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## Crossing the Studio Art Threshold: Information Literacy and Creative Populations

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# Crossing the Studio Art Threshold: Information Literacy and Creative Populations

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## Abstract

Artists often require visual and inspirational information sources that range outside of library walls and websites, and develop their work within the complex social environment of the studio. Librarians historically engage with studio art and design students using multiple standards documents. This article offers an analytical literature review of the pedagogical approaches librarians have taken toward their work in the art and design studios, specifically identifying library practitioners who have adapted or critiqued standards documents in order to address the unique needs of creative populations. The Association of College and Research Libraries' (ACRL) *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* provides librarians an opportunity to further engage with studio art students in critical information literacy practices. Future pedagogical practices and assessment techniques are considered, and new approaches to studio art and design instruction are discussed.

*Keywords:* instruction, information literacy, art and design, artists, information needs, pedagogy, assessment

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# Crossing the Studio Art Threshold: Information Literacy and Creative Populations

## Introduction

This article examines the use and influence of professional standards documents on information literacy instruction for undergraduate studio art and design students. Through a critical literature review, the authors seek to understand how the 2016 ACRL *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education (Framework)* applies to creative practices. Instruction librarians are implementing the *Framework* in professional contexts shaped by the 2001 *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education (Standards)* and disciplinary specific information literacy standards documents; although the *Framework* superseded the *Standards*, the older document continues to have an impact on librarians' work (Xu & Gil, 2017). While the *Standards* focus in large part on the format of information, the *Framework* lends itself to conversations about disciplinary expectations and practices. This shift appears to be a welcome one for librarians who work with creative populations; the literature demonstrates a trend of adapting, tweaking, and resisting the prescriptive nature of the *Standards* (Bliss & Rockenbach, 2002; Brinkman & Young, 2010; Greer, 2015; Halverson, 2008; Payne, 2008; Vecchiola, 2011; Zanin-Yost, 2012; Zanin-Yost & Tapley, 2008). As the profession transitions from the *Standards* to the *Framework*, librarians immersed in the studio context offer instruction librarians from any discipline examples and experiences that model the importance of pedagogical context, including decentering traditional scholarship and drawing on disciplinary practices and methodologies that may be unique.

The authors critically consider the role of standards documents in shaping the practice of library instruction. Drabinski and Sitar (2016) wrote that professional standards documents can help librarians claim a seat at the table, draw power and resources to the organizations that author them, and influence professional discourse and practice. Acknowledging robust criticism of the *Standards*, they noted that nevertheless standards "...shape the professional practice of librarians who, whether they comply or resist their strictures, arrange their practice around the documents" (p. 55). This influence on practice ranges from individual teaching efforts to advocacy at an institutional level. They also argued that, although the *Framework* attempts to avoid some of the constraints of standards and avoids naming itself as such, it acts as a standard. As the authors of this paper investigate the impact of standards

documents on professional practice in the following review, they deem the *Framework* to fall within this category.

Engaging with the specific context of studio art and design education, this article also draws on the literature exploring the information seeking behavior of artists. Cowan (2004), approached the topic of artists' information needs by calling for an expanded view of information within the creative process. She theorized that artists may not approach their work as a set of problems that they attempt to solve, and instead she described the art-making process as one "of perception and expression, a dialogue with the world and [the artist's] materials" (p. 18). Much of the literature on studio art and information literacy reveals a central tension between the prescriptive approach of the *Standards* and the heuristic tendencies of art education. This includes many examples of librarians taking the studio context into consideration and adapting the *Standards* as needed, highlighting tensions between instructional practice, theory, and standards. The *Framework* aligns more easily with this context compared to the *Standards*, yet still privileges traditional forms of scholarship. How might this influence the way that teaching librarians continue to shift their practice?

