

Threshold Concepts of Information Literacy as Organizing Framework

Sarah Toatley, Honors Program

Course Background

HPR 183 G is a [Grand Challenge](#) course with general education outcomes in [Information Literacy](#) and [Diversity & Inclusion](#).

I have created several iterations of this shell since 2017.

This Spring, with Portrayals of Diversity and Inclusion in North America (which I've nicknamed (di)visions & diversity) a broad range of cultural artifacts are analyzed and interpreted through conceptual frameworks including the threshold concepts of information literacy, positionality, intersectionality, and decoloniality.

The unique demographics of Honors means this is an intimate seminar with an average of 20 students.

I have delivered this course both online and in person and teaching formats include: lecturing, small group discussion, in-class activities, peer-to-peer discussion and feedback, creative writing activities, somatic practices and breathwork, written meditations, discussion boards, student presentations, etc.

I use a [labor-based grading system](#).

If students commit to completing all work (assigned at the beginning of the semester and outlined in the syllabus), they receive full credit (an A) as their transcript mark for the class.

In order to participate in this grading system, students must turn in all work.

If work is not submitted, a grade breakdown (also in syllabus) is used to determine the transcript mark.

Rather than provide grades as feedback on discrete assignments over the course of the semester, feedback takes the form of dialogue and discussion, via Brightspace, email, and in person.

Course Changes

A recontextualization of many individual assignments into the [framework of the Threshold Concepts of Information Literacy](#).

This was accomplished by starting the semester with a brief introduction to the Threshold Concepts, and revisiting one concept in greater detail every other week (or so) throughout the semester.

On the syllabus, I refer to this as a Foundational Focus.

Usually the format would involve:
a (re)introduction of concept,
exploration (journaling, further reading),
conversation in small groups.

Total time allotted would be around 30 minutes and prompts were usually designed to dovetail with other topics/concepts/subject matter being explored in class.

Results

A more cohesive approach to examining and exploring Information Literacy that facilitates meaningful understanding of this interrelated and multi factorial field of knowledge and better serves the general education outcomes.

Additionally, [frameworks require a level of engagement and deep learning](#) that carries over into other concepts I frequently organize my teaching/classroom activities around, including: [intersectionality](#), [positionality](#), and [decoloniality](#).

THINK BIG  WE DOSM