PERFORMING ARTS AND THE ACRL FRAMEWORK: USING THE MUSIC COMPANION

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While the *ACRL Framework* (2016) provides broad threshold concepts for information literate students, interpreting these concepts for performing arts classrooms and practices can be especially challenging. Librarians working with theater, musical theatre, dance, and performance studies may encounter students and faculty who perceive a disconnect between their work and traditional "scholarship" or "research" invoked by the language of the Framework. Compared to conventional information literacy instruction, interactions with arts courses involve disciplinary ideas of authority, methods of inquiry, creative approaches, and processes for finding and exploring information that may be unrecognizable for many librarians and academics outside arts fields. However, the Framework's threshold concepts can be interpreted in ways that readily accommodate the variety of sources, processes, and techniques used in the performing arts. The recently published Music Companion to the *Framework for Information Literacy* (2023) is the first companion document intended for a performing arts field. This brief essay provides a concise introduction to the Music Companion as a way to support the work of performing arts librarians, bridge disciplines for those with multiple liaison roles, and possibly inspire the creation of other arts companions to the Framework. Using the Music Companion as a model, each Frame is addressed through an explanation of performing arts considerations and discipline-specific examples of learning outcomes and applications. Performing arts librarians may also share many of the concerns the Music Companion was meant to address, including intersections of scholarly and artistic authority, searching and evaluation of non-text sources, complex issues of copyright and citation in performed works, and artistic research through embodied exploration.

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Introduction

As soon as the Association of College and Research Libraries released the *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*, efforts emerged to interpret it for specific disciplinary contexts.[1] While the concepts in the *Framework* are powerful and foundational enough to be applicable in nearly any information context, a certain amount of "translation" has proven necessary to help librarians, faculty, and other stakeholders understand how the broad threshold concepts and their associated knowledge practices and dispositions might apply to the extremely varied and divergent disciplines and information products that librarians encounter. The need for discipline-specific support has resulted in a number of guides, documents, and studies on the application of the *Framework* to different areas. This article introduces a recent contribution to this conversation, the *Music Companion to the Framework*, in hopes that librarians in other areas of the performing arts may find it useful in considering approaches to information literacy in creative work.

Among the many existing documents and case studies on disciplinary information literacy are several in visual arts and music, with fewer addressing integration with other arts. Some visual art librarians were quick to note the ways that the *Framework* differed from earlier *Standards* and might spur new thoughts on the importance of information literacy for creative work in art studios. Larissa Garcia and Jessica Labatte highlight the fact that the *Framework* "recognizes that information literacy is a metaliteracy where multiple literacies (visual, news, digital, etc.) intersect," which gives librarians tools to consider the application of information literacy skills to creative processes as well as traditional scholarly work.[2] Since, as Sarah Carter, Heather Koopmans, and Alice Whiteside note, the *Framework* "lends itself to conversations about disciplinary expectations and practices," art librarians are poised to demonstrate "examples and experiences that model the importance of pedagogical context, including decentering traditional scholarship and drawing on disciplinary practices and methodologies that may be unique."[3] While these studies come from the visual arts, their calls

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1. For early examples, see Rebecca Z. Kuglitsch, "Teaching for Transfer: Reconciling the Framework with Disciplinary Information Literacy," *portal: Libraries and the Academy* 15, no. 3 (2015): 457–70, https://doi.org/10.1353/pla.2015.0040; Erin Conor, "Engaging Students in Disciplinary Practices: Music Information Literacy and the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy in Higher Education," *Notes* 73, no. 1 (September 2016): 9–21, https://doi.org/10.1353/not.2016.0087; and Samantha Godbey, Susan Beth Wainscott, and Xan Goodman, eds., *Disciplinary Applications of Information Literacy Threshold Concepts* (Chicago, IL: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2017).

2. Larissa Garcia and Jessica Labatte, "Threshold Concepts as Metaphors for the Creative Process: Adapting the Framework for Information Literacy to Studio Art Classes," *Art Documentation*, 34, no. 2 (2015): 235, https://doi.org/10.1086/683383.