## History of information literacy instruction in studio arts

Standards documents, art instruction, and assessment

In the years between the publication of the *Standards* and *Framework*, various disciplinary standards documents were also developed to support information literacy in the arts. In 2006, the Art Libraries Society of North America (ARLIS/NA) published *Information Competencies for Students in Design Disciplines* (ARLIS/NA *Competencies*), which was derived from the *Standards* and designed with a dual goal to "assist librarians . . . to develop information competencies in a systematic fashion, and form the basis for discussions with design faculty on integrating these competencies into the curriculum" (Brown et al., 2007, p. 4). During the drafting phase the authors mapped each competency to the *Standards*; they also consulted disciplinary standards for accreditation in architecture, landscape architecture, and interior design. The authors acknowledged that "analyzing and assessing the information needs of studio artists and other design disciplines that focus primarily on creative output rather than traditional 'research' is a challenge" (p. 8), and they indicated the lack of mandated standards from the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD) was also a major challenge.

The ARLIS/NA *Competencies* and the ACRL *Visual Literacy Standards*—also used by many librarians who work with art and design students—are both closely aligned with the *Standards*, using similar language and concepts. The *Framework* represents a divergent pedagogical theory from that posited by the *Standards* (Foasberg, 2015). It is grounded in a constructivist point of view, where information has value to a learner in the context of one or more communities in which the learner participates. Taking a positivist stance, the *Standards* hold that information is external to the learner, and may be acquired, judged, and used. The *Framework's* “constructivist understanding of information and information literacy allows us to consider how the value of information artifacts may differ from one context to another” (Foasberg, 2015, p. 702). Recently, Opar (2017) noted that some of the individual resources listed in the ARLIS/NA *Competencies* had become outdated, but she did not address the theoretical shift from positivism toward constructivism that the *Framework* has signaled within the profession.

Mayer's (2010) survey confirms that librarians teaching art and design students have been engaged with competency documents. While 83% of the survey respondents taught students how to use “art-related databases,” only 23% taught “open-access resources for use in post-college life as a working artist,” and 17% taught “professional-related competencies” such as how to write an artist statement (p. 150). Survey respondents indicated challenges such as “difficulties in engaging art students in text-based databases and research,” “lack of written assignments to tie with information literacy,” and “the difficulties of making information literacy skills applicable to artistic techniques and finding inspiration” (p. 151). These comments highlight the challenges librarians face in reconciling the *Standards'* focus on traditional academic research practices with the information needs of student artists and designers.

Salazar (2013) chronicled broad challenges with assessment and accountability within studio art education, noting both an increasing emphasis on institutional and pedagogical accountability and difficulties in representing learning outcomes in art and design to stakeholders. Pollock, et al. (2015) sought to address this by examining feedback-based assessment in a multiyear studio learning environment and in specific moments for assessment. They found that feedback was intertwined with power and relationships and that students should have a role in developing a community of practice in which expectations can be clearly discussed. Within this environment, feedback can take many forms (formal, informal, summative, formative, written, spoken, etc.), and students' active and ongoing reflection on feedback is essential to their development as self-aware, articulate

and critical practitioners. While Pollock, et al.'s examination does not specifically address the role of the library, it provides a useful window into the complexities of studio culture and of communication in assessment.

Librarians who teach art and design studio students come from diverse backgrounds; some may have experienced the unique qualities of a studio-based environment, while others are rooted in practices of the humanities or social sciences. Those who do not have experience in studio-based practice may find it challenging to engage with art and design communities. Van Arnhem (2017), a practicing artist and academic librarian, points to the importance of reflexivity, interdisciplinarity, and process in her work and suggests that librarianship as a profession could benefit from more engagement with critical discourse and process and less "presentation of materialist 'fact' as the dominant frame" (p. 251). Which conceptual thresholds would an academic librarian need to cross in order to understand how an art and design student "examines and compares information from various sources in order to evaluate reliability, validity, accuracy, authority, timeliness, and point of view or bias?" (ACRL *Standards*, p. 11). An article from a peer-reviewed journal that would be valid in the art historical context may not be valid in the studio context. Conversely, cellular telephone snapshots, magazine advertisements, and commercial packaging materials may be valid in the context of the painting studio but not acceptable for an art history assignment. Artistic communities of practice have standards for acceptable sources; librarians may easily be unaware of these, instead showing bias toward more scholarly resources, sources that may not be appropriate to the circumstance. As van Arnhem also highlights, in the studio there is an emphasis on creating and doing, a part of the research process that has traditionally been less of a focus of information literacy instruction compared to finding and evaluating.

