Databases are like Box Stores: Teaching Information Literacy with Analogy

Kory A. Paulus
Wingate University, k.paulus@wingate.edu

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Databases are Like Box Stores: Teaching Information Literacy with Analogy

Jessica Swaringen, Reference & Instruction Librarian
Kory Paulus, Reference & Instruction Librarian
What is Information Literacy?

As defined by the American Library Association (2020):

“Information literacy is a set of abilities requiring individuals to ‘recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information.’ To be information literate, then, one needs skills not only in research but in critical thinking.”
What are Analogies?

Wormeli (2009):

“The relationship between two things is similar to the relationship between two other things; making an inference of similarity . . . between two things based on shared characteristics.”

Merriam-Webster (2020):

“A comparison of two otherwise unlike things based on resemblance of a particular aspect.”
What are Analogies?

Burkhardt (2016):

Take something unknown and compare it to something known; something that is abstract and compare it to something concrete. Get students to answer, “how is this situation like something I already know?”

Wormeli (2009):

The “Antimetaphor” uses a comparison to illuminate an unknown subject, but instead of focusing only on similarities, an antimetaphor also highlights differences between two subjects.
Analogies Improve Learning

Wormeli (2009):

“If we want students to understand a topic, we have to become more adept at showing them how to picture it.”

“By giving students specific tools to think critically … we help students move beyond memorization to deeper learning that lasts.”
Analogies Improve Learning

**Beginning** - Hearing an analogy explained to them; explaining an analogy they just learned

**Transitional** - Explaining/Analyzing an analogy presented to them without context

**Mastery** - Creating an analogy and explaining it to the teacher
Gabriel (2018):
“Using formative assessments and discussing the results with students can also help them realize their strengths and weaknesses and what they still need to do before the real exam”

Burkhardt (2016):
“Teachers can help students transfer knowledge by asking them to describe concepts in their own words and relate the concepts to other things they already know.”
Wormeli (2009):

“When students generate their own metaphors as a formative assessment, we see what they ‘map’ from one concept to another; we become aware of connections made and not made and learning that occurred or did not occur.”

Students should always have an opportunity to be reassessed after they do this formative assessment activity.
Challenging Information Literacy Concepts

Information Creation as a Process
• Parts of a Research Paper

Searching as Strategic Exploration
• Boolean Searching
• Subject Filters

Research as Inquiry
• Initial Review of Search Results

Information has Value
• Intellectual Property
• Citations and Style Guidelines

Scholarship as Conversation
• Scholarship is a conversation

Authority is Constructed and Contextual
Group Activity

Please split into groups of 3-5 people
Choose a speaker
Choose a scribe

Identify difficult IL concepts
What Makes an Effective Analogy?

Effective analogies (Wormeli 2009)

• Give new information
• Provide a “fresh perspective or insight” into the unknown concept.
• Connect to the students’ lives and experiences

“If students don’t have the personal background to recognize a metaphor’s connection to the content, **we must work to create that context.**

It’s **not a luxury** to be considered only if time allows; providing the context can be the difference between function and dysfunction in the classroom.”
Example of Analogies from WU

Link to our Current List:
https://tinyurl.com/AnalogiesfromWU

Information Creation as a Process
• Parts of a Research Paper | Baking a Cake

Searching as Strategic Exploration
• Boolean Searching | Grocery Lists
Example of Analogies from WU

Research as Inquiry
• Subject Filter | Tagging on Facebook/Instagram

Information has Value
• Intellectual Property | “Widgets” or Novelty Mugs

Scholarship as Conversation
• Scholarship | Conversation
Group Activity
Please split into the same groups

Brainstorm Analogies for your IL Concepts
Groups Share Analogies
Assessing the Efficacy of Analogies

Use the metaphor quality scale
- Handout from Wormeli (2009)

Ask your students if they get it in the moment
- Test their knowledge later, if you can!

Walk through the analogy with a colleague


Questions or Comments?

Jessica Swaringen: j.swaringen@wingate.edu
Kory Paulus: k.paulus@wingate.edu