

Relinquish Control and Embrace Challenge to Create Resilient Researchers

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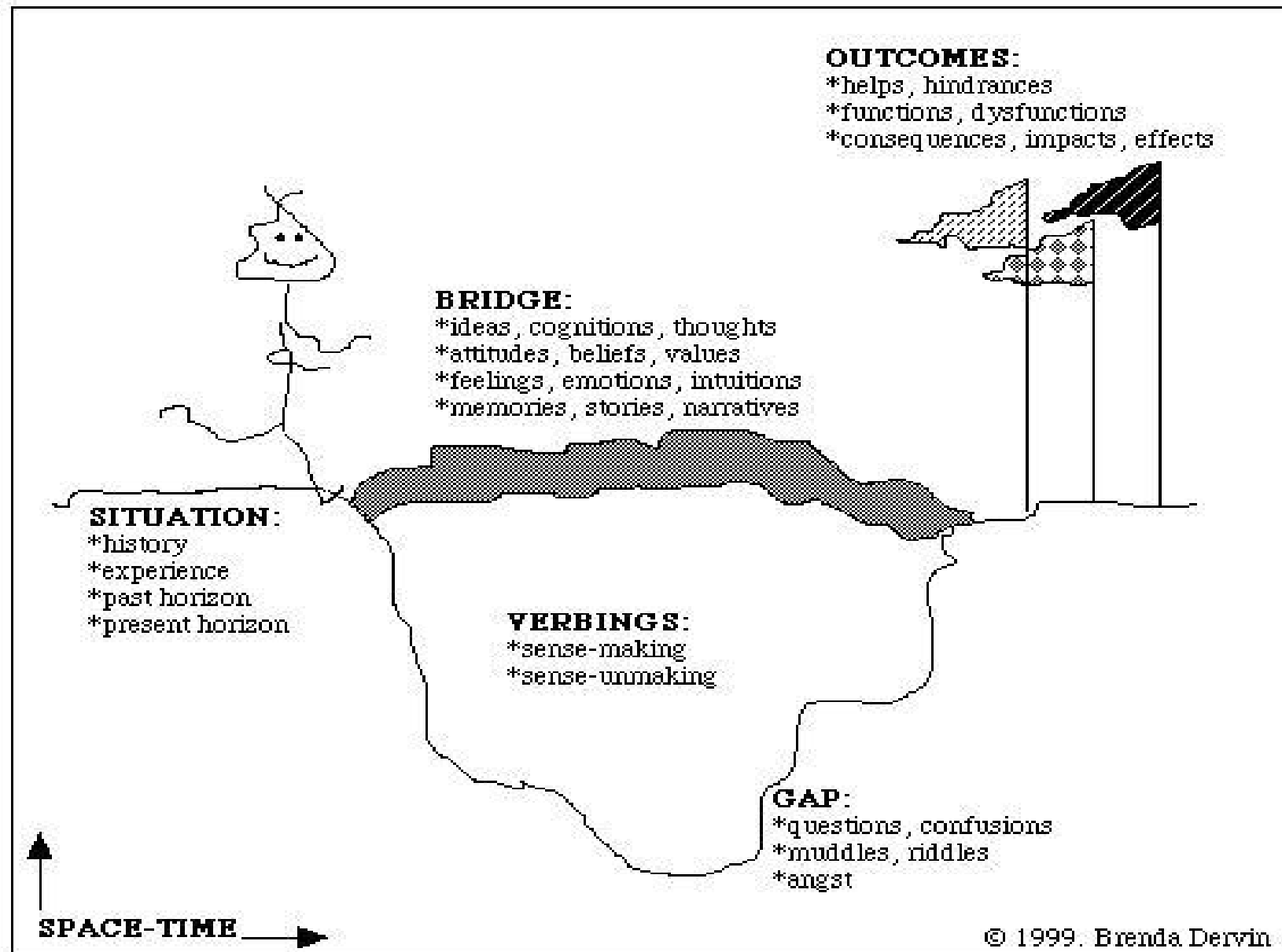
We will

- Define the issue of controlling learning
- Summarize interdisciplinary perspectives to create a framework for engaging with this problem
- Provide examples of applications

Sense-Making (Brenda Dervin)

- As we move through our world, we are immersed in a "soup" of **cognitive gaps**.
- Gaps are the information **needs, questions, and confusions** we have.
- We **bridge the gaps to create sense**. Information or knowledge is the "sense" we (individually and collectively) make of the world at these points.
- What Dewey (1929, pp. 242-243) called "transform[ing] a problematic situation into a resolved one."

