

Glendale College Library Information Competency Workshops Improving Library Research - -Outline

Core Competencies:

2. Develop and implement an effective search strategy appropriate for an information need by:
 - a. Differentiating various types of information sources (specialized encyclopedias, article databases, library catalogs, search engines, etc.) and the purpose of each.
 - b. Choosing and accessing appropriate information sources for the research question.
4. Evaluate information by:
 - c. Distinguishing reliable from unreliable sources of information, scholarly and popular sources, substantiated facts and point of view.
 - d. Assessing the authority, accuracy relevance, reliability, completeness, and timeliness of information.
7. Organize, synthesize and communicate information:
 - b. Integrating information from a variety of sources appropriate to the research question.

Introduction, agenda, etc. Explain that this workshop will cover the following research skills: **(10 minutes)**

- Identification of different types of information sources, their characteristics, and usefulness to college research (exercise 2)
- criteria for evaluating search results (exercise 1)

Begin the session with a brief discussion of the relative merits of various information resources.

- Start with a question to the students: "Where do you go to find information for a school research assignment?"
- You will probably get answers that include: Internet, Web, Google, library databases, ProQuest, library catalog.
- Use student responses to outline the differences between different types of resources and sources, touching on how different resources can yield different types of information sources and different types of information sources can be more or less useful for college level research. This will be explored more thoroughly during the workshop.
- Also briefly review Page 1 of the handout—information intended to assist students in identifying different types of sources.

Exercise I: Evaluating Your Search Results (15 minutes)

Introduce Exercise 1 by briefly discussing the **Criteria for Evaluating Search Results**. Perhaps give some examples of topics and sources that may or may not be useful, timely, appropriate, or authoritative for those topics.

Examples:

- a. A book on American Women in History, 1970-2000 would not be **useful** or **timely** for finding information on Margaret Sanger (women's rights activist, 1879-1966).
- b. An advertisement from Glamour magazine would be **appropriate** for an essay on how women are portrayed in the media.

- c. A web site on the Navajo Indians written by a sixth-grader would not be an **authoritative** source for a Cultural Anthropology course research paper on the Navajo culture.

Explain that the job of evaluating sources begins with your list of search results, and proceed to **Exercise I**. I give the instructions and give students time to come up with answers to the two questions for Figure 1. Then we discuss the answers they volunteer as a group.

Do the same for Figure 2.

NOTE: The graphics have been updated to reflect the current **Catalog** and **ProQuest** databases. I have also changed the **results** for Figure 1 and the **question and results** for Figure 2. My effort here is “keepin’ it real”. The answers are less clear-cut than the old exercise—much as in real life. There aren’t necessarily right answers for the questions; the questions are intended to spark discussion of how to “evaluate” search results, i.e., How much can you determine just from looking at the results page?

Exercise II: Analyzing documents – asking students to apply evaluation criteria previously discussed (**35 minutes**)

Changes to this exercise:

- 4 documents instead of 6! (note that one of them—the book review—is new and different)
 - There is a mock research question for this exercise: “What are the global effects of Japanese fishing economically and ecologically?”
 - Do this exercise using a “jig-saw” technique to facilitate students’ engagement with the documents and sharing their discoveries (peer teaching/learning). Students are assigned to become mini-experts on one piece of the larger instructional content, then asked to report back to the class as a whole in order to collectively assemble the bigger picture. Each student is responsible for the close review/evaluation of 2 documents, yet he/she will be exposed to the qualities and evaluation of all 4.
1. Direct students to the **Workshop Materials** web page for this workshop. There they will find links to 4 pdf documents.
 2. Direct ALL students in the class to examine and evaluate Document #2 (Wikipedia article) using the matrix provided, evaluating each document based on the research question: *What are the global effects of Japanese fishing economically and ecologically?*
 3. Assign one of the remaining 3 documents to each of the three rows in the classroom.
 4. Allow about 10 minutes for students to complete their examination of the 2 documents and to write their responses into the matrix.
 5. Lead a discussion of Document #2 (Wikipedia article which everyone reviewed) asking for volunteer input from the entire class for each criteria and finally on the overall appropriateness of the document for a college-level research project.
 6. Ask for a volunteer from each row to report on Documents #1, #3, and #4

See **Exercise II Key** for some answers and points for discussion with students.

Please collect the Exercise 2 matrices from the students and leave them in the folder with the roster. THANKS!