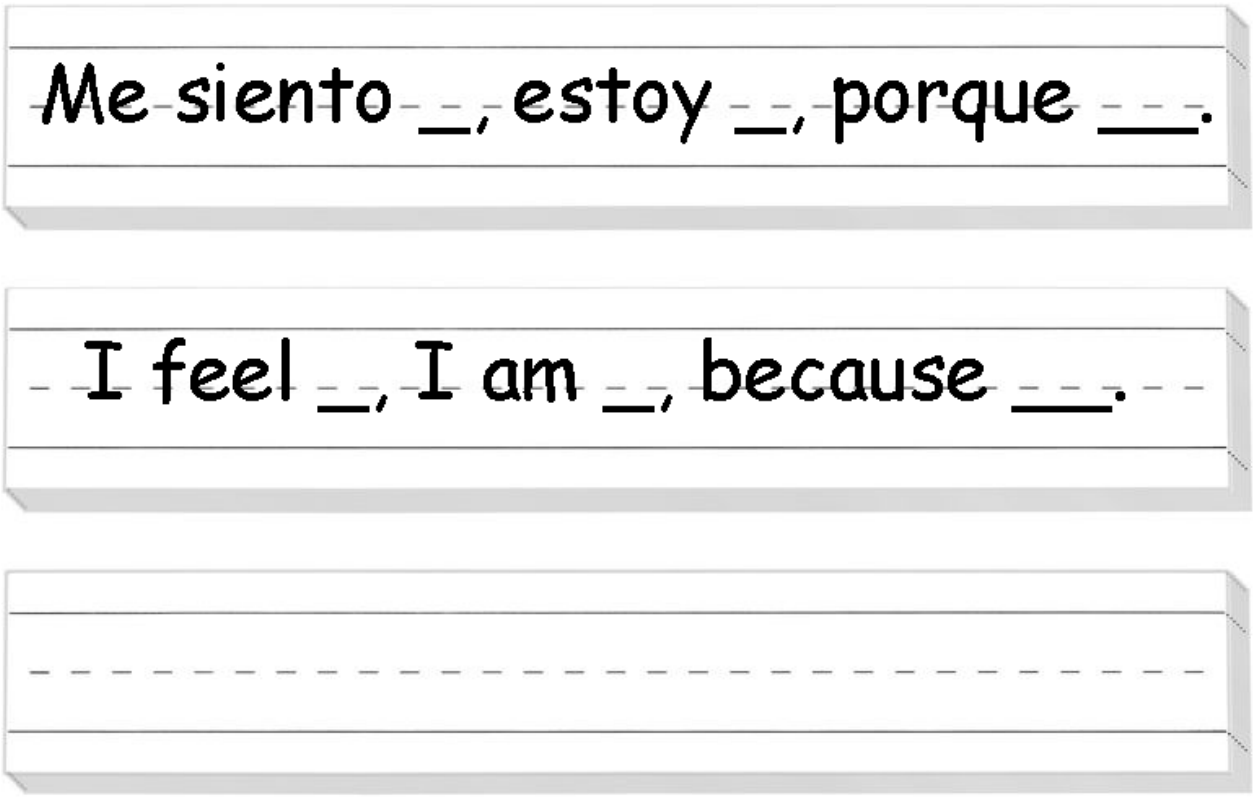
Natalia Umaña

Where Is the Love? (/Rage/Joy, Etc.)

Making Sense of the Missing Affect in the Framework as an Early Career Bibliotecóloga

If you visited my former third grade classroom, you would find the "sentence frames" pictured on the wall, along with a visual dictionary of a variety of emotions. These visual anchors served to support my young multilingual students' language and psychosocial skill development foundational to elementary education. As a primary educator, it was critical for students' learning that I noticed how they felt and worked with them through their emotional experiences. After pivoting professionally to academic librarianship, the question of attending to students' affective needs lingered as I set out to facilitate information literacy (IL) learning experiences in the higher education library classroom.



As a former public school teacher beholden to state academic standards, I turned to my new field's standards, the ACRL's Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education, expecting the document to similarly inform my instructional design. In engaging with the introduction, I learned about the 2016 shift from prescriptive standards to threshold concepts,[1]

Natalia Umaña is the education librarian at the University of Colorado Boulder, email: natalia.umana@colorado.edu.

