(Formerly known as the Georgia Conference on Information Literacy)

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Sustainable Partners: Librarians and Instructors Using Threshold Concepts to Reinforce Information Literacy

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Sustainable Partners: Librarians and Instructors Using Threshold Concepts to Reinforce Information Literacy

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Context for Our Partnership

- First-Year Administrators
  - Instructional Designer, Munday Library
  - Director of First-Year Writing
- General Education Renewal
- Long-term Visions → Shared Goals
- Sustainability

Our Shared Kairotic Moment

Encouraged by the shift in both of our disciplines to threshold concepts, we developed a sustainable multi-session library instructional experience to not only explore how **collaborative instruction** in threshold concepts can affect students' understanding, retention, and application of troublesome knowledge but to also explore how **cross-disciplinary integration** can empower our separate disciplines to **advocate against one-off, skills-focused writing and research instruction**.

Pilot Project

CONTEXT

- Faculty Survey (12 Responses)
  - Need for tailored, individualized curriculum
  - Interest in multiple sessions

DESIGN

- Shared Threshold Concept :: Scholarship as Conversation
  - Explicit in Information Literacy; Embedded in Writing Studies
  - Threaded throughout three sessions
- Three Sessions
  - Session 1: Multi-section lecture session (5 FYW courses)
  - Sessions 2 and 3: Individual, section-specific
  - Reflective Writing: integrated into writing assignments and/or class discussions
  - Pre- and post-surveys

Pilot Project :: What We Learned

➜ Multi-session is no-brainer!
➜ Multi-class lecture improves sustainability.
➜ Parroting or Learning?

Parroting or Learning? Magaly

How does a conversation—instead of a pro-con debate or for-against positions—change how you think about research and what you will need to do differently?

When considering a conversation, one must think about how the listening and speaking aspects of it build upon [each other] rather than [going] against each other. Even when, addressing a different perspective or opinion, you don't just merely bring something random up, *you build on what the other person said before you*. [....] *Perhaps what I have to say in this "conversation" matters, too.*

In what ways has this assignment influenced the way you think about constructing an argument and entering academic conversations? In other words, how, if at all, has WP4 changed the way you understand and approach academic writing?

Call it insecurity or lack of confidence, but I always felt like academic writers were posh and I wouldn't understand them. Because I had this perception of academic writing and because I thought it wasn't written for me, I automatically assumed it wasn't written for me. [....] *I now understand that I, too, am a scholar and can write academic writing.* I can help professors and more advanced scholars understand the thought process and mentality of a 19 year old undergraduate scholar and *I can also add to the conversations started by other young scholars like myself.* The process of doing WP4 has helped me understand that I can approach academic writing with *a lot more curiosity than knowledge at the beginning of the research process*. I am not unafraid, but I see academic writing as something less threatening and more enticing.

Parroting or Learning? Kasey

How does a conversation—instead of a pro-con debate or for-against positions—change how you think about research and what you will need to do differently?

Knowing that scholarship is a conversations makes me aware of the fact that there are *many different sides and questions* to any topic. When I am researching I will have to start looking for both sides of a topic *instead of the one that I personally think is right*. Being able to know both sides and understand their position allows my writing to be able to connect with the opposite side while still presenting my position. Though this may mean a bit more research time, *if I am able to expand on my audience then I will be able to further contribute to the conversation that is out there.*

In what ways has this assignment influenced the way you think about constructing an argument and entering academic conversations? In other words, how, if at all, has WP4 changed the way you understand and approach academic writing?

Changing my audience from teachers to students allowed me to *generate more of a connection* because I am a student who is personally struggling with reading science articles [....] This paper has influenced the way that I look at constructing an argument because I have a deeper respect for finding usable and credible sources. I have learned the *importance of good articles that address your topic and are already embedded in the conversation* that you are trying to address [....] I need to be aware that I *must first have a good understanding of the topic I want to address* and then make drafts *to see where my mind drifts to in the conversation*.

