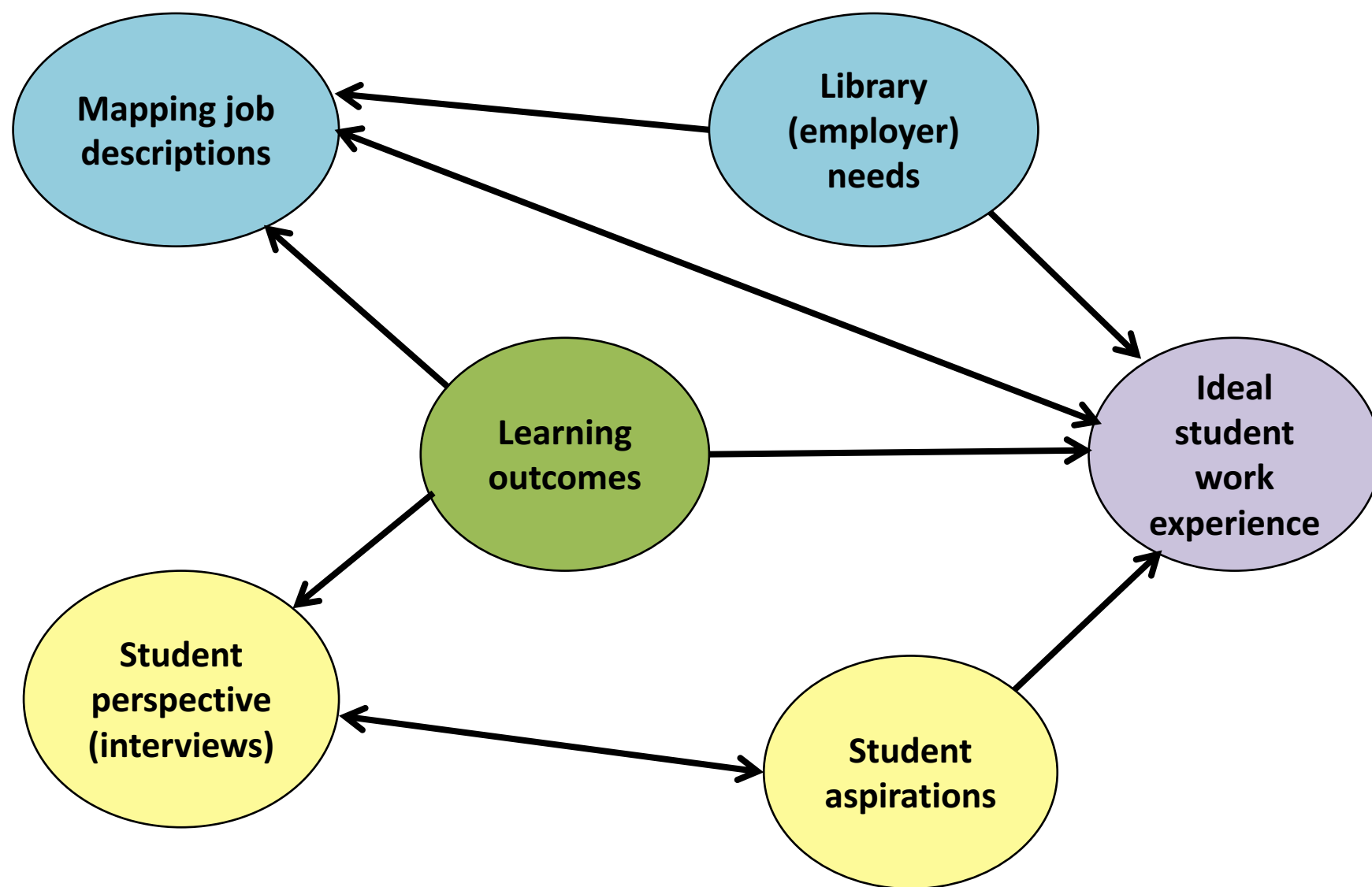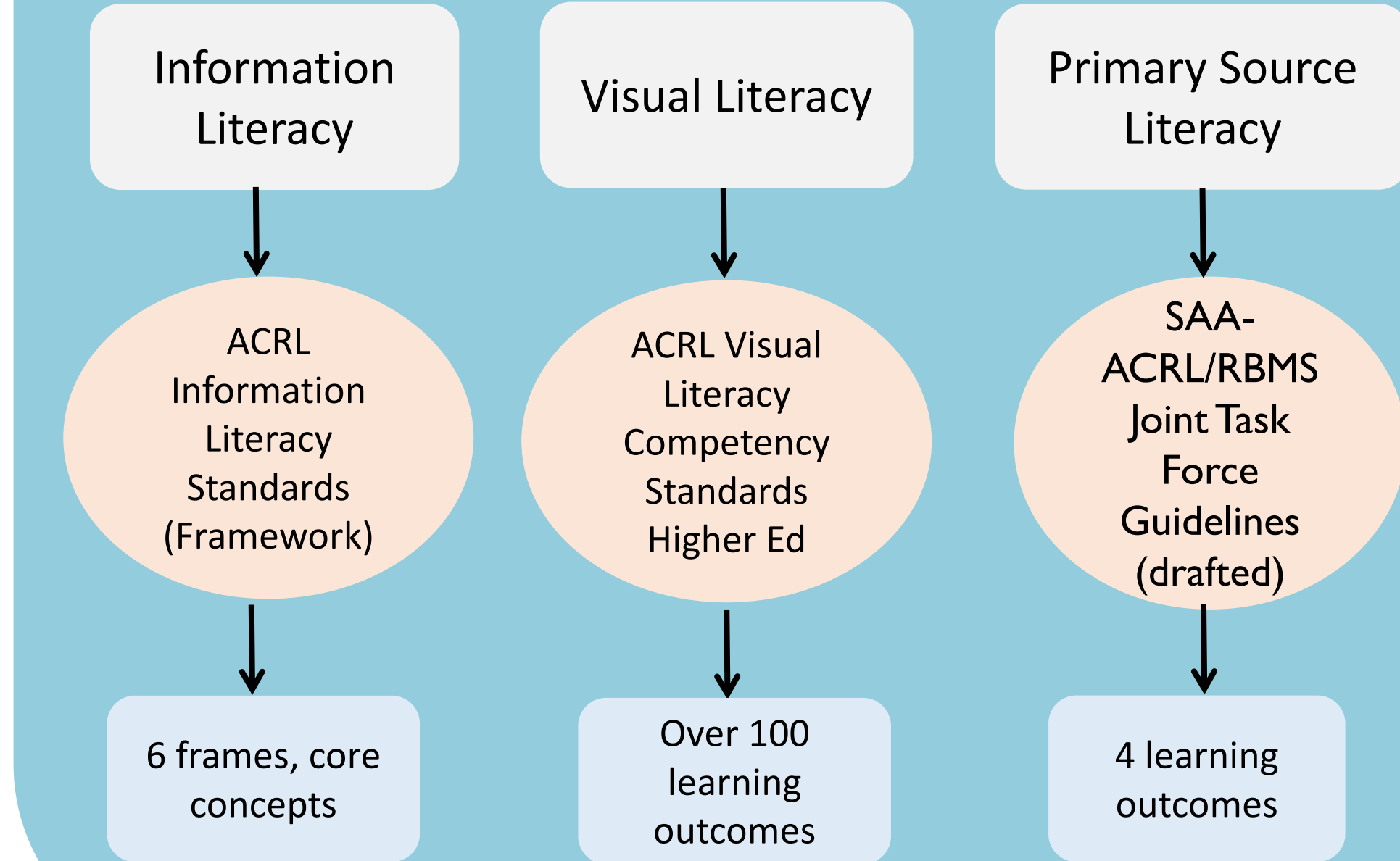# Student Employment Matters: Mapping Literacies and Learning Outcomes in Special and Digital Collections

