

Librarian views of the ACRL Framework and the impact of covid-19 on information literacy instruction in community colleges

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Highlights

- Information literacy instruction practices in community colleges are understudied.
- The ACRL *Framework* is reported to be useful in the design and delivery of instruction.
- A diverse population, time limits, and faculty attitudes complicate the adoption of the ACRL *Framework*.
- The complete ACRL *Framework* is rarely used in instruction.
- COVID-19 decreased one-shots but offered new opportunities for embedded information literacy instruction online.

Abstract

Community colleges offer a unique context in higher education and yet specific guidance on implementing the ACRL *Framework* in community colleges is lacking. Semi-structured interviews with 30 community college librarians who had instruction duties explored the state of the implementation of the *Framework* in community colleges and the effect of the recent pandemic on information literacy instruction (ILI). The *Framework* is most lauded for its effect on the design and delivery of instruction, but its components mainly underpin ILI rather than being explicitly taught. The pandemic limited one-shot information literacy instruction but opened up opportunities for embedding librarianship in online courses. The value of this study lies in the potential for identifying opportunities for improving ILI in community colleges, based on a better understanding of librarians' attitudes and experiences of their instructional roles. Community college librarians with responsibility for ILI can be more fully supported when their instructional challenges are better understood.

Keywords: Community colleges; Information literacy instruction; Interviews; Covid-19; Framework for information literacy for higher education

1. Introduction

It is critical to understand information literacy instruction (ILI) practices in community colleges as they represent more than half of the post-secondary institutions of higher learning in the United States (Eddy, 2013). The research reported here resulted from a larger project with two original goals: to survey ILI practices in community colleges—particularly about the implementation of the *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* (Association of College and Research Libraries, 2016) and librarian perceptions of student needs in Florida and New York (Julien, Latham, Gross, Moses, & Warren, 2020), and to understand how students in community colleges think about information literacy (Latham, Gross, Julien, Warren, & Moses, in press). The data reported here arise from a third phase, in which instructional librarians were interviewed to further explore librarians’ earlier survey responses.

Community colleges are of special interest because their mission and the students they serve are substantially different from those of other institutions of higher learning. Community colleges provide open access to education, which means that they serve an especially diverse student population. These students come from a wide range of educational and socioeconomic backgrounds, represent a wide range of ages, and often hold down jobs and care for children (Dougherty, Lahr, & Morest, 2017; Rosenbaum, Ahearn, & Rosenbaum, 2016). They are also diverse in their educational goals: some seek associate degrees and transfer to a four-year institution, some seek credentials and skills to facilitate employment, some are engaged in remedial education, and some are high school students completing college credits early. Community colleges are also important because they educate almost half the students enrolled in institutions of higher education in the United States and provide access to education in rural areas of the country (Eddy, 2013).

1.1 Problem statement

As community colleges represent a context that is different from other institutions of higher education, and because research on community colleges is limited, librarians who provide ILI in this context, educators who prepare librarians to provide ILI, and researchers interested in this context generally rely on data that does not take the realities of community colleges and community college students into account. This has become more apparent as higher education has begun transitioning from the *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education* (ACRL, 2000) to the *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education (Framework)* (ACRL, 2016). The difference between these two sets of standards is nontrivial. The old “standards” defined information literacy as a set of specific skills. The new *Framework* defines information literacy as the assimilation of threshold concepts that inform how information is conceptualized, created, and used.

The literature reflects disagreement about the appropriateness of the *Framework* to guide ILI in community colleges (Ludovico, 2017; Reed, 2015). This has made tracking the use (or nonuse) of the *Framework* in community colleges important for understanding the challenges it poses, as well as documenting successes. This study is unique in its in-depth exploration of the perceptions of community college librarians who are responsible for information literacy instruction and the implementation of the *Framework*. It is also unique in its ability to capture ILI activities during the COVID-19 shutdown. When this research was planned, it was not possible to know that COVID-19 was lurking around the corner. The lockdown ensued and it became important to capture librarians’ efforts to provide ILI during the lockdown.

