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Librarian and Faculty Conversations about Information Literacy: A Pilot Study on Communication across Disciplinary Boundaries

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Abstract

The purpose of this pilot study is to discover how academic instruction librarians discuss the concept of information literacy with faculty colleagues outside the library and information science field; how they negotiate shared meanings of the term; and what pedagogical actions result from these conversations. The researcher interviewed a purposive, convenience sample of three early-career ILI librarians employed at private colleges in the Northeastern United States to ascertain their perspectives on the quality and nature of their conversations with faculty members about information literacy. The researcher used the theoretical framework of Etienne Wenger's dimensions of boundary processes to interpret the qualitative interview data. The researcher discovered that the interviewed instruction librarians do not often discuss disciplinary definitions of information literacy with their faculty colleagues, that they adapt their teaching as needed to meet faculty expectations, and that they develop fruitful pedagogical partnerships with key faculty "allies."

Keywords: information literacy; academic libraries; collaboration; boundary processes

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Introduction

Contemporary conversations about effective research pedagogy in higher education (HE) revolve around the skills, dispositions, and practices collectively termed *information literacy* (IL). The Association for College and Research Libraries' [ACRL] (2016) current definition of IL highlights the contextual, social, and metacognitive nature of the concept:

> 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. (2016, p. 3)

The ACRL's (2016) *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* uses six conceptual frames to posit IL as a "cluster" (n.p.) of competencies that include an understanding of scholarly and professional conversations and the power structures behind information creation and dissemination. The ACRL's conceptualization of IL in the *Framework* is widely recognized and applied by academic librarians in the United States and Canada (Bradley, 2017), but the document is not well-understood by non-LIS faculty members (Guth et al., 2018). The lack of a shared definition of IL across HE constituencies impedes teaching and curricular collaborations among academic librarians, disciplinary faculty members,[1] and other key curricular stakeholders. The absence of a joint definition also negatively impacts students' acquisition of the foundational IL skills necessary for academic and career success (DaCosta, 2010).

Several recent studies have explored faculty perceptions of IL and/or the *Framework* (Dawes, 2019a; Dawes, 2019b; Fullard, 2017; Kaletski, 2017, Moran, 2019). However, there is a gap in the literature regarding how information literacy instruction (ILI) librarians who visit courses to teach research skills discuss IL definitions and concepts, including the *Framework*, with their faculty colleagues. This pilot study fills that gap by examining ILI librarians' qualitative perceptions of their conversations with faculty members about IL. The researcher uses the theoretical lens of Etienne Wenger's (2000) conceptualization of boundary processes in communities of practice to analyze the nature of these faculty-librarian interactions along three dimensions: coordination, transparency, and negotiability.

Literature Review

Many researchers have examined the perceptions of faculty toward IL as a concept, including their attitudes toward the ACRL's definitions of IL in both the American Library Association's (2000) *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education* and in the ACRL's (2016) current *Framework* document. Most studies have identified a conceptual and a definitional gap between LIS professionals and other academic stakeholders regarding IL, as well as disagreement regarding who has the responsibility for teaching and assessing IL as a

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[1] Many academic librarians in Canada and in the United States hold faculty status at their institutions. In this article, the term "librarians" refers to academic librarians with or without faculty status, while the term "faculty" refers to non-LIS instructors, lecturers, and professors.

student learning outcome (SLO). The following section reviews the LIS literature about faculty perceptions of IL, including an overview of recent empirical research into faculty attitudes toward the *Framework*. The review incorporates insights from the researcher's interviews with two key IL researchers, Dr. Laura Saunders (Simmons University, Boston, MA) and Prof. Lorna Dawes (University of Nebraska-Lincoln).

