

Information Literacy and Teaching and Learning

Determining the Information Structure in Your Discipline

The purpose of this worksheet is to allow you to delineate the information structure of your discipline so that you can more effectively guide your students toward an understanding of the kinds of knowledge, research, questions, studies, and activities appropriate to the subject you are teaching. Your work here will assist you in developing the concepts that your students will find helpful in their use of information and that you will find valuable in conveying relevant information to your students. If you answer the questions below, you should know

- how information in your discipline is identified and defined by scholars and experts and how that knowledge can help determine appropriate ways to present, search for, and archive information in your field
- how information sources in your discipline are structured
- how information sources in your discipline are intellectually accessed by users
- how to identify useful information in your field
- how information sources and collections in your field are physically and digitally organized and accessed

The Questions

1. What constitutes “information” in your discipline?
2. In your area of study are some categories of information valued more highly than others?
3. Over the past hundred years, how has the definition of appropriate information in your discipline changed?
4. Does the ostensible value of information in your field change over time? That is, do certain sources of information fall out of favor or become reputable as time passes?
5. Who determines what sort of information is appropriate in your field?
6. How is information accepted or rejected as reliable, valuable, or worthy? (What evaluative principles are used, and what sorts of professional reviews prevail?)
7. What designates information in your field as the *most* highly valued or reliable? (source? author? kind?)
8. How do you collect information in your field?
9. How do you verify that your collection methods are reliable?
10. How do you demonstrate reliability?
11. How do you know when the information you have collected is valuable?

12. What do you want your students to know about information in this discipline?
13. How do you convey information to your students—verbally, textually, visually?
14. How do students convey information in your field to you?