

Three's Company: The ACRL Framework's Use in Three Different Post-Tests

Cara Berg

William Paterson University, Wayne, New Jersey

Abstract

When the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education (ACRL Framework) was introduced, opportunities arose for librarians to use this new tool in a variety of ways, including in developing and refining assessment tools. At William Paterson University in New Jersey, three post-tests for library instruction sessions were developed using the ACRL Framework and implemented during the fall semester of 2015. The first assessment, designed for First Year Seminar (FYS) students used the frames “Information Has Value”, “Authority is Constructed and Contextual”, and “Searching as Strategic Exploration”. The second assessment, designed for upper level undergraduate students used the frame “Searching as Strategic Exploration”. The third assessment, designed for business law undergraduate students, used the frame “Information Has Value”, “Information Creation as a Process”, and “Searching as Strategic Exploration”. All three assessments were created in Google Forms; librarians were able to electronically send the students the assessment.

This poster will showcase each assessment, as well as graphs detailing the numerical data gathered from each assessment. In addition, student comments from the assessments will be displayed to see evidence of the knowledge practices and dispositions of the ACRL Framework within the students' own writing. Finally, the use of the ACRL Framework in designing each assessment will be discussed.

Introduction

As a user education librarian, and as one with a large focus on assessment, a question when the Framework was approved by the ACRL Board was, “how do I use this in assessment?” The ACRL Standards have clear measurable outcomes, whereas the Framework is designed with threshold concepts in mind which can be a little challenging in terms of assessment. Making the leap from designing assessments around the Standards to designing assessments around the Framework was a unique prospect. I had the opportunity to design three different post-tests in the 2015-2016 academic year, and within that year I was determined to build the questions in the assessment around some of the frames in the Framework, as opposed to the Standards. The assessments were designed over a period of one year. Each assessment corresponded to a certain student population after receiving library instruction.

Learning Outcomes

Student learning outcomes for First Year students differ from student learning outcomes for First Year Students. Two assessments were for the upper level undergraduates:

Upper level undergraduate classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Select appropriate sources (databases, books, Internet) for the discipline and construct search strategies using key concepts, field searches, controlled vocabulary and advanced features of databases and sources when appropriate.Evaluate information and distinguish among various categories of information resources (e.g. scholarly, trade, popular, primary sources, and technical reports) within a discipline. Recognize what the role of each type of publication plays within the discipline and how each serves the discipline.Select and use a citation style appropriate to the discipline, organize information appropriately by summarizing, paraphrasing, quoting and acknowledging sources. Use management tools to facilitate the organization of sources/citations.
First Year Seminar	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Recognize the importance of seeking assistance from a librarian and learning core library resources and servicesSearch the discovery layer for library materialsUnderstand when it's appropriate to use the discovery layer, and when it's appropriate to use other sourcesIdentify keywords and conduct a keyword searchEvaluate websites based on certain criteria and be able to recommend or not recommend useUnderstand the basics of citations and plagiarism

Assessment Demographic and Distribution Data

	Assessment 1	Assessment 2	Assessment 3
	FYS Post-Test	One Size Fits Most Assessment	Lexis Nexis Post-Test
Population (All students attended a library instruction session)	First year students	Students enrolled in 2000-4000 level courses- upper level undergraduate	Students receiving instruction in using Lexis Nexis enrolled in the course: Legal Environment of Business and Business Law- I
Tool Used	Survey Monkey	Google Forms	Survey Monkey
Distribution	1-3 months after library instruction session	At the end of class	1 month after library instruction session
Amount of responses	100	194	45
In-Class	Students watched a video prior to the class and did an active learning demonstration of the discovery layer, followed by an interactive exercise on keywords and a chunked lecture on website evaluation. An assignment was developed in class for them to work on.	As this encompassed all 2000-4000 level classes, this was up to the librarian. Traditionally the librarian would demonstrate resources pertinent to the students' already existing research assignment and give students time to use those sources on their own.	Two shot library instruction class: students received a brief lecture on Lexis Nexis in the first session. In the second session, the students were broken up into groups. Each group had a task to complete about Lexis Nexis or the overall assignment, and then the students reported on their work back to the class.
Marketing	Emailled directly to students, incentive to enter a drawing for a Starbucks gift card.	Sent to the students' computers via classroom software (more successful response rate), emailed to students (less successful response rate). No incentive.	Emailled directly to students, incentive for extra credit from their professor

Different questions were designed with the Framework in mind, in the hopes to see if students could fulfill part of the knowledge practices and dispositions of that frame.

The most versatile question, which appeared in all three assessments, was “**name one thing that you learned**”. Student comments extracted from this question were where we were able to see evidence of the Framework in use.

