HOW DO YOU PRONOUNCE PEDAGOGY?

The Evolution of Critical Pedagogy and Praxis in Library Instruction

*Presented by Carrie Wade
for CAPAL 2017
@TheGnarrator*

Influencing Factors in the Discourse

- Marginalization of Librarians in Academia (Stillman, Leckie and Fullerton, Knapp, etc)

- Epistemology of Positivism in LIS (Kapitzke, Wilkinson)

- Social Upheavals rooted in war, recession, technological change, and more (Kennedy, Hubbard, Elmborg)

- Master's level education and clerical-style training for Librarians (Hogan, Mandernack)
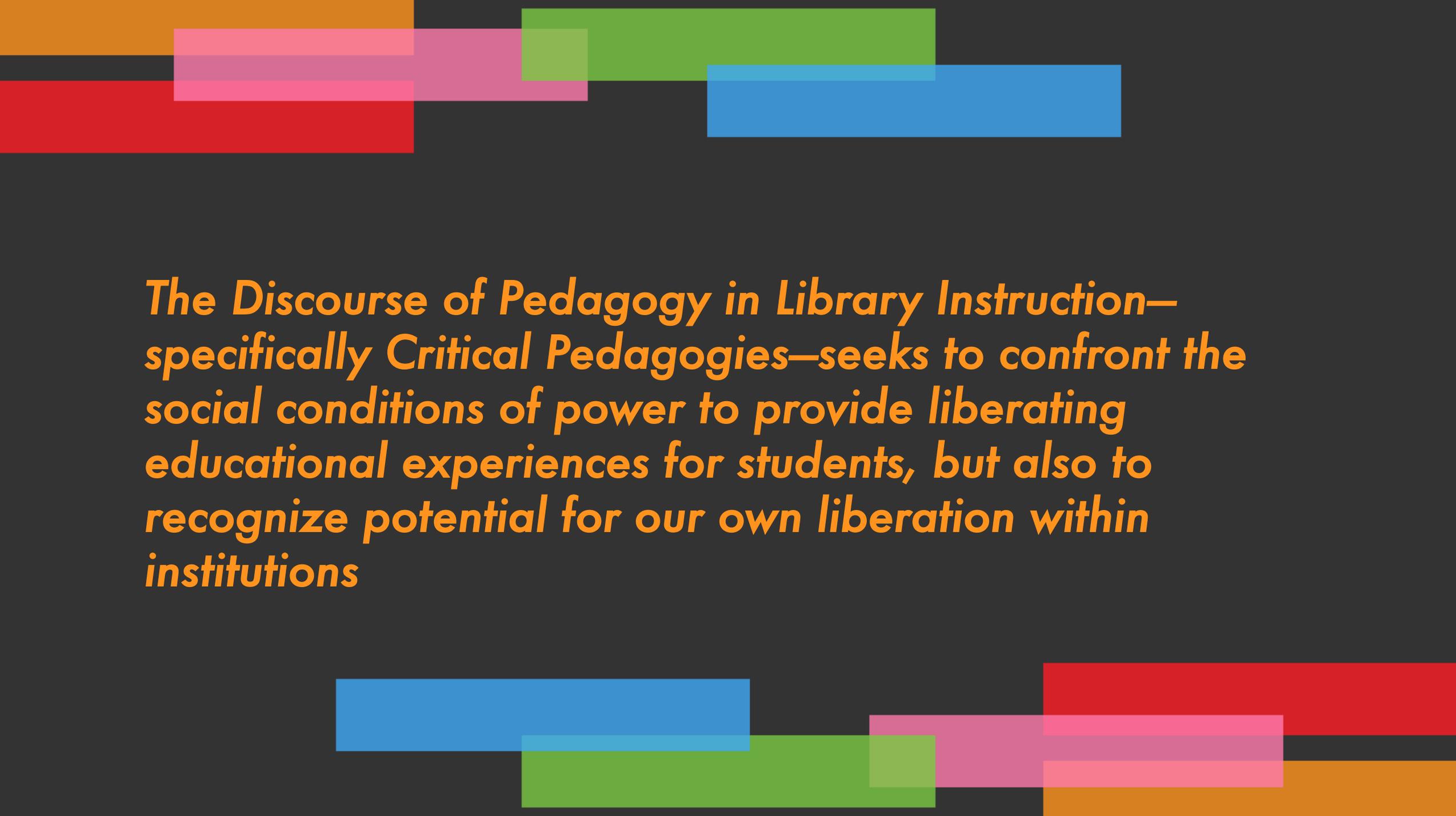
The Discourse of Pedagogy in Library Instruction—specifically Critical Pedagogies—seeks to confront the social conditions of power to provide liberating educational experiences for students, but also to recognize potential for our own liberation within institutions

Pedagogy and Praxis Defined

- PEDAGOGY – The Art, Science, or Profession of Teaching

- CRITICAL PEDAGOGY - An approach to teaching influenced by critical theories (such as feminist, queer, postmodern) and radical thought. It is primarily concerned with examining relationships of power to provide liberating educational experiences through problematization and dialogue.
  - In the Discourse of Pedagogy in Library instruction *Pedagogy functions as a Metonym for Critical Pedagogy*

