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# Supplementing a Librarian's Information Literacy Toolkit with Textbooks: A Scan of Basic Communication Course Texts

Melissa Kozel-Gain, *Boise State University*

Rick A Stoddart, *Oregon State University*



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# Supplementing a Librarian's Information Literacy Toolkit with Textbooks: A Scan of Basic Communication Course Texts

Melissa A. Kozel-Gains  
*Boise State University*

Richard A. Stoddart  
*Boise State University*

## SUPPLEMENTING A LIBRARIAN'S INFORMATION LITERACY TOOLKIT WITH TEXTBOOKS

A scan of basic communication course texts

Melissa A. Gains  
*Boise State University*

Richard A. Stoddart  
*Boise State University*

### ABSTRACT

This inquiry subjectively examines selected basic communication textbooks for information literacy concepts from the communication discipline point of view. Librarians can build on these concepts in library skills instruction sessions for first-year communication students. This analysis reveals that communication textbook authors are addressing information literacy concepts and standards with content, exercises, examples, and, most importantly, context; and the authors are often utilizing their own discipline-specific terminology to do so. Because finding, using, and evaluating information is a cornerstone of communication education and because the most successful information literacy efforts result from learning its tenets in a variety of contexts, librarians supporting communication classes should consider reviewing discipline-specific textbooks when planning course-specific library instruction. Further, it is recommended that class textbooks in other disciplines be analyzed, especially in classes with multiple sections. By focusing on many classes for which students share a common textbook, librarians can maximize their information literacy efforts to reach large numbers of students with more discipline-specific instruction.

## INTRODUCTION

On college campuses, libraries can be thought of as bridges to information literacy (IL), not islands acting alone in these efforts. Libraries and librarians work to connect information literacy to student learning. However, instead of a librarian solely presenting information literacy concepts to students in one-shot bibliographic sessions, the opportunity exists for the librarian, class instructor, *and* course text together to provide a seamless introduction to information literacy principles.

It would be prudent for librarians to undertake an environmental scan of the information literacy competencies already being taught across their campuses, and, more importantly, to determine the context in which the skills are being introduced. Presenting information literacy exclusively in the context of the library, wherein the librarian defines the terms, standards, and outcomes of information literacy, may not take into account how subject disciplines present and codify information literacy. Most of today's college teaching faculty are charged with improving students' basic skills in writing, oral communication, and information literacy, not just with conveying content information in their disciplines (McAdoo, 2008; Nicosia, 2005). In this light, one of the librarian's responsibilities is to determine "the scope of the concept in the context of the librarian's role and expected contribution to the realization of campus information literacy objectives, and to delineate specific and executable ways of effectuating information literacy" (Owusu-Ansah as cited in D'Angelo & Maid, 2004, p. 212).

Often ignored in the delivery of information literacy theory and skills training are the

course textbooks students use. Many textbooks introduce and/or reinforce information literacy concepts in the context of their subject-based content, even though the term information literacy may not be specifically articulated. Based on this article's exploration of basic communication course textbooks, there are some general reasons librarians may want to take the time to examine course textbooks. By doing so, librarians can:

- become more aware of what textbooks are commonly used on their college campuses in order to better understand how information literacy concepts are presented in subject-specific courses;
- use the language/concepts presented in subject-specific textbooks to better situate information literacy topics in context;
- incorporate campus textbooks into bibliographic instruction efforts thereby enhancing collaboration opportunities between librarians and instructors;
- reinforce student-learning by referencing information already presented in course textbooks; thus, librarians are not necessarily introducing something new but simply supporting and re-emphasizing knowledge students may have gained through the textbook or course lectures;
- gain knowledge of course textbook content, which may provide *ready-made* materials and exercises that support information literacy; therefore, librarians can spend less time

introducing information literacy and creating new assignments and more time validating course-specific content.

