



# Exploring Affective Learning in an Undergraduate Information Literacy Course Using Fink's Taxonomy and the ACRL Framework

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## Abstract

This study investigated the impact of affective learning in an undergraduate information literacy course using a mixed methods approach. Using the *ACRL Framework* and *Fink's Taxonomy*, the research team revised the ISLT 1111 course and assessed knowledge, skills, and attitudes in two versions of the class, and compared in-seat and online student performance.

## Background

The ACRL historically disseminates guidelines for information literacy curriculum development. The most recent iteration published in 2015 is known as *The Framework*. For the first time, ACRL guidelines incorporated learning outcomes with a strong focus on attitudinal and value-based learning, known as *Dispositions* (ACRL, 2015).

*The Framework's* design is conducive to *Fink's Taxonomy of Significant Learning* (Fink, 2013), which is comprised of six dimensions that are complementary and integrated. Little research has been conducted to explore affective outcomes and activities in information literacy courses using *The Framework*.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the learning effects of incorporating affective learning objectives and reflection exercises aligned with the *Framework Dispositions* and *Fink's Taxonomy* in an information literacy course. Performance was measured using the Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills (SAILS), ISLT Affective Assessment (ISLT-AA), and the course-embedded journal reflections.

## Research Questions

- Are there significant differences in SAILS scores between
  - the in-seat and online sections?
  - the previous course and revised course?
- Is there a significant difference in ISLT-AA scores between
  - the in-seat and online sections?
  - the previous course and the revised course?
- Does engagement in journal reflections reinforce ACRL dispositions?

## Methods

### Participants

N = 47 undergraduates  
n = 25 Session 1; n = 22 Session 2  
n = 21 In-Seat; n = 26 Online

### Research Design

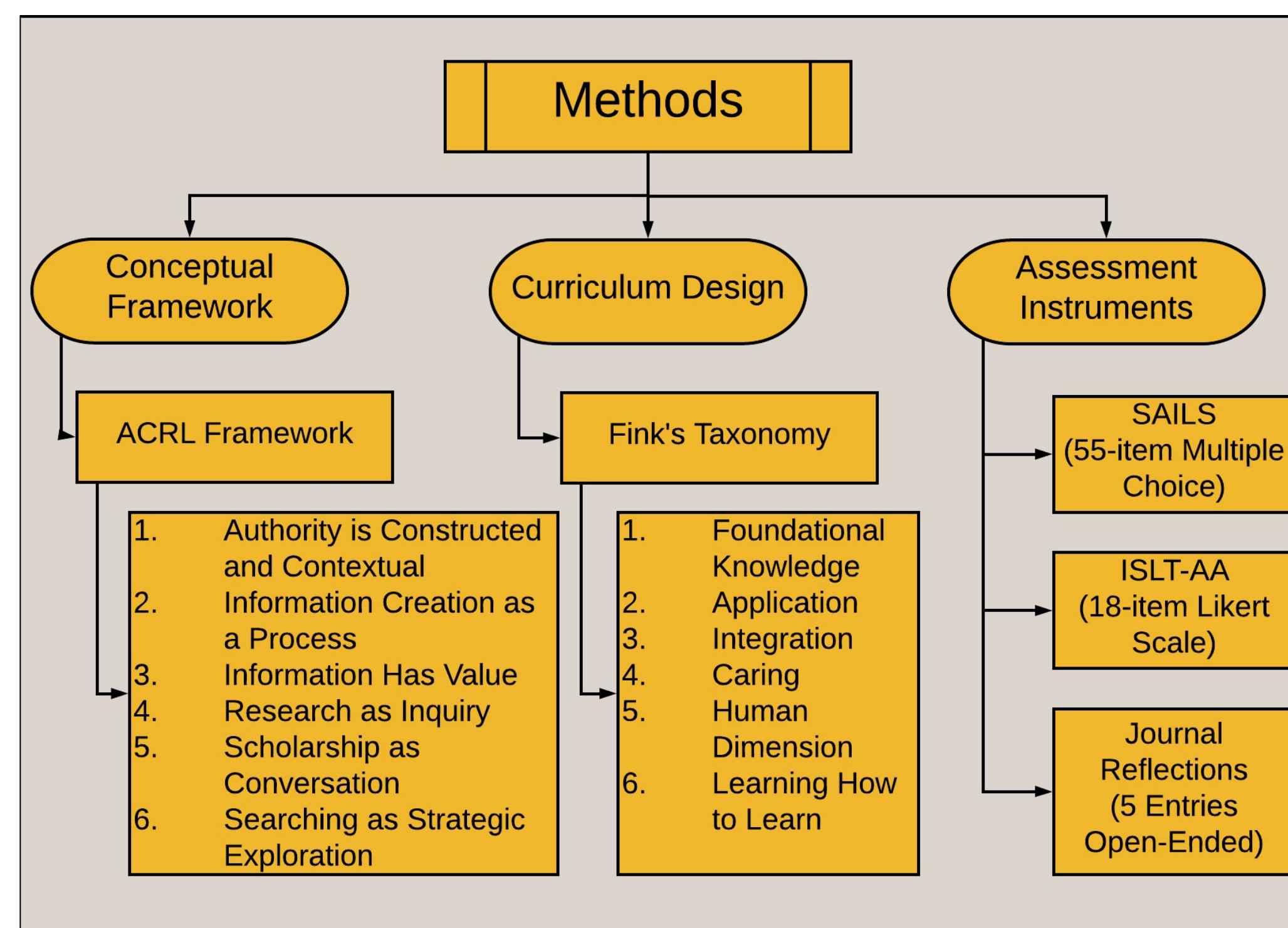


Figure 1. Study methods.

