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Teaching Matters: A Panel Critique of Budd's Framing Library Instruction and the Author's Rejoinder

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A PANEL CRITIQUE OF BUDD'S *FRAMING* *LIBRARY INSTRUCTION* AND THE AUTHOR'S REJOINDER

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This column focuses on the conceptual and practical aspects of teaching information literacy. Column co-editors Patrick Ragains and Janelle Zauha write about trends and issues that have come to our attention, but also solicit contributions to this space. Readers with ideas for Teaching Matters may contact Patrick Ragains at ragains@unr.edu, or the editors of Communications in Information Literacy at editors@comminfolit.org.

INTRODUCTION

This column departs from its usual approach to examine John M. Budd's book, *Framing Library Instruction* (2009). In this important work, Budd discusses philosophies of cognition, recommending elements of this body of thought to instructional librarians. Budd also offers his perspective on the information literacy (IL) movement and concludes by describing a model course to teach library research skills within a metacognitive framework, which he terms phenomenological cognitive action.

I read *Framing Library Instruction* shortly after its publication. After finishing the book, I wondered what impact it might have within the information literacy community. Here was a detailed critique of information literacy from a library educator, who, while not regularly teaching IL to college and university students, has been teaching future librarians to do just that. How would instructional librarians receive and respond to his ideas? These thoughts led me to convene a panel of three current and one former librarian, whom I asked to read the book and answer questions both directly related to the book, and to provide their perceptions of students' learning needs and the state of information literacy instruction.

The panelists are as follows:

Dr. John J. Doherty. Doherty spent 12 years as an instruction librarian before transitioning to his current role as an instructional designer for the e-Learning Center at Northern Arizona University.

Debra Gilchrist. Gilchrist is Dean of Libraries and Institutional Effectiveness at Pierce College, Washington.

Esther Grassian. Grassian is Information

Literacy Librarian, University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) College Library (1969-present); Adjunct Lecturer, UCLA Information Studies Department, co-author of *Information Literacy Instruction: Theory and Practice*, 2nd edition, (Neal-Schuman, 2009); and former Chair of the ACRL Instruction Section.

James T. Nichols. Nichols is the Assistant Coordinator of Instruction and Distance Learning Librarian in Penfield Library at the State University of New York at Oswego, NY.

The panelists' comments were uniformly thoughtful and enlightening. What follows are excerpts from their responses. (The complete responses are posted on the website of Communications in Information Literacy). John Budd graciously agreed to respond to this discussion, and his rejoinder follows the panelists' comments. In my concluding comments, I attempt to digest and respond to what these five extraordinary individuals have offered. Readers must decide for themselves the importance of *Framing Library Instruction*, but I believe it provides a strong and necessary tonic for reflection on the underpinnings and practice of information literacy instruction.

PANEL RESPONSES

1. *Do ACRL's Information Literacy Competency Standards (2000) and information literacy instruction itself overemphasize mechanics (i.e., how to perform skills versus analytical thinking)?*

Grassian: The ACRL Standards (2000) fulfill a need first expressed in 1990 when instruction librarians began using the phrase "information literacy" as a substitute for and

expansion of the phrase “bibliographic instruction.” Arp argued that if librarians use the phrase *information literacy*, “...we will be expected to order skills and concepts hierarchically that we teach, and that we will be expected to TEST these statements in a large-scale fashion. . . . We must be careful to use each term within the political framework in which we live and not make too many claims about our ability to produce that which we cannot measure or prove” (1990,48-49).

Overall, the Standards (2000) offer a much needed structure, with detailed explication of the meaning of “information literacy,” in the form of a set of competencies and performance indicators. In order to measure learning, the Standards describe behaviors that can be observed and then assessed, and use active verbs in doing so, including “confers,” “explores,” “defines or modifies,” “investigates,” “selects,” “constructs,” “determines,” and “reviews.” The Standards also describe many independent means for learners to become information literate, including acts of investigation, critical thinking, and analysis — providing a framework for measuring learning in the area of higher education instruction in which librarians have been involved on behalf of their libraries and other institutions and organizations. The Standards do not overemphasize mechanics. They cover a range of activities and processes that comprise a thorough approach to information research and critical thinking.

Finally, the introduction to the Standards indicates correctly that information researching can be a recursive process, where students may begin in a linear fashion, but may have to go back and repeat certain portions of the process as they conduct research, communicate and reflect

upon their research.

2. *Do instruction librarians need reminding that information literacy instruction is not an end “in and for itself”?*

Gilchrist: Everyone in higher education loves his or her discipline; it is where our passion is rooted. Because of that, it is easy to become overly focused on the specifics of information literacy, regardless of how important it might be to student success. A library has more of an interdisciplinary approach than most other areas of a college/university. Instruction is integrated and intended to have students succeed in other areas of their undergraduate program. Lifelong learning is more on our minds than in most other disciplines, so I don’t believe most of us see information literacy as an end in itself.