This article examines our university's basic communication course textbook, *Communication Counts: Getting It Right in College and in Life* (Worley, Worley, & Soldner, 2009). This text, and other similar well-received communication texts, draw from their pages potential concepts that librarians may utilize as they advocate for information literacy skills development on their college campuses. Information literacy, as deployed within a basic communication textbook, will be recognizable to a librarian, but the language or context in which it is presented may be a little different. How can a librarian maximize this discipline-specific form of information literacy in their library instruction sessions? Reviewing the basic communication textbook(s) used on campus might allow a librarian to mine their own information literacy skill set to better connect, support, inform, and enhance the content found in texts and taught by subject instructors.

While this inquiry is drawn from the communication field of study, we encourage librarians to consider reviewing other discipline-specific textbooks when planning course-specific information literacy and library instruction. Because information literacy is not a skill set that can be learned quickly, teaching methods should be encouraged that allow students to experience it over time in a variety of ways and in a variety of settings (Mackey & Jacobson, 2004; Meyer et al., 2008). By focusing on classes with multiple sections and hundreds of students that may share textbooks in common, librarians can reach a very substantial number of students with course-specific information literacy efforts.

## THE BASIC COMMUNICATION COURSE AND INFORMATION LITERACY

As previously mentioned, this article focuses on the basic communication course, as it is one of the classes on our campus that meets the criteria of having multiple sections and a common textbook. In fact, our course, Communication 101, has an enrollment of over 1000 students each semester. This is not surprising as the basic communication course is often included as a core component of general education programs and specific disciplines on most college campuses (Mazer, Hunt, & Kuznekoff, 2007; Meyer et al., 2008; Worley, & Worley, 2001), and this is true of our campus. Consequently, the introductory communication class is regularly taken by thousands of undergraduates every year (Morreale, Hugenberg, & Worley, 2006). Further, "Teaching students to acquire, use, and evaluate information is a staple of communication education" (Meyer et al., 2008, p. 30), and the basic course provides an ideal avenue as one of many gateways to information literacy skills training. Students apply the communication and information literacy skills they are learning in the preparation, presentation, and analysis of formal speeches, which are assigned fairly frequently and receive reasonably prompt feedback (Ehrmann, 2004; Jacobson & Mark, 2000). These conditions are optimum for beginning to apply complicated information literacy concepts and skills.

Information literacy can be seen as "an intellectual framework for understanding, finding, evaluating, and using information" (Association of College and Research Libraries, 2000, p. 3), which requires not only a comprehension of the overall concepts but also the ability to

process information using a skill set developed over time. In the past, most faculty members did not formally teach the research process, information literacy, or library skills (Jacobson & Gatti, 2001). In today's world, with an overwhelming amount of information available to students and researchers in a myriad of formats and often of uncertain quality, it is critical these competencies are "not extraneous to the curriculum" (ACRL, 2000, p. 5). Instead, these skills must be systematically embedded in discipline-based assignments and instruction.

Thus, with this heightened awareness of information literacy, more and more instructional materials furnished to students, such as textbooks, may include elements of information literacy woven into their content. This is a potential boon for librarians because it provides an opportunity for students to develop and practice information literacy skills in the context of their majors or courses, rather than depending solely on librarians for this training. Because the basic communication course has the potential to touch so many

students, it is valuable to explore how information literacy is manifested within the Communication 101 course. The basic communication textbook is one place to begin this inquiry.

## METHODOLOGY

In order to see how elementary information literacy concepts might be revealed within the basic communication textbook used on our campus, we performed a subjective review of *Communication Counts: Getting It Right in College and in Life* (Worley et al., 2009). In addition, we examined in the same manner 7 of the most popular introductory communication course textbooks (see Table 1 and Appendix A), published in the last 4 years. The latter texts were selected based on *most use* according to the *Basic Communication Course at U.S. Colleges and Universities in the 21st Century: Study VII* survey (Morreale et al., 2006, p. 428), which included data from 306 colleges.