Sense-Making (Brenda Dervin)



Value of gaps

- Rich situations, highly educational situations, challenging situations have a lot of "**gappiness**" - what Pirsig (1975) called "quality."
- These situations provide a lot of opportunity for learning to take place. But they can be challenging and scary.
- Maybe we need to **build gaps into** our instruction rather than trying to remove them.

Individuals must make their own sense

- "To control self and move through time and space, each individual must **make his own sense**. No outsider can impose sense." (Dervin, 1977, p. 28)
- "...The change which a person attempts within [themselves] **must be construed by [them]**... if [they are] to make any sense of it." (Kelly, 1955, pp. 78-79)
- Students **must find their own focus** when researching. A focus should not be imposed on them to make the process easier for them. (Kennedy, Cole, and Carter, 1999)

Power in Emergent Strategy

What is Emergent Strategy?

- A leadership model for collective organizing rooted in biomimicry and the work of Octavia Butler coined by adrienne maree brown (2017)
- Philosophy of "ways for humans to practice being in *right relationship* to our home and each other..." (emphasis added p.24)

Element: Interdependence and Decentralization

- Power is mutually reliant
- Power must be shared among the group

Power in Emergent Strategy con.

"Trust the People. (If you trust the people, they will become trustworthy)." (p. 42)

- Teachers are not the only ones with the power to make sense of things
- Trusting students to create sense = decentralization

Empower

- Not a powerful teacher granting power to powerless students
- "Encourage and support the ability to do something" (Cambridge University Press, 2008)

