

**Branch, N. A. (2019). Illuminating social justice in the framework: Transformative methodology, concept mapping, and learning outcomes development for critical information literacy.**

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The purpose of this study was to discern the viability of using concept mapping methodology to create learning outcomes for the *Framework for Information Literacy in Higher Education* which could elevate social justice and critical thinking within information literacy. The primary goal was to explore the methodology, but a secondary goal was to test collaborative processes to enhance greater information literacy practices in libraries.

The study recruited 11 academic librarians who met virtually for two focus groups and later individually completed sorting and rating tasks. These librarians were selected because of their “demonstrated interest in and engagement with the *Framework*” via social media, recommendations, conferences, or at their local institutions (Branch, 2019, p. 10). The frame “Information Has Value” within the *Framework* was treated by researchers as the construct to be examined.

Using concept-mapping methodology, the researchers utilized its three components ((1) a focus group brainstorm about learning outcome statements for the frame; (2) individual sorting and rating items; and (3) visual mapping of the sorted and rated items using multidimensional scaling and hierarchical cluster analysis) plus added a fourth step of conducting a post-mapping focus group allowing participants to review and reflect. The study used three software packages to collect data: Zoom for focus groups; usabilityTEST for sorting; and Qualtrics for rating learning outcomes.

The first focus group conference call’s tasks included brainstorming social justice and critical thinking elements of the frame using prompted statements. The researcher synthesized the 100+ statements generated into 75 outcomes statements. The initial list was sent to the group for review and two gave feedback. The statements were formatted in Qualtrics (survey with 0-10 rating instructions) and usabilityTEST (statements on cards to create groups of statements based on individuals’ discretion using guidelines). Each participant rated and sorted using both tests. The researcher compiled ratings and statistics to create an initial map, and the focus group reviewed and reflected. The group determined that low rating variance may be due to lack of correlation to the examined frame, but overall felt the project highly successful.

The researcher refined the map for greatest validity using statements generated by the usabilityTEST and sent results to the participants. The researcher identified nine learning outcome clusters and identified each cluster’s average rating and standard deviation. The group

rated clusters focused on power and critical thinking issues the highest; the lowest dealt with skill-based tasks.

The transformative framework supports collaborative research into social justice and information literacy and is a strength of the concept map created here. This could lead to the library advocating and implementing values-based assessment outcomes that are social science focused. Other frames within the *Framework* could also be examined via concept mapping. A final strength of the design allows direct linkage from learning outcomes to instruction and assessment. This practical aspect provides for easy examination of subsets of learning outcomes and can lead to further research on assessment.

Weaknesses in design include a non-representative sample including only librarians who supported the *Framework*. Not all librarians support or understand it so further research should include them. Further, repeating this design would likely have different statements and outcomes, but the researcher states that is fine. Consistent replication is necessary, however, in order to prove a theory; thus, this lack of generalizability to future research is a limitation. Finally, the first focus group could have been given more time to generate statements and a second focus group could have synthesized the statements instead of the researcher for a more cohesive concept map.