Companion Document to the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education

Journalism

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Introduction

This document applies principles that are addressed within the *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* adopted in January of 2016 by the Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL). Its purpose is to enable the evaluation of the information literacy and research skills of journalism students and professionals by providing a set of framing concepts pertinent to that profession. The audience for this document includes librarians, journalism educators, post-secondary students, and professional journalists. Dispositions and knowledge practices addressed assume a United States context but may also contribute to comparison with journalism in other nations. These frames are a resource for faculty and librarians involved in curriculum planning, instructional settings, and research consultations that intersect with journalism curricula and contribute to sets of standards professional journalists may consider as they go about their work. Standards of excellence from journalism education organizations, as well as codes of practices and codes of ethics from the journalism profession, were consulted during the creation of the document (see Appendices iii & iv). These standards and codes guide journalists in supporting a vibrant free press and maintaining the exchange of information that is accurate, fair, and thorough.

Since the publication in 2011 of ACRL's Information Literacy Standards for Journalism Students and Professionals (pdf), the *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* extends the definition of *information literacy.*[1] It recognizes the increasing role for students and professionals as creators of new knowledge and enhanced understanding and attention devoted to ethical uses of that information.

This recognition is presented in the form of a series of threshold concepts viewed as the points at which enlarged understanding takes place for how to think about and practice a discipline (see Appendix i).[2] As the *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* describes, knowledge practices are the proficiencies or abilities that learners develop as a result of their comprehending a threshold concept. Dispositions involve attitudinal components of learning, clusters of preferences, attitudes, and intentions.[3]

The authors considered the following factors to develop a document that can be relevant to the wide-range of journalists' tasks. Journalism resides at an intersection of multiple literacies such as data, visual, civic, and media. It is a practice employing a wide variety

[1] Information literacy is the set of integrated abilities encompassing the reflective discovery of information, the understanding of how information is produced and valued, and the use of information in creating new knowledge and participating ethically in communities of learning.
[2] Meyer, J. H. F., Land, R., & Baillie, C. (2010). Editors' preface: Threshold concepts and transformational learning. In J. H. F. Meyer, R. Land, & C. Baillie (Eds.), *Threshold concepts and transformational learning* (pp. ix–xlii). Sense Publishers. https://www.lamission.edu/learningcenter/docs/1177-threshold-concepts-and-transformational-learning.pdf
[3] Salomon, G. (1994). *To Be or Not to Be (Mindful)*. American Educational Research Association Meetings, New Orleans, LA.

of rapidly evolving communications platforms and digital tools. Because of technological advancements, individuals can exhibit both novice and expert behaviors at different parts of the research process. At expert levels within their field, journalists understand not only how to practice their profession, but why their work and the independence of a free press is critical. The study and practice of journalism can include investigation of situations when publication sources or platforms familiar to the public are used as tools for the spread of misinformation. The role of journalists at times challenges existing positions of power or status held by persons, organizations, or governments. Journalists and their organizations may also periodically be targeted by those who wish to manipulate what and how news is covered. They engage in reflective practice, understand how journalism is produced and valued, and use the information they encounter to synthesize as well as create new knowledge for the benefit of a diverse citizenry.

The sections that follow present knowledge practices and dispositions important for information literacy within journalism. These abilities and attitudes are addressed under six conceptual frames: Authority is constructed and conceptual, information creation as a process, information has value, news as conversation, research as inquiry, and searching as strategic exploration.

Authority Is Constructed and Contextual

Sources that journalists consult reflect the knowledge and experience of their creators. Evaluating sources for inclusion in a story depends on the type of story being told and the context in which the sources will be used. Authority is constructed given that people, including journalists, and communities recognize and rely on different types of expertise and judgment. Authority is contextual in that the type of story a journalist tells or the type of information they need to inform themselves on a topic will determine the expertise, insights, and/or judgments they seek.

Journalists evaluate sources for accuracy, transparency, reliability, and relevance to a story. Novices are beginning to understand that relevant sources are important for telling a story, and that there are multiple ways to assess the veracity and usefulness of their sources. Experts view authority with informed skepticism and recognize their responsibility to consider the opportunities and constraints of the information sources they consult. These include the biases and privileges inherent in the people, organizations, archives, databases, and documents that journalists use. Novices understand the need to corroborate sources wherever possible, but may struggle to ask relevant questions about the origins, context, and suitability of their sources, and to consider a range of positions on a topic. Experts identify and address competing insights or observations in their sources, and hold themselves and their sources accountable for the information they glean and share. Experts cultivate habits of lateral reading that result in source evaluation that extends analysis of any one source into coverage of the same topics by other authors and sources. Both novices and experts turn to knowledgeable people where appropriate, to help them distinguish which sources are authoritative or not (e.g., community leaders, scholars). However, novices may demonstrate an overreliance on sources recommended to them by professors, coworkers, and peers. Experts recognize their own viewpoints and backgrounds and how these may influence their evaluation of sources and the way they tell a story. Experts understand that expanded access to digital communications and publishing technologies also disrupt authority in journalism. Those global technologies enhance opportunities for expert-level news gathering and reporting, but also enable contested claims over how authority as a journalist is defined.

