

Metaliterate Learning Through Self-Assessment of Recorded Research Presentations

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Introduction

Metaliteracy. Despite its roots in the “skills-based approach”¹ to information literacy instruction (ILI), this “overarching”² framework emphasizes students’ abilities to produce and share information, especially with new media and emerging technologies, and posits that these abilities are just as important as finding, evaluating, and using sources in research papers and projects. Essentially, metaliteracy allows ILI practitioners to move beyond traditional bibliographic instruction and resource sharing (e.g., citation tutorials, database demonstrations, etc.) and onto instruction that encourages critical thinking—specifically, “metacognition or critical self-reflection”—that can be used by students beyond the classroom,³ both in everyday life and throughout their (business and finance) careers.

If you are just starting out in ILI, you’ve probably heard the term “metaliteracy” thrown around at conferences, read it in the literature, and even clicked the hashtag on Twitter but perhaps aren’t quite sure what it is. Conversely, if you’ve been around for a little while, you may understand how metaliterate learning is supposed to work in practice but still don’t know how to implement it in classes that you regularly teach. Regardless of your familiarity with the concept of metaliteracy, the lesson described below will help you wrap your head around its practical application in business ILI. Because metaliterate

learning “supports the acquisition, production, and sharing of knowledge in collaborative online communities,”⁴ research presentations, specifically those created and consumed by students in an online or virtual environment, are a great way to introduce metaliteracy to your teaching praxis.

This chapter and the materials it shares are, in fact, the result of a commercial real estate finance professor’s request for help with market research presentations in fall 2019. Since my hiring in July 2018, I had been providing assignment-based, one-shot sessions and subsequent one-on-one and small-group research assistance for two of my colleague’s courses—a first-year experience course inspired by downtown Charleston’s absurd real estate market and a standard, 300-level market analysis course—so we had built some rapport. The 300-level course is naturally more research-intensive, yet students in both of these classes are required to present on various assigned properties in front of business and real estate professionals. While the professor had routinely insisted that I share a number of resources from our Student Success and Career Centers regarding professional dress on the course’s research guide and briefly present them during my instruction sessions, my instructional role shifted even more dramatically when, in response to her comments about the quality of her students’ presentations, I recommended that they use our main library’s One Button Studio to practice.

Starting as an informal, hands-on tutorial on using, and scheduling time to use, library technology—which as the switch to emergency remote teaching began in March 2020, eventually became a tutorial on using Zoom—the professor and I informally discussed the pros and cons of different self-assessment activities over the span of three semesters. One early idea was the submission of a brief reflection paper by each student in OAKS/D2L, the institution’s learning management system (LMS). While this was not exactly a shining example of collaborative creation in an online or virtual environment, it at least allowed students to review both the content and delivery of their practice presentations. Also, seeing as though the market research presentation and the written report that accompanies it is collaborative, the paper provided a rare opportunity for each member of each group to pause, critically self-reflect, and comment on the work completed thus far. The usefulness of these comments, of course, was questionable seeing as though only the professor saw them. Although the reflection paper worked to the satisfaction of my colleague for a couple of semesters, the lesson described below was eventually designed to make the reflection process one that “emphasizes collaboration in the development and distribution of original content in synchronous and asynchronous online environments.”⁵

Originally, as a guideline for the reflection paper, I created a self-assessment rubric that was designed as a matrix of the RUSA *Business Research Competencies (BRC)*⁶ and Jacobson, Mackey, and O’Brien’s *Metaliterate Learner Characteristics Aligned with ACRL Framework Dispositions*⁷ as related to the learning goals and student learning objectives (SLOs) presented on the course syllabus. The syllabus for the 300-level market analysis course specifically mentions the following learning goals published by the College of Charleston (CofC) School of Business:

- Communication skills, or “the ability, via both written and spoken word, to effectively present, critique, and defend ideas in a cogent, persuasive manner”
- Quantitative fluency, or “competency in logical reasoning and data analysis skills”
- Synthesis or “[the integration of] knowledge from multiple disciplines incorporating learning from both classroom and non-classroom settings in the completion of complex and comprehensive tasks”⁸

The course syllabus also lists the following SLOs pertinent to research and information literacy:

- “Know how to find sources for information about real estate markets and different types of properties and to use those resources in the final project.”
- “Have demonstrated the ability to research, analyze, and differentiate issues that affect the markets for one of the following types of real estate: single-family, multi-family, industrial, office retail, missed-used/special-use commercial real estate, depending on the final project assignment.”

