

The ACRL Framework sub-group of the SAA-ACRL/RBMS Joint Task Force on the Development of Guidelines for Primary Source Literacy was tasked with assessing the appropriateness of the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education for our task force’s work on the “development of guidelines that will provide competency standards for primary source literacy.” The sub-group decided to analyze and annotate the Framework, seek input from the rest of the task force in response to the document, and develop a preliminary crosswalk between the six frames or core concepts in the Framework and similar skills and understandings related to primary source literacy.

Crosswalk from ACRL Framework to Primary Source Literacy Needs

ACRL Frames	Primary Source Literate Users Should
Authority Is Constructed and Contextual	Understand the context of the source
	Understand how the source was shaped by creators and others
	Recognize the need to approach primary source materials critically
	Be aware of what has been collected and what is missing in the record
	Understand how the source is authorized and contextualized by archival practice
	Be conscious of how the source may be used differently by different communities and disciplines
Information Creation as a Process	Be aware of different formats
	Recognize when there is a need to use the source in its original format versus a reproduction
	Be aware of how formats can present information differently and how sources relate to other material
	Know how to interrogate the container as part of the research process
Information Has Value	Be aware of the different kinds of values held by primary sources
	Recognize the rights of rights holders
	Give credit through citation
	Respect the cultural and personal value of primary sources
	Understand why some groups may be underrepresented or marginalized within the archive
	Be aware of the influence that primary source materials have had on society
Research as Inquiry	Be aware of the nature of archival research

	Understand the access tools for doing research using primary sources
	Know how to use policies, handle materials, and request copies as part of research with primary sources
	Know how to ask a research question, analyze primary sources, and build an argument using primary sources
	Seek guidance from a librarian, archivist, or curator
Scholarship as Conversation	Consider the ways that the scholarly conversation impacts archives and special collections
	Understand that primary sources may be used differently for different scholarly ends
	Consider how the perspectives provided by primary sources add to the scholarly conversation
	Be aware of primary source-related barriers to the scholarly conversation
	See themselves as creators of knowledge and contributors to the scholarly conversation
Searching as Strategic Exploration	Appreciate the differences between individual repositories
	Recognize possibilities for discovery and serendipity
	Understand how to use descriptive tools as part of search strategy
	Realize that searching for primary sources may require different terminology
	Learn from the expertise of others
	Understand the unique characteristics of primary sources

The crosswalk above was condensed from an earlier draft which interwove the bulk of the text from the Framework with more detailed lists of skills and understandings related to primary source literacy. This draft crosswalk, which was developed by the sub-group and other members of the task force, is included as an appendix to the report.

The three members of the sub-group agree that the Framework can be a useful model for developing primary source literacy competencies in that it provides a sophisticated and flexible structure which reflects how research and learning occur. However, the Framework does not completely align with primary source literacy. It does not lend itself as well to articulating the development of “curiosity and appreciation for the past” (from our charge) or an understanding of the history of rare books and print culture, nor does it address necessary research skills like the ability to differentiate between primary and secondary sources.

Appendix 1. Draft Crosswalk

Authority Is Constructed and Contextual

Information resources reflect their creators' expertise and credibility, and are evaluated based on the information need and the context in which the information will be used. Authority is constructed in that various communities may recognize different types of authority. It is contextual in that the information need may help to determine the level of authority required.

Knowledge Practices

Learners who are developing their information literate abilities

- 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).
- Use research tools and indicators of authority to determine the credibility of sources, understanding the elements that might temper this credibility.
- Understand that many disciplines have acknowledged authorities in the sense of well-known scholars and publications that are widely considered "standard". Even in those situations, some scholars would challenge the authority of those sources.
- Recognize that authoritative content may be packaged formally or informally and may include sources of all media types.
- Acknowledge they are developing their own authoritative voices in a particular area and recognize the responsibilities this entails, including seeking accuracy and reliability, respecting intellectual property, and participating in communities of practice.
- Understand the increasingly social nature of the information ecosystem where authorities actively connect with one another and sources develop over time.