Faculty Conceptions of IL and the *Standards* Document

Recognizing the importance of faculty/librarian collaborations to IL programs in higher education settings, LIS researchers have sought to determine faculty perceptions of IL definitions, and have studied faculty attitudes toward IL as an SLO. Webber et al. (2005) conducted a phenomenographic[2] study of faculty members from multiple disciplines at academic institutions in the United Kingdom to ascertain their personal conceptions of IL. Both sets of faculty members wanted students to engage thoughtfully with information sources, prompting the authors to conclude that "[s]uch an academic would probably respond better to a discussion about how he or she could work with the librarian to encourage more critical thinking" (Webber et al., 2005, p.15). A later article by the same authors using the same interview dataset (Boon et al., 2007) focused on English professors' personal conceptions of IL, their perceptions of their own IL teaching, and IL as an embedded competency in the university. The researchers discovered that the faculty conceptualized IL as encompassing tool-based skills such as accessing print materials, while also valuing core IL dispositions such as critical thinking and self-efficacy. The faculty members also viewed IL skills as largely situated in a library context rather than as a constellation of skills that they themselves can teach intentionally in their courses. The authors concluded that when initiating conversations about IL with non-LIS colleagues, librarians should understand that faculty "conceptions of information literacy and the significance that they give to particular elements (e.g. evaluation and critical thinking) suggests that they need but a little prodding to see information literacy not as something done in a library, but something central to their roles as English researchers and educators" (p. 225).

DaCosta's (2010) qualitative studies of faculty members in the United Kingdom and in the United States confirms the importance that faculty give to IL. However, her research also reveals a mismatch between faculty expectations for students' IL skills acquisition and the actual amount of time they teach—or have librarians teach—those skills during class time. Her findings indicate that students are not benefitting from course-embedded ILI that could help them become information literate citizens, and she calls upon librarians to act as "bridge builders" (DaCosta, 2010, p. 218) by educating faculty about the importance of IL through cross-disciplinary conference presentations and publications.

Bury's (2011) survey of faculty members at York University (Toronto, Canada) uncovered similar attitudes, with most participants voicing support for IL pedagogy and for faculty-librarian ILI collaborations, but with fewer integrating ILI into the classroom and/or partnering with librarians to do so. In a follow-up to her survey research, Bury (2015)

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[2] LIS researchers have used *phenomenography* to explore the variety of individuals' experiences of the concepts and practices of IL and IL pedagogy. According to Limberg (2008), "[p]henomenography is a research approach aimed at the study of variation of human experiences of the world" (n.p.). Whereas phenomenology seeks to analyze the essence of a phenomenon through individual descriptions, phenomenography seeks to explore the variation of human experiences of that phenomenon. Phenomenography also posits that an individual's experience of a phenomenon is intrinsically linked to actions taken in relation to that phenomenon.

interviewed a subset of faculty members from her earlier study to glean qualitative data on faculty perceptions of IL in the undergraduate curriculum at York University. She discovered that faculty have a narrower view of IL than do librarians, focusing more on source retrieval and evaluation rather than on information use. The faculty members also viewed IL as inherently interwoven with other disciplinary literacies, such as idea synthesis. Noting that faculty largely support efforts to improve students' IL skills, Bury recommends that librarians work with campus academic leaders to encourage the holistic integration of IL into the undergraduate curriculum.

Saunders (2012) conducted mixed-methods research on U.S. faculty members' awareness of formalized IL standards, their perceptions of the importance of IL learning outcomes, and disciplinary differences in those perceptions. She found that while many professors were unaware of the term *information literacy* or associated it with computer skills or basic library searching, all research participants highly value the critical thinking skills that lie at the core of LIS conceptions of IL, and many were concerned by students' lack of facility in these areas. Notably, Saunders discovered that some study participants expressed frustration with the term *information literacy* itself, indicating that they do not use that terminology and/or find it confusing. Given this finding, Saunders (2012) notes that "some discussions on information literacy might be forestalled due to misunderstandings or lack of knowledge about the term itself" (p. 230). This conclusion supports the contention that the lack of a shared definition or conceptualization of IL prevents librarians and faculty members from forging the partnerships necessary for effective IL pedagogy.

