INTRODUCTION

In this paper we, as members of the ACRL EBSS Social Work Committee, share our experience of developing a companion document to the ACRL Framework. Our overarching goal of this project is to clearly demonstrate the overlap between the ACRL Framework and social work's educational competencies professional ethics. Over the course of this two-year project, we developed a fuller understanding of how social justice—and its corresponding concepts of diversity, equity, and inclusion—exist in both professions. We decided to format the document to a Springshare LibGuide so that it exists as an open and accessible tool. In order to encourage a diversity of voices and reflections about this project, we embedded a feedback form into the Guide itself. Note that throughout this paper, we use the terms document and Guide interchangeably to refer to the Social Work: Companion Document to the ACRL Framework.

In addition to our core audience of academic social work librarians, we include social work educators, practitioners, and social work students as the key stakeholders of this Guide. Our hope is to demonstrate how academic librarians—regardless of their subject specialities—can incorporate their liaison areas' existing disciplinary guidelines and standards to determine where they may already align with the ACRL Framework.

OUR PROCESS

The Social Work Committee was tasked by the EBSS leadership in 2018 with creating a companion document to the Framework. To accomplish this, we started meeting every eight weeks beginning that August. Our process began with reviewing examples of companion documents from other ACRL Committees, specifically Psychology, Journalism, and Women and Gender Studies. Next, we developed a targeted action plan by prioritizing which portion of the document to address first. As a Committee we started by reviewing one Frame at a time; highlighting overlapping themes, values, ethics, and standards as they related to social work.

From the beginning we determined it was crucial to consult two major resources from the field of social work: The Council of Social Work Education (CSWE) Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) and the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics. CSWE is the main accrediting body of baccalaureate and master's social work programs in the United States and its EPAS outline ’thresholds

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for professional competence” in social work practice. We used the EPAS to identify overlaps with the Framework’s pedagogical goals and the Code of Ethics to understand the profession’s ethical principles and core values; the latter of which includes service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence.

To work collectively on this project, we began by drafting a single, shared Google Doc that quickly became cumbersome and unwieldy, so we transitioned to using a Google Sheet to add and edit content. Our Google Sheet was organized with a Frame on each row. The first four columns contain the short and long narrative portions of each Frame, followed by the corresponding Knowledge Practices and Dispositions. Figure 1 depicts the successive columns containing the Committee’s reflections on how the first Frame connected to social work information literacy. Inspired by the mapping work of Gregory and Hines, we added content from both the EPAS and Code of Ethics in the neighboring two rows. Upon successive readings we highlighted text in red font that reflected themes of social justice, noting values of diversity, equity, and inclusion. The structure of our Google Sheet helped us better visualize how the two professions’ standards and ethics overlapped.

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<td>Learners who are developing their information literate abilities:</td>
<td>* In Social Work we see Authority is Constructed and Contextual exemplified in the process of Evidence Based Practice (EBP). In EBP a social worker formulates an answerable practice question, searches for empirical research to answer the question and, if found, integrates it with the practitioner’s expertise and their client’s values, culture, and preferences to inform treatment. The social worker recognizes the authority of empirical research (and the information resources it is contained in) and contextualizes it according to their expertise and the needs, values, and culture of their client.</td>
<td>The CSWE does not use the term “information literacy” in its Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS). Rather, it outlines the following competencies and educational policies:</td>
<td>4.01 Competence (c) Social workers should base practice on recognized knowledge, including empirically based knowledge, relevant to social work and social work ethics.</td>
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<td>*develop and maintain an open mind when encountering various and sometimes conflicting perspectives;</td>
<td>* The increased focus on Evidence Based Practice in Social Work is mirrored in the CSWE EPAS Competency Four: Engage In Practice* Informed Research and Research* Informed Practice. The context of the information need represented by the frame Authority is Constructed and Contextual is particularly relevant to social workers as they make decisions for their clients based on research as well as individual social worker professional experience and the experiences of the client. Additionally, peer reviewed research on the effectiveness</td>
<td>Competency 4: Engage In Practice Informed Research and Research Informed Practice</td>
<td>5.01 Integrity of the Profession (d) Social workers should contribute to the knowledge base of social work and share with colleagues their knowledge related to practice, research, and ethics. Social workers should seek to contribute to the profession’s literature and to share their knowledge at professional meetings and conferences.</td>
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<td>*motivate themselves to find authoritative sources, recognizing that authority may be conferred or manifested in unexpected ways;</td>
<td>and “the demonstration of competence is informed by knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes that include the social worker’s critical thinking” (p.6)</td>
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<td>*develop awareness of the</td>
<td>* Educational Policy 2 for Generalist Practice requires that students “acquire research information”</td>
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<td>importance of assessing content with a skeptical stance with a self-awareness of their own biases and worldview;</td>
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<td>*question traditional notions of authority and recognize the value of diversity</td>
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Figure 1. Screenshot of the Google Sheet. Detail on Frame 1: Authority is Constructed and Contextual

Once we completed the Google Sheet, we transitioned its content to a LibGuide where each Frame was given its own page on the Guide. At the top of each page, we address the relevance of the Frame in question to social work education and practice. When relevant, two columns outline content from both the EPAS and the Code of Ethics. Each page also includes suggested learning objectives for each Frame and sample exercises for information literacy instruction.