3. Sarah Carter, Heather Koopmans, and Alice Whiteside, "Crossing the Studio Art Threshold: Information Literacy and Creative Populations," *Communications in Information Literacy*, 12, no. 1 (2018): 37, https://doi.org/10.15760/comminfolit.2018.12.1.4.

to take advantage of the flexibility of the *Framework* to rethink disciplinary and creative applications of information literacy skills have been embraced by librarians in other artistic disciplines, especially music.[4]

More formally, professional organizations and ACRL sections have also taken the approach of creating "Companions" to the *Framework* for specific disciplinary contexts and information types, including such documents for Education, Social Work, and Public Policy. The *Framework for Visual Literacy in Higher Education*, approved by ACRL in 2022, is a complementary framework that proposes four themes in visual literacy learning that are connected to ideas in the *Framework for Information Literacy*. This is an important document for making connections between information literacy skills and artistic skills, but it is a transdisciplinary guide rather than a companion for information literacy work within a specific discipline. In October 2023, the Music Library Association approved the first companion intended for an arts discipline, the *Music Companion to the Framework for Information Literacy*.[5]

Information Literacy, Music, and the Performing Arts

Performing arts fields share a number of characteristics that make application of the *Framework* concepts less transparent than it may be in other academic fields. While some aspects of these fields, such as musicology and theatre history, may be fairly well served by the language in the original *Framework* document, many of our patrons and collaborators are engaged primarily in creative work that may not as obviously correlate with categories of "information," "scholarship," and "research" invoked by the language of the *Framework*. Disciplinary ideas of authority in these areas are constructed and communicated in ways that are often inconsistent with those taught in conventional information literacy instruction, such as peer review, and methods of inquiry and searching may be very different from what is expected in other academic fields. Forms of information and the processes for finding and exploring it in artistic research may be unrecognizable

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4. See in particular Kathleen A. Abromeit, editor, *Ideas Strategies, and Scenarios in Music Information Literacy*, MLA Basic Manual Series, no 10 (Middleton, WI: A-R Editions, 2018) and Beth Christiansen, Erin Conor, and Marian Ritter, editors, *Information Literacy in Music: An Instructor's Companion*, MLA Technical Reports Series, no. 35 (Middleton, WI: A-R Editions, 2018).

5. The *Music Companion* has been adopted by the Music Library Association, but has not been put forward for approval by the ACRL, because the Music Library Association is not an official section of the ACRL, but a branch of the International Association of Music Libraries (IAML). For access to the full *Music Companion*, see Andrea L. Beckendorf, Tom Bickley, Erin Conor, Anna Grau Schmidt, Angela L. Pratesi, and Veronica A. Wells, "Music Companion to the Framework for Information Literacy," Music Library Association, Updated October 2023, https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.musiclibraryassoc.org/resource/resmgr/docs/music_companion_to_the_frame.pdf.

to many librarians and academics outside the arts fields. Unlike primarily text-based disciplines which are implicitly the focus of the *Framework*, creative fields center a variety of processes, products, and methods not explicitly accounted for in the *Framework*. This variety can result in the impression that research in these fields is not strategic; one participant in a study of acting and directing research described their research process as "completely wild and different every single time,"[6] a statement that encapsulates how the importance of intentional information literacy habits may not be evident even to performing arts researchers themselves.

Despite differences in language and common examples, the threshold concepts at the foundation of the Framework can in fact be interpreted in ways that accommodate the variety of sources, processes, and techniques used in the arts. For example, simply interpreting "Scholarship" in the frame "Scholarship as Conversation" more broadly aids in thinking through applications to the performing arts classroom. If outcomes of intentional creative work are included alongside more traditional academic formats, as they are in many universities' approaches to research funding and reporting, it is clear that the knowledge practices and dispositions associated with this concept apply to performance work as well as a variety of written and oral forms of information sharing.

Although the Music Library Association's *Music Companion* was created primarily by and for librarians who provide instruction for music courses and related creative activities, many of the librarians involved in its creation are also responsible for information literacy instruction in other performing arts disciplines, and we anticipate that many librarians who primarily work with theatre or dance may share duties in music departments. We hope the *Music Companion* may be of use both to those providing instruction in music courses and to librarians working with other performing arts fields, since those disciplines share many of the concerns that this companion was meant to address, including issues like intersections of scholarly and artistic authority, searching and evaluation of non-text sources, complex issues of copyright and citation in performed work, and artistic research through embodied exploration. In addition, critical information literacy and social justice are important lenses within the *Music Companion*, related to shared concerns across the arts such as equity in access to arts education and representation in artistic canons.

