



## CHAPTER 4

# In a Research- Writing Frame of Mind

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## Introduction

Librarians have been coordinating with composition instructors to offer information literacy instruction in composition classrooms long enough that it can no longer be considered a new trend, but rather a standard feature of many information literacy programs. Sometimes this collaboration comes in the form of a one-shot, sometimes the librarian is embedded, and sometimes the librarian is a co-instructor. Information literacy and composition are often intertwined in higher education; recently, the professional organizations associated with writing programs and with information literacy programs have developed documents to define the characteristics, habits and dispositions of successful students. The documents, the *Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing*<sup>1</sup> (hereafter WPA Framework) and the *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*<sup>2</sup> (hereafter ACRL Framework), lay out frames that describe students who write and manage information well. The publication of these two Frameworks provides an opportunity

for practitioners to examine the relationship between writing and information literacy, what writing instructors often refer to as research-writing skills.

Intended for librarians and composition instructors, this chapter examines how teachers of writing and research skills can enhance their understanding of the two Frameworks as being similar and linked with one another, and by doing so become more effective teachers. We hope to make the intersections of information-using and writing that exist implicitly in practice explicit for students as we explore ways to better integrate writing and research instruction in composition and information literacy classrooms. We do so by looking at how the intersections between the Frameworks inform writing and library instruction pedagogy, and we provide examples of writing and information-using assignments based on the Frameworks.

One of our foundational claims is information literacy and writing are linked together under the view of students as information creators, partaking in the process of “information creation” as the ACRL Framework puts it.<sup>3</sup> To consider the research skills associated with information literacy as being separate from writing is not tenable, since writing is a form of information creation. Furthermore, much of the information that students encounter is also expressed in written language, such that the information must be considered as pieces of writing. Perhaps some will object claiming much information is visual and wordless, or is data, but it is worth noting the contemporary fields of visual and scientific rhetoric hold that visual creation and scientific communication are rhetorical in nature, and thus are not divorced from writing.

When students are evaluating information and when they are writing, they are taking rhetorical concerns into account. Rolf Norgaard has already called for a rhetoricized information literacy, but we further believe much of information literacy is inherently rhetorical in nature.<sup>4</sup> With this idea in mind, writing teachers and librarians can make the intersections of research and writing that implicitly exist in the minds of writing and information literacy instructors explicit for students, scholars, and administrators by addressing the WPA Framework and the ACRL Framework in their course descriptions and major assignments.

Two key frames in the WPA Framework and the ACRL Framework suggest connections between composition and research instruction, and they can be used jointly to inform practical writing classroom and library instruction pedagogy. Our chapter looks at two intersections of the two Frameworks; for each intersection we discuss how the concepts contained in those intersections interact and examine the implications of those intersections for both writing instructors and librarians. The first part of our chapter traces the theoretical and practical uses of putting the Frameworks into dialogue. In doing so, we focus on the WPA frame “Developing Flexible Writing Processes” as well as the ACRL frames “Information Creation as a Process” and “Searching as Strategic Exploration.” We also consider the WPA frame “Developing Rhetorical

Knowledge” and the ACRL frames “Authority is Constructed and Contextual” and “Scholarship as Conversation.”

When synthesized, these two sets of frames enable writing and library instructors to highlight the existing connections between the processes of writing and researching—connections already supported and employed in composition pedagogy and assessment. The articulation of these connections should enable students to investigate, use, and reflect on the purposes of researching as part of scaffolded assignments, much the same way drafting, workshopping, and revising allows students to engage knowingly and critically in the writing process.

## Literature Review

Tying together composition and information literacy has become increasingly the norm in recent years. On a practical level, since composition classes are required of most students at nearly all U.S. colleges and universities, integrating information literacy into composition classes—through one-shots or through embedding librarians—is an efficient way to educate a large number of students early in their academic careers. Apart from those considerations, it makes sense to combine information literacy and composition because they “draw from the same intellectual well, building upon more general pedagogical developments.”<sup>5</sup> James Elmborg notes information literacy programs have faced many of the same challenges from the academy as composition programs, but the information literacy movement could learn from Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) programs, particularly with regard to wading into more theoretical waters.<sup>6</sup>