### **Sources of artistic inspiration: Studio, library, and everywhere else**

The literature shows that the disciplinary practices and dispositions of studio art and design challenge traditional methods used by librarians to teach information literacy. Artists often view information-seeking as a social behavior within their peer networks. The social aspects of the search for knowledge of materials and techniques, as well as marketing and career guidance, within their peer networks has been well documented (Cobbledick, 1996; Dane, 1987; Gatten & Bryant, 2010; Hemmig, 2009; Nilsen, 1986; Toyne, 1975). More recently, scholars have acknowledged that artists and art students seek inspiration and need information for their practices from a wide variety of sources; many of those reside outside the academic information sources emphasized in the *Standards* (Haines, 2004; Hemmig, 2009; Keeran, 2013; Mason & Robinson, 2011). As an example, "student artists may seek

creative stimulus from artwork and artists, their peers, images from their own experience, and virtually any other source that makes sense to them” (Frank, 1999, p. 446). According to Cowan (2004), one artist defined external information sources as “the environment - colors, textures, smells, sounds, temperature, a sense of space and light” (p. 17), as well as the natural world, artistic materials, and the artistic piece itself. She described the artist’s process as “moving, relational, organic, dialogic and iterative” (p. 19). Cowan noted how her perspective of and vocabulary for information needs differed from the artist’s. Although the artist thought primarily about sources for her work through the natural environment she experienced, Cowan was able to identify the artist’s additional “problems and needs . . . such as the need to find good brushes, the need to have high quality slides made, and the problems of gaining recognition and financial remuneration” (p. 18). Cowan’s article draws attention to and validates artists’ information practices as they exist largely outside of conventional library boundaries. Keeran (2013), addressing how to teach information literacy within the disciplines of art and art history, documented that studio art students require multiple sources, some of which are not included within the confines of traditional literature. She observed that librarians may overlook studio artists’ use of eclectic resources and non-traditional research needs.

## **Librarian bias and studio arts research methods**

In addition to the biases against studio research practices in various competency documents, librarians can unconsciously create barriers to teaching information literacy within studio arts. Much of Cowan’s (2004) work is rooted in understanding librarian biases, including the assumption that artists are browsers and that this implies a certain level of ineptitude when compared with users who prefer to search. Although Stam (1995) disparaged browsing, other researchers (Cobbledick, 1996; Cowan, 2004; Frank 1999; Hemmig, 2009) normalized this behavior. Still, librarians often steer students toward vetted materials that conform to academic systems of knowledge production and dissemination, rather than to materials outside the academic realm that at times may be preferable to art students.

Hemmig (2009) worked directly with practicing visual artists to identify their preferred sources of inspiration. His research revealed that of the top six sources of inspiration, “four are not primarily associated with libraries” (p. 688). Those four sources include items such as “forms occurring in nature [and] personal life experience” (p. 688). The fifth and sixth sources of inspiration mentioned most frequently by artists were “images and/or text in art magazines, periodicals, newspapers and images and/or text in art books (includes exhibition

catalogs)” (p. 688). It is therefore potentially problematic that, according to data collected by Mayer (2010), librarians predominantly focus on teaching studio art students how to locate and use their least-preferred sources of inspiration. Keeran (2013) also acknowledged the troublesome reality that teaching studio art students how to use proprietary databases to discover peer-reviewed articles about their topic may not be the best method for developing transferable skills. By overlooking the utility artists derive from their preferred sources, librarians essentially subordinate the artists’ needs in order to fulfill their own requirement to teach information literacy in a context that is comfortable for them.