Few faculty members in Saunder's (2012) study taught IL intentionally in class, nor did they collaborate with librarians to weave IL into lessons and assignments. Rather, they saw IL as a skillset students develop independent of their courses. Saunders did discover a positive correlation between faculty members' awareness of formal IL definitions and standards and their willingness to work with librarians to teach and assess IL in class. She indicates that in the HE context librarians need to shoulder the responsibility for starting dialogue with faculty about ILI if they hope to realize their goals for IL curricular integration. In a follow-up study, Saunders (2013) surveyed academic librarians about their own interactions with faculty about IL, discovering that most of the participants adapt their conversations based upon a faculty member's disciplinary background.

Dubicki's (2013) multi-institution survey of faculty members at colleges and universities in New Jersey corroborates Saunders' finding that faculty who are aware of IL standards are more likely to teach IL intentionally in their courses. However, Dubicki's survey respondents indicated that most professors remain disappointed with students' IL skills as they progress through their studies, leading Dubicki to recommend that librarians work closely with faculty members to develop IL SLOs and to design IL lessons and learning objects.

Cope and Sanabria (2014) interviewed faculty members at two New York City colleges to discover how their definitions of IL differed from that of LIS professionals, and to determine whether those definitions varied by participants' academic discipline. Their results indicate that faculty across disciplines perceive IL as deeply enmeshed with the information practices of their disciplines, and therefore may resist institutional imperatives to incorporate formulaic IL standards into their teaching practice. These findings suggest that differing perceptions and definitions of IL between librarians and faculty may impede the academic partnerships necessary for effective ILI programs.

Faculty Conceptions of the *Framework* Document

When the ACRL (2016) approved the *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*, its authors hoped that the document would provide a universal conceptual framework that would transcend disciplinary boundaries and enable cross-campus dialogue about IL teaching and SLOs. However, recent research on faculty conceptions of the *Framework* indicates that a faculty-librarian conceptual divide about IL still exists despite ACRL's efforts to

> open…the way for librarians, faculty, and other institutional partners to redesign instruction sessions, assignments, courses, and even curricula; to connect information literacy with student success initiatives; to collaborate on pedagogical research and involve students themselves in that research; and to create wider conversations about student learning, the scholarship of teaching and learning, and the assessment of learning on local campuses and beyond. (Association of College & Research Libraries, 2016, n.p.)

Kaletski's (2017) online survey of faculty at Stetson University revealed that faculty rate the *Framework*'s knowledge practices as important for student success, but that they identified some of those practices as falling to the students to develop independently. Moran (2019) surveyed faculty at Broward College and discovered that while participants purport to value IL, "instructors do not avail themselves or their students of librarians as resources for ILI" (p. 157). She recommends that librarians engage in outreach activities to demonstrate the importance of ILI to faculty members.

Other researchers are more sanguine about the role that the ACRL *Framework* can play in librarian conversations about IL with campus stakeholders. Dawes (2019a, 2019b) conducted a phenomenographic study of University of Nebraska-Lincoln faculty members' conceptions of student information and how those conceptions inform their teaching of first-year students. Like previous researchers, she found that faculty do not view IL skills as distinct from information-seeking activities and critical thinking in their disciplines. She recommends that librarians shift their ILI from skills-based workshops to instruction that focuses on deeper changes to student information-seeking behavior (2019a), and she suggests the ACRL *Framework*'s learning dispositions can serve as a lingua franca in librarians' IL discussions with faculty members because they more closely align with faculty members' own experiences with information and research (2019b).

Fullard (2017) interviewed instructors at the University of the Western Cape in South Africa and discovered that faculty from a wide range of academic disciplines readily identify with the ACRL's current IL conceptualization, concluding that "[t]he language and concepts presented in the ACRL Framework can serve as pivots or common meeting points around which the specific knowledge practices or dispositions desired by a lecturer and librarian might be more precisely evoked and discussed" (p. 53). These recent studies provide ILI librarians with a potential route forward in their quest to find a common language for IL that can be leveraged in curricular and pedagogical discussions with faculty colleagues.