© 2026 Natalia Umaña

introducing flexibility and encouraging adaptation for local contexts. My excitement grew upon reading about the inclusion of "dispositions to address the *affective* dimension of learning" within each frame and how the Framework's foundations lay in metaliteracy, which "demands ... *affective* engagement with the information ecosystem."[2] This explicit attention to emotionality as inherent to IL piqued my interest. A closer reading of the document in search for emotionality, however, left me feeling lost as to how to address this domain in my IL teaching. So began my exploration of the influence of emotion and metaliteracy[3] in IL discourse and my journey defining what it means for me as an early-career bibliotecóloga (librarian).

My Strategic Exploration

The (2016) Framework

I began my search by scanning the Framework for language related to affect, expecting obvious identifiers such as "emotions," "feelings," or specific states of emotion such as "frustrated, relieved, anxious." Instead, I found myself trying to imbue meaning or relevancy within the existing dispositions, leaving me with further questions. For example:

Frame	Text	My Reflections
Authority Is Constructed and Contextual	"Develop and maintain an open mind when encountering varied and ... conflicting perspectives"[4]	• What emotional skills are required for developing an open mind (attitude)? What emotions might occur in this process? How might this vary for different students? • How do I teach maintaining an open mind if/when conflicting perspectives cause intense emotions? • How do I translate this into the one-shot setting?

Excerpt from my reflections analyzing the Framework for "emotion."

My analysis of the Framework left me confused—the document introduced itself as incorporating "dispositions, which describe ways in which to address the affective, attitudinal, or valuing dimension of learning,"[5] but where was the affective domain discussed? Did I not really understand what *affect* meant, or is the Framework so capacious in its flexibility for implementation that it completely leaves the issue of emotionality up to the IL instructor? Grasping for understanding, I mined the sources the Framework references, scanned books on metaliteracy,[6] and continued searching.

Information Literacy Literature

Scholars note the lack of attention to emotion in ACRL IL guidance as early as 2010,[7] infrequently pointing to Carol Kuhlthau's seminal information search process to underscore emotionality's importance to IL. The Framework's 2016 adoption marked a turn toward metaliteracy's tenets of multimodality, constructivism, and attention to affective domains of learning.[8] In the subsequent decade the field wrestles with the latter, with discourse dominated by a focus on negative emotions and framings of emotionality as barriers to IL[9] such as library anxiety. Alex Hewitt problematizes this narrow gaze as an example of Freirean "narrative sickness," arguing for a conceptual shift of emotion and pointing to Indigenous models of relationality as pathways for this work.[10] Silvia Vong steps in to fill the gap, responding to critiques on the Framework's nebulous treatment of the affective domain by substantially clarifying "dispositions." Relating them to researcher positionality, Vong offers

a clear and robust praxis for teaching this concept.[11] While this critical contribution addresses the valuing and attitudinal facets of the affective domain concretely, Vong does not tackle emotionality directly.

Corollaries to this conversation beyond the Framework abound in LIS discourse. Yvonne Eadon centers emotionality positing the research self model (RS) for teaching reflexivity and approaching the complex relationships between "identity, emotion, epistemology, and research practice."[12] Critiques and pedagogical approaches that attend to students' full humanity[13] emphasize the importance of emotion. These include attending to emotion to mitigate barriers in pedagogies of care[14] and Sentipensante pedagogy,[15] which more directly integrates emotion and intuition as part of deep learning. Indigenous librarian and scholar Jessie Loyer gifts us the nêhiyaw (Cree) and Michif (Métis) law of wâhkôhtowin—the importance of kinship, radical love, and accountability for IL instruction.[16] Loyer emphasizes the care required of librarians, urging critical reflection, particularly considering the intersection of research and trauma. Speaking directly to how a librarian working with Holocaust researchers is "aware of his own emotional and spiritual stability as a facilitator of research," Loyer states that in the "Indigenous view ... it is harder to delineate the borders between mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual components of the self."[17]

Indigenous LIS discourse and Sheila García Mazari and Samantha Minnis' applications using Sentipensante Pedagogy, which is based on Toltec wisdom and Aztec culture, reminded me of my personal orientations to Women of Color Feminist theories. Could revisiting them be useful on my path toward emotion-informed IL instruction?