## **An uneasy fit: Using standards and competencies documents for studio arts information literacy instruction**

Success stories via standards customization

Much of the literature on art library instruction references standards, including case studies of engaging with the *Standards* and/or *ARLIS/NA Competencies* to develop new approaches or programs, which reflects the degree to which standards documents direct professional efforts. Bliss and Rockenbach (2002) used problem-based learning to develop a required instruction session for architectural design students, modifying an existing assignment about “renovating a historic building to comply with Americans with Disabilities Act requirements” (p. 22). The authors condensed the *Standards* from six to five in order to meet their needs, emphasizing students’ use of discipline specific information sources. They credit the *Standards* with providing a means of focus for their instruction to architecture students. Similarly, Vecchiola (2011) wrote that the *ARLIS/NA Competencies* worked well in conjunction with discipline-specific information competencies as a foundation for developing a sequenced information literacy program for architecture students. Vecchiola also used the *Standards* to engage faculty in conversation about National Architectural Accrediting Board standards. In both of these examples, standards may have helped the librarians articulate claims to institutional resources, such as classroom time and legitimacy as teaching colleagues.

Brinkman and Young (2010) used the *Standards* to implement a problem-based, collaborative multimedia art installation, the results of which showed students thought critically about the nature of information, utilized multiple research methods, and evaluated and synthesized new information into project plans. Students “explored the relationships between information, text, and technology, and how the digital/virtual environment has changed not only the nature of research, but also how we perceive reality and physical



materials” (p. 63). The librarian and studio art faculty discovered their shared goals aligned under the umbrella of the *Standards* and used them to shape their work with students. Given the challenges of making the *Standards* work in a creative context, it is significant that the authors were able to plan for IL integration, to anticipate what the students might learn and to interpret the students’ creative actions and output.

#### Limitations of the *Standards*

Other discussions of the *Standards* and ARLIS/NA *Competencies* offer specific examples of the challenges of aligning these standards. Walczak, Reuter, and Sammet (2009) noted that in their 11-week, three-credit course for applied arts students that “some of the ACRL and ALSNA [sic] information literacy standards were at a level beyond that which someone seeking an associate’s or bachelor’s degree in an applied art and design field needs to know” (p. 197). They instead developed a list of disciplinary-specific information literacy skills to use in their program, which included “navigation, trade and consumer information, primary and secondary [sources], evaluation, documentation, and application” (p. 198). Echoing Cowan (2004), they conceded that MLA and APA citation styles did not meet the needs of applied art and design students; as a result, the authors created their own documentation guidelines for students. Leousis (2013) critiqued the ARLIS/NA *Competencies* by asserting that the needs of MFA students ranged far beyond the document’s wording that advanced students’ understanding of the “role of art and contemporary society and current trends in the art world” (p. 131). She found the same breadth of interdisciplinary topics noted by Hemmig (2009) in his research of artists’ information needs.

Gluibizzi (2010) approached the subject of competencies from the perspective of visual literacy, highlighting several challenging factors for studio art students. In attempting to translate the idea of students’ inquiries about their own work into ACRL Standard 1—“The information literate student determines the nature and extent of the information needed” (ACRL, 2001, p. 8)—the author stated that the students ask librarians “What art does my work look like?” rather than “How do I find something?” (p. 135). Gluibizzi noted that the “‘textbook’ library searches” do not produce the visual information students need. She further claimed that the *Standards* and ARLIS/NA *Competencies* do not address students’ engagement with images after locating them, which could lead librarians to ignore the larger context of the students’ experiences. Librarians may want to consider how standards documents influence expectations of their work in order to determine appropriate methods and extend lessons to their practical end.