Pilot Project :: Refining Our Plan

➔ Confirmed Investments in
   ◆ Cross-Disciplinary Integration
   ◆ Multi-session experiences
   ◆ Shared Threshold Concepts
➔ Secured IRB-Approval
➔ Identified Writing Studies Threshold Concepts

Disciplinary Threshold Concepts

Information Literacy

➔ Authority is Constructed and Contextual

➔ Information Creation as a Process

➔ Information Has Value

➔ Research as Inquiry

➔ Scholarship as Conversation

➔ Searching as Strategic Exploration

Writing Studies (Rhetoric & Composition)

➔ Writing is a Social and Rhetorical Act

➔ Writing Speaks to Situations through Recognizable Forms

➔ Writing Enacts and Creates Identities and Ideologies

➔ All Writers Have More to Learn

➔ Writing is (also always) a Cognitive Activity

from ACRL's *Framework for Information Literacy*

from *Naming What We Know*: *Threshold Concepts in Writing Studies*

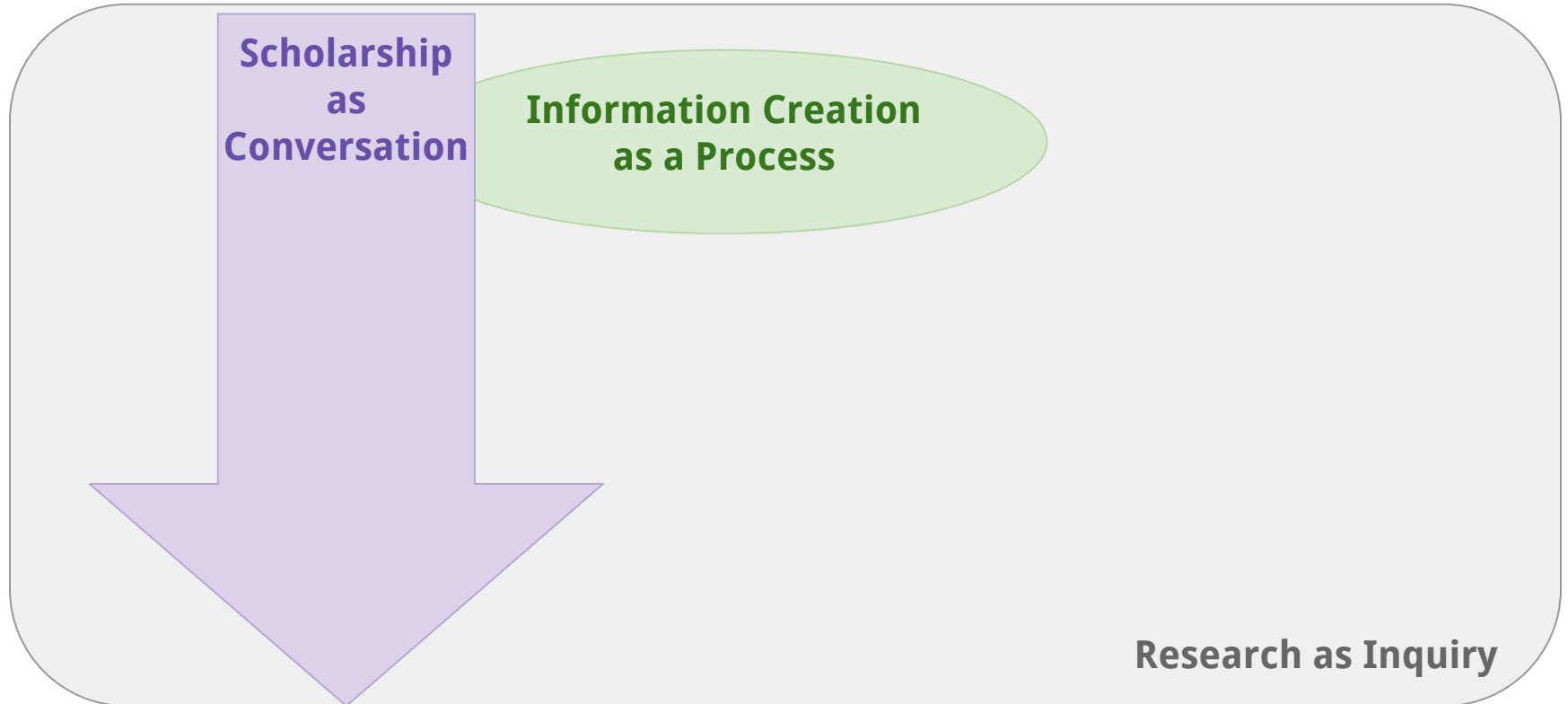# Teaching IL Threshold Concepts in FYW

Scholarship as Conversation

Teaching IL Threshold Concepts in FYW

Scholarship as Conversation
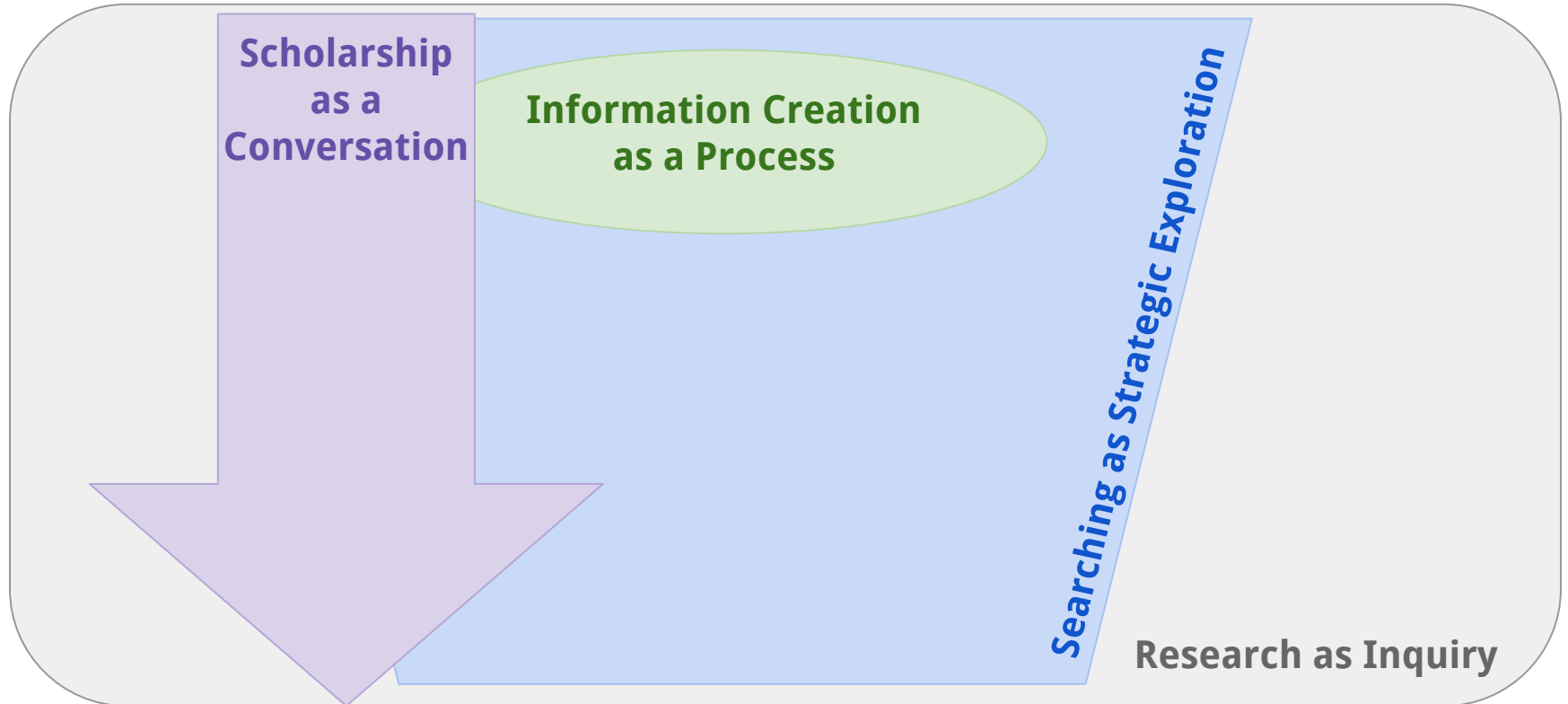
Research as Inquiry

