Searching Is Strategic

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Students will identify their information need
- Students will recognize that sources of information vary by content
- Students will evaluate the appropriateness of different kinds of resources in relation to information need

Preparation

- Discuss learning outcomes with instructor. How has source evaluation been addressed in class? Has the instructor discussed with students what they, as writers, can <u>do</u> with sources?
- Prepare research "scenarios". (See reverse side of handout for an example). You may find Bizup's "rhetorical vocabulary" for sources to be a useful model as you construct research scenarios. [Bizup, J. (2008). BEAM: A rhetorical vocabulary for teaching research-based writing. *Rhetoric Review*, 27(1), 72-86]

Lesson Plan

- Outline day's lesson plan and learning outcomes.
- Working together as a class, generate a list of information content found on the web
- 4 student groups. Each group then repeats this process, with one of the following sources: (1) reference works, (2) books, (3) magazine articles, & (4) scholarly journal articles. Groups list content on whiteboards and report to class.
- Each student group is assigned a different research scenario. Working with their assigned research scenario and the content lists generated by the class, each group will select (at most) 3 types of information that they believe would be useful for their research
- Each student group will locate one source that is relevant to their research scenario <u>AND</u> that contains at least one type of information they identified as useful. Each group reports to the class.

Teachable moments

- An empowering message for students: You are not only consumers of information but also producers of scholarship.
- Students begin to discover that no one source—whether popular or scholarly— is likely to meet all their information needs. It is often necessary to consult multiple sources to become informed about an issue. .

Challenges

- As with any student-driven activity, be prepared to probe student responses, ask for reasons why, etc.
- Check in with student groups to be sure they are focusing on the research scenario. Identifying <u>information need</u> is a key element of this activity.
- Be sure students consider the <u>purpose</u> of the information they are seeking. This part of the exercise calls for students to be strategic about research. They have a tendency to skip over this step.

RESEARCH SCENARIO: WHAT DO YOU NEED TO FIND OUT?

Imagine you are researching the following:

[Sample research scenario: You are writing a paper about the activist role that social media has played in community responses to violent encounters between police and African-Americans over the past year. You know this is not the first time social media has sparked political action. You are looking for background information (e.g. key events, movements) that would help place this phenomenon in context.]

WHAT INFORMATION MEETS YOUR RESEARCH NEED?

Given the scenario above, what kind of information would be most useful for your purpose? (e.g., background information, popular opinion, etc.)

Select <u>no more than three</u> types of information. For each, list one reason why it would be useful to you.

1. Type of information: _____

    How would you use this information? _____

2. Type of information: _____

    How you would use this information? _____

3. Type of information: _____

    How would you use this information? _____

LOCATE AN APPROPRIATE SOURCE FOR YOUR TOPIC

Locate one source that is relevant to the above topic <u>AND</u> contains at least one of the types of information you listed above.