

Exploring the Scholarly Territory Using Library Resources

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Overview

In this lesson students view a series of short videos about searching library resources, interspersed with exercises in which they conduct searches on their topics and reflect on what they find and on the research process. (The first two videos and accompanying activities are done outside of class; the third can be done in class.)

Learning Goals

- Students will learn that research is about exploring the scholarly conversation about a topic and not just about finding answers to questions.
- Students will learn that exploring library (and non-library) resources can help them develop different directions and ways of approaching their topics than they initially had in mind.
- Students will learn how to create strategies for overcoming common obstacles encountered while researching a topic.
- Students will learn how to follow paths from one scholarly source to others.

ACRL Framework: Frames Applied

- Searching as strategic exploration
- Research as inquiry
- Scholarship as conversation

Video #1: [Searching as Strategic Exploration](http://bit.ly/bu-sswc1)
<http://bit.ly/bu-sswc1>

Activity #1: Searching the Library Discovery System

The purpose of this exercise is for you to familiarize yourself with strategies for finding scholarly sources; to begin to learn about the scholarly “territory” for your independent research project.

After doing your searches:

- a) Describe one kind of source that you hoped or expected you’d find but didn’t find in this preliminary try at searching.
- b) Identify one source (genre, author, and title) you didn’t expect to find but that looks potentially useful or interesting anyway.

Video #2: Search Tips & Overcoming Obstacles

[Part 1](#) | [Part 2](#)

<http://bit.ly/busswc2> | <http://bit.ly/busswc3>

Activity #2: New Search Strategies & Unexpected Results

Now, using BU Libraries Search, try at least two or three additional search strategies that you didn't try as part of Activity 1.

After doing your searches:

- a) List 2-3 new strategies.
- b) Using this range of new strategies, did you find the kind of source that you hoped or expected you'd find in your first search attempt (1a)? If so, what is it (genre, author and title), and why might it be useful? If not, why do you think you didn't and what will you do next?
- c) What did you become more curious about through searching, browsing, and selecting these scholarly sources related to your topic during these two activities?
- d) In several sentences, sum up anything you have learned so far about the scholarly conversation out there about your topic.

Video #3: [Subject Databases & New Directions](#)

<http://bit.ly/busswc4>

Activity #3: Following Paths & Reflecting on Research

Using one or more of the databases listed on the course guide under Literature & the Humanities, Arts, or Social Sciences, identify two or three sources (genre, author, and title) you think are most promising for your project. [NOTE: The database categories can vary based on the course and the course guide.]

After doing your searches:

- a) Explain why you think those sources are the most promising.
- b) Select one of these sources—or a promising one you found in BU Libraries Search in Activity 1 or 2—and “mine” its Works Cited list or bibliography. (These are generally found at the end of an article, a book, or a book chapter.) Choose at least one more source that looks promising and jot down its title/author. (Often one really good source will cite several other promising sources.)
- c) In several sentences, sum up how your understanding of your topic and the scholarly conversation about it has changed from Activity 1 through Activity 3.

Follow-up Discussion

Following in-class viewing of the third video and completion of the accompanying activity, students discuss what they learned about research and the research process.

Course Guide Examples

- **WR150: Representing Illness**
http://library.bu.edu/representing_illness
 - **WR150: Monsters**
<http://library.bu.edu/monsters>
 - **WR150: Migration Culture**
<http://library.bu.edu/migrationculture>
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Suggested Readings

Baer, Andrea. *Information Literacy and Writing Studies in*

Conversation: Reenvisioning Library-Writing Program

Connections. Sacramento, CA: Library Juice Press, 2016.

D'Angelo, Barbara J., et al. *Information Literacy : Research and*

Collaboration Across Disciplines. Fort Collins, CO: The WAC

Clearinghouse ; Boulder, CO: University Press of Colorado, 2016.

McClure, Randall, and Purdy, James P. *The Future Scholar :*

Researching and Teaching the Frameworks for Writing and

Information Literacy. Medford, NJ: Information Today, Inc., 2016.

McClure, Randall. *Rewired : Research-Writing Partnerships within the*

Frameworks. Chicago: Association of College and Research

Libraries, 2016.