

Lesson Title	Lesson #3 Asking questions / Ask a librarian
Course	Psy 1730 – Strategies for Academic Success
Lead	Course instructor & reference librarian
Location/# of students	Psy 1730 classroom; 25 –30 students
Duration	50 min.
Learning Goal(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Realize that question asking is an information literacy lifelong skill ▪ Become familiar with asking questions through use of a question asking game ▪ Understand the role of asking questions in entering the research conversation ▪ Understand key steps in effectively seeking help from reference librarians ▪ Increased sense of confidence in seeking help from a reference librarian, which will be gained through a structured assignment
ACRL Standard(s)	1; 2; 3
Summary	Students will be introduced to asking questions as a vital part of not only the research process, but the lifelong process of information literacy. Students will practice this skill through a group-based interactive activity in which they will also have some exposure to techniques they can use to get help when stuck at a point of the information literacy process. They will be coached on seeking help from reference librarians and will have an assignment to practice what they are learning.
Materials/samples/ handouts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Instructor & librarian talk to students and decide on a suitable controversial topic for the question asking activity. ▪ One resource for current topics could be a quick scan of msn.com or npr.org ▪ The instructor will need to provide overheads for each group and overhead markers & there will need to be an overhead projector in the classroom. ▪ Reference Question Checklist (2 to a sheet on bright paper) ▪ Seeking Help Assignment <p>[If desired by the instructor, a handout can be developed that lists the levels of questions, including examples of each level of question & information derived from each level of question.]</p>
Prerequisites or Suggested Sequencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lesson #1 - Getting acquainted a librarian and the research process ▪ Lesson #2 – Daily life to academic research: Research as conversation

Lesson Overview

Topic	Time
Introduction / Opening discussion about assignment	5 minutes
Question asking group activity	15 minutes
Presentation of group findings	10 minutes
Role play	5 minutes
Discussion and Assignment	10 minutes
Closure	5 minutes

Introduction/Opening [5 minutes]

		Est. Time
Gain Attention of Students & Introduce Information Literacy	<p><i>How do little kids learn? Have you ever been around two-year olds? What do they do all day?</i></p> <p><i>What does this quote mean?: “Without strong questioning skills, you are just a passenger on someone else’s tour bus. You may be on the highway, but someone else is doing the driving.” Jamie McKenzie</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Question asking as a fundamental component of life. ▪ <i>Why do people ask questions?...</i> leading them to overall concept of asking questions as a means of gaining information. ▪ Discuss doing research as one component of “information literacy” being sure to introduce this phrase & being sure to discuss question asking/information seeking as a lifelong skill that they will continue to develop. 	5 min.

Learning Activities [25 minutes maximum]

		Est. Time
Question Asking Activity	<p><i>Step 1:</i> Have students break into groups of 3 – 4 students</p> <p><i>Step 2:</i> Provide directions that today students will gain practice with the skill of asking questions, which they are already very familiar with.</p> <p><i>Step 3:</i> Hand out one overhead transparency & overhead marker to each group & have the groups pick a “scribe.”</p> <p><i>Step 4:</i> Provide students with a current controversial topic (pre-selected by librarian & instructor) & indicate that as a group they will think of as many questions about the topic as possible within the next 10 minutes (each group</p>	15 min.

