Sample Active Learning Assignments that Support the ACRL Framework

Scholarship is a Conversation (*renamed to Scholarship as Conversation in Final Draft*)
1. 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.
2. Create a timeline to track the evolving threads of a continuing scholarly conversation.
3. Select a topic on which students have some knowledge or experience. Identify a venue (blog, discussion forum, other social media site) in which a scholarly conversation is taking place. Ask students to:
   - Identify key players and their perspectives.
   - Compare a related scholarly article by one of the players to the online conversation.
   - Consider how to involve themselves in the conversation.

Research as Inquiry
1. Students 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.
2. Assign students to keep research logs in which they note changes in particular research directions as they identify resources, read, and incorporate new learning.
3. Ask students in professional or career-focused programs to evaluate the role of evidence-based that may move toward changing practice.

Authority is Contextual and Constructed
1. Provide students with two different information types (with two different goals) on the same topic by the same unnamed authoritative creator/author (for example, scholarly article and blog post). Use as discussion starter with students about context in relationship to authority. Reveal authorship later.
2. Ask students to find several scholarly sources on the same topic that take very different stands. How was it that the authors came to different conclusions? Does it have to do with authority?
3. Have students look at a blog, a video on YouTube, a collection of tweets, or some other type of social media regarding a contemporary event (e.g. demonstrations at Tahrir Square during the "Arab Spring" events). Ask them to describe how they would analyze and evaluate the authority. Are there ways to determine whether the individual was an actual witness or participant? Are there ways to identify whether the individual or group has a political bias? Can they determine whether the author(s) has a particular status within the group he/she represents or is the individual reporting as an "average citizen"?
Format as a Process *(renamed to Information Creation as a Process in Final Draft)*

1. Student will identify the format of the sources they find for a given research project and articulate why the chosen formats are appropriate for the information need.

2. Student will find sources about the same topic in two divergent formats, e.g. newspaper movie review and literary journal movie review or scholarly article and a researcher’s blog. 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.

3. Ask students to transform information they have created in one format to another format, and to write a reflection on what they needed to consider as they went through the process.

Searching as Exploration *(renamed to Searching as Strategic Exploration in Final Draft)*

1. Assign students to identify and use subject headings after conducting a keyword search; after which they write a paragraph on the differences between subject and keyword searching.

2. Students must identify one or two important databases for the project they are working on and analyze why they consider them to be an effective resource for their research.

3. Ask students to choose a topic, develop key search terms, and use two different search engines to locate information on their topic. Have them compare the results in terms of quantity, types of sources (e.g., government, educational, scholarly, and commercial), order/sequence of results, and relevance. Pair students who used the same search engine with different topics to compare results.

Information has Value

1. Ask students to find several images that would enhance the project or paper on which they are working. Then ask them to determine which can be used without asking permission. What would they need to do to use this material?

2. Assign students to read a timely article connected to information ethics in the field of study as a discussion starter.

3. Discern between the economic processes behind different types of information, e.g. newspaper articles vs. 24-hour TV news, edited academic volume vs. popular title on a top 10 list.

4. Ask students to determine what information they can find about themselves or a relative online, and to assess whether steps should be taken to control this personal information.

*(Note: these are adapted from the ACRL’s Task Force, Revised framework for information literacy for higher education, Draft 2 (June, 2014). The most recent Final Draft, released in January 2015 does not include sample assignments.)*

**Resources**