Because we aimed to analyze textbooks for communication-specific information literacy

TABLE 1 — BASIC COMMUNICATION COURSE TEXTS

- *The Art of Public Speaking*, Stephen Lucas, 2009, 10<sup>th</sup>ed.
- *Human Communication*, Judy C. Pearson, Paul E. Nelson, Scott Titsworth, & Lynn Harter, 2011, 4<sup>th</sup> ed.
- *Communication: Making Connections*, William Seiler & Melissa Beall, 2008, 7<sup>th</sup> ed.
- *Understanding Human Communication*, Ronald Adler & George Rodman, 2009, 10<sup>th</sup> ed.
- *Human Communication: The Basic Course*, Joseph DeVito, 2009, 11<sup>th</sup> ed.
- *Public Speaking*, Michael Osborn, Suzanne Osborn, & Randall Osborn, 2009, 8<sup>th</sup> ed.
- *Public Speaking: Strategies for Success*, David Zarefsky, 2008, 5<sup>th</sup> ed.
- *Communication Counts: Getting It Right in College and in Life*, David Worley, Debra Worley, & Laura Soldner, 2009, custom ed.

concepts that might be utilized in librarian-facilitated training, our initial assessment looked for references to the terms *information literacy*, *librarians* or *libraries*, *library research*, and similar verbiage. Our search was then broadened to include critical listening; databases and indexes; documentation, evidence, and supporting materials; information gathering; information resources or sources; information use and information savvy; and research skills or methods. As our list expanded and because our focus was on the introduction of information literacy concepts, rather than on the depth of coverage for each principle, we examined some texts more than once.

A scan, looking for all the terms listed in the previous paragraph, was undertaken of all the textbook indexes, glossaries, tables of contents, and chapter headings and subheadings. Then, the textbook introductions, partial and whole chapters, and exercises were checked. Besides looking at the identified concepts, we thoroughly read related textbook content associated with each term. All the while, textbook content and ways it might support the *ACRL Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education* was taken into account (see Table 2). Some disciplines

such as anthropology and sociology have collaborated with ACRL's Anthropology and Sociology Section's (ANSS) Instruction and Information Literacy Committee's Task Force on IL Standards to have specific information literacy standards developed for them ([http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/acrl/standards/anthro\\_soc\\_standards.cfm](http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/acrl/standards/anthro_soc_standards.cfm)).

Unfortunately, that is not yet the case for communication. Due to this fact, as well as the general introductory nature of the basic communication course, we felt that the ACRL information literacy standards were the most appropriate measure for comparison.

## COMMUNICATION CONCEPTS

Instead of discussing each of these books separately, the following sections define a basic communication text concept that can be tied to one of the five ACRL information literacy standards. Associated with each ACRL standard are examples from selected texts that support them. Suggestions are given for librarians about how to connect these communication concepts to information literacy principles. These illustrations are not intended as a comprehensive list of information literacy concepts that may be found within the pages

**TABLE 2 — ACRL INFORMATION LITERACY COMPETENCY STANDARDS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION**

1. Determine the nature and extent of information needed
2. Access the needed information effectively and efficiently
3. Evaluate information and its sources critically and incorporate selected information into one's knowledge base
4. Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
5. Understand the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information, and access and use information ethically and legally

of a basic communication textbook. Rather, these examples are meant to give librarians a sense of how subject-specific content can be re-conceptualized within the domain of information literacy.

### *Communication Concept: Topic Selection*

*Topic Selection* is “the specific focus of a speech” (Worley et al., 2009, p. 191).

**What the textbooks say.** Selecting the topic of a speech is one area that all reviewed communication texts consider, and most include as a separate chapter (e.g., Adler & Rodman, 2010; Lucas, 2009; Osborn et al., 2009; Pearson et al., 2011; Seiler & Beall, 2008; Zarefsky, 2008). Undoubtedly, good topic selection can influence the success or failure of a speech assignment simply because students seem to do better work on subjects that interest them. Lucas (2009) suggests students select a topic they know well or a topic about which they want to know more (pp. 77–78), and DeVito (2009) adds that students should look at themselves and consider the unique experiences that can make their research and speeches more meaningful and interesting (p. 301).