To generate feedback on the companion document, we publicized the Guide on an ACRL EBSS listserv, a Google Group, and delivered two presentations in 2020 about our project: In May, we accepted an invitation by the ACRL Information Literacy Frameworks and Standards Committee to showcase how our project connects to the values of social justice. The following November, Committee members presented virtually at the annual meeting of the Council for Social Work Education.

**FINDINGS**

In crafting pages for each of the information literacy Frames, we identified three themes running throughout the entire Framework with respect to social justice: (1) information access as privilege, (2) cultural competency...
and humility, and (3) valuing lived experience. These themes resonated with the practice of social work, allowing us to draw connections to its Code of Ethics and its educational competencies (the EPAS). As these themes of social justice were already present in the Framework, we argue that they demonstrate how academic librarians can enhance information literacy alongside the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The first theme speaks to information access as privilege. This mirrors the third ACRL Frame, Information Has Value, which calls on academic librarians to engage learners (in this case, social work students) as they “understand how and why some individuals or groups may be underrepresented or systematically marginalized within the systems that produce and disseminate information” and “recognize issues of access or lack of access to information sources.” Over time, such engagement with librarians can encourage social work students to “see themselves as contributors to the information marketplace rather than only consumers of it” and “be able to examine their own information privilege.”

The next theme, cultural competency and cultural humility, forms a praxis which values diversity while recognizing the need for self-reflection, lifelong learning, and institutional accountability. Frame 1, Authority Is Constructed and Contextual, acknowledges various communities may recognize different types of authority and encourages one to view it with an eye of informed skepticism and openness to new perspectives, recognizing that unlikely voices can also be recognized and credible.

In the third theme, valuing lived experience, librarians acknowledge there is more than one source of authority. This approach encourages inclusivity within library collections and—as presented in the fifth Frame, Scholarship as Conversation—recognizes how a sustained discourse with new insights and discoveries based on varied perspectives and interpretations, is critical to learning and knowledge creation. Frame 5 urges librarians to engage with learners so they may “identify barriers to entering scholarly conversation via various venues” and “recognize that certain systems privilege authorities and that not having a fluency in the language and process of a discipline disempowers one’s ability to participate.”

These three themes, present throughout the Framework, facilitated our ability to connect information literacy to social work’s professional and educational standards. These connections, however, are not necessarily unique to social work. Librarians specializing in other disciplines may find such themes resonate within different sections of the Framework according to tenets of their discipline’s professional and educational programs.

**Example: Authority is Constructed and Contextual**

Following our introductory “About” section that provides information on our Guide’s aim and audience, we devoted successive tabs to each of the six Frames. In each tab we delineate how the particular Frame relates to both social work practice education (see Figure 2).

*Figure 2.* The Authority is Constructed and Contextual Tab on the Guide. The narrative for Social Work Practice is circled in red.
To illustrate this clearly, we will examine our work using the first Frame, Authority is Constructed and Contextual. As noted by Branstiter and Halpern,19 we agreed this Frame connects to the principle of evidence-based practice for social work. Practitioners aim to routinely gather empirical data, reflect on their own expertise, and integrate it with their client’s experiences and needs. Thus, social workers must recognize their own authority as experts, as well as that of existing research and their client’s authority of their own lived experience. With regard to the latter point, Branstiter and Halpern state “any evidence-based decision must be contextualized within the client’s sociopolitical realities.”20 Additionally, librarians can help social work students navigate the authority of academic scholarship and how to evaluate non-scholarly sources they may consult, such as consumer health information.

Next, we link the first Frame to disciplinary standards for social work. The CSWE EPAS list nine competencies for social work education. The fourth competency in particular, Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice,21 complements information literacy in general. Our Committee identified this fourth competency as especially relevant to the first Frame as it highlights how social workers must consult various types of authoritative sources. This critical competency argues that social workers must “understand that evidence that informs practice derives from multi-disciplinary sources and multiple ways of knowing.”22

**Figure 3.** Detail of the page of the guide detailing the connections to professional standards and ethics for Frame 1.

