

The Impact of Creativity on Information Literacy Instruction

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General Description

The researcher has applied three (3) phases to a study of creativity in information literacy. The first stage is a conceptual approach and review of the literature; the second phase, in progress, uses a survey to examine the role of creativity and play in information literacy instruction; the third phase, in planning, is a Delphi study that garners feedback from those who shaped the new ACRL Framework to find out if and how creativity plays a role in information literacy. The study is focused primarily on the way creativity is being employed as part of academic library practice. For those who are utilizing creativity and play as part of their library instruction, the research intends to examine the impact this practice has on student learning. The focus is broad-based in scope and in its approach, but also emphasizes and articulates a case for libraries as central to the conversation on creativity as a catalyst for transformative learning, particularly across college campuses.

Significance of the Research

The library field in general is in a period of rapid change. Libraries can adapt to change and embrace new phenomena; however, it can be the case that there is little research/analysis done into the rationale for adopting new ideas and to the way those ideas are applied. As one of the first empirical studies on creativity in library instruction (information literacy), this study will advance our understanding of how librarians perceive creativity and whether the implementation of creativity, as it aligns with opportunities in the new Framework, actually better academic learning.

Information literacy, defined as the ability to locate, access, evaluate, and use information efficiently, effectively and within legal and ethical guidelines (ACRL, 2000), has evolved over the past two years to include a Framework for Information Literacy in Higher Education (ACRL, 2015). The belief is that information literacy, as an educational reform movement, will realize its potential only through a richer, more complex set of core ideas. The Framework is based on conceptual understandings that organize many other ideas about information, research, and scholarship into a coherent whole—a cluster of interconnected core concepts, with flexible options for implementation, rather than one set of standards or learning outcomes. This allows librarians, faculty, and other institutional partners to redesign instruction sessions, assignments, courses, and even curricula to be more dynamic and flexible in meeting student needs.

The *Framework* depends on these core ideas of “metaliteracy”, with a special focus on metacognition, or critical self-reflection, as crucial to becoming “more self-directed in a rapidly changing ecosystem.” The Framework allows for flexibility, outlining six (6) different concepts. The question remains as to how flexible these threshold concepts are in facilitating a more creative approach to information literacy, and if the concepts are seen as an opportunity to engage in more creative elements of library instruction. No one concept seems to encapsulate or define creativity, but instead, creativity seems to be spread across all of the concepts.

By examining the impact of library instruction in various formats on student learning, the research will add broadly to a growing body of knowledge about the value and impact of creativity on student learning. The research will also add broadly to a growing body of knowledge about the value and impact of the threshold concepts on the impact of information literacy on academic libraries generally and will provide evidence of the impact of creativity on college students specifically.

In an academic setting, the researcher seeks to explore the new ACRL Framework, the way it is used and implemented, conceptually, and its effectiveness in precipitating the way creativity is manifested in the classroom, practically. The researcher suspects that little study has been done assessing the impact and/or effectiveness of creativity as a manifest extended from the new ACRL Framework. Paired with metaliteracy, technologies that facilitate creative learning through the academic library, and other pedagogies explored as part of student engagement across campuses, there is an increasing interest in exploring creativity as part of the Framework, and the way the creative information literacy component fits into the holistic approach of a changing, albeit, more engaging, curriculum on college campuses. The three-part study will gauge who is implementing creativity in the information literacy classroom and how it is being practiced, but also with the intention of bringing more visibility to the practice of creativity in the library classroom, albeit, information literacy, and to the possible flexible interpretation of the new framework and what that means for transformative learning in the classroom at all junctures of the college experience.

Research Questions guiding the study include:

- (1) How does creativity (defined by play, and critical, reflective, contemplative pedagogy) impact student learning?
- (2) How does creativity in the classroom change the kind of learning the library provides?
- (3) How does creativity fit into the new framework?
- (4) Does creativity in the classroom transform the library experience, and does it engage students in the research and learning process?

Problems to Discuss

The research on creativity is part of a growing organism of research that looks at both the changing culture of academic libraries and its role in transformative learning—learning that is engaging and fosters, builds, implements and facilitates student learning for a twenty-first century model. One of the issues the researcher has been struggling with is how to gauge creativity. A literature review/conceptual paper the researcher previously wrote encapsulates issue shared with reflective, critical and contemplative pedagogy, as well as using practice from the arts in informing creativity as part of information literacy, but how exactly is it quantified in the research moving forward?

The researcher is also curious as to how the study will take shape beyond the Delphi Study. Some questions that arise are: Will it be imperative to interview students moving forward? To what extent will/should technology and digital applications be considered in creativity as part of information literacy learning? Finally, aside from follow-up interviews to the phase 2 survey, will it be necessary to conduct a qualitative study?

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