Knowledge practices

Journalists who are developing their information literate abilities

- identify and describe different types of authority related to a story topic, such as academic expertise, lived experience, and information that is and is not publicly available;
- recognize the institutional role of journalists and a free press in American society as rooted in sets of professional standards and ethical practices and laws, with authority based within these shared principles;

- understand the historical, political, sociocultural, and economic contexts/motivations that shape the creation and distribution of sources;
- challenge the assumption of authority based on reputation or position and consider a range of contextual factors when determining the quality of a source (e.g., the source's motive, track record, point of view, and confirmability);
- challenge the assumption that a source is reputable simply because it appears in multiple places or is repeated by various news outlets, particularly given the highly interconnected environment in which journalism operates and in which information is shared;
- recognize that the relevance of a source depends on the source's awareness of, proximity to, or other expertise pertinent to the subject of that reporting;
- recognize that information is dynamic such that journalists must be vigilant in staying up-to-date on their stories without compromising integrity;
- identify colleagues or communities of practice to whom they can turn for help assessing the value and validity of the information in their reporting;
- seek out a diversity of voices, ideas, and angles when considering who or what is authoritative or credible to include in a story;
- seek out sources or individuals that bring forward the voices of Black, Indigenous, or historically marginalized racial and ethnic groups, and those of underrepresented genders (including cis women, trans women, trans men, non-binary people, and those who are otherwise marginalized).

Dispositions

Journalists who are developing their information literate abilities

- know that they and their work become a source of information for the general public, which renders them an authority with the ethical responsibilities that come with that kind of impact;
- develop an awareness of the challenging nature of evaluating sources, particularly in a dynamic and highly distributed environment;
- acknowledge that journalists and news organizations work within an environment of competing commitments (public interest, profit, attention, bias, trust), which can affect their independence, the quality of their stories and the information sources they consult;
- reflect on their own biases and how those may influence how they select and evaluate sources for inclusion in a story and/or in the messages they create;
- bring a robust sense of skepticism and critique to the sources they consult to discern bias, reliability, and verifiability, while also acknowledging the skepticism that viewers, readers, and listeners bring to the media they consume;
- identify whose voices may be missing from a story and how to include them wherever possible and appropriate;
- are conscious that maintaining these attitudes and actions requires persistence, reflection, and self-evaluation.

Information Creation as a Process

Journalists use a variety of information sources that can include but are not limited to documents, datasets, news articles, videos, and people. Information is created in published and unpublished formats with unique processes that can influence how journalists select and use information.

The journalism field recognizes that information is highly interconnected and is created in a variety of formats and modes of delivery. Journalists assess these information formats by looking at the various creation processes involved, usually for authoring content in their original reporting work. Assessment can include but is not limited to how the information was gathered and vetted, when it was collected, and who was collecting and publishing it. Understanding the creation and publishing processes is vital for fact-checking. Journalists value information sources that are transparent in how they were created to help them evaluate for quality, accuracy, and relevance in a story. Sources that are not as transparent or deemed unreliable may be used as a starting point, and then fact-checked through triangulation and other information; however novice reporters struggle with tracing information back to the original source. Novice journalists are beginning to understand the significance of public records but cannot always articulate what they are and *why* they are important. If deadlines allow, expert journalists take the time and legal action to sift through public information and request information to be made public by leveraging Freedom of Information (FOI) laws. Expert journalists understand that creation processes are fluid, and that the credibility of information sources can change as the processes change. Journalists who cover a specific topic or beat have specialized knowledge and familiarity with the formats valued and produced by the field they are covering. Additionally, investigative journalists may probe deeper into information verification, uncover difficult-to-locate material, gather facts from uncooperative human sources, or critically analyze complex systems of disinformation. Journalists develop skills to produce and publish information in a variety of formats, including packaging and disseminating the same news story across different platforms, which might affect how news consumers perceive the information from each format.

