From Pints to Barrels:

Helping Topic-Focused Students See the Bigger Picture

Beth Fuchs and Deborah Sharp, University of Kentucky

Denver, Colorado
Librarian  

Student
“It’s not about the burrito . . .”

Scores 0=3, 1=15, 2=3, 3=0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What community are you researching?</th>
<th>What keywords relate to your community?</th>
<th>After doing keyword searches, what subject terms did you find that relate to your community?</th>
<th>What combinations of search terms did you try? What combination gave you the best results?</th>
<th>Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Wellington Dog Park</td>
<td>dog, great dane, public park</td>
<td>none.</td>
<td>couldn't find anything</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Grounds</td>
<td>Coffee, Shop, Entertainment, Music, Coffee House</td>
<td>I found things about Coffee House Culture. Other searches brought in other topics that aren’t as related to my topic as what I need. I will do more searches.</td>
<td>The Coffee House Culture gave me the best results.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth floor goers at the William T. Young Library</td>
<td>Library, UK, Study</td>
<td>Checkout, books, library resources, library history</td>
<td>University libraries, William T. Young</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country bar</td>
<td>Country, bar, employees</td>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>Country, bar, employees</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Add yours!

http://padlet.com/bethfuchs/loex2015

Librarian       Student
Typical scenario...
Less typical scenario . . .
FINDING CONTEXT:

What Today’s College Students Say about Conducting Research in the Digital Age

BY ALISON J. HEAD, PH.D. AND MICHAEL B. EISENBERG, PH.D.

PROJECT INFORMATION LITERACY PROGRESS REPORT
FEBRUARY 4, 2009
THE INFORMATION SCHOOL, UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
RESEARCH SPONSORED BY A GIFT FROM PROQUEST
### Figure 5.1. Model of the Information Search Process (ISP).

Cognitive science connection

Expert and novice thinking

Prior knowledge
Theory \rightleftharpoons Practice
3 Teaching Gateways

Multiple Perspectives and Questions
Patterns and Analogies
Rubrics and Concrete Examples
Multiple Perspectives and Questions

“The process of critically examining different perspectives meant students began viewing knowledge as less certain or absolute.”

Your Space: New Perspectives

Describe it: What do you know about your space? What happens there? Who would you and wouldn’t you find there? Why? What are they doing? What is the atmosphere like? What spaces are similar to yours on campus or in the area? What makes your space unique?

Trace it: How has your space changed over time? What is the history of your space? What events have influenced your space?

Connect it: What is your space related to? What is your space influenced by? What does your space influence? Who is interested in your space? How might people argue about your space? What bigger issues are you interested in that relate to your space?
Describe it:

What do you know about your space?
What happens there?
Who would you and wouldn’t you find there? Why?
What are they doing?
What is the atmosphere like?
What spaces are similar to yours on campus or in the area? What makes your space unique?
Trace it:

How has your space changed over time?
What is the history of your space?
What events have influenced your space?
Connect it:

What is your space related to?
What is your space influenced by? What does your space influence?
Who is interested in your space?
How might people argue about your space?
What bigger issues are you interested in that relate to your space?
Patterns and Analogies

“Experts’ ability to classify information in more meaningful – and thus more practically useful – ways than novices is linked to their ability to recognize meaningful patterns.”

- How learning works: Seven research-based principles for smart teaching (2010), p. 55
Organize these foods into three categories:

- apples
- strawberries
- pears
- raspberries
- potatoes
- walnuts
- peaches
- blueberries
- onions
- bananas
- carrots
Zoom in/Zoom out: Search Terms

Keywords

Even broader

Broader

Your topic

Subject Terms
Rubrics and Concrete Examples

“We understand new things in the context of things we already know, and most of what we know is concrete.”