Capturing the impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on ILI was critical for many reasons. The impact that the pandemic has had on education has led many to worry about student progress both during and after the pandemic as well as made obvious issues of lack of technology, technology skills, and broadband access; and has generated interest in the challenges and successes of educators during this time.

For all these reasons, the following research questions guided this study:

RQ1. How are community college librarians integrating the ACRL *Framework* into their information literacy instruction?

RQ2. How has the recent pandemic affected information literacy instruction, particularly concerning the implementation of the ACRL *Framework*?

2. Literature review

In 2016 the ACRL approved and adopted the *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*. Several years in the making, it called for a paradigmatic change in how librarians in institutions of higher education think about, teach, and assess the attainment of information literacy. Moving away from a skills-based definition, information literacy is now defined as “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” (ACRL, 2016, p. 3). In place of an established skill set, information literacy now focuses on six threshold concepts: (1) Authority Is Constructed and Contextual, (2) Information Creation as a Process, (3) Information has Value, (4) Research as Inquiry, (5) Scholarship as Conversation, (6) Searching as Strategic Exploration. Each of these threshold ideas is further described in specified knowledge practices and dispositions.

The *Framework* was the result of the efforts of many people and its development included soliciting continuous feedback through online American Library Association (ALA) channels and social media, as well as public and private email lists (ACRL, 2016). Despite the broad desire for feedback on the part of the committee, several writers contend that some in community colleges felt marginalized by how the *Framework* was developed (Craven, 2016; Wengler & Wolf-Eisenberg, 2020). Some writers question the suitability of the *Framework* for community college students (Leeder, 2015; Ludovico, 2017; Nelson, 2017; Reed, 2015). Other concerns voiced suggest that it does not address social justice issues (Battisa et al., 2015), is abstruse (Jackman & Weiner, 2017), and does not support learning information literacy skills that are expected in the workplace (Nelson, 2017). Others disagree. Swanson (2014) supports the use of the *Framework* in community colleges, and Calia-Lotz describes how she uses the *Framework* as a pedagogical foundation in her ILI (2020). A survey of community college librarians revealed that some found the *Framework* very useful (Julien, Gross, & Latham, 2018).

A recent national survey of community college librarians found limited adoption of the *Framework* (Wengler & Wolff-Eisenberg, 2020). Based on 1,201 valid responses this study revealed a preponderance of one-shot instruction, as well as the use of multiple shots, workshops, and credit-bearing IL classes. More than half of respondents said they had read the *Framework*, but only 11 % were willing to say that they were very familiar with it. Nonetheless, several negative associations with the *Framework* were expressed. Respondents felt excluded from the creation of the document and believed that those involved did not understand community college students. They reported that the *Framework* has had little impact on ILI. In line with this was wide support for the idea of developing a version of the *Framework* adapted to the needs of community

colleges. However, those who were working with the *Framework* reported that it improved their instruction, and many respondents indicated an interest in learning more about the *Framework*, asking for applications geared exclusively for the community college context.

Online surveys of the instructional practices of community college librarians in 2016 and 2019 included questions about librarian perceptions of student IL needs and sought opinions about the *Framework* and the extent to which it has influenced ILI (Julien et al., 2020). Based on 760 responses, the survey found less reliance on the one-shot than the Wengler and Wolff-Eisenberg survey, but also included a variety of ILI types such as individualized instruction, making instructional materials available, credit courses, and lectures and demonstrations. Respondents did not evidence extreme views of the *Framework*, but did note limitations to using the *Framework* such as its conceptual nature and use of jargon, time limits for instruction that favor skills-based approaches, and the need for buy-in on the part of faculty. Successes in using the *Framework* centered on teaching about sources, citations, and plagiarism; helping students understand abstract concepts; teaching about the information life cycle; and, increasing student engagement. The study reported here sought to further explore these findings with community college librarians.

