Teaching "INFORMATION CREATION AS A PROCESS" in an Era of WEB-SCALE DISCOVERY

KEVIN SEEBER / MLIS
Colorado State University-Pueblo
kevin.seeber@csupueblo.edu
@kevinseeber

CLAMS Spring Conference
Everett Community College
May 22, 2015
#clams15s

LEARNING OUTCOME

Participants will recognize the need to discuss the role of "process" in order to improve students' ability to critically evaluate information.
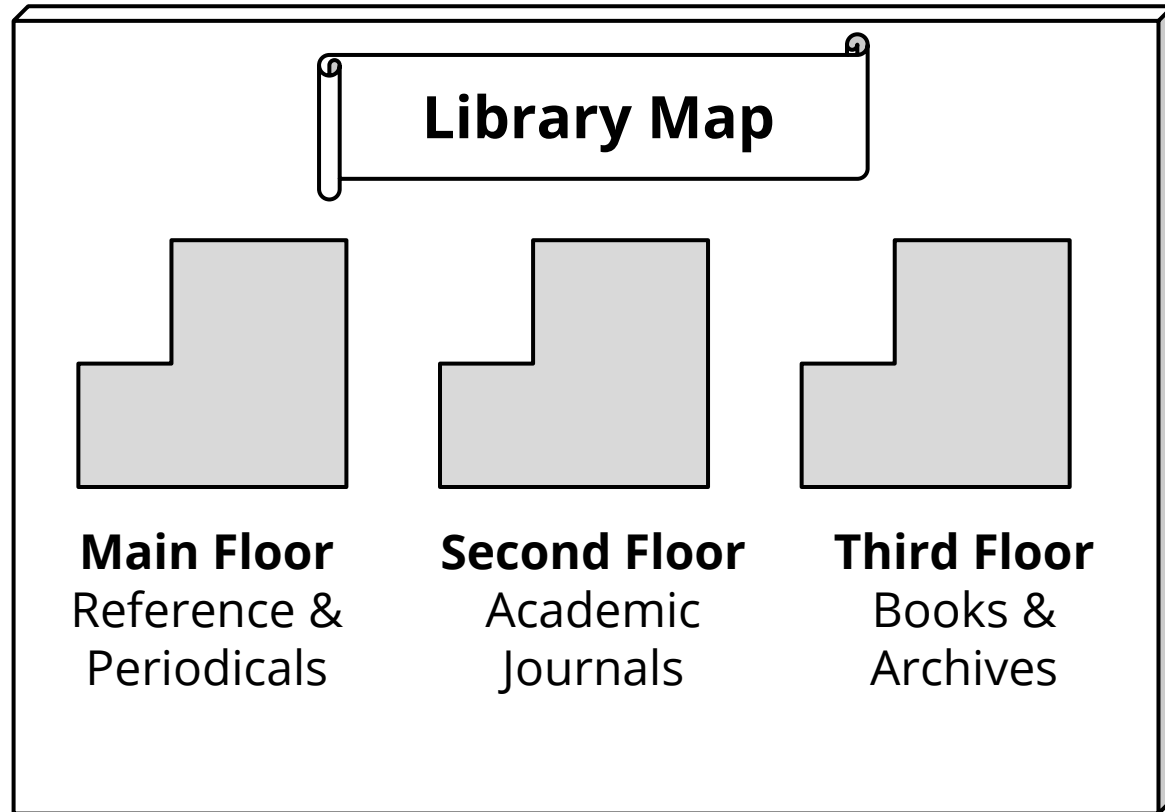
OUTLINE

1. Past Models of Instruction
2. Changes in Discovery
3. The Role of the Framework
4. A Real Classroom Example!
5. Discussion

So... How Did We Get Here?

LIBRARY INSTRUCTION AS GEOGRAPHY LESSON

"I want students to know how to do research, so could you give them a tour of the library?"

Library Map

Main Floor
Reference & Periodicals

Second Floor
Academic Journals

Third Floor
Books & Archives

LEARNING OUTCOME

Students navigate the building to locate appropriate sources.

ASSESSMENT

Are students able to find appropriate sources on the shelf?

Effective when:
Students are in a specific library.
Collection locations are static.
Print sources are enough to meet needs.

LIBRARY INSTRUCTION AS
GRAPHIC DESIGN SEMINAR

"I want students to know how to do research, so could you show them what good sources look like?"

Scholarly Article
A. Scholar, Ph.D.
University of Examples

MAGAZINE!

