

Spring 3-26-2015

Foundational Assumptions in Threshold Concepts and Information Literacy

Patrick K. Morgan
Hope College, morganp@hope.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.hope.edu/faculty_presentations



Part of the [Information Literacy Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Repository citation: Morgan, Patrick K., "Foundational Assumptions in Threshold Concepts and Information Literacy" (2015).
Faculty Presentations. Paper 179.
http://digitalcommons.hope.edu/faculty_presentations/179
Spring March 26, 2015.

This Presentation is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ Hope College. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Presentations by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Hope College. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@hope.edu.

foundational assumptions:

in threshold concepts and information literacy



patrick morgan
hope college
morganp@hope.edu



- problems with threshold concepts' specific manifestation in IL discourse; e.g.:
 - concepts originally intended to be hypothetical have remained fundamental
 - i.e., to the *Framework*
 - these concepts reflect, originally, a rather limited viewpoint
 - original study methodology, etc.
- problems with threshold concept theory itself, its application in IL; e.g.:
 - TCs themselves, when used to generate a disciplinary framework, stunt the finished structure
 - caricature, fetish, reductionism

Heaven
is a place



(theme
the
first)

where nothing ever happens.

immanence

- language of identification/discovery
- *Framework's* concepts clearly come from Townsend group's original articles:
 - utterly changeless maxims, e.g.
 - **authority is constructed and contextual**
 - superficially altered maxims, e.g.
 - **information as commodity**/information has value
 - **format as process**/information creation is a process

conceptual stasis

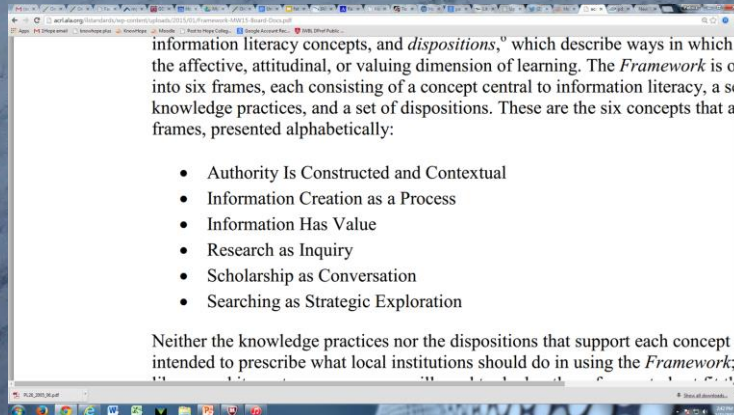
2011: suggested threshold concepts:

Information as Commodity
Format is a process
Research solves problems
Good searches use database structure
Metadata = Findability
Authority is constructed and contextual

2011

2012 (follow-up):

- Metadata=findability
- Good searches use database structure
- Format is a process
- Authority is constructed and contextual
- “Primary source” is an exact and conditional category
- Information as a commodity
- Research solves problems



← 2015, in the *Framework*



II:

lux ex nihilo



background check

2011: Lori Townsend, Amy R. Hofer, and Korey Brunetti take a stab at articulating several threshold concepts for IL

2012: librarians respond to authors' questions; results are used to legitimize "threshold concepts approach" as hypothesized earlier.

confirmation bias?
59 librarians' opinions?
"saturation"?



TCs in *Framework*

Plastic

Jesus

3.



(commodity) fetishism

- metonymical constraints, Procrustes-style
- gnomicism
- information's value
- commodity lens: exchange vs. use value
- fetishism: articulate the **human** in terms of **things** (Marx, Baudrillard, Willis)

**** : the simulacrum



map before territory

small pool of librarians' ideas of what students "think like" is a strange choice for a disciplinary pedagogical vision

acrl can't just decide to be un-prescriptive so easily

building our own private ?



References

Lori Townsend and Korey Brunetti and Amy R. Hofer. "Threshold Concepts and Information Literacy." *portal: Libraries and the Academy* 11, no. 3 (2011): 853-869. <https://muse.jhu.edu/>

Amy R. Hofer and Lori Townsend and Korey Brunetti. "Troublesome Concepts and Information Literacy." *portal: Libraries and the Academy* 12, no. 4 (2012): 387-405. <https://muse.jhu.edu/>

Susan Willis. *A Primer for Daily Life*. London: Routledge, 1991.

Jean Baudrillard. *Simulacra and Simulation*, translated by Sheila Glaser. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994 (1981).