Ruth Stiehl (2005) asks us to consider the *students’ experiences* as they progress through a program or a degree. What is the student’s intellectual journey? With this approach, faculty members are asked to determine the outcomes they want for students at the end of a program or degree and then design backwards so that the courses provide the students with the skills, concepts, theories, and frameworks they need to achieve those outcomes. All too often faculty members teach what they are interested in, rather than what they have intentionally designed for students to achieve. If colleges and universities adopted Stiehl’s model of curriculum design, then information literacy skills and concepts could be mapped directly into the programs at the time of critical need for the student and the full integration we advocate could be realized. In the interim, librarians can do their own mapping of curriculum and

assignments. Librarians and faculty can also elect to teach to mutually agreed-upon outcomes instead of what we individually determine to be relevant. Establishing outcomes helps us to focus on what we want for students when they leave our institutions instead of an immediate end.

3. *What are your key criticisms of Budd's argument?*

Doherty: I think Budd has some excellent points, but he opens by saying that he is adopting the language of other fields in order to have a conversation with them. Doing so, I think, can exclude an important audience — practicing librarians. For example, in Chapter 2 he notes the overwhelming rhetorical emphasis on competence in the ACRL Standards. One can argue that focusing on competence acknowledges an immediate student need to be able to search and retrieve. True, it is skills based, which falls into the lower end of Bloom's cognitive domain. Effective library instruction should give students opportunities to practice higher order thinking processes such as application, synthesis, and evaluation. These higher order processes are implied in the ACRL Standards, but need to be much more explicit. In other words, Budd really ought to be speaking to his prime audience — instruction librarians — before those others he mentions.

I hope his argument will begin a necessary conversation. The strength of it is the focus on metacognition -- the need to think about thinking. The mechanistic approach implied in the ACRL Standards should be challenged. However, there are many practicing librarians who already do much of what is said, especially in reference to the idea of teaching through example.

What is missing from the framework presented is true action. I'd like to know what we want the students to do with information literacy once they have it. Any form of information literacy instruction needs to question the concept of information literacy itself so that it can be further developed to help students explore the critical, thoughtful, and informed connections between the world they know and that which they do not: the Other world that does not fit into societal norms.

Gilchrist: It is not so much his main points that I wanted to challenge, but his approach and presentation. I thought his criticisms of current practice were soft and didn't consider the full scope of what the other authors had intended in their work; pieces were carved away rather than fully analyzed. His critique of Kuhlthau's work as linear doesn't seem to be consistent with his own phenomenological arguments. One concept key to both Heidegger and Sokolowski's work he did not discuss is the hermeneutic circle.

The hermeneutic circle considers that the process of engagement or "dialogue" with something is circular rather than linear and therefore dynamic. As we engage with the a process, we move between the parts and the whole (or in the case of the research process from one step to another, one source to another, one idea to another) in order to fully grasp the meaning of our inquiry. Heidegger said that we continually return to the text, to the stories, to the experience in order for them to be fully understood (Solokowski, 1999). If Budd accepts phenomenology's principles, then in fact Kuhlthau's linear process would not be linear at all. Any student engaged in the first step would learn that step, but then after engaging the second step would have a different experience of the first based on

their understanding of the second. So Kuhlthau's theories would actually be a circle or spiral of engagement on the part of the student. I don't believe Kuhlthau ever saw this process as starting and stopping and then starting over but instead representative of the fact that time is linear and we have to learn in that manner. But how we apply the learning was never intended to remain linear.

My second major criticism is much more basic: Librarians are already doing much of what Budd suggests. He discusses going from what students know to the new learning (p. 158), reading others' ideas (p. 163), and discussing where ideas have come from and how they have been communicated (p. 153). These are certainly not new concepts for instruction librarians to incorporate, but nuances for them to consider.

Grassian: Five key criticisms stand out.

a. Too much focus on philosophy and philosophers. Budd introduces his work as follows: "This book is actually an extended argument for taking a new look at instruction" (p. 1). In fact, his book critiques both ILI and higher education instruction in general from a huge array of philosophical points of view. For example, he writes, "Phenomenological cognitive action is, quite frankly the missing element, not only in libraries' instruction, but in instruction across campuses" (p. 126). Further on page 137, he talks about "transcendental epoche" and "a kind of effort that requires us to question what constitutes our Being," when promoting the important need for reflection.

b. Misinterpretations of and misunderstandings about the ACRL Standards. Budd takes some of the Standards' performance indicators out of

context. He complains that the Standards are too focused on information technology, using the following as an example: "Outcome d of Performance Indicator 1 of Standard Two. . . states, 'Selects efficient and effective approaches for accessing the information needed from the investigative method or information retrieval system'" (p. 54). It seems that he read this sentence too quickly, as both "investigative method" and "information retrieval system" are listed as options, a point reiterated in the introduction to the Standards--i.e., the learner could use a non-technological approach instead of an online system.

