12-2020

Designing a Collaborative Learning Experience around the Framework

Samantha Godbey
University of Nevada, Las Vegas, samantha.godbey@unlv.edu

Xan Y. Goodman
University of Nevada, Las Vegas, xan.goodman@unlv.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/lib_articles

Part of the Information Literacy Commons

Designing a Collaborative Learning Experience around the Framework

Xan Goodman

Health Sciences Librarian, Associate Professor, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, USA

Samantha Godbey

Education Librarian, Associate Professor, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, USA

In late 2015, we presented a three-hour workshop on the nascent ACRL *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* at the European Conference on Information Literacy (ECIL) in Tallinn, Estonia,[1] after which we were approached about preparing a more in-depth learning experience on the Framework for a group of international librarians. These librarians were part of the AMICAL Consortium, a consortium of twenty-nine liberal arts institutions in Europe, Asia, and Africa. At this point, we had already led several active learning–filled workshops on the Framework, including the one at ECIL. We were also working on a coedited book on the Framework, which would eventually be published as *Disciplinary Applications of Information Literacy Threshold Concepts*.[2] Through these projects, we had met librarians from across the United States and throughout the world who were eager to engage more deeply with the Framework and the concepts it contains. Although other information literacy standards and guidelines exist and are used widely in international contexts, we had direct experience with international librarians who, like their American

counterparts, were struggling with how to transition into working with the Framework.

Although there are, of course, benefits to discussing information literacy among librarians, the successful integration of information literacy into the curriculum requires collaboration between librarians and disciplinary faculty. Therefore, we felt that it would be ideal to bring both together to engage around this new approach to information literacy. We worked with the chair of the AMICAL Information Literacy Committee to develop a proposal to the AMICAL organization, and it was selected as a professional development offering in spring 2017. Titled "Co-design: Integrating Information Literacy into Your Disciplinary Course," this two-day, hands-on learning experience was open to librarians and disciplinary faculty partners from AMICAL member institutions.[3] The workshop was designed to provide an opportunity for faculty and librarians to work together on advancing information literacy at their institutions by engaging directly with the new Framework. In this chapter, we describe the workshop itself, which laid the groundwork for the collaborations detailed in the case studies and lesson plans in this collection.

Fourteen pairs participated in the workshop. In addition to four teams from the host institution, American University of Paris (AUP), other participants traveled from Armenia, Bulgaria, Italy, Kosovo, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Morocco, Switzerland, and the United Arab Emirates to work on courses such as history, writing, media studies, political science, marketing, and cultural anthropology. Courses ranged from first-year seminars to graduate-level courses. Six of these teams received funding for airfare and housing, while others were self-funded, which speaks to the deep interest and commitment to this project. Each pair provided in their application clear plans for close collaboration on the planning and teaching of a course for the following semester; these plans were solidified in the workshop itself.

Workshop Design

We designed the workshop using a backward design approach, starting with developing learning outcomes and working backward through the assessments and activities that would enable our participants to scaffold student learning and measure progress toward the desired outcomes. Additionally, we wanted to incorporate active learning throughout, reducing time spent lecturing and

emphasizing activities that called for the active participation of the workshop participants.

We wanted to ensure that participants had tangible products that they could take back to their institutions. Participants would finish the workshop with a draft of a codeveloped syllabus, including collaboratively identified learning outcomes and ideas for assignments, lesson plans, and assessment strategies. Participants would also articulate an implementation plan for the collaboration itself. As part of the requirements for participation from the sponsoring organization, participants would put these syllabi and implementation plans into practice in a pilot course in fall 2017 and would report back in spring 2018 on lessons learned after implementing the pilot course.

The Workshop

First, we required prework of all participants. Participants were asked to read two documents: the Framework itself, including the introduction, and an article or chapter selected by the disciplinary faculty member about core concepts in their discipline. Selections by disciplinary faculty included chapters from textbooks providing overviews of their disciplines, as well as articles or chapters that explored a concept that would be a focus of the course, such as diversity and literature or critical media literacy.[4]

The workshop itself was structured around the backward design model, starting with developing outcomes. Further, we modeled throughout the kinds of active learning strategies and assessment techniques that participants might consider incorporating into the plans they were developing themselves, such as brainstorming, Think-Pair-Share, jigsaws, and one-minute papers. During the two days of the workshop, participants were reading, discussing, questioning, and often moving around the room. They were composing, rethinking, and revising. As facilitators, we designed a structured workshop plan that allowed for flexibility to accommodate changes that might be necessary along the way. The first day was more structured, while the second day provided more opportunities for participants to work with their partner on course and assignment design.

The workshop space was arranged in groups of tables with four to six participants at each table group. In addition to the participants, two additional AUP library staff observed the workshop and assisted with logistics such as registration and coffee breaks.