- PRAXIS - Practical application of a theory.
  - In critical pedagogies it is often seen as *the intersection of action and reflection*
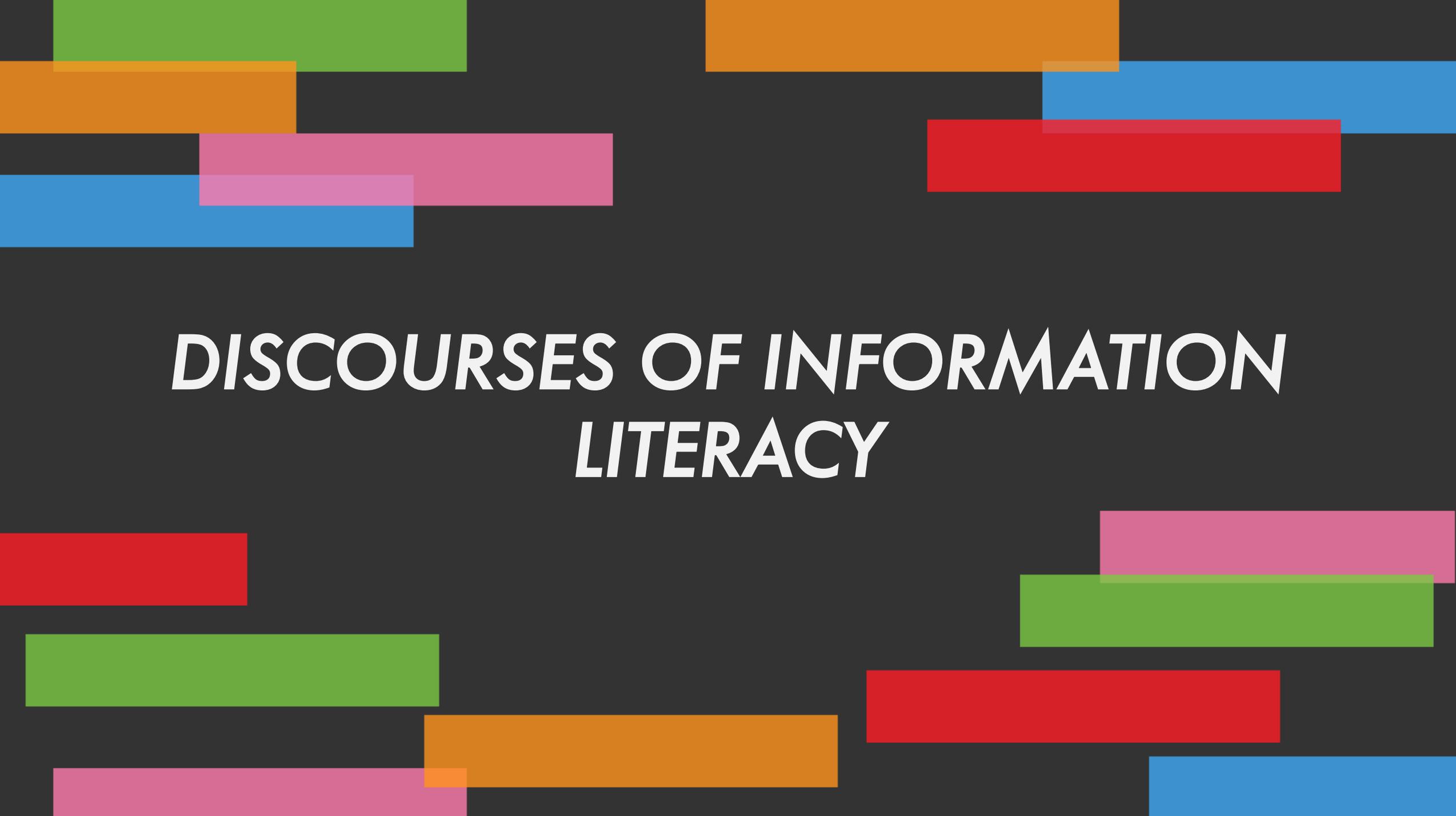
DISCOURSES OF INFORMATION LITERACY

Paul Zurkowski, 1974 –
"People trained in the application of information resources to their work can be called information literates. They have learned techniques and skills for utilizing the wide range of information tools as well as primary sources in molding information solutions to their problems."

Lee Burchinal, 1976 –
""To be information literate requires a new set of skills. These include how to locate and use information needed for problem-solving and decision-making efficiently and effectively."

American Library Association, 1989 –
"…A set of abilities requiring individuals to ' recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information.'"

2000 addendum –
"Information literacy also is increasingly important in the contemporary environment of rapid technological change and   proliferating information resources"

Alexandria Proclamation, 2005 –
"Information Literacy lies at the core of lifelong learning. It empowers people in all walks of life to seek, evaluate, use and create information effectively to achieve their personal, social, occupational and educational goals. It is a basic human right in a digital world and promotes social inclusion of all nations.
Lifelong learning enables individuals, communities and nations to attain their goals and to take advantage of emerging opportunities in the evolving global environment for shared benefit. It assists them and their institutions to meet technological, economic and social challenges, to redress disadvantage and to advance the well being of all."

American Library Association, 2015 –
"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"

CRITICAL POINTS IN PEDAGOGICAL DISCOURSE

Taylor Hubbard, 1995 –
## "Bibliographic Instruction and Postmodern Pedagogy"

- How does taking a postmodern view of knowledge (that there may be no knowledge, only knowledges) impact how we conduct instruction?
- Confronts the issue that The Internet poses as an unorganized collection of knowledge.
- As BI existed then, "The Information Age may be more of a threat than promise for our pedagogy if not our profession."
- "Finding Information is only part of the lesson…the focus of our attention needs to be educating about knowledge[s]"
- Need to do less teaching about ourselves and more teaching to destabilize the library structures.