On a substantial level, composition programs and information literacy programs often aim to develop the same skills and knowledge practices of students they instruct—our analysis of the two Frameworks demonstrates this—but prior to the development of these Frameworks a good number of composition instructors and librarians had begun working together to identify and teach important skills in common, such as evaluating information for authority and bias,<sup>7</sup> selecting appropriate research topics, managing information, and more.<sup>8</sup> Despite these shared aims, there is still much work to be done putting composition instructors and librarians in conversation with one another.<sup>9</sup>

Several authors, in this collection and throughout the professional literature, have noted that for information literacy and composition and rhetoric to be integrated, the information literacy movement must engage in theoretical discussions about pedagogy.<sup>10</sup> Certainly this is true. However, the publication of the Frameworks provides a strong venue for collaboration between writing instructors and librarians. This chapter provides a rationale and sample assignment sequence that achieves the outcomes for both Frameworks, and, in doing so, also demonstrates how such collaboration can support the aims of writing programs and libraries on an institutional level.

## First Intersection: Writing and Research as Processes

One of the clearest ways the Frameworks overlap is in their focus on both writing and research as processes. They are activities done over time, and students should expect both processes will have to be repeated and revised for different situations. In this section, we consider how both Frameworks present the writing and research processes, and how these processes are intertwined.

### *The Writing Process*

The opening to *The Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing* habit of “Developing Flexible Writing Strategies” states:

Writing processes are not linear. Successful writers use different processes that vary over time and depend on the particular task. For example, a writer may research a topic before drafting, then after receiving feedback conduct additional research as part of revising. Writers learn to move back and forth through different stages of writing, adapting those stages to the situation. This ability to employ flexible writing processes is important as students encounter different types of writing tasks that require them to work through the various stages independently to produce final, polished texts.<sup>11</sup>

There are two important ideas to take away from this frame. The first, as the text clearly states, is the writing process is not linear. That is to say, there is not one set procedure through which students will move from start to finish. It is expected that students will have to cycle through the drafting, revising, and editing processes multiple times. The second idea is that the writing process is not uniform or standard. That is to say, students might not go through the same steps in the same order every time they write. For example, there may not always be time for significant revision to take place. It is important that students be flexible, as the frame states, because every writing situation will be different. Writing a ten-page report due in a month is different than writing a one-page reflection due in the next class, and both situations are different from the writing situations students might encounter in the business world. Accordingly, students must understand the importance of considering writing as a process and not view all writing situations as the same.

Likewise, these principles can be adapted when thinking about the research process,<sup>12</sup> as the frame implies, “a writer may research a topic before

drafting, then after receiving feedback conduct additional research as part of revising.<sup>13</sup> It is useful for the purpose of teaching research, and particularly research as part of the writing process, to make this claim explicit in order to explore why and how research strategies, purposes, and uses can be employed and revisited. The research process is non-linear, and students may move through steps apart from a fixed order many times over. To teach students to do a fixed set of steps in a particular order is not helpful. Research situations change, and the research process for a dissertation looks very different from the research process for a two-page article summary.

Students working on large research projects will likely have to search for sources many times over, not just once at the beginning of the project. Viewing information literacy this way, a librarian would not focus on teaching students to create perfect search strings in order to acquire every necessary source at the beginning of a project; instead, a librarian might guide students through several search techniques and encourage them to engage in new searches as their research develops. Additionally, librarians can model their own research processes for students, engaging students by showing them how exciting finding and evaluating information can be.<sup>14</sup> Results that seem satisfactory at the beginning of a research project may not be as the project is developed and refined. By teaching students the research process is flexible, librarians prepare students for a variety of research situations without being locked into one set of steps that may or may not be appropriate for the task at hand.

Presenting the research process as flexible, another principle common to both Frameworks, also allows for more student engagement in the research process. Rather than research as fixed and external to the student, it is personal and dependent upon who is doing the research. Students must consider their research needs and context in order to decide what process will work best for them. Flexibility empowers students to make their own choices about research, rather than relying upon an external authority to dictate what steps must be followed at every turn.

## *The Research Process*

The ACRL frame “Information Creation as a Process” begins this way:

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.