Practically speaking, it may not be necessary to use every one of the guidelines, standards, and frameworks published by professional associations and respected ILI experts, but drawing connections between the assignment expectations—which, hopefully, directly reflect the mission and learning goals of the institution as well as the course SLOs drafted by the professor—and the competencies, skills, and “threshold concepts”⁹ agreed upon by other ILI practitioners is advisable. At the end of the day, you take what you can get and make sense out of whatever the assignment is. All the better if you are actually invited to help the professor design the assignment and its goals/learning outcomes.

It should be noted that the aforementioned professor, my colleague, never got the chance to provide meaningful feedback on the first draft of the self-assessment rubric below (and most likely never will since she is leaving my institution at the same time that the first draft of this chapter is due). For that reason, I am citing her 300-level real estate market analysis course as inspiration for this lesson, but I cannot yet attest to its success as written. That said, the lesson described below was created with backward design—the method of using thoughtfully developed goals/learning outcomes to design learning experiences that will effectively help students achieve said goals/outcomes. Did I assume a few changes in the original assignment as it was presented to me when I started in 2018? Yes, I did. In an ideal world (I know, I know), librarian-professor collaboration is a constructive give and take, a dialogue focused on the enhancement of “the overall student experience.”¹⁰ In reality, however, the assignments on which ILI practitioners base their instruction are not always designed with specific learning goals and even course SLOs in mind. So, if there are any business and finance professors reading this chapter, let this be a lesson for you as well: Asking an ILI practitioner to provide a simple library orientation, demo a few databases, share resources from the campus career center, or do a quick library technology or Zoom tutorial can lead to a professional conversation about pedagogy in your classes.

Planning

Number of participants

Each fall and spring semester, there are up to 40 students per section of the course, but summer sections are much smaller. Research is completed and presented in small groups of 3 to 6 students, depending on course enrollment.

Audience

This is a great place to talk about entry behaviors—students’ prerequisite knowledge, attitudes, or skills before instruction. This course consists of upper-level students only (i.e., juniors and seniors) with past coursework in financial accounting, macro- and microeconomics, real estate principles, and perhaps the most dreaded: business statistics. Because

the CofC School of Business offers a minor in real estate in addition to its commercial real estate finance major, it is not unusual to encounter students previously taught in 300- and 400-level hospitality and tourism management and marketing courses in these sections. (Minors in hospitality and tourism management and marketing are also offered to undergraduate students, so there is a lot of crossover in general.) Despite their academic standing or major/minor, the majority of the students enrolled are not likely to have had ILI beyond what was necessary to complete passable research papers in humanities and social science courses that are required as part of the core curriculum. Even those who have given individual or small-group presentations in 100- and 200-level School of Business courses are not likely to have explicitly considered their use of data and information through the lens of metaliteracy.

Preparations and Resources

I already mentioned the thorough examination of learning goals and SLOs in the introduction, but to me, preparation equals assessment, however informal. If at all possible, I recommend using graded but redacted student work samples from recently completed sections to familiarize oneself with the level of work that is typical of prospective students. Redaction is a little difficult when it comes to video recordings, of course, but speaking frankly with the professor about previous exemplary and unsatisfactory work, or actually attending students' final presentations the semester before instruction is scheduled to take place, can also help the ILI practitioner assess needs and set instructional goals (i.e., goals/learning outcomes on the lesson level), which is where all lesson planning should start.

While librarians are often asked by professors to focus on the location of data and information, the lesson described below assumes that assignment-based ILI regarding finding and evaluating sources has already taken place, either in a previous instruction session or via one or more online learning objects (e.g., video tutorials or narrated presentations with or without interactive quizzes/surveys, graphics/online handouts, research guides, etc.) that the students are required to complete/view before class. To complete their market research presentations, students will use library databases (e.g., DemographicsNow, IBIS-World, MarketLine, Statista, etc.) to locate industry analysis, public and private company information, and demographic and psychographic data as well as government websites and other discipline- or profession-specific online content to research their assigned properties—another reason this lesson is highly compatible with metaliteracy—but no specific subscription-based resources or fee-based services are absolutely required. Because the assignment in this particular course is focused on the local commercial real estate market, I also recommend the following to CofC students. The latter two are the local and state newspapers, both of which are accessible via our library's subscription to NewsBank's Access World News.