Knowledge Practices

Journalists who are developing their information literate abilities

- understand a variety of information formats are available for them to use;
- articulate the opportunities and limitations of established and emerging formats, recognizing when certain formats should be used and for what purpose;
- identify and evaluate the creation and publishing processes of different information formats, including their vetting, ownership, and copyright;
- recognize the implications of using information formats that contain static or dynamic information;

- identify the different types of information formats produced by the news media and the platforms used for publishing, and develop the skills needed to produce and publish information in a variety of formats;
- understand the value of public records and know how to request records under the Freedom of Information (FOI) laws;
- recognize that different communities value some information formats over others;
- develop specialized expertise in the information creation processes and formats that are used by people in their beat or particular subject area;
- understand how mis/disinformation can be created and published;
- understand the greater information ecosystem, that it is highly interconnected, and how individual formats function in the greater system.

Dispositions

Journalists who are developing their information literate abilities

- value the process of selecting appropriate information formats based on the information need, editorial deadlines, and competition pressures between newsrooms;
- understand that the variety of formats produced by news media can impact how information is received, used, and understood;
- value organizations and formats with transparent creation processes, such as public records;
- understand the role of new and emerging information communication technologies throughout the newsgathering and publishing processes;
- are inclined to develop the skills to use and assess new information formats, such as the ability to gather, analyze, manipulate, and report on numeric data.

Information Has Value

Journalists understand that information has value as a commodity and as a means to educate citizens, influence public opinion, and foster an informed society. The value of information can be driven by powerful interests that marginalize certain groups or perspectives in society. In journalism, ethical, legal, and socioeconomic interests affect the selection, production, and dissemination of information.

Journalists are producers and critical consumers of information. To make deliberate and informed decisions on reporting, journalists should know their rights and responsibilities concerning the value of information in the various contexts of journalism. In selecting information, journalists must gather information from trustworthy sources in a wide variety of forms. Both novice and expert journalists advocate for the free flow of knowledge in the public domain, but expert journalists are keenly aware of when to use closed sources such as subscriptions to access premium content. Reporting verified information is invaluable to building trust in a story and the journalists telling that story. Journalists exercise healthy skepticism to back up every claim in a news story and verify, attribute, and cite all sources transparently and adequately. They seek to avoid disclosing sensitive or confidential information such as trade secrets, comments shared "off-the-record," or other information that might put a human source at risk. In reporting a story, journalists should recognize when individuals and organizations with power attempt to use information to influence change and for other forms of civic, economic, social, or personal gains. When reporting about marginalized groups or views in society, journalists strive to recognize their own and their source's potential bias and to be accurate and fair in conveying a diversity of perspectives to their audiences.[4] Journalists should be vigilant in identifying the purpose of the sources they consult, and be honest and transparent in the disclosure of any conflicts of interest. Journalists often write the same story for multiple formats (e.g., in a newspaper, on-air, and online), and supplement the story with graphics, data, audio, or video, which requires current knowledge of laws and doctrines for the copyright and fair use applicable to each format. They should understand the benefits and costs of publishing or broadcasting in these myriad formats.

Knowledge Practices

Journalists who are developing their information literate abilities

- maintain transparency in obtaining and reporting about the original ideas and work of others;
- do not plagiarize or fabricate information;

[4] See the recommendations from the 2020 Diversity and Inclusion Audit of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* for examples of approaches to inclusive sourcing, editing, hiring, and engagement, https://www.lenfestinstitute.org/diverse-growing-audiences/what-we-learned-from-an-independent-diversity-audit-of-more-than-3000-philadelphia-inquirer-stories

- understand intellectual property laws and appropriately attribute and cite all sources such as images, videos, graphics, datasets, and text;
- invest in the necessary information and communications technologies to carry out their work;
- apply adequate time, staff and funds toward investigative reporting whose goals may not be limited to minimizing cost;
- exercise good judgment in situations when paid access to the source material is required;
- reduce harm when reporting about some individuals or groups of individuals who are underrepresented or systematically marginalized within society;
- know when to protect a source's safety and right to privacy, and when to serve the public's right to know;
- learn the history of ownership and readership for publications and other media platforms in their industry;
- adhere to ethical codes from professional organizations and, when in doubt, seek help from their organizations and communities of other journalists.

Dispositions

Journalists who are developing their information literate abilities

- respect the original ideas, data, and stories of others;
- value the expertise and time needed to produce high-quality news reports;
- see themselves as both contributors to and consumers in an information marketplace;
- understand that quality journalism may require the use of information behind paywalls or subscriptions, and the privilege inherent to this type of information access;
- strive to be fair and accurate in covering diverse voices and varying perspectives;
- recognize the intersection between the work of journalism and structural racism and sexism, and how this influences the value placed on certain types of information or sources;
- examine their privilege connected to freedom of the press and speech in monitoring and challenging economic and political power, including how that role for journalists differs around the globe.