### Foreshadowing the *Framework*

Several librarians engaged with the *Standards* in an attempt to reconcile studio arts pedagogy and practices with performance indicators and outcomes that are better suited to textual research. The resulting body of literature foreshadows aspects of the *Framework*. Due to the largely cognitive focus of the *Standards*, Halverson (2008) viewed them to be ineffective for addressing the affective dimensions of information retrieval. The unique “needs, dispositions, and habits” of studio art students were not reflected within his information literacy instruction practice (p. 34). As a result, he reworked his instruction methods to include conceptual practice, approaching “IL as a way of thinking rather than solely as a set of skills” (p. 35). Halverson’s shift toward a practice of situating student learning within the constructivist model pointed to the need for a more flexible standards document.

In 2008, Payne adopted a three-tiered approach to incorporating studio art pedagogy into the curriculum, including collaborative constructivist learning approaches, one-on-one student and instructor communication, and the practice of studio critique. He stated that “using studio-based instruction principles engages students on a conceptual level first, which then motivates them to explore technical searching skills as codified in the *Standards*” (p. 40). Payne invited studio arts students to conceive and execute their own artworks within the library space. The resulting installations identified and challenged power structures within libraries, including food and drink policies and classification systems. Payne explained that by inviting studio art students into the library to create installations, they witnessed...

a reversal of our earlier procedures where seminars were given on practical usage of our Library search tools in the hope that broader philosophical or theoretical understanding would eventually emerge through using our catalogue, databases or print indexes/abstracts. For visual learners, however, this methodological reversal is critical as it mimics the collaborative environment of the studio, where broad concepts or artistic techniques are presented but are worked out technically by the students on their own terms, whether at the easel, the computer screen, or a woodworking bench. (p. 40)

Payne acknowledged that while the resulting student works offered “profound interpretations” of libraries and research (p. 36), the ambiguous nature of art made it difficult to assess the exact extent of student learning.

Zanin-Yost and Tapley’s (2008) work paired the *Standards* with a research methodology that privileged social justice conversations in the classroom. The authors situated their study

within action research and adopted principles developed by May (1993) in their methodology, including the idea that “changes toward social equity are possible and desirable” (p. 119). In this study, students’ reliance on older research sources perpetuated racist viewpoints about aboriginal art. To counter this, Zanin-Yost demonstrated how the use of Library of Congress Subject Headings “‘American Indians,’ ‘Indians of North America’ and ‘Indians’ will generate different lists of resources in the library catalog and databases” (p. 43). This work foreshadows the frame ‘Authority is Constructed and Contextual’ as a useful lens for addressing biases, changing viewpoints, and shifts in vocabulary.

Zanin-Yost (2012) indirectly critiqued the *Standards* in her article about creating an information literacy program for interior design students:

[The author] realized that the information literacy sessions focused on teaching skills only for academia, such as citation format. This type of teaching would not help the students in the long term. Most students would be pursuing careers that did not emphasize these skills. Unless they knew how to access and use information outside the academic setting, the students would not become information literate. (p. 451)

Through discussions with teaching faculty, Zanin-Yost developed a scaffolded information literacy plan based upon learning objects to meet artists’ professional needs as well as those demanded by the academe. The author and a small group of teaching faculty mapped seven courses within the interior design curriculum to the *Standards* and then mapped specific outcomes from the same document to each course assignment.

Greer (2015) also addressed the issue of sources appropriate to a particular context in the development of a photography information literacy curriculum using the ARLIS/NA *Competencies*, the *Standards*, and ACRL’s *Visual Literacy Standards*. The author described how “learning outcomes from the aforementioned standards documents were matched to the stages of the photography curriculum” (p. 88). Greer observed the following:

...studio art students have different evaluative criteria than students in other disciplines. For example, the lag in academic publishing may force students to use artist or museum websites, or even gallery sites, to find pertinent information. Although these sources are generally not scholarly, the information they provide may be critically important to a student’s understanding of contemporary art trends. (p. 91)

While Greer and Zanin-Yost used standards documents to shape their pedagogy, their conclusions foreshadow the *Framework's* assertion that 'Authority is Constructed and Contextual' as well as the frame 'Searching as Strategic Exploration.'