Teaching IL Threshold Concepts in FYW

Scholarship as Conversation

Information Creation as a Process

Research as Inquiry

Teaching IL Threshold Concepts in FYW

Teaching IL Threshold Concepts in FYW

Scholarship as Conversation

- Recognize that a given scholarly work may not represent the only or even the majority perspective on the issue.

- Identify barriers to entering scholarly conversation via various venues.

Scholarship as Conversation (IL)

Writing is a Social and Rhetorical Act (Writing Studies)

➔ "[W]riting can never be anything but a social and rhetorical act, *connecting us to other people across time and space* in an attempt *to respond adequately to the needs of an audience*" (Roozen 18).

➔ "Writing is both *relational* and *responsive*, always in some way part of *an ongoing conversation* with others" (Lunsford 20).

➔ "First, when writers understand that meanings are not determined by history or *Webster*'s prescriptions alone, but also by *language users' contexts and motives*, they gain a powerful insight into the causes of communicative success and failure [....] this threshold concept helps us see how we can *reduce the likelihood of misunderstandings* [....] this concept helps explain why particular meanings for key terms in their writing can require *careful framing*" (Dyer 25).

Scholarship as Conversation (IL)

Writing is a Social and Rhetorical Act (Writing Studies)

➔ "Rather, to say writing involves ethical choices is to say that when creating a text, the writer addresses others. And that, in turn, initiates a *relationship* between writer and readers, one that necessarily involves human values and virtues" (Duffy 31).

➔ "The power of networks can perhaps be most easily understood in terms of *connectivity*: the ability to connect readers to writers, to turn anyone with a network connection into a publisher. Connectivity allows writers to access and participate more seamlessly and quickly with others [...]" (Brooke and Grabill 33).

Teaching IL Threshold Concepts in FYW

Scholarship as Conversation

- Determine an appropriate scope of investigation.

- Use various research methods, based on need, circumstance, and type of inquiry.

- Organize information in meaningful ways.

- Synthesize ideas gathered from multiple sources.

- Formulate questions for research based on information gaps or on reexamination of existing, possibly conflicting, information.

Research as Inquiry

Teaching IL Threshold Concepts in FYW

Scholarship as Conversation

Information Creation as a Process

- Assess the fit between an information product's creation process and a particular information need.

