

Theoretical Foundations

Framework for Information Literacy

Searching as Strategic Exploration
“information searching is a contextualized, complex experience”

Knowledge Practices

Match information needs and search strategies to appropriate search tools	Understand how information systems are organized in order to access relevant information	Use different types of searching language appropriately
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(ACRL, 2016)

Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing

Describes the dispositions, skills and knowledge that embody effective college-level writing.

Rhetorical Knowledge

“the ability to analyze and act on understandings of audiences, purposes and contexts in creating and comprehending texts”

Knowledge of Conventions

“the formal and informal guidelines that define what is considered to be correct and appropriate, or incorrect and inappropriate, in a piece of writing”

(CWPA, NCTE, & NWP 2011)

Small Teaching

Draws on evidence-based research to suggest easily implementable, impactful ways to improve teaching.

Writing Course Content

Information Literacy Instruction

“Connecting” increases comprehension and retention

(Lang, 2016)

Overview

This method is designed to enhance one-shot information literacy sessions for undergraduate students enrolled in writing courses.

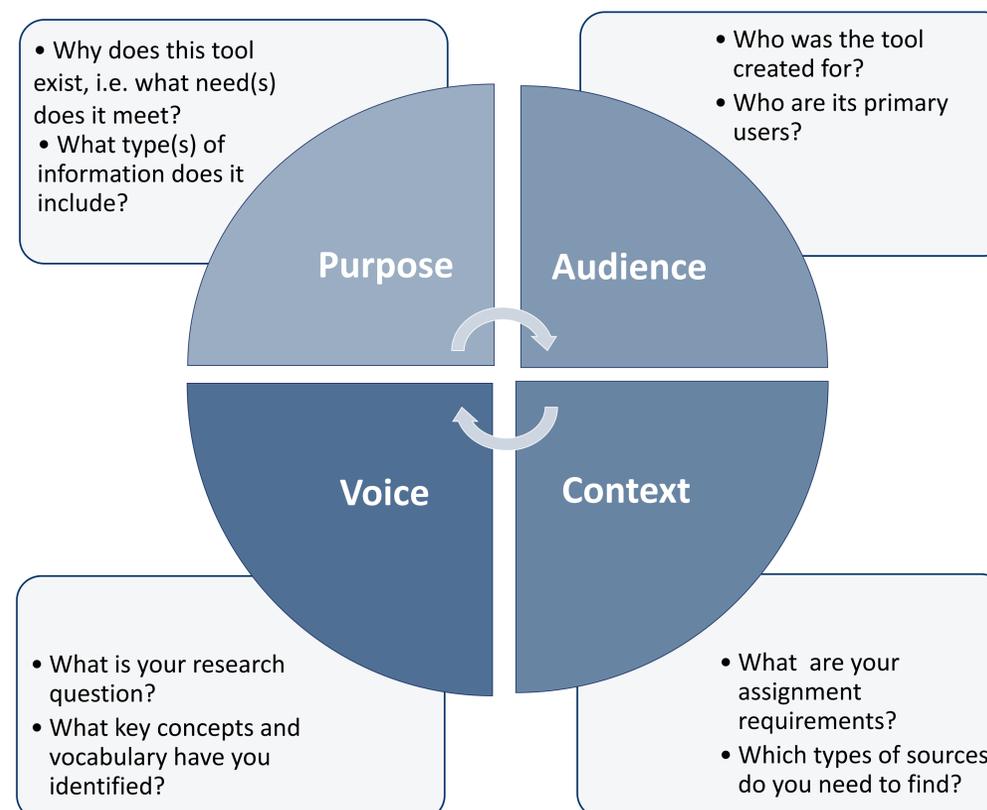
Academic Databases as a Genre

Academic databases have recognizable features or conventions that distinguish them from other search platforms.

“Think about genres as tools to help people get things done” (Dirk, 2010, p. 252).

Rhetorical Analysis of a Database

Asking students to consider the purpose of an academic database and its primary audience within the context of their research needs for writing assignments encourages them to be deliberate about their search language and strategies, i.e. their voice.



Teaching Strategies

Incorporating this approach into your class can take as little as a few minutes or be developed into a more complex activity.

- Librarian Overview**

 - Provide a brief explanation of how academic search tools can be viewed as a distinct genre that call for specialized search strategies.
 - Estimated time: 1-2 minutes
- Think-Pair-Share**

 - Prior to discussion of a database, ask students to explore the tool and jot down answers to questions about its purpose, audience, and their assignment context. Give students several minutes to search individually, then have them pair with a classmate. Ask for several volunteers to share what they discovered.
 - Estimated time: 10-15 minutes
- Compare and Contrast**

 - Provide a topic (or have students use their own) to examine two tools with different purposes and audiences, e.g. Google and PsycInfo. Use the activity to initiate a discussion about *voice*, or the use of search terminology, in different tools.
 - Estimated time: 20-30 minutes

Discussion

Introducing academic databases as a genre with unique characteristics that necessitate the use of specialized terminology and advanced search strategies (e.g. Boolean operators, nesting, truncation and phrase searching), connects information research skills to course content in an explicit way that can benefit all learners. It moves our one-shot sessions for writing courses beyond point-and-click and operationalizes the ACRL information literacy frame “searching as strategic exploration.” It also provides a metacognitive framework that students can use to interrogate a variety of search platforms.

References

Association of College and Research Libraries. (2016). *Framework for information literacy for higher education*. <http://www.ala.org/acrl/files/issues/infolit/framework.pdf>

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Dirk, K. (2010). Navigating genres. In C. Lowe & P. Zemliansky (Eds.), *Writing spaces: Readings on writing* (pp.249-262). Parlor Press. <http://writingspaces.org/essays>

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