Book Review:
Teaching Information Literacy Reframed: 50+ framework-based exercises for creating information-literature learners.

Joanna M. Burkhardt, London: Facet Publishing, 2016

Reviewed by
Lucy Langley-Palmer
SCONUL Focus editorial
team member and
Subject Librarian at the
University of Bristol Library
lucy.palmer@bristol.ac.uk
@LGLPalmer

Joanna M. Burkhardt presents this book as a practical companion to the six threshold concepts within the Association of College and Research Libraries' (ACRL) *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*, offering a suite of exercises linked to each element of the *Framework*. It is worth noting that the ACRL is an American organisation and the focus and origin of the book is also American, and my own experience is of academic librarianship in the UK. The *Framework* has not been implemented in the UK in the same way as in the US, although many European colleagues will be aware of it and some will be using it. We are not using the Framework at my institution, so I began reading this book with interest, eager to see if it could be translatable to my context.

The book's structure takes the six anchoring concepts from the *Framework* as the headings for chapters two to seven, sandwiched between an opening chapter entitled 'Decoding the *Framework*' and a concluding chapter about instructional design and assessment. Each chapter offers an exploration of the key concept, followed by several exercises that relate to it. As it is mapped neatly onto the structure of the *Framework* the book will be easily navigable for those who are already familiar with the document. For those who are less familiar with it, there is a brief description of each of the six concepts in the first chapter and the *Framework* is reproduced in full in the appendix.

It quickly becomes clear that Burkhardt is not an ardent advocate of the *Framework* as she questions the evidence and feedback that brought it about, and highlights the ongoing debate about 'what threshold concepts are, how to identify them for information literacy, and the validity of the six specific threshold concepts that were identified or chosen' (p. 3). Another of Burkhardt's criticisms of the *Framework* is that it 'offers a description of the expert in information literacy but does not provide a roadmap to show how that person becomes an expert' (p. xiii). The book's acknowledgement of the *Framework's* limitations is refreshing. By offering up the book as a reluctant companion to the *Framework*, the author becomes an ally, writing in solidarity with other librarians facing similar struggles.

However, Burkhardt's engagement with the theory is at times schematic and verbose. In chapter 5, for example, she offers the following description, when unpacking the concept of information as a creation process: 'Books are a centuries-old format for providing in-depth information. Books can be fiction or nonfiction. They can be of any size and covering. They can be paperback or hardcover. They can be short or long...' (p. 79). This, along with other similar passages, gives the impression that Burkhardt has lost sight of her intended audience, as surely such a description is unnecessary in a book intended for librarians. Proponents could argue that the simple treatment of concepts can be justified by her frequent assertion that this book is for beginners. It may also be result of Burkhardt attempting the unenviable task of translating something that is heavily conceptual into something of practical use.

Many of the exercises are a good starting point for developing information literacy, although I feel most are too elementary for use in a UK higher education institution. They could be valuable for librarians in further education or schools, and with a little effort the exercises could be adapted to different purposes. An early career librarian might find this book useful for gathering practical ideas as they build up their arsenal of professional tools. Burkhardt's approach will appeal most to those who are, perhaps reluctantly, already engaging with the *Framework* and looking for ways to teach to it.