- Articulate the traditional and emerging processes of information creation and dissemination in a particular discipline.
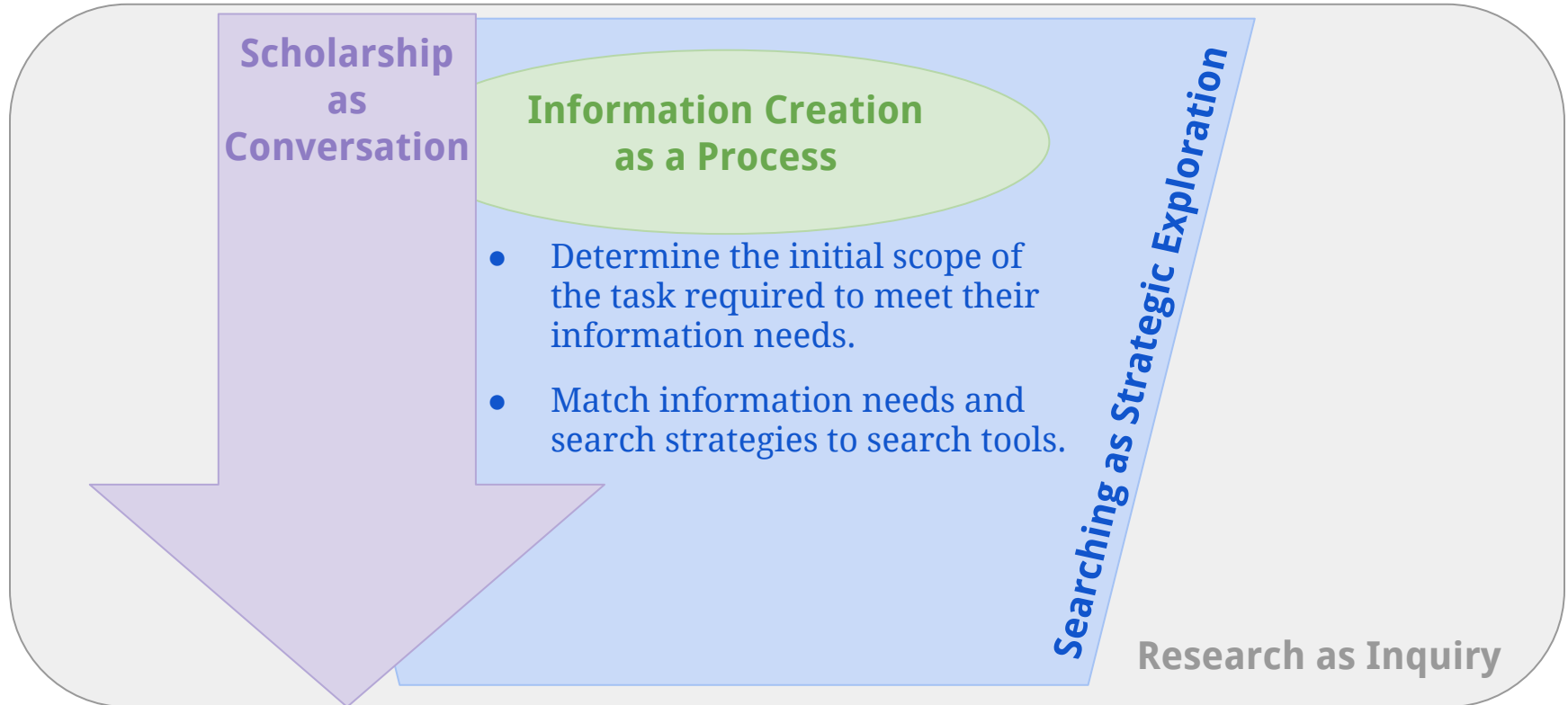
Research as Inquiry

Information Creation as a Process (IL)

Writing is a Social and Rhetorical Act (Writing Studies)

➔ "The idea that writing expresses and shares meaning to be reconstructed by the reader can be troublesome because there is a tension between the *expression of meaning and the sharing of it*" (Bazerman 22).

➔ "…whatever meaning a writer or reader makes of a particular text is not a result of their engagements with that particular text *alone*" (Roozen 44).

➔ "…texts always *refer to other texts and rely heavily on those texts* to make meaning" (Roozen 44).

➔ "…texts are *profoundly intertextual* in that they draw meaning from a *network* of other texts" (Roozen 44).

Teaching IL Threshold Concepts in FYW

Scholarship as Conversation

Information Creation as a Process

- Determine the initial scope of the task required to meet their information needs.

- Match information needs and search strategies to search tools.

Searching as Strategic Exploration

Research as Inquiry

Current Project

CONTEXT

- Expand Overarching TC :: Scholarship as Conversation
- In-depth, IRB-Approved study of multi-session approach

DESIGN

- *Collaborative planning* of course activities, assignments, calendar
- 4 sessions, not 3 sessions; 2 classes, 1 control group
- Varied data collection
    - Literacy Strategies Inventory (Week 1 and Week 15)
    - Reflective Writing assignments
    - Usability tests