The information creation process could result in a range of information formats and modes of delivery, so experts look beyond format when selecting resources to use. The unique capabilities and constraints of each creation process as well as the specific information need determine how the product is used. Experts recognize that information creations are valued differently in different contexts, such as academia or the workplace. Elements that affect or reflect on the creation, such as a pre- or post-publication editing or reviewing process, may be indicators of quality. The dynamic nature of information creation and dissemination requires ongoing attention to understand evolving creation processes. Recognizing the nature of information creation, experts look to the underlying processes of creation as well as the final product to critically evaluate the usefulness of the information. Novice learners begin to recognize the significance of the creation process, leading them to increasingly sophisticated choices when matching information products with their information needs.<sup>15</sup>

Teaching writing as a process is a best practices method in writing instruction, but writing instruction can further expand the definition of that process by explicitly teaching research as an iterative process built into the larger writing process. Teaching writing as a process is a component of the cognitive view of writing, an approach to writing instruction often associated with Linda Flower and John Hayes who argued for a recursive cognitive processes model for assignment sequencing.<sup>16</sup> Ken Hyland explains the cognitive view of writing instruction “sees writing as a problem-solving activity: how writers approach a writing task as a problem and bring intellectual range to solving it.”<sup>17</sup> By working with librarians to develop an understanding of research as a recursive process, and by recognizing the ways in which the research process is, in fact, part of the writing process, writing instructors can employ assignments and sequences enabling students to conceptualize research as a continuing conversation, increase their audience and rhetorical awareness, and explore how the texts they produce have applicability beyond the classroom.

Writing instructors and librarians can also help students increase their ability to conduct rhetorical analysis by employing assignments requiring them to identify multiple perspectives and to understand how these might appeal to primary and secondary audiences by researching throughout the writing process to identify stakeholders and explore a discourse community.

The ACRL frame “Searching as Strategic Exploration” adds the following to this intersection of thought:

Searching for information is often nonlinear and iterative, requiring the evaluation of a range of information sources and the mental flexibility to pursue alternate avenues as new understanding develops.<sup>18</sup>

By considering these two ACRL frames in conjunction as a part of the research process, writing instructors can encourage their students to go further in how they evaluate texts and select sources rhetorically. Through researching, summarizing, and synthesizing a variety of sources about a particular topic, students can gain a better understanding of sources and information as a nuanced conversation, which they can then enter into through their own writing.

## Second Intersection: Rhetoric and Context

The second overlap between the two Frameworks is not as easy to piece together as process, but it is still quite powerful. Both Frameworks highlight the rhetorical nature of writing and research. As stated, the idea that information is rhetorical, whether in the form of a piece of writing or an image or graph, underlies the foundation of our analysis. This idea, as articulated in each Framework, resides at the intersection of rhetorical analysis and authority, concepts that require students to think about who is saying what and how the speaker's or writer's position affects their understanding of the information being used and created.

### *Rhetoric and Writing*

The first habit of mind in the WPA Framework offers:

Rhetorical knowledge is the ability to analyze and act on understandings of audiences, purposes, and contexts in creating and comprehending texts.

Rhetorical knowledge is the basis of good writing. By developing rhetorical knowledge, writers can adapt to different purposes, audiences, and contexts. Study of and practice with basic rhetorical concepts such as purpose, audience, context, and conventions are important as writers learn to compose a variety of texts for different disciplines and purposes. For example, a writer might draft one version of a text with one audience in mind, then revise the text to meet the needs and expectations of a different audience.<sup>19</sup>

Contemporary writing programs teach students to analyze their rhetorical situation as they write. The audience to whom they write matters; their professors, for whom they write papers, have different expectations than their friends, for whom they write tweets. The context of their writing influences how and what they write; for example, the workplace has a different context than the academy, such that a business memo will look and be read differently than an op-ed in the school newspaper. Their purpose in writing will, of course, affect their writing. Writing intended to convince someone to buy something will look different than writing intended to explain a concept.

Perhaps this frame will sound familiar to librarians. Many of the concepts of rhetorical knowledge are interwoven into the ever popular CRAAP test, where one evaluates information for currency, relevance, authority, accuracy, and purpose.<sup>20</sup> For example, librarians routinely teach students to be aware of bias in the sources they choose. Like concepts, certain terms are also already shared; the term purpose is used in both fields to signal the reader, writer or researcher to consider exigency and function. Context is very much linked to currency, for which librarians also teach students to examine. In fact, as we will discuss, context plays an important role in the ACRL Framework.

What is so significant about an analysis of these similarities is it highlights librarians are teaching students to think about information rhetorically. The factors librarians teach students to consider are not arbitrary. The study of rhetoric stretches back for thousands of years. By framing information evaluation concepts as rhetorical, the artificial divide between research and writing is broken down as both are subject to rhetorical concerns. The rhetorical concept of purpose, for example, is relevant to students both as they write and as they evaluate others' writings.

