

Easing the High School to University/College Transition

Building Effective Programming to Bridge the Information Literacy Gap

Friday January 31, 2020

OLA Super Conference

Sophie Bury, Samhita Gupta, Sarah Shujah, and Christopher Tomasini
Guest speakers: Heather Buchansky and Shelagh Straughan

Learning Outcomes

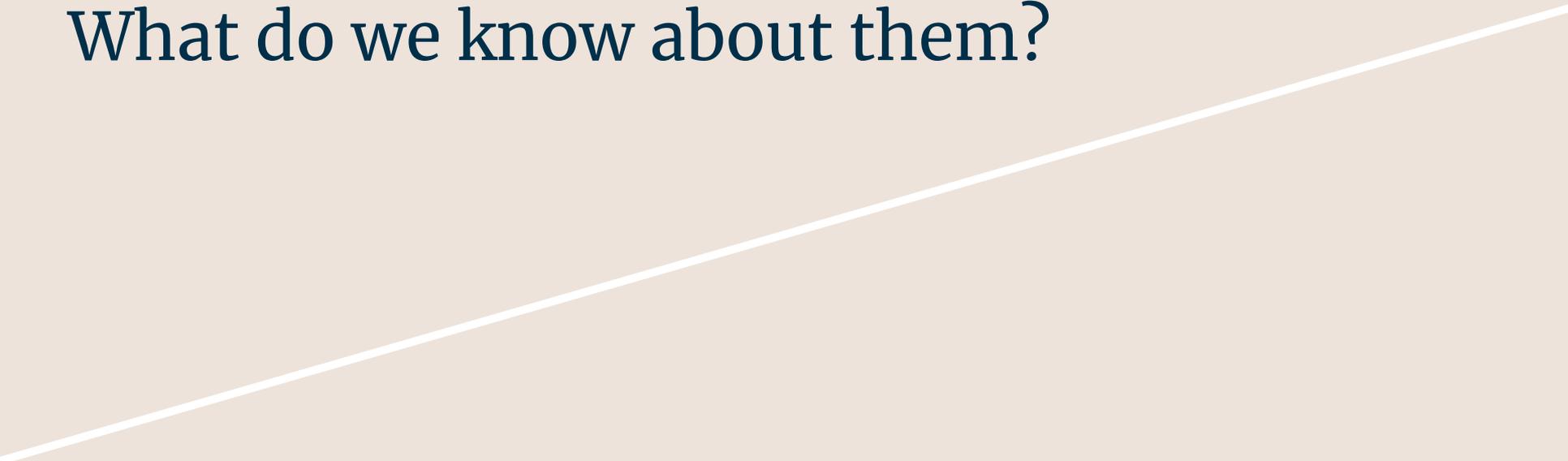
1. Understanding the characteristics of students research skills as they transition from high school to post-secondary school.
2. To facilitate relationship building with educator counterparts using the language of the Framework and Together for Learning the Inquiry process, so that we can better support students in the transition from high school to university in regards to information literacy skills.
3. Explore best practices of teaching research skills for students transitioning from secondary to post-secondary school with librarians from each sector.
4. You will come away with strategies and approaches to designing an effective onboarding transition program for high school students and first year university/college students.

Agenda

1. Student Characteristics
2. Information Literacy (IL) Frameworks
3. Examples of IL Best Practices
4. Easing the Transition Redesign Workshop (30 minutes)
5. Presentations
6. Closing Remarks

Transitioning Students

What do we know about them?



Shout out

What do students transitioning from high school to post-secondary struggle with most when it comes to research?

Student voices on transitioning from high school to university: Filmed at York and Lakehead Universities (Fall 2019)



Key points from our interviews with students

- Research in high-school mainly based on internet (Google) searching
- Uncertainty about using & searching library databases
- Uncertainty about evaluating credibility of a resource
- Uncertain what to do with a resource after finding it - “How do I read, assess and make use of this resource in my own paper?”
- Academic integrity expectations and citation experienced as intimidating and largely new (domestic students with more experience than international students)