Returning Home: Women of Color Feminism, Womanism

Indigenous views, Women of Color Feminism, and Womanism all coalesce around a framing of *knowing* that involves the mind, the body, and the spirit.

One of my earliest IL journeys was sense-making of challenging and dysregulating experiences after joining higher education as library staff. I found "bridges and homes"[18] in Women of Color Feminist scholars and viscerally experienced their theories, encountering my ontological and epistemological orientations before I knew what the words *ontology* and *epistemology* meant. This highly emotional, relational, and embodied IL experience was neither isolated nor uniquely personal. I continue to witness emotions arise in my IL work with undergraduate and graduate students, subtly in the IL classroom and more explicitly in student responses and one-on-one research consultations. If the Framework is intended to be transformational, as threshold concepts are theorized, why not incorporate other worldviews that consider embodiment and emotion, relationality, and reciprocity as core to being information literate?

Canonical Chicana feminist Gloria Anzaldúa presents her model of personal knowledge as conocimiento (from the Spanish *conocer*, to know) as a process of deep self-awareness and transformation toward fuller consciousness that comes from "opening all your senses, consciously inhabiting your body ... deepening the range of perception enables ... inner reflection and vision—the mental, emotional, instinctive, imaginal, spiritual, and subtle bodily awareness—with social, political action and lived experiences to generate subversive knowledges.[19] Womanism, a Black feminist "logic of harmony and wholeness-making" embodies this as a "way of being" or worldview that "privileges the experience of inspiration, a

heightened, nonrational spiritual state … and contributes to an ongoing sense of inner well-being and power."[20] What would it mean for our field to recognize these moments, such as experiencing a feeling in the body, as "information" worthy of being literate at, instead of only barriers to our learning goals? For example:

Frame	Definition	Knowledge Practices	Dispositions
Information Practices Are Embodied and Relational	Engaging with information involves embodied, emotional, and relational experiences. Encountering information involves the body, emotions, social location, and relationships. This in turn shapes how learners interact with information sources.	Learners identify the physical, emotional, and relational aspects of their experiences as they encounter information.	Learners iteratively reflect on how their bodies, emotions, identities, and relationships shape their information practices.

Excerpt from my imaginings of the Framework.

Advocating for a mind-, body-, and spirit-informed IL guide from the ACRL is a radical ask. I will continue to ruminate whether such a specific epistemological stance belongs in the Framework, in a companion document, or nowhere near it at all. At the very least, I hope to add my voice to what critical LIS scholars have been saying: a worldview *already* dominates the Framework, one that compartmentalizes humans, prioritizing cognition and the intellect as the sole factors worthy of focus in our practices and studies. I know this because my journey was rich with sources on *emotionality's* importance to learning, especially in Threshold foundational literature[21] (cited by both the 2016 and 2026 draft versions). In April 2026, the ACRL Information Literacy Framework Review and Revision Task Force shared a draft of the revised Framework. This document mentions the word *emotion* two more times than the 2016 version—a start? Both references are in the Authority Is Constructed and Contextual frame: "[Learners] are open to … reviewing their own biases (including emotional reactions to information)" and a disposition stating that an "understanding of one's emotional awareness" is required for maintaining the frame's attitudes and actions.[22]

A deeper analysis awaits. For now, I center my responsibility to students and turn to my lesson plans to consider possibilities.

Emotion-Informed Practices

To start explicitly embedding emotions in my teaching, I revisited my lesson plans[23] to code for knowledge practices and dispositions. I started by updating language to reflect the draft ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education: 2026 Revision,[24] then identified areas fruitful for addressing emotion. I incorporated associated learning objectives and revised assessments to evaluate both knowledge practices and the newly added dispositions. Some sample learning objectives for Searching as Strategic Exploration include:

- Students will reflect on and record affective reactions in their search log, including naming one to two emotional or physical reactions they experienced while searching.
- Students will identify at least one way each [reaction] shaped what they noticed, chose to pursue, or abandoned in the search process.
- Students will describe at least one concrete change to their search strategy in response to these reactions.