In order to facilitate this work, this article offers expansion and explanation of a few of the knowledge practices outlined in the *Music Companion* that are most relevant to other performing arts courses and disciplines, along with specific sample learning outcomes and suggested activities for courses in theatre,

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6. Melkorka Oskarsdóttir, "'Completely Wild and Different Every Single Time': How Acting and Directing Students Do Research (Master's thesis, University of Iceland, 2019), 50, http://hdl.handle.net/1946/32548.

dance, musical theatre, and performance studies. We hope this document will provide inspiration for performing arts instruction librarians, and perhaps inspiration for other companions or interpretive tools specific to the performing arts.

Learning Outcomes and Applications

While the *Framework* is broadly relevant to all disciplines, it can be difficult to identify the specialized skills, methods, and knowledge that are unique and salient in the performing arts. Additional challenges are posed by the multimodal nature of the performing arts (e.g., written communication, oral communication, visual, audio, somatic,[7] etc.), overlapping and intertwined disciplinary considerations, and the varying degrees to which people experience traditional "research" methodologies (theory) and participate in "creative" aspects (praxis) in the arts. These challenges require a reconsideration of what an effective knowledge practice looks like for an arts creator. The dispositions of curiosity, motivation, and persistence could be important factors in connecting students to the multifaceted aspects of information literacy as related to music and the performing arts.[8] Developing collaborative approaches to building on student passion for artistic endeavors and identity as performing artists may aid faculty and librarians in articulating both the importance of information literacy and a more wide-ranging and authentic variety of information sources and products. At the same time, the multimodal and exploratory methods associated with arts methodologies may be a benefit to students' development of more advanced information skills and literacies.[9]

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7. In the Music Companion, somatic awareness is included in the concept of embodiment. While that concept may not be familiar as an information literacy practice, the literature supports the idea that this type of knowing is "experiential knowledge that involves senses, perceptions, and mind-body action and reaction" in Sandra Kerka, "Somatic/Embodied Learning and Adult Education," *ERIC Trends and Issues Alert* no. 32 (2002): 1, https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED462550. Somatic practices that may inform embodied ways of knowing include Feldenkrais, Alexander Technique, Body Mapping (Conable), Movement Fundamentals (Hawley), occupational therapy, and physical therapy. Intersections of health literacy and information literacy and the application of information literacy in everyday work practices also attend to ideas of embodiment.

8. Anna Grau Schmidt, Andrea Beckendorf, Angela L. Pratesi, Veronica A. Wells, and Tom Bickley, "A Thematic Analysis of Music Instructor Perceptions of Student Information Literacy," *Notes*, 81, no. 1 (September 2024): 51–52, https://doi.org/10.1353/not.2024.a934838; Randy Burke Hensley, "Curiosity and Creativity as Attributes of Information Literacy," *Reference & User Services Quarterly* 44, no. 1 (2004): 31–36; and Erin Conor, "Re-envisioning Information Literacy: Critical Information Literacy, Disciplinary Discourses, and Music History," *Journal of Music History Pedagogy* 9, no. 1 (2019): 28–43, http://www.ams-net.org/ojs/index.php/jmhp/article/view/293.

9. Adrienne Huber, Judith Dinham, and Beryl Chalk, "Responding to the Call: Arts Methodologies Informing 21st Century Literacies," *Literacy* 49, no. 1 (2015): 45–54, https://doi.org/10.1111/lit.12054.

While we believe the Frames are flexible enough to account for the concerns discussed here, reconceptualizing some of the associated knowledge practices and dispositions to be more explicitly applicable to artistic and musical practices is helpful. The *Music Companion* thus contains suggested knowledge practices, dispositions, and learning outcomes for music contexts, as well as consideration of how novice and expert learners may encounter these concepts. In order to extend some of this work to librarians and instructors in adjacent disciplines, this article will:

- Expand on elements of the *Music Companion* that are relevant to other performing arts disciplines, situating the discussion in current literature on information literacy and behaviors in the arts.
- Outline potential learning outcomes and approaches to information literacy instruction in the performing arts for a variety of scenarios and levels, from one-shot instruction to more in-depth independent and collaborative work.

The learning outcomes and activities provided are a few examples of the many ways the *Framework* might apply to information literacy and classroom instruction in areas of theatre and dance. Readers who are experts in these and other areas of performing arts librarianship will likely have many other scenarios in mind; we hope our examples will serve as a starting point. As in the *Music Companion*, we have focused here on connections to performing arts praxis that are not apparent in the original *Framework* language, rather than on applications to aspects of scholarly approaches that are well-served by the original.