Additionally, from the literature

- Over reliance on Google coming in to university/college (D’Orio, 2019; Head, 2013)
- Overwhelmed by variety of information sources (Dempsey & Jagman, 2016; Head, 2013)
- Experience challenges in developing search strategies and understanding scholarly sources (D’Orio, 2019; Head, 2013; Smith, Given, Julien et al., 2013;)
- Struggle with expectations for course assignments including knowing how to “dig deep”, evaluate sources, and master the critical inquiry process (D’Orio, 2019; Fosnacht, 2015; Head, 2013; Witteveen, 2018)
- Citation and academic integrity taught at high school but not generally translating to university expectations (Raven, 2012)
- Lack of knowledge of librarians’ roles at university and college (D’Orio, 2019), made more challenging by belief they should be self-sufficient and that asking for help not “the norm” (Head, 2013)
- Incoming students often overconfident at first about their research abilities (D’Orio, 2019; Dempsey & Jagman, 2016)

A difficult, yet potentially transformative, transition period

“Students making the transition from high school to university experience dramatic shifts as they are expected to manage their own learning. The learning expectations and environments change from highly structured tasks guided by teachers in high school to independent, less structured learning formats in post-secondary educational environments.”

Smith, J.K. (2013). Information literacy proficiency: Assessing the gap in high school students' readiness for undergraduate academic work. *Library & Information Science Research*, 35(2), p. 88.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lisr.2012.12.001>.

Information Literacy Frameworks



OSLA Together for Learning : School Libraries and the Emergence of the Learning Commons (2010)



Together for Learning

School Libraries and the
Emergence of the Learning Commons



A VISION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

In OSLA's *Together for Learning*, the teaching of information literacy is embedded within the contexts of moving towards a learning commons and inquiry-based models of learning.



The Emergence of the Learning Commons

Vision

The Learning Commons integrates the new and the old in a seamless physical and virtual space in which all formats can be assimilated and studied.

The Learning Commons liberates the exploration of ideas and concepts, encouraging inquiry, imagination, discovery and creativity through the connection of learners to information, to each other and to communities around the world.

Together for Learning: Creating a Culture of Inquiry

Ideas for establishing a culture of “guided inquiry”

■ Ideas to Consider

Instructional Staff	Learners
<p>Content</p> <p>Teacher/teacher-librarian directed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivers integrated curriculum • Acknowledges background information • Establishes the context • Guides the process • Scaffolds instruction and learning throughout • Designs inquiries based on real world situations • Encourages developing open ended questions • Models and teaches specific information literacy skills (e.g., information organizers, online databases, social media tools, presentation formats) 	<p>Learner generated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individually explores area of interest • Makes connections to other texts and transfers experiences • Generates deep inquiry questions • Uses a wide variety of print, media, electronic and human resources • Displays learning in personally significant way

Instructional Staff	Learners
<p>Collaborating</p> <p>Teacher/teacher-librarian enabled</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows for flexible groupings based on interest • Facilitates inquiry process • Connects learning partnerships with outside experts, using technology • Monitors outside experts consulted • Contributes to/joins learning partnership(s) • Models learning during process • Leads with questioning 	<p>Learner enabled</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determines scope of partnerships • Seeks expertise beyond the school setting • Contributes to a team according to own learning style and aptitudes • Contributes to collective knowledge creation • Reflects on learning with others • Shares in the responsibility of ownership of collaborative products
<p>Process</p> <p>Teacher/teacher-librarian enabled</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasizes multiple sources • Emphasizes safe and responsible use of information • Provides template for source validation • Provides guidance in effective search strategies • Targets specific lessons necessary to build reflective practice • Conferences at significant stages of the inquiry • Fosters the metacognition of the skills being learned and emotions encountered • Models reflective thinking/practice 	<p>Learner enabled</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies prior experiences, synthesizes with new information and transfers the learning • Seeks multiple sources • Validates multiple sources for authority, bias and relevancy • Uses effective search strategies • Reflects on learning and shares feelings, findings and perspectives with different audiences • Reaches understandings which are personally significant • Thinks creatively to solve problems and make decisions

“[T]he rapidly changing higher education environment, along with the dynamic and often uncertain information ecosystem in which all of us work and live, require new attention to be focused on foundational ideas about that ecosystem...The Framework offered here is called a framework intentionally because it is based on a cluster of **interconnected core concepts, with flexible options for implementation, rather than on a set of standards or learning outcomes, or any prescriptive enumeration of skills**. At the heart of this Framework are conceptual understandings that organize many other concepts and ideas about information, research, and scholarship into a coherent whole. These **conceptual understandings are informed by the work of Wiggins and McTighe**,² which focuses on **essential concepts and questions in developing curricula, and also by threshold concepts**,³ which are those ideas in any discipline that are passageways or portals to enlarged understanding or ways of thinking and practicing within that discipline.”