1999

Gloria Leckie & Anne Fullerton, 1999 –
"The Roles of Academic Librarians in Fostering Pedagogy for Information Literacy"

- Discourses shape power relationships (Foucault)
- How do Dominant Faculty Discourses in Pedagogy differ from Dominant Librarian Discourses in Pedagogy?
- Faculty are very much concerned with disciplinary integrity
- Librarians are primarily concerned with meeting user needs
- What purposes can Engaging in pedagogical Discourses serve?
- Reflective Praxis on discourses can enable librarians to consider the way our discourses shape power dynamics in Higher ed, and can enable greater collaboration and consideration of librarianship as an academic pursuit
- Information Literacy inherently linked to power dynamics
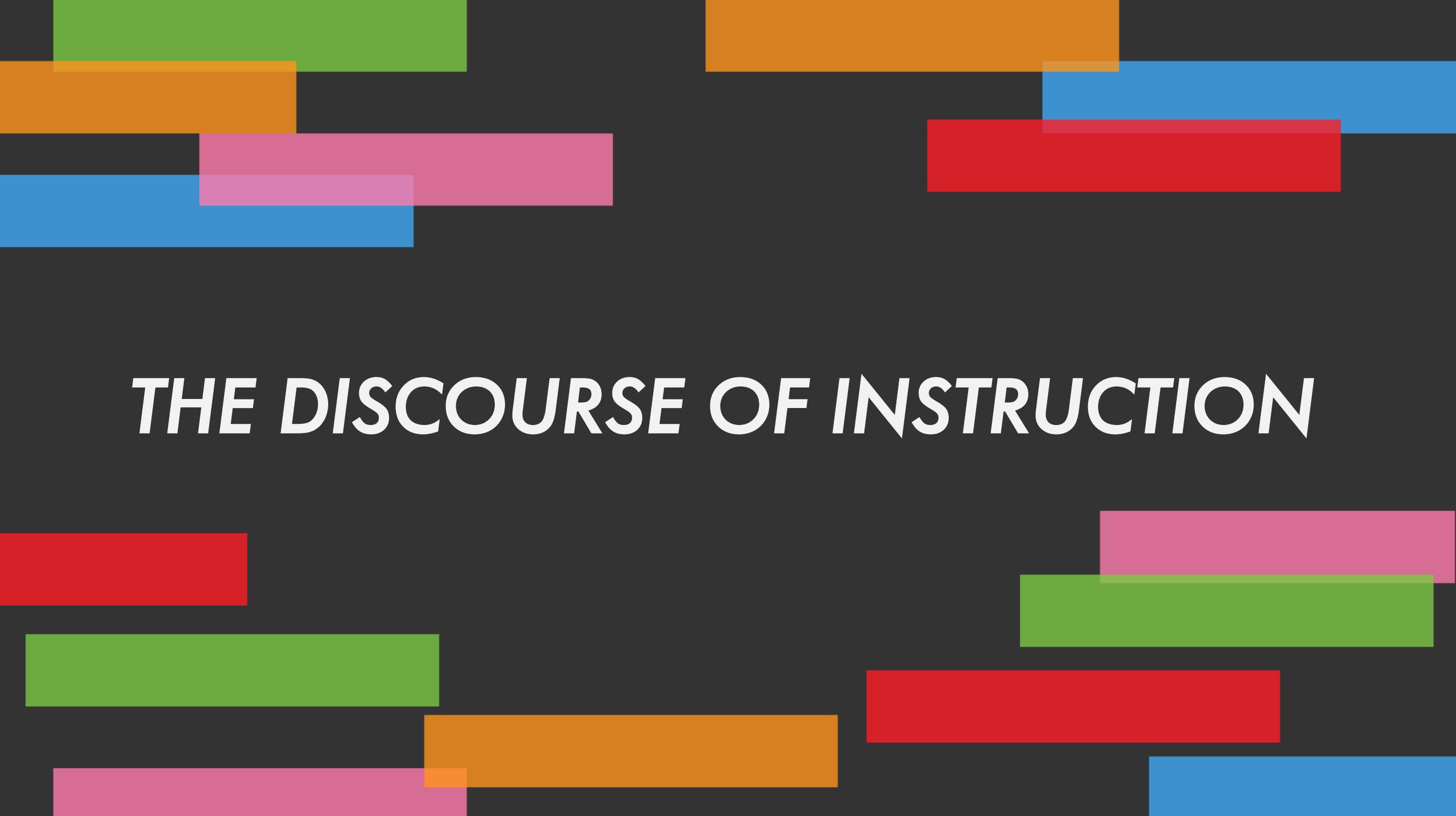
THE DISCOURSE OF INSTRUCTION

BRIEF TOUR OF INSTRUCTION DISCOURSES, PRE-PEDAGOGICAL

1876 TO 1960s

- Over 400 articles on the subject of library instruction, most focusing on the values of "Book Finding" education.

1960s

- Defined modern concept of instruction as a means of understanding the bibliographic machinery (Knapp)

- Considered good instruction to make the work of the librarian explicit (Knapp)
- Instruction as a response to "Mediocrity in Librarianship"

- College students need to learn to navigate "a Wilderness of books" as they are "starving mentally in the midst of plenty" (Phipps)

- Library orientations fail to impart significant knowledge (Phipps)

- Established the One-shot (in a first year comp class) as a standard way to give "the library lecture" (Phipps)

1970s

- Professionalization of Instruction
  - LOEX – 1971
  - WILU – 1972
  - Bibliographic Instruction Section – 1977

- "Myth of the Card Catalog" and Faculty Assumptions about student competence (Palmer)

- Wide disagreement of what instruction should be, but many opinions on what it could be
  - Information literacy first defined in 1974, but not adopted by mainstream librarianship until 1989…and terminology of BI persisted through 2000s

1980s

- Finally a Critical Mass of Instruction Librarians (Werking, Hogan)

- The Pitfalls of Master's Level Education for Instruction Librarians (Hogan, Mandernack)

- THE REFERENCE PARADIGM
  - A System focused on responding to specific queries (Hopkins)
  - Instruction becomes a way of easing the load on reference librarians (most of whom are responsible for instruction)
  - Teaches students to operate like reference librarians
  - As online searching enters the library, reference model focuses on teaching computer skills for basic searching (Dalrymple)
  - "ease and efficiency" model

