Fostering Discovery: Collaborative Solutions for Teaching with Discovery Tools

Mary T. Moser, University of Massachusetts Boston
Dunstan McNutt, Amherst College

Available at: https://works.bepress.com/mary_moser/3/
Choose Your Adventure

What best reflects your instructional environment?

Primarily one-shots for introductory courses

Primarily one-shots for upper-division courses

Primarily graduate-level classes

One-on-one research appointments with particular disciplines
Fostering Discovery
Collaborative Solutions for Teaching with Discovery Tools
Dunstan McNutt, Amherst College
Mary Moser, UMASS Boston @RedPandaReads
"Regardless of the search system, students exhibited a marked inability to effectively evaluate sources and a heavy reliance on default search settings."


See wiki for further reading: https://sites.google.com/site/loexfosteringdiscovery/bibliography
Discover vs. Summon
Results
What's an instruction librarian to do?

Given your scenario and potential stumbling blocks for students using web-scale discovery tools...

On your own - See individual handout (3 minutes)
- Reflect on the problems associated with your instructional scenario, and write down at least one learning outcome that addresses the problems.

With your table - See group worksheet (12 minutes)
- Assign a recorder and a presenter
- Agree on a problem to address
- Agree on a shared learning outcome
- Develop a learning activity that will facilitate the learning outcome
- Provide one potential limitation of using a discovery tool for this activity, or one question you would like to be addressed by the larger group
- Prepare to present your outcome and activity to the larger group, lightning talk style (1-2 minutes each)
Learning outcome: Students will be able to recall previous library experiences in order to relate prior knowledge and experiences to new information landscape.

Learning activity: Provide a worksheet asking 1) What library tools have you used in the past? 2) What is a sample search relevant to your research interests? 3) Having conducted that search in a discovery tool, how is it similar or different to past experiences? Then, have students discuss their experiences in a small group, with the goal of reporting to the class 1) A key similarity between the discovery tool and past experiences; 2) An important difference between the discovery tool and past experiences; and 3) One thing they learned from a group member that is new to them.
Another example...

Telescope: First-Year One-Shot

**Scenario:** Students in a first-year composition class need to write a research paper using scholarly sources

**Discovery Tool Problem:** Students do not look past first page of results

**Learning outcome:** Students will examine search results thoroughly in order to explore the full scope of information available.

**Learning activity:** Having covered the basics of keyword searching, ask them to perform a search and choose three different types of sources that represent different approaches, disciplines or ideas. Ask which of the sources would be most relevant, and why.

OR

Do some pre-searching on a potential topic, and ask them to identify a source (such as a book) that you know will show up on the second page of results.
Another example...

**Binoculars: Upper-Division One-Shot**

**Scenario:** Students in an upper division course need to write their final paper on a topic of their choosing related to course content.

**Discovery Tool Problem:** Students have trouble determining when to consult a subject-specific database, and what the right database would be.

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**Learning outcome:** Students will be able to identify subject-specific databases in order to locate relevant literature in their discipline.

**Learning activity:** Either 1) Perform a search in a discovery tool, and having identified a relevant source, determine what database might be explored next; OR 2) Perform a search in a discovery tool and a subject-specific database of the librarian's choosing.

Then, evaluate the search results in both databases, considering 1) Are they different? If so, how? 2) Which one would be more effective as a research tool moving forward? 3) Which was easier/more efficient to use?
Another example...

**Microscope: One-on-One Research Consultations**

**Scenario:** A student sets up an appointment for a research consultation as she prepares to embark on a significant research project.

**Discovery Tool Problem:** Students have difficulty identifying substantive sources amidst flood of unsubstantial or misleading records.

**Learning outcome:** Students will be able to critically evaluate a list of results in order to distinguish useful from unsubstantial sources.

**Learning activity:** Provide a pre-assignment for research consultation. 1) Write down a search you've tried in a discovery tool; 2) Write down one source that is substantive and useful and why; 3) Write down one source that is good, but irrelevant and why; 4) Write down one source that confuses you (or that you find to be unsubstantial) and why.
Questions and Limitations

- Do discovery tools REALLY give us “more time” in the classroom to focus on things like evaluating information?
- Where do we draw the line between discovery tools and other library resources, and how do we teach students how to find that line for themselves?
- Is a discovery tool a starting point, an ending point, a middle point, or a dead end? And again, how to teach students to discern that for themselves?
- What are some practical techniques or approaches for managing time in research consultations and the classroom when teaching with discovery tools?
Stay in touch!

Dunstan McNutt
Research & Instruction Librarian
Amherst College
dmcnutt@amherst.edu
413-542-5454

Mary Moser
Head of Reference, Outreach, Instruction, & Public Services
UMASS Boston
mary.moser@umb.edu

Wiki: https://sites.google.com/site/loexfosteringdiscovery/


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