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

- Role of misconceptions about writing and research
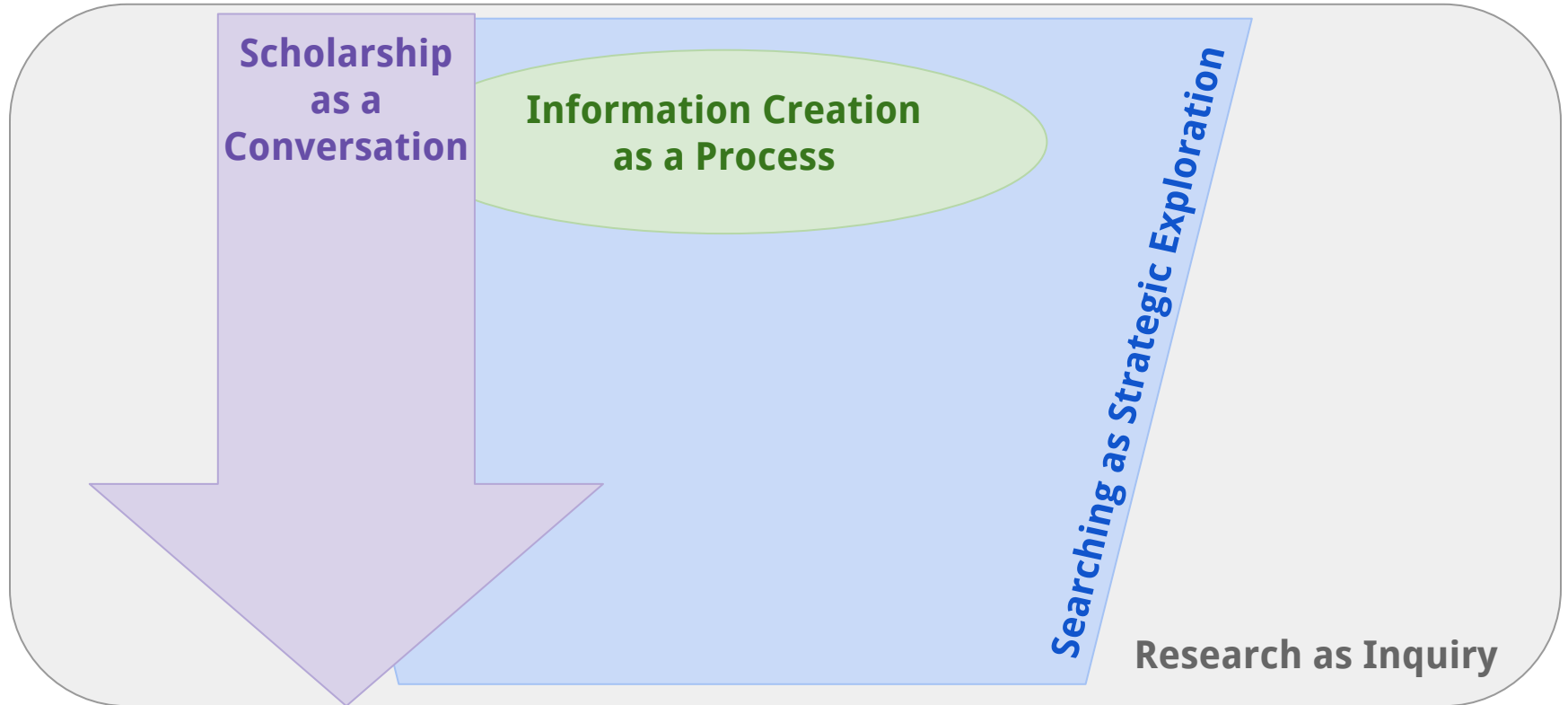
Programmatic Effects

