

Burkhardt, J. M. (2016). **Teaching Information Literacy Reframed: 50+ Framework-based Exercises for Creating Information-literate Learners**. Chicago: Neal-Schuman, an imprint of the American Library Association.

In 2000, the Board of Directors of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) approved the **Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education**, which were designed as a guide for information literacy instruction. Ten years later, ACRL appointed a task force to update the **Standards** “to reflect changes, improvements, and the expansion of the concept of information literacy in higher education” (Burkhardt, 2016, p. 2). But “rather than simply updating the language, the task force changed directions and crafted a new document, the **Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education**” (p. 2), which appears as an Appendix in this book and which was ratified by ACRL in 2015. The **Framework** develops what the task force described as a “richer, more complex set of core ideas” (p. 6) about information literacy and is based on what the task force described as six “threshold concepts.” In alphabetic order these are: i) Authority is Constructed and Textual ii) Information Creation as a Process iii) Information Has Value iv) Research as Inquiry v) Scholarship as Conversation and vi) Searching as Strategic Exploration.

In Burkhardt’s view—a view likely to be shared by anyone uninvolved in the creation of the **Framework**—the threshold concepts are not self-explanatory—further, the **Framework** does not offer any hints or examples of use in the classroom. Hence this book.

Burkhardt herself is well qualified to write it—now a senior administrator at the University of Rhode Island, she has been involved in instruction for over 30 years and is the lead author of earlier (bestselling) titles on the topic: **Teaching Information Literacy: 50 Standards-Based Exercises for College Students** (2003) and **Creating a Comprehensive Information Literacy Plan** (2005).

In addition to a first chapter explaining the book’s necessity, and an eighth and final chapter on “Creating Exercises, Rubrics, Learning Outcomes and Learning Assessments,” the remaining six chapters focus on each of the threshold concepts in the **Framework** although, unlike in the **Framework**, they do not appear in alphabetic order.

In each chapter, Burkhardt clearly explains a threshold concept and then provides several exercises (58 in total) that could be used in a class to aid students in grasping the concept. For example, on the concept “Information Has Value,” Exercise 52 (p. 129) (“Citation Format Comparison”) is designed to help students learn the differences between APA and MLA citation styles. The instructor is invited to prepare pairs of citations for books, journals, and websites in both styles and then students are required to “List as many differences as you can between the two citation styles” and also to

think of and list reasons why the two formats are different. They are also required to answer three questions: “Who might use APA style citations?”, “Who might use MLA style citations?”, and finally “What priorities might scholars using APA style citations have compared with the priorities of scholars using MLA style citations?” (p. 129).

In very few of these exercises does Burkhardt supply suggested answers.

Those who have taught for several years will appreciate the strengths of Burkhardt’s approach. Each exercise begins with a Learning Outcome and each gets the student to do something—her approach involves active learning rather than forcing students to sit quietly as the instructor drones on about the topic. To be sure some of her exercises may require unnecessary preparatory work by the instructor. In teaching Boolean Searching (Exercise 43), Burkhardt would have the instructor:

cut pieces of construction paper into a variety of large shapes—squares, triangles and circles for example. Use three different colors of paper. Write one of three general topics on each shape. (For example, you might have a green square with the topic ‘global warming’ on it, a blue triangle with the topic ‘United States’ on it and a yellow circle with the topic ‘carbon’ on it.) Give each student one shape of each color... (p. 104)

Surely Boolean search techniques could be taught more simply by using what the students arrive with—for example, glasses, contacts, or no eyewear; whether they come from the city they are being taught in (and, if not, their state/province of origin; and, if not, their country of origin, etc.).

But the biggest problem with this book is the fault of the **Framework** itself, rather than Burkhardt. If they are lucky, academic librarians get to address students for one to three hours at most in a given course, leaving no conceivable way for any librarian to be fortunate enough to use many of the exercises Burkhardt suggests. This is particularly true when a course is offered over a semester rather than a full academic year—professors just cannot set aside the time to allow librarians to teach the **Framework** systematically. Indeed, the book would be most useful in a stand-alone course on libraries, although that would benefit only the few.

That said, Burkhardt has the right approach to teaching and her book could prove very useful to any instructor who is committed to information literacy and sees an opportunity to tuck in a relevant exercise in the middle of a class.

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