This brief introductory essay is meant as a supplement and introduction to the *Music Companion to the Framework*; we encourage interested readers to refer to that document for additional ideas on applying the *Framework* to performance-oriented disciplines. Both documents are designed to supplement the *Framework*, rather than substitute for it.

Authority Is Constructed and Contextual

In fields with a strong praxis component, questions of authority are especially complex and teaching students to focus on traditional markers like peer review may not be sufficient nor appropriate. Scholarly and artistic authority may be equally important, depending on the specific information needed, and artistic authority can be harder to identify. Even within scholarly discourse, there may be a variety of approaches to authority: students in theatre, dance, and related fields may need to look to experts in fields such as kinesiology or linguistics

for some needs, and learners will need to recognize the appropriate markers of authority for work in those fields as well as for creative work in their area.

Many arts fields are also grappling with the underrepresentation of certain voices in their canons and repertories. Some common markers of authority such as representation in critical and historical studies, or a history of awards or commissions should also be recognized as historically contingent and/or not equally available to all creators. Many conceptions of authority are also based strongly in Western ways of knowing and verbal methods of expression; when the *Framework* asserts that Authority is Constructed and Contextual, this can be understood to apply both narrowly to credentials or markers within a particular practice, and broadly to our understanding of the cultural construction of authority within Western culture as contingent and historically situated.[10] Information literate artists have the opportunity to reshape canons and repertories rather than only replicating received practices.

This Frame also acknowledges that authority, as it is constructed in academic norms, may not recognize artistic expertise or experience as authoritative inputs that warrant consideration. In a study of information practices of theatre professionals around the works of Shakespeare, Michael Olsson found that professionals saw expertise derived from experience performing the works of Shakespeare or even "emotional truth" as more convincing sources of authority than scholarly work, and saw theatre professionals, not academic specialists, as the "true custodians of Shakespeare's work."[11] Within this context, authority is constructed in a very different way than is served by discussions focused only on peer review or degree qualifications. Students should be willing to challenge some received ideas of authority while still recognizing the potential of artistic sources to carry different levels and kinds of authority according to disciplinary norms.

Forms of authoritative work are also more complex in creative fields. Authority in these fields is often transmitted by expert creators in a variety of ways, including orally: people themselves often function as authoritative sources. Theatre professionals may rely on dramaturgs to gather or synthesize relevant information,[12] and one study found that among fiction writers there was "an emphasis on hands-on investigation and interviews rather than text-based or scholarly sources, a less strict approach to evaluating information, and ambiva-

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10. Alexander Watkins, "Teaching Inclusive Authorities: Indigenous Ways of Knowing and the Framework for Information Literacy in Native Art," in *Disciplinary Applications of Information Literacy Threshold Concepts*, ed. Samantha Godbey et al. (Chicago, IL: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2017), 13–24, https://scholar.colorado.edu/concern/book_chapters/j38607609.

11. Michael R. Olsson, "All the World's a Stage – the Information Practices and Sense-Making of Theatre Professionals," *Libri* 60, no. 3 (2010): 241–52, https://doi.org/10.1515/libr.2010.021.

12. Olsson, "All the World's a Stage," 247.

lence around whether the research process enhances creativity or interferes with it."[13] Because performance work is often collaborative, creators with different kinds of expertise often work together, requiring experts in one aspect or phase of the research/creative process to acknowledge the authority of others. A key skill of the information literate performing artist is to be able to recognize and evaluate a broad range of types of authority and expertise, in a number of formats or genres, in order to fill creative information needs.

Sample Learning Outcomes and Activities:

- Describe the markers of authority present in the facilitation of a dance masterclass.
- Discuss approaches to integrating historical information and artistic vision in costume design for a period drama.
- Compare editions of a play by Shakespeare and select the most authoritative edition for a specific need.
- Create a collaborative list of strategies and tools for learning about and identifying diverse plays.

Information Creation as a Process

Though the *Music Companion* specifically references the term "musico-information," the underlying concepts are also applicable to other performing arts disciplines, as the term refers to the "complex spectrum of information musicians must navigate."[14] Like musicians, artists in other performing fields deal with multimodal and somatic information that goes beyond text and even visual content and includes physical input, time-based and nonverbal formats, and formal and informal sources. Artists rely on the body itself as a source of information through embodied practice and have long traditions of in-person interactions with experts as authoritative ways of communicating knowledge, through pedagogical lineages and oral tradition. The number and variety of information creation processes available to performing artists is both a strength of these disciplines and an additional layer of challenge for students evaluating sources and making their own creative decisions.