- Students will identify at least one supportive strategy—e.g., mindfulness, meditation, accessing relational networks—that they intend to apply throughout the search process as needed.

I also reviewed my examples noting research artifacts to share and moments to "think aloud" how emotions arise in my own process, as well as create space for discussion on diverse experiences. I added activities to construct strategies for considering this dimension as a group, both for self and collective understanding and care. Making room for mind-body-spirit sensing, I iterate continuously based on faculty and student feedback.

Invitation

This exploration involved all of me. My mind read and wrote and reread and rewrote in pursuit of understanding complex concepts, grouping, sorting, evaluating, and synthesizing; my body experienced anger, disappointment, confusion, excitement, validation, fatigue, and relief; my spirit was the reminder in my heart, whispering when I was exhausted that examining my practices under the lens of reciprocity and responsibility is how I make this work worthwhile, good, and meaningful. I leaned on those to whom I belong: the Andean mountains that launched me; the Coloradan foothills I settled on; my dog, friends, family, and ancestors. It is valuable now to return to Hewitt's claim that IL views emotion as a Freireian "narrative sickness." This means we are trying to narrate life, in this case IL, instead of allowing students to explore and learn through experience. It means watching for my own biases, including being a highly emotional and spiritual person, when I design and teach IL workshops. It includes acknowledging that diversity in emotionality includes not only emotional intelligence but also emotional expression and, most of all, that I am just beginning my inquiries into the intersection of IL and the psychosocial.

Through critiquing the dearth of emotion in the Framework, I came to understand the document and its motivations in a more meaningful way. The journey ultimately devolved into redefining my teaching philosophy in my new professional context of IL instruction in higher education. I am a librarian who thinks, feels, and intuits practices to best honor the responsibility I have to students. Granting myself the permission to be this way is the pathway for tuning into my students' whole selves and their needs. I accept and make room for the well-known contradictions of limited time and faculty expectations, among others, embracing humility to proceed. Onward. I will keep trying new methods and strategies and centering the students in front of me. As I continue iterating my practices, I channel critical hope, intent on rejecting futility.[25] In other words, I seek to embody my own dispositional threshold "that researchers do not abandon complex inquiry."[26] It feels impossible, but I just got here and I am not ready to give up yet! "Slowing my roll,"[27] sigo pa' lante. Pa' trás ni pa' coger impulso (I keep moving forward, I'm not going backward even to gather momentum).

I invite you to consider your own IL teaching philosophy and how your positionality impacts your relationship to library instruction, the Framework, to students. Last but very importantly, how do you feel about it all?

> "Me siento bien, estoy feliz, sabéis ¿por qué? Porque estoy vivo y sigo aquí."[28]
> (I feel well, I am joyous, do you know why? Because I am alive and still here.)

Notes

1. Ray Land, Jan H. F. Meyer, and Caroline Baillie, *Threshold Concepts and Transformational Learning* (Sense Publishers, 2010).

2. Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL), "Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education," 2016, https://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework, 8; italics added.

3. Thomas P. Mackey and Trudi E. Jacobson, *Metaliteracy in a Connected World: Developing Learners as Producers* (ALA Neal-Schuman, 2022); Thomas P. Mackey and Trudi E. Jacobson, eds., *Metaliterate Learning for the Post-Truth World* (ALA Neal-Schuman, 2019).

4. ACRL, "Framework," 2016, 4.

5. ACRL, "Framework," 2016, 2.

6. Trudi Jacobson and Thomas P. Mackey, eds., *Metaliteracy in Practice* (ALA Neal-Schuman, 2016).

7. Robert Schroeder and Ellysa Stern Cahoy, "Valuing Information Literacy: Affective Learning and the ACRL Standards," *portal: Libraries and the Academy* 10, no. 2 (2010): 127–46, https://doi.org/10.1353/pla.0.0096; Ellysa Cahoy and Robert Schroeder, "Embedding Affective Learning Outcomes in Library Instruction," *Communications in Information Literacy* 6, no. 1 (2012), https://doi.org/10.15760/comminfolit.2012.6.1.119.