The umbrella of rhetoric is also necessary as the new ACRL Framework calls upon librarians to think of students not only as information users, but also as people who partake in the information creation process, as information creators. The frame "Information Has Value" states information literate students will "see themselves as contributors to the information marketplace rather than only consumers of it."<sup>21</sup> This is particularly relevant to the writing classroom, where students are already treated as information creators, although they are not, generally, explicitly referred to that way. In the contemporary composition classroom, students are taught, as writers, they are always subject to rhetorical concerns, regardless of whether or not they are aware of them. A piece of writing, of course, is something librarians would consider a piece of information, and it, too, could be considered subject to rhetorical concerns.

There is a great opportunity here for librarians to bridge the gap between what students learn in the composition classroom and what they learn in the library simply by linking terms for rhetorical concepts and information litera-



cy together. Librarians teaching information evaluation have long been teaching rhetorical analysis of information under a different name, but by speaking to the rhetorical terms students are hearing in the composition classroom, they can show how information analysis and use are closely linked to information creation.

## *Research and Context*

The ACRL frame “Authority is Constructed and Contextual” begins:

Information resources reflect their creators’ expertise and credibility, and are evaluated based on the information need and the context in which the information will be used. Authority is constructed in that various communities may recognize different types of authority. It is contextual in that the information need may help to determine the level of authority required.<sup>22</sup>

The idea that a source is not a monolithic, purely objective statement of facts can be difficult for college writing students to grasp, but it is a central tenet of composition instruction. Analysis and evaluation of sources not only encourage students to consider the credibility and potential ways to use a particular source in their own writing, but also engage students in the kinds of critical thinking crucial to a successful writing process. Through analyzing the credibility of a source, students can learn to evaluate the author’s ethos, identify the author’s purpose in writing, and critique the rhetorical strategies and devices used in the text. This process reveals for students that authority is constructed and contextual, and it helps them see what steps they might take to construct authority in their own writing.

Writing instructors seek to foster in students the ability to read and to evaluate the credibility and appropriate use of a variety of texts, and to encourage students to identify how they are or can become an authority in writing a particular genre themselves. These interconnected outcomes of student learning, as well as the use of genre and discourse analysis pedagogies, are part of Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) programs. Since the 1970s, writing programs have explored methods for teaching writing across the curriculum. WAC programs are not identical; William Condon and Carol Rutz state that instead, WAC “varies in its development and its manifestation from campus to campus,” and “assumes certain pedagogical moves beyond the obvious difference between assigning writing and teaching writing.”<sup>23</sup> WAC programs “[require] a complex partnership among faculty, administrators, writing cen-

ters, faculty development programs—an infrastructure that may well support general education or first-year seminar goals,” and, we argue, information technology instruction.<sup>24</sup> They further delineate that the primary goals of foundational WAC programs are to establish “a problem-based statement of purpose,” “increase writing in the curriculum,” make it such that “teaching writing becomes everyone’s job” (rather than just the job of writing instructors with whom students will work for one or two courses), and “understand the difference between learning to write and writing to learn.”<sup>25</sup>

Collaborations between librarians and writing instructors to bridge the Frameworks can accomplish the goals of WAC in three ways: first, by teaching students how to “recognize different types of authorities,”<sup>26</sup> and understand how those authorities might be used in different ways based on different rhetorical contexts and goals; second, by extending the job of writing instruction to include librarians in their capacity of experts in teaching information literacy; and third, by valuing students (and encouraging them to value themselves) as knowledge-makers.

WAC programs value introducing students to the writing conventions, genres, and scholarly conversations across the disciplines. By working together to teach students how to recognize and analyze different authorities in different contexts, librarians and writing instructors can help students to identify, analyze, research, and write appropriate responses to a range of discipline-specific rhetorical situations using the authorities valued by the field. In composition theory and writing instruction, pedagogical approaches focused on these goals fall under the umbrella of genre analysis approaches. John Swales argues for the use of a genre analysis methodology as a means of “studying spoken and written discourse for applied ends.”<sup>27</sup> Curricula and assignments that employ a genre approach give students “a workable way of making sense of the myriad communicative events that occur in the contemporary English-speaking academy—a sense-making directly relevant to those concerned with devising English courses,” or for constructing assignments and sequences that teach writing and researching in collaboration.<sup>28</sup>