- Charleston Regional Data Center (<https://www.charlestonregionaldata.com>)
- Charleston Trident Association of Realtors Market Reports (<https://www.charlestonrealtors.com/marketreports>)
- *The Post and Courier* (Charleston, SC) (<https://www.postandcourier.com>)
- *The State* (Columbia, SC) (<https://www.thestate.com>)

Finally, as I already mentioned, I strongly encourage students to use data and information resources and research tools provided by discipline- or profession-specific sources, including the online content provided by professional organizations and trade associations

dedicated to commercial real estate services; there are more than forty of these groups currently listed on the research guide. Typically, at the start of the semester, each student is provided with a copy of Norman G. Miller and Margot Weinstein's *Commercial Real Estate Career Education and Resource Guide* (2009),¹¹ which contains information on US and international undergraduate and graduate real estate programs, profiles of successful professionals, and a glossary of common terminology in addition to a comprehensive list of associations and organizations. In order to make access to the latter easier for the students to access, I was asked to include links on the research guide. In addition to this list of links, I advise students to find, evaluate, and compare quarterly market reports, blog posts, and short articles regarding “trends and insights” from the following top-ranking companies and brokerage firms.

- Colliers International (<https://www2.colliers.com/en/research>)
- CoStar (<https://www.costargroup.com/insights/us-blog>)
- Cushman & Wakefield (<https://www.cushmanwakefield.com/en/insights>)
- Integra Reality Resources (<https://www.irr.com/research>)
- Jones Lang LaSalle (<https://www.us.jll.com/en/trends-and-insights>)
- NAI Global (<https://www.naiglobal.com/category/market-research/>)

The data and information provided on these sites (as well as their URLs) are in constant flux. As I explain to students, these companies and firms are under no obligation to share proprietary research or forecasts with the general public—even if some of the content is cited from government agencies—and may require registration in order for users to access and download reports without purchasing them. While these resources above will not be explicitly represented in the lesson described below, the inclusion of content from library databases as well as online data centers, news and social media, professional organizations and trade associations, and experts certainly presents opportunities to discuss the “dynamic and often uncertain information ecosystem” of commercial real estate.¹²

There are also lots of choices when it comes to instructional technology. While various tools (free or paid) may be used to create instructional materials and deliver the lesson, these details are entirely up to the ILI practitioner and the professor teaching the course; there's no harm in staying in your comfort zone here. I regularly use and recommend the following, all of which are freemium (i.e., there is a free version, but a paid subscription or institutional site license provides additional features).

- Canva (<https://www.canva.com>) for the self-assessment rubric final
- Google Docs (<https://www.google.com/docs/about>) for the BRC/Metaliterate Learner Characteristics (MLC)/ACRL *Framework* matrix table and self-assessment rubric draft
- Google Slides (<https://www.google.com/slides/about>) for presentation slides
- Zoom (<https://zoom.us>) to deliver the presentation and manage discussions

The lesson as written also requires a file storage and sharing service of some kind (e.g., Google Drive, Microsoft OneDrive, or even LibGuides) and an LMS. At CofC, we use OAKS, a customized version of D2L (<https://www.d2l.com>), but any LMS (free or paid) with a discussion board feature will work. The tools that the students use to collaborate, however, should be chosen carefully as the ability to produce and share, especially with new media and emerging technologies, is key for metaliterate learning. In the lesson described below, students are asked to record their practice presentations with Zoom, mostly because they are already familiar with the software due to our institutional license but also because Zoom allows multiple participants/presenters to be recorded simultaneously. That said,

there's a lot of freely downloadable and web-based screencasting software out there that allows users to record presentation slides, audio narrations, and webcam video, and if the presentations are created by individuals versus small groups, conferencing software may not be absolutely necessary. I have used the following programs over the years in addition to Zoom (all freemium or temporarily available as a free trial).

- Camtasia (<https://www.techsmith.com/video-editor.html>)
- Microsoft PowerPoint (<https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoft-365/powerpoint>)
- Screencastify (<https://www.screencastify.com>)
- Screencast-O-Matic (<https://screencast-o-matic.com>)
- VoiceThread (<https://voicethread.com>)

Description of Lesson/Activity

Goals/learning outcomes

By the end of the lesson, the students will be able to

1. identify factors and trends that dynamically influence how the commercial real estate industry changes by seeking multiple perspectives and guidance from experts as well as conversation taking place in market analysis research;
2. discuss the local commercial real estate climate with content from timely and authoritative sources of information that are disseminated with different purposes, including ambiguous data and information presented in emerging formats or modes (e.g., social media, online data centers, and GIS, etc.), and assess them with a skeptical stance and self-awareness of individual biases and worldviews; and
3. consistently and correctly use citations to demonstrate that they respect the original ideas of others and see themselves as contributors to the information marketplace rather than only consumers of it.