3. Method

Community colleges in Florida and New York were targeted to recruit participants as both the states have community college systems that serve urban and rural populations that are diverse in terms of age, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic and military status (City University of New York (CUNY), 2019; Florida Department of Education, 2019; State University of New York (SUNY), 2019). These are the same community college systems that were the focus of the survey and student interview study phases.

Librarians with instructional responsibilities were recruited via an email invitation to participate in an online semi-structured interview. These invitations were sent directly to all community college librarians in both states. The interview schedule was pretested with four librarians at Florida State University before it was deployed. The interview schedule provided a general guide that ensured certain information was collected, such as years of professional experience, while allowing participants some autonomy in determining the scope and direction of their comments. The interviews varied from 15 to 74 minutes in length and were recorded and then transcribed for entry in NVivo for qualitative data analysis. Participants received a \$50 gift card as an incentive for participation. Ethics approval was obtained from Florida State University in agreement with the University at Buffalo SUNY. Interviews were completed during the spring of 2021.

3.1 Participants

The first 30 respondents to the recruitment email were scheduled for interviews. Similar to the gender breakdown in the profession, 23 respondents were female and seven were male. Seventeen of the participants were from Florida and 13 from New York. Their years of experience ranged from three to forty ($M = 13.5$; $SD = 8.95$), and their community college systems enrollments ranged from 600 to 160,000 ($Mdn = 10,000$).

Respondents reported engaging in typical forms of information literacy instruction such as one-shot sessions, credit courses, library orientations, embedded instruction, and workshops, as well as instruction provided one-on-one and as part of reference transactions. Services are provided in classrooms, in the library, in computer labs, and online. Participants' names have been replaced with pseudonyms throughout this report.

3.2 Data analysis

After transcription, a set of initial codes was developed by the research team based on the questions developed for the interview schedule. Initial coding was performed by entering these codes into NVivo. Then two members of the research team coded the documents, one transcript at a time, and reviewed their work to ensure that the coding was consistent and reliable. The resulting Kappa score was in the excellent range (0.7684). Additional codes were revealed during coding as additional themes were added to NVivo, and previously coded files were re-coded at each stage of data analysis to ensure all themes were captured. After intercoder reliability was initially established, one coder completed the coding of the remaining transcripts. When the coding of all transcripts was completed, one of the co-PIs reviewed all the coding to ensure that coding was consistent across all the transcripts. Codes were reviewed again during data analysis, which was undertaken using various query and report options provided by NVivo software. Findings were reviewed and discussed by the research team to ensure that consensus was achieved among the co-principle investigators. These steps assured a trustworthy interpretation of the data.

4. Results

Findings are arranged as they relate to the three research questions that guided this inquiry.

4.1 Implementing the ACRL framework into ILI

Participants' reactions to the *Framework* covered a broad continuum from finding it inspirational to finding it overwhelming, abstract, and inappropriate for a community college setting. One respondent categorized their reaction as "neutral." The main reasons for positive responses to the *Framework* were its usefulness in the design and delivery of instruction. "I think it's given me some ideas and some vocabulary that I can use with students to better articulate what information literacy is" (Kim). Respondents also said that the *Framework* helped them better understand student behavior and several said that they found the parts of the *Framework*, such as the individual frames, the knowledge practices, and the dispositions especially helpful. The frames Authority is Constructed and Contextual and Information has Value were seen as useful to get students to think more deeply about information. The frames Research as Inquiry and Searching as Strategic Exploration were seen as useful as they fit well with teaching research skills and the research process. When considering the value of the individual frames in ILI, the 24 (80 %) respondents who were using the *Framework* in ILI mentioned all of the frames, but some of the frames were considered more useful than others. Sixteen respondents identified the frame Authority is Constructed and Contextual as useful to their ILI. Research as Inquiry was rated useful by 14 respondents and Information has Value was seen as useful by 13 respondents. Scholarship as Conversation and Searching as Strategic Exploration were each seen as useful by ten respondents. Only six respondents specifically mentioned Information Creation as a Process as useful in their ILI.