The goal of introducing students to the perspectives and conversations of stakeholders is shared by librarians, as is explicit in the ACRL “Authority Is Constructed and Contextual” frame and within the introduction to “Scholarship as Conversation” frame, which states: “Communities of scholars, researchers, or professionals engage in sustained discourse with new insights and discoveries occurring over time as a result of varied perspectives and interpretations.”<sup>29</sup> One way librarians and writing instructors might achieve the shared goal of introducing students to the scholars, researchers, and professionals who engage in conversation over time and through myriad perspectives is to work together to construct and employ assignments that lead into each other and require students to regularly revisit and reexamine their re-

search. An example of this type of assignment sequence is included at the end of this chapter.

The collaboration of writing instructors and librarians to build a genre approach assignment sequence that fosters the entwined reiterative processes of researching and writing should also have a positive impact at the institutional level. The collaboration supports a “robust, sustained WAC curriculum,” aids students and the academy to recognize multiple and diverse authorities, and empowers students to see themselves as authorities by entering into scholarly conversations.<sup>30</sup> This collaboration is in response to and continues the call from WAC proponents to value the authority of a wide range of knowledge-makers, wherein students, faculty, and professionals “are understood to have an appropriate expertise, and tapping such expertise is understood as one important means of learning about the effects of a WAC program and then of enhancing it.”<sup>31</sup> Drawing on the expertise of librarians enables writing instructors not only to achieve the best practices of the composition field, but also to expand writing instruction across the institution.

Furthermore, the ACRL Framework explains “developing familiarity with the sources of evidence, methods, and modes of discourse in the field assists novice learners to enter the conversation.”<sup>32</sup> Through an assignment sequence such as the one we propose, students should recognize their own expertise as they develop familiarity with the stakeholders, conversations, and perspectives involved in a topic, come to understand the complexity and nuances of the topic, and, as a result, identify how their unique perspectives add to the conversations.

We demonstrate the intersections of the Frameworks discussed in this chapter through a sample assignment sequence, one we hope librarians and writing instructors will use to teach research as a recursive part of the writing process. We believe the assignment sequence encourages students to enter scholarly conversations as authorities. The assignments help them identify how they can present their own perspectives and the sources they have brought together in the most rhetorically-effective way for their audiences.

## Sample Assignment Sequences

The following sample assignment sequence may be altered for writing courses across the curriculum. The sequence is composed of two assignments that each ask students to select a research topic and to engage in an iterative research-writing process through which they build familiarity with the subject, identify the conversations about the subject, analyze its discourse community, and insert themselves with authority into the scholarly conversation.

### *Assignment 1: Discourse Community Analysis*

A discourse community, argues Swales, is a group of individuals having six characteristics: (1) “a broadly agreed set of common public goals,” (2) “mechanisms of intercommunication among its members,” (3) uses “participatory mechanisms primarily to provide information and feedback,” (4) “utilizes and hence possesses one or more genres in the communicative furtherance of its aims,” (5) has “acquired some specific lexis,” and (6) contains “a threshold level of members with a suitable degree of relevant content and discursual expertise.”<sup>33</sup> An example of a discourse community can be shared with students to help them understand this concept and to model for them the analysis of a discourse community. The most helpful examples will be specific communities in conversation about a specific topic. To identify a discourse community, instructors and students can look for professional communities (such as professors, prison guards, realtors), social or societal communities (activist organizations such as Amnesty International, specific ethnic groups, etc.), civic groups (volunteers for the SPCA, a student group on campus, a political action group, etc.), or cultural communities (such as online or tabletop gaming groups, battle re-enactors, or fans of a particular show or musician).

An effective way to model discourse community analysis is to provide students with an example then ask them to walk through an examination of the key factors of a discourse community (i.e., ask students to identify the stakeholders, the gatekeepers, the jargon, shared goals, etc.) This process should enable students to become familiar with new terms and to practice using this vocabulary in a low-stakes situation. Students can then begin to identify, research, and analyze a discourse community on their own. A primary outcome of this assignment sequence is, as students continue their research process, making “new insights and discoveries...as a result of varied perspectives and interpretations.”<sup>34</sup> This opening activity helps students realize topics are not two-dimensional, so the research they conduct will become more complex and nuanced, tuning them in to multiple and varied perspectives. An additional outcome is that this analysis and research increases their critical thinking and reading skills.

