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Introduction

As academic librarians we prescribe an intellectual framework for research to students by referring to the "family of terms *scholar-scholarly-scholarship*" (Andresen 2000) and by touching upon the mechanics of peer-review in our instruction. Given the long list of goals to accomplish during a one-shot session in a lecture-handout format, we are pressed for time to elaborate on how we perceive this framework and the values it prescribes with respect to student learning. It might be reasonable to expect disciplinary faculty to take on this task and fill in the gaps for students, yet, in a one-on-one reference interaction with students, librarians very often find students underprovided; students come to the library completely baffled, not knowing *why* they are asked to look for scholarly sources and where this fits in the larger scheme of things. What librarians (and other academic participants) may have realized by now about academic values is that they are seldom made explicit, let alone defined.

Scholarship, the avatar of academic values, is a slippery concept. And yet it is one that cannot be ignored for the fundamental reason that it provides an overarching prescriptive environment for all endeavors of academe, and more so for information literacy. It is very likely that as researchers and instructors, both disciplinary faculty and academic librarians, have several intertwined understandings of scholarship related to personality traits, professional identity, practices, methods, and processes, and it is difficult to delineate them for a useful classroom presentation or discussion. Lea and Street (1998), for example, while looking at the broader institutional and

epistemological context in the case of student writing, find that academic discourse conventions are as intangible to instructors who frame their instruction within it as they are to students; instructors' academic knowledge and disciplinary perspectives strongly underlie how they frame their instruction and student assessment, yet they were most likely to use the surface elements of "structure" and "argument" in giving feedback to students.

Indeed, the givens of academe are not given at all for most constituents of academe—*not* for instructors or for newly entering college students, more so *not* for first generation college students or for students whose sociocultural episteme is very different from the academic episteme. In this article, I present a few questions to grapple with in considering this tricky concept, starting with a brief overview of LIS perceptions of scholarship, followed by an argument for a broader academic context for information literacy. Following that, I present the door-in-the-face technique for reflection on complex theoretical questions followed by a practical approach exemplified by Brew's (1999) qualitative conceptions of scholarship. In conclusion, I present a few ideas on how we might begin to make the sociocultural context of higher education visible.

Library and Information Science (LIS) Perspectives on Scholarship

In information literacy literature, we find several *underlying* perceptions of scholarship, particularly related to notions of expertise—our own expertise as librarians as well as expectations of our students as budding scholars. The first wave of information literacy advocacy in United States in the 1980s and the early 1990s began with a skills-oriented, competencies-based approach to expertise: students should be able to search, retrieve, organize, and evaluate information; thorough information-gathering skills implies a certain quality of research practices related to the rigor and meticulousness of disciplinary experts. ACRL standards for information literacy and the *Big Six* skills approach are a testimony to this approach. Libraries as a place to conduct research and librarians as qualified experts in searching came to be the selling point for information literacy. Information and knowledge were used interchangeably and the road to the information age was thought to be paved with chunks of information put together.

In the mid-to-late 1990s, as the realization that content, process, and context cannot be separated crept in, instruction librarians started discussing process-oriented and contextual approaches that integrated library instruction with the curriculum. Librarians' role as collection developers was seen to endow instruction librarians with the knowledge of the structure of disciplinary literature that could be used in a curriculum-integrated program. Scholarship was implicit in the understanding of disciplinary literature structures and the scholarly communication processes that provide the disciplinary literature with unique structures.

In recent years with the proliferation of web content, critical thinking skills for evaluative criteria of content has become the core issue. Meola (2004), for instance, has debunked the checklist approach to web content evaluation, a relic of the skill-based information literacy era, to propose a general approach based on comparison of content and corroboration of evidence—an evaluative process contingent on reasoned judgments in the context of the research topic. Others with disciplinary interests have proposed discipline-specific guidelines wherein scholarship means an ability to recognize cognitive authority and assess the validity of evidence in interpreting information. Holschuh Simmons (2005), for example, has contended that in our instruction, information is presented as monolithic and apolitical, and that we should point to the differences in disciplinary discourse practices for a critical approach to information. She looks to genre theory for a framework and posits that librarians' interdisciplinary background, combined with their position outside the disciplines, gives them an edge over disciplinary faculty who are too immersed within their disciplines to make domain-specific rhetoric explicit.