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

LEARNING OUTCOME

Students identify sources based on visual cues and formatting.

ASSESSMENT

Can students distinguish one type of source from another?

Effective when:
   All sources follow set formatting rules.
   There is a limited number of source types.
   Every format can be explained.

LIBRARY INSTRUCTION AS DATABASE TUTORIAL

"I want students to know how to do research, so could you show them the library databases?"

LEARNING OUTCOME

Students manipulate a database
to locate appropriate sources.

ASSESSMENT

Are students aware of database functions?
Do they apply them?

Effective when:
Database interfaces are static.
Every database can be demonstrated.
Library databases are the only tool used.

So... What Changed?

Library users have come to expect simpler interfaces with more results.

JUST ONE BOX!

Search

WEB-SCALE DISCOVERY

has been offered as a possible solution for meeting those user expectations.

So what is "library instruction" in an era of web-scale discovery?

Now we can focus
on just teaching
the one interface...

...right?

July 16, 2013: The Reckoning

EBSCOhost®
News & Information

As a valued EBSCO customer, we want to let you know about some exciting enhancements to the EBSCO*host* and EBSCO*admin* interfaces coming in July and August 2013.

As part of our continued efforts to constantly improve the EBSCO search experience, EBSCO is releasing several updates and enhancements, including:

- Improvements to the overall look of the Search, Search Results, and Detailed Record pages within EBSCO*host*, providing a more visually appealing interface to end users.
- The feature previously labeled **Alert/Save/Share** is now labeled **Share**. All of the existing functionality of this feature remains the same. This change is one of several small updates that further optimizes our interface for language translation.
- Updating the look of EBSCO*admin* to provide a more visually appealing and simplistic look and feel to our administrative interface.

In addition to the above enhancements, Visual Search will be discontinued in all EBSCO databases and interfaces. This change enables us to focus on additional enhancements and improvements to many of the popular features you rely on in our products.

We hope that you and your users enjoy the clean new design of EBSCO*host* and we welcome your feedback.

Regards,

EBSCO Support

Visual Search will be discontinued in all EBSCO databases and interfaces.

Wait... what?

Uh oh.

Kevin Seeber
@kevinseeber

Ebsco is 86'ing Visual Search. I learned this fact ~40 min before a class where, yes, I had planned on demo'ing visual search. New plan!

← Reply 🗑 Delete ★ Favorite ••• More

12:36 PM - 16 Jul 2013

Reply to @kevinseeber

THE EPIPHANY

Any instruction based on static interfaces, locations, products, or appearances is not sustainable.

WE'VE ENTERED A NEW ERA

Search tools, library or otherwise, keep getting simpler, while pulling in more and more types of information.

So, again, what is "library instruction" in an era of web-scale discovery?

Don't talk about the interface.

TALK ABOUT THE RESULTS.

WE NEED TO FOCUS ON CRITICAL EVALUATION

Information Literacy is not about knowing "how."

It's about knowing "why."

WHICH BRINGS US TO THE FRAMEWORK...

FORMAT AS A PROCESS.

"What makes a book a book and a newspaper article a newspaper article has nothing to do with how one accesses it (print/digital), but with the process that went into creating it. Understanding this principle helps students navigate the information they find online and evaluate it according to the process underlying its creation, rather than by a set of memorized, constantly changing, inconsistent characteristics."

Hofer, A.R., Townsend, L. and & Brunetti, K. (2012). "Threshold Concepts and Information Literacy: Investigating Threshold Concepts for IL Instruction." *portal: Libraries and the Academy*, *12*(4), pp. 387-405.

Information Creation as a Process.

"Information in any format is produced to convey a message and is shared via a selected delivery method. The iterative processes of researching, creating, revising, and disseminating information vary, and the resulting product reflects these differences."