Dispositions

Learners who are developing their information literate abilities

- Develop and maintain an open mind when encountering varied and sometimes conflicting perspectives
- 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
- Question traditional notions of granting authority and recognize the value of diverse ideas and worldviews
- Are conscious that maintaining these attitudes and actions requires frequent self-evaluation

Related to Primary Source Literacy:

- UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT OF THE SOURCE
 - Understand the origin and context of the source
 - Place the source within its larger historical context, and context of its creation
 - Historical bias and purpose of material at time of creation

- UNDERSTAND HOW THE SOURCE WAS SHAPED BY CREATORS AND OTHERS
 - Understanding the perspective of the creator, his/her knowledge of topic, first-hand witness of event or not
 - How the authority of the author was constructed by publisher and literary patrons in early books
 - The audience of the primary source when it was created and how that shaped its creation
- RECOGNIZE THE NEED TO APPROACH MATERIAL CRITICALLY
 - Understanding need to approach unedited, unpublished sources critically
 - Awareness that not all material in an archive is credible (analyzing forgeries and fakes)
- BE AWARE OF WHAT HAS BEEN COLLECTED AND WHAT IS MISSING
 - Authority of the archives, what is collected
 - Awareness of gaps in the historical record; silences in the archives
 - Censorship determining what was published (rare books, censored by the crown)
 - Knowledge of ways archival collections might be “censored” or made incomplete by donor, collector, or creator removing items prior to transfer to repository, loss, theft, or disaster
 - Be aware that rare books may be in private collections, split up, or have maps or engravings missing.
- UNDERSTAND HOW THE SOURCE IS AUTHORIZED AND CONTEXTUALIZED BY ARCHIVAL PRACTICE
 - Understanding of how collections come into archives/libraries and importance of provenance/chain of custody to establishing authority and integrity
 - To this statement, “Authority of the archives, what is collected,” I would add “and how it is described”
 - Understand the relationship between a source and its creator/parent collection (this probably fits in with identifying its context, but could be explicitly stated).
 - Understand importance of original order in establishing a source’s context.
- ARE CONSCIOUS OF HOW THE SOURCE IS USED DIFFERENTLY BY DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES AND DISCIPLINES
 - What is a primary source, and what has authority as a source, can differ by communities or disciplines

Information Creation as a Process

Information in any format is produced to convey a message and is shared via a selected delivery method. The iterative processes of researching, creating, revising, and disseminating information vary, and the resulting product reflects these differences.

Knowledge Practices

Learners who are developing their information literate abilities

- Articulate the capabilities and constraints of information developed through various creation processes
- Assess the fit between an information product’s creation process and a particular information need

- 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
- Recognize the implications of information formats that contain static or dynamic information
- Monitor the value that is placed upon different types of information products in varying contexts
- Transfer knowledge of capabilities and constraints to new types of information products
- Develop, in their own creation processes, an understanding that their choices impact the purposes for which the information product will be used and the message it conveys

Dispositions

Learners who are developing their information literate abilities

- Are inclined to seek out characteristics of information products that indicate the underlying creation process
- Value the process of matching an information need with an appropriate product
- Accept that the creation of information may begin initially through communicating in a range of formats or modes
- Accept the ambiguity surrounding the potential value of information creation expressed in emerging formats or modes
- Resist the tendency to equate format with the underlying creation process
- Understand that different methods of information dissemination with different purposes are available for their use

Related to Primary Source Literacy:

- **BE AWARE OF DIFFERENT FORMATS**
 - Awareness of different formats of primary sources
 - Understanding how a process can lead to different formats: manuscript drafts, revisions, typescripts, proofs...
- **RECOGNIZE WHEN THE INFORMATION NEED REQUIRES A SOURCE IN ITS ORIGINAL FORMAT VERSUS AS A REPRODUCTION**
 - Knowledge of when there is a need to see the original
 - How original primary sources relate to digitized versions or facsimiles
 - Understand the limitations of transcriptions (e.g. oral histories, handwritten letters), translations, reproductions, or “published editions.”
- **BE AWARE OF HOW FORMATS CAN PRESENT INFORMATION DIFFERENTLY AND HOW SOURCES RELATE TO OTHER MATERIAL**
 - Understanding of ways different forms of primary sources present information differently
 - Understanding of ways different formats complement each other in creating an historical narrative
 - Understanding of how primary sources differ from and relate to secondary sources and how they support each other
- **KNOW HOW TO INTERROGATE THE CONTAINER AS PART OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS**
 - Understanding of the need to interrogate the material container and format of the source as well as its context.