Seiler and Beall (2008) advise students to use four techniques for identifying a speech topic. These include conducting a self-inventory; brainstorming; reviewing current magazines, newspapers and news programs; and conducting an Internet search (pp. 167–172). Other authors suggest students use techniques such as concept-mapping (Pearson et al., 2011), mind mapping (Osborn et al., 2009), or creating interest charts (Osborn et al.) to generate a topic. The latter of which includes questions like: “What *places* do you find interesting? What *people* do you find fascinating?” And, “Which *ideas* do you find

intriguing?” (Osborn et al., pp. 125–129). Many of these techniques are also suggested by the textbook authors as ways to not only *discover* a topic but also to *narrow* it so it is workable for presentation in a speech, sometimes a confounding issue for beginning speakers.

**Connecting the communication concept to information literacy.** Librarians can use *topic selection* to support Information Literacy Competency Standard I to “determine the nature and extent of the information needed.” Obviously, all communication assignments begin with a topic, whether they are written or oral tasks. Only after identifying a research topic can a student articulate the need for related information. Presumably, first-year communication students have had practice generating topics before they come to the basic communication course, but the process can still be daunting. Much like the other textbooks mentioned, our campus text, *Communication Counts* (Worley et al., 2008), emphasizes brainstorming as a topic selection technique and also provides a list of questions students can ask themselves when choosing a topic (pp.182–183). These queries range from the practical such as “How much time do I have to speak?” and “How much time will I need for additional research?” to considering the audience when choosing a topic. Questions that make allowance for listeners include “What does my audience want to know?” and “What does my audience consider important?” (Worley et al., p. 183). In future bibliographic instruction sessions, librarians are urged to use these questions, and others as well, in addition to directing students to related textbook pages for reference as they analyze their topic choices.

Many of the aforementioned textbook techniques (brainstorming, concept-



mapping, mind mapping, etc.) can also be repurposed to help students develop keywords and search terms. These techniques provide value in helping students understand how to broaden and narrow their search strategies so they can identify a workable topic and determine the amount of information needed for a particular speech or other assignment. A librarian might consider using this type of exercise in tandem with a library database to demonstrate the kinds of search results returned, depending on how narrow or broad the search terms. Students can also refine their search results using limiters such as subject headings, which aid in focusing their topics.

### *Communication Concept: Reference Librarian*

*A Reference Librarian is "someone specifically trained to help... find sources of information"* (Pearson et al., 2011, p. 286).

**What the textbooks say.** Information needs are created when communication students are required to give particular types of speeches. Many basic communication texts explicitly state that the library is a good place for students to begin researching speech topics (Alder & Rodman, 2010; Devito, 2009; Lucas, 2009; Seiler & Beall, 2008). More specifically, Pearson et al. (2011) encourage students to start at the "practical 'center' of [the] library" (p. 266), the reference desk, by asking for assistance when they need help with research.

To satisfy their information needs, students are urged to consider searching the online catalog, databases, reference works (including subject encyclopedias), and newspapers, among other resources (Adler & Rodman, 2009; Lucas, 2009; Pearson et al., 2011). Knowing how to access information quickly is emphasized and

building a bibliography, taking notes, getting organized, and managing time are detailed (Devito, 2009; Osborn et al, 2009). Research is covered thoroughly in Zarefsky's (2008) "Researching the Topic" chapter (pp. 122–155), and students are urged to make information choices strategically. Personal experience, common knowledge, examples, documents, statistics, and testimony (including interviewing) are all explained in depth. Analyzing all these sources of information in all these formats can be overwhelming, but librarians can help communication students develop organized research strategies when preparing their speech assignments. Further, "Library experts help [students] make sense of and determine the validity of the information [they] find" (Adler & Rodman, p. 298).

