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Investigate and join the **Conversation**



Accept **Revision** as part of the process



Learn through strategic **Exploration**



Consider and question **Authority**



Be **Thoughtful**; use self-reflection and imagination



Embrace art practice as **Experiential** research

LG: What I'd really like to do with CREATE in the future is expand instruction into other studio art classes. Like I said, I've been doing a lot of work with one professor to incorporate research and library sessions in the photography department. However, beyond that department and some art history classes, I do very little library instruction for the School of Art and Design. The professor I work with is also working really hard to talk about what we do together and has gotten positive feedback from other art faculty and even some initial interest in expanding information literacy in the school of art.

AM: Of course, offering more instruction within the School of Art at my university is a major goal and opportunity to use CREATE. As I said before, my liaison responsibilities have expanded since taking this new position and I'd really like to use CREATE in the Communication Arts as well: graphic design, photography, film and media, etc. I'm working to build relationships with faculty in these departments. I will still use backwards design to plan my sessions for all of these subject areas and even if I don't talk about the higher level concepts in the classroom, I'll use CREATE in planning. Or I'll use it as a model to plan for disciplines that don't have the same focus and rely more on the ACRL Framework. I'll also use it as an outreach tool as often as I can...I want students to know that research is a part of what artists do and help them acknowledge that they have been doing it all along without calling it such in many cases.

CREATE!

The research and corresponding library instruction that supports studio art coursework and artistic practice often looks different from the methods used to conduct scholarship in other disciplines. The Framework for Information Literacy, with its emphasis on knowledge practices and dispositions, resonates with art librarians because it provides much more flexibility for discipline-specific applications across a broad array of institutions than the previous Standards.

Four teaching librarians identified concepts that illuminate research practices in studio art and design disciplines and developed the memorable mnemonic device CREATE (Conversation, Revision, Exploration, Authority, Thoughtful, Experiential) to draw parallels between the research process and the creative process. CREATE can be used to introduce, reinforce, and enhance information literacy for learners in the arts. In keeping with the ethos of the Framework, CREATE is meant to be flexible in its application; it is not prescriptive and does not provide a "how-to" guide for working with art students. Instead, its concepts (and the Framework concepts) can help to contextualize information literacy within the discipline and to cultivate new knowledge practices and learning activities that are tied to the specific curricula and goals of individual art and design programs or institutions.

This zine highlights some of the work that the four contributors have done to implement CREATE in our planning, instruction, and work with art and design students. This work has provided a year-long conversation for us and we hope that others find our experiences and ideas useful; we welcome YOU to the conversation!

How does CREATE fit into your work?

Ashley Peterson: I'm a discipline-specific librarian, working almost exclusively with a studio art population, and I'm interested in keeping up with how info lit is being defined at the international level while also keeping in mind the scholarship needs of my community. CREATE acts as a great filter or modifier to the Framework. It helps enormously at the planning stage, whether I'm creating lesson plans for one-shot sessions or strategizing a more prolonged, embedded relationship with a course. It really helps me apply concepts from the Framework to studio art education.

Amanda Meeks: I also use it in planning instruction sessions for studio art students and practicing artists, and I mostly use it in the same way that I use the framework, but it helps me conceptualize what my art students actually need in terms of creative research and processes. I'm a big fan of using backwards design in my instruction sessions--I've used it to figure out new knowledge practices, learning objectives and essential questions I need to ask my students during instruction to encourage self-reflection and make a clear link between creativity and research. CREATE has also supported a more feminist and critical pedagogy when I'm working with students because each session or meeting is an opportunity for me to recognize their unique challenges and different approaches to research and creativity and I couldn't do that with a surface level understanding of how artists research.

Larissa Garcia: I've really used CREATE as more of a way to contextualize information literacy for students. It's been a way for me to put something up visually--I use the image that Amanda created in my sessions for photography students to explain "Why did your professor bring you to the library? Why are we here?" And then I use a few of the concepts (especially Conversation, Revision, and Exploration) to be the main focus for the library sessions we have. Yes, I use it for planning and behind the scenes, but I'm using it also as an outreach tool. It helps students see how the research process is related to their work.

