

INQUIRY, STRATEGY, CONTEXT:

Information literacy threshold concepts and the curriculum



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Workshop agenda

- Threshold concepts and the ACRL Framework
- What is information literacy?
- Overview of ACRL information literacy (IL) threshold concepts
- Questions/entries/opportunities (adapted from N. Pagowsky)
- Activity

Information literacy: A brief history

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.

1974



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.

2014

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2014, ACRL

- Liberation from oppressive media
 - Active citizenship
- Information literacy vs. computer literacy
 - Lifelong learning
- Recognizing an information need

70s – 90s

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2014

Information literacy is 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."

1989, ACRL

ACRL Standards for information literacy in higher education





An information literate student

- **determines** the nature and extent of the information needed
- **accesses** needed information effectively and efficiently
- **evaluates** information and its sources critically and incorporates selected information into his or her knowledge base and value system
- **uses** information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose.
- **understands** many of the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information and accesses and uses information ethically and legally

Standard 2:

The information literate student accesses needed information effectively and efficiently.

Performance indicators:

-  The information literate student selects the most appropriate investigative methods or information retrieval systems for accessing the needed information.
-  The information literate student constructs and implements effectively-designed search strategies.
-  The information literate student retrieves information online or in person using a variety of methods.
-  The information literate student refines the search strategy if necessary.

ACRL Framework, 2014

- Dynamic rather than linear
- Structured around 6 threshold concepts, or 6 frames
- Recognizes students as creators of information
- Richer, more complex ideas
- Recognizes the importance of collaboration

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The 6 Frames

- Authority is constructed & contextual
- Information creation as a process
- Information has value
- Research as inquiry
- Scholarship as a conversation
- Searching as strategic exploration

AUTHORITY IS CONSTRUCTED & CONTEXTUAL

Information resources reflect their creators' expertise and credibility, and are evaluated based on the information need and the context in which the information will be used. Authority is constructed in that various communities may recognize different types of authority. It is contextual in that the information need may help to determine the level of authority required.

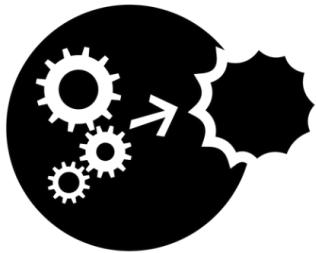
- *How can we tell if a source is authoritative?*
- *How might established authority prevent other voices from being heard?*
- *How can students become authorities on a topic?*



Created by Luis Prado
from the Noun Project

INFORMATION CREATION AS A PROCESS

Information in any format is produced to convey a message and is shared via a selected delivery method. The iterative processes of researching, creating, revising, and disseminating information vary, and the resulting product reflects these differences.



- *Why are scholarly sources preferred sources for writing research papers? In what situations might scholarly sources not be the most optimal resources?*
- *What exactly are “internet sources”?*
- *How does the creation process on the public web influence a source’s credibility, or the perception of a source’s credibility?*

Created by Takao Umehara
from the Noun Project

INFORMATION HAS VALUE

Information possesses several dimensions of value, including as a commodity, as a means of education, as a means to influence, and as a means of negotiating and understanding the world. Legal and socioeconomic interests influence information production and dissemination.

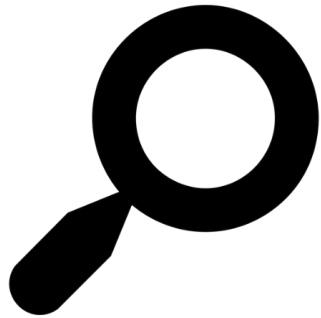


Created by Olivier Guin
from the Noun Project

- *Why is some information restricted, and how does this affect scholarship (or day-to-day life?)*
- *Why do we cite the information we use?*
- *What is the value of our personal data?*

RESEARCH AS INQUIRY

Research is iterative and depends upon asking increasingly complex or new questions whose answers in turn develop additional questions or lines of inquiry in any field.



Created by John Caserta
from the Noun Project

- *How do we approach a question that has no definitive answer?*
- *How do we determine which questions have not yet been answered?*
- *How can seemingly simple questions become complex ones throughout the research process? How can we create smaller questions out of larger ones?*

SCHOLARSHIP AS A CONVERSATION

Communities of scholars, researchers, or professionals engage in sustained discourse with new insights and discoveries occurring over time as a result of varied perspectives and interpretations.



Created by Ahmed Elzahra
from the Noun Project

- *How can we better understand a topic by looking at different perspectives?*
- *What can be gained by tracing an argument backwards and forwards?*
- *How can students take part in a scholarly conversation in their research papers?*

SEARCHING AS STRATEGIC EXPLORATION

Searching for information is often nonlinear and iterative, requiring the evaluation of a range of information sources and the mental flexibility to pursue alternate avenues as new understanding develops.

- *How do we go about matching an information need to the right tools?*
- *Why and how must a search strategy be modified from one database or tool to the next?*
- *How can the information we find (or don't find) change our approach or even our research question?*



Created by James Keuning from the Noun Project

Activity

- In small groups, review your example assignment
- Consider which IL threshold concepts (frames) are implicit in that assignment, and whether students might have trouble with these concepts.
- Brainstorm ways to make these ideas more explicit and help students cross these thresholds
- Follow the same process with an assignment you have given to students

Possible assignments (Framework, 2nd draft)

- Students look at a non-traditional source (ie. Youtube video) and determine the credibility of the presenter or writer (*Authority is constructed & contextual*)
- Students identify different information formats and evaluate the characteristics of each (*Information creation as a process*)
- Students blog for one week about all their encounters with needing information and brainstorm the associated costs (*Information has value*)
- Students keep research logs tracing the project's development (*Research as inquiry*)
- Students trace the development of a topic through traditional scholarly sources as well as social media (*Scholarship as a conversation*)
- Students perform searches in databases and use controlled subject headings to create follow-up searches (*Searching is strategic exploration*)

Thank you! Questions?

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References

Association of College & Research Libraries. (2015). *Information Literacy Framework for Higher Education*. Retrieved from: <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework>.

Pagowsky, N. (2014). #acrllrevisions next steps. Retrieved from <http://pumpedlibrarian.blogspot.ca/2014/12/acrllrevisions-next-steps.html>