Convener
Kate Langan

Summary
The purpose of this discussion group is to facilitate a conversation in integrating threshold concepts (TCs) in meaningful information literacy lesson plans. The discussion will stem from and continue the conversation in the 2013 article by Townsend, Brunetti, & Hofer. Kate Langan will briefly review definitions of TCs, discuss her own interpretation, and share how she applied this theoretical framework to her own teaching. She will present lesson plans and activities based on a pedagogical approach that finds its foundation in dialogism.

This discussion is designed for those interested in moving away from skills-based information literacy lesson plans toward a more meaningful and thoughtful teaching pedagogy.

Attendees will be encouraged to share what they’ve identified as TCs and how they have applied them in the classroom. The discussion will break out into smaller discussions where participants can further brainstorm ideas for lesson plans and TCs.

Rationale
Kate is the lead librarian on a project to develop an integrative IL program for the college-level writing course Engl. 1050. During the past five years, she has been assessing student learning in hopes of restructuring the IL program for Engl. 1050. She soon realized that she did not know a critical aspect of her students. She was unsure of incoming first year students’ experiences and their exposure to research and writing. In pre-assessing incoming first year students, it was quickly revealed that her assumptions and bias concerning their experience rendered her skills-based IL lesson plan irrelevant and not meaningful. Approximately 20% of first year students in the Engl. 1050 course did not write a paper in high school. They have never been exposed to the ritual, the process, the language, or the expectations. More than 30% never used their high school library. Some didn’t even have a library to use. Not only is the academic library a foreign land, but the cultural cues and language required to be fluent in the research and writing are also foreign. By teaching to universal concepts, lesson plans based on threshold concepts immerse students in the language of academia in order to prepare them at a foundational, conceptual level, which is then easily transferred into task-based skill sets.

Overview of Session
1. Introduction to people
2. Introduction to technology
3. Presentation: Teaching the Art of the Academic Dialog: Dialogism, Agnotology, & Threshold Concepts in the IL lesson plan.
4. Questions
5. Break out sessions
6. Reconvene for summaries
7. Conclusion
8. Final questions, thoughts.

**Articles to read prior to the webinar:**


**Questions to think about in advance:**

Please read this article and think about the following questions. These questions contextualize a pedagogical shift: away from skills-based teaching and learning to a pedagogy that emphasizes foundational knowledge/threshold concepts.

These four topics will also be used for the break out sessions. Please think about which conversation you would like to join.

A.) What is your bias?

When students participate in a skills-based IL lesson, what assumptions do librarians have? Why? What is the source or origin of these assumptions?

B.) Who are you teaching?

What do you know about your student base? Millennial is all the hype, but beyond that? Our students tend to be local, from smaller school districts with average ACT/SAT scores and high school GPAs. Is this important to librarians?

C.) Who are your allies?

Can you identify offices, people, and other resources to help you get a better picture of your student body? What would you like to ask them about your student body? For you to teach IL more effectively, what do you need to know about your students?

D.) What is in your lesson?

What are you teaching and why? Are you teaching specific skills-based standards? What would happen if you didn’t teach to specific standards? Would you end up teaching skills or concepts? Is it possible to create lesson plans based on threshold concepts while also addressing formal SLOs? What do they look like? Does it work? How can they be assessed?

**Further reading:**