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13. Allison Hosier, "'Every Story I Write Is a Research Project': The Role of Research in Fiction Writing," *portal: Libraries and the Academy* 22, no. 4 (2022): 1063–93, https://doi.org/10.1353/pla.2022.0052.

14. Jessica M. Abbazio, Angela L. Pratesi, and Zoua Sylvia Yang, "Creating Information Literate Musicians," in *Creators in the Academic Library: Library Services for Artists, Engineers, Designers, Makers, and More*, vol. 1, *Instruction and Outreach*, ed. Alexander Watkins and Rebecca Kuglitsch (Chicago, IL: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2023), 220fn1, https://hdl.handle.net/11299/256469.

All research and information creation processes require iteration, but the collaborative and real-time nature of performing arts processes often require that iteration to be coordinated and centered in ways that are not always seen in other fields. Production meetings, rehearsals, and play workshops, for example, are structured opportunities for iterative information creation. Understanding these processes and how they might affect the experience of the performance is part of an information-literate understanding of the arts.

As creators, learners also need to take into account context, audience, and their own role in their choice and execution of a particular process.[15] Understanding the expectations and needs of their audience and what they want to communicate to that audience should guide the selection of a particular format or process, and their choices will affect how their product is received. Information literacy and artistic competency are aligned in recognizing that the form in which information is presented and the process by which it is created are implicated in the message conveyed by the final product. Nils Holger Petersen considers the distinction between 'artistic' and 'scholarly' endeavors to be one of medium, in that the choice of medium, or format, impacts both the communication of a creative work and the expectations implicit in the mode of communication.[16] Artist-researchers select among many media, both artistic and scholarly, when communicating their research. The process by which information was created may not always be evident to an audience, but awareness of the choice is important for both creator and consumer.

While message and information need guide the selection of processes and products, information-literate artists are aware that the availability of specific information formats and processes are affected by social and economic factors, and that this has impacted the history of the performing arts and the favored status of some forms and genres over others. Some processes, such as academic peer review or large-scale theatrical productions, have historically only been available to a limited and privileged population. While issues of access and education impact all areas of study, the financial realities of artistic work amplify these effects, and learners should be aware of this when selecting and evaluating materials.

Sample Learning Outcomes and Activities:

● Use improvisation as a method to explore possible choreographic inter-
  pretations of an idea.
● Explain the role of dramaturgy in a theatrical production.

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15. Beckendorf et al., *Music Companion*, 3.

16. Nils Holger Petersen, "The 'Scholarly' and the 'Artistic': Music as Scholarship?" in *Changing Borders: Contemporary Positions in Intermediality*, ed. Jens Arvidson, Mikael Askander, Jørgen Bruhn, and Heidrun Führer (Lund, Sweden: Intermedia Studies Press, 2007), 118.

- Create an audience "study guide" for an upcoming production that explains the artistic vision, historical context, and important parts of the production process.
- Reflect on an actor's process in preparing for a new role, and the kinds of information that could help in each stage. Identify information resources for each element of character development, such as biographical, historical, and dialect sources.
- Compare trailers for two to three different format productions of the same work (black box, mainstage, film, etc.) and discuss differences in message, creation process, and uses in research.

Information Has Value

In performing arts, issues of copyright, licensing, and royalties feature more prominently than in other fields. Students more frequently will find themselves in the role of both consumer and creator of copyrighted and publicly available material, including performances. Arts productions may involve many layers of copyright, including authorship of underlying text and music, recording and broadcast rights, and performance rights. Fair use and other copyright exceptions apply differently to dramatic and nondramatic works, so guidelines learned in other contexts may not apply to performing artists.

Copyright law and practices around some aspects of the performing arts remain murky. Theatrical design and choreography are both areas that have complex copyright histories, in part because of the embodied and ephemeral nature of performance work. As Anthea Kraut has observed, "Not only is the circulation of dance across bodies integral to its transmission and therefore its existence, but dance movement is also difficult to contain;"[17] dance by its nature resists being fixed in tangible form. Similarly, legal cases regarding theatrical design have tested the distinction between idea and expression.[18] The difficulty of notating movement and preferential treatment of written forms in the history of copyright has had dramatic effects on the circulation of music, dance, and theatrical work.