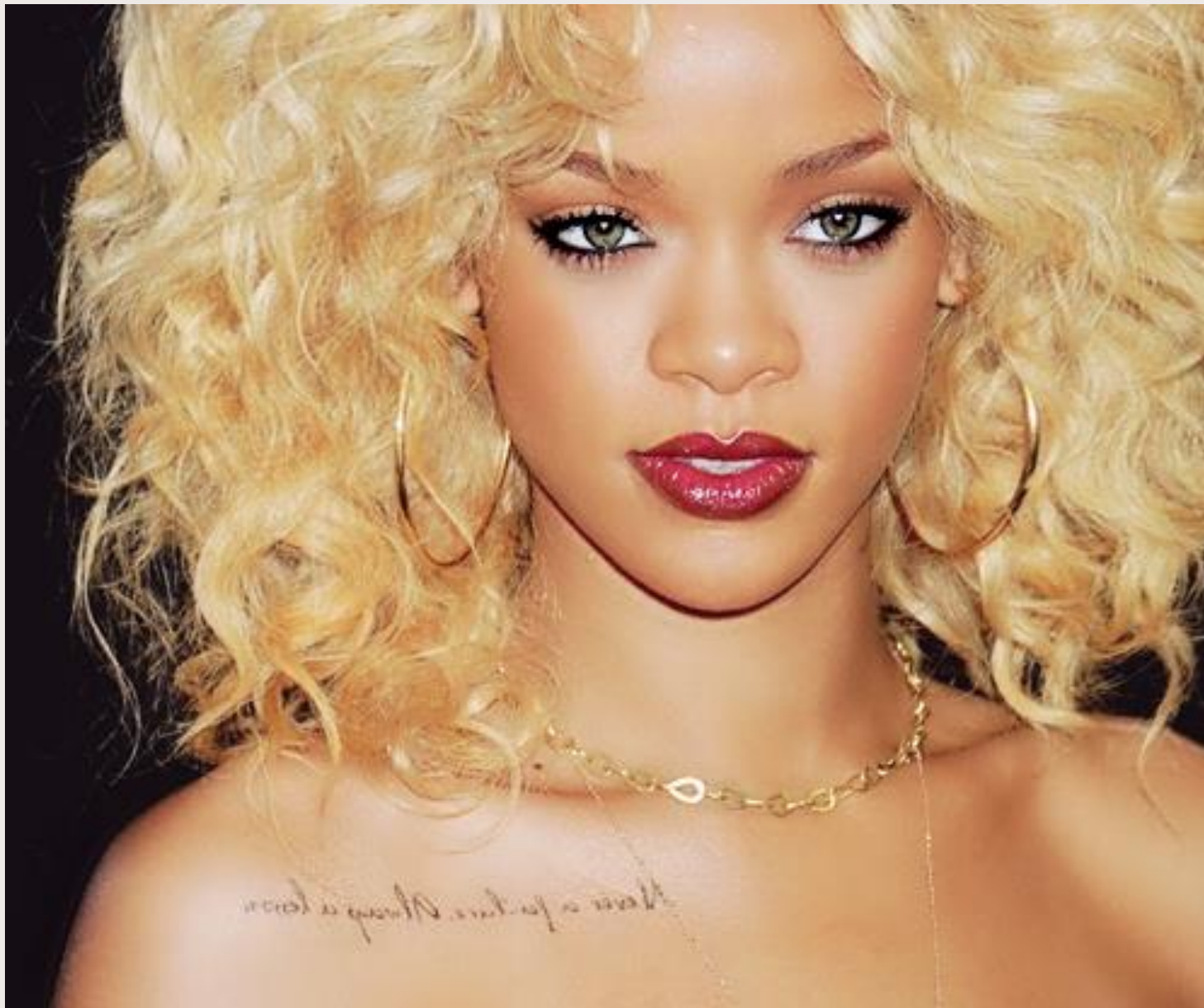


“A thousand candles can be lighted from the flame of one candle, and the life of the candle will not be shortened. Happiness can be spread without diminishing that of yourself.”

— Gandhi

Ahimsa Non-Violence

1. **Recognize the power you have within** (the power you give yourself through confidence and conviction)
2. **Recognize the power you have over others** (through social structures)
3. **Support the power of others** (meeting them where they are at)
 - Everyone is on their own journey. The purpose of teachers is to support, not interrupt or attempt to force a direction.
 - You can't force learning.
 - Constructivism: Learners create their own meaning. That creation cannot be controlled.



Never a failure, Always a lesson

“Never failure, always a lesson” (brown, 2017, p. 41)

Learning is often **nonlinear** and **iterative**

- **Nonlinear:** Things don't turn out how you expect, so you need to modify your trajectory
 - **Iterative:** Try something, gather feedback, try again
 - Error acts as feedback or **necessary friction**, sending the signal that something needs to change. The system needs to begin (or continue) adapting. (Beer, 1972)
 - What Pickens (2021) called "**information proprioception**" (p. 3)
- “...messy chaotic beauty of transformation.” (brown, 2017, p. 119)

Failure & Friction

Productive Failure (math)

- We don't necessarily need success at solving problems but “more flexible and adaptive learners.”
- “...a productive exercise in failure.” (Kapur, 2008, p.414)
- “Asking students to use their existing knowledge and skills to struggle with the material *before* we teach it can provide a robust foundation for deeper learning.” (Lang, 2021, p. 20)

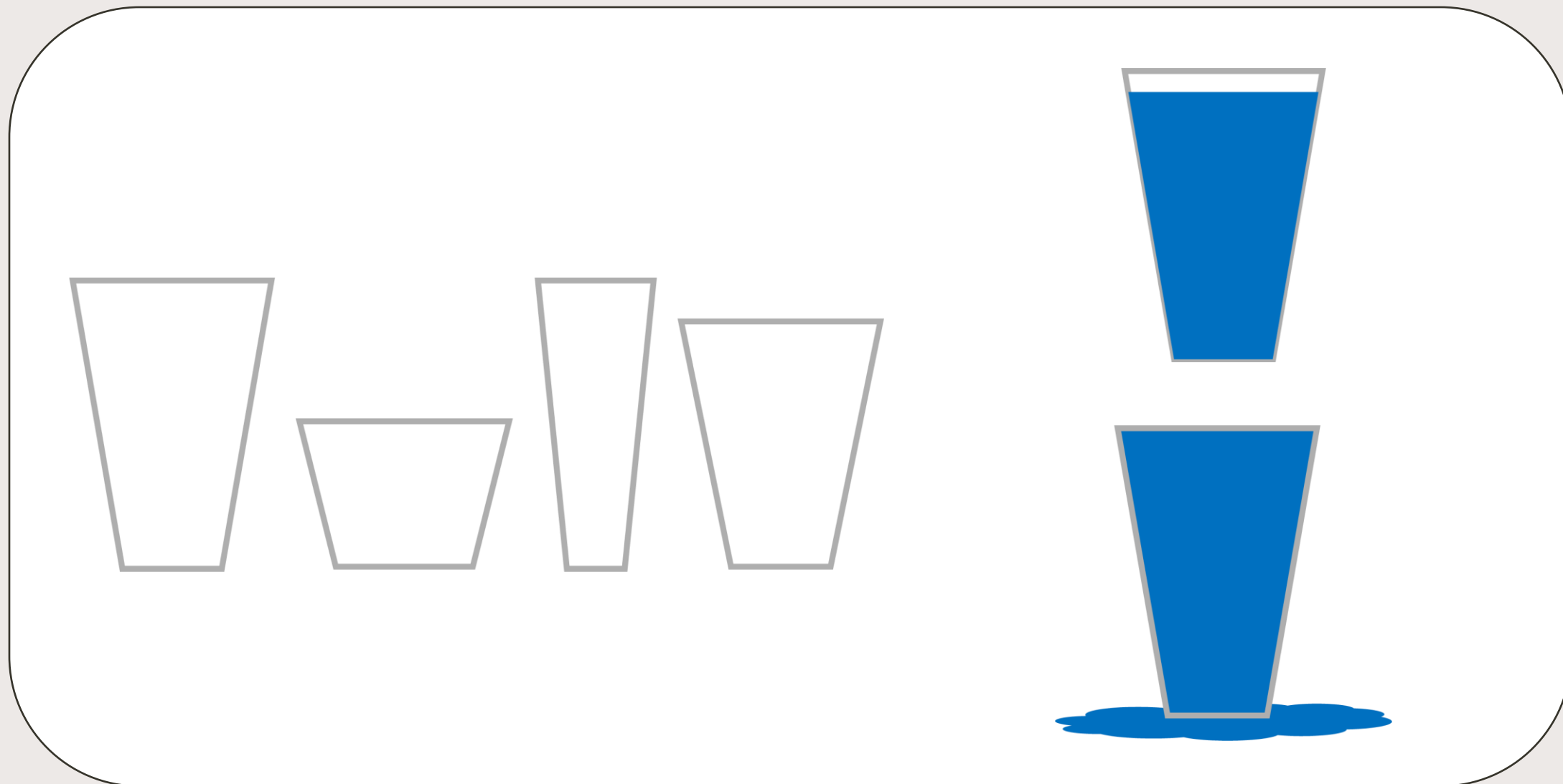
Productive Struggle (math)