### Impact of the *Framework* on practice

Librarians began to integrate the *Framework* into their practices after the draft document was unveiled in 2014. Garcia and Labatte (2015) employed the studio art practices of critique, writing artists' statements, and browsing for inspiration within the *Framework*. They used 'Scholarship as Conversation' as a metaphor for the artist's statement and 'Searching as Strategic Exploration' to explain browsing for inspiration. After they asked students to find broadly-defined sources, the students asked for more flexibility in format type, expressing interest in "poetry, videos, films, exhibits" (p. 246). Formative and summative assessment techniques captured students' progress through these two interconnected frames. The authors noted that future attention should be devoted to skills-based learning, such as search techniques. Librarians engaging with the *Framework* recognize the importance of skills cultivated by the *Standards* and *ARLIS/NA Competencies*.

Xu and Gil (2017) situated studio art practices within the 'Scholarship as Conversation' frame to "help students contextualize their work within the artistic, cultural, historical, political, and social contexts" (p. 126). They acknowledged their use of the *ARLIS/NA Competencies* and *Standards* to guide their work, and they noted the challenge they faced since their institution had adopted the now-rescinded *Standards* into their core curriculum outcomes. Garcia and Peterson (2017) presented the studio critique as a discipline-specific tool that allows "art librarians to consider how an enhanced definition of information literacy can inspire more impactful teaching practices within the discipline" (p.73). They drew strong connections between knowledge dispositions required for studio art critiques and the 'Scholarship as a Conversation' frame.

In the literature on early implementation of the *Framework* in the art and design context, librarians focused on just one or two frames, illustrating the document's flexibility. Miller (2017) advocated for adapting the "Research as Inquiry" concept to "redefin[e] terms such as 'information' to align with the terminology of visual inquiry common to the arts" (p. 202). Peterson (2017) positioned the concept 'Searching as Strategic Exploration' as an opportunity to embrace the serendipitous nature of research. As an embedded librarian in an advanced jewelry seminar, her interventions throughout the semester helped students "observe and enact research as a nonlinear, iterative, and multimodal process" (p. 327).

Peterson noted the high level of trust and collaboration required between librarians and art and design faculty “both at the individual and administrative levels” (p. 319).

## Implications for assessment and teaching practices

According to Mayer (2010), 55% of art librarians “do not assess the impact of their art instruction in any way” (p. 151). This may seem surprising given the increasing push for accountability in higher education. However, the literature examined in this article demonstrates how creative, collaborative and adaptable many librarians have been in making sense of the *Standards*, *ARLIS/NA Competencies*, and *ACRL Visual Literacy Standards* in relation to studio art information literacy: how they have planned instructional programming, content and delivery, as well as assessment. Librarians have undertaken assessment to support departmental or institutional accreditation requirements (Halverson, 2008; Vecchiola, 2011) to obtain evidence that was shared with faculty in order to foster collaboration (Greer, 2015; Vecchiola, 2011), and to plan for ongoing instructional improvements (Garcia & Labatte, 2015; Greer 2015; Halverson 2008;). Librarians have employed numerous methods, such as scaling assessment into programs beyond one shot instruction (Greer, 2015; Halverson, 2008; Vecchiola, 2011;), developing formative and summative assignments and exercises (Garcia & Labatte, 2015), and analyzing sources used in capstone projects (Greer, 2015).

The conceptual nature of the *Framework* pushes teaching librarians to shift their focus from tools and processes to critical, holistic ideas, and to reflect on their purpose and goals as educators (Beilin, 2015; Halverson, 2008). Making sense of the *Framework* provides another opportunity to adapt and strengthen assessment practices that they already value. For example, in a paper pre-dating the *Framework*, Zald and Gilchrist (2008) discussed educational assessment as a diverse activity that centers on the “deeper questions” of student learning (p. 166). They emphasized that librarians, faculty and other partners should work collaboratively to develop local learning outcomes and integrated assessments that flow from shared vision, expertise, and evidence. The authors suggested that the *Standards* could serve as “inspiration” for this work (p. 167). They also articulated that assessment could spur librarians’ critical self-reflection in service of personal and professional growth.