On page 62, Budd objects that the Standards say that learners need to recognize their need for information. Yet later, he seems to contradict himself, stating quite emphatically: "To reiterate an essential point, the first cognitive step is to frame the question" (p. 120). It is difficult to see how this differs from the Standards. Both inside and outside academia, in order for one to grasp that one has an information need, one must have realized that there is a gap in knowledge, and, informally perhaps, even unconsciously, have asked questions—What is this? How does it work? Where? When? Why?

c. Too much focus on one-unit IL courses and on a single study of such courses. The bulk of this book focuses on what seems to be standalone, one-unit credit IL courses taught by librarians who have faculty status. Yet, many academic librarians do not have faculty status, and many develop and utilize a variety of information literacy instruction (ILI) formats not always related to academic disciplines, including, but not limited to, credit courses—e.g., online tutorials, videos, exercises, and guides. Budd relies heavily on an article by Paul Hrycaj, noting that Hrycaj's review of 100 one-unit information

literacy credit course syllabi revealed little attention to Standard Four (using information effectively for a specific purpose) (p. 70). However, Hrycaj cautions the reader that syllabus reviews do not necessarily reflect the entirety of a course, nor its content. Further, Hrycaj used only copies of freely available syllabi and simply counted the number of topics listed in each syllabus (2006). A different and perhaps more informative approach regarding this question would be to survey librarians regarding whether, when, and how they use evaluation in their courses. The ACRL Instruction Section Objectives that accompany the Standards support the view that certain of these Standards (including Standard 4) are the responsibility of faculty who are subject matter experts or may be taught collaboratively by librarian/faculty partners or teams. In other words, while these are important, it is beyond the realm of librarians to address them on their own.

d. Assumptions about the role of the librarian in instruction. In numerous places, Budd recommends teaching methods and approaches for IL often utilized in discipline-based credit courses by faculty who are subject matter experts. In his view, IL in higher education only makes sense in relation to academic disciplines, and seems largely limited to standalone, one-unit, IL courses taught by librarians who are faculty. Budd says further that librarians should use the Socratic method to get students to question subject matter.

All instruction librarians can do this, to a degree, by helping students learn generic IL skills, including critical thinking skills, which can be taught without delving deeply into a subject and its larger context. They can help students learn to pose more informed questions regarding authorship, authority, currency, completeness, and

whether authors provide evidence to support their arguments. On page 175, Budd himself describes generic critical thinking criteria that can be applied in the search for "meaningful information," including "Has the author done work in this area before? Does the author appear to know how to investigate the topic?"

Librarians can also help students understand the need for additional critical thinking criteria like those below, although (for the most part) only the faculty who are subject matter experts can actually guide the students in applying them:

- accuracy in comparison to other significant material on the topic
- whether the evidence provided is valid
- whether the evidence provided really does support the author's arguments

e. Assumptions about what librarians are teaching and how they do it. Reading Budd's book makes one wonder whether he has actually observed ILI in its various forms, such as face-to-face, online, print, synchronous, and asynchronous. Librarians have used many of the teaching methods he suggests for decades. These include teaching students that the peer review process and journal acceptance rate are political aspects of academia, ensuring that students are exposed to differing points of view (p. 9) and helping students understand that authors may not always be honest (p. 122).

Budd claims that many ILI programs "treat students as blank slates, ready to absorb sets of skills" (p. 131), and that "librarians are teaching Boolean operators out of context as an isolated skill (p. 46- 47). He goes on to say that Wilder could be right about

students not knowing or caring that they're not information literate (p. 49) and concludes that librarians are telling students that what they are finding or utilizing is not good enough (p. 54). This message misses the point. Often, librarians work with faculty, and it is faculty who tell students not to use Google, Wikipedia, and many other free websites for scholarly research. Ultimately, students do care when course requirements and grades depend upon the quality of their research materials.

Nichols: My main criticism is that Budd does not sufficiently address the need to consider the situations of students as they come to us librarians for instruction and guidance. We cannot communicate well with those we are not willing to listen to, or even recognize as individuals who all happen to be in the same boat (or course). I would much rather see the design work that goes into a specific course at a specific college, rather than a generalized outline of a possible course.

Budd's critique of common conceptualizations of information literacy is both interesting and helpful. However, I remain unconvinced that "information literacy" is a useless term. "Literacy" remains important because it signifies ability in reading and writing—both fundamental acts of communication. "Information" is indeed an empty term but is commonly used to refer to informative sources and the contents of those sources. The "information" part primarily works to signal that we can no longer hold on to old assumptions about academic reading and writing as we move to a networked society. I think "information literacy" works well enough; the biggest problem with the term is that too many librarians take it as just another word for library instruction.