- Struggle must be productive, not create too much frustration, anxiety, or it will be counter-productive. (Warshauer 2015, Hiebert and Grouws 2007)

Educational Friction (rooted in UX and AI design)

- Uncertainty and confusion are common in early stages of research. (Kuhlthau, 2004)
- Belkin (1980) "Anomalous state of knowledge" – fuzziness of focus is natural – don't try to eliminate it.

Threshold of Productive Struggle



Aparigraha Non-Possessiveness

"What we try to possess, possess us" (Adele p. 91)

- Expectations lead to dissatisfaction.
- Attachment makes us blind to new opportunities.
- Just because we don't see the sense-making, doesn't mean it's not there.
- Learning will happen without our supervision.

What does this look like?

- Asking students: What would you like to learn today?
 - Refer back to this at the end of class
- Prediction: Students guess the answer first (Lang, 2021)
 - Ask: How do you evaluate a source? How do you develop keywords? How would you read this?
 - Can be done in small groups
- Have students search first, then teach
- Let them sleep! Let them remain silent!



What made you a happy pug? What did you learn?
What did you like most about today's class? What did
you like about my instruction style?

*I liked how you didn't make
any one who didn't want to
talk*

“I liked how you didn’t make
anyone who didn’t want to talk”

What does this look like in the profession?

As librarians, we must also

- Make our own sense
- Bridge gaps
- Be non-violent to ourselves
- See our failures as lessons
- View friction as a feature of learning
- Be unattached to our expectations of ourselves

Information Literacy Defined

“...this Framework envisions information literacy as extending the arc of learning throughout students’ academic careers and as converging with other academic and social learning goals... Information literacy is the set of integrated abilities encompassing the reflective discovery of information, the understanding of how information is produced and valued, and the use of information in creating new knowledge and participating ethically in communities of learning.”

(ACRL Framework for Information Literacy, 2016)



*"Lasciate ogne speranza,
voi ch'intrate"*
Abandon all hope, ye who
enter here

La Porte de l'Enfer (The Gates of Hell)
by Auguste Rodin

Release Cruel Optimism

“A relation of cruel optimism exists when something you desire is actually an obstacle to your flourishing.” (Berlant, 2011, p. 1)

- Optimism isn't inherently a negative thing
- It becomes cruel when the thing is impossible, unattainable, out of your control, etc.

Information Literacy as a cruel optimism

- IL and the Framework are used as goals and a way to evaluate instruction and the library's worth
- Cannot be taught by librarians alone, especially not in a one-shot
- What if IL was reframed to “how to library” instead? (Seale & Nicholson, 2024, p. 133)

Thank You

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