Time required

As I suggested above, the following outline uses the flipped classroom approach in which students are provided with one or more online learning objects covering some of the direct instruction and assumes a 75-minute class meeting—the amount of time I am typically allowed each semester—but two 45-minute classes could work very nicely, especially if the *Credibility in Presentations* mini-lecture is recorded and added to the list of items to be completed before the instruction session. Any available class time in the latter, fully flipped scenario could be spent discussing content or answering questions as a class or working directly with the groups as they conduct their commercial real estate research and prepare their reports/presentations.

Teaching Outline

Flipped direct instruction (to be completed before the instruction session)

- *Finding & Evaluating Sources in Commercial Real Estate* video
 - This video will demonstrate and discuss the above resources.
- *Using & Citing Sources in a Presentation* video
 - This video will focus on attribution in presentations.

Direct instruction (45 in-class minutes)

- Introduction to the librarian and the research guide
- Demonstration on how to schedule a research appointment
- Credibility in Presentations: How to Show That You Know Your Stuff mini-lecture
 - This mini-lecture will introduce concepts needed to evaluate the example sources in the ranking exercise and use the rubric below.

Guided practice (30 in-class minutes)

- Ranking exercise: Students will be provided with a link to a Google Drive folder of different example sources and be given 10 minutes to look over each source before ranking their credibility. Students will then move to sit in their presentation groups (or, more likely, be placed into Zoom breakout rooms) to discuss their individual rankings and come to a consensus before sharing their opinions with the class.

Independent practice (to be completed after the instruction session)

- Students will complete their presentations, making research appointments as necessary.
- Shortly before final reports/presentations are due, each group will record (via Zoom) and submit (via OAKS, the LMS) a practice presentation, and each student will respond to the following discussion board prompt before replying to their classmates:
 - After recording your group’s practice presentation, use the self-assessment rubric to reflect on your work. Please answer each of the questions below in either paragraph form or a bulleted list.
 - Do you think your combined, total score accurately reflects the credibility of the presentation? Why or why not?
 - What score did you assign to each criterion (i.e., industry research, economic and regional research, and attribution)? Explain each score.
 - How do you think your group could improve their presentation based on the highest level (i.e., expert) of the rubric’s criteria?
 - In general, what did your group do well?

Additional details

As I mentioned in the introduction, I changed a few details of the original market research presentation assignment while designing this lesson. First, I imagined that more emphasis would be placed on attribution as well as the inclusion and evaluation of a wide variety of sources rather than eye contact and professional attire. Sure, all business students should acquire presentation delivery skills before graduation, but I would argue that data and information literacy—and metaliteracy—are just as important to establishing credibility in increasing online and research-focused workplaces. Another additional but key detail worth sharing is that the students I have worked with so far all had temporary, educational-use-only access to CoStar’s mighty and all-powerful database through negotiation of the professor; most schools will not be able to afford this resource, so it’s safe to assume that most undergraduate students conducting commercial real estate research will need a little creative help from your “bizref tool kit.”¹³ Finally, these final presentations are given to business and real estate professionals. These fine people, rightfully so, act as judges because the groups are in direct competition with each other, of course. With this dynamic in mind, I designed the above lesson so that the students are not expected or

required to upload their recorded practice presentations on the discussion board (figure 41.1). Instead, I imagined that they would do so in an online dropbox in the LMS, meant only for the professor—and, perhaps, the ILI practitioner—to view and give feedback. Because competitive, small-group work is not uncommon in business courses, it would be wise to consider how certain types of collaboration might play into, or against, the professor's end game.