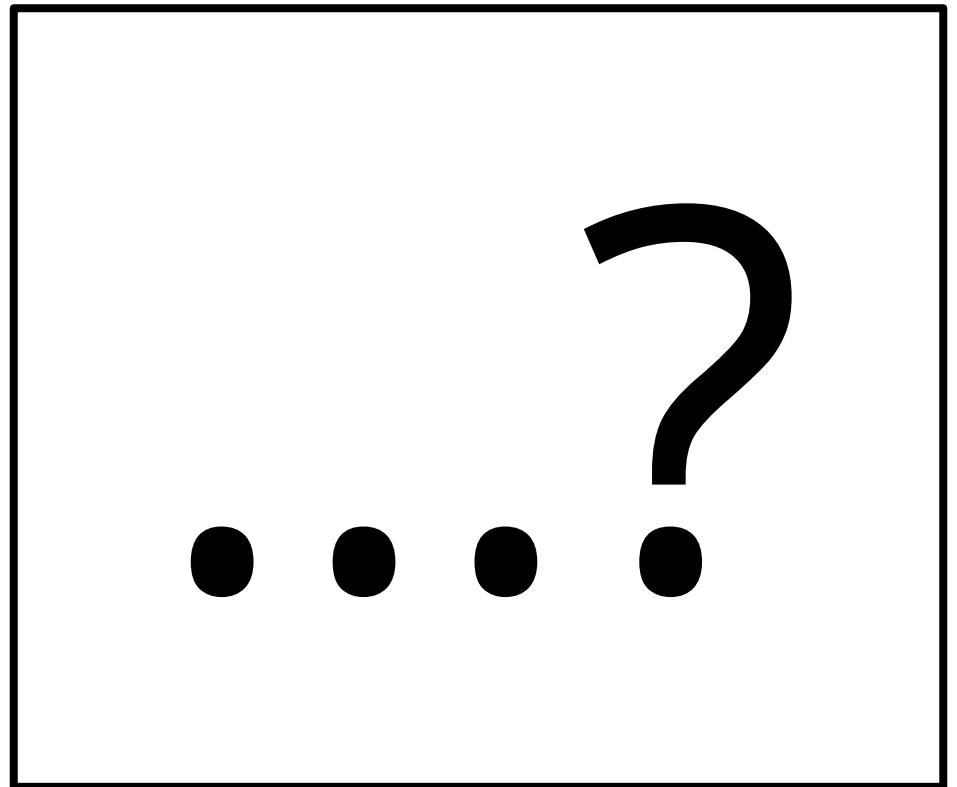Association of College and Research Libraries. (2015). *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*. Retrieved from http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework

WHY THIS CONCEPT IS SO HELPFUL:

It does not rely on appearance or location. It's responsive to different information seeking contexts.
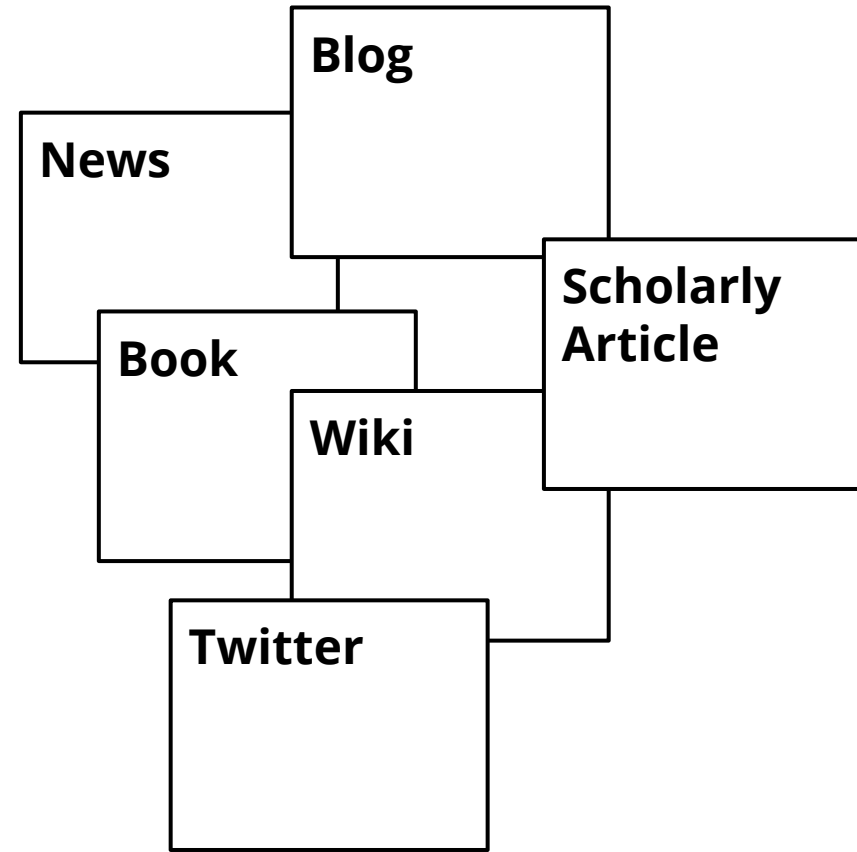
How Does This Work in Practice?