Chapters 3 and 4 also seem to be a collection of musings on what would be good practice in teaching with little reference back to phenomenological cognitive action or how teaching and learning could be reshaped by phenomenological cognitive action. Chapter 3, for instance, presents a standard syllabus with no reflection on how the syllabus might be different if we took phenomenological cognitive action seriously.

4. What can instruction librarians learn from Budd's argument?

Doherty: That librarians should make few if any presumptions when interacting with students, especially in students' freshman and sophomore years. Budd makes a very important point about these students: They are still learning, and sometimes the prescriptions placed on them by their instructors (and thus the prescriptions students place on librarians by wanting/ needing only what is necessary to complete an assignment) is indicative of this cognitive state, or readiness.

The Standards, by seeking to leverage students' immediate need in order to expose them to more skills and potential information may be one step too far, especially for the focused, intentional learner. Indeed, the idea that "we have them here, let's throw it at them and see what sticks" is very prevalent in first year instruction.

Librarians need to cooperate with faculty by understanding and conforming to their basic instructional design (i.e., what is the intent of learning here, and do we fit?). Budd said this at the outset -- sometimes the library does not fit and needs to step back and let the instructor develop the cognitive

readiness in the students.

Gilchrist: I appreciated the insight into the dialogue Budd is encouraging between the student and the literature, i.e., the value of the “I-Thou.” This is very important to students as well as consistent with librarians’ attachment to lifelong learning. This dialogue is a much deeper engagement than critical thinking alone. Encouraging students to read and write for themselves and not for their teacher should be expected if students are to graduate as strong thinkers. It helps them see the long-term purpose of their education -- not a collection of courses to get through, but a strategically designed program of study that is intended to prepare them for a lifetime. His premise that phenomenological cognitive action “makes all perspectives visible” (p. 145) is viable because it is exactly what we are trying to get undergraduates to do -- to perceive multiple ideas, opinions, and outlooks.

While most librarians understand the theory of constructivism and see it as a viable theoretical framework for information literacy, they are less familiar with the more foundational theory of phenomenology. While Budd’s articulation of it is dense, I respect the fact that he brings it to the table. I appreciate his generally thoughtful approach and theoretical underpinnings.

Grassian: Budd offers some valuable

comments, suggestions, and reminders regarding ILI. Examples include:

- The ACRL Standards are necessary but not sufficient for ILI (p. 41).
- "...students should be open to unanticipated thoughts and ideas as they read, view or listen; ... [be] able to assess alternative ideas and admit errors. . . ." (p. 41).
- Librarians need to avoid jargon, or explain it when they use it (p. 31 & 79 & 120).
- Though it may be difficult, put yourself in the place of the novice who may need very basic instruction (p. 70).

Budd suggests further that in addition to teaching the peer review process, we teach potential problems that underlie this seemingly objective and unbiased method widely utilized in academia (p. 85). His point regarding the referee process is well taken -- it is a human process and there may be many reasons for rejection.

At another point, Budd suggests exercises to help students think critically about articles (p. 177) and the peer review process. Both are useful, as far as they go, but could be expanded. Students can ask the same questions about websites that they ask about articles (Grassian, 1995; 2006).

GILCHRIST: [BUDD'S] PREMISE THAT PHENOMENOLOGICAL COGNITIVE ACTION “MAKES ALL PERSPECTIVES VISIBLE” IS VIABLE BECAUSE IT IS EXACTLY WHAT WE ARE TRYING TO GET UNDERGRADUATES TO DO -- TO PERCEIVE MULTIPLE IDEAS, OPINIONS, AND OUTLOOKS.

On page 92, Budd suggests, "The primary reason for the failure of some lectures to foster learning is that they are (obviously) monologues." We need to remember to engage learners in a variety of ways, including turning lecture content into a series of questions and then posing those questions in face-to-face sessions or through online formats/methods. Some of Budd's suggestions can be helpful in this regard, including using outrageous claims and controversial examples to get students to reflect and apply reason to their beliefs. Students will probably be more engaged, too, if we use up-to-date examples that are familiar to them, e.g., the organization of music on iPhones or iPods as an analogy for a categorization system (p. 158).

Budd suggests correctly that we teach the concept of articles as speech and the fact that the communication process in academia "is not a by-product of education; it is constitutive of education" (p. 67). However, this approach is much better described in Bechtel's article, "Conversation, a New Paradigm for Librarianship" (1986). Finally, Budd poses a number of fervent arguments regarding ILI and raises some questions that ILI librarians should consider regularly, such as:

- Am I focusing too much on the mechanics of using research tools and finding information?
- Am I incorporating critical thinking and evaluation into each form of instruction and each instructional session?
- Am I posing questions to learners and challenging them to engage, reflect, and respond, rather than simply feeding them facts?