ACRL Framework for IL for Higher Education

Defining Information Literacy

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.

– ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education

<http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework>

(ACRL, 2016)

Frames /Threshold Concepts

Authority Is Constructed and Contextual

Information Creation as a Process

Information Has Value

Research as Inquiry

Scholarship as Conversation

Searching as Strategic Exploration

(ACRL, 2016; Meyer & Land, 2005)

Information Literacy Instruction Best Practices



Photo by [Jasmine Coro](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Example: School Library

Shelagh Straughan

Teacher Librarian

Trinity College School Library



Senior School Library *Trinity College School*

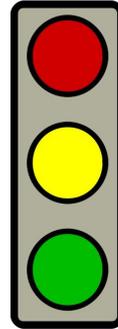
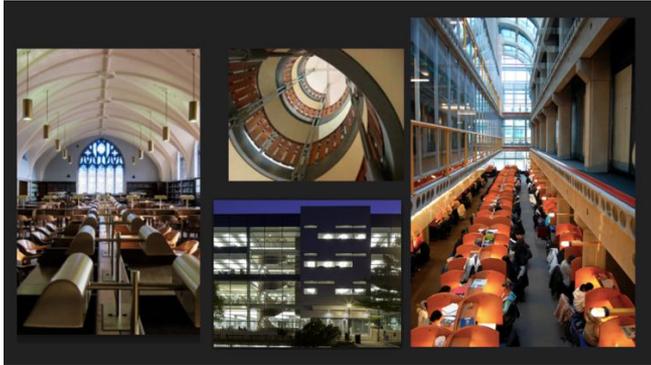
Co-ed, day/boarding school
in Port Hope, Ontario

Serving 455 students
in grades 9-12

Workshop about using academic libraries

- Builds on existing research- and reading-based relationship with Gr 12s
- Working with each of Grade 12 guidance classes
 - 15-20 presentation followed by work session and sharing of findings
 - Aim to work together for 30 minutes of the 65 minute period
- Part of a “road ahead” series of classes run by guidance counsellors
 - Topics include course selection, residential life, budgeting, etc.

What's worked...



<https://freesvg.org/stoplight-remix>



<https://freesvg.org/money-symbols>



What hasn't worked...



*COURSE
RESERVES*

DDC > LC

Name of university/college:
Is the library page easy to find off the main school page? YES NO
Printing/photocopying costs /page
Name of a place where you can work quietly...
Name of a bookable study room:
<input type="checkbox"/> I found information about Course Reserve material
Circle all relevant options: I'll be able to visit / call / email / chat with librarians
Number of libraries on campus:

Making it happen

- **Show potential value**
 - Inform yourself by connecting with academic librarians closest to your school and visiting academic libraries whenever possible
 - Demonstrate how the principles of *Together for Learning* reflect the *Framework* and how the work our students have done in discovery, inquiry, critical and creative thinking sets the stage for their post-secondary learning
- **Align with your school community**
 - Decide most effective “in” (an alternative to guidance class)
 - Choose examples from schools familiar to graduating students
 - Get feedback from grads to inform next year’s workshop

Example: Post-Secondary

Heather Buchansky
Student Engagement Librarian
University of Toronto
Libraries

First-year students at university

Personal Librarian

How it works

- Librarians reach out with advice through emails
- Students can contact librarian at anytime for help

Goals

- Make a personal connection to first-year students
- Identify key questions asked, to inform outreach

First-year students at university

What are they asking?

- Known topic, need sources
- How to search a database
- Citation help
- Writing support
(refer to Writing Centre)



(from PL email analysis)

What do they find most difficult?