AM: I also envisioned it as an outreach tool initially! For both faculty and students.

Alyssa Vincent: I really have been using CREATE as a planning tool and inspiration point to change up some of the previous art sessions. My predecessor left a lot of lesson plans but CREATE has really helped me rethink what students in the art history classes actually need and it has been an entry point to talk to studio art pros to encourage them to see the value in research in studio practice.

How are you planning to use CREATE in the future?

AP: I will continue to use it when planning sessions, and thinking through ways to make clear to students how research connects to their work. I haven't ruled out presenting it to them as a mnemonic device, though my experience so far with the students I work with is that they are a little allergic to catchy learning devices, things that seem very traditionally "school-y." Many students who choose to attend art school are looking for ways to learn that don't necessarily conform to traditional education models, and as someone schooled at those traditional types of institutions, I try to look past my own experience and keep this in mind.

A bigger way that I hope to use CREATE in the future is to open up conversations with other subject librarians. As of July 2016, the SMFA is a department of Tufts University, and as a result I am now working with Instruction librarian colleagues across a wide range of disciplines, from social sciences to engineering/hard sciences to the humanities. I would love to use CREATE as a way to start conversations with other liaison librarians about their discipline-specific teaching practices.

AV: Like Ashley, I feel like the students I work with are anti-acronym, but ideally I want to actively introduce CREATE to students during class sessions. I think CREATE can help students tell a more complete story about their process and their work, so acronym or not, it's a tool that will help them at each stage of their artistic life.

AM: At Northern Arizona University, where I currently work, I did a one-shot with an upper-level class on land and environmental art; I focused on “thoughtful” and came up with essential questions for each CREATE concept that each student could reflect on individually. I had students saying “I’d never thought about this before” and writing and sharing insights into their creative research practices that inform their work in key ways. Having the students themselves emphatically tell me that it was helpful (along with the instructor) made me realize that this conversation needs to happen more often. The instructor invited me to the final show for the class and pointed out the ways that students engaged with these concepts, as they made their installations, which made for a pretty incredible teaching/learning experience.

LG: I used this at the beginning of the library sessions that I do for photography classes and was able to get some student feedback on CREATE at the end of our second session. It was really great to see that they wrote down some comments that really expressed that they got it. For example, for “conversation,” one student wrote “Looking up artists gives one the ability to converse about the subjects one is interested in, also allows the artist to enter into a conversation with other artists.” Another wrote down, “Conversation is the goal for an artist practice. Without conversation it’s just a personal piece of work for the maker. Conversation is a key/goal.” For “exploration,” one student wrote, ““Research opens other avenues, keywords send one on different tangents.” They understood how research can impact and inform their work!

AP: During the current academic year (fall ‘16/spring ‘17) I am embedded in the SMFA Senior Thesis program. Students in this program undergo a selective application process and spend two semesters shaping, researching, and executing a thesis project in the visual arts. My role in the class is to guide and support students’ research practices. This is done via helping faculty develop research activities, participating in course events, and providing one-on-one research consultations with each student. CREATE really came in handy when I was thinking about how to frame my involvement in the course to students: on day one of the fall semester, I introduced myself and my role in the class by paraphrasing a quote from James Elmborg’s influential 2006 article “Critical Information Literacy: Implications for Instructional Practice.” The quote is, “Information can [be] redefined as the raw material students use to solve [problems] and to create their own understandings and identities, rather than as something ‘out there’ to be accessed efficiently.” Raw materials that result in a work of art may be cameras, canvas, metal, fabric, bodies, etc. They should also include ideas and concepts that are shaped and informed by the research process. That, to me, is what CREATE is all about.

What is one thing CREATE has changed about your professional practice?

Ashley Peterson: The process itself of developing CREATE, working with you all to define and shape it, has been amazing for my professional practice. It’s been great learning about everyone’s different approaches to teaching, and more than ever I feel like I’m part of a community of rad art librarians.