With regards to social work practice, the NASW Code of Ethics outlines both ethical standards and principles. Our Committee identified two standards that aligned with the first ACRL Frame, Authority is Constructed and Contextual. The Ethic speaks to Cultural Awareness and Social Diversity which directs social workers to “have a knowledge base of their clients’ cultures and be able to demonstrate competence in the provision of services that are sensitive to clients’ cultures and to differences among people and cultural groups.”23 This reiterates the need for understanding clients as a type of authority based on their lived experiences. Second, the Ethical Standard of professional Competence argues that “[s]ocial workers should base practice on recognized knowledge, including empirically based knowledge, relevant to social work and social work ethics.”24 This standard, in turn, mirrors to the fourth CSWE EPAS which emphasizes research-informed practice.25 Such types of “recognized knowledge” necessitate a discernment of authority’s “constructed and contextual” nature in information literacy.

Finally, we concluded each Frame by suggesting learning outcomes and sample exercises that may “illuminate the social justice, critical thinking, and higher order thinking elements of information literacy.”26 To do so, the Committee drew from our own experiences as instruction librarians as well as recommendations from the ACRL Information Literacy Sandbox.27 For the first Frame, we offer two exercises as outlined in Figure 4 below.28
IMPLICATIONS FOR ACADEMIC LIBRARIANS

As mentioned at the outset of this paper, our audience for this companion document includes academic librarians who liaise with subjects outside of social work. We encourage all academic librarians to use our Guide as a template for leveraging your subjects’ existing disciplinary documents to determine where they may, or may not, align with the Framework. To illustrate this, let’s look at the field of nursing to imagine how an academic librarian liaising with this subject area might begin.

Consulting and collaborating with nursing faculty is certainly an ideal place to begin identifying the field’s key disciplinary documents. In nursing, The American Association of the Colleges of Nursing (AACN) outlines its essential components of graduate nursing education. Use this type of document to guide conversations with nursing faculty about how they may (or may not) recognize shared goals of information literacy, including the embedded concepts of social justice. In particular, the AACN’s stated positions on Diversity and Inclusion is a disciplinary document worth reviewing together. Academic librarians can also consult with existing ACRL Committees such as the Health Sciences Interest Group who developed the “Information Literacy Competency Standards for Nursing.” In other words, consult with existing documents and teaching faculty, to conceptualize how a companion document may take shape in your respective liaison areas.

CONCLUSION

Developing our social work companion document demonstrated to us how librarians in a common subject specialty from a variety of academic institutions can collaborate. Tasked by the EBSS leadership, this project also serves as an example of the benefits of participating in professional organizations similar to ACRL. Through this enterprise we fostered greater collegiality among our fellow librarians across academic disciplines as well as with social work faculty. For them, this companion document is evidence of our mutual goals concerning the education and preparation of future social workers.

Relating the Framework to social work’s professional and education standards challenged us to assert the importance of information literacy in the practice of social work. As we studied the NASW Code of Ethics and CSWE EPAS we gained confidence to communicate as peers with our social work faculty. Familiarizing ourselves with the Code of Ethics and EPAS also informed our decision to view this companion document as a work in progress; a malleable Guide that will change with future updates to existing standards.

Coincidentally, CSWE is scheduled to revise its EPAS in 2022. Early drafts utilize the term “information literacy” incorrectly as it merely speaks to the use of technology in social work education and practice. In November 2020, our Committee presented our document at the CSWE annual program meeting. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting was held virtually much like this 2021 ACRL Conference. Currently, it is unclear if the committee of the revised EPAS viewed our presentation or intend to update its use of “information literacy” as we argued. We wonder, had the meeting occurred in person, if we would have had more direct opportunities to positively impact and advocate for ACRL’s fulsome definition of information literacy.

While we intend to continue this advocacy virtually, we strongly recommend social work librarians to review and challenge the proposed language in the 2022 EPAS with its incorrect use of the term “information literacy.”
literacy.” It is critical that social work educators have a proper understanding of what information literacy means and we trust our Guide can help in this process.

Finally, numerous ACRL committees are in currently in different stages revising their related companion documents to the ACRL Framework.39 We hope our social work companion document and our shared process encourages academic librarians in other disciplines to leverage their subjects’ professional standards, guidelines, and statements on diversity, equity, and inclusion to determine where they may, or may not, align with the Framework.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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NOTES

1. EBSS (Education and Behavioral Sciences Section) Social Work Committee http://www.ala.org/acrl/ebss/acr-ebssswsw
5. last modified October 24, 2020, https://acrl.libguides.com/sw
6. Education and Behavioral Sciences Section
11. “Connecting Justice To Frameworks: Information Literacy In Social Work” can be viewed at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RcilpU6HJxEr
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
20. Ibid., 26
22. Ibid.
23. NASW Code of Ethics, Ethical Standard 1.05(b)
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid., Ethical Standard 4.01(c)
26. CSWE EPAS, Competency 4: Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice, p. 4
27. Ibid., Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice, p.7
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