- Selecting keywords to narrow down searches
- Filtering & sorting through results
- Identifying/selecting sources & investigative methods from all available
- Integrating & summarizing writing styles from different sources/formats



(Top 4 results of Most Difficult Research Tasks from "[Learning the Ropes](#)" [Project Information Literacy](#) Report, 2013, Fig. 4, p.15)

Ideas for bridging the IL gap

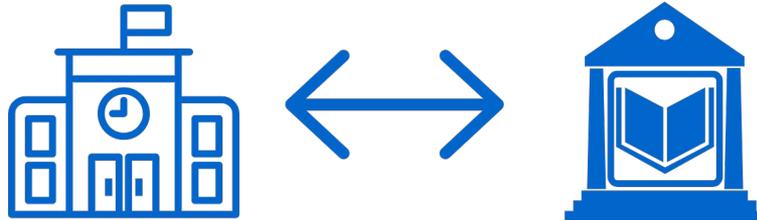
For academic librarians...

- **Create a high school-friendly webpage** (ex. A. Flak, McMaster University Library) to highlight first-year undergrad students' required research skills
- **Offer IL workshops** (ex. U of T Scarborough) to high school students, either in-person, or online, *based on student assignments*
- **Host professional development sessions** for teacher-librarians at your institution or visit a school library

Ideas for bridging the IL gap

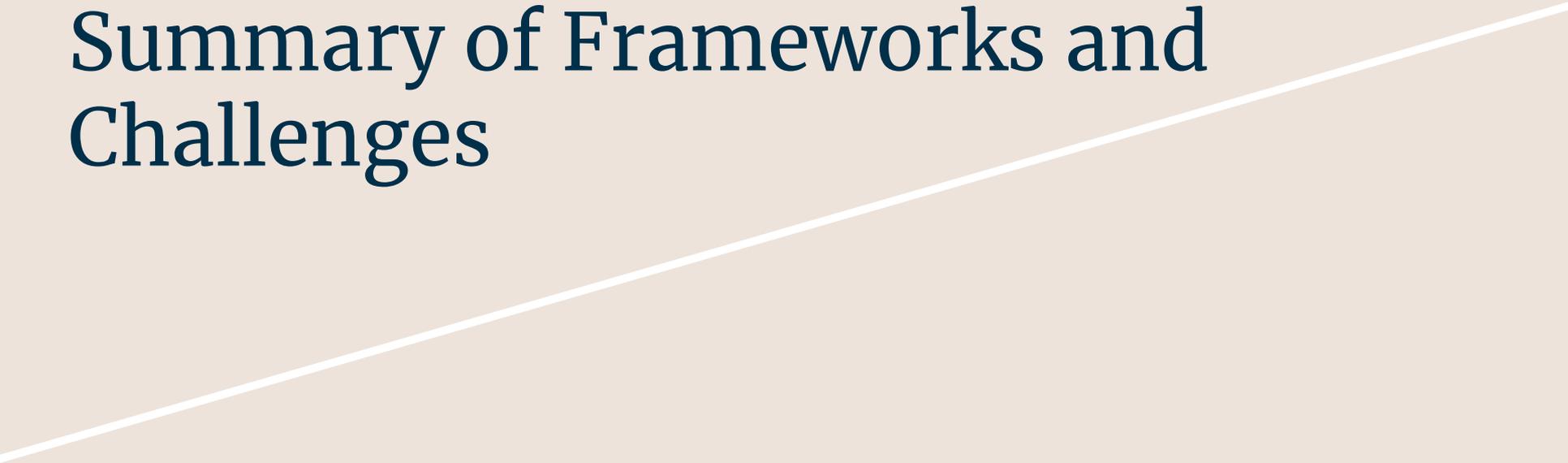
Work in progress...

[OCULA / OSLA Information Literacy Toolkit](#)



Handout

Summary of Frameworks and
Challenges



Moving Forward in Easing the Transition

IL Concepts Challenging to Students / Frame	Characteristics of students transitioning from high school to post-secondary
Research as iterative / Research as Inquiry	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- difficulties with digging deep and mastering critical inquiry process- overconfident at first
Searching as complex / Searching as Strategic Exploration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Struggle with library databases- Over reliance of Google
Understanding sources and using sources / Scholarship as Conversation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- “How do I read, assess and make use of this resource in my own paper?”- writing support needed- Lack of knowledge of librarians’ and libraries roles
Academic Integrity expectations / Information Has Value	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Expectations of citing are intimidating- Need help with proper citation
Evaluating credibility and relevance / Authority Is Constructed and Contextual	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Uncertainty about evaluating the credibility of a resource
Using more than just websites / Information Creation as a Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Over reliance on Google- Overwhelmed by the size and variety of information sources

Easing the Transition Workshop

IL for a Library
Orientation/Introductory
Session



Photo by Bernard Hermant on [Unsplash](#)

Activity: Instruction for Orienting Students Transitioning from high school to post-secondary school

30 minutes

You will develop an orientation or introductory lesson in collaboration with members from OSLA, OCULA, and OPLA.