Nichols: Budd's arguments support the idea that library instruction has real value beyond

the immediate assignment and that information literacy, understood as the discovery and use of informative sources, is fundamental to higher learning. Instruction librarians can also learn about recent developments in postmodern thought. Understanding concepts like social constructivism and intersubjectivity can help librarians participate in the currents of higher learning and to move away from the tacit behaviorism that hobbles innovation in education.

5. Does information literacy instruction incorporate dialectical investigation (i.e., thinking through contradictions), or have too many librarians settled for teaching lower-level skills?

Gilchrist: Most of librarians' involvement with group instruction is with first- and second-year courses, which means that the "lower level" information literacy skills are most on our agendas. I don't believe the major issue is librarians "settling" for teaching these skills, but instead a lack of understanding on the part of the discipline faculty about what librarians can accomplish during a short class session. However well-meaning, faculty are not realistic in their expectations that, in one or two class sessions, librarians can teach everything that students need to complete their assignments. Theoretically the undergraduate experience is about development; we expect different levels of ability and thought from our fourth-year students than our first-year students. However, most faculty assign the research paper at both of these levels without any thought to how students will learn the strategies or thought processes that align with the faculty's level of expectation. We are lacking the developmental approach to

the research process that matches the developmental approach to learning in the discipline. This places librarians in an awkward situation as we try and accommodate the faculty, rather than meet as co-educators on an equal playing field.

Even with this awkward circumstance, there is plenty of opportunity for all instruction librarians to incorporate dialectical investigation at every level of instruction. It, too, is developmental, and librarians can provide students with the opportunity to engage in multiple levels of thinking in even the most basic courses. We all teach what we value, and many librarians value the linear approach to research, asserting that the “basics” of information access need to be taught before the more advanced. Budd does a good job of reminding us that this is not the case.

Nichols: I suspect librarians settle too quickly for teaching lower-level skills. Here at Penfield Library, we have taken on the motto, “elevate the learning,” and do just that. We resist teaching the clicks and try to clarify how every tool relates to scholarship. We do not formally adhere to a dialectical model but do exploit the dialectical nature and phenomenological attitude implicit in the research process. That is, the point of research is not to report on what is known by others, but to raise genuine questions and build new knowledge through critical reflection on what is known and what can be observed. I often remind students they are ultimately responsible for the answers to two questions: What have you learned? And how do you know that?

6. *What does Budd’s model course contribute to information literacy instruction? Does his proposed course follow logically from his*

argument?

Nichols: The model course does offer some learning experiences that connect library practices on the part of scholars to the core work of scholarship and scholarly communication. For example, he presents citations as an element of the scholarly network, not as a way to defend against plagiarism. Ideas like this make a contribution to information literacy instruction.

The proposed course is not particularly organized along the lines of phenomenological cognitive action. But it does show how the fundamental themes of his framework can weave into instruction throughout a course.

The parts of the course that do not seem to follow from Budd’s argument also appear to be remnants of library science and the same old way of teaching library skills. First-year students do not need to learn how to be nascent librarians; rather, they need to learn how to do academic research. Relevance, for instance, is a core concept in information science, but first-year students do not need an elaboration on the concept, as Budd suggests. He does move beyond relevance (which does not seem to follow from phenomenological cognitive action) and into the idea of meaningful sources. I have found that students are better served with the concept of “useful” sources, which are not only about the desired topic, but also offer something for the student to learn and can contribute to the student’s research quest. So we do not try to elaborate on relevance in and of itself; rather we mention it as a part of judging how important a work might be to a specific research project. I also find that an introduction to the library catalog does not need to review the fields of the record, to mention Library of Congress

Subject Headings, or to elaborate on keyword versus controlled vocabulary searching, as Budd suggests. For first-year students, I simply point out the citation information (citation practice is one of the guidepost concepts here at SUNY Oswego) and that they can use the displayed terms for an item to conduct a more precise search.

Budd's argument does not convince me of the need for a standalone course, especially for first-year students. It seems to me that the phenomenological cognitive action framework would lead us to prefer integration of information literacy instruction into the curriculum.

REJOINDER TO THE PANELISTS

By John M. Budd, Professor, School of Information Science & Learning Technologies, University of Missouri

I am flattered that Pat Ragains would see fit to elicit commentary on my book, *Framing Library Instruction*. A purpose of the book was indeed to generate discussion in librarianship about the need for instruction, not only in the use of information resources, but also in the critical integration of what others say and write into students' work. The latter necessarily entails enhancing students' critical acumen, teaching them about the structure of formal information systems (including databases and their protocols, locating specific items, and evaluating the content of articles, books, websites, etc.), and alerting them to the nuances of authority when it comes to the responsibility for stating something publicly. I also owe a very large debt of gratitude to the individuals who accepted Pat's invitation and commented on the book. They represent not only some of the best known individuals in the field, but also

some of the most astute observers in the area of instruction. Their commentary is critical in the most positive sense of the word; they obviously read the book carefully and have given serious thought to what I have said in light of their own extensive knowledge and experience. Their remarks deserve responses that are equally serious on my part.

