Find and Cite Three-to-Five Sources: Applying the Sociological Imagination to Critical Information Literacy

Mooney, Hailey; Dempsey, Paula

**Find and Cite Three-to-Five Sources:**

**Applying the Sociological Imagination to Critical Information Literacy**

**Challenge:** Do you ever ask students to complete an assignment that includes a bibliography requirement? Literature research and writing is an opportunity to apply the sociological imagination to both the paper topic and to the process of discovering and selecting the information sources that will inform student work. However, this is often a missed opportunity: either information discovery is seen as ancillary to the assignment and not discussed, or library instruction may not meaningfully integrate sociological concepts from your course curriculum.

**Approach:** The Sociological Information Literacy Framework
- Tool for identifying how to bring critical information literacy into the classroom
  - Reflectively locate, understand, and use information in support of lifelong learning goals for developing informed citizens with higher-order thinking skills

**Next Steps:** Peer review, revision, and putting it into practice!
- Review and endorsement of the Sociological Information Literacy Framework by the Association of College & Research Libraries and the American Sociological Association
- Making meaningful connections between sociological and information literacy will provide a foundation to enrich instructor-librarian collaboration in the classroom and strengthen overall student learning.

---

**Sociological Information Literacy Framework (Draft)**

**Author:** Sociology Subgroup, Instruction & Information Literacy Committee, Anthropology & Sociology Section, Association of College & Research Libraries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sociological Literacy Framework Concepts</th>
<th>Framework for Information Literacy Concepts</th>
<th>Information as a Process</th>
<th>Information Has Value</th>
<th>Research as Inquiry</th>
<th>Scholarship as Conversation</th>
<th>Searching as Strategic Exploration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authority Is Constructed and Contextual</td>
<td>Create and use information for specific purposes</td>
<td>Information creation as a process</td>
<td>Commodity, education, influence, understanding</td>
<td>Iterative question asking, methods and analysis</td>
<td>Sustained discourse, varied perspectives</td>
<td>Iterative evaluation of range of sources, mental flexibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology as a distinct discipline</td>
<td>Social basis and construction of knowledge</td>
<td>“the medium is the message”</td>
<td>Commodity: economic/financial structures support/constrain information production</td>
<td>Ask questions like a sociologist</td>
<td>Social context of scholarly discourse; (a) who is an expert in a field, (b) where the boundaries of a field lie, and (c) what can be said within these boundaries</td>
<td>Deconstruct search engines as products of human engineering and bureaucracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Structure</td>
<td>Social roles may privilege some over others</td>
<td>Ownership of information systems impacts the processes of information creation and what information is made available</td>
<td>Ownership of information systems is concentrated; even where information is produced by individuals, it may be owned by private corporations (e.g., on social media platforms, transfer of copyright agreements)</td>
<td>Expert knowledge is shaped by established scientific systems and processes</td>
<td>Scholarly conversations are shaped by institutional structures: higher education, research firms, publishers, libraries, archives, and the WWW</td>
<td>Search engines as gatekeepers to information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology of a social structure</td>
<td>Social institutions exert influence over what is considered valid or factual</td>
<td>Ownership of information systems is made available</td>
<td>Ownership of information systems is concentrated; even where information is produced by individuals, it may be owned by private corporations (e.g., on social media platforms, transfer of copyright agreements)</td>
<td>Expert knowledge is shaped by established scientific systems and processes</td>
<td>Scholarly conversations are shaped by institutional structures: higher education, research firms, publishers, libraries, archives, and the WWW</td>
<td>Search engines as gatekeepers to information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialization</td>
<td>Ideologies impact accepted authorities</td>
<td>Social media as performative work</td>
<td>Creation of information as expressions of self and social belonging is monetized and monitored (e.g., social media)</td>
<td>Cultural contexts shape perceptions of legitimate knowledge and questions</td>
<td>Participate in scholarly discourse relies on membership in communities of practice</td>
<td>Search engines as gatekeepers to information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The relationship between the self and society</td>
<td>“Fake news”</td>
<td>Social media as performative work</td>
<td>Creation of information as expressions of self and social belonging is monetized and monitored (e.g., social media)</td>
<td>Cultural contexts shape perceptions of legitimate knowledge and questions</td>
<td>Participate in scholarly discourse relies on membership in communities of practice</td>
<td>Search engines as gatekeepers to information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stratification</td>
<td>Institutions with authority to produce knowledge recreate social inequalities</td>
<td>Socioeconomic status impacts ability to participate as a producer of information, or to access information</td>
<td>Profitable research outputs receive more value and resources</td>
<td>Reinterpretation of public information (i.e., surveillance capitalism) and privacy ramifications</td>
<td>Historical exclusion of subordinated social groups from scholarship</td>
<td>Search engines as gatekeepers to information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The patterns and effects of social inequality</td>
<td>Certain forms of knowledge production are valued over others: e.g., low income students as lacking cultural capital, rather than the institutional de-valuing of different cultures</td>
<td>Socioeconomic status impacts ability to participate as a producer of information, or to access information</td>
<td>Profitable research outputs receive more value and resources</td>
<td>Reinterpretation of public information (i.e., surveillance capitalism) and privacy ramifications</td>
<td>Historical exclusion of subordinated social groups from scholarship</td>
<td>Search engines as gatekeepers to information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Change and Social Reproduction</td>
<td>Scientific authority comes from traditional sources of legitimacy, rather than the examination of facts</td>
<td>Scientific authority comes from traditional sources of legitimacy, rather than the examination of facts</td>
<td>Scientific authority comes from traditional sources of legitimacy, rather than the examination of facts</td>
<td>Reinterpretation of public information (i.e., surveillance capitalism) and privacy ramifications</td>
<td>Historical exclusion of subordinated social groups from scholarship</td>
<td>Search engines as gatekeepers to information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How social phenomena replicate and change</td>
<td>Expert knowledge is shaped by established scientific systems and processes</td>
<td>Expert knowledge is shaped by established scientific systems and processes</td>
<td>Expert knowledge is shaped by established scientific systems and processes</td>
<td>Reinterpretation of public information (i.e., surveillance capitalism) and privacy ramifications</td>
<td>Historical exclusion of subordinated social groups from scholarship</td>
<td>Search engines as gatekeepers to information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Bibliography**

---

**Engage with us! Call for Peer Reviewers**

---

**ANSS**

---

**American Sociological Association Annual Meeting 2018**

**Presenters:**
- Hailey Mooney, University of Michigan Library
- Paula Dempsey, University of Illinois at Chicago Library