- Groups of 5 or so (mixed sectors)
- Handouts
- Flip Charts + Markers

Consider the frameworks, testimonials & characteristics of students, and examples discussed to develop an orientation or introductory lesson.

Scenario 1:

Introducing Grade 11 Students to Library Research

Redesign an introductory IL class to develop student research skills

- Grade 11
- Two 15 minute sessions in the 70 min research periods offered for library instruction
- Research project essay
 - choose own topic
 - multiple perspectives
 - develop a thesis

Include active learning!

Scenario 2:

University/College Library Orientation for 1st Year Students

Redesign an orientation for a first year course.

- First year course
- Large lecture hall, ~100 students
- Invited to 2nd/3rd class of semester
- 50 minutes

Include active learning!

Presentations

IL for Easing the Transition



Photo by Bernard Hermant on [Unsplash](#)

Scenario 1

Introducing Grade 11 Students to Library Research

Scenario 2

University/College Library Orientation



Thank you & Contacts

Sophie Bury

sbury@yorku.ca

Samhita Gupta

sgupta@branksome.on.ca

Sarah Shujah

sarah.shujah@utoronto.ca

Christopher Tomasini

ctomasin@lakeheadu.ca

Guest speakers

Heather Buchansky

heather.buchansky@utoronto.ca

Shelagh Straughan

sstraughan@tcs.on.ca

References

- Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL). (2016). The ACRL framework for information literacy for higher education. Retrieved from <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework>.
- D’Orio, Wayne (2019). Ready or not? College and high school librarians take on the college readiness gap. *School Library Journal (SLJ)*, 65(8), 29-37.
- Gross, M., & Latham, D. (2012). What’s skill got to do with it?: Information literacy skills and self-views of ability among first-year college students. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 63(3), 574–583. <https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.21681>
- Head, Alison. (2013). Learning the ropes: How freshmen conduct course research once they enter college. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2364080>
- Dempsey, P. R., & Jagman, H. (2016). “I Felt Like Such a Freshman”: First-Year Students Crossing the Library Threshold. *Portal: Libraries and the Academy*, 16(1), 89–107 <https://doi.org/10.1353/pla.2016.0011>
- Fosnacht, K. (2012). *Information use during the first college year: Findings from the NSSE experiences with information literacy module*. Conference Proceedings. ACRL 2015.
- Ontario School Library Association. (2010). *Together for learning: school libraries and the emergence of the learning commons: a vision for the 21st century*. Toronto: Ontario Library Association.

References

- Meyer, J., & Land, R. (2005). Threshold concepts and troublesome knowledge (2): Epistemological considerations and a conceptual framework for teaching and learning. *Higher Education*, 49(3), 373–388.
- Raven, M. (2012). Bridging the Gap: Understanding the differing research expectations of first-year students and professors. *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice*, 7(3), 4–31. <https://doi.org/10.18438/B8WG79>
- Smith, J.K. (2013). Information literacy proficiency: Assessing the gap in high school students' readiness for undergraduate academic work. *Library & Information Science Research*, 35(2), 88-96. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lisr.2012.12.001>
- Smith, J. K., Given, L. M., Julien, H., Ouellette, D., & DeLong, K. (2013). Information literacy proficiency: Assessing the gap in high school students' readiness for undergraduate academic work. *Library & Information Science Research*, 35(2), 88–96. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lisr.2012.12.001>
- Ontario School Library Association. (2010). *Together for learning: School libraries and the emergence of the learning commons*. Retrieved from <https://www.accessola.org/web/Documents/OLA/Divisions/OSLA/TogetherforLearning.pdf>
- Witteveen, A. (2018) First things first: How academic librarians are helping undergrads build a strong foundation in information literacy. *Library Journal*, 143(18), 6-8.

Handouts

- [Summary and Key Takeaways of a Student Transitioning from High School to University/College](#)
- [Scenario Handout](#)
- [Together for Learning](#)
- [Frames](#)
- [Threshold Concept Cards](#)