Pat asked the respondents a series of questions; it would probably be most effective if I took the questions in turn (I will not be repeating them here). The first relates directly to the ACRL Standards, of which I was quite critical in the book. Esther Grassian makes the excellent point that, since they were adopted over two decades ago, the Standards have offered a structure that was missing and that is still needed. I certainly do not deny that need, and, in many ways, the Standards fulfill the structural need admirably. In part, my concern is, and has been for some time, that they impose too much structure. That is, the Standards, especially those other than Standard Three, are at a level of detail for both the instructor and for the desired pedagogical outcomes. Grassian disagrees with me on this point; she writes, "The Standards also describe many independent means for learners to become information literate, including acts of investigation, critical thinking, and analysis." While I believe these should be objectives of instruction, I do not think the Standards provide the kinds of intellectual and methodological guidance to achieve them. Rather than a framework, which Grassian maintains they do offer, I argue that they bypass framework and become enmeshed in minutiae. The risk of the detail that permeates the Standards is that a genuine framework that could shape instructional content and method is missing. It is here that I do think the Standards do

overemphasize mechanics. I should mention that commentators are not in complete agreement on this point; John Doherty says, “The mechanistic approach in the ACRL Standards should be challenged.” It is just this kind of healthy debate that I hoped would result from the publication of the book.

Ragains’ second question asks the respondents if they think practicing librarians need to be reminded that information literacy is a means to an end and not an end in itself. This must have been a very difficult question for them to answer; I am struggling with it. Debra Gilchrist states that she thinks the interdisciplinary nature of library instruction ensures that librarians are not likely to be tempted to see the instruction as an end in itself. On the one hand, a purpose of any instruction—single session or course—is to provide students the wherewithal to succeed at navigating the complex intellectual landscape of their courses and majors. In that sense, the instruction is a means, a means that is frequently guided by the faculty teaching specific courses. As Gilchrist wisely observes, though, the teaching faculty may have fairly narrow and specific aims in their courses, and librarians should keep an eye on larger outcomes that are not solely focused on immediate ends. On the other hand, library instruction has a value of its own, a unique value. I believe the respondents chose to address this matter in the context of other questions, but they did mention such things as metacognition, things that are emphasized in the book.

When the respondents were asked what their key criticisms of the book were, they were not at a loss for words. Gilchrist took issue with my treatment of the work of Carol Kuhlthau. I will readily admit that I do find, and have found, Kuhlthau’s ideas simultaneously tantalizing and frustrating.

The very concept of “seeking meaning” is undeniably essential to all education and is especially pertinent to librarianship’s instructional mission. I agree with Gilchrist that a creative reading of Kuhlthau could lead to the apprehension of a complex and iterative learning dynamic that engages students continuously. I should emphasize here that, while one may turn to Heidegger for some guidance in the phenomenological aspect of the framework I suggest, I strongly urge that one use Husserl and Ricoeur as sources. Heidegger turned much of Husserl’s thought on its head, and much of the attention today to multiplicity of readings of texts relies on Heidegger (and even a misreading of Heidegger). I hope that what Husserl has to say is indeed new to librarians, but I will admit that I may well have done an insufficient job of explicating what I intended to draw from Husserl.

Grassian had the most detailed criticisms, which deserve to be addressed in some detail. First, I really cannot apologize from drawing on the work of philosophers. It may be, as I admitted above, that I did not explain my use of their works with enough clarity, but everything that occurs in the profession of librarianship can, and should, be subjected to scrutiny. The thinking of many philosophers has already tackled many of the matters librarians grapple with on a daily basis. Grassian and I have different readings of the Standards. To extract only one point that she makes, the Standards state that students need to recognize their needs for information; this, she says, is the same as my maintaining that the first essential step for an individual is to frame the question. Framing a question is much more than recognizing a need for information. In other words, I mean something more than having an intimation of a gap in one’s knowledge. I mean a more formal and well developed conception of

where the gap resides, what it relates to, and the complex cognitive interrelations that enable question framing.

Grassian also says that I assume the most effective pedagogy is that used by discipline-based faculty, that information literacy only makes sense in relation to academic disciplines. I did not intend to leave readers with that impression, primarily because of two reasons: (1) Academic disciplines tend to employ methods that can be very specific to their discipline (mathematics as opposed to history, for example); and (2) there is a metaprocess of reasoning that covers all instruction and is not disciplinary in any sense of particularity. It is true that the teaching faculty are the experts in the content and the methods of inquiry in their respective fields; but even in single-session meetings across many disciplines, librarians are able to work with faculty to ensure that meaningful examples are employed in the instructional sessions. I do not think that Grassian and I are really in disagreement here. There are limits to what librarians can do in the instructional realm in specialized disciplines, but there are also, as she points out, extremely valuable exercises in reasoning that apply universally.