Information Literacy and Academic Literacy

Despite numerous calls for context-specific instruction such as "curriculum-integrated" or "discipline-specific" that expound various forms of expertise and scholarship, the fact is that library instruction still remains largely divorced from the contexts that matter. The contexts that sorely need attention are the context of academic expectations and the context of student learning. Library instruction is by-and-large connected with the research component of first-year writing composition. Writing composition has traditionally been the primary site for students' crossing over to academic culture with library instruction complementing the research-skills aspects of writing (Schroeder 2001). While this may have worked well in the past, expanded ideas of information literacy, such as those expounded by Holschuh Simmons and Meola, *cannot* be adopted in the limited-discipline, limited-instruction-time framework that we presently live in. Related to this problem is the fact that we know that students as learners need to see contextual relevance (personal, process, social, etc.) of their learning, yet we are unable to provide much of a context other than that of a research topic or theme. If we do acknowledge that our students have diverse backgrounds, that they come with their own set of beliefs about knowledge and that their understanding the activity of research as a task requires an understanding of research within the context of academic values as a whole, we need to move to a framework different from one limited in competencies and desirable outcomes.

A refreshing perspective can be found in an Australian study, where Walton and Archer (2004) approached information literacy from an interesting and distinctive standpoint of academic literacy, disciplinary cultural capital and students' epistemic beliefs. They began with premises that recognize a

number of critical aspects others have so far omitted: a) teaching a critical approach to web sources is particularly difficult when students are only partly socialized into academic literacy; b) critical evaluation often requires prior knowledge of a discipline and the cultural capital associated with it; and, c) the quality of access people enjoy is influenced by their interpretive skills and their beliefs about knowledge. In a discipline other than writing composition, Walton and Archer provided scaffolding to students' research process through online discussion over a three-year period to make evaluative criteria for web content explicit. They guided three cohorts of first-year engineering students from previously disadvantaged schooling backgrounds and having English as their second language to build evaluative criteria for web-based information on rural technologies. They concluded that information gathering skills need to be provided in certain context:

> The formulation of searches, the interpretation of search results and the effective evaluation of web sources are all competencies that require advanced knowledge of academic literacy practices. Such research practices are important but often invisible dimensions of academic culture. Our study has shown that these practices can be made visible and carefully mediated to students, and that development of domain-specific academic discourse is integral to information literacy (p. 184).

Walton and Archer's specialized method of scaffolding students' learning was offered through a mandatory, integrated academic literacy course within joint programs in engineering that cater to academically disadvantaged students each year. The method of scaffolding was identified as starting from the point of what learners already know and building from there on:

> Scaffolding identifies elements of a task that are initially beyond a learner's capacity, and allows learners to focus on aspects of the task that they can manage. Through this process, they should develop a deeper understanding of the task as a whole. Methods of scaffolding include teaching strategies, web materials, and the curriculum structures that encourage participation in a community of enquiry-supporting students engaged in knowledge construction. Scaffolding equally refers to making tasks meaningful by building on and recruiting what learners already know (p. 177).

Given the pragmatic goals of information literacy, it is easy to sideline the sociopolitical context of literacy. Walton and Archer, by defining information literacy as a subset of academic literacy, make an important distinction from current information literacy discourse which by using the "information seeking" label essentializes student experiences with information. Their dialogic interaction with students acknowledges principles of inclusion

and recognition that frame both faculty and students' assimilation into the dominant academic culture. Also, it appears that looking at information literacy from a broader perspective enables Walton and Archer to move away from facile labeling of students in two extreme categories of information literate—either lazy, deficient users of information in need of a cure, or tech-savvy personalities who are already information savvy. The study is a useful marker in seeing academic instruction librarians as instructors who ask students for a new way of thinking and being and students as responding to the propositions depending on how they understand the academic values associated with it.

The Door-in-the-face Technique for Reflection: Complex Questions

Making visible the general, domain-specific, disciplinary, and epistemic dimensions underlying academic practices and embedded within the concept of scholarship is a long and tricky process. It would require instruction librarians to be aware of their own conceptions of scholarship as they evolve, of the knowledge beliefs their student population is likely to have, and to interpret the two in terms of classroom activity. This essentially means espousing a teaching-learning connection "as being about teachers learning about their students learning as they teach" (Linder and Marshall 2003).

Conceptions of knowledge, packed in the academic bundle of scholarship, have to a large extent shaped how we view academic information literacy. To unpack this big bundle, I propose the door-in-the-face technique. In social psychology, this technique is a method of persuasion whereby asking a big outrageous request to be rejected and following it with a smaller reasonable one, increases the chance of the smaller request being accepted and complied with (Cialdini, et al., 1975). Academic instruction librarians can begin with big questions to reflect on such as:

- What is scholarship, is it an activity or an outcome of an activity (Trigwell and Shale 2004)?
- Does a scholar have a certain sensibility, a habit of mind (Andresen 2000)?
- What kind of intellectual, creative, artistic pursuits does a scholar engage in (Shulman 1987)?
- Do all regions of the world value scholarship, if so, how is this value similar to or different from the one western academia prescribes (Shanbhag 2006)?

