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

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**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!

1. Review and endorsement of the Sociological Information Literacy Framework by the Association of College & Research Libraries and the American Sociological Association
2. 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.

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### Sociological Information Literacy Framework (Draft)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sociological Literacy Framework Concepts</th>
<th>Framework for Information Literacy Concepts</th>
<th>Information Has Value</th>
<th>Research as Inquiry</th>
<th>Scholarship as Conversation</th>
<th>Searching as Strategic Exploration</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authority Is Constructed and Contextual</td>
<td>Information Creation as a Process: Different formats reflect varying messages and delivery methods</td>
<td>As commodity, education, influence, understanding; role of legal and socio-economic interests</td>
<td>Iterative question asking, methods, analysis</td>
<td>Sustained discourse, varied perspectives</td>
<td>Iterative evaluation of range of sources, mental flexibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sociology as a distinctive discipline</td>
<td>“the medium is the message”</td>
<td>Commodity: economic/financial structures support/constrain info 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>
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<td>Social Structure: The impact of social structures on human action</td>
<td>Social roles may privilege some as authorities</td>
<td>Ownership of information systems impacts the processes of information creation and what information is made available</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>
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<td>Socialization: The relationship between the self and society</td>
<td>Social institutions exert influence over what is considered valid or factual</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>Participation in scholarly discourse relies on membership in communities of practice</td>
<td>Search engines as gatekeepers to information</td>
<td>Algorithms reflect the interests of their creators</td>
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<td>Stratification: The patterns and effects of social inequality</td>
<td>Organizations with authority to produce knowledge recreate social inequalities</td>
<td>Creation of information as expressions of self and social belonging is monetized and monitored (e.g., social media)</td>
<td>Cultural contexts shapes perceptions of legitimate knowledge and questions</td>
<td>Perceptions of relevance are shaped by social position</td>
<td>Conceptual and methodological systems associated with social inequality</td>
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<td>Social Change and Social Reproduction: How social phenomena replicate and change</td>
<td>Certain forms of knowledge production are valued over others: e.g., low income students as lacking cultural capital, rather than 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>Particular methods of scientific inquiry are privileged as creating “neutral” knowledge</td>
<td>Historical exclusion of subordinated social groups from scholarship</td>
<td>Unequal access to literacy education</td>
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<td>Scholarly as Conversation: Sustained discourse, varied perspectives</td>
<td>Critical Information Literacy</td>
<td>Profitable” research outputs receive more value and resources</td>
<td>Corporate control and limits on information distribution and participation</td>
<td>Universal standards for knowledge production (i.e., surveillance capitalism) and privacy ramifications</td>
<td>Development of expert search strategies is a skill that takes education and experience</td>
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</tbody>
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**Call for Peer Reviewers**

- Sociology Subgroup, Instruction & Information Literacy Committee, Anthropology & Sociology Section, Association of College & Research Libraries

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

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**American Sociological Association Annual Meeting 2018**

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