Day 1

9:00–9:15   Welcome
9:15–10:30   Session 1: Introductions, Materials, Workshop Plan
10:30–10:45   Coffee Break
10:45–12:00   Session 2: Information Literacy and the Framework
12:00–13:30   Lunch
13:30–15:00   Session 3: Applying the Framework to Courses (+ Draft/
                 Revise Course Learning Outcomes)
15:00–15:15   Coffee Break
15:15–16:45   Session 4: Applying the Framework—Draft Lesson Plan,
                 Framework Resources

In the morning of the first day, we focused on getting to know each other and the Framework. The librarians in the workshop already knew each other from the library consortium, but we felt it was important for the disciplinary faculty to be incorporated into the learning community and for all participants to have at least a preliminary understanding of each other's projects. We started with a twenty-minute icebreaker that asked participants to reflect on, and then discuss, a course or assignment that had changed their way of thinking. Then we went through introductions of all participants, including their institution, role, discipline or specialty, and a brief description of the course they were focusing on.

The next segment of the workshop explored changing definitions of information literacy. We did a brief lecture defining information literacy and providing an overview of the Framework; then participants discussed the question "What does information literacy mean or look like in your discipline?" This was an opportunity for participants to discuss personal experiences with information literacy as well as drawing on the shared readings that had been the prework for the workshop.

From this broad discussion of information literacy, we moved into more specific discussions of the content of the Framework. We delivered a brief lecture about the individual frames, but the detailed work of exploring the frames was done by the participants. Each table group was assigned a frame to discuss in detail ("How would you explain this frame? What resonates for you and your students?") before returning to the whole group for a frame-by-frame discussion of the Framework. We anticipated from previous workshop experience that this

segment would likely require a substantial chunk of time, particularly for participants who were new to the Framework, and this activity continued after lunch.

In the afternoon, we started the work of applying the Framework to the courses. Drawing on Middendorf and Pace's Decoding the Disciplines model,[5] we encouraged pairs to identify potential bottlenecks in student learning in their courses. We first did an activity in which we provided scenarios for discussion.[6] For each scenario, participants were asked to identify a potential bottleneck and to identify a frame from the Framework that might help alleviate this bottleneck. This discussion provided participants with tangible examples of how the concepts in the Framework might be used to rethink the student learning experience.

Participants then worked with their partners to articulate bottlenecks in the specific course they had come to work on, draft course outcomes, and identify a frame or frames that aligned with these outcomes. These outcomes could be cognitive or affective and might incorporate language from the Framework itself as was helpful. The draft outcomes were shared on big paper and posted on the walls so that participants could read and comment on each other's outcomes before proceeding.

In the final segments of the day, participants identified a priority point in the course for a single librarian session. Participants wrote a draft lesson plan, with the understanding that these were initial thoughts on how to use the librarian and a reminder that the materials would all be revised the following day as we moved into discussing assessment and learning activities. Participants were reminded to try to make connections between the bottlenecks they had identified, their course outcomes, and the Framework. We provided focused work time to explore the Framework and related online resources or to work on syllabi or course outcomes.

This marked the end of the first day, in which we had begun thinking deeply about the Framework and laid the foundation for the faculty-librarian collaboration now underway.

Day 2

9:00–9:15   Welcome + Review
9:15–10:30   Session 1: Assessment
10:30–10:45   Coffee Break
10:45–12:00   Session 2: Learning Activities

12:00–13:30	Lunch
13:30–15:00	Session 3: Group Peer Review
15:00–15:15	Coffee Break
15:15–16:45	Session 4: Implementation Plan + Workshop Evaluation

On the second day of the workshop, our goal was to have draft plans, including draft syllabi, course outcomes, and assessments, in place by the lunch break. Having articulated student bottlenecks, course outcomes, and connections to the Framework on the first day, we continued the backward design process to work on assessment. Some participants were hesitant about assessment, having experienced assessment primarily as an administrative requirement in the past. Many felt anxious about doing assessment correctly or about how the data they gathered might be used. This was true for both librarians and disciplinary faculty. In the workshop, we acknowledged and discussed these worries, but we encouraged participants to draw their focus back to the student experience. We defined assessment as evidence of student learning or experience: that is, how will the instructors know what students have learned or experienced as related to their course outcomes? We also discussed approaches to responding to student work and coding assessment data.