Respondents who were implementing the *Framework* noted resistance among their peers either because they perceived the *Framework* as too difficult or because they lacked self-confidence in their instructional role. For example, Audrey said

It took three of us and my colleagues are, I think are really smart people. It took three of us ... quite a bit to really work through each of the frames to create our learning outcomes because we had to decipher and ... figure out ... what things meant and how they could be applied to a community college environment.

Eight respondents (27 %) said they were not using the *Framework*. Some of the reasons why echo concerns in the literature about the *Framework*'s appropriateness for community college students. These reasons included the idea that the *Framework* is not relevant to student IL needs, is too abstract for students entering the workforce, and that a focus on practical applications of IL makes the most sense for their students. They feel that the language used in the *Framework* is confusing to students and that the *Framework* makes ILI harder than it needs to be.

Other reasons for not teaching the *Framework* have more to do with the impact on the librarian's workload. Respondents were disinclined to redo completed work and work structures such as IL course content, established instruction report formats, etc. They expressed feeling pressure to get the job done and demonstrate success. They also felt little motivation to change their approach because they perceived that their library administration is not interested in the *Framework*.

Another reason given for not adopting the *Framework* is lack of involvement in professional associations such as the ACRL, and/or the ACRL Community and Junior College Libraries Section (CJCLS). The pandemic shutdown was also a reason for not using the *Framework* in ILI and one respondent said the *Framework* is not being used, "for no particular reason."

4.1.1 What implementing the framework looks like

Participants are bringing the *Framework* into a broad array of approaches to ILI. However, one-shots represent the main format for ILI instruction. In delivering a one-shot, time is the biggest challenge and it is a challenge for everyone involved. Respondents report that librarians are only granted a limited amount of time with students in one-shots that can range from as short as 15 minutes to as long as 90 minutes. They find it very difficult to teach the entire *Framework* as well as the content the instructor expects them to cover in such a short session. Under these conditions, the *Framework* is mainly used as a guideline for instruction or a specific frame might be chosen as a theme around which the instruction is planned, or to get the students' attention. Often this is done without explicitly mentioning the *Framework* or even the name of the specific frame. One respondent reported projecting PowerPoint slides on the *Framework* as students enter the room, but before instruction begins. Many incorporated the *Framework* into their instruction but "don't ever say those words" (Maureen).

Respondents say it is difficult to overcome the time limitation inherent in the one-shot approach. They report that teachers do not have and are not willing to devote more time to ILI. Instructors say to them: "I don't have time to incorporate all this. This is not a library instruction class, just teach the assignment, you know, show them ... how to find articles and then you're done" (Jasmine). Nonetheless, respondents report continuing to work to connect with instructors and to orient them to the *Framework*, not only to make inroads for the library, but also to encourage instructors to work with librarians in developing assignments and to consider how instructors themselves can incorporate IL into course content. Respondents recognize that time is an issue for students too. Students often have full-time jobs and family responsibilities on top of their commitment to their studies. Students say things like, "Just tell me what I need to do. You know, just give me the three steps that I need to do to finish this assignment and move forward" (Carol).

To overcome the limitations of the one-shot and to increase the visibility of the *Framework* some respondents described getting the threshold concepts into the hands of students and instructors using handouts and online tutorials. One respondent developed a program where

students could earn digital badges by completing lessons that include *Framework* content. Another respondent put together an escape room using Google forms that included content from the *Framework*.