LIBRARY INSTRUCTION AS DISCUSSION OF PROCESS

"Why don't I talk with students about why some kinds of information might be better than others?"
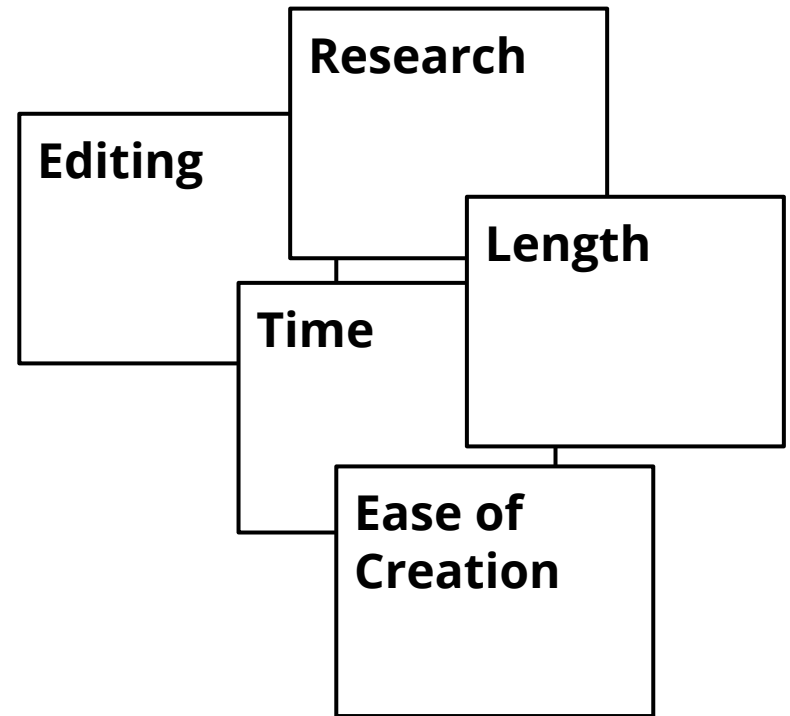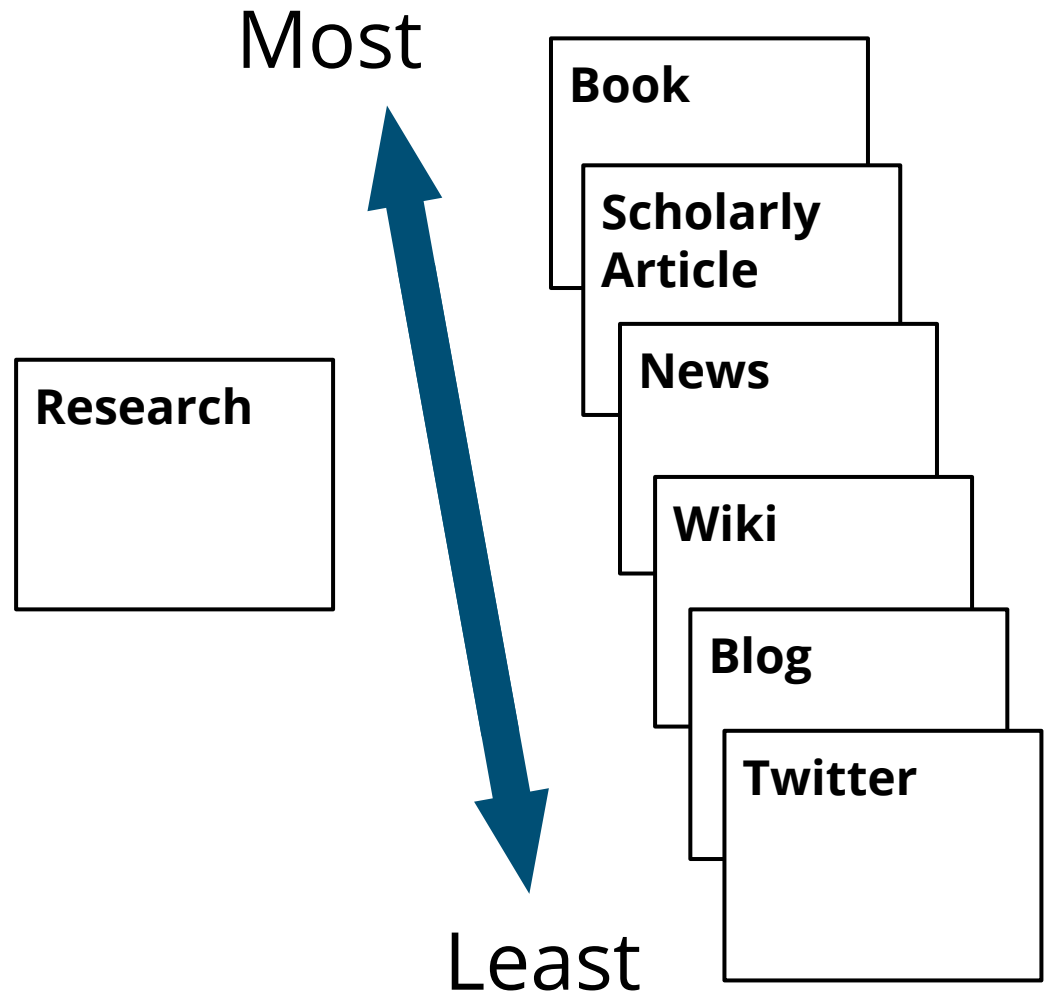
THE FOLLOWING IS A DECIDEDLY "LOW-TECH" SOLUTION...

