

Freshman Seminar PBL Exercise

Topics, Keywords and Posters Activity

Lesson Plan

Goals

The Topics, Keywords and Posters PBL activity is designed to introduce students to brainstorm keywords and synonyms necessary for constructing a search query. The activity also provides students with practice in creating a topic sentence or hypothesis pertaining to the topic or research question being answered. The PBL activity also promotes teamwork and team problem-solving. This activity has been adapted from Debra Quast of Asuza Pacific University.

By the end of this PBL activity, students will be able to define a research topic, identify search terms and synonyms and write a concise topic statement or hypothesis.

Objectives

The students will demonstrate satisfactory attainment of the PBL activity objective by creating a poster comprised of a topic statement or hypothesis and at least three keywords and synonyms for each keyword.

Materials

This PBL activity requires poster paper, colored markers or crayons and scotch tape to hang the posters.

Lesson Description

This lesson promotes teamwork and introduces students to think critically about potential search terms in query construction. This PBL activity incorporates the application level of learning of Bloom's Taxonomy.

The exercise addresses:

1. ACRL Standard One: "The information literate student determines the nature and extent of the information needed," Performance Indicator 1: The information literate student defines and articulates the need for information," and
2. ACRL Standard Two: "The information literate student accesses needed information effectively and efficiently," Performance Indicator 2: The information literate student constructs and implements effectively-designed search strategies."

Lesson Procedure

Students will form groups of 3-4 and instructed to follow the following steps:

1. Choose one topic for your group. Pick a topic for which you can find additional keywords.
2. Brainstorm keywords in your group. Remember, in brainstorming all ideas are valid. Make decisions and write them down on the instruction sheet.
3. Come up with a topic sentence and keywords and think of synonyms, broader and narrower terms.
4. Group members transfer the topic, keywords, and topic sentence to the poster paper.
5. Hang your poster on the wall.
6. Vote for the best poster in each category on the ballot. (To be distributed).

Instructional Strategies

Students should be encouraged to work in teams to explore the functionality of databases and in generating search queries. The tutor should visit with teams and facilitate by prompting students to explore database functions and provide clues to potential search terms.

Assessment

Assessment of learning is determined by examining the quality of keywords and synonyms created by the groups, examining the quality of the topic statement or hypothesis and observing how well the students worked in their teams. Student votes for best posters can also be used for assessment.

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