News as Conversation

Understanding of a news event is highly complex, and addresses many possible angles. News reporting is constructed by inquiring into a range of perspectives in a participatory information ecosystem that includes professional journalists, newsroom staff, citizen journalists, sources, and readers.

News stories break and evolve over time, with various news outlets covering different angles and revealing new pieces of information. Expert journalists seek out gaps in coverage but also determine what stories need to be retold for the benefit of the community. In framing a news story, a journalist must choose which pieces of information and perspectives to include and how to organize them. To be represented in the news is inherently powerful, and it is an ethical responsibility in journalism to hold those in power accountable and to give a voice to those without power, particularly groups that are historically disadvantaged or marginalized.[5] The kinds of perspectives that are represented in the news may change over time with differences in societal values, with greater awareness of those without power and with developments in news production and dissemination. Expert journalists understand that a news story may be characterized by several competing perspectives and are inclined to seek out a range of perspectives, including those voices that are marginalized. They critically judge what tells a story in the most impartial light and are aware that choices made may change others' conclusions about the story. Novices may only perceive "both sides" of a story and may only seek out familiar perspectives or voices.

Experts balance the commercial demands and tight deadlines of reporting with seeking complete and fair information. While anyone may participate in the news conversation, those who work for established news media organizations may have more significant influence and amplification of reporting. Expert journalists understand the importance of the participatory environment in news reporting and value the contributions of other reporters, editors, experts, and members of the community in writing a story, whereas novices may consider reporting as a solitary act of performance. The news conversation occurs through both traditional publishing and new information communication technologies, and experts go beyond established modes of publishing when disseminating information. Familiarity with methods of journalistic research, writing, and publication helps novice learners enter the news conversation.

Knowledge practices

Journalists who are developing their information literate abilities

- contribute to the news conversation in various mediums, which may include reporting, blogging, participating in social media, and following media commentary;

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[5] See, for example, "Journalism Needs More Diverse Voices" https://news.climate.columbia.edu/2020/09/11/journalism-needs-diverse-voices

- identify advantages, challenges, and responsibilities to entering the news conversation via various venues and technologies, considering issues like the intended audience, how the information might be used, and the time frame;
- determine how a news story fits within the contributions of previous reporting and cite other news sources as appropriate;
- choose perspectives that are representative to the community being served and appropriate to the type of publication;
- evaluate how perspectives are represented in the news and how that has changed over time;
- recognize that an individual source represents the “face” of a perspective, that an individual may not represent the only - or even the majority - perspective on the issue
- determine how to represent potentially socially harmful perspectives carefully and ethically;
- leverage new technologies creatively in identifying perspectives and sources and in contributing to the news conversation.

Dispositions

Journalists who are developing their information literate abilities

- value and evaluate contributions made by others to the conversation;
- understand that reporting is a collaborative process;
- recognize that how a story has been told in the media may not be the best or the only way of understanding what happened;
- recognize that society privileges certain perspectives over others, and that those without power should be sought out;
- recognize that their own personal biases may need to be checked in choosing perspectives for a story;
- suspend judgment on the value of an individual perspective until the broader context is understood;
- recognize that conversations are happening in traditional and emerging venues;
- Seek to build trust with community members, and specifically look to include and listen to marginalized groups

Research as Inquiry

Journalism research is an iterative process that creates new threads of inquiry and helps identify and scope story ideas.

Inquiry is an integral part of the research process in reporting, often leading down different lines of questioning as journalists learn more about the issue(s) they are covering, and identify gaps in existing news coverage. Expert journalists recognize the importance of following those paths and digging for answers. They also understand that research is an integral part of the process in determining the credibility of an information source and confirming what they have been told. The range and depth of questions that journalists ask and examine can vary depending on the nature of the topic, with some issues requiring more investigation to provide further support for a story. Novice journalists stick to a limited number of research methods, while experts have developed a wider variety of strategies for researching and questioning. Experts are also able to recognize the scope of inquiry needed (depending on the topic), the demands of the publication cycle, and the importance of deadlines. Novices will feel their research is complete once there is enough information for a reader to understand the story and will typically stay at the surface level, whereas an expert will also ensure that they have explored multiple sides of a story.

Knowledge Practices

Journalists who are developing their information literate abilities

- monitor a variety of information to develop story ideas;
- develop questions based on gaps in media coverage of a story, such as untold parts of a story or voices that have not been heard or amplified;
- assess the appropriate amount of research needed;
- use background research to gain a broad understanding of a topic or issue;
- leverage technologies in the process of identifying new questions;
- synthesize information from a selection of sources found through research;
- maintain a secure system for organizing and safeguarding information obtained through a variety of sources.