Respondents found it easier to incorporate the *Framework* when teaching IL at the reference desk, one-on-one, when embedded in a class, and in specially designed workshops and events. However, in these instances, they also reported using parts of the *Framework* rather than teaching the entire *Framework* as a cohesive structure for learning. For example, taking their cue from the students and the students' assignment, respondents might explore the concept of Authority is Constructed and Contextual or the idea of Scholarship as Conversation. In this way the *Framework* is also embedded in instruction, but not in an explicit manner.

Respondents who taught credit courses on IL had the best opportunity to integrate the *Framework* into their teaching. In one example, librarians teaching a one-credit course in advanced research were able to use the *Framework* to structure the class. One respondent talked about integrating the *Framework* into the quality enhancement plan (QEP) developed by their unit. Another talked about including at least one frame and a plan for assessment as part of the library's annual goals.

Respondents often made a point of discussing the diversity of the students enrolled in community colleges in terms of the challenges this poses for ILI. They said that the *Framework* assumes prior knowledge that many do not have. Two respondents reported their best successes with the *Framework* were experienced teaching honors classes. The subpopulations they need to reach, who are often in the same classroom, include dual-enrolled high school students, first-generation college students, non-traditional students, remedial students, international students, students who are not comfortable with technology, students with limited exposure to IL skills and concepts, students who struggle with reading, transfer students, and students looking to enter the workforce. "And you want them to be able to understand like the theory, right?" (Eleanor).

4.1.2 Evaluating student learning

Most efforts at evaluating student learning were described by respondents as informal and as formative assessments. The most common ways respondents measured learning were checking for understanding by asking questions during instruction or taking time at the end of a presentation to reflect on what was learned. Many respondents used short surveys asking students about their satisfaction with the presentation, what they felt they had learned, how likely are they to use the library, etc. Several methods were used to assess skills including pre and post-tests; the ACRL Project Outcome toolkit, which supports survey development to measure learning outcomes; and grading and/or otherwise analyzing student papers. Some schools have instituted college-wide information literacy surveys to measure student IL skills. For the most part, respondents were not assessing learning related to the *Framework*, although there were exceptions. For example, a few respondents talked about using the knowledge practices and dispositions in the *Framework* as a way to assess student skill levels.

One respondent talked about being deeply embedded in an economics course where she was able to use the *Framework* to teach IL in multiple sessions and provide feedback to the instructor on students' final papers. She remained embedded in the course and was able to collect data on student performance over multiple semesters. Another respondent said that for-credit classes are evaluated by her college every three years, and they expect to focus on critical thinking, communication, and information literacy "And I think if we broke those down, we would find the *Framework* in those as well" (Maureen).

Several respondents were open about the lack of assessment in their ILI. Time was again an impactful factor, particularly with one-shots. Some respondents sought verbal feedback from instructors, and some spoke of plans to work on assessment when COVID has passed.

4.1.3 Resources used to implement the Framework

Familiarity with the *Framework* would seem to be a prerequisite to its use and so respondents were asked about the specific resources they used to learn about the *Framework* and how to incorporate it into ILI. Four respondents stated that they have not used any resources that provide information about the *Framework*. The rest revealed a wide variety of resources consulted. Eighteen respondents said that they had attended a course on the *Framework*. The second most common source reported by 11 respondents, was reading books, articles, and/or newsletters, and nine respondents reported using the ACRL sandbox as a way to learn about incorporating the *Framework* into their ILI. All other resources were mentioned by seven or fewer respondents. Table 1 below displays frequencies for other sources of information used by respondents to learn about the *Framework*.

4.1.4 A future for the Framework

Most participants do not anticipate a complete replacement of the ACRL Standards with the *Framework* but see value in a blend of the two. There is a strong belief that community college students need specific skills, such as being able to construct research questions, search databases, locate and evaluate information, cite sources using a standard style, etc. “There’s a sort of mandate for skills. There’s a lot of investment in assessment, so things can be measured, the conceptual stuff doesn’t lend itself to easy measurement and that’s a real challenge I think” (Peter). Another reason they feel the skills orientation will not disappear is that information skills are what instructors expect them to teach. Aside from those instructors, who are already working with librarians, typically instructors in English, respondents often experience instructors as “territorial,” not taking librarians seriously, not interested in ideas that are not their own, and not wanting to learn. “Resistance from faculty? I think that’s the biggest challenge” (Naomi). Many participants favored developing a blended model that places skills within frames and “weave[s] in the practical with the theoretical” (Audrey). This is the approach that many see themselves as having taken in incorporating the *Framework* into ILI. “If you look at how I did it, I probably took the concepts and made them into skills” (Inez).