Theoretical Framework

Saunders (2013) observes that one of the barriers to the successful integration of IL into the academic curriculum is that of organizational culture: although librarians, faculty members, and college administrators are all part of the broad university community, members of each constituency also follow the norms and practices of their own disciplines or professions:

> While each college and university has an overall culture that permeates the whole institution, different groups and departments within the institution may also have their own culture, sometimes referred to as subcultures or organizational cultures, separate from the institutional culture. (Saunders, 2013, p. 138)

Saunders thus describes the university as a coordinated system of specialist communities, each with its own history, disciplinary knowledge, workplace practices, and professional language.

In other words, the university is a collection of *communities of practice* (CoP), described by social learning theorist Etienne Wenger (1998) as groups of people "created over time by the sustained pursuit of a shared enterprise" (p. 45). These CoPs necessarily interact in the broader social system of the university writ large, thereby creating "a complex landscape of different communities of practice—involved not only in practicing the occupation, but also in research, teaching, management, regulation, associations, and many other relevant dimensions" (Wenger-Trayner et al., p. 15). The CoPs connect with one another via *boundary processes*, where activities must be negotiated and procedures aligned across disciplinary divisions, and where "even common words and objects are not guaranteed to have continuity of meaning" (Wenger-Trayner et al., p. 17). Boundary processes can be identified, analyzed, and assessed through certain elements, including 1) *brokers/boundary crossers*, people who bridge the gap between communities; 2) *boundary objects*, such as documents, procedures, and shared language; and 3) *boundary interactions*, opportunities for members of different CoPs to engage with one another (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Wenger, 2000).

This study examines campus conversations about IL and ILI between librarians and faculty members through the theoretical lens of boundary processes. These connections between or among CoPs in a landscape of practice may be contentious, or they may create a rich environment for collaboration and creativity. Wenger (2000) notes that

> Boundaries can create divisions and be a source of separation, fragmentation, disconnection, and misunderstanding. Yet, they can also be areas of unusual learning, places where perspectives meet and new possibilities arise. Radically new insights often arise at the boundaries between communities. (pp. 233-234)

Wenger (2000, p. 234) provides a conceptual framework through which boundary processes can be evaluated:

- *Coordination*: Does the interaction entail an alignment of action?
- *Transparency*: Does the interaction lead to shared meaning?
- *Negotiability*: Does the process create one-way or two-way connections? Does the interaction involve equal power?

These three aspects or dimensions of boundary processes provide a mechanism by which to assess the quality of a boundary interaction.

Methods

The researcher set out to understand the context, nature, content, and quality of librarian/faculty conversations about IL as experienced by academic instruction librarians, and

how those conversations inform librarians' IL teaching practices. Guiding research questions included:

1) How do academic instruction librarians discuss their own definitions of information literacy with non-LIS faculty members?
2) Do academic instruction librarians perceive that faculty members have differing conceptions of IL than their own?
3) Do academic instruction librarians and their faculty colleagues negotiate a shared understanding of the concept?
4) How do conversations about IL with faculty colleagues impact librarians' teaching practices?

The researcher interviewed a purposive, convenience sample of three early-career ILI librarians employed at private colleges in the Northeastern United States, all of whom teach IL sessions by embedding in classroom faculty members' courses. All participants are Caucasian and identify as female. The librarians' names have been changed in this article to protect their confidentiality. The researcher received Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval to conduct the pilot research study, and the instruction librarians signed Informed Consent Forms prior to the interviews.

The researcher posed the following structured interview questions to all three participants, asking follow-up and/or clarifying questions as appropriate:

1) Please begin by describing your specific job duties at the library. Could you provide details about your instructional role?
2) Describe how you work with faculty members to teach IL skills to students in their classes.
3) Now I would like to discuss the concept of information literacy. What is your own definition of information literacy? Are you familiar with the definition of IL in the ACRL's *Framework for Information Literacy*?
4) How do you discuss your conception of information literacy with your non-LIS faculty colleagues, especially those whose classes you visit for library sessions?
5) Do you find that faculty members have differing definitions or conceptions of IL than you do?
6) Do you and your faculty colleagues come to an agreed-upon understanding of informational literacy? Please give an example of a situation where this process went well.
7) What specific actions result from these conversations and negotiations?
8) How do these conversations with faculty members about IL impact your own teaching?
9) Is there anything else you would like to add?