	<p>will work on the same topic). These will be written directly on the overhead transparency.</p> <p>* For example, a possible topic might be having unhealthy vending machines in schools *</p> <p><i>Step 5:</i> Provide instruction that if the group gets stuck & needs help, they should trade overheads with another group (Alternatively, groups can be “forced” to do this after a predetermined amount of time to gain exposure to other questions). Also, indicate that the reference librarian is available to help students formulate questions.</p> <p><i>Step 6:</i> After 10 minutes, indicate that the group must decide on the “best” question they developed, which they will circle on their overhead & will present to the class. Provide instruction that the group must think about why they chose the particular question as the best one, which they will share when they present this to the class.</p> <p><i>Step 7:</i> Have each group present their best questions & why they chose them. Write these down on another overhead.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Make the connection that most groups chose questions that would be the most “effective,” making the point that there are not necessarily good or bad questions but particularly when looking for information / doing research, there are questions that may gain information more efficiently. ▪ May discuss levels of questions if there is time. 	10 min.
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<p>Role play</p>	<p>Instructor and reference librarian can model the process of seeking help, which is basically a conversation about the research process. A fun way to do this is to first do it with the instructor playing the part of an ‘unprepared student’ (can use props such as baseball cap on backwards to make it more entertaining and ham it up a bit) and then again with a student who is ready to engage the librarian, who has the assignment in hand, writing utensil, has thought about the topic, has possibly picked a topic, and is forthright about where they are in the research conversation.</p> <p>This activity should include having each individual think aloud the thoughts running through their minds throughout the role play & having half the students make observations of the “student” and half make observations about of the reference</p>	5 min.
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<p>Discussion of getting help in the library</p> <p>Assessment/Assignment</p>	<p>librarian.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What worked well / didn't work well for the "student" while seeking help • Any concerns the students have in interacting with the reference librarian (to debunk any myths / unwarranted fears) • Important steps that students need to take in preparing to seek help from a reference librarian, including information they need, questions they plan to ask, & materials they will need to bring when they go to speak to a reference librarian. <p>Pass out Reference Question Checklist handout [attached].</p> <p>Pass out and discuss the Seeking Help Assignment, which dovetails with doing research to write a paper. [See attached assignment.]</p>	<p>10 min.</p>
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Closure

		Est. Time
	<p><i>Question asking is a skill you develop throughout your life.</i></p> <p><i>Asking questions can help you make up your own mind about issues.</i></p> <p><i>“Once you have learned how to ask relevant and appropriate questions, you have learned how to learn and no one can keep you from learning whatever you want or need to know.” Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner, Teaching as a Subversive Activity</i></p> <p><i>There is no right or wrong way to seek help from reference librarians; however, seeking help in the most effective way you can, using the pointers we shared, can make information seeking more efficient.</i></p>	<p>5 min.</p>

Optional Lesson Information

Adaptations	See notes throughout lesson above.
Credits	Melissa Bowles, Betty Dance, Pamela Martin, Julie Pelletier, Carol Rosenthal

Reference Question Checklist

1. Be specific about the information you are seeking, including the topic of your research.
2. Mention what you are going to do with the information. For example,
 - You are going to write a summary paragraph
 - You need the information for a speech that you will deliver
 - You will be writing a 3, 5, 8, 10, 15, 20 page (etc.) paper
3. If for a class, identify the course and level
4. Be prepared: Show up with something to write with and write on.

Adapted from: <http://lib.colostate.edu/howto/askgood.html>, July 10, 2006

Name: _____

Psy 1730: Seeking Help Assignment

- 1) As part of this assignment you will be required to go to the library to ask a reference librarian for help in finding a source for your self-chosen topic.
- 2) **Prior to going to the library, please complete the following steps:**

- a) Think about your research background. For example, have you ever needed to find a research source before; have you ever used the library before? Write down three important things about your research background:

- i) _____
- ii) _____
- iii) _____

- b) Generate three specific questions you have regarding sources that could apply to your topic (e.g., “Would it be most useful to find a current source or a historical source?”).

- i) _____
- ii) _____
- iii) _____

When you go to the library to visit with the reference librarian, complete the following steps:

- c) **Check off** each question above that you asked during your visit with the reference librarian.
- d) **Check off** that you brought with you a writing utensil / something to write on: _____
- e) **Check off** that you brought the course syllabus & assignment sheet (for the assignment to find a source for your topic) with you when you visited with the librarian: _____
- f) **Check off** that you told the reference librarian what class your assignment is for: _____
- g) **Have the reference librarian sign off that you completed this assignment:**

_____ **Date:** _____

- h) **Attach** a photocopy of the notes from your discussion with the reference librarian, including the citation for the source you decided upon with help from the librarian.