The perceived value of performance materials is also bound up with the social and political status of creators; the histories of music and choreography copyrights and the changes in which forms and types have been copyrightable reflect

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17. Anthea Kraut, *Choreographing Copyright: Race, Gender, and Intellectual Property Rights in American Dance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 2.

18. For a discussion of some of the legal and professional complexity of stage design copyright and resulting norms, see Mark Bailey, "Exit Stage, Enter Streaming: Copyright of the Theatrical Stage Design Elements in a Changing Theater Industry," *Journal of Intellectual Property Law* 28, no. 2 (July 16, 2021): 365–95, https://digitalcommons.law.uga.edu/jipl/vol28/iss2/3.

the marginalization of certain creative populations.[19] Creators must recognize and protect the value of their own information products, while also respecting the value of others, whether or not it is legally enforceable. In some areas of the performing arts, the resulting professional norms discourage creators from consulting previous related work, to prevent accidental infringement on the ideas of others, even when those ideas are not subject to legal copyright. For example, Ann Medaille's study of theatre information seeking found that not only did some "artists worry that borrowing too closely from other productions could interfere with their creative processes, but they also believed that this could potentially create awkward situations among peers because it might be considered cheating or stealing the ideas of others."[20] On the other hand, creative work thrives on the reuse and adaptation of previous ideas and content, and overzealous protection of intellectual property can have a chilling effect on artistic creation.[21] By considering the ways information has value to both original creator and user, information literacy instruction can guide learners to make thoughtful decisions about complex questions.

Sample Learning Outcomes and Activities:

- Recognize the marginalization of certain groups of creators in past legal or citational frameworks and correct for it in your own creative work.
- Demonstrate cultural sensitivity in selecting genres and texts for performance, and in making casting selections.
- Identify appropriate ways to credit sources and collaborators, even when traditional citation formatting isn't possible or appropriate, such as in performance notes or verbal introductions.
- Discuss scenarios for reusing materials in performance and whether they would qualify for fair use or other exceptions or would require permission or licensing.
- Identify the licensing organization (or individual) for a piece of music for use in a dance recital or theatrical production.

Research as Inquiry

Creative practice requires students to ask varied and complex questions and to make concrete decisions based on information. In the performing arts, experts

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19. For further discussion of embodiment as it relates to choreography, see the "Introduction: Dance Plus Copyright" chapter of Kraut, *Choreographing Copyright*, 1–42.

20. Ann Medaille, "Creativity and Craft: The Information-Seeking Behavior of Theatre Artists," *Journal of Documentation*; Bradford 66, no. 3 (2010): 338, http://doi.org/10.1108/00220411011038430.

21. See for example reactions to the outcome of *Williams v. Gaye* over alleged copyright infringement in the song "Blurred Lines." Edwin F. McPherson, "Crushing Creativity: The Blurred Lines Case and Its Aftermath," *Southern California Law Review* 92 (February 2019): 67–82.

pursue many lines of inquiry that do not result in traditional academic forms, such as scholarly papers or publications, but that still constitute research.[22] To answer these questions, artists look to a variety of source types and research methodologies, and then must synthesize information found in many modalities.[23] Often, they will need to look across scholarly, creative, technical, and popular sources that use different methodologies and practices, and will sometimes use sources in ways very different from the original intent, such as using a historical news story to provide audio for a production, or drawing on documentary video to inspire costume design.

Formulating a question in relation to an appropriate methodology is a key skill for the expert learner. Scholars and practitioners in the performing arts may use a variety of research methodologies, including performance-as-research approaches as well as historical, ethnographic, and qualitative methods. Among the kinds of inquiry methods performing artists use are their own personal physical experiences (e.g., pain or discomfort, breath, proprioception, physicality of pronunciation, body mechanics), which they may use to recognize the need for new information, whether for safety or for a desired artistic outcome. The interdisciplinarity and variety of roles in the performing arts lead to a large variety of research questions; for example, along with looking for inspiration, and investigating historical and contextual information, studies have demonstrated that theatre practitioners often research processes, technical details, and career-related information.[24] Dancers and other physical artists may also formulate questions related to physical and health issues either for themselves or for evidence-based approaches to teaching.[25] It is difficult but important to learn to scope questions and understand which methodologies from among many overlapping disciplines might best answer emerging questions.