The interviews were conducted in Fall 2020 via the Zoom video conferencing platform, recorded, transcribed, and thematically coded using Etienne Wenger's (2000) three dimensions of boundary processes (coordination, transparency, and negotiability) as overarching conceptual frameworks. Based on words and terms identified in the interview data, the researcher identified emergent themes related to each boundary process dimension (see Table 1). The next section discusses the dimensions and the themes in detail, with supporting quotations from the study participants.

Findings/Emerging Themes

Coordination: Does the Interaction Entail an Alignment of Action?

According to Wenger (2000), effective boundary interactions necessitate shared understandings and activities that allow for mutual engagement across multiple disciplines. Such coordination "must accommodate the practices involved without burdening others with the details of one practice and provide enough standardization for people to know how to deal with them locally" (p. 234). The researcher discovered that the interviewed instruction librarians usually took the first step in the collaborative relationship by initiating the professional conversation with classroom instructors, and by aligning their IL teaching practices with the course needs and pedagogical preferences of their faculty partners.

Table 1: Coding for librarian perceptions of conversations with faculty members about IL

Boundary dimension	Explanation	Themes
Coordination *Does the interaction entail an alignment of action?*	Responses included the following words: plan, reach out, design, draft, discuss, conversation	• Librarians initiate the IL sessions by reaching out to faculty members regarding library instruction workshops. • Librarians customize their IL discussions and lessons to faculty needs, perceptions, and timeframes.
Transparency: *Does the interaction lead to shared meaning?*	Responses included the following words or actions: translate, map, jargon, buzzwords, frame	• Instruction librarians rarely overtly talk to faculty about IL concepts or frameworks. • Librarians independently map faculty-requested library research skills to conceptual IL knowledge practices and learning dispositions. • Librarians consider formal IL definitions and frameworks to be specific to the LIS field, and therefore not easily translatable to faculty outside the discipline. • Librarians perceive that faculty members conceive IL as a set of discrete library research skills rather than as a conceptual framework for critically and ethically engaging with constellations of information.
Negotiability: *Does the interaction involve equal power?*	Responses included the following words: time, service, power, authority, decide	• Librarians perceive that faculty lack the time and/or the inclination to engage in deeper conversations about IL competencies and frameworks. • There is sometimes tension among librarians and faculty regarding who

		should teach the conceptual aspects of IL. • Some librarians perceive that they play a supporting role in faculty members' classrooms. • Librarians partner with faculty allies who understand librarians' role in teaching IL; these collaborations are mutually satisfying and beneficial.

Librarians initiate the IL sessions by reaching out to faculty members regarding library instruction workshops

Sylvie stated that at her college the dialogue about library instruction invariably begins with librarians contacting faculty with a list of potential IL topics that they can cover in a session. She noted that at the beginning of the conversation, she focuses less on the theoretical aspects of IL than upon the discrete skills that are "specific, like topic brainstorming or source evaluation or citation management or in-depth database sort of demo stuff." At this early stage in the dialogue, the emphasis is on clarity and a clear delineation of the specific sessions she can teach that will help students with research in their classes.

Librarians customize their IL discussions and lessons to faculty needs, perceptions, and timeframes.

Sylvie noted that her next step in the process of preparing for an IL class is to review a faculty colleague's syllabus and to discuss a variety of lesson options with the instructor. She also negotiates which topics she can reasonably cover in the timeframe the faculty member has allotted for the session. At this point in the interaction, she introduces additional topics that will provide students with more nuanced IL learning practices: "I will get their assignment information and their thoughts and then sort of project back what I can do. A lot of them are sort of like, oh, I didn't realize you could talk about X, Y and Z in class." Therefore, while Sylvie takes care to align her lesson plan with faculty expectations, she uses the opportunity to incorporate additional topics that are relevant to librarians' conception of IL.

