 2019. "First-Year Students and the Framework: Using Topic Modeling to Analyze Student Understanding of the Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education." *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice* 14 no. 2): 51–69. <https://doi.org/10.18438/eblip29514>.
- Jacobson, Trudi E., and Thomas P. Mackey. 2013. "Proposing a Metaliteracy Model to Redefine Information Literacy." *Communications in Information Literacy* 7 no. 2): 84–91.
- Mackey, Thomas P., and Trudi E. Jacobson. 2011. "Reframing Information Literacy as a Metaliteracy." *College & Research Libraries* 72 no. 2): 62–78. <https://doi.org/10.5860/crl-76r1>.
- Mader, Sharon, et Craig Gibson. 2019. « Teaching and Learning Centers: Recasting the Role of Librarians as Educators and Change Agents. » Communication présentée à la conférence ACRL 2019. *Recasting the Narrative, Cleveland, Ohio, April 10-13, 2019*, 785-800. <https://www.ala.org/acrl/sites/ala.org.acrl/files/content/conferences/confsandpreconfs/2019/TeachingandLearningCenters.pdf>.
- Meyer, Jan H. F., and Ray Land. 2005. "Threshold Concepts and Troublesome Knowledge (2): Epistemological Considerations and a Conceptual Framework for Teaching and Learning." *Higher Education* 49 no. 3): 373–88.
- Promotion du développement des compétences informationnelles (PCDI). 2016. *Référentiel de compétences informationnelles en enseignement supérieur*. Réseau de l'Université du Québec. <http://ptc.quebec.ca/pdci/referentiel-de-competences-informationnelles-en-enseignement-superieur>.
- Roxå, Torgny, and Katarina Mårtensson. 2009. "Significant Conversations and Significant Networks: Exploring the Backstage of the Teaching Arena." *Studies in Higher Education* 34 no. 5): 547–59. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070802597200>.
- SCONUL Working Group on Information Literacy. 2011. *The SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information Literacy Core Model For Higher Education*. <https://www.sconul.ac.uk/sites/default/files/documents/coremodel.pdf>.
- Shulman, Lee S. 2004. "The Wisdom of Practice: Managing Complexity in Medicine and Teaching." In *The Wisdom of Practice: Essays on Teaching, Learning, and Learning to Teach*, 249–272. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Townsend, Lori, Corey Brunetti, and Amy R. Hofer. 2011. "Threshold Concepts and Information Literacy." *portal: Libraries and the Academy* 11 no. 3): 853–69. <https://doi.org/10.1353/pla.2011.0030>.
- Ward, Dane. 2006. "Revisioning Information Literacy for Lifelong Meaning." *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 32 no. 4): 396–402. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2006.03.006>.
- Witek, Donna. 2014. "Metaliteracy and the New Draft ACRL IL Framework." *Information Constellation* (blog). February 21, 2014. <http://www.donnawitek.com/2014/02/metaliteracy-and-new-draft-acrl-il.html>.