**Connecting the communication concept to information literacy.** Supporting Information Literacy Competency Standard II: "access[ing] the needed information effectively and efficiently" is often assumed in the basic texts we examined. From the textbook scan, it is evident that communication texts are most often concerned with what the resources are, not necessarily when to use them, how to use them, and where to find them. That makes sense because basic textbook authors are mainly interested in introducing supporting resources, not necessarily in providing step-by-step instructions for their use. Our campus text, *Communication Counts* (Worley et al., 2009), is no different in this regard and offers a brief discussion of library resources. Fortunately, it does assert that students should talk to librarians if they need more specific information and instruction.

Because it was discovered that there was little in the basic communication texts about

how to use library resources, our findings will definitely inform how our campus librarians support *Standard II* going forward in our library instruction sessions. In our one-shot classes, we will reiterate that students talk to librarians if they need help. We might even encourage instructors to *require* their students to confer with a librarian at the reference desk while researching one of their early speech topics. If library database use is prescribed by communication instructors to support an informational speech, it is appropriate to promote general academic database resources such as *Academic OneFile* or *LexisNexis Academic*, or even *MasterFILE* or *Readers' Guide Online* for less academic topics. A persuasive or argumentative speech may call for students to use a resource like *CQ Researcher* or choose a journal such as *Congressional Digest*, which provides a pro/con section that may aid them in looking at both sides of an argument. By conferring with communication instructors *before* instruction sessions, librarians can better understand the scope of assigned research and offer active learning exercises for practice using one or two relevant databases.

**Communication Concept: Critical Listening/Evaluative Listening**

**Critical Listening/Evaluative Listening** is analyzing a message to determine its validity, reliability, and appropriateness (Worley et al., 2008, p. 326) and/or its accuracy, meaningfulness, and utility (Pearson et al., 2011, p. 412).

**What the textbooks say.** One textbook asserts that listening to speeches is important because the process allows students to develop habits of analysis, cultivate memory, and decide for themselves which speech strategies work

(Zarefsky, 2008). Among the four types of listening, Seiler and Beall (2008) identified the following in their text: listening for information, evaluative listening, empathic listening, and listening for enjoyment (p. 150). The first two types of listening are the most applicable to information literacy. Listening for information involves "listening to gain comprehension" while evaluative listening seeks "to judge or to analyze" the information heard (Seiler & Beall, 2008, p. 150–151). *Comprehensive listening* and *critical listening* are the terms Lucas (2009) used for the same concepts (p. 49). Zarefsky's (2008) critical listening definition is similar, which is "not only an accurate rendering of the speech but an interpretation and assessment of it" (p. 58).

Critical listeners are challenged to identify a speech's main ideas, decide if the links between the ideas are reasonable, judge whether the ideas are supported appropriately, and determine how accepting or rejecting the thesis affects their own belief systems (Zarefsky, 2008, pp. 61–63). This is a formidable task for the basic communication student, as all of this is supposed to happen within the limited time frame of a speech.

Lucas (2009) discusses "judging the soundness of evidence" as part of critical listening (p. 50). He presents four basic questions to ask about a speaker's evidence, including whether it is accurate, objective, relevant, and sufficient to support the speaker's claims (p. 58). Seiler and Beall (2008) provide a good explanation of the dual purposes of critical listening from judging the speaker to analyzing the message:

Practicing critical listening involves analyzing and assessing the accuracy of the information presented,

determining the reasonableness of its conclusions, and evaluating its presenter. In other words, we must ask ourselves questions about the message: Is the message true? Is it based on solid evidence? Is it complete? Is it logical? What motivates the speaker to present the message? (p. 153).

### **Connecting the Communication Concept to Information Literacy**

A librarian can encourage critical listening as a way of developing the ability to judge information effectively, one of the essential goals of becoming information literate. Critical listening supports *Information Literacy Competency Standard III*: “Evaluate information and its sources critically and incorporate selected information into one’s knowledge base.”

Our campus text, *Communication Counts* (Worley et al., 2009), provides guidelines for critical listening, including understanding a message before assessing its merit, considering source and evidence credibility, and evaluating the speaker’s reasoning (p. 79). These guidelines offer a framework librarians can use to draw students into the information evaluation process. Students can practice translating others’ ideas into their own words and incorporating their own ideas with the information they gather from speeches. Librarians can mediate discussions about evaluating both the information and its sources. After handing out copies of Worley’s or any other author’s critical listening guidelines to students, librarians might use speeches included in the text or in ancillary materials as a template for discussing evaluative strategies during a bibliographic instruction session.