- Establishment of Competency Standards to give librarians concrete learning goals in 1989 (ALA ACRL)
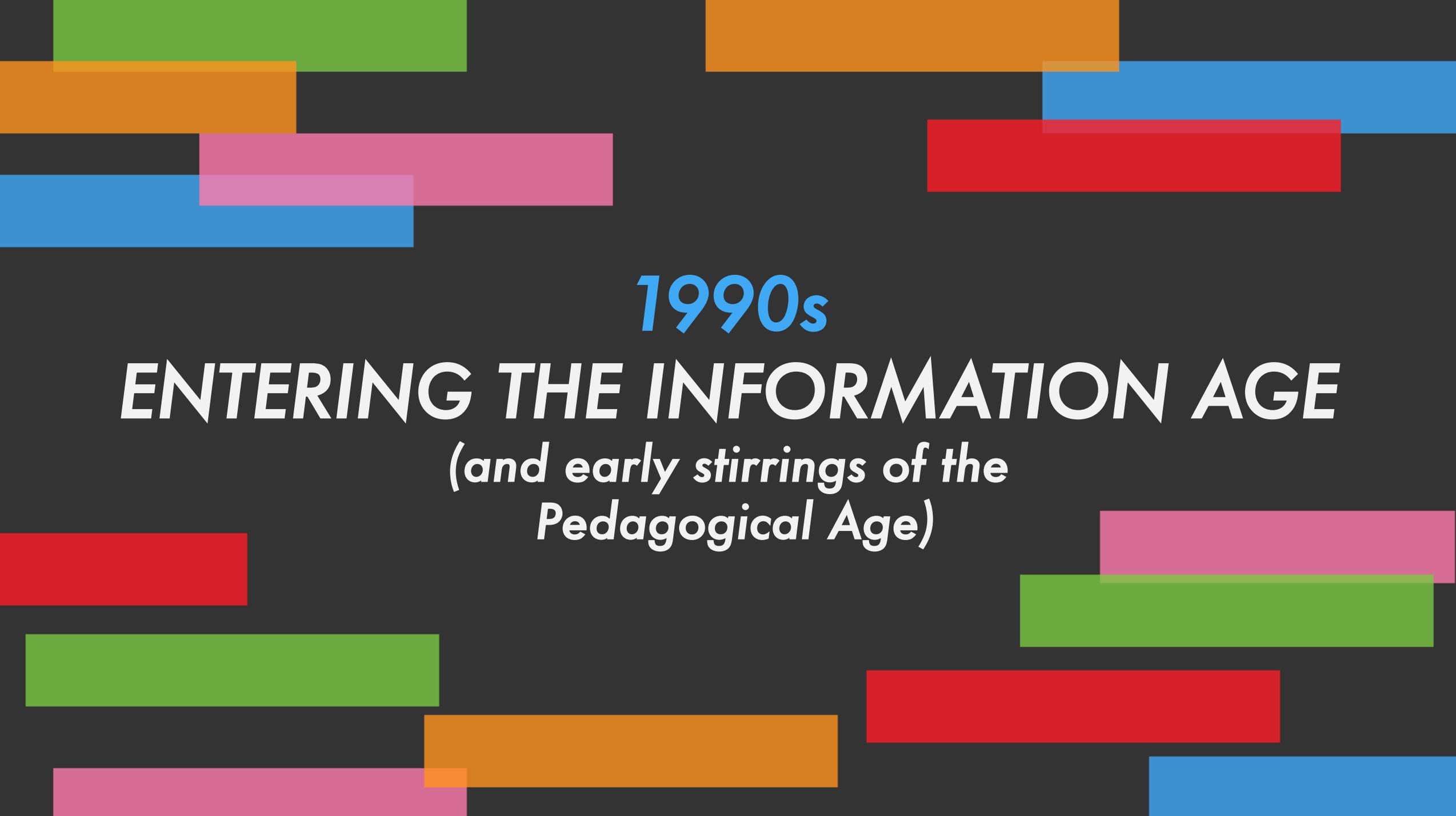
1990s
ENTERING THE INFORMATION AGE
(and early stirrings of the Pedagogical Age)

"Symbolically, information literacy appears to represent the ability to use information, or possibly the possession of a knowledge of information." (Behrens)

- Differentiate between "user education" (what was once "book finding") and generating knowledge of information. (Behrens)

- Consider Literacy on a continuum with Information Literacy as a Component (Behrens)

- "the Courses, not the students, are the determining factors in the degree to which a library contributes to the academic programs, specifically the curriculum" (Rader)