Dispositions

Journalists who are developing their information literate abilities

- seek a variety of sources and multiple perspectives in developing a defensible story;
- ethically treat human sources and subjects in the process of gathering and using information;
- recognize the importance of persistence in gathering information;
- seek assistance from and collaborate with colleagues as needed;

- maintain a critical approach in determining what could be considered newsworthy;
- recognize that more sources will be acquired than might appear in the final story;
- demonstrate flexibility and creativity in learning new technologies for research purposes;
- Value the process of source verification.

Searching as Strategic Exploration

Journalism requires multiple research tools and strategies to gather a variety of quality sources.

Information sources, both second and first hand, can be found in an increasing number of places and can be published or unpublished. Journalists know that finding quality information requires repeated attempts using an assortment of online, physical, and human sources. Building a toolkit of flexible methods and multiple search strategies is key for reporters. Different sources, such as public records, government documents, subscription databases, social media, press releases, numeric data, and key witnesses, require different search strategies. Novice reporters rely on familiar search processes, such as freely available search engines, and they rarely look beyond the first page of results. Expert journalists take time to develop keywords, create search strings, persist when they face search challenges, and use advanced search techniques and tools during their quest for information. Experts also search for and identify human sources relevant to a story, and seek out diverse perspectives for their reporting. While novice journalists are unsure what to do after using a public search engine, experts engage in a search process that can take them from their laptop to the courthouse, to a library archive all in the same day—and they are prepared and well positioned to consider how each type of source employed in their reporting might inform a story.

Knowledge Practices

Journalists who are developing their information literate abilities

- use multiple channels to identify a variety of human and secondary sources that may yield information about a story;
- develop reliable strategies for discovering information and for identifying what information is missing or still needed for a story;
- match information source needs and search strategies to their choice of search tools or databases;
- understand which institutions, governmental bodies, individuals, and agencies produce and preserve information, and how that information is organized and accessed;
- design and refine needs and search strategies as necessary to create the final story;
- use different types of online searching language (e.g., controlled vocabulary, keywords, natural language) appropriately;
- apply appropriate computer programming languages or related digital skills and tools to their reporting (e.g., web scraping, application programming interfaces [APIs], data visualization software);
- develop effective interviewing skills when gathering information from human sources;
- know which information is collected, and legally available to the public, but must be retrieved through Freedom of Information (FOI) requests;

- understand the typical design and underlying structures of search tools and transfer multiple search techniques across those different information tools.

Dispositions

Journalists who are developing their information literate abilities

- exhibit mental flexibility and creativity when identifying and gathering sources;
- understand that first attempts at searching do not always produce adequate results;
- understand the ways in which algorithms influence what information is retrieved (e.g., in search engines and on social media), and that this can affect the way a story is interpreted when using these sources of inquiry;
- realize that information sources vary significantly in content and format and have varying relevance and value, depending on the needs and nature of the story;
- recognize the value of browsing and other serendipitous methods of information gathering in discovering and developing stories;
- respect the role of dates and timelines when assessing their sources, tools, and stories;
- persist in the face of search challenges, and know when they have enough information to complete a story or meet a deadline;
- value well-organized subscription and open access databases, cataloging, and metadata that allow for easier access and retrieval of information;
- have a willingness to learn new and emerging technologies to develop new methods of searching for and understanding information.

Appendix i: Strategies for Assessment

This *Framework for Information Literacy in Journalism for Higher Education* presents six frames that represent the underlying conceptual understandings or "threshold concepts" of the information practices in journalism, with each frame breaking out associated concepts, practices, and dispositions. A threshold concept is a fundamental understanding within an area of study that is transformative and irreversible in that once understood, the learner comprehends ideas and perspectives within the discipline in a new way. Oftentimes, these concepts can be difficult for students to understand and can be stumbling blocks to moving on to more sophisticated understanding and performance.[6]

It is much easier to assess what a student does than what a student understands or values, particularly when it is acknowledged that learning for understanding is a messy, recursive process. This is generally the difficulty of the assessment of conceptual understanding - assessment is linear, and learning is not. However, there are meaningful ways of assessing student understanding that, when taken into account alongside traditional methods of assessing student products, can benefit both the instructor and the student. Assessing activities that make learning explicit, such as written reflections, diaries, critiques, research logs, and concept maps, allow the assessor to look for evidence of the understandings, practices, and dispositions of the journalism profession. Recommendations for the classroom and program levels are presented in the following sections.