Our primary constituents are our students. Students' views towards learning, authority, and evidence are associated with personal epistemic beliefs. Whitmire (2003, 2004) found a relationship between college students' beliefs related to the nature of knowledge and their information-seeking behavior. She found that students who believe in the uncertainty, complexity

and, contextual nature of knowledge are able to handle conflicting information and understand its rhetorical underpinnings while students who believe knowledge to be certain or absolute often hit the wall in all stages of information-seeking. A deep understanding of the nature of knowledge, its source and structure with respect to the academic institution and its disciplines is vital not only for informing students' understanding of research and to the strategies and perspectives they bring to it, but also for their negotiating established institutional and curricular structures.

As we begin to consider the knowledge beliefs of our students, some deeper questions might surface:

- What is the source of knowledge for our students?
- What is the source of academic knowledge?
- What counts as knowledge for our students?
- What counts as knowledge within academia?
- What is the justification of knowing for our students?
- What is the justification of knowing in academia?
- Do students discern a difference between knowledge of the disciplines?
- Are students' beliefs about academic knowledge general or are they domain specific (Buehl and Alexander 2001)?
- Do disciplines provide a primary way in which people think of their research (Becher 1994)?
- Does nature of certain academic discipline(s) predispose students to certain perceptions of web use (Lombaro and Miree 2003)?

In a reflexive direction, as we inform standards and policies at our institutions and in our professions, we could reflect on questions such as:

- What notions of scholarship underlie our reference to expertise in our instruction and in our discourse?
- Besides scholarship, what other conceptions of literacy, information, teaching and learning inform our practice of information literacy (Webber and Johnston 2000)?
- What is the scholarship of teaching for information literacy?

The Door-in-the-face Technique for Reflection: Qualitative Conceptions of Scholarship

Jumping from the seeming neutrality of current information literacy pedagogy to its ideological undercurrents can appear to be a tall order for academic instruction librarians; this task that can be aided with intermediary questions of how we understand scholarship through our qualitative experiences of it. Scholarship is how we qualitatively experience it in terms of academic roles, personal episteme, and personal and professional identity. Boyer's (1990) framework for teaching, research and scholarship, one that

largely informs disciplinary and institutional standards, recognizes this fact and prescribes that the individual "define in more creative ways what it means to be a scholar".

Particularly in regard to information literacy, scholarship is experienced in such closeness and intricacy with other weighty values such as knowledge and literacy that the process of delineation can become confusing and wearisome. Brew (1999) provides academic instruction librarians with a few pointers on mapping their qualitative experiences. Brew has studied how scholarship is *qualitatively experienced* by scholars from three disciplinary groups. She maps structural and referential dimensions of these conceptions and delineated the complex mass into five conceptions in order of increasing complexity: quality conception, preparation conception, creating conception, integrating conception, and confusion conception (See Figure I).

Figure I: Structural and referential dimensions of conceptions of research

Table adapted from Brew (1999)

	Structural Dimension (what is perceived and how the elements of what is perceived are related to each other)	Referential Dimension (the meaning given to what is perceived)
Quality Conception	In the foreground are activities describing careful work: accurate footnoting, critical thinking, logicality, etc. They are linked through the concepts of rigour and meticulousness.	Scholarship is interpreted as the way academics demonstrate professionalism.
Preparation Conception	In the foreground is the literature and the activities of reading and learning. They are linked through the idea of providing a context for the research.	Scholarship is interpreted as the preparation for research.
Creating Conception	In the foreground are the literature plus the addition of new ideas and discoveries. They are linked through the idea that the new knowledge has to be fitted into the existing knowledge.	Scholarship is interpreted as the process of adding new knowledge to the existing literature.
Integrating Conception	In the foreground are the literature, the new ideas and discoveries, and the processes of dissemination, including publication and teaching. Scholarship is viewed as the integration of these.	Scholarship is interpreted as the process of making a contribution to society through the integration and dissemination of ideas and knowledge.
Confusion Conception	In the foreground are confusions, including ideas from university policies and conceptions of research. There is an effort to try to make sense of confused ideas.	The concept of scholarship does not make any sense. It is interpreted as not being a useful concept.

