

Glendale College Library Information Competency Workshops

Research Strategies—Outline

Core competencies/learning outcomes:

1. Recognize the need for information and define a research topic by:
 - a. Articulating a research question, problem, or issue
 - b. Obtaining background information to identify and define key concepts and terminology related to the topic
2. Develop and implement an effective search strategy appropriate for an information need by:
 - c. Identifying search terms appropriate to the research tool and the topic
3. Locate and retrieve information by:
 - a. Using the library's print and online resources effectively

Preparation:

Open Demo Docs folder on instructor computer desktop and open the "Topic Development" file. Open the NetSupport program. Distribute handouts. This workshop incorporates the exercises into the handout. Tell students that their participation in the workshop is part of what determines their "credit" for attendance. The worksheet (second page of the handout) will be collected at the end of the workshop.

Developing a topic:

- Begin by having students read from their handout, the excerpted reference article: "Human Trafficking" from the *Dictionary of Policing* in CREDO Reference. (5 min.)
- Instruct students to write in the table below terms from the article that are important to a general understanding of the topic. Terms might be synonyms of "human trafficking" (put those in the left column), but could also be related terms (e.g. words that describe facets of the topic that interest you and you want to learn more about). These go in the right column. (IMHO: it's not all that important into which column the terms get written, just so good terms get generated)
- Compile list of terms from everyone. Use the table "Topic Development" in the Demo Docs folder on the instructor desktop. Use NetSupport to project the table to all students as you fill it up based on their contributions.
- Instruct students to write in the space provided two questions about the article they have just read—things they would like to know more about, things that were not well-explained in the article, things omitted, etc.
- Go back to the "Topic Development" document in the Demo Docs folder and compile a list of **Brainstorming Questions** as they contribute them.
- Briefly describe and discuss what makes a good research question and the difference between a research question and a thesis statement. Refer to the "From Topic to Research Question" points on the handout.
- Have students individually choose from the **Brainstorming Questions** list the question they think is the best research question and use that question for the online catalog and article database exercises.

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Searching Databases

BRIEFLY explain what we are doing when we search a database. Refer to the table, "Database Diagram" in the Demo Docs file on desktop. Show students where the software searches when it does a keyword search, a title search, an author search, and finally a subject search. This sets up the important distinction between keyword and subject searching, which you can explain briefly.

This workshop doesn't have enough time for students to explore and choose a specific database for their topic. Make the point that we have databases covering many subject areas and kinds of information. We're doing the choosing today. Students should consult a reference librarian for future research assignments.

Demonstrate/Explore Online Catalog – use an example other than human trafficking for the demo – Be sure to point out:

- The advanced search form—necessary for searching multiple concepts
- When searching for books, key words should be fewer and broader than when searching for articles because books are usually broader in scope than books
- Remember from our database table that neither subject searches nor keyword searched are exhaustive. Try both
- Start with a keyword search – find an appropriate title – display subject headings and explain how they can be used to find similar books that don't use your original keywords.
- Give students time to do their own catalog searches on their human trafficking question.
- Move around the room to consult with them
- Have a couple of them share their successful searches using NetSupport
- Discuss

Demonstrate/Explore Article Database – ProQuest – Be sure to point out:

- Try different combinations of keywords
- The dropdown menu of search indexes and relate it back to your explanation of search indexes
- From search results, point out "Suggested Topics" and explain that these are subject headings
- Give students time to search for articles on their human trafficking question.
- Move around the room to consult with them
- Have a couple of them share their successful searches using NetSupport
- Discuss.

Remind students about a few things this workshop doesn't have time for:

- Keep a log of your searches in each database, so you won't have to repeat them.
- Collect the necessary information for your Works Cited or References page. Suggest going to the Citing Sources workshop for more on this.
- And, as always, consult with a reference librarian.