- Students can only obtain Library "skills" through coursework that is determined largely by faculty attitudes and teaching methodologies (Rader)
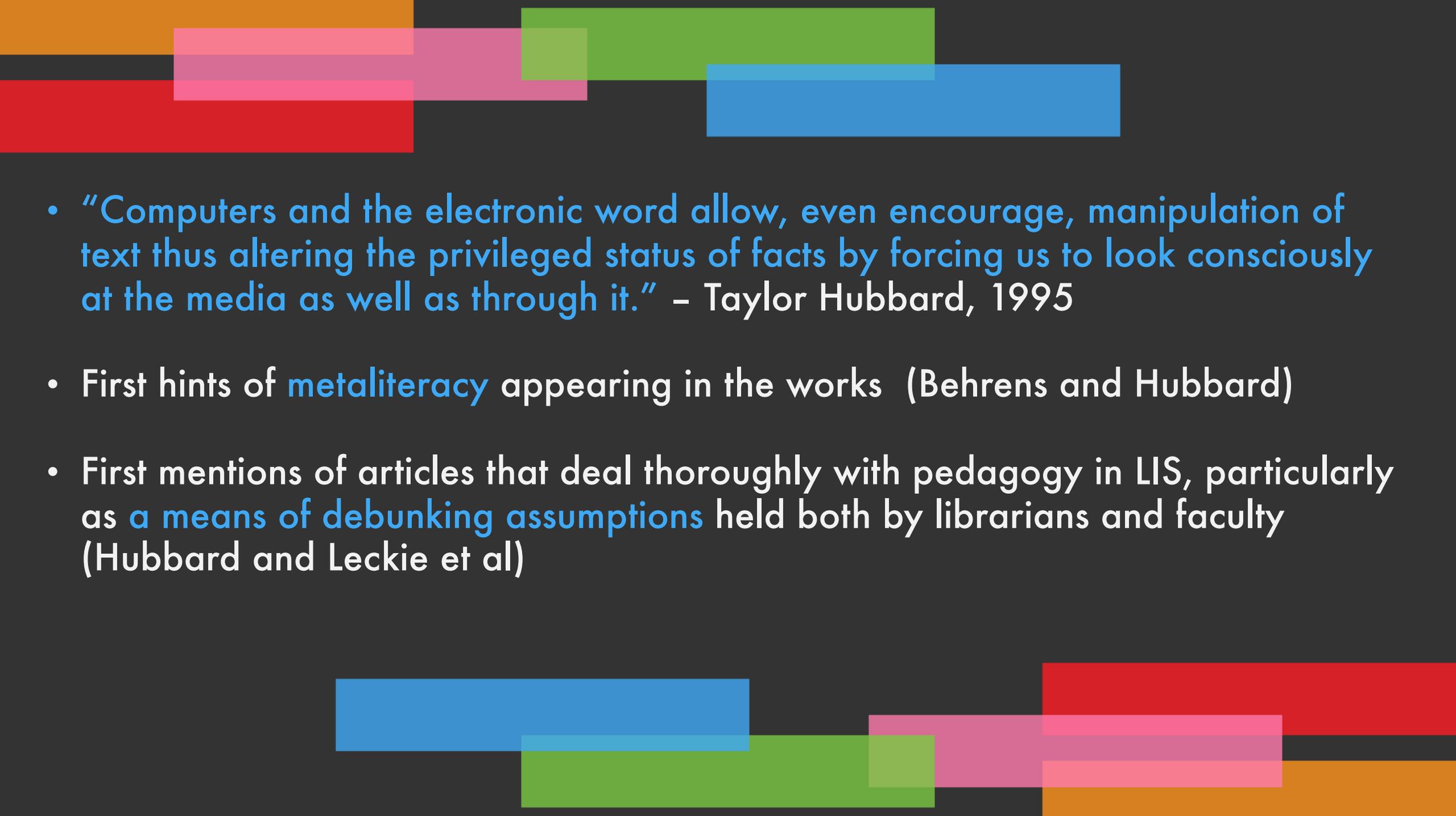
- "Computers and the electronic word allow, even encourage, manipulation of text thus altering the privileged status of facts by forcing us to look consciously at the media as well as through it." – Taylor Hubbard, 1995

- First hints of metaliteracy appearing in the works (Behrens and Hubbard)

- First mentions of articles that deal thoroughly with pedagogy in LIS, particularly as a means of debunking assumptions held both by librarians and faculty (Hubbard and Leckie et al)

- First suggestion that pedagogy can be a means of liberating dialogue within institutional structures (Leckie and Fullerton)

- "Pedagogical Discourse is the discourse of how we talk about the way we teach" – Leckie and Fullerton

- Times of economic prosperity, security, and low growth in higher education

2000s & 2010s
CRITICAL GROWTH & POWER DISRUPTION

JAMES ELMBORG, 2002 & 2006

"Teaching at the Desk: Toward a Reference Pedagogy"

- Means of bridging the reference paradigm, and changing the service model towards one that moves away from showing skills and techniques but rather seeks to first understand how the patron learns and constructs meaning

"Critical Information Literacy: Implications for Instructional Practice"

- Draws upon the work and thought of Paolo Freire
- Addresses the problems librarians engaged in instruction face as that is not what MLIS programs cover
- The Scholarship of literacy offers an entry point for librarians to better engage the educational climate on campus
- "Freire equates the common library function sof receiving, filing, collecting,and cataloging with the banking concept"
- "Critical literacy provides a way for libraries to change this trajectory and more honestly align themselves with the democratic values they often invoke"
- "Instructional librarianship requires extensive knowledge of pedagogies and of the cultures and discourse of communities of higher education"
- Time to develop a critical consciousness and "problematize" the library

JAMES ELMBORG, 2012
"Critical Information Literacy: Definitions and Challenges"

- Follows up 2006 work with a more thorough analysis of the professional assumptions that restrict genuine change

- Reticence of Librarians to engage in theoretical approaches and concepts

- Educational approaches that emphasize problematization are daunting because it destabilizes information needs into complex and unknown territory (and we cannot rely on our Nouns to solve everything"

- Posing poor solutions grounded in traditional answer-based service models can lead to misunderstanding issues

- Rather than relying on beloved "nouns" or things and tools, librarians should instead spend time to dig into the complex issues of information

- Literacy=power; it always has—how we approach information literacy can perpetuate power hierarchies

CUSHLA KAPITZKE, 2003
"Information Literacy: A positivist Epistemology and a Politics of OUTformation"

- Critical perspective of neutrality and positivism in LIS

- Information Literacy is not a panacea as it has traditionally been use to dispense order to solve information needs or problems
  - It places the onus of responsibility on the student, not the librarian (sees students as "lacking")

- Disrupt these assumptions through a pedagogy that emphasizes connections rather than collections

- Pedagogies for Information Literacy should separate facts from knowledge and delve into knowledges and learning as socially distributed entities across people and technology, beyond individual minds and bodies

JOHN DOHERTY, 2005
"Towards Self-Reflection in Librarianship: What is Praxis?"

