**Activity Title:** The Price is Right

**Purpose:** The primary goal of the activity is to help students understand that there are significant costs associated with access to information resources.  Students will also debate how these costs impact research and scholarship in the field, as well as public access to scholarly research.

**Framework Concept:**

* **Information Has Value**

**Learning Outcomes**

**By the end of the activity, students should be better prepared to:**

* Recognize that information sources may possess multiple different types of value
* Recognize issues of access or lack of access to information sources
* Value the skills, time, and effort needed to produce knowledge

**Description of Activity:**

* Divide students into groups.
* Show students (using a whiteboard or PPT slide) a list of information resources in the field. For example:
	+ A biology textbook
	+ An individual subscription to a major biology journal
	+ Access to the Science Direct database (or another relevant database)
	+ A video or documentary relevant to the field
	+ A newspaper or magazine article relevant to the field
	+ A website or blog post relevant to the field
* In their groups, have the students put together a guess as to what they think the "package" of information would cost them if they bought individual access to each item. Compare and discuss the guesses.
* Share the approximate monetary value of the resources. Guide a discussion on the cost of information in the field:
	+ Why do these resources cost so much?
		- How much time and effort does it cost to create each type of resource?
	+ Who is actually making money?  Do the scholars themselves make money on their work?
* Are there any additional hidden costs associated with accessing these information sources? (For example, paying for internet access)
* Who has “free” access to these information sources and who does not?
* How does the cost of these resources impact scholarship in the field? Are certain people restricted in their ability to research and contribute to the conversation due to these costs?
* How does the cost of these resources impact the public’s ability to access scholarly knowledge? Can someone not affiliated with a university usually afford to remain active in research in the field?