Nicole's interactions with faculty members follow a similar pattern. She notes that she usually adheres to faculty expectations for the library session, while also teaching the skills that she herself determines are necessary for successful completion of the academic project: "I'd say I'm more in a reactive position with regard to instruction, as in [faculty] have an assignment for which they would like their students to visit the library. And it's my role to design instruction around that assignment and to determine what resources are going to be most useful for their students and also to determine what skills they really need help with." Like Sylvie, Nicole uses her time in the classroom as an opportunity to advance students' IL skills within the parameters set by the faculty member, noting that she aims to "finesse [the lesson] with the faculty member and determine[s] what specific information literacy skills they want their students to develop." However, she also endeavors to use these conversations as a mechanism for forging a

pedagogical partnership: "I'm always trying to have a back and forth with the faculty member and to try to make it as collaborative as possible."

Delia also indicated that librarians instigate discussions about ILI at her college, noting that "I wouldn't say that a lot of the faculty are very deeply aware of what we offer." She described the initial dialogue as "fairly one-sided," with librarians eagerly offering their IL services to faculty members who are not deeply cognizant of librarians' expertise. Based on the study participants' experiences, the researcher notes that while librarians and faculty members do coordinate their plans, librarians tend to accommodate their own teaching to faculty needs.

Transparency: Does the Interaction Lead to Shared Meaning?

Wenger (2000) notes that "boundary processes give access to the meanings they have in various practices" (p. 234), but they do not necessarily require that meanings be universally shared by all members of the community of practice. The instruction librarians described boundary interactions with faculty members that reflect Wenger's contention that cross-disciplinary collaborations need to result in effective action, with or without a deep understanding of the theories and rationales behind the processes.

Instruction librarians rarely overtly talk to faculty about IL concepts or frameworks.

For example, the instruction librarians, while fully cognizant of the ACRL *Framework*'s knowledge practices and learning dispositions, do not find it necessary when crafting IL sessions to describe the *Framework* to faculty members in detail. Sylvie commented that she discusses "the parts of information and literacy that are relevant, but I don't ever frame it that way." Instead, she describes the skills and dispositions that librarians call *information literacy* without necessarily using those words or LIS definitions with faculty members. Nicole also notes that while she is "often in a reactive position," she also attempts to work with the faculty member to "determine what specific information literacy skills they want their students to develop," thereby making the process "as collaborative as possible."

Librarians independently map faculty-requested library research skills to conceptual IL knowledge practices and learning dispositions.

Rather, the librarians map their IL lessons and outcomes to the *Framework*'s dispositions independent of faculty knowledge or input. The *Framework* is therefore viewed as a document to be shared and utilized by librarians, and it is used by librarians to ensure that students in given classes are learning certain skills. Delia stated that she and her library colleagues discuss the *Framework* "behind the scenes, like we will have the *Framework* up while we're making sure that all of these check marks are getting…checked." However, the librarians do not view the *Framework* as a heuristic to discuss externally with other colleagues on campus.

Librarians consider formal IL definitions and frameworks to be specific to the LIS field, and therefore not easily translatable to faculty outside the discipline.

One reason that the librarians gave for not openly discussing IL theory and/or the *Framework* with faculty colleagues is their perception that the document is specific to the LIS field, and therefore does not easily translate into the disciplinary practices of campus partners. Delia noted that

> [R]eally, to me, the *Framework* is, it's library jargon…[W]e can speak this language amongst ourselves…I think we do a very good job of incorporating the *Framework* and making sure that, you know, we're using elements that are professionally accepted within the field. But it is difficult to have those conversations with pretty much anybody outside there. It's like I said, it comes off as jargon. People don't want another acronym.

Delia went on to state that because librarians and faculty members are "speaking two different languages," librarians need to "find a way to translate that into ways that anyone can understand."