Skill development is, of course, necessary in learning to become an information literate practitioner, but it is a hollow endeavor without an associated understanding of why journalists perform in certain ways or value certain things. It is even possible that a student may be able to mimic a successful product (news report, opinion piece, research paper, etc.) but not actually understand the underlying concepts of why it is good.[7] Information literacy is a process, not a product. If we only examine the product of a task that requires information literacy, only glimpses of the student's information literacy abilities and understanding is possible. If we also directly assess students' actual understanding of the underlying concepts, that can serve as a diagnostic tool for articulating reasons behind the execution of student work.[8]

The Importance of Relationships

Meaningful assessment of information practices in journalism is a collaborative endeavor between librarians, students, instructors, and journalism programs. Strong relationships built on

[6] Meyer, J., Meyer, J., & Land, R. (2006). Threshold concepts and troublesome knowledge: an introduction. In J. H. F. Meyer & R. Land (Eds.), *Overcoming barriers to student understanding threshold concepts and troublesome knowledge* (pp. 3-18). Routledge.

[7] Land, R., & Meyer, J. H. F. (2010). Threshold concepts and troublesome knowledge (5): Dynamics of assessment. In J. H. F. Meyer, R. Land, & C. Baillie (Eds.), *Threshold concepts and transformational learning* (pp. 61–79). Sense Publishers. https://www.lamission.edu/learningcenter/docs/1177-threshold-concepts-and-transformational-learning.pdf

[8] Meyer, J., Meyer, J., & Land, R. (2006). Threshold concepts and troublesome knowledge: an introduction. In J. H. F. Meyer & R. Land (Eds.), *Overcoming barriers to student understanding threshold concepts and troublesome knowledge* (pp. 3-18). Routledge.

shared goals of creating learning environments and opportunities for students ensure that ideas brought to the proverbial table are encouraged and valued.[9] To extend the metaphor, the collaborators are necessary legs of the table -- remove a leg, and the table will wobble. While librarians may lack frequent interactions with students in the classroom and have less access to student work where learning may be evident, they can be expert resources for faculty in designing effective assignments, mapping the curriculum for key outcomes, assessing artifacts to understand at the classroom and programmatic level what students understand, and in understanding how students use information over time.

Recommendations at the Classroom Level

Journalism curricula are organized around the exposure of students to threshold concepts largely through practical exercises and assignments in order to build confidence and activate enthusiasm for creating real social change and making a difference. In order to assess conceptual understanding, design assignments that specifically diagnose a student's ability to understand particular concepts, controlling for other factors. The knowledge practices can be clues for these kinds of assignments. For example, an assignment that asks students to, "Identify and describe different types of authority related to a story topic" will assess a student's ability to understand the contextual nature of authority.

Students should engage with a threshold concept in multiple ways as different scenarios and learning will be recursive. Students today are, as Filloux (2020) notes, in a "permanent skills-acquisition mode" as they try to acquire an ever-evolving breadth of technical knowledge, so start from what they know. This does not mean that threshold concepts should be simplified for novice learners, though, as this can result in later problems with learning the concept: there becomes a "false proxy" that students settle for.[10]

Instructors who have difficulties remembering what it is like not to understand a threshold concept should take time to listen to students in order to develop a greater understanding of their patterns when wrestling with a concept.[11] Listening to students can take place informally through the use of written reflections like MacMillan's (2009) I-SKILLS résumé which asks students to reflect on, assess, and describe their information skills.[12] This type of instrument can be introduced to both novice and expert learners in an attempt to discern the growth of individuals' information literacy as well as curricular interventions. Peer review is another form of

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[9] Meulemans, Y.N., & Carr, A. (2013). Not at your service: Building genuine faculty-librarian partnerships. *Reference Services Review*, *41*(1), 80–90. https://doi.org/10.1108/00907321311300893

[10] Meyer, J. H. F., Land, R., & Baillie, C. (2010). Editors' preface: Threshold concepts and transformational learning. In J. H. F. Meyer, R. Land, & C. Baillie (Eds.), *Threshold concepts and transformational learning* (pp. ix–xlii). Sense Publishers.
https://www.lamission.edu/learningcenter/docs/1177-threshold-concepts-and-transformational-learning.pdf

[11] Filloux, F. (2020, May 24). The upcoming journalism school overhaul. *Monday Note*.
https://mondaynote.com/the-upcoming-journalism-school-overhaul-a4e7498cca70

[12] MacMillan, M. (2009). Watching learning happen: Results of a longitudinal study of journalism students. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, *35*(2), 132–142. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2009.01.002

assessment that can be incorporated into classroom assignments. The act of giving feedback can aid the development of conceptual understandings.