Frames Used in Each Assessment

FYS Post-Test

Searching as Strategic Exploration

Information Has Value

Authority is Constructed and Contextual

One-Size Fits Most Assessment

Searching as Strategic Exploration

Lexis Nexis Post-Test

Information Has Value

Information Creation as a Process

Searching as Strategic Exploration

Sample Questions Mapped to Framework

Assessment	Question	Frame, Knowledge Practices and/or Dispositions
FYS Post-Test	Give some examples of what you would look at when evaluating a website.	Authority is Constructed and Contextual KP: Define different types of authority, such as subject expertise (e.g., scholarship), societal position (e.g., public office or title), or special experience (e.g., participating in a historic event); recognize that authoritative content may be packaged formally or informally and may include sources of all media types. D: develop awareness of the importance of assessing content with a skeptical stance and with a self-awareness of their own biases and worldview.
One Size Fits Most Assessment	Name the resources that were demonstrated in class.	Searching as Strategic Exploration KP: Identify interested parties, such as scholars, organizations, governments, and industries, who might produce information about a topic and then determine how to access that information
Lexis Nexis Post-Test	What can you find in Lexis Nexis?	Information Creation as a Process KP: articulate the traditional and emerging processes of information creation and dissemination in a particular discipline; recognize that information may be perceived differently based on the format in which it is packaged

Student Comments Mapped to the Framework

Assessment: The FYS Post- Test

Comment	Link to Framework
How to narrow down my results to get a more precise search result	Design and refine needs and search strategies as necessary, based on search results; manage searching processes and results effectively (Searching as Strategic Exploration)
Paraphrasing is still considered a form of plagiarism.	Give credit to the original ideas of others through proper attribution and citation; respect the original ideas of others (Information Has Value)

Assessment: One Size Fits Most Assessment

Comment	Link to Framework
The vast and extensive information that is right at our finger tips that go unnoticed due to the blinding monopoly "Google" has on many of us.	Motivate themselves to find authoritative sources, recognizing that authority may be conferred or manifested in unexpected ways Develop awareness of the importance of assessing content with a skeptical stance and with a self-awareness of their own biases and worldview (Authority is Constructed and Contextual)
I didn't know that all those sources were on the internet. I usually just use google.	understand that different methods of information dissemination with different purposes are available for their use (Information Creation as a Process)

Assessment: Lexis Nexis Post-Test

Comment	Link to Framework
You can make searches easier by entering the court case number. it narrows down the searches	Design and refine needs and search strategies as necessary, based on search results; Understand how information systems (i.e., collections of recorded information) are organized in order to access relevant information; Use different types of searching language (e.g., controlled vocabulary, keywords, natural language) appropriately; Manage searching processes and results effectively (Searching as Strategic Exploration)
I learned how to find articles appropriate for my class discussion, and how to locate current news if interested.	Determine an appropriate scope of investigation Use various research methods, based on need, circumstance, and type of inquiry (Research as Inquiry)

Discussion and Conclusions

When it came to the three assessments, all quick post-tests, the “**Searching as Strategic Exploration**” frame was the most versatile. As it deals with retrieving sources, a concept taught often in library instruction, it was easy to design questions around that frame.

The “**Information Has Value**” frame was also versatile, mostly in looking at the plagiarism/citation portion of the frame and that factored into the two specific assessments.

Missing from the three assessments are the “**Scholarship as a Conversation**” and the “**Research as Inquiry**” frames. The missing Research frame is simply because the FYS classes and Lexis Nexis classes weren't conducting a traditional research paper, and for the generalized 2000-4000 level assessment the frame was too specific. An assessment that was designed specifically for a library instruction class that needed to complete a research paper very well may have questions designed from that frame. A focus on assessment of graduate classes may incorporate more from those two frames, as opposed to our focus on undergraduate classes.

The student comments were **essential** in looking at the application of the Framework. Using the numerical data from the assessment, librarians could see if the students were successfully recalling information about the search process. However, using the student comments, librarians were able to see students grasping the concepts within the Framework, even concepts not thought of when designing the actual assessment questions.

As a whole, creating the questions using the different frames was a bit of a challenge. In addition, it was notably easier to go into more specific frames with a more targeted instruction plan, as opposed to needing to keep it general. However, it was a triumph to look at student comments and map those comments back to all aspects of the Framework. Librarians had used frames, and could see the students' work reflect in that, where they hadn't thought to do so before.

Going forward, new learning outcomes may need to be developed, now focused around the Framework, as opposed to the Standards, which could prove to have an impact on the questions asked in the general assessment.

Overall, designing assessment questions with the Framework as a guide was a task that proved beneficial. Even without the clear cut measurable outcomes of the ACRL Standards, it was still possible to design questions and work with pre-existing learning outcomes as well as design new ones. And finally, seeing the work of the Frames- both used and not used- in the student comments was proof that the knowledge practices and dispositions librarians want students to know are becoming part of their mindset, guiding students over that threshold.

References

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