Other participants want to see the *Framework* rethought and presented in multiple documents that tailor the presentation of the *Framework* to various contexts and audiences: “A version of the *Framework* that’s focused on our classroom faculty and then one that’s more librarian focused... maybe cut down on some of the more library jargon, maybe make them shorter” (Eleanor). In addition, they suggest providing instructional faculty with examples of assignments along with the *Framework*, to get them started.

The lack of interest in the *Framework* among some librarians is also cited as something that restricts and may continue to limit efforts at implementation. “I would say it’s not very hopeful that we will make many converts among our colleagues” (Lily). This opinion is balanced by others who have experienced a more positive reaction to the *Framework* among their coworkers. “So,

Table 1. Resources used to implement the ACRL *Framework* in information literacy instruction (ILI).

Resources used	Number of respondents
Webinars and other professional development courses	18
Books, articles, newsletters	11
ACRL sandbox	9
Discussions with other librarians	7
ACRL website	6
Blogs, emails, list serves	6
Conference presentations	4
None	4
workshops	2
Twitter	1
Lib guides	1
Videos	1

what the *Framework* has done and what using the *Framework* has done has been to create a habit within the library faculty of sharing, of collaborating, uh, talking about teaching” (Samantha).

4.2 Impacts of COVID-19 on information literacy instruction

The impact of the pandemic on community colleges in Florida and New York was perhaps first experienced in the precipitous decline in enrollments across campuses. One respondent described this as “bleeding students” (Audrey) and several respondents described drops in enrollment in the range of 30 to 50 percent. With decreases in enrollment came the cessation of most, if not all, face-to-face contact with students, a drop in the number of one-shots provided, and an increase in online and embedded services. These librarians quickly moved to record and post content on library websites and offer it to instructors for their classes. In this period of transition, librarians became more aware that many students struggle with technology and because of this were in danger of falling through the cracks. Participants voiced concerns about students losing connections with other people and the fate of students dealing with housing insecurity. As Neil put it, “COVID-19 has changed our life completely.” The normal practice of going to where students are or hosting them in the library largely stopped. As Sara stated, “Library instruction requests have decreased substantially.” Another participant, Allen, described current practice saying,

So now we are not typically getting invited to give a live presentation on an online course, but we do have our library that has the information that we used to show in classes and faculty and students can access it...So what we used to say face to face is now recorded on YouTube and professors need to show it in class. They can get it there and it's easy to access through our library website.

Others were able to make the transition to visiting online classes. “Now during COVID...it's completely remote. So, we usually, uh, ask the professor to provide us, uh, their virtual room link and we meet them there” (Inez). One-shots moved online and drop-in sessions for help with research were instituted using Zoom. Zoom was a typical platform for online contact and these librarians used it to connect with students and faculty, increasing participation, interactivity, and connection during a time of social isolation. Reaction to working in Zoom was very positive among respondents.

Just honestly, I find library instructions in general to be better on Zoom in a lot of ways, right? Because like they can see my screen right on their screen. I just think that like I can share links with them easier versus like if they're in the computer lab, I have to then send the link in an email to their student emails, like after the class. (Kayla)

Also during this time, embedded instruction became more common and online IL courses for credit were maintained. Participants who had not tried embedded librarianship were very pleased with the experience. They felt like they were connecting more successfully with students over the Zoom platform as students can see who they are. They report students being more comfortable in reaching out to them and being able to give more detailed help.