2017 SAA Research Forum | Erin Passehl-Stoddart, University of Idaho

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What role do information literacies play in the lives of library student workers who work with special and digital collections?

Variety of Literacies in the Library Workplace

Information Literacy	Visual Literacy	Primary Source Literacy
ACRL Information Literacy Standards (Framework)	ACRL Visual Literacy Competency Standards Higher Ed	SAA-ACRL/RBMS Joint Task Force Guidelines (drafted)
6 frames, core concepts	Over 100 learning outcomes	4 learning outcomes

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Mapping Standards to Student Job Descriptions

Job Duty Function	Digitizes and helps provide access for digital collections by:
Job Duties/Responsibilities	• Producing and assigning metadata for photographic, textual, and other materials. • Retrieving material from storage, scanning items, and returning boxes and containers to storage. • Scanning photographic, textual, and other materials. • Assisting with web design and web portal development. • Assessing and processing archival materials related to Idaho forests.
Percentage Of Time	80
Essential/Marginal	Essential
Job Duty Function	Organizes and maintains archival digital files by:
Job Duties/Responsibilities	• Assisting in the digital preservation efforts of the digital initiatives unit.
Percentage Of Time	15
Essential/Marginal	Essential
Job Duty Function	Contributes to team effort by:
Job Duties/Responsibilities	• Assisting with physical exhibits as needed; performs other related duties as assigned.
Percentage Of Time	5
Essential/Marginal	Marginal