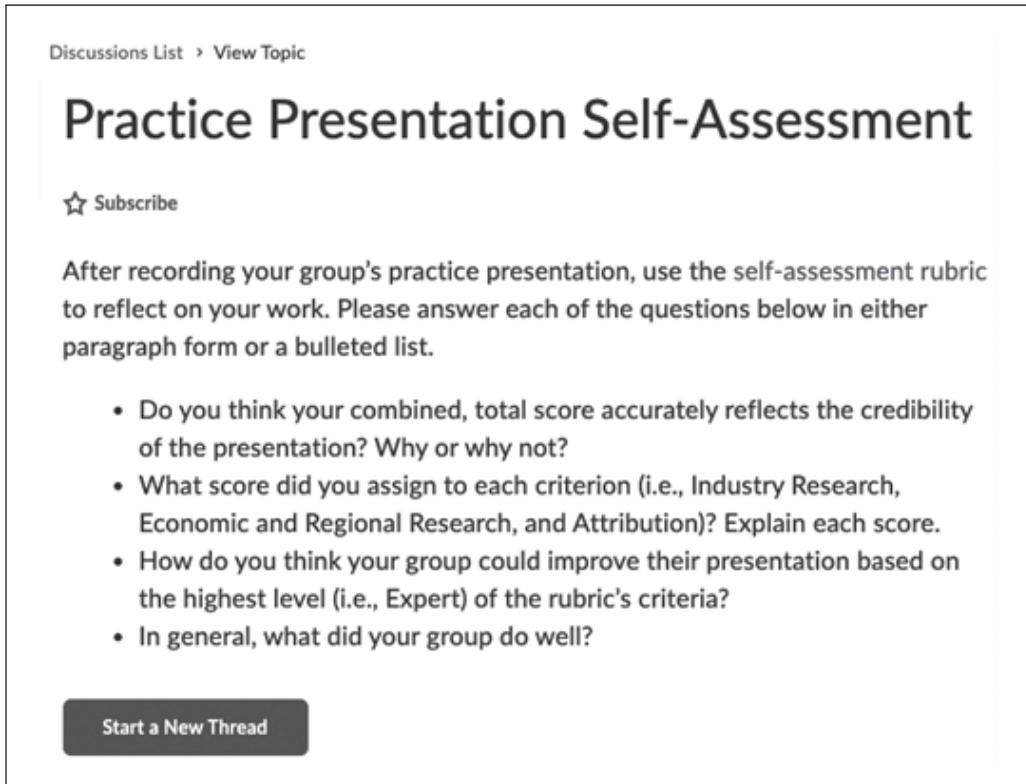


Figure 41.1

Screenshot of OAKS Discussion Board.

- BRC/MLC/ACRL Framework Matrix (provided in the ACRL Sandbox (sandbox.acrl.org) and findable with the tag “#bizinfoit”)
- Self-Assessment Rubric Draft (provided in the ACRL Sandbox (sandbox.acrl.org) and findable with the tag “#bizinfoit”)
- Self-Assessment Rubric Final (provided in the ACRL Sandbox (sandbox.acrl.org) and findable with the tag “#bizinfoit”)

Transferability

Substitute databases

The above lesson can be adapted for any subject area. Resources to be demonstrated in-person or in one or more online learning objects as well as example sources can be chosen at the discretion of the ILI practitioner, and rubric criteria and levels will obviously

be dependent on the type of research that the students are expected to use in their reports/presentations.

Ability to transfer to online or to in-person

Because most of the above instruction can easily be translated into online learning objects, moving to a synchronous, online or hybrid classroom (i.e., via Zoom or some other conferencing software) is a nonissue. Active learning strategies will have to be reconfigured and carefully thought out, but otherwise, the lesson is the same. Even shifting to asynchronous would be relatively easy depending on the capabilities of the institution's learning management system.

To different class sizes or audiences

Class size should also be a nonissue, but a change in audience will require an assessment of entry behaviors. For example, students in the aforementioned professor's first-year experience course would likely need an extended introduction to finding and evaluating sources.

Endnotes

1. Thomas P. Mackey and Trudi E. Jacobson, "Reframing Information Literacy as a Metaliteracy," *College & Research Libraries* 72, no. 1 (January 2011): 76.
2. Mackey and Jacobson, "Reframing Information Literacy," 62; *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*, Association of College and Research Libraries, American Library Association, February 2, 2015, <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework>.
3. *Framework*, Association of College and Research Libraries.
4. Mackey and Jacobson, "Reframing Information Literacy," 62.
5. *Ibid.*, 76.
6. "Business Research Competencies," Reference and User Services Association, November 19, 2019, <http://www.ala.org/rusa/guidelines/business-research-competencies>.
7. Trudi E. Jacobson, Thomas P. Mackey, and Kelsey L. O'Brien, "Metaliterate Learner Characteristics Aligned with ACRL Framework Dispositions," *Metaliteracy.org*, n.d., <https://metaliteracy.org/ml-in-practice/mlacrl/>.
8. "School Mission and Goals," College of Charleston School of Business, College of Charleston, accessed November 25, 2020, <https://sb.cofc.edu/about-the-school/officeofthedeans/facultyresources/mission.php>.
9. *Framework*, Association of College and Research Libraries.
10. Trudi E. Jacobson and Sally Friedman, "Teaching Critical Thinking and Metaliteracy Through OER: Theory and Practice in a Course Collaboration," *International Journal of Open Educational Resource* 2, no. 1 (Fall 2019/Winter 2020): 175.
11. Norman G. Miller and Margot Weinstein, *Commercial Real Estate Career Education and Resource Guide* (North Palm Beach: Hoyt Institute of Real Estate, 2009).
12. "Business Research Competencies," Reference and User Services Association.
13. Celia Ross, *Making Sense of Business Reference: A Guide for Librarians and Research Professionals* (Chicago: ALA Editions, 2020), 1.

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