We started with a brief lecture on types of assessment and an activity to help participants expand their ideas about assessment. From our experience, we knew that faculty frequently use research papers to assess student learning. Therefore, we provided a list of alternative assessments to open up other ways of thinking about assessment, including several examples of alternatives to a research paper such as writing a grant proposal, preparing a marketing plan, or creating an infographic. Participants read, annotated, and commented on a list of potential assessments, noting ones they had tried, what they might want to try, and which ones were unclear. After participants annotated and commented on this list of assessments individually, we discussed the list as a group. At this point, we answered many questions about unfamiliar assessments and discussed possible variations on these assessments that might work for their courses.

Participants then worked with their partners to identify at least one assessment for each course outcome. Participants were encouraged to identify student-focused, authentic assessments for the overall course as well as any specific sessions they had in mind for the semester.

Continuing to work backward from their course outcomes, we next devoted time to discuss specific learning activities that could be used to help students

be successful on the assessments. We worked our way through the same annotate-and-discuss activity we had used for assessment. In this case, we provided a two-page list of instruction activities. This list included a range of student-centered, active learning approaches, such as concept mapping, fishbowl discussions, jigsaws, and Think-Pair-Share. Additionally, throughout the workshop, we had explicitly noted learning strategies used in the workshop, identifying each active learning strategy by name in the instructions for each task we did together. Participants again read, annotated, and commented on the list provided, noting learning activities they had already tried, what they'd like to try, and which were unclear. After this individual time to process, we discussed the learning and instruction activities as a whole group.

Next, we provided participants thirty minutes of focused work time to pull their materials together. Each pair needed to finalize their course outcomes and assessments. They also completed a semester timeline handout to plan out how the different assessments and activities would fit together over time. It is important to note that for each of these tasks, participants were encouraged to revise earlier products as needed, checking each for connections to the Framework and reworking components in an iterative process.

Regarding the structure of the work materials, we provided handouts for each of the following: lesson plan template, assessment, and a semester timeline. Each pair was encouraged to use these as loosely or strictly as was helpful to them. Some pairs found the structure of the handouts to be helpful and completed all handouts very carefully, choosing to revise their official syllabus after the workshop was complete. Others found it more useful to use the handouts to jot down some ideas and questions but primarily worked on revising their syllabus directly.

The next portion of the workshop was devoted to group peer review of materials. For the group peer review, we provided the following questions and criteria to guide participant feedback. Each pair met with at least two other pairs for twenty minutes each.

For course outcomes, we encouraged participants to consider these questions:
- Are course outcomes clear?
- Are they appropriate for these learners?
- Do they relate to a frame or frames from the Framework?
- Are students given multiple opportunities to engage with these ideas?

For the assignments and assessments, we asked participants to consider the extent to which the assignments:

- align with the course goals
- are relevant or authentic (replicate real-world tasks, realistic)
- provide opportunities for students to receive feedback
- are combined with appropriate learning activities that prepare students for success in larger assignments

During the final session of the day, participants planned ahead for continuing the collaboration beyond this workshop. We provided an open-ended implementation plan handout to prompt this planning. This included questions such as:

- What do you need to do next in order to successfully implement this plan?
- How will the group maintain communication?
- How often should the group meet?
- What information should be shared among group members, and who is responsible for dissemination?
- What will you do with the assessment data? When?

Then it was time to close the workshop. We revisited the definition of information literacy from the Framework, which we had discussed on the morning of the first day. At this point, we wanted to discuss in what ways participants' understanding of information literacy and how it applies to their discipline had changed over the course of our work together. Participants shared successes and frustrations from their work through this process. For many of the disciplinary faculty, information literacy was a new concept. For many of the librarians, rethinking information literacy as a "set of integrated abilities"[7] required a shift in thinking. For all, having two days of time devoted to discussing these ideas was invaluable to even begin the process of integrating information literacy into the curriculum.

Thinking Ahead

In the next chapter, our AMICAL colleagues discuss the results of the survey completed by participants. As facilitators, we integrated assessment into the workshop plan so that we could respond to participant needs during the workshop, and we collected evaluations at the end of day two.

It is important to note that some participants struggled with the idea of threshold concepts and the other theories discussed in the Framework. Some

participants needed more time to digest the terminology from the Framework than we were able to provide. We provided an introduction to the main theories discussed in the Framework document, including threshold concepts, but we tried to do so quickly in order to devote more time to the frames themselves. We had at least one professor who needed much more time to grapple with these new ideas. This participant wanted time to read extensively about these ideas before proceeding to examine the specific content of the frames. As a scholar, this professor felt it was important to internalize and trust the theories mentioned in the Framework before engaging with it fully. Drawing on threshold concept terminology, some participants were working through a liminal space and experiencing the frustration that often comes with making changes to one's thinking. Although we tried to flip some learning by requiring reading before the workshop, we witnessed firsthand this bottleneck in learning during the workshop sessions.