Break students into groups, then give each group a stack of cards. Each card lists a type of information.

Blog

News

Scholarly Article

Book

Wiki

Twitter

Each group also has a card with an underlying process written on it.

Editing

Research

Length

Time

Ease of Creation

Have groups discuss the process, then rank the different types of information.

Most

Least

Research

Book

Scholarly Article

News

Wiki

Blog

Twitter

LET THE STUDENTS EXPLAIN.

You will learn so much from listening to them.

Some Ideas To Keep in Mind During the Discussion...

FOCUS ON THE PROCESSES, not the formats.

AVOID VISUAL CUES.

Process is invisible.

Discuss processes objectively.

No One Type of Information is Always the "Best" Source.

ASK HOW PROCESSES MAKE SOMETHING BETTER OR WORSE.

Editing
Research
Time

These all have benefits and limitations

Use process to discuss how authority is constructed and contextualized.

How was this information made?

Does that make it more or less credible?

This is an opportunity to discuss PRIVILEGE

Who gets their books published?

Who gets to Tweet something?

Why is one more valued than the other?

What voices are we not hearing?

ENGAGE IN A PROCESS.

Blog.
Tweet.
Edit a Wiki.

Create information.

YOU DO NOT NEED TO TALK ABOUT EVERY KIND OF INFORMATION.

You only need to articulate the role of process.

WHAT ABOUT DISCOVERY?

CONNECT SKILLS TO OTHER SEARCH AREAS.

Web-Scale Discovery	Search Engines

These have a lot in common (both good and bad).

Use The Processes to Explain the Interface.

Facets like "peer reviewed" and "date published" make a lot more sense after talking about the role of editing and time.

ASSESS THEIR THINKING, NOT THEIR SOURCES.

Reflective essays tell us so much more than a bibliography.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

"What can you tell about how this information was made?"

"What about that process makes this information 'good'?"

WHAT ARE WE ASSESSING?

Can students identify an underlying process that created the information?

Can they qualify how that process contributes to the authority or relevance of the information?

Learning Outcome

Students reflect on formative processes when evaluating sources.

Assessment

Do students consider process, and does that reflection influence selection of information?

Effective when:
They search in multiple environments.
Formats take on a variety of shapes.
Students are capable of critical reflection.

In Time, This Critical Reflection Extends Beyond "Sources" to Examine the Processes Which Create and Distribute That Information.

ELMBORG TELLS US THAT

Critical Information Literacy "is more than a set of acquired skills. It involves the comprehension of an entire system of thought and the ways that information flows in that system. Ultimately, it also involves the capacity to critically evaluate the system itself."

Elmborg, J. (2006). "Critical Information Literacy: Implications for Instruction Practice," *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, *32*(4), pp. 311-29.

QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?

KEVIN SEEBER / MLIS
kevin.seeber@csupueblo.edu
@kevinseeber

Seeber, K.P. (2015). "Teaching 'Format as a Process' in an Era of Web-Scale Discovery," *Reference Services Review*, *43*(1), pp. 19-30.

OA Version of ⇧: archives.pdx.edu/ds/psu/14514
These Slides: kevinseeber.com/clams2015.pdf
The Cards Activity: kevinseeber.com/processcards.pdf