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Scavenging for Research Ingredients

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Scavenging for Research Ingredients

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NUTRITION INFORMATION

First-year students are asked to compete in a scavenger hunt using their library's discovery tool. By participating in this guided seek and find activity, they will be introduced to key features and search strategies for the platform and have the opportunity to practice them.

Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Perform simple effective keyword searches in a discovery tool.
- Locate relevant sources on a pre-defined topic.
- Choose discovery tool limiters to refine their searches.

NUMBER SERVED

Serves 15 to 30

COOKING TIME

Prep time: 30 minutes to 1 hour

Lesson delivery: 15 to 30 minutes, depending on the number of questions created

DIETARY GUIDELINES

Frame: Searching as Strategic Exploration

Knowledge Practices:

- Design and refine needs and search strategies as necessary, based on search results.

- Manage searching processes and results effectively.

Dispositions:

Understand that first attempts at searching do not always produce adequate results.

INGREDIENTS & EQUIPMENT

- One computer for every two to three students.
- Instructor computer station
- Scavenger hunt worksheets, one copy for each group
- Small prize for the winning group (we use library promotional items)

PREPARATION

Identify the features of your discovery platform that you want your students exposed to and create a worksheet of scavenger hunt questions that highlight these features. For example, ask students to answer a question (report number of search results) or locate a specific item (peer-reviewed journal article on a specific topic). At the end of the worksheet, give students instructions on how to e-mail their answers to the librarian using the discovery tool's folder/list function. If your platform includes an embedded citation tool that you wish to highlight, ask students to send their answers in a specified citation style.

FIGURE 1. Discovery Tool Scavenger Hunt

1. Pick a team name.
2. How many results do you get when you search: **peace AND sports**?
3. How many results do you get when you search **peace AND sports diplomacy**?
4. Find an article on this topic in a *peer reviewed journal*. Save it to your folder.
5. Find an article or book on this topic published between 2000 and 2008. Add it to your folder.
6. Find a book about politics and the Olympics written by **Kay Schaffer**. (**Hint**: the advanced search features appears if you click the wheel next to the search button, and you will find a way to search by author here).
- 7a. How many results do you get when you search **Olympic boycott 1980**?
- 7b. How many do you get searching **"Olympic boycott" 1980**?
- 7c. Based on what you see, what purpose do quotation marks have in a search?

To Complete the Scavenger Hunt

Go to your folder of saved items and e-mail your list of resources to me (insert your e-mail address here). **ALSO**, in the message box, type in your team name and the answers you found to questions 2, 3 and 7(a-c). First group to submit the worksheet with the most correct answers gets a prize!

COOKING METHOD

1. Show students how to get to the discovery tool on the library's website. Briefly introduce the discovery platform as an entry point to many of your library's resources. Avoid a lengthy lecture, as this is intended to be a hands-on exploratory exercise. Explain that, rather than watching a demonstration, they will be exploring the tool for themselves through a scavenger hunt.
2. Divide the class into groups of two to three students, with a computer and a worksheet for each group (Figure 1).
3. If the discovery platform requires a login to collect items to a folder, have one member of each group create an account.
4. Before they start, give them a couple of tips for completing the exercise. For example, show them the folder/list feature for saving items. Briefly point out the limiting features as a way to narrow their searches.
5. Mention that there will be a prize for the group that submits their answers with the most speed and accuracy.
6. As the groups work through the scavenger hunt, work the room and answer questions and provide hints if students seem overly stuck. Monitor your e-mail for group submissions, encouraging all groups to submit their answers as winners will be selected by both speed *and* accuracy.

7. Check the answers as they come in and select a winning team. The winner is the group that submitted the worksheet with the most correct answers first.

ALLERGY WARNINGS

The activity as designed requires students to e-mail folders of resources to the librarian in order to submit their scavenger hunt answers. Have students create a team name so that you can identify each group. If you want them to provide text answers to certain questions, then your discovery system will need to have a "comments" or "notes" box that they can use to do this. If your system does not have this, consider an alternate method for submitting answers or limit to item-based answers.

CHEF'S NOTE

I encourage this to be a competitive activity. Students are much more engaged with the scavenger hunt when they knew they are working against other teams. There are many features that you can demonstrate through this exercise; in the past I have focused on concise keyword searching and narrowing, Boolean searching, using quotation marks, narrowing by date range, locating specific material types, and finding resources by specific authors. Also, this is a good activity to use for courses with multiple sections. I was able to tweak the worksheet from section to section based on the areas in which students struggled.

CLEAN UP

Use the submitted answers to identify skills and concepts that are unclear to the students. End the exercise by clarifying the muddy points while demonstrating a search.