The main assignment asks students to perform a rhetorical analysis of a discourse community wherein students analyze what are the purposes of communication, how members of the community share information, and what are the genre expectations set out for the types of information produced. Students are then responsible for finding examples of writing within the discourse community, as well as outside sources about the community. This sample assignment includes the paper prompt, as well as scaffolded pre-assignments integrating ideas from the Frameworks about authority and context.

## SCAFFOLDED PRE-ASSIGNMENT PROMPT

We offer the following writing activity to students in advance of the main assignment:

Your paper assignment asks you to find three to five credible sources written by experts for your discourse community analysis. Your task for this assignment is to investigate what makes someone an expert within the discourse community, and to compare that criteria for expertise to what makes someone an expert within your current academic community. Create a list with two columns identifying and analyzing at least four characteristics of an expert in your chosen discourse community and four characteristics of an expert in your academic community. Write a brief reflection about what types of experts you will look for given your discourse community analysis assignment.

## DISCOURSE COMMUNITY PAPER PROMPT

This is how we describe the main assignment to students:

In this discourse community assignment, you will explore and analyze discourse communities within a field or discipline you are interested in entering. First, identify a specific discourse community existing within a field or discipline in which you are interested, for example, commercial real estate agents or data analysts. Next, begin primary research by contacting three to five participants in this community and conducting an email, phone, or in-person interview to learn from these participants what the goals of the community are, what sort of information is exchanged between participants, how that information is exchanged, and what types of writing of texts (genres) exist in the community to effectively convey this information and achieve these goals.

Then, continue research by finding three to five primary examples of one of these genres. Analyze the genre for keywords or phrases that make up the lexis of the community and identify examples of how the genre achieves the goals of the community and conveys key information. Finally, continue your research by finding three to five credible sources

written by experts in or about the discourse community and use these sources to support and illustrate your discourse community analysis.

### *Assignment 2: Synthesis Assignment*

A synthesis assignment is a unit on research many writing classes employ; this assignment allows students to begin gathering information on a particular topic on which they may work throughout a course, while also encouraging them to complicate their understanding of research. Such an assignment might ask students to research three to five credible sources on a particular topic, focusing on authors who have different points of view or relationships to the issue. Next, students typically engage with the texts by analyzing the claims, concerns, and contexts of each text. Finally, students put these texts into conversation in a paper that highlights the stakeholders, their concerns, and points of agreement or disjunction. Most students entering college writing courses tend to view issues as being black or white. By exploring the many stakeholders involved with a research topic and exploring how the conversation about the issue has progressed throughout time and through different perspectives, students learn topics are multi-faceted and that they too can add something unique to the conversation by bringing together sources in new ways to shape their own perspective on the topic.

The assignment to follow asks students to synthesize a variety of viewpoints about one particular topic. Rather than being a simple pro/con paper, the point of this assignment is for students to develop the ability to analyze multiple viewpoints, some which differ from each other only subtly, then synthesize those viewpoints. This assignment requires students work through both the writing and research processes multiple times, as well as develop the mental flexibility to accommodate a variety of perspectives and see how they intersect.

#### SCAFFOLDED PRE-ASSIGNMENT PROMPT

Similar to the first sample assignment, we precede the main assignment with another writing activity. We explain the preceding assignment to students this way:

For your upcoming synthesis assignment, you will bring together several sources representing different viewpoints about a given topic. As preparation for this assignment, create a research journal about how you are finding and evaluating sources. For this pre-assignment, you will find at least six sources, four of which you will use in your synthesis assignment. For each source you find, note (1) the system you

used to perform your search (Google, the library catalog, a specific database, etc.), (2) what terms you used to find the source, and (3) why you think the source will be useful for your paper. Please note this assignment is not expected to be a formal piece of academic writing, though it should reflect your actual research process.

## SYNTHESIS PAPER PROMPT

The description we offer to students for the main assignment:

In the textbook *Navigating America*, David Moton and Gloria Dumler describe a synthesis as bringing “several sources together to make one larger point” (171).<sup>35</sup> A synthesis is a way to take the ideas of others and build a new text that can be your own. Synthesizing is not only a terrific critical thinking skill to develop, but also a wonderful way to academically digest the scholarship in your field to create a unique viewpoint. Synthesizing is the culmination of this whole course—when synthesizing, you use the researching and analyzing techniques you have developed over this semester to integrate the different perceptions and information available about a topic to construct and convey your own understanding of it.