Although the *Standards* and *Framework* are very different documents, Zald and Gilchrist’s approach to assessment suggests similarities in how they may be applied. Oakleaf (2014) argued that the *Framework* continues to support best practices of assessment, finding that custom learning outcomes, faculty and campus partnerships, and self-reflection remain

important. Drawing upon research by Land and Meyer (2010), Oakleaf encouraged assessment techniques that “permit the use of authentic assessment approaches, provide useful feedback to students to help them over the ‘stuck places’, emphasize individual variation in the journey that students travel to achieve them, [and] recognize that learners may redefine their sense of self” (2014, p. 511). Oakleaf, and Land and Meyer (2010) are in agreement that assessments promoting critical self-reflection are preferable over those requiring a more singular response. This shares much in common with Zald and Gilchrist’s (2008) call for assessment of process work.

While the authors of the present study have noted how assessment can be a challenge in art and design education, the heuristic approach to learning in the studio classroom provides a promising environment for information literacy assessment efforts. Librarians can participate in studio communities that value an open exchange of ideas, gain insight into students’ creative journeys, and collaborate with faculty to articulate expectations and identify appropriate moments for feedback. Payne (2008), and Brinkman and Young (2010) provide foundational examples for this practice.

Activities that prompt students to explain and reflect on their processes can also provide artifacts for assessment. For example, librarians have used concept mapping as an exercise to help art and design students visually reflect on, organize and seek relationships between ideas (Otis, n.d.; Petraits, 2010). This technique is aligned with mapping and listing activities described by Oakleaf (2014) and may specifically support the frame ‘Research as Inquiry.’ More recently, Petraits (2017) adopted an action research approach to develop an assessment of graduate students’ multimodal, transliterate fluency during and after studio critiques. She applied Bloom’s revised taxonomy to selected concepts from the *Framework* and created a criteria chart that outlines the intersection of art and design competencies with information literacy competencies. Petraits used the chart in discussions with studio art and design faculty about students’ qualitative assessment.

## Implications for pedagogy

Some librarians have successfully engaged with studio research practices using the *Standards*, but the constructivist nature of the *Framework* may provide greater opportunities to discuss marginalized research activities and encourage librarians to better understand previously overlooked methods that artists use for research. In addition to the wide range of sources potentially needed for different projects, student artists rely on non-scholarly sources such as artist and gallery websites to keep up with “bleeding edge” activities in contemporary art

(Greer, 2015). The *Framework's* 'Searching as Strategic Exploration' and 'Authority is Constructed and Contextual' frames relate to determining which kinds of information suit professional contexts, and where to find and critically evaluate such information from non-academic, non-library, non-traditional sources. For example, librarians may create lesson plans for fine arts students to emphasize that in addition to art historians having conversations about contemporary art, other stakeholders such as gallerists, curators, art fair jurors, art critics, and artists themselves engage in discourses that shape the discipline. Students should be exposed to methods of locating such non-scholarly sources and analyzing their contents. The editorial process of such publications is another rich area of exploration. Within art and design disciplines, peer-reviewed work is not generally the norm. Instead, librarians may talk about editorial processes that lead to the publication of art news, museum and gallery publications, and criticism.

While the conceptual nature of the *Framework* appears more inclusive of disciplinary practices, the 'Scholarship as Conversation' frame may imply that written communication is the superlative, preferred method of communication. Librarians will need to find innovative methods to decode this frame without imposing traditional scholarly conventions upon a field with different conventions. One way to approach this is to think more broadly about what "scholarship" and "conversation" mean in the studio context. It is crucial that librarians acknowledge that artists and designers engage in visual and conceptual "conversations" with the world around them through the creation of their artwork. By reframing the understanding of conversations as visually-based, librarians can talk about artistic appropriation of themes, imagery, and methods. A discussion of copyright infringement cases within the fine arts context, such as *Rogers v. Koons* (1992) and *Cariou v. Prince* (2013), can illustrate the need for student artists to carefully consider their sources and the ways in which their artwork may be reused by others in the field.