- Initial work to grapple with praxis in a progressive way

- Defines praxis in Marxist terms as "the process of applying theory to practice to develop a more informed theory and practice (as it relates to social change)"

- Information is a tool that enables people to overcome false perceptions of reality

- Praxis—particularly reflective praxis—requires transfer of thought to text and consideration of one's social context

- Reflective praxis can influence a librarian to be more fluid and commit to change that responsibly responds to shifting social realities

HEIDI JACOBS, 2008
"Information Literacy and Reflective Pedagogical Praxis"

- Brings pedagogy and praxis together in dialogue

- Pedagogy is not merely Information Literacy-related we can think more broadly of how we approach our pedagogical work
  - expands to reference, collections, professional organizations, campus and community groups, formal and informal interactions.
  - Considers the political and ideological implications of information and IL in serving power and reinforcing hierarchies

- Reflective praxis can help us understand what, who, and why we are teaching in those spots and consider the most pedagogically engaging way to enhance these interactions.

- The work of pedagogy Starting with creative, reflective dialogue in the classroom (based on Freire's methodology) can place learning at the center of the classroom to move our work from teaching to pedagogy.

HEIDI JACOBS, 2014
"Pedagogies of Possibility within the Disciplines"

- Follows up 2008 article with a call for a DEEP approach to Information Literacy

- Standards do not grant students agency as information creators or contributors to scholarship

- Critical (Information) Literacy – empowers people through shared decision making and can lead to transformative action

- Complicating information literacy (beyond procedure and skills) generates more pedagogical opportunities

- Take a broader view of information literacy (beyond standards) to forge those necessary connections with teaching faculty within disciplines to consider the unique information landscape of each area of study and engage in broader global concerns through information and knowledges

NICOLE PAGOWSKY, 2015
"A Pedagogy of Inquiry"

- Deals with the newly drafted Framework for Information Literacy in Higher Education an its influence on pedagogy

- Asking questions should guide our pedagogy

- There is still room for skills (particularly for underrepresented groups), but there needs to be more effort to design learning around a curriculum that engages in big questions—both new and enduring

- Teaching is undervalued in librarianship and Librarianship is undervalued by teaching faculty
  - Librarians often seen as subordinate to disciplinary faculty
  - Opinions shaped through Neoliberalism

- Through engagement with Deleuze via *Fabulation* (the reimagining of realities to enact true change) can help reinvent our position within academia and improve our educational impact

ANDREA BAER, 2016
"Critical Pedagogy, Critical Conversations: Expanding Dialogue about Critical Library Instruction through the Lens of Composition and Rhetoric"

- Why has it taken LIS so long to engage with critical pedagogies?

- Composition and Rhetoric pedagogies have operated on liberating models since the 1980s