8. Mackey and Jacobson, *Metaliteracy in a Connected World*.

9. Sarah H. Mabee and Sarah E. Fancher, "Curiosity Is a Luxury of the Financially Secure: The Affective Thresholds of Information Literacy," *Library Trends* 68, no. 3 (2020): 482–505, https://doi.org/10.1353/lib.2020.0002.

10. Alex Hewitt, "What Role Can Affect and Emotion Play in Academic and Research Information Literacy Practices?," *Journal of Information Literacy* 17, no. 1 (2023), https://doi.org/10.11645/17.1.3311.

11. Silvia Vong, "From Dispositions to Positionality: Addressing Dispositions of the Student Researcher in the ACRL Framework," *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 47, no. 6 (2021), https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2021.102457.

12. Yvonne Eadon, "Mapping the Research Self: Context, Emotion, and Lifeworld in Counterestablishment Research," *Information & Culture* 60, no. 1 (2025):1-32, https://doi.org/10.1353/lac.00002.

13. Melissa N. Mallon et al., eds., *Exploring Inclusive and Equitable Pedagogies: Creating Space for All Learners*, vol. 1 (ACRL, 2023).

14. Katie S. Greer, "A Pedagogy of Care for Information Literacy and Metaliteracy Asynchronous Online Instruction," *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 49, no. 3 (2023), https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2023.102676.

15. Sheila García Mazari and Samantha Minnis, "Examining the Information Literacy Dreamfield: Applying a Sentipensante Pedagogy to Library Research Consultations," in *Exploring Inclusive & Equitable Pedagogies: Creating Space for All Learners,* vol. 1, ed. Melissa N. Mallon et al. (ACRL, 2023), https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6191z609.

16. Jessie Loyer, "Indigenous Information Literacy: Nêhiyaw Kinship Enabling Self-Care in Research," in *The Politics of Theory and the Practice of Critical Librarianship* (Library Juice Press, 2018).

17. Loyer, "Indigenous Information Literacy," 147.

18. Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, 4th ed. (Routledge, 2015); Gloria Anzaldúa and AnaLouise Keating, *This Bridge We Call Home: Radical Visions for Transformation* (Routledge, 2002).

19. Gloria Anzaldúa, *Light in the Dark* = Luz En Lo Oscuro: Rewriting Identity, Spirituality, Reality (Duke University Press, 2015).

20. Layli Maparyan, *The Womanist Idea* (Routledge, 2012).

21. Glynis Cousin, "Threshold Concepts, Troublesome Knowledge and Emotional Capital: An Exploration into Learning about Others," in *Overcoming Barriers to Student Understanding*, eds. J. H. F. Meyer and R. Land (Routledge, 2006).

22. Information Literacy Framework Review and Revision Task Force, "ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education: 2026 Revision," April 10, 2026, https://docs.google.com/document/d/1dAiqVltx3qeD0o-2avGwhw3sfctyWVQHh1m7cmfMkuI/edit?usp=sharing, 10-11.

23. See the full example lesson plan and change process at https://docs.google.com/document/d/1bbE-v-KRIjMNnIsP7hV1ItgWVs1abGIo0AtLm6OR2ag/edit?usp=sharing.

24. Information Literacy Framework Review and Revision Task Force, "ACRL Framework for IL: 2026 Revision," 2026, 20.

25. Sofia Leung, "The Futility of Information Literacy & EDI: Toward What?" *College & Research Libraries* 83, no. 5 (2022):751-64, https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.83.5.751.

26. Information Literacy Framework Review and Revision Task Force, "ACRL Framework for IL: 2026 Revision," 2026, 20.

27. Lalitha Nataraj and April Ibarra Siqueiros, "'Slow Your Roll': Making Time for Reflection and Diverse Epistemic Practices in Library Instruction," *College & Research Libraries* 83, no. 5 (2022): 819-32, https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.83.5.819.

28. Guaco, "Me Siento Bien," streaming audio, produced by 5G Production LLC, released as a single on November 3, 2023. This song is part of my joy toolbox, on repeat frequently when motivating myself. If you don't speak Spanish, you can still partake in its joy via the creators' YouTube video at https://youtu.be/jp-2Nf7t3Zo?si=7NBpdRSNyMqM73yA&t=10.