Example Sequence for Relevant Information Literacy Basic Experiences

[“Thinking: so that students can be prepared before the class, so that more time can be spent on research and dealing with issues that come up individually, so that students can solve problems on the individual level. This means that you are helping that student in that context which means that that learning will be more meaningful and memorable.”]

I. Getting Started: “Thinking about” through Formulating a Focus

Uncover, reveal, draw out, identify ideas for inquiry BEFORE research

- Use complex thinking (as opposed to, e.g., “What is a Nursery Rhyme?”)
- Incorporate dimension of personal interest – engagement and enjoyment will increase
- Frame suitable questions for their assignment.

WHEN: At Time of Assignment Distribution
WHERE: Homework, then In-Class Small Groups Discussion.
WHAT: Develop possible questions, begin creating keyword list.
WHY: Broaden and deepen thinking skills. Expansive.

Activities and strategies that formulate focus

- Come up with 3 or more possible questions for exploration; begin developing keyword list.
- Think, Pair, Share: value of bringing other perspectives (people) to your work
- Mind maps of what they know, what they don’t know, what they want to find out, etc., help to frame their research process. Who, What, When, Where, How, and maybe Why.
- Encourage talking, writing, browsing, reading, etc.
- Practice narrowing topics as a group then individually

Possible assessments

- Dialogue w/ instructor and peers.
- Self-reflective assignments: Research log, mind-maps, reflection papers.

Have students keep a research log to show the process from starting questions, keyword progression from beginning to end, show shifting of focus through time, record their metacognitive activity.

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II. Stepping into university level research methods

WHEN: Right before hands-on session (or earlier if needed)
WHERE: Homework
WHAT: How to search using UConn Libraries’ tools
WHY: Prepared for active learning at hands-on session

Flipped Classroom. Build competence in basic information searching and retrieval in academic research tools. Best Practice: Students have formed a research question.

• Navigating the Library Website.
• Aware of common features of research databases, such as menu tools to refine searches.
• Able to find a full-text article or call number.
• Understand the anatomy of a scholarly article, and understand the purpose of its parts (abstract, thesis, lit review, etc.)

III. Doing the research with their Guide (you) on the side

WHEN: Hands-on Session and beyond
WHERE: Hands-On Classroom
WHAT: Actively engaging with research tools
WHY: Select materials for assignment

Understandings being developed:

• Finding which are researchable. Requires flexible thinking, persistence, and rethinking alternative relevant vocabulary for topic.
• Tolerate uncertainty. Be able to modify or shift topics as they progress through research and writing.
• Create a focus – see the wider variety of possibilities for investigation within a reading/film/etc.
• Reflect on student’s inclusion of information in research and writing

“Formulation of a focus is a critical pivotal point in a search where the general topic becomes clearer and a particular perspective is formed. [...] A focus is a guiding idea that gives the search direction, narrows the search, and provides a basis for collecting information and making relevance judgments. [...] When little formulation has been made within the search process and no focus formed, difficulty is commonly experienced in writing and presenting the topic.” (Kuhlthau 95)