The librarians' perception of the *Framework* as a library-specific document is borne out by LIS research. Guth et al. (2018) discovered that "[i]n faculty statements addressing the frames, the most common concern, voiced by all disciplines, was the use of jargon and lack of clarity" (p. 709). Guth et al. (2018) recommend that librarians find ways "to connect the frames in everyday terminology or disciplinary language that reflect faculty's concerns regarding their students IL skills" (p. 709). The participants in this study are doing just that, communicating IL themes across disciplinary boundaries to better ensure that students learning the skills they need for academic and career success.

Librarians perceive that faculty members conceive IL as a set of discrete library research skills rather than as a conceptual framework for critically and ethically engaging with constellations of information.

Despite librarian efforts to translate IL concepts to faculty colleagues, the interviewed librarians expressed frustration at their perception that faculty members still view IL as a discrete set of library skills rather than a cluster of knowledge practices that can be employed when engaging with various information formats. Delia noted that many faculty members see IL as centering on "resources" rather than "the teaching of the concepts." She believes that when faculty introduce IL to students on their own rather than inviting librarians to class, they teach surface searching techniques and evaluation heuristics rather than delving into a deep engagement with information creation processes. In the opinions of the study participants, therefore, the boundary interactions with faculty members do not necessarily lead to transparency of meaning and practice, even when the librarians try to describe IL in terms that can be understood by individuals outside the field.

Negotiability: Does the Interaction Involve Equal Power?

Wenger (2000) asserts that communication and collaboration at the borders of landscapes of practice are efficacious when viewpoints and processes are negotiated among all participants in the boundary interaction. He states that "[b]oundary processes can merely reflect relations of power among practices, in which case they are likely to reinforce the boundary rather than bridge it" (Wenger, 2000, p. 234). The librarians interviewed in this study observed that in boundary interactions between librarians and faculty members, the faculty often resist librarians' efforts to forge a truly equal academic partnership, thereby creating a power differential in conversations about IL and library instruction.

Librarians perceive that faculty lack the time and/or the inclination to engage in deeper conversations about IL competencies and frameworks.

The librarians observed that faculty members are often unwilling to put in the time necessary for meaningful conversations about IL theory and pedagogy. Delia perceives that "no one's been interested in having that conversation [about IL] with me." Also, faculty often do not want to give up class time to have a librarian visit, thus impacting students' acquisition of IL skills. Delia feels that faculty "think they can…kind of gloss over it themselves because they don't have time to have a librarian come in." This unwillingness to devote time and/or attention to conversations and or partnerships with librarians is indicative of a deficit of negotiability in the boundary process.

There is sometimes tension among librarians and faculty regarding who should teach the conceptual aspects of IL.

While academic instruction librarians possess the expertise to teach higher-order IL skills, the study participants perceive that faculty do not always recognize that they can do so. As a result, librarians are dependent upon faculty members inviting them to class. Sylvie identifies this tension while also noting that librarians and faculty members agree that students need IL skills for academic success:

> We at least understand that those are important things for students to learn, whether…that's the purview…of library instruction or faculty in class discussion is… a different ballgame. But I think in terms of what the concepts are and how they're important, we agree on that.

Thus, the groundwork for the development of shared goals regarding student IL competencies is in place. However, perceived power differences between librarians and faculty members make negotiation of those goals difficult.

Some librarians perceive that they play a supporting role in faculty members' classrooms.

Some of the interviewees noted that one issue at the heart of librarian-faculty negotiation regarding ILI is the role of librarians in the classroom. Delia identifies her position in the process of lesson planning and ILI is to reinforce faculty expectations for their students: "If…this is what they want them to learn, then my job is to back that up, like we are a support service at the end of the day."

Librarians partner with faculty allies who understand librarians' role in teaching IL; these collaborations are mutually satisfying and beneficial.