- The "Rich potentials of critical pedagogy reflect a need for examining librarians' instructional and institutional roles within and *beyond the one-shot*"
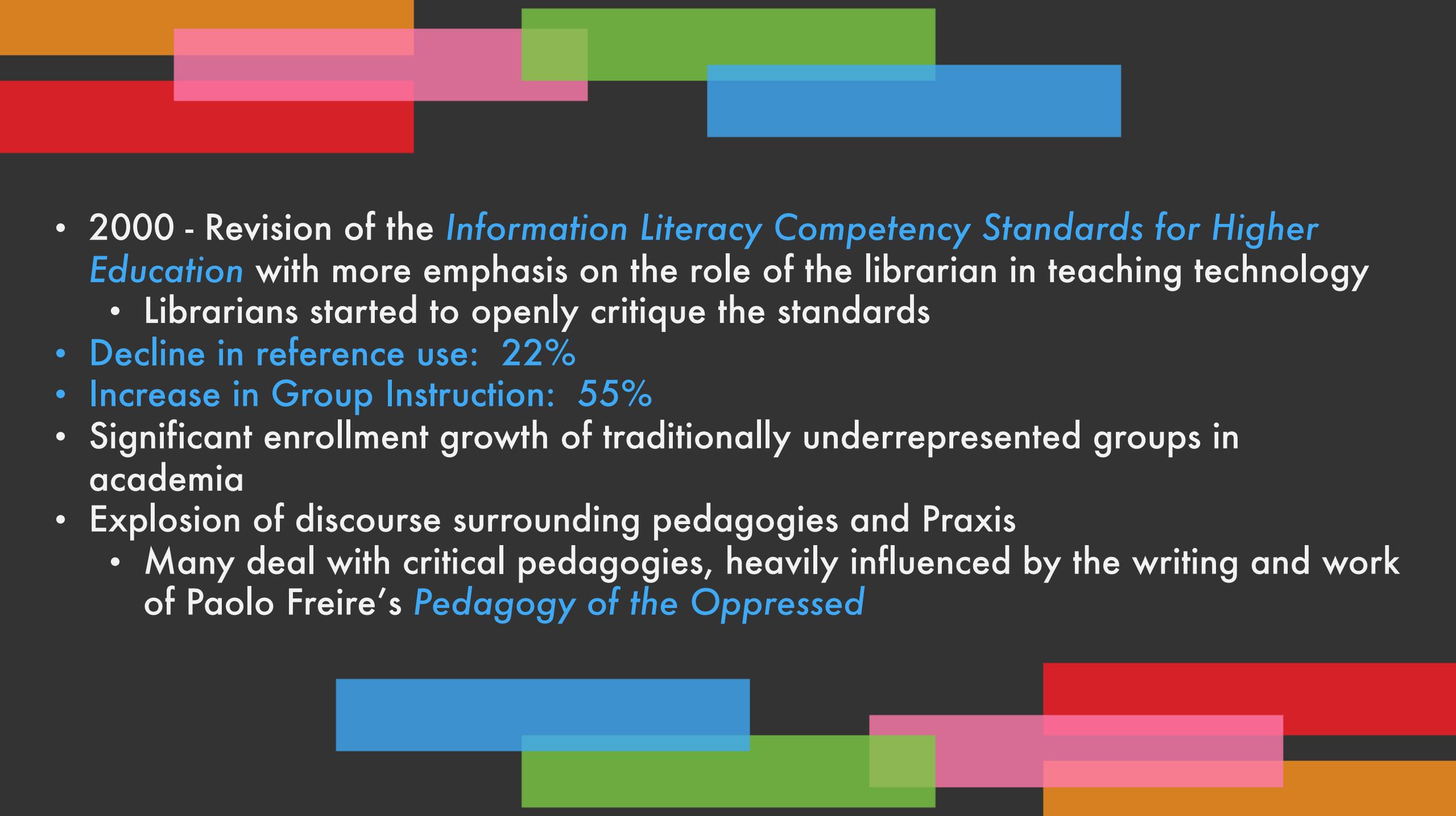
- 2000 - Revision of the *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education* with more emphasis on the role of the librarian in teaching technology
  - Librarians started to openly critique the standards
- Decline in reference use: 22%
- Increase in Group Instruction: 55%
- Significant enrollment growth of traditionally underrepresented groups in academia
- Explosion of discourse surrounding pedagogies and Praxis
  - Many deal with critical pedagogies, heavily influenced by the writing and work of Paolo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*
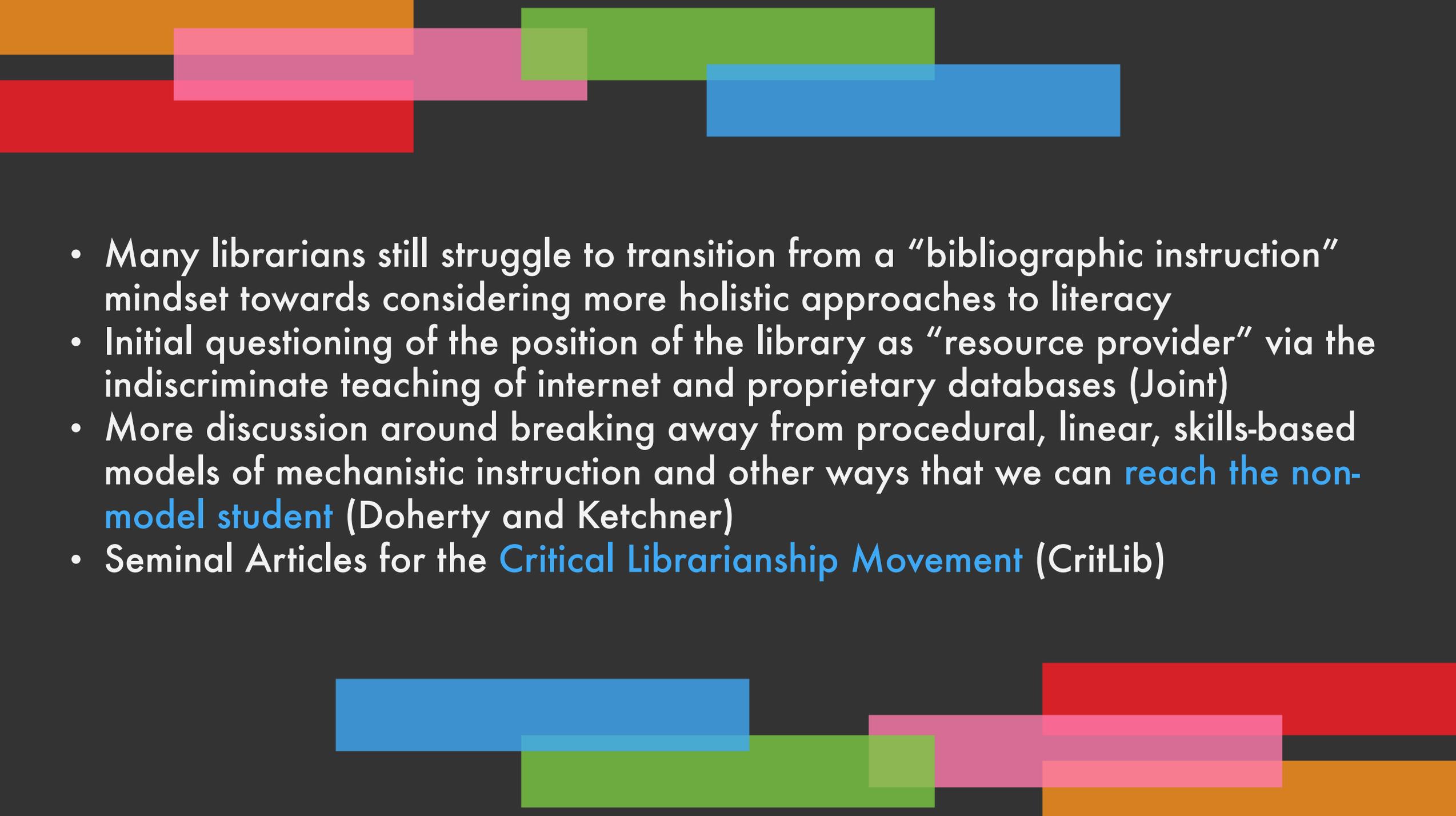
- Many librarians still struggle to transition from a "bibliographic instruction" mindset towards considering more holistic approaches to literacy
- Initial questioning of the position of the library as "resource provider" via the indiscriminate teaching of internet and proprietary databases (Joint)
- More discussion around breaking away from procedural, linear, skills-based models of mechanistic instruction and other ways that we can reach the non-model student (Doherty and Ketchner)
- Seminal Articles for the Critical Librarianship Movement (CritLib)

- Large influence of post-recession mindset on literature surrounding pedagogy and instruction
- Growing Energy of the Critical Librarianship movement
  - Higher visibility for Critical Pedagogies (Drabinski, Accardi, Swanson, Jagman, McElroy, Pagowsky)
- Increased discourses around critical theories as they relate to LIS and instruction in particular through engagement with "big hitters"
  - hooks
  - Lyotard
  - Giroux
  - Freire
  - Foucault