Library Goals

- Increase multi-sessions
  - Rhetoric & Composition I: 5 out of 28
  - Rhetoric & Composition II: 13 out of 22
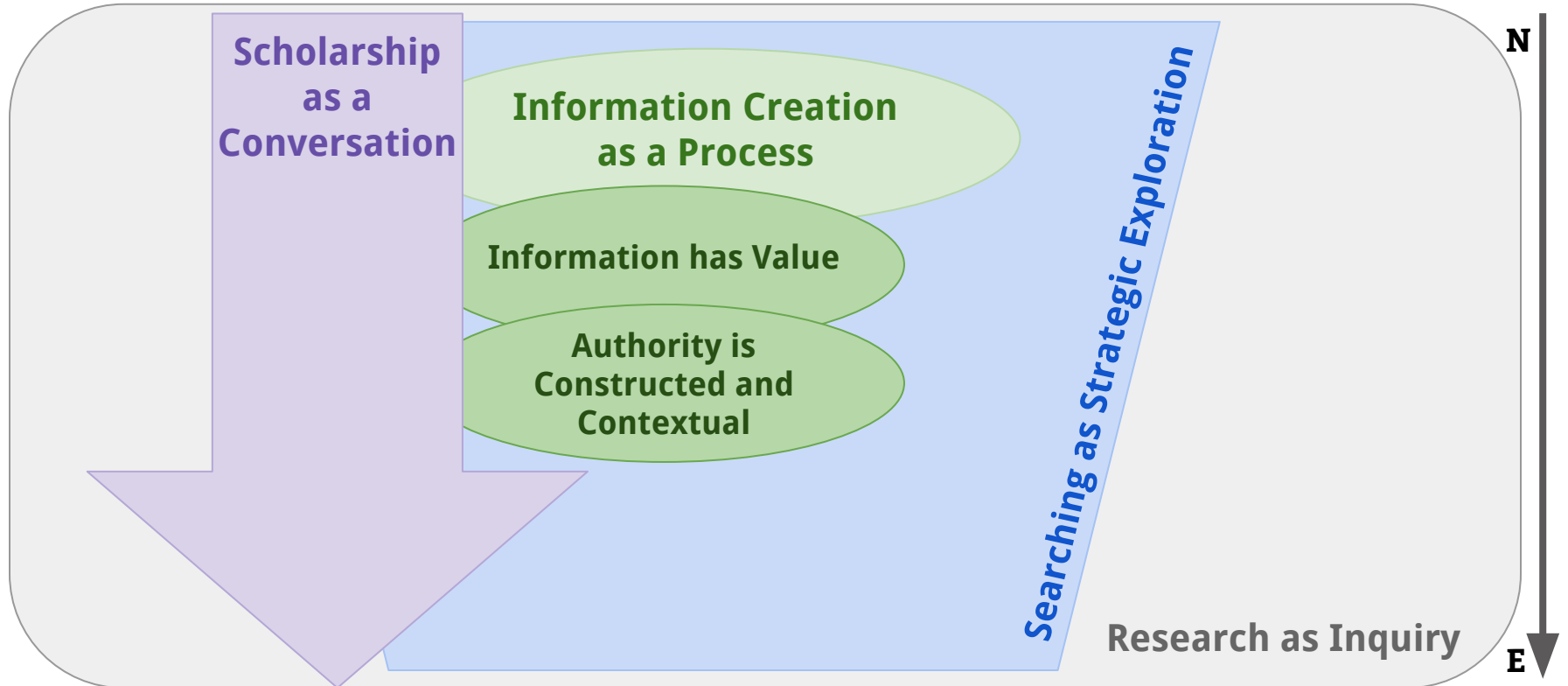 - Non-RC I & II courses: 6 out of 53

First-Year Writing Goals

- Focused Information Literacy conversations in ENGW 1301 & 1302
- Multi-Session support from faculty
- Vertical support for writing and research

Teaching IL Threshold Concepts

Teaching IL Threshold Concepts

Scholarship as a Conversation

Information Creation as a Process

Information has Value

Authority is Constructed and Contextual

Searching as Strategic Exploration

Research as Inquiry

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THANK YOU!

Questions?
Comments?
Thoughts?

Supplemental Materials

Literacies Strategy Inventory

Draft Curriculum Map

Sample Lesson: Introducing Scholarship as Conversation

Naming What We Know: Threshold Concepts of Writing Studies (2015)