-Why don’t students like school?: A cognitive scientist answers questions about how the mind works and what it means for the classroom (2009), p. 67
## Information Literacy Student Learning Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0 Emerging</th>
<th>1 Developing</th>
<th>2 Proficient</th>
<th>3 Distinguished</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Define extent of information needed</td>
<td>Does not define a research question/topic.</td>
<td>Defines an incomplete research question/topic. (e.g., too broad or too narrow)</td>
<td>Defines a complete research question/topic.</td>
<td>Defines a complete research question/topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does not articulate keywords appropriate for the topic.</td>
<td>Articulates a list of keywords that are incomplete or inappropriate for the topic.</td>
<td>Articulates a sufficient list of keywords to define the topic.</td>
<td>Articulates a comprehensive list of keywords for each aspect of the research topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Constructs effective research strategy</td>
<td>Conducts a single search.</td>
<td>Conducts multiple searches using similar strategies.</td>
<td>Conducts multiple searches using a variety of strategies (uses different keyword combinations, combines terms with &quot;AND&quot;, &quot;OR&quot;, etc.)</td>
<td>Conducts multiple searches using a variety of strategies (uses different keyword combinations, combines terms with &quot;AND&quot;, &quot;OR&quot;, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Constructs search terms and phrases</td>
<td>Uses everyday language to describe key concepts.</td>
<td>Uses everyday language and synonyms to describe key concepts.</td>
<td>Translates everyday language and synonyms into appropriate subject terms for key concepts.</td>
<td>Translates everyday language and synonyms into appropriate subject terms for key concepts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Refines Search</td>
<td>Refines search by omitting and broadening based on results of previous searches.</td>
<td>Refines search by narrowing and broadening based on results of previous searches.</td>
<td>Refines search by narrowing and broadening based on results of previous searches.</td>
<td>Refines search by narrowing and broadening based on results of previous searches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Identifies and selects appropriate information research tools</td>
<td>Does not show evidence of using more than one information research tool.</td>
<td>Examines a variety of information research tools.</td>
<td>Examines a variety of information research tools.</td>
<td>Examines a variety of information research tools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does not identify information research tool or identifies only partially or incorrectly.</td>
<td>Identifies information research tool that is general in scope.</td>
<td>Provides vague or ambiguous rationale for selection.</td>
<td>Identifies information research tool that is appropriate to research topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Evaluates information effectively</td>
<td>Types of information sources include: books, articles (scholarly, trade, or popular), web sites, primary source materials, videos, audio/visual records, images, etc.</td>
<td>Identifies the type of information source accurately.</td>
<td>Examines source and applies evaluative criteria (i.e., authority, currency, reliability, accuracy, relevance, context, purpose or bias).</td>
<td>Examines source and applies evaluative criteria (i.e., authority, currency, reliability, accuracy, relevance, context, purpose or bias).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does not identify the type of information source or identifies inaccurately.</td>
<td>Examines source and applies evaluative criteria (i.e., authority, currency, reliability, accuracy, relevance, context, purpose or bias).</td>
<td>Examines source and applies evaluative criteria (i.e., authority, currency, reliability, accuracy, relevance, context, purpose or bias).</td>
<td>Articulates the relevance between selected source and topic.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on ACRL Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education

PDF available at http://ala.org/acrl/standards/informationliteracycompetency

Find it here: libguides.uky.edu/infolit
## Guide for Developing a Research Question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Distinguished</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Question is not related to the topic or question is a broad topic instead of a research question. Question does not identify key concepts.</td>
<td>Research question is related to topic, but is too broad or too narrow.</td>
<td>Research question is focused.</td>
<td>Research question is concise and scope is well defined.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Key concepts are Incomplete.</td>
<td>Question shows some understanding of issues and key concepts.</td>
<td>Question expresses some aspects of original thought.</td>
<td>Question is grounded in background information. Key concepts are articulated. Question expresses a high level of independent thought and inquiry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Young Library</td>
<td>What study spaces are in Young Library?</td>
<td>What type of study spaces do college libraries provide for students?</td>
<td>Do study spaces in academic libraries contribute to student success?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>women in the Middle East</td>
<td>What are some of the issues that women face in the Middle East?</td>
<td>What is education like for women in Egypt?</td>
<td>What are the opportunities and challenges for women in higher education in Egypt?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop your topic here</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### After . . .

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What service organization are you working with?</th>
<th>Based on your research, what related idea or broader issue did you decide to focus on?</th>
<th>What keywords relate to this broader issue?</th>
<th>After doing keyword searches, what subject terms did you find that relate to your broader issue?</th>
<th>What combinations of search terms did you try? What combination gave you the best results?</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arboretum</td>
<td>Recycling and Reusing.</td>
<td>Environment, preservation, green, recycle, reuse, sustainability, conservation, beautification.</td>
<td>Environmental protection, Landfills, environmental sustainability, conservation of nature, waste management, compost, environmental policy</td>
<td>conservation of natural resources and environmental protection, reusing and waste management, environmentalism and green policy, and many others. Recycling and environmental protection gave me the best results.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenhouse 17</td>
<td>domestic violence</td>
<td>domestic violence, women, children, abuse, intimate partner abuse</td>
<td>psychological effects, physical effects, effects on mothers and children</td>
<td>At first, I just searched domestic violence. Then I narrowed it down to domestic violence and a keyword of psychological effects. I found some very interesting articles using this search, and it gave me the best results</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step By Step</td>
<td>How teenage parenthood affects the education of the parents and children.</td>
<td>Teenage parents, Teenage pregnancies, Teenage parent education</td>
<td>Single Parents, Single parent home life, single parent education, teenage parent home life</td>
<td>Teenage Parenthood, Education and teenage parents, education and single parents</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scores: 0=3, 1=11, 2=15, 3=6
Key References


Figure 5.1. Model of the Information Search Process (ISP). Reprinted from Seeking meaning: A process approach to library and information sciences (p. 82), by C. C. Kuhlthau, 2004, Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, Inc.
From Pints to Barrels:

Beth Fuchs
Undergraduate Learning Librarian
beth.fuchs@uky.edu

Deborah Sharp
Information Literacy Coordinator
debbie.sharp@uky.edu