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

Mooney, Hailey; Dempsey, Paula

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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!
- 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.

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**Sociological Information Literacy Framework (Draft)**

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

**Framework for Information Literacy Concepts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sociological Literacy Framework Concepts</th>
<th>Framework for Information Literacy Concepts</th>
<th>Information Creation 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>Evaluate based on information need and context, different types of authorities.</td>
<td>Different formats reflect varying messages and delivery methods.</td>
<td>As commodity, education, influence, understanding; role of legal and socioeconomic 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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociological Eye</td>
<td>Sociology as a distinctive discipline</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>
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<tr>
<td>Social Structure</td>
<td>The impact of social structures on human action</td>
<td>Ownership of information systems impacts the processes of information creation and what information is made available</td>
<td>Means of education: varying access, promotion of “correct” information</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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<tr>
<td>Socialization</td>
<td>The relationship between the self and society</td>
<td>Social roles may privilege some as authorities</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 algorithms reflect the interests of their creators</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stratification</td>
<td>The patterns and effects of social inequality</td>
<td>Institutions with authority to produce knowledge recreate social inequalities</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>Scholarly conversations are shaped by institutional structures: higher education, research firms, publishers, libraries, archives, and the WWW</td>
<td>Perceptions of relevance are shaped by social position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Change and Social Reproduction</td>
<td>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 the institutional de-valuing of different cultures</td>
<td>&quot;Profitable&quot; research outputs receive more value and resources</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>Cultural bias impacts design of search engines and classification systems</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Commodification of personal information (i.e., surveillance capitalism) and privacy ramifications**

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

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**Bibliography**

1. Sociological Literacy Framework (Ferguson & Carbonaro 2016)
3. Sociological Information Literacy Framework

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**Next Steps:**

- Peer review, revision, and putting it into practice!

- **Peer Review:**
  - 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.

- **Review and endorsement:**
  - Scholarly conversations are shaped by institutional structures: higher education, research firms, publishers, libraries, archives, and the WWW
  - Searching as Strategic Exploration
    - Iterative evaluation of range of sources, mental flexibility

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**Call for Peer Reviewers**

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**Presentation Information**

- **Presenters:**
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