Recommendations at the Program Level

Capstone courses are commonly found in a majority of journalism education programs, and among programs that offer a capstone course, almost all place it in the core curriculum. These kinds of courses offer programs the opportunity to "assess the quality of instruction and the level to which its students attain desired outcomes".[13] At the same time, capstone courses offer students the opportunity to "reflect and synthesize what they have learned" in previous courses as they prepare to embark on professional endeavors.[14] These two goals can have competing and conflicting expectations. Capstone courses frequently have students produce a tangible product, such as a professional portfolio, in an attempt to demonstrate employability.

Awareness of Accreditation Standards

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC) is the agency responsible for ensuring that accredited programs meet rigorous standards for professional journalism education in colleges and universities. As part of the accreditation process, journalism and mass communication programs are to comply with nine standards.[15]

Each standard has indicators and measures of evidence. Standards 2 (Curriculum and Instruction) and 9 (Assessment of Learning Outcomes) are especially relevant in light of this *Framework*. Standard 2 outlines 12 professional values and competencies necessary to prepare journalism students to work in a diverse global and domestic society. Standard 9 offers suggested assessment measures, like exit exams, interviews, and professional projects or portfolios, to improve teaching methods. Overall, the ACEJMC contends that three criteria should guide the assessment of student learning: awareness, understanding, and application.

Librarians should familiarize themselves with the language used in these standards, along with the ongoing discussions surrounding the accreditation process, when communicating with instructors and program directors about assessment, competencies, and values.[16]
Librarians should also consider how the knowledge practices and dispositions can connect to the standards when mapping the curriculum and designing learning opportunities.

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[13] Bowe, B. J., Blom, R., & Davenport, L. D. (2020). Journalism and mass communication capstone course: Bringing it all together? *Communication Teacher*, *34*(2), 161–174. https://doi.org/10.1080/17404622.2019.1630656

[14] ibid.

[15] See Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications. (n.d.). Nine Accrediting Standards. http://www.acejmc.org/policies-process/nine-standards/

[16] See Christ, W. G., & Henderson, J. J. (2014). Assessing the ACEJMC professional values and competencies. *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*, *69*(3), 301–313. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077695814525408 and Henderson, J. J., & Christ, W. G. (2014). Benchmarking ACEJMC Competencies: What It Means for Assessment. *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*, *69*(3), 229–242. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077695814525407

Assessment of Dispositions
Assessing dispositions may present unique challenges given the emphasis on the value dimension of learning which may not fully reveal itself by the end of a 10-14-week course. However, journalism education programs trying to comply with ACEJMC standards have a commitment to advancing the profession through regular communication and engagement with alumni and professionals. This commitment offers opportunities for assessing dispositions.

Working together, librarians, instructors, and programs can conduct informal surveys or interviews with recent alumni -- e.g., those who have graduated in the past five years -- to address not only their perceived readiness for entering the profession, along with the reality of it, but also their critical attitudinal behaviors toward their place in the profession.[17] Moreover, interviews and engagement with veteran journalists can help identify how observable changes in the profession, like disruptive innovation, alter or reinforce professional values. These kinds of conversations can offer both librarians and faculty with advantageous material to incorporate into curricula.[18]

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[17] See Rosenstiel, T., Ivancin, M., Loker, K., Lacy, S., Sonderman, J., & Yaeger, K. (2015, August 6). *Chapter 6: Skills, knowledge and comfort levels with job skills*. American Press Institute. https://www.americanpressinstitute.org/publications/reports/survey-research/skills-knowledge-and-comfort-levels-with-job-skills/

[18] See Ferrucci, P. (2018). "We've lost the basics": Perceptions of journalism education from veterans in the field. *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*, *73*(4), 410–420. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077695817731870

Appendix ii: Background of the Development of this Framework

The original *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Journalism Students and Professionals* was implemented by the ACRL Education and Behavioral Sciences Section's Communication Studies Committee in October 2011, after an extensive review of the literature and consultation with communication and journalism faculty as well as professional journalism organizations. In light of technological innovations and media convergence, the original document acknowledged the rapidly changing field of journalism and its subsequent impact on journalism education, while taking into account related literacies such as data, visual, news, and media.

Shortly after the adoption of the *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* in 2015, the ACRL EBSS Communication Studies Committee began compiling a list of "stuck places" -- instances where journalism students and practitioners seemingly have trouble finding, evaluating and using information in their reporting[19] -- attempting to map them to each of the *Framework*'s threshold concepts. Assignment prompts were also reviewed. Based on those stuck places, definitions were initially drafted on what constituted an expert within each frame.