Information Has Value

Information possesses several dimensions of value, including as a commodity, as a means of education, as a means to influence, and as a means of negotiating and understanding the world. Legal and socio economic interests influence information production and dissemination.

Knowledge Practices

Learners who are developing their information literate abilities

- Give credit to the original ideas of others through proper attribution and citation
- Understand that intellectual property is a legal and social construct that varies by culture
- Articulate the purpose and distinguishing characteristics of copyright, fair use, open access, and the public domain
- Understand how and why some individuals or groups of individuals may be underrepresented or systematically marginalized within the systems that produce and disseminate information
- Recognize issues of access or lack of access to information sources
- Decide where and how their information is published
- Understand how the commodification of their personal information and online interactions affects the information they receive and the information they produce or disseminate online
- Make informed choices regarding their online actions in full awareness of issues related to privacy and the commodification of personal information

Dispositions

Learners who are developing their information literate abilities

- Respect the original ideas of others
- Value the skills, time, and effort needed to produce knowledge
- See themselves as contributors to the information marketplace rather than only consumers of it
- Are inclined to examine their own information privilege

Related to Primary Source Literacy:

- BE AWARE OF THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF VALUES HELD BY PRIMARY SOURCES
 - Primary sources may have a variety of values: informational, artifactual, historical, monetary, legal, evidential, ceremonial/symbolic
 - Need to understand the context of the source, how it was created, when, where, by whom, before understanding its potential value
- RECOGNIZE THE RIGHTS OF RIGHTS HOLDERS
 - Understand the authority of rights holders (and limits to that authority) of a primary source, including repository and creators, esp. related to re-use for various purposes.
 - Understanding of the difference between physical ownership and rights to intellectual property
- GIVE CREDIT THROUGH CITATION
 - Awareness of how to cite unpublished as well as published sources, use of “preferred citation” element in finding aids, how to cite digitized primary sources

- Knowledge of how to appropriately reuse primary sources, taking into consideration copyright, citation
- RESPECT CULTURAL AND PERSONAL VALUE OF PRIMARY SOURCES
 - Respect for privacy and ethical use of information
 - Considerations of cultural sensitivity, tribal records, privacy rights, third party rights in collections
 - See one's own role as a contributor to the historical record; recognize that one's own records and the records of the communities with which one is involved have historical value.
- UNDERSTAND WHY SOME INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS MAY BE UNDERREPRESENTED OR MARGINALIZED WITHIN THE ARCHIVE
 - Authority of the archives in terms of what is collected, what is given importance
 - Archival silences, marginalization of certain voices, reasons some people are underrepresented
- BE AWARE OF THE INFLUENCE THAT PRIMARY SOURCE MATERIALS HAVE HAD ON SOCIETY
 - Awareness of the impact the printing revolution and wide transmission of texts had on society
 - To the last point above, you might add other revolutions: mechanization of printing in C19, digital revolution, etc.

Research as Inquiry

Research is iterative and depends upon asking increasingly complex or new questions whose answers in turn develop additional questions or lines of inquiry in any field.

Knowledge Practices

Learners who are developing their information literate abilities

- Formulate questions for research based on information gaps or on reexamination of existing, possibly conflicting, information
- Determine an appropriate scope of investigation
- Deal with complex research by breaking complex questions into simple ones, limiting the scope of investigations
- Use various research methods, based on need, circumstance, and type of inquiry
- Monitor gathered information and assess for gaps or weaknesses
- Organize information in meaningful ways
- Synthesize ideas gathered from multiple sources
- Draw reasonable conclusions based on the analysis and interpretation of information

Dispositions

Learners who are developing their information literate abilities

- Consider research as open-ended exploration and engagement with information
- Appreciate that a question may appear to be simple but still disruptive and important to research

- Value intellectual curiosity in developing questions and learning new investigative methods
- Maintain an open mind and a critical stance
- Value persistence, adaptability, and flexibility and recognize that ambiguity can benefit the research process
- Seek multiple perspectives during information gathering and assessment
- Seek appropriate help when needed
- Follow ethical and legal guidelines in gathering and using information
- Demonstrate intellectual humility (i.e., recognize their own intellectual or experiential limitations)