Another way a librarian can support critical

listening might be to ask students to assess the clarity of the librarian’s information literacy presentation. Students could use electronic classroom response systems such as clickers, traditional methods like pencil and paper analysis, or discussion to indicate whether the librarian/instructor is being understood. Students might critique what the librarian does well and consider “three things the [librarian] could do better to help students keep track of the lecture” (Lucas, 2008, p. 61). Since information literacy is a fairly novel construct to most students, librarian-directed discussions could help validate student understanding and provide a practical example of synthesizing new knowledge with prior knowledge.

### *Communication Concept: Supporting Materials/Evidence*

*Supporting Materials/Evidence* is “information you can use to substantiate your arguments and to clarify your position” (Pearson et. al., 2010, p. 418).

**What the textbooks say.** Communication textbooks often use the terms *supporting materials* or *evidence* when talking about the resources used to construct and support speeches, as does our campus text. Librarians may not be specifically as tuned to recognize these words as they are to terms such as *peer-reviewed articles* and *research*. Supporting materials and evidence are used to establish a speaker’s credibility. Adler and Rodman (2009) espouse the “Functions of Supporting Materials” to clarify, make interesting, make memorable, and prove the truth of speech assertions (p. 323). They highlight “find[ing] the perfect statistic, definition, analogy, anecdote, or testimony to establish the truth of [the] claim. . . .” (pp. 389–390). Pearson et al.’s (2011) coverage is similar, but surveys, analogies, explanations, and definitions (pp. 296–301) are also listed.

Lucas (2009) devotes a whole chapter to "Supporting Your Ideas" (pp. 140–163) and another to "Gathering Materials" (pp. 118–139) with a four-page discussion about "Doing Library Research." The Osborns' (2009) text offers a slightly different tact for students by suggesting, "The articles you find do not provide you with a speech" (p. 160). Rather, one builds his or her own case for a particular audience. Thus, the resultant speech's main idea and thesis statement are enriched with carefully chosen supporting materials.

### **Connecting the Communication Concept to Information Literacy**

Using appropriate supporting materials is one way librarians can emphasize *Information Literacy Standard IV*: "Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose." As mentioned previously, the basic course is a fitting place for students to begin honing their skills in understanding, differentiating, and locating research in a variety of sources to support classroom assignments and speeches. As the basic texts demonstrate, not only can students become aware of available resources, but they can also begin to develop their information literacy skills. Textbooks provide a solid foundation on which a librarian can build. All basic communication texts suggest using examples, statistics, narratives, testimonies, and definitions, or some such selection to inform speeches. Textbooks use the term *supporting materials* in this context.

Librarians offering communication-specific instruction should try to appropriate this terminology. Instead of saying to students, "This is the process about how to find a book or article," a librarian may say instead, "This is the process for finding supporting materials." Our campus textbook suggests students use supporting materials based on

their "relatedness," "relevance," and "respect." Information should be "directly and clearly related to a topic, thesis, and point" (Worley et al., 2008, p. 219). Obviously, this suggests that students should choose supporting materials with care, a message that should be emphasized and re-emphasized by librarians. Pearson et al. (2010) provide a series of evaluative questions dealing with authority, relevance, currency, objectivity, bias, and corroboration as *tests of evidence* for persuasive speeches (p. 397). Additionally, selecting supporting materials and even a speaker's choice of topic should be sensitive to the audience's level of engagement, expertise, and personal interests, as well as have respect for the audience's "prior knowledge and values" (Worley et al., p. 219). With this in mind in instruction sessions, librarians might try to incorporate these criteria for students to evaluate the supporting materials they find.

### *Communication Concept: Ethics/ethical communication*

**Ethics/ethical communication** is "*the right way or best way to communicate in a given situation*" (Worley & Worley 2009, p. 19).