Alyssa Vincent: I would agree with Ashley, with connecting to a community. It’s also forced me to slow down. Having this kind of structure and not accepting what I’ve done in the past. It’s been a good way for me to check in and not do things I’ve always done in the past.

Amanda Meeks: I third all of that; this has been a really helpful process. When I first had the idea for CREATE, I wanted to make a “thing”—an object or learning tool for students. But it has grown into a year-long conversation with you all, which I think has been really valuable in working through the framework concepts in the art education context.

AP: Yeah, there’s a big difference between hashing things out through conversation with colleagues and going to professional conferences or reading professional literature. While those more “formal” modes of professional development are useful, they generally fall along an expert-novice learning model. The process of creating CREATE has been very cooperative, and a wonderful peer learning opportunity for me.

Larissa Garcia: Yes! It’s a different experience trying to adapt “best practices” or ideas from the professional association, conferences, or workshops by yourself to your individual practice. This has been a collaborative effort to take the framework and develop it locally but as a larger resource.

Have you faced any difficulties in using CREATE?

AM: I recently transitioned from being the sole Instruction librarian at a small art school, to working at large state institution as a liaison to several departments including visual art. This has made it challenging to focus on visual art, though it has also highlighted ways that other creative disciplines--such as English, Film and Media--research differently. Even though CREATE was made with visual artists in mind it has helped inform instruction in other disciplines. Also, going through the process of contextualizing the framework so carefully for one discipline has made it clear that doing this for all disciplines is a LOT of work, but the outcome has been positive despite that.

AV: As I mentioned I use CREATE as a tool to speak with faculty about information literacy and library instruction sessions. Sometimes, i get a negative response to CREATE in the sense that some instructors are focused on their own immediate goals at the expense of more theoretical content - "Just show them the databases!" "Teach them Oxford Art and leave!" While this reveals a divide between my goals as an instruction librarian and faculty perceptions of what library instruction is, it also allows me an opportunity to step back and think about other ways to communicate what I do. Practical skills and an intellectual framework for information literacy are mutually supportive.

LG: I am fortunate in that I have been working with a faculty person who is very supportive of CREATE and generally interested in integrating information literacy into her classes. That said, my challenges with CREATE arise when hashing out the individual concepts. I don't have a fine arts background, and thus I have had a much easier time with the concepts that relate directly to the Framework than with the ones that are more specific to an artistic practice (Thoughtful, Experiential). Fortunately, the instructor I work with has been great about filling in the gaps in my knowledge/experience and driving home for students the connection between research and artistic practice.

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AM: Larissa, I'm glad you pointed this out. I do have a visual art background, and I really wanted CREATE to contextualize the Framework for artists. It's great that it's started a conversation and presented a good opportunity to co-teach with faculty for you.

LG: Yeah, one challenge in teaching research to visual artists is that many are reluctant to look past their own experience and viewpoint when they create art, and research helps them contextualize their work more broadly. However, it is still important to validate someone's personal experience and viewpoint! CREATE allows for both.

AP: Since I use CREATE as more of a behind-the-scenes tool and don't explicitly discuss it with students or faculty, the challenges I face are at that session planning stage. They are actually pretty similar to what Alyssa describes: sometimes when I'm putting together a lesson plan, and especially when I am pressed for time, I have to remind myself to take a step back and think about the concepts that inform the more skills-based content that some instructors want me to emphasize. I suppose this isn't actually a challenge with CREATE itself, since it actually really helps me out in those situations! If I stop and consider which CREATE (or Framework) concepts are related to session content, it helps me connect more-or-less fleeting skills -- i.e., knowing how to navigate my institution's discovery tool -- to the broader philosophy of info lit.

What is your best example of using CREATE thus far?

AM: I have two examples where I felt like CREATE really helped in the classroom instruction beyond planning. One was with a first year English course at my former job. I had the students talk about each concept under CREATE and they defined it for themselves, and then we talked about those definitions as a group. As they were going through their writing process, they were thinking about it as an extension of their creative practice and art-making. It made them think a little more deeply about their writing assignments, and they produced better quality writing that quarter.

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