In an attempt to further delineate novice and expert behaviors, additional research[20] was conducted in 2018 involving semi-structured, in-depth interviews with journalism students, faculty, and practitioners on their own information-seeking behaviors. The interviews were analyzed and coded against the six frames using meaning condensation followed by content analysis. Attention was also given to the perceived skill level of novices, intermediates, and experts.

These six frames form the backbone of this companion document, which seeks to further tailor the *Framework* to the practice of journalism.

Authors:

Jen Bonnet, University of Maine
Kristina M. De Voe, Temple University
Stacy Gilbert, University of Colorado Boulder
Carolina Hernandez, University of Houston
Megan Heuer, Southern Methodist University
Kyung Kim, Florida State University

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[19] Garczynski, J. (2017, October 4). Why research matters to journalists. *News Media Alliance*. https://www.newsmediaalliance.org/support-real-news-research-matters/

[20] Boss, K. E., De Voe, K. M., Gilbert, S. R., Hernandez, C., Heuer, M., Hines, A., …Williams, K. E. (2019). Reporting in the "post-truth" era: Uncovering the research behaviors of journalism students, practitioners, and faculty. In D. M. Mueller (Ed.), *Recasting the Narrative: Proceedings from Association of College & Research Libraries* (pp. 730-744). Chicago, IL: Association of College & Research Libraries. http://www.ala.org/acrl/sites/ala.org.acrl/files/content/conferences/confsandpreconfs/2019/ReportinginthePost-TruthEra.pdf

Hillary Ostermiller, Columbia College Chicago
Michael Pasqualoni, Syracuse University
Rayla Tokarz, University of Nevada

Appendix iii: Journalism Ethics Codes and Standards

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Journalism Education Association. (2019, September). *Standards for journalism educators*. https://jea.org/wp/home/for-educators/standards/

Society of Professional Journalists. (2014, September 6). *SPJ code of ethics*. https://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp

Appendix iv: Other Journalism Associations

American Press Institute
https://www.americanpressinstitute.org/about/about-us/
Asian American Journalists Association
https://www.aaja.org/
Broadcast Education Association
https://www.beaweb.org/wp/
Investigative Reporters and Editors Inc.
https://www.ire.org/about
Journalism Education Association
https://jea.org/wp/
National Association for Media Literacy Education
https://namle.net/
National Association of Black Journalists
https://www.nabj.org/
National Association of Hispanic Journalists
https://nahj.org/
National Center on Disability and Journalism (Arizona State University)
https://ncdj.org/
National Communication Association (NCA)
https://www.natcom.org/
See: NCA Learning Outcomes & Assessment
https://www.natcom.org/academic-professional-resources/teaching-and-learning/learning-outcomes-assessment
National Federation of Press Women
https://nfpw.org/
National Newspaper Publishers Association
https://nnpa.org/
Native American Journalists Association
https://najanewsroom.com/
News Leaders Association
https://www.newsleaders.org/
Online News Association
https://journalists.org/
Poynter Institute
https://www.poynter.org/
Radio Television Digital News Association (RTDNA)
https://www.rtdna.org/
UNESCO International Programme for the Development of Communication
https://en.unesco.org/programme/ipdc/council

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Appendix vi: Glossary

Citizen Journalism: Journalistic content produced by the general public, or those who are not professional journalists. Content can include witness accounts, analysis, and reporting.

Expert: *Expert* refers to the advanced skills, dispositions, and behaviors of a journalism practitioner, student, or professor. A journalist may be an expert at some areas of practice, and a novice in other areas.

Freedom of Information (FOI) Laws: Legislation pertaining to public access to government records. Journalists often interact with these laws during their reporting. In the United States, core FOI legislation at the federal level includes the 1966 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), and many subsequent amendments to FOIA, as well as the 1974 Privacy Act. Most U.S. states, the District of Columbia and U.S. territories have similar laws addressing Freedom of Information. General principles tied to FOI laws presume disclosing government information to the public, and at times relate to additional laws or regulations that call for open government meetings. Exemptions to government records access frequently involve concerns for national security, confidential business transactions, and privacy of personal information. Trends toward ease of disclosure versus obstacles to access encountered by a journalist vary across different U.S. state and federal jurisdictions. Access opportunities and barriers have also varied across numerous public policy changes since the passage of the original Freedom of Information Act in 1966.

Novice: *Novice* refers to the developing skills, dispositions, and behaviors of a journalism practitioner, student, or professor. A journalist may be an expert at some areas of practice, and a novice in other areas.

Source: A person, publication, or document that provides information for a news story.