Two ACRL frames support the social aspect of information sharing, identified by Hemmig (2009) as an important aspect for artists. The 'Searching as Strategic Exploration' frame states that "Experts realize that information searching is a contextualized, complex experience that affects, and is affected by, the cognitive, affective, and social dimensions of the searcher" (ACRL, 2016, p. 9). The 'Authority is Constructed and Contextual' frame states that "Learners who are developing their information literate abilities understand the increasingly social nature of the information ecosystem where authorities actively connect with one another and sources develop over time" (ACRL, 2016, p. 4). Librarians may attempt to situate artists' social research behavior within either or both of these frames, or

develop new frames in order to make sense of disciplinary research practices. For example, librarians could ask students to reflect upon which people or communities they already turn to for information; students could then identify potentially helpful connections outside of their existing networks and develop strategies for expanding their professional circles.

The role of unconventional sources of inspiration within artistic practice (Cowan, 2004; Frank 1999; Mason & Robinson, 2011) and studio art students' needs for interdisciplinary research sources (Garcia & Labatte, 2015; Hemmig, 2009; Keeran, 2013; Mason & Robinson, 2011), easily map to the frames of 'Searching as Strategic Exploration' or 'Research as Inquiry.' When librarians connect research skills to students' artistic practices, they take a step closer to acknowledging the studio art context, embracing the social constructivist pedagogical theory of the *Framework* rather than relying on more decontextualized approaches of the *Standards* and *ARLIS/NA Competencies* documents.

## Final Thoughts

This article's analysis shows that librarians teaching art and design students have a history of resisting the positivist nature of the *Standards*, suggesting that they are already positioned for continued innovation and flexibility to meet challenges and opportunities posed by the *Framework*. The authors believe that librarians can leverage the *Framework's* flexibility and emphasis on local context to better integrate information literacy instruction and assessment with studio practice methods. Common adaptations and criticism in the literature emphasize that the *Standards* and *ARLIS/NA Competencies* did not address practices outside of formal library spaces and resources. Librarians' early implementations of the *Framework* indicate a shift away from evaluating the output of creative practices and towards engaging with faculty and students in their processes while seeking appropriate moments to intervene and encourage self-aware, critical research. The literature also suggests ways in which incorporating studio methodologies and pedagogy into information literacy instruction can strengthen librarians' teaching practices. Librarians may determine that their work with studio art and design students leads to proposals for new threshold concepts in the arts. If that is the case, then contributions to the *ACRL Framework for Information Literacy Sandbox* (ACRL n.d.) will be useful for sharing and refining new approaches. Librarians have already begun to translate and map the *ACRL Visual Literacy Standards* to the *Framework* so that they are more extensible (Meeks, 2015; Meeks, 2017). However, methods developed for a single institution's context may not make sense for many others. Each librarian must survey the academic landscape at her institution and develop a plan of engagement with the *ACRL Framework* that is aligned with local artistic practices.



The common denominators of exploration, heuristic learning, and critique in the studio classroom provide librarians with key starting points in approaching information literacy instruction. Librarians want to teach transferable skills, and that means more of them should be entering studios and engaging with disciplinary practices. This article calls for deeper engagement with studio art and design faculty and students in their creative practices. Doing so successfully may mean de-centering libraries, and especially library materials and research methods that may not be relevant in the studio art and design context. Part of the way that librarians continue to advocate for and demonstrate their value is by crossing literal and metaphorical thresholds, moving beyond the confines of librarianship to share disciplinary expertise and celebrate the complexity of artistic research.

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