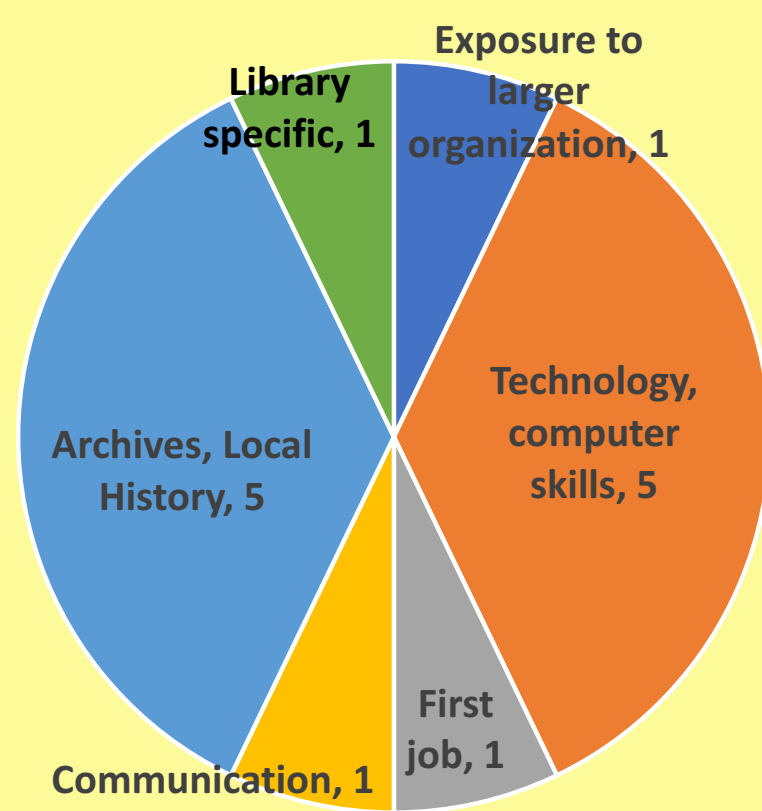Current: Student worker job description, focus on percentages, functions

Student Responsibilities	ACRL IL Higher Ed Framework	ACRL Visual Literacy	Primary Source Literacy
Assisting with physical exhibits as needed.		Standard 1 Standard 2 Standard 5	Interpret, Analyze, and Evaluate Use and Incorporate Conceptualize Find
Digitizes and helps provide access for digital collections by assessing and processing archival materials.	Authority is Constructed and Contextual	Standard 7	Find Interpret, Analyze, and Evaluate Use and Incorporate
Assisting with web design and web portal development.	Searching as Strategic Exploration	Standard 4 Standard 5	Use and Incorporate
Producing and assigning metadata for photographic, textual, and other materials.	Information creation as a process	Standard 2 Standard 3	Find Interpret, Analyze, and Evaluate Use and Incorporate
Retrieving material from storage, scanning items, and returning boxes and containers to storage.	Information creation as a process	Standard 3	Find Interpret, Analyze, and Evaluate
Scanning photographic, textual, and other materials.	Information creation as a process	Standard 3 Standard 4 Standard 5 Standard 6	Interpret, Analyze, and Evaluate
Organizes and maintains archival digital files by assisting in the digital preservation efforts of the digital initiatives unit.	Information creation as a process	Standard 4	Find Interpret, Analyze, and Evaluate