Related to Primary Source Literacy:

- **BE AWARE OF THE NATURE OF ARCHIVAL RESEARCH**
 - Aware of the need to plan for doing archival research (review of finding aids, policies, etc.) but also the value of serendipity in conducting archival research
 - Familiarity with some of the reasons that archival research is a slow process
 - Research with primary sources also an iterative process
 - Awareness that alternative strategies may be needed if the information being sought is not in the collection, or the research question may need to evolve as different information is discovered
- **UNDERSTAND THE ACCESS TOOLS FOR DOING RESEARCH USING PRIMARY SOURCES**
 - Understanding the differences in the ways archival materials are grouped, arranged, and described and how this affects the way they will be identified, searched, and used (by creator, not subject...)
 - Understanding how to use a variety of catalog records, guides, digitized sources, and finding aids which may present description at a variety of different levels (collection, series, folder, item)
 - Understanding how to locate and use finding aids effectively
- **KNOW HOW TO USE POLICIES, HANDLE MATERIALS, AND REQUEST COPIES**
 - Knowing how to find and read archival policies and procedures.
 - Understand how to physically manipulate/access primary sources, and why special care is required
 - How to request copies or scans, familiarity with the policies for access and use
 - Know how to document sources, organize notes and images to allow for later citation
- **KNOW HOW TO ASK A RESEARCH QUESTION, ANALYZE PRIMARY SOURCES, AND BUILD AN ARGUMENT**
 - How to navigate between primary and secondary sources for context and building or refuting an argument
 - Familiarity with the primary source research methods of the relevant discipline
 - Historical empathy, willful naiveté, and other historical processes that somewhat fall under demonstrating intellectual humility
 - How to interpret/analyze primary sources: document analysis, image analysis, artifact analysis
 - Generating questions about an object or topic, from a source
 - Knowing when to stop researching
- **SEEK HELP FROM A LIBRARIAN, ARCHIVIST, OR CURATOR**
 - Understanding the value of the archivist/librarian/curator as a source for additional information

Scholarship as Conversation

Communities of scholars, researchers, or professionals engage in sustained discourse with new insights and discoveries occurring over time as a result of varied perspectives and interpretations.

Knowledge Practices

Learners who are developing their information literate abilities

- Cite the contributing work of others in their own information production
- Contribute to scholarly conversation at an appropriate level, such as local online community, guided discussion, undergraduate research journal, conference presentation/poster session
- Identify barriers to entering scholarly conversation via various venues
- Critically evaluate contributions made by others in participatory information environments
- Identify the contribution particular articles, books, and other scholarly pieces make to disciplinary knowledge
- Summarize the changes in scholarly perspective over time on a particular topic within a specific discipline
- Recognize that a given scholarly work may not represent the only or even the majority perspective on the issue

Dispositions

Learners who are developing their information literate abilities

- Recognize they are often entering into an ongoing scholarly conversation and not a finished conversation
- Seek out conversations taking place in their research area
- See themselves as contributors to scholarship rather than only consumers of it
- Recognize that scholarly conversations take place in various venues
- Suspend judgment on the value of a particular piece of scholarship until the larger context for the scholarly conversation is better understood
- Understand the responsibility that comes with entering the conversation through participatory channels
- Value user-generated content and evaluate contributions made by others
- Recognize that systems **privilege** authorities and that not having a fluency in the language and process of a discipline disempowers their ability to participate and engage

Related to Primary Source Literacy:

- CONSIDER THE WAY THAT THE SCHOLARLY CONVERSATION IMPACTS ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS
 - Current research trends and interests affect what is collected (e.g., zines)
- UNDERSTAND THAT PRIMARY SOURCES MAY BE USED DIFFERENTLY FOR DIFFERENT SCHOLARLY ENDS