Despite the feeling that many faculty members do not view librarians as equal educational partners, the interviewees indicated that they are able to develop strong professional relationships with some faculty members who serve as library "allies" and IL advocates. Sylvie described a fruitful collaboration with a faculty member who, after a conversation about various IL lesson plans, asked her to visit the class multiple times for a complete unit. Sylvie noted that "[m]y conversations with them sort of opened their eyes to what we could do and really led to a really good partnership." This expression of negotiability reveals a relationship in which "both sides see themselves as members of an overarching community in which they have common interests and needs" (Wenger, 2000, p. 235), thus exemplifying negotiated, well-aligned practices.

Discussion

The results of this pilot study indicate that the interviewed instruction librarians all understand and utilize the ACRL's *Framework* document when planning IL programs with their library peers, when designing lesson plans, and when assessing students' IL competency. However, they rarely discuss IL or the *Framework* with faculty members directly. Rather, they weave the frames into their instruction sessions by integrating them with faculty members' goals for the class. The librarians acknowledge that while some faculty members value the skills and activities that librarians term *information literacy,* others view IL as essentially tool-based search skills. The librarians do not negotiate a shared meaning of IL with faculty colleagues, mainly because the librarians perceive that faculty members lack the time and the bandwidth for such conversations. The interviewed librarians find that their teaching practices are bound by faculty expectations. However, they do develop strong pedagogical relationships with core faculty "allies" who are willing to engage in dialogue about IL, and who welcome the librarians' expertise in the classroom. The librarians find these collaborations to be particularly rewarding for themselves as teachers, as well as for the students who gain critical IL skills.

In comparing the study participants' comments to Wenger's (2000) boundary dimensions of coordination, transparency, and negotiability, the researcher concludes that faculty-librarian conversations about IL reveal power structures that impede truly effective collaboration. Librarians shoulder the responsibility for initiating interactions and aligning their teaching practices to that of faculty members (coordination). Librarians translate their conceptions of IL into disciplinary language that is understood by faculty members, while mapping their course-embedded lessons to the standards and frames of their profession without faculty input (transparency). Librarians' dependence on faculty cooperation in IL endeavors, and upon faculty recognition of their professional expertise, creates a situation in which it is difficult for "joint activities [to be] structured in such a way that multiple perspectives can meet and participants can come to appreciate each other's competencies" (Wenger, 2000, 235). As a result, there is a limited negotiability in the librarian-faculty interactions.

In the landscape of higher education, librarians are often required to play the role of brokers (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Wenger, 2000) by creating a bridge between two disciplinary languages and practices. The participants in this study are instruction librarians who are attempting to create meaningful IL partnerships with individual faculty members or with departments. This researcher believes that conversations about IL on college campuses need to be initiated at the system level (Detmering et al., 2019): library leaders should reach out to curriculum committees, academic department chairs, and/or college administrators to begin conversations about IL as an SLO. With administrative support, librarians' efforts to provide effective ILI instruction and programming will be enhanced by strong partnerships and clear communication about IL outcomes.

Conclusion

The results of this pilot study confirm that librarians and faculty conceive of IL differently and indicate that librarians adapt their professional language and teaching practices to meet faculty expectations. The researcher acknowledges several limitations to the study, including 1) the small sample size, 2) the lack of diversity in the pool of participants, and 3) her own bias as an academic instruction librarian. Future researchers could mitigate these limitations by interviewing a larger group of librarians and by seeking a diversity of voices and perspectives.

According to the ACRL (2016), students need to engage with an increasingly complex and confusing information landscape, and educators have an obligation to teach them the essential skills necessary for traversing that terrain:

> Teaching faculty have a greater responsibility in designing curricula and assignments that foster enhanced engagement with the core ideas about information and scholarship within their disciplines. Librarians have a greater responsibility in identifying core ideas within their own knowledge domain that can extend learning for students, in creating a new cohesive curriculum for information literacy, and in collaborating more extensively with faculty. (Association of College & Research Libraries, 2016, n.p.)

By ensuring that librarian-faculty conversations entail the coordination, transparency, and negotiation necessary for effective collaboration, educators can together provide our students with the critical skills necessary for information fluency.

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