Of course, there were also challenges. Amy said, “And of course this year is just, I don't want to call it a wash, but this year has been odd to say the least.” Another respondent reported a failed first effort at providing embedded services for students who were first responders. Both the librarian and the students were overwhelmed. The solution was to move to appointment-based, one-on-one, or small group sessions. The result was more relaxed and personal learning.

Interestingly, several talked about the effects of COVID on ILI instruction.

...especially with COVID, you know, they have questions, they may not know what to ask, but they know that they want to know, you know, am I going to die? Is this what's going to

happen? My family going to die. I know I have my cousin caught COVID and she died. And so, because anytime there's a major social event, uh, the questions go through the roof. (Chuck)

Librarians were able to take this topic that students had a personal interest in too and bring it into instruction. Examples of subject matter included looking for information on the Johnson and Johnson vaccine, how authority is contextual, and the importance of context. This opened up opportunities for using the *Framework* as a guide. “Anyway, the *Framework*, that's a perfect example of how the *Framework*, as a guide, right, as a guide, as a, as something to inform my Praxis has been really useful” (Cathy).

Another advantage of the pandemic for some librarians was the ability to work from home, for example, facilitating professional writing and providing more time to work on teaching skills, including consideration of the *Framework*. In looking toward the future most think that services developed during this time, such as one-on-one Zoom sessions and increased embedded librarian services, will continue as they have proved to work well.

5. Discussion

Much of what respondents had to say was tempered by a recognition of the diversity of the population served and the range of resulting needs. For example, older, returning students are less confident than younger ones; not all students have access to technology, nor are they necessarily adept in its use; students may be acquiring English language skills; and some may be struggling with basic literacy issues, while others are well-prepared for college-level work.

The diversity of community college students complicates the implementation of the *Framework* in ILI. One of the successes reported was in teaching honors students. The easiest approach to implementing the *Framework* was to teach it in the context of a semester-long, credit-earning class. However, for-credit classes are a rarity (Julien et al., 2020). The one-shot approach to ILI continues to dominate, although the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in less of this type of instruction being offered. Another effect of the pandemic was an increase in embedding librarians into online classes, which many participants found was not only enjoyable but increased their effectiveness.

The truth remained that most ILI used a skills-based approach, consistent with earlier research examining the integration of the *Framework* in the community college context (Julien et al., 2018; Julien et al., 2020). This is in part because of instructor demands, but also because it is perceived that this is what students need, whether the students themselves understand this or not. While several skill deficiencies were noted, along with a reliance on social media for staying informed, the ability to evaluate information quality stands out as a concern that has long been mentioned in the IL literature (Gross & Latham, 2013). While some participants were not using the *Framework* at all in their instruction and had no intention of using it in the future, many were trying to incorporate it at various levels.

One of the biggest obstacles these librarians faced was time. The amount of time allotted for ILI works against full integration of the *Framework* into lesson plans. While the *Framework* document (ACRL, 2016) states that implementation of the *Framework* is not meant to happen in the context of one-shots, but should happen across programs and in collaboration with campus stakeholders, these participants were using the opportunities they had to move their instruction in the *Framework* direction, receiving little support from faculty outside of the usual collaborations with English departments. However, in one case, at the institutional level, the quality enhancement plan (QEP) focuses on IL and the library was incorporating the *Framework* into their response.

Another participant reported that their QEP guiding committee is looking to embed librarians into general education courses. While this news is exciting in one respect, the respondent reasonably wondered how, given the size of the library staff, this goal could be accomplished. In another instance, the library selected as one of its goals for their annual discipline report to incorporate and evaluate one frame, Searching as Strategic Exploration, into their ILI.