- Understanding that the same primary sources can be used to construct different arguments
- Understand that primary sources can be used in different disciplines (and that the same source might be seen differently from discipline to discipline) -- an extension of point 2 above
- CONSIDER WHAT THE PERSPECTIVES PROVIDED BY PRIMARY SOURCES ADD TO THE SCHOLARLY CONVERSATION
 - Multiple perspectives on a topic provide a fuller sense of an event/person
 - Perspectives on topics reflect historical context, societal views at the time
 - Using primary sources can extend the scholarly conversation by generating new knowledge
- BE AWARE OF BARRIERS TO THE SCHOLARLY CONVERSATION
 - Understand how the physical characteristics of a source serve as indicators of access- who could and who couldn't access/create a particular kind of source, both historically and today (e.g. Latin vs. vernacular text, fine vs. simple bindings, letters written on new vs. used paper, digital vs. physical records).
 - Understand that archives are for everyone, not just certain groups (the academy, records creators), but also note that some archives and rare book collections are restricted
- SEE THEMSELVES AS CREATORS OF KNOWLEDGE/CONTRIBUTORS TO SCHOLARLY CONVERSATION
 - Understanding of how students contribute to scholarly conversation through their own research by producing online exhibits, videos, posters, papers that are made available for future research use
 - Understanding how to convey interpretations of primary sources through communication, writing, presentation, and collaboration

Searching as Strategic Exploration

Searching for information is often nonlinear and iterative, requiring the evaluation of a range of information sources and the mental flexibility to pursue alternate avenues as new understanding develops.

Knowledge Practices

Learners who are developing their information literate abilities

- Determine the initial scope of the task required to meet their information needs
- Identify interested parties, such as scholars, organizations, governments, and industries, which might produce information about a topic and determine how to access that information
- Utilize divergent (e.g., brainstorming) and convergent (e.g., selecting the best source) thinking when searching
- Match information needs and search strategies to search tools
- Design and refine needs and search strategies, based on search results
- Understand how information systems (i.e., collections of recorded information) are organized to access relevant information
- Use different searching language types (e.g., controlled vocabulary, keywords, natural language)
- Manage searching processes and results

Dispositions

Learners who are developing their information literate abilities

- Exhibit mental flexibility and creativity
- Understand that first attempts at searching do not always produce adequate results
- Realize that information sources vary greatly in content and format and have varying relevance and value, depending on the needs and nature of the search
- Seek guidance from experts, such as librarians, researchers, and professionals
- Recognize the value of browsing and other serendipitous methods of information gathering
- Persist in the face of search challenges, and know when enough information completes the information task

Related to Primary Source Literacy:

- APPRECIATE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN REPOSITORIES
 - Recognize the different kinds of sources housed in certain repositories. For instance, understanding the difference between archives and special collections, and identifying the collecting scope of subject/geography-specific repositories
 - Understand that primary sources may be organized differently from repository to repository, including online
- RECOGNIZE POSSIBILITIES FOR DISCOVERY AND SERENDIPITY
 - Archival sources provide information not found in other sources and can lead to new discoveries, original scholarship
 - Archival research provides opportunities for serendipity.
- UNDERSTAND HOW TO USE DESCRIPTIVE TOOLS AS PART OF SEARCH STRATEGY
 - Understanding the differences in the ways archival materials are grouped, arranged, and described and how this affects the way they may be identified, searched, and used
 - Understanding how to locate and use finding aids effectively and how to interpret the different levels of description available
 - Realize that some content, such as photographs, may not be described in a way that will be useful for your research
- REALIZE THAT PRIMARY SOURCES MAY REQUIRE DIFFERENT KEYWORDS
 - How to formulate searches using current and past terminology (African-American and Negro)
 - Related to other Related to Primary Source Literacy, but perhaps worth setting on its own: Generating appropriate keywords not only dependent on time period and geographical origin of sources, but also depending on the context of the tool being used
- RECOGNIZE WHEN DIFFERENT RESEARCH STRATEGIES ARE NEEDED
 - Awareness that alternative strategies may be needed if the information being sought is not in the collection, or the research question may need to evolve as different information is discovered
 - Understand when not finding something is the result of not searching well or in the wrong place, and when it's the result of a gap or silence in the archival record
- LEARN FROM THE EXPERTISE OF OTHERS
 - Learn how expert searchers use original primary source materials, databases of primary source materials, and digital collections online in relation to one another
 - Utilizing the knowledge and expertise of the archivist/librarian/curator

- UNDERSTAND THE UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS OF PRIMARY SOURCES
 - Know how to differentiate between primary and secondary sources
 - Understanding of information that can be gleaned from an original that may not be accessible with a facsimile (watermarks, texture of animal skin, etc.)