

# Threshold Concepts for all Researchers: the 21st century information landscape

Presented by Librarians:

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# Information Literacy

- SUNY Information Management Competency:
  - **Students will:**
    - perform the basic operations of personal computer use
    - understand and use basic research techniques
    - locate, evaluate and synthesize information from a variety of sources.
- Draft definition from ACRL:

Information literacy combines a repertoire of abilities, practices, and dispositions focused on expanding one's understanding of the information ecosystem, with the proficiencies of finding, using and analyzing information, scholarship, and data to answer questions, develop new ones, and create new knowledge, through ethical participation in communities of learning and scholarship.

# Threshold concepts from the ACRL draft

- Scholarship is a Conversation
- Research as Inquiry
- Format as Process

# Threshold Concepts

## Concepts for Info. Literacy

- Broad
- Interdisciplinary
- Allow for transfer of knowledge
- Promote intrinsic motivation
- Address why?
- Harder to assess

## Tools for Info. Literacy

- Specific and detailed
- Discipline restricted
- Create higher-level skills
- Require predetermined motivation
- Address what, where, and how?
- Easier to assess

# Recognized “Bottlenecks” in Knowledge

- Understanding Format
  - Information Cycle
- Authority is Constructed and Contextual
  - “Authority” depends on the context
- Information as Commodity
  - Citation and Fair Use
- Primary sources and Disciplinarity
  - “You were there” principle

# Format as process

## Concepts

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- Information cycle
- Purpose of information creation
- Value of the information
- Distinguishing characteristics for various types regardless of form

## Tools

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- Journals, magazines
- Books
- Blogs, wikis
- Conference proceedings
- Databases, catalogs
- OERs (open educational resources)

# Authority: Constructed and Contextual

## Concepts

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- Evaluation is key, but it is not the only criteria.
- Scholarship as conversation?
- What constitutes “authority” changes depending on context

## Tools

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- In article databases, check the box that says “peer reviewed”
- Scholarly journals
- Authors’ credentials
- Checklist for criteria -- TRAP

# Information as Commodity

## Concepts

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- Why I should care about Intellectual Property:
  - Fair Use
  - Citation

## Tools

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- Copyright policy
- Interlibrary Loan
- Manuals of Style
- Guides (OWL, Diana Hacker, Writing Center)
- Technology (NoodleTools, Zotero, Word)

# Primary/Secondary Sources

## Concepts

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- “You were there”
- First-hand observation or research

## Tools

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- Databases
- Limiters within certain databases
- Archives and online sources
- Guides and lists

# Helping Each Other

## What we can do for you...

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- Reinforce the ideas you are trying to instill in students
- Encourage interdisciplinary collaboration and transfer of ideas
- Acknowledge that faculty expertise in their field is highly valued
- ???

## What you can do for us...

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- Help us to identify the gaps in student knowledge in general as well as within your discipline
- Help us develop new (collaborative) ways of teaching based on your experience with students
- Help us evaluate our research guides for your discipline
- ???

# Practical Ideas/Assignments from ACRL

- Scholarship is a Conversation
  - Assign an entire class to conduct an investigation of a particular topic from its treatment in the popular media, and then trace its origin in conversations among scholars and researchers
  - Create an online community for a class where students post their findings from a research project in order for them to understand how research and scholarship work among practicing researchers
- Research as Inquiry
  - Students in a first year course reflect upon the steps they went through when researching a major purchase or event in their lives (buying a car, selecting a college, etc.). They identify the steps involved in the research behind such a decision, and confront the importance of employing a similar strategy in the academic setting.
- Format as Process
  - Provide students with records for items created in different ways. Ask them to identify how the sources were created and instances when each might be appropriate.
  - Ask students to find sources about the same topic in two divergent formats, e.g. A newspaper movie review and literary journal movie review. Students will compare and contrast the type of information found in each format, as well as articulate the processes underlying the creation of each format.
  - Ask student to transform a primary document into another format, such as a script/skit, poem, song, including a primary type format (e.g., diary, oral interview “script,” newspaper article, etc.).

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