In terms of examples of implementing the *Framework* into ILI, the inclusion of the *Framework* was at times almost subliminal. It appeared in handouts or in PowerPoint slides projected on a screen as students entered the classroom, but was not presented in the actual instruction. None of the participants talked about using *Framework* language with students. The preferred approach in most instances was to use part of the *Framework*—individual frames, knowledge practices, dispositions—to frame instruction, get students’ attention, and demonstrate the relevance of skills.

Similar to the idea presented in the Wengler and Wolff-Eisenberg survey (2020) for a community college-specific version of the *Framework*, several participants suggested the need for a revised *Framework* for the community college environment, or for multiple *Framework* documents, accompanied by sample assignments, targeted to librarians and faculty. Having multiple versions of the *Framework* would make it more digestible and marketable to instructors across the disciplines as well as those preparing students for specific kinds of work.

5.1 Limitations

This study reports data collected from community college librarians in Florida and New York, but the views they shared are not necessarily representative of other community college librarians in Florida, New York, or elsewhere. Participants were recruited who represent the profile required by the study, but were self-selected in terms of their choice to respond to the invitation. Respondents may represent community college librarians who have strong feelings, pro or con, regarding the *Framework*, and this should inform perceptions about the transferability of these findings to other community college ILI practices.

5.2 Implications

This study suggests several implications for the practice of ILI in community college libraries. A central concern is to meet the IL needs of students across extremely diverse subpopulations, which are a hallmark of community colleges. Student needs and instructor demands for skill-oriented instruction will likely continue to be a feature of this information landscape. Collaboration with instructors, many of whom may be adjuncts as is common in community colleges, will likely continue to be difficult to achieve unless there is a mandate from administration or accreditation bodies.

The finding that librarians are using parts of the *Framework* and see the need for the development of multiple “Frameworks” that are tailored to various audiences and include sample assignments signals an opportunity to involve community college librarians in further development of the *Framework* and to allow for the discovery of how to make the *Framework* both easier to use and more relevant to a variety of stakeholders. Further, this would allow for community college librarians to feel their voices are being heard and increase their sense of ownership in promoting the use of the *Framework* in the community college environment.

There are also implications for the preparation of pre-service librarians, whose learning should be informed by a current, in-depth understanding of ILI opportunities and challenges across instructional contexts and include how to advocate for IL in institutions of higher education.

Educating pre-service librarians for the instructional role must include an understanding of the various contexts in which they may work and the diverse needs of the students they will work with.

5.3 Future directions

While the literature on IL is extensive, studies specific to community colleges are not; thus, there are many opportunities for additional work in this area. The diversity of the student population requires extensive exploration of their IL needs and how to support the transition of the population to a more sophisticated view of IL that defeats the problem of overconfidence among the nonproficient (Gross & Latham, 2012) and makes the integration of threshold concepts into information seeking, creation, and use second nature. Research is also needed on how to best support community college librarians charged with implementing the *Framework*.

One research area specific to an important subpopulation of students is the need to bridge the gap between the type of ILI high school students receive and the *Framework* (Burns, Gross, & Latham, 2019). Both the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) and the ACRL updated their standards at roughly the same time. However, the AASL retained a skills-based approach. Community college students include dual-enrolled high school students and so offer a unique opportunity to help these students expand their thinking about information before they start college or enter the workforce.

6. Conclusion

The community college environment is unlike other institutions of higher education and would benefit from assistance in tailoring the *Framework* to a variety of student populations, instructors, and librarians, and from providing discipline-specific content, including assignments and advice on the assessment of student outcomes. It is unlikely, however, that the *Framework* will supersede a skills-based approach to ILI, at least for the foreseeable future. The main challenges community college librarians face in their ILI are meeting the needs of a diverse community, limited time to do so, and difficulty getting buy-in from faculty.

The value of this study lies in the potential for identifying opportunities for improving ILI in community colleges, based on a better understanding of librarians' attitudes, and experiences in their instructional roles. Community college librarians with responsibility for ILI can be more fully supported in their work when their instructional landscapes and challenges are better understood.

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