Performing arts researchers also address their conclusions to a wide variety of intended audiences, such as collaborators, academic audiences, performance audiences, and donors.[26] This flexibility and variability in audience creates the need to differently organize and synthesize the findings of an artist's inquiry. In the context of creating a performance, an artist may need to convey a number

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22. Beckendorf et al., *Music Companion*, 5.

23. On the interdisciplinarity of dance research, in particular, see Scott Stone, "The Interdisciplinary Nature of Dance Scholarship as Seen Through a Citation Analysis of MFA Theses," *Notes* 79, no. 4 (June 2023): 475–94, https://doi.org/10.1353/not.2023.a897454.

24. Laura Dimmit Smyth, Ian Moore, and Kodi Saylor, "'Looking for Pictures of Clouds': Defining the Unique Research Needs of Creative Communities" *College & Research Libraries* 82, no. 3 (2022): 393–415, https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.83.3.393; Medaille, "Creativity and Craft," 9.

25. Jamie J. Hawke and Shannon S. D. Bredin, "Examining the Preferences and Priorities of Dance Educators for Dance Science Information: A Pilot Study," *Journal of Dance Medicine and Science* 27, no. 2 (2023): 107–15, https://doi.org/10.1177/1089313X231178079.

26. Beckendorf et al., *Music Companion*, 6.

of different possible answers to a historical or practical inquiry to a collaborator and then work together to select the option that best matches the artistic vision, venue, budget, and other considerations.

Sample Learning Outcomes and Activities:

- Formulate research questions based on creative needs such as aspects of character development or the technical requirements for a set design.
- Identify groups of creators that are historically marginalized in the field and search for works by members of those groups.
- Using a collaborative platform such as Padlet, work as a class to gather images and links that provide inspiration for a particular visual element of a hypothetical production.
- Examine masterclass recordings or interviews from two dance or movement practitioners from the same lineage (teacher-student or different students from the same teacher) to compare and contrast performance concepts.
- Find abstracts for articles about dance injury in general, health, and humanities databases and consider how each area approaches the issue.

Scholarship as Conversation

Because the nature of the performing arts is frequently both participatory and collaborative, learners encounter conversational work early and often. It is revealing that the two performing arts chapters in the collection *Disciplinary Applications of Information Literacy Threshold Concepts* both appear in the "Scholarship as Conversation" section.[27] Whether in production meetings, on stage with fellow performers, or collaborating with a dramaturg, director, or choreographer, performing artists are often drawn to this aspect of the work. A major part of the collaborative process for theatre artists is information sharing based on research; Medaille's interviews with theatre artists revealed that "while theatre artists often seek information independently during preparation for a production, the sharing of information is an important component of the process and occurs during meetings of the production team, during rehearsals, and during construction of sets, costumes, and other elements."[28] Similarly, Shannon Marie Robinson found that dance researchers rely heavily on interpersonal conversations and conference attendance for information

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27. Christina E. Dent, "Theater as a Conversation: Threshold Concepts in the Performing Arts," 275–85, and Rachel Elizabeth Scott, "Performance as Conversation: Dialogic Aspects of Music Performance and Study," 239–50, in Godbey et al., *Disciplinary Applications.*

28. Medaille, "Creativity and Craft," 334.

sharing.[29] Information literacy instruction can build on enthusiasm for the collaborative process among artists by helping learners to recognize that both scholars and practitioners are working with information collaboratively and conversationally, and that their own collaborative work can be seen as a kind of scholarship.

This kind of informed praxis is also in conversation with textual scholarship and source material, and expert performing arts researchers recognize the value of scholarly research as one source of information to consider when making artistic decisions. In turn, they understand that their own artistic products are open to interpretation by both audiences and scholars that might affect scholarly and general conversations. Artists encounter the works and performances of others which they may use as inspiration or to inform their own work. While many artists may be anxious to avoid exposure to existing designs or interpretations of a specific work, exploratory engagement with a range of performances and productions in the chosen art form is a common habit of artists. Their own artistic decisions are in conversation with the current trends in the art form and with past productions of similar works.

Sample Learning Outcomes and Activities:

● Find and compare reviews of existing productions of a work students are preparing to perform.
● Work in small groups to choreograph or improvise a short dance work and describe the process and inspiration.
● Make a list of the potential collaborators you will consult within the production of a play. Reflect on their collective skills, backgrounds, and identities to determine any potential gaps.
● Using a "jigsaw" approach, work in a group to research one aspect of a production design (costume, set, sound, etc.). Then regroup to present research findings and inspirational images to other members of a "production team."