If we were to run another workshop, we would be sure to highlight these theories in advance in order to allow time for participants to work through the liminal space. The theory component seemed to be especially challenging for disciplinary faculty, either because of their academic training in specific theories or because information literacy was new to them. Increasing prework resources and explaining this potential bottleneck in advance could help to alleviate this challenge. This challenge was also exacerbated by the condensed nature of this workshop. Liminality is real, and adjusting to entirely new concepts cannot necessarily take place on schedule within a two-day learning experience.

Additionally, participants expressed a strong desire for time with the workshop facilitators for one-on-one meetings to discuss their projects. We made an effort to circulate among participants throughout the workshop and provide feedback along the way, and we structured the workshop so that each pair would receive feedback from four to six other participants and view at least two other final projects. However, we did not meet with each of the fourteen pairs individually. Given the overwhelming interest expressed by the participants, we discussed how we might schedule these appointment slots during lunch or coffee breaks. While this places a strain on the facilitators, we felt that this should be a priority in the future. Ideally, we would extend the workshop by an additional half day to accommodate these appointments.

While there are, of course, aspects we would modify for the future, overall we are proud of the work done here. The co-design workshop was a productive,

laughter-filled two days of exploring new ideas and thinking deeply about what is important to our students. We are grateful for the experience of working with these thoughtful, engaged librarians and professors. We hope that the chapters in this collection are helpful to you, the reader, as you consider how the Framework might be useful in your own work. We hope that you are able to find ways of collaborating with colleagues across your campus to integrate information literacy into the curriculum, ways that are meaningful to you and the students we serve.

Notes

1. Association of College and Research Libraries, *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* (Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2016); Samantha Godbey, Xan Goodman, and Susan Wainscott, "Crossing the Threshold with Threshold Concepts: Redesigning a Library Instruction Lesson Plan" (workshop, European Conference on Information Literacy [ECIL], Tallinn, Estonia, October 19, 2015).
2. Samantha Godbey, Susan Wainscott, and Xan Goodman, eds., *Disciplinary Applications of Information Literacy Threshold Concepts* (Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2017).
3. Samantha Godbey and Xan Goodman, "Co-design: Integrating Information Literacy into Your Disciplinary Course" (AMICAL workshop, American University of Paris, March 31–April 1, 2017), https://www.amicalnet.org/events/co-design-integrating-information-literacy-into-your-disciplinary-course.
4. Masao Miyoshi, "Turn to the Planet: Literature, Diversity, and Totality," *Comparative Literature* 53, no. 4 (2001): 283–97; Steven Funk, Douglas Kellner, and Jeff Share, "Critical Media Literacy as Transformative Pedagogy," in *Handbook of Research on Media Literacy in the Digital Age*, ed. Melda N. Yildiz and Jared Keengwe (Hershey, PA: IGI Global, 2016), 1–30.
5. Joan Middendorf and David Pace, "Decoding the Disciplines: A Model for Helping Students Learn Disciplinary Ways of Thinking," *New Directions for Teaching and Learning* 2004, no. 98 (Summer 2004): 1–12, https://doi.org/10.1002/tl.142.
6. The examples for these scenarios were drawn from our coedited book Godbey, Wainscott, and Goodman, *Disciplinary Applications*.
7. Association of College and Research Libraries, *Framework.*

Bibliography

Association of College and Research Libraries. *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education.* Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2016.

Funk, Steven, Douglas Kellner, and Jeff Share. "Critical Media Literacy as Transformative Pedagogy." In *Handbook of Research on Media Literacy in the Digital Age*. Edited by Melda N. Yildiz and Jared Keengwe, 1–30. Hershey, PA: IGI Global, 2016.

Godbey, Samantha, and Xan Goodman. "Co-design: Integrating Information Literacy into Your Disciplinary Course." AMICAL workshop, American University of Paris, March 31–April 1, 2017. https://www.amicalnet.org/events/co-design-integrating-information-literacy-into-your-disciplinary-course.

Godbey, Samantha, Xan Goodman, and Susan Wainscott. "Crossing the Threshold with Threshold Concepts: Redesigning a Library Instruction Lesson Plan." Workshop, European Conference on Information Literacy (ECIL), Tallinn, Estonia, October 19, 2015.

Godbey, Samantha, Susan Wainscott, and Xan Goodman, eds. *Disciplinary Applications of Information Literacy Threshold Concepts*. Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2017.

Middendorf, Joan, and David Pace. "Decoding the Disciplines: A Model for Helping Students Learn Disciplinary Ways of Thinking." *New Directions for Teaching and Learning* 2004, no. 98 (Summer 2004): 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1002/tl.142.

Miyoshi, Masao. "Turn to the Planet: Literature, Diversity, and Totality." *Comparative Literature* 53, no. 4 (2001): 283–97.