For the Synthesis Essay, choose a topic and find four to five sources that represent different perspectives about that topic. Explain the perspective each source has about the issue as well as analyze why your sources might have their own particular stance on the issue, what position they have in relation to the issue, the effect the issue will have on them, their own ethos and potential effect, and their motives.

Bring your sources together to make one larger point. (If it helps, consider that your sources are having a conversation, and the larger point is the one thing they all seem to be saying.) Your essay will not be a pro/con argument, but a snapshot of one part of the conversation among your sources.

## Conclusion

Both authors have experience in libraries. Both taught composition classes extensively throughout their English PhD programs, and Cassie currently teach-

es in a writing program and collaborates with the librarians at her university. Kathy is a librarian in a university library learning and outreach department. Both work at large public research institutions. What has been most striking about this project is finding out how often people in both libraries and composition programs are talking about the same ideas with different terms. That is to say, they are participating in different discourse communities. These different discourse communities seem to make it more difficult to collaborate on the deepest levels. However, it was striking to the authors how seamlessly they could tie together complex concepts from information literacy and rhetoric and composition when they were both speaking the same language, as it were.

At the moment, communication between the disciplines of composition studies and information studies requires a sort of code switching that adds an additional step to the collaboration process. By reviewing the Framework documents of both postsecondary writing and library science, writing instructors and librarians can together develop a method of speaking to one another that bridges disciplinary divides. This not only makes collaboration more effective, but also helps students recognize how information literacy and writing are intimately connected.

## Notes

1. Council of Writing Program Administrators, National Council of Teachers of English, and National Writing Project, *Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing* (Council of Writing Program Administrators, National Council of Teachers of English, and National Writing Project, 2011) <http://wpacouncil.org/files/framework-for-success-postsecondary-writing.pdf>.
2. Association of College and Research Libraries. *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* (Chicago: American Library Association, 2015) <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework>.
3. Ibid.
4. Rolf Norgaard, "Writing Information Literacy in the Classroom: Pedagogical Enactments and Implications," *Reference and User Services Quarterly* 43, no. 3 (Spring 2004): 224, EBSCOHost.
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9. Elizabeth Birmingham et al., “First-Year Writing Teachers, Perceptions of Students’ Information Literacy Competencies, and a Call for a Collaborative Approach,” *Communications in Information Literacy* 2, no. 1 (2008): 2, <http://www.comminfolit.org/index.php?journal=cil&page=article&op=viewArticle&path%5B%5D=Spring-2008AR1&path%5B%5D=67>.
  10. See Bowles-Terry, Davis, and Holliday, “Writing Information Literacy’ Revisited;” Elmborg, “Information Literacy and Writing Across the Curriculum;” and Rolf Norgaard, “Writing Information Literacy: Contributions to a Concept,” *Reference and User Services Quarterly* 43, no. 2 (Winter 2003): 124–130 accessed through EBSCO-Host.
  11. WPA, Framework.
  12. Rolf Norgaard also articulates the need for a process-based approach to information literacy in “Writing Information Literacy.” His work shows how, at a more abstract level, “rhetorized” information literacy calls for a “process-oriented literacy” (127).
  13. *Ibid.*
  14. Elmborg, “Information Literacy and Writing Across the Curriculum,” 73.
  15. ACRL, Framework.
  16. Linda Flower and John R. Hayes. “A Cognitive Process Theory of Writing,” *College Composition and Communication* 32, no. 4 (1981): 365–387.
  17. Ken Hyland, *Teaching and Researching Writing*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Routledge, 2013): 20.
  18. ACRL, Framework.
  19. WPA, Framework.
  20. *Evaluating Information—Applying the CRAAP Test* (Chico: California State University, Chico, 2010) [https://www.csuchico.edu/lins/handouts/eval\\_websites.pdf](https://www.csuchico.edu/lins/handouts/eval_websites.pdf).
  21. ACRL, Framework.
  22. *Ibid.*
  23. William Condon and Carol Rutz, “A Taxonomy of Writing Across the Curriculum Programs: Evolving to Serve Broader Agendas,” *College Composition and Communication* 64, no. 2 (2012): 358.
  24. *Ibid.*, 358–359.
  25. *Ibid.* 362.
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  28. *Ibid.*, 1.
  29. ACRL, Framework.
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  31. *Ibid.*
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