Searching as Strategic Exploration

Artists are often used to a nonlinear and exploratory approach to finding some kinds of information, such as visual inspiration or favorite media. From an information literacy perspective, the kinds of work practicing artists might do to keep track of new work by favorite creators, seek opportunities for jobs or funding,

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29. Shannon Marie Robinson, "Artists as Scholars: The Research Behavior of Dance Faculty." *College & Research Libraries* 77, no. 6 (2016): 779–94, https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.77.6.779.

or find new repertory to perform are all search tasks that require a strategic approach. This kind of searching is often both "systematic and creative."[30] Medaille describes the research persona of some theatre artists as "'super-encounterers'—those who routinely engage in information search behaviors such as browsing that are conducive to information encounters and who are excited about finding useful information through serendipity."[31]

Whether searching or browsing, locating information about performing arts introduces additional challenges. Changes and inconsistencies in vocabulary and descriptions can impact the findability of materials across different systems and disciplinary contexts, especially when non-text sources are involved. Because library systems are often designed for scholarly work rather than creative practice, it is not surprising that many creative artists do not turn primarily to libraries for their research needs,[32] and part of information literacy instruction in this area may mean helping learners identify tools and collections that better suit their needs.

"Searching" for information needed by performing artists can also involve interrogating one's own personal embodied practice, for example by trying out alternative movements, blockings, vocal gestures, or spatial designs for their physical impact and incorporating the physical feedback into their performance decisions. The collection of "data" through movement and observation among dancers and other physical performers may extend beyond the kind of searching and exploration librarians feel equipped to advise on, but by recognizing the importance of embodied knowledge to the research process in movement fields, librarians can help situate what they do offer in disciplinary methodological conversations.[33]

Sample Learning Outcomes and Activities:

- Document information gathered from a movement practice and articulate how it might contribute to creative performance decisions.
- Identify practices professional artists use for keeping up to date on developments in their field, such as podcasts, magazines, or news sources.
- Evaluate search tools for their appropriateness for a specific information need. For example, compare filters available for locating plays in the library catalog to the filters available on Drama Online.

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30. Beckendorf et al., *Music Companion*, 8.

31. Medaille, "Creativity and Craft," 343, drawing on a term from Sandra Erdelez, "Information Encountering: It's More Than Just Bumping into Information," *Bulletin of the American Society for Information Science and Technology* 25, no. 3 (1999): 26–29, https://doi.org/10.1002/bult.118.

32. Allison Hosier, "'Every Story I Write Is a Research Project,'" 1083.

33. For reflections on the role of embodied knowledge in dance research methodologies, see the "Introduction" to Rosemary Candelario and Matthew Henley, *Dance Research Methodologies: Ethics, Orientations, and Practices* (Oxford: Taylor & Francis, 2023).

- Locate different editions, performances, and reviews of a play in the library catalog.
- Assemble information and images that could help inform one aspect of a specific production, such as costume design for *A Raisin in the Sun*.

Conclusion

The different areas of practice in the performing arts—music, dance, theatre—as well as other modes of performance, have a great deal in common. A notable common element is that the sources and methods that inform performing artists embrace not only text but also various media, embodied knowledge, and diverse systems of meaning and value. Another significant common point is that research in the practice of the performing arts occurs largely outside, though overlapping with research in the academy. This global community of practitioners in performing arts is essential to its vitality. Performing artists at all levels of learning and sophistication employ information literacy. The forms in which this takes place, however, differ markedly from traditional academic practices, sources and methods, and thereby reflect the sometimes awkward fit of the arts in higher education. As we developed the *Music Companion*, we came to recognize that the flexibility of the Frames both describes the way information functions in human society and is a particularly meaningful descriptive match for how information functions in the performing arts. Using the *Framework* and the *Music Companion* can offer support in building intentionality and awareness around already prevalent information practices in the arts.

We reiterate our goals in this essay: that our application of the *Framework* to the discipline of music may be transferable to information literacy instruction in other performance disciplines and that the *Music Companion* document may serve as support for those librarians with liaison responsibilities in multiple areas of the performing arts. We also hope that this work may encourage the creation of analogous companion documents for dance, theatre, and other performing arts.

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