Unlike previous research defining scholar and scholarship as fixed attributes, Brew's conceptions, based in activity, are fluid—scholarship is not a fixed concept but it changes as some activities are foregrounded while others recede to the background. The conceptions can shift from one to another and they can expand to become more complex. Their applicability lies in seeing them as distinct, progressively increasing in complexity, with each incorporating the foregrounded activities of the previous. Brew follows Marton and Booth's (1997) phenomenographical research method—each qualitative

experience forms a fundamental unit of research. It is mapped on to two dimensions: the structural dimension and the referential dimension. The structural dimension is twofold: it discerns the whole from the context on the one hand and discerns parts and the relationships between parts on the other. The referential dimension provides meaning to the structural dimension. The structural *way of experiencing* is also twofold and can be described as:

> the way in which the phenomenon is discerned from its context (sometimes called the 'external horizon'), and the way in which the phenomenon's constituent parts are related to each other (sometimes called the 'internal horizon'). In this perspective, a way of experiencing something depends on which constituent parts are discerned and appear simultaneously in the learner's focal awareness, and which parts or aspects recede into the background (Linder and Marshall, 273).

For example, in the Quality Conception, careful work is discerned from the context of professionalism; on the one hand accurate footnoting, critical thinking and, logicality are discerned as its parts, connected by their relationship with concepts such as meticulousness and rigor on the other. Putting together the whole, the parts, and the relationship between parts, the referential aspect of quality conception sees scholarship as the way academics demonstrate professionalism. Brew's conceptions are easy to understand as we have first-hand experience in all of the areas she maps as we constantly shift our focal awareness due to varied roles we play; for example in informing policies regarding promotion and tenure, as professionals we bring to our focal awareness to the outcome of scholarship and areas of research and research methods in librarianship whereas in introductory library instruction, as instructors we stress on the qualitative and preparatory aspects of work such as the rigor and meticulousness while other conceptions stay in the background.

Propositions for moving from a skills-based IL to something more holistic such as academic literacy will have many pointing that students are more eager to get on with the task at hand, earn their grades and eventually earn their degree than to be bothered with the academic culture of learning. While this is probably true in this age of education for career preparation, it is not completely true. Students do concern themselves with the immediate task at hand and yet they do discern the need to abide by a set of rules beyond the stated ones in their assignments. Lea and Street, for example, found that students switching from various forms of disciplinary writing in preliminary courses begin to realize after a while that their new academic learning demands more than structure, argument, and clarity in their writing—a voice that demonstrates the cultural conventions of academia. Considering the fact that many academically disadvantaged students feel this cognitive dissonance acutely, and sense a devaluation of their identity by the institution, leading to

psychological, social, and cultural confusion, we might want to take a deeper interest in making the invisible visible.

Conclusion

So far, we are likely to find few disciplinary faculty who have attempted to conceptualize scholarship through activity- and practice-oriented models such as involving students in their research, role playing, self-publishing, and so on. While they may have been successful in conveying certain dimensions of scholarship to students, it is unlikely that the students have continued the process of conceptualizing after the completion of the course. Also, since these are not institution-wide planned educational experiences, it is likely that many students have entirely missed the activity. To form multiple and complex conceptions of scholarship, students need to be deeply absorbed within the academic context and continually introspect their changing conceptions.

Bearing this in mind, there is an immediate need for information literacy proponents to conceptualize information literacy in broader terms of academic literacy, and think about ways in which to support students with a range of academic abilities. Clearly, this also calls for aligning information literacy discourse with research on students' experiences in higher education and the cultural conflicts these educational experiences bring forth. On a state and national level, a broader foundation for debate on theoretical assumptions behind information literacy needs to be laid as well. Meanwhile, within our institutions, we might make inroads by being mindfully aware of how we bring our understanding of scholarship to the classroom. We need to make our thinking on scholarship visible and keep advancing it in small incremental steps. For a more meaningful dialogue with students, we might consider making entries into different formats of instruction besides the lecture-handout format. Workshops, credit-bearing courses, online discussions, and online interactive journals or blogs are good venues to make certain cultural and social contexts of academic literacy explicit through dialogic engagement with students. We might also consider ways in which to engage various communities on campus to discuss how information literacy could become a discipline in itself. Instruction librarians might also work closely with senior librarians to involve institutional leaders in advocacy for substantial presence and engagement with students. A fragmented presence, with "nonwriting skills" separable from writing, has been our scourge, and we need a purposeful shift from the literacy tradition of mass instruction in skills to a literacy tradition that is organic to students' growth and that of our own.

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