**What the textbooks say.** Most basic communication textbooks conjoin communication with ethics in order to emphasize the concept *ethical communication* as defined by the National Communication Association guidelines (<http://www.natcom.org/index.asp?bid=13592>). As Seiler and Beall's (2008) text suggests, "Ethical communicators speak responsibly and give credit to any sources that contribute to the message being conveyed. An ethical communicator does not plagiarize and does not lie" (p. 7). Critical thinking competencies are key as students strive to become ethical communicators and as they evaluate their

fellow students' communication products to determine whether they are ethically sound. As Zarefsky (2008) states in his textbook, the emphasis on ethics is not simply lipservice to students but a real necessity. "Speech has tremendous power, and the person who wields it bears great responsibility" (p. 20).

Adler and Rodman (2009) offer an "Ethical Challenge" section in their book with a listing of unethical communication behaviors adapted from Andersen's dissertation (1979), *An Analysis of the Treatment of Ethos in Selected Speech Communication Textbooks* (p. 381). The challenge contains explanations about negative practices such as committing plagiarism, relaying false information, and withholding information (pp. 380–381).

### **Connecting the Communication Concept to Information Literacy**

This emphasis on communication ethics readily supports *Information Literacy Competency Standard V*: "Understand the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information, and access and use information ethically and legally." Our campus text, *Communication Counts* (Worley et. al, 2009) reprints the *National Communication Association Credo for Ethical Communication* (p. 27) as well as provides sources for ethical guidelines and moral growth (pp. 27–30). Additionally, the authors emphasize the concepts of fidelity, confidentiality, and fairness with a further emphasis on *significant choice*, which they define as "having sufficient information about a situation to make a 'good' decision" (p. 32). Significant choice is one concept librarians may highlight regarding information sources in bibliographic instruction sessions by asking, "Does your speech provide sufficient information for a listener to make a good

decision? Or, does your speech provide sufficient information for your professor to award your project/speech an A?"

Another possibility for librarians is to provide ethical dilemmas taken from course texts to demonstrate how students must evaluate the information they use for bias, sexist language, or other questionable connotations. As one textbook noted, speakers are ethically obligated to "find the best possible sources of information, cite their sources of information, and to fairly and accurately represent [them]" (Pearson et al., 2011, p. 302). Textbook embedded resources, such as the one page *Ethical Public Speaking Checklist* (Lucas, 2009, p. 37) would be a good resource for librarians to highlight and discuss with students, helping them make sure their speeches are free of plagiarism and ethically sound.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

Whether explicitly stated or simply implied, information literacy is intimately connected to the information and concepts presented in the basic communication course and the textbooks that support it. Librarians can add value for students by collaborating with communication instructors and incorporating textbooks into bibliographic instruction efforts. Every one of the surveyed basic communication texts address some, if not all, of the *ACRL Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education* to a degree. Since disciplinary context and librarian/faculty collaboration are deemed two of the most successful strategies for delivering information literacy instruction, appropriating basic communication texts' terminology and concepts for library skills training is encouraged to support the basic communication course and campus-wide information literacy objectives. This may

also be the case with other textbooks at use on college campuses.

Librarians, in their role as information literacy advocates, should be advised to try to bridge textbook concepts and themes to information literacy principles and practices. Although the standards, conceptualizations, and skills may be more rudimentary in beginning texts, and that is understandable and desirable, instructors and librarians can provide common ground to better situate students for becoming more information literate. Because core courses such as the basic communication class reach so many students, these courses are indeed a gateway by allowing students to expand and transfer their information skill set from one context to the next.

Examining discipline-specific textbooks for information literacy concepts is one way librarians can support the learning and development of information literacy skills on their campuses, especially in classes with common textbooks and multiple sections. Doing so can only make librarian-led collaborations more cooperative and validating to discipline faculty and students.

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## APPENDIX A

### Textbooks Used in Basic Communication Course Textbook Analysis:

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