Future: Map/align responsibilities with specific literacies

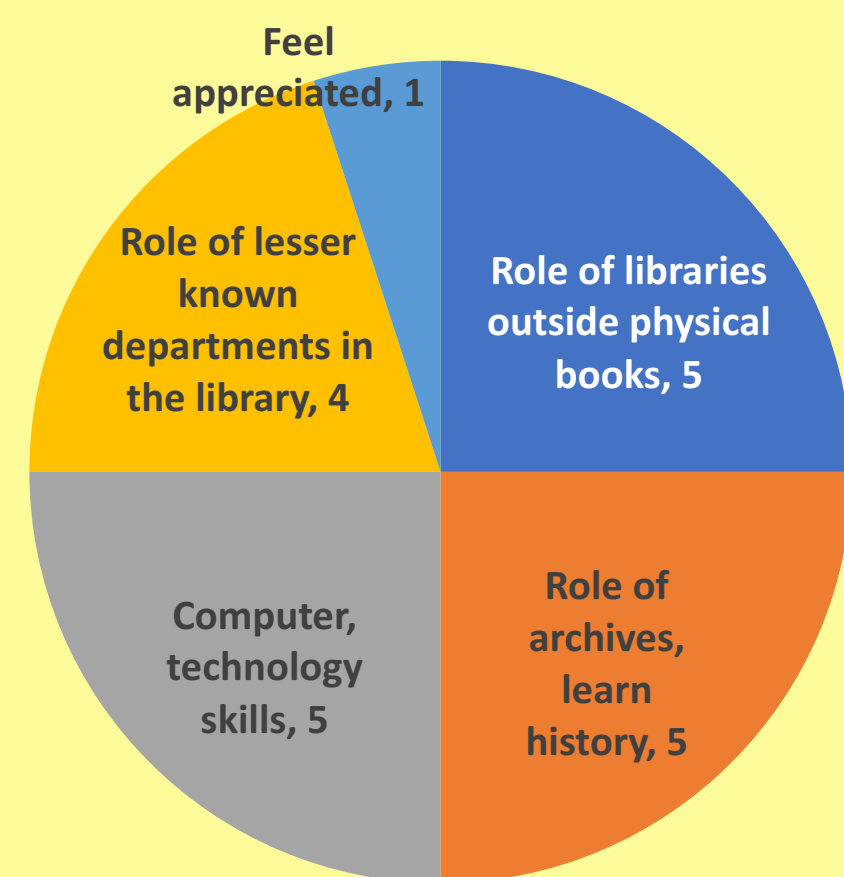## Qualitative Student Interviews

7 undergraduates | 5 female, 2 male | Sophomore to recent graduate | 20-60 minutes long
Time in library ranged from 3 months to 4 years, approximately 10 hours per week

Aspirations

Library specific, 1
Exposure to larger organization, 1
Technology, computer skills, 5
Archives, Local History, 5
Communication, 1
First job, 1

Local geography, 2
Web development, 1
Basic computer skills, 5
Importance of archives, local history, 6
Tricks, shortcuts, 5
Communication in the workplace, 2
Importance of metadata, 1
Research skills, 3

Perspectives on Libraries

"A lot of people think of working with books, libraries are antiquated, but after working in digital... there are actually preserving history in a way that would go throughout time and kept up with current technology, a lot of people don't necessarily see at the library." Interviewee #3

Feel appreciated, 1
Role of lesser known departments in the library, 4
Role of libraries outside physical books, 5
Computer, technology skills, 5
Role of archives, learn history, 5

Skills Beyond Graduation

100% stated that they increased existing or learned new skills that helped them in school and post-graduation.

"I am definitely better at picking up clues, deduction, finding little details and expanding out. Obviously technical skills (Photoshop, Excel, scanning); I know my way around new software. I learned lots of new things. Even learning keyboard shortcuts, so much easier." Interviewee #4

"I got to learn a little bit about coding, interesting to see and be less intimidated. I work with developers now, and although I don't know the full extent it is less intimidating. I am ok with admitting I don't know. Its not completely foreign, I have some context and experience. It was my first job ever too so it had a really big impact." Interviewee #3

Scaled Questions
ACRL Visual Literacy Student Self-evaluation

Analyzed Standard 3 (1, 2) and Standard 4 (1, 3). **Average score was 3.9 out of 5**

"I am developing skills used for working with clients." Interviewee #1

"At the very beginning I would show you the handwriting sample that I could not read, now other students are showing me the problem and I can work through it. Interpreting handwriting, finding details in images to figure out the when, what. I have definitely improved...taking a small piece of a little clue in the picture and expanding on it." Interviewee #4

"Since I grew up [out of state], looking at the history of farmers, miners, and blue collar workers was different and interesting to see. Very foreign and diverse for me." Interviewee #2

Scaled Questions
SAA-ACRL/RBMS Primary Source Literacy Guidelines Student Self-evaluation

Analyzed all 4 learning outcomes. **Average score was 4.3 out of 5**

"I have always liked history but appreciating Idaho history has led me to do things like go camping locally, going to locations I have worked on. I want to see it with my own eyes, tell other people about it, they ask me about my work and I tell them about what I learned, not just about scanning and metadata. Making connections with state history. Solid 5 if not a 6. My favorite part about this job." Interviewee #4

"It was really cool especially seeing student organizations and documents showing the growth of campus especially since I have close personal ties to campus through my family, seeing the evolution of Idaho history. Something to be proud of. Things that most people don't get to see first-hand." Interviewee #3

Next Steps

○ Revisit student job descriptions to align with library and campus learning goals

○ Map responsibilities directly related to visual, digital, and primary source literacies and standards.

○ Assess whether to include how students "grade" themselves against these standards verses staff evaluations of students throughout their employment.

○ Map student experiences to the language of administrators, strategic plans, and learning outcomes; place an importance on experiential and in-depth learning experiences at work (AACU LEAP High-Impact Educational Practices).

○ **Student worker library experiences play a fundamental role in shaping lifelong information literacy skills. As libraries connect this new information literacy framework to departments that employ student workers, libraries can strategically communicate impacts on student learning, student retention, student success, workplace readiness, and their contribution to the overall information literacy lifecycle.**