Grassian questions whether I have observed actual instruction as it has taken place in libraries. The answer to that is yes; I oversee the University of Missouri's one-credit course. Additionally, I have worked with librarians across North America in collaborative efforts to improve curricula and pedagogy. I agree with her that many librarians have been creative and innovative and have contributed a tremendous amount to professional development in the field. I have also seen many practicing librarians who resist any focus on enhancing students' critical abilities and the expansion of instruction beyond the technical use of

resources. It is not possible to make universal statements about practice in librarianship. I must confess that I am unclear as to her last criticism; it may be that we are once again in agreement. Certainly the teaching faculty establishes the rules according to which students will be assessed; that said, there could possibly be an inherent prejudice (warranted or not) against some resources. If the prejudice is warranted, then the expression of the warrant needs to follow the spirit of the Standards—it should be explicit and reasoned.

I find it difficult to respond to Nichols' comments. I do agree that recalcitrant students will always be a challenge, but they are not merely a challenge for librarians; all teachers at all levels bemoan students who do not pay attention. I fear that the presentation of the content of a specific course at a specific institution may miss the differences among students and institutions that certainly exist and must be acknowledged. When I wrote the book, I was aware that I would probably convince few people that "information literacy" is a misleading term for what it is that librarians do. However, I stand by the argument that I attempted to make; "literacy" implies a deficiency that can and should be remedied. At the same time, it implies a minimal level of competence. Both of the implications are, I believe, misplaced in the context of library instruction. As for information, it is a word that means everything and nothing; the best I can do here is recommend a work of mine that will appear soon (Budd, in press).

It is gratifying that the respondents believed that there was something that librarians could learn from the book. Doherty observes that the students are still developing in important ways; I do not think this observation can be overstated. There is

a substantial amount of research on the cognitive and social development of college-age students that indicates strongly the growth that still lies in front of them. His connection between the development and the assumption of the Standards that immediacy of instruction is foremost is very important. I heartily agree with Gilchrist's comments related to students' needs to explore according to their own thinking and cognitive needs. I also appreciate her willingness to examine the phenomenological elements of learning. Nichols appears to be in agreement with Gilchrist as well. I am also grateful to Grassian for emphasizing that the peer review process is more complex than may be presented to students. Her recognition that learning is a challenge and that we must employ many and varied processes and actions is extremely important; the effectiveness of instruction relies greatly on enabling students to face and respond to different approaches to topics. Grassian's mention of Bechtel's article is welcome; I should have included it in my work.

Ragains' next question may be the most difficult of all. I, for one, cannot say that librarians have settled for teaching lower-level skills; ascertaining that would require a very large-scale investigation. I would, though, suggest that more of a dialectical approach could be adopted by more instruction librarians. As Gilchrist says, some attention to fundamental skills is necessary so that students can maneuver through a complicated informational landscape. She notes that concentration on fundamentals may be, of necessity, more prevalent in single-session experiences. She offers a very thoroughly considered response to the question, noting that faculty could work more closely with librarians to create assignments that build on a growing and maturing dialectic. She mentions that

librarians may be lacking a developmental approach to student learning, but I would add that the teaching faculty may not be much more advanced than librarians when it comes to awareness of dialectics. Nichols echoes some of what Gilchrist says and adds that there are indeed conscious efforts to infuse instruction with higher-level learning strategies. Because a major purpose of the book is to enhance and extend the conversation about instruction, I am especially hopeful that this area of dialectics might be a focus of some discussion at future conference sessions.

The last question—what might the model I present contribute to instruction—is not easy for me to answer; I am too close to the project to be as objective as the respondents. Nichols summarizes his response by saying that he is not convinced that a stand-alone course is necessary. A reader of the book may well surmise that I would disagree; I do disagree, but only to a point. The ideal that I would actually like to see at all colleges and universities is a much more fully integrated, collaborative approach that would result in students grasping the continuity between the classroom instruction and the exploration of what others say and write. In other words, it would be best if librarians and faculty in all disciplines were to cooperate throughout all 4 years of students' academic lives so they could become most fully aware of the inherent dialectical nature of all education. That said, I am in complete agreement with Nichols' admonition that the students be informed about useful resources—those that are most likely to provide expressions that embody intellectual integrity and authority (writ large). When the instructions include the reasons why those resources are useful in specific ways, the learning process can indeed be rich. I will say that the idea just described is an extraordinarily difficult one to achieve, in large part because more

librarians would be needed on every campus so that the collaboration could take place. That is a campus shortcoming, though, and one that cannot be addressed here.