- 2016 – Official adoption of the *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*
- Moves the concepts of CritLib from the fringes to a more prominent position in the profession (sort of…)
- Still trouble negotiating the expectations of students to "gain skills" to be competitive on the labor markets as a neoliberal view of higher education becomes more deeply ingrained in society and the democratic mission of Critical IL to liberate and generate social change
- Continuing struggle to achieve recognition as equals by faculty
- "Fake news" crisis has placed more emphasis on factiness/truthiness and positivist epistemologies
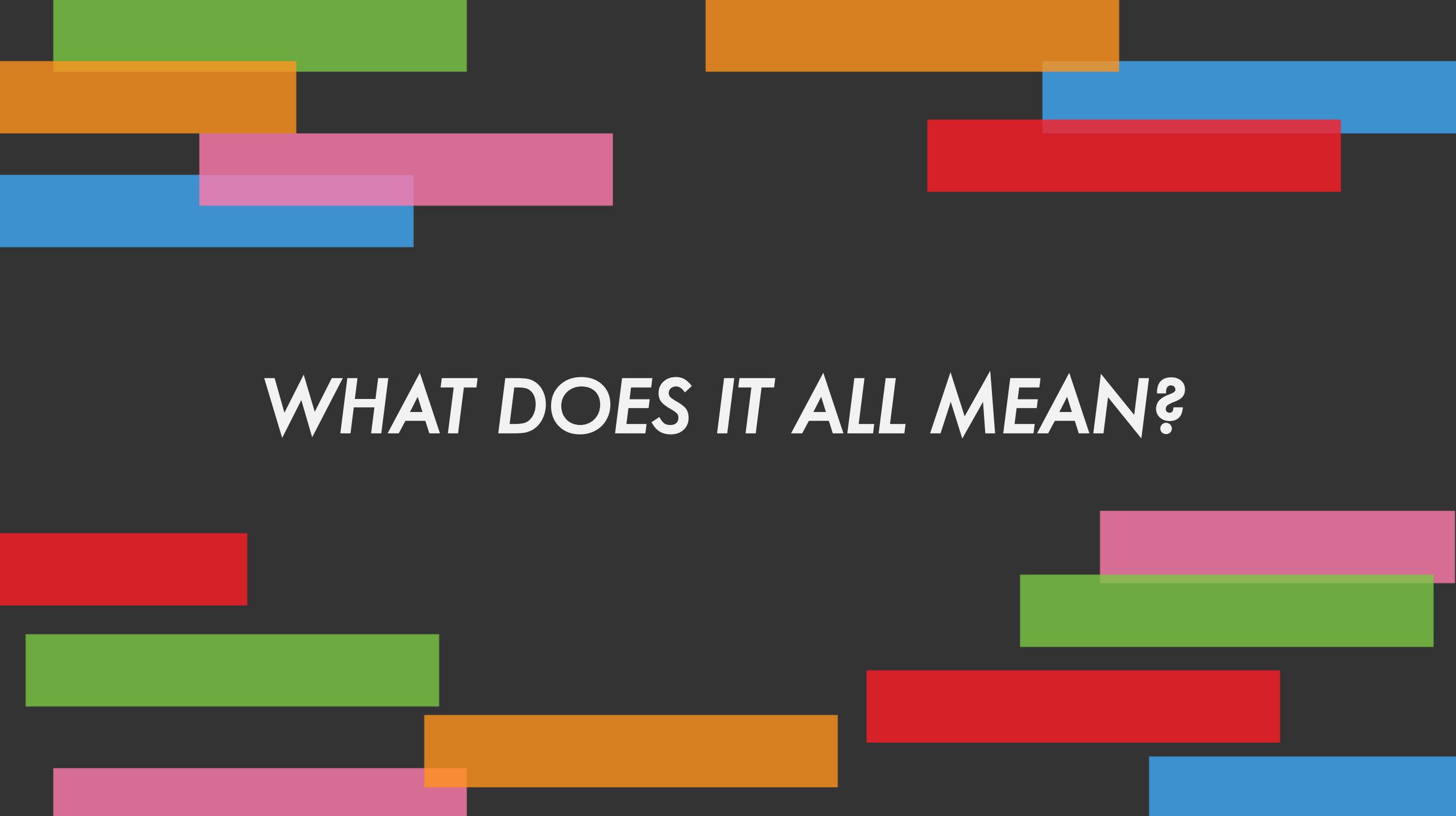
WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

PLOTTING A WAY FORWARD
Obstacles to Progress

- Cowtowing to faculty expectations
  - REFUSE THE ONE SHOT!
- Not engaging in meaningful dialogue with students, committee members, faculty, administration, and community about liberating praxis
  - Action without reflection = activism (in a bad way)
  - Reflection without action = verbalism
- Temptation to focus on Ease and Efficiency
- Overreliance on tools and concepts that distance librarians from students without pedagogical considerations
  - Libguides
  - Learning commons
  - Chat reference
  - Online tutorials
- MLIS programs that do not grapple with these big questions, avoid critical theory, and fail to prepare critical librarians

PLOTTING A WAY FORWARD
Reminders for Progress

- Information is ideologically situated. Positioning ourselves as neutral bodies only services structures of inequality
- It is our duty to continue the probing of social discourses with the goal of liberating students and communities of learners (as well as ourselves)
- Engage in pedagogies and tactics that do not half-ass liberation
- Push ourselves to develop new ways to think with students and peers, not for them.
- Remember that information can be messy, and that's a good thing
- We can overcome our sexist, racist, ableist, colonial, and complicated origins and practices through discourse, dialogue, fabulation, reflective praxis, and inquiry

FOR A BIBLIOGRAPHY, SLIDES, & UPDATES ON CARRIE'S PEDAGOGY PROJECT VISIT HER BLOG
HTTP://SEADOUBLEYEW.COM/

CONTACT: CARRIETHEWADE@GMAIL.COM
TWITTER: @THEGNARRATOR

THANK YOU!