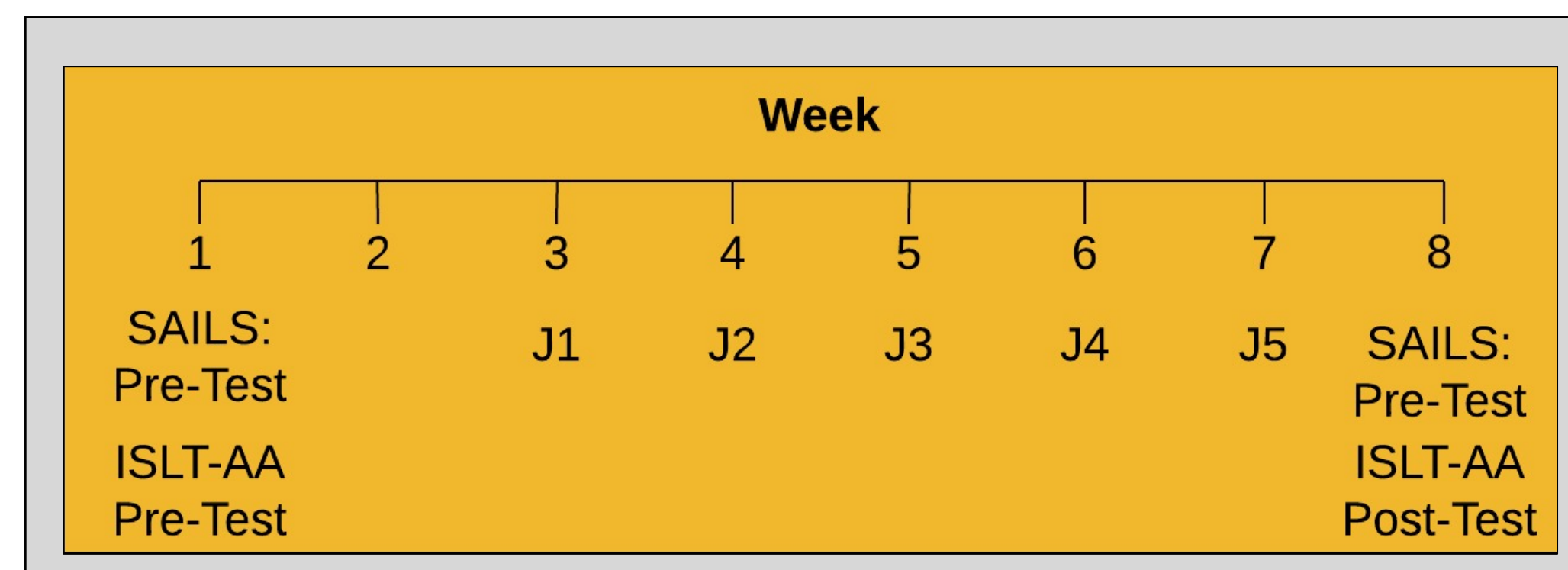


Figure 2. Assessment administration timeline.

## Data Analysis

### SAILS and ISLT-AA: Analysis in progress

#### Journal Reflection Samples

"When someone has worked hard on something that they have written they deserve credit rather than someone else ripping off their ideas. It is important to write what is your own unless you cite your sources and give credit to where it is deserved"

-Information Has Value: Respect the original ideas of others

"When conducting research, it's best to find a lot of information and then narrow it down to what you want to use to help prove your point"

-Information Creation as Process: Value the process of matching an information need with an appropriate product

"It is important to be able to refute somebody else's argument when presented. If you can't do this than it will be hard to have a dependable critical stance."

-Research as Inquiry: Seek multiple perspectives during information gathering and assessment

## Implications

### For ISLT 1111 course design:

Highlights areas for re-design in the curriculum  
-Students rarely indicated they sought out help from resources  
Sets up a framework for continuous improvement

### For ACRL Framework:

Provides insight on practical application of dispositions  
Limitations of Framework in undergraduate curriculum  
-No dispositions aligned with valuing credentials as an index of authority

## References

- Association of College and Research Libraries [ACRL]. (2015). Framework for information literacy for higher education. Retrieved from <http://www.ala.org/acrl/sites/ala.org>
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- Kent State University. (2000, 2018). Project SAILS (Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills). Retrieved from <https://www.projectsails.org/>

## Funding

We thank the Students Teaching as Research project funded by Mizzou Advantage for the financial support, and the Office of Graduate Studies and School of Natural Resources for fiscal and programmatic leadership.