I want to reiterate my thanks to Pat Ragains for putting this project together; it has taken a significant amount of time and energy on his part. I also want to reiterate my gratitude to the respondents for offering not just useful, but wise, commentary on the book. No author could hope for anything more than critical attention to his work.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

By Patrick Ragains

The panelists' comments and John Budd's response achieve more of a synthesis than I expected. Each one articulates the belief that students' analytical skills need deliberate nurturing and that cogent information use is an essential part of one's intellectual growth. I wondered initially if professional pride, sometimes called "turf issues," might divide Budd (a library educator) from practicing librarians. After considering what the reviewers wrote, I do not believe this exchange of views suffered from such feelings.

This brings us to the substantive issues raised by Budd and the panelists. Regarding Budd's dislike of the term "information literacy," I admit that I didn't like it much, either, when I first encountered it. I believed, as did Jesse Shera, that librarianship had been synthesized out of other disciplines (e.g., literary scholarship, chemistry, education, psychology) and that it didn't need a special name (Shera, 1972, p. 199). Never mind that this is an incomplete conception. I was much younger

and less well-rounded than I am today. I am familiar with the argument that asserting a need for information literacy implies that the unwashed are illiterate. Some think this renders "information literacy" an undesirable term. I disagree. First, many words have opposites, although that is no reason to avoid using them. I am unaware if other related terms such as "financial literacy" and "numeracy" provoke a similar response. I am comfortable discussing information literacy in the company of those who understand it in any of the aspects defined by Christine Bruce (1997, pp. 110-151). Just as easily, I can use other terminology such as "research methods," "critical analysis," "corroboration," or "library research skills," all of which intersect with my conception of information literacy. Finally, I believe a number of societal trends call for a more deliberate focus on teaching analytical skills, or literacies, more than just *library* instruction. Rather than implying disdain for the illiterate, I think such an attitude simply supports educational improvement, focused on students' information use.

Budd and several of the respondents are critical of ACRL's Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education. As one who attended open hearings when the Standards were drafted, I noted some strong points as well as others that seemed opaque or diluted. Since their adoption, the Standards have been used in many instructional programs and have guided the development of discipline-based competency standards in the sciences and other fields. In both cases, librarians often modify the Standards to suit the needs of their own institutions or disciplinary focus. The Standards are serving librarians' instructional efforts well, although it may be appropriate at some point for librarians and other stakeholders to review and revise

them.

John Budd's model course appears sound and resembles some others I've encountered. My strongest suggestion is to emphasize using real questions, not just those with predetermined answers (e.g., use Lexis-Nexis for news; use the catalog for books). Students should discuss their own research questions and search strategies, which can yield several benefits. Questioning, of course, opens many doors to learning. Once articulated, questions or tentative thesis statements can be unpacked to allow examination of a researcher's assumptions and current level of knowledge. The instructor can advise the student concerning strengths and weaknesses in her planned research, recommend sources for background information, suggest reframing, and point to resources and strategies to investigate. These techniques can be used in a variety of settings, as long as time is available to cover what is desired. I believe this is congruent with Budd's idea of phenomenological cognitive action.

ILI programs in higher education, particularly credit-bearing courses, have advanced greatly in smaller institutions, including many 4-year and community colleges. While I rely on casual observation, rather than on data to support my ideas about this, I believe institutional priorities and issues of scale often work in favor of better teaching in small schools, more so than in large colleges and universities. As John Doherty wrote, cultures and priorities in large, comprehensive universities may make introducing and sustaining an information literacy course difficult. On larger campuses, course-related instruction, often one-shot sessions, appear more common than credit-bearing ILI. In his rejoinder, Budd notes that he favors course-integrated

instruction throughout the curriculum.

Esther Grassian noted 16 errors in the book that should have been corrected in the proofreading and copyediting stages of the book. She listed these in her complete response, which is posted on the *Communications in Information Literacy* website. There was no groundswell among the panelists concerning this, but I detected a few such errors before reading Grassian's comments. To cite two examples, on page 131, Budd writes "college has a string effect on people..." [should be "strong"]; on page 180: "examples of famous people who have been caught plagiarism" [should be "plagiarizing"]. Although none of the errors appear to alter his intended meaning, poor editing compromises clarity. It is in Budd's interest to ensure thorough proofreading and editing for subsequent editions of the book.

Where does this leave us? I think more contact is needed between practicing instructional librarians and library educators concerning librarians' sense of what students need to know and how to teach them. Perhaps an exploratory joint committee, comprised of members of the Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE) and the ACRL Instruction Section could focus on preparation of MLS students to provide information literacy instruction. If more library educators conducted research and published works about ILI, then their ideas might become better integrated into practice. Library educators themselves might also gain influence by initiating or joining more programmatic information literacy efforts in higher education. The preparation of better informed, analytically-minded students is a worthy goal for such efforts.

Finally, I wish to thank John Budd, John

Doherty, Debra Gilchrist, Esther Grassian, and James Nichols for devoting their time and attention to this panel and rejoinder. They have given me much to consider, which I hope is true for others who read *Framing Library Instruction* and this discussion.

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