Information Seeking Behaviors of High School Students

Annotated Bibliography

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“The objective of this research project was to identify what factors motivated different types of students in different content areas to complete assigned research projects successfully. Information was collected through student journals, interviews with students and teachers, and observation. Preliminary findings identified access to information, task perception and understanding, the research purpose, and time as factors that appeared to encourage students to complete their research and develop confidence in their ability to create meaning. This work adds the important component of student experience and voice to earlier research concerning motivation and student information literacy.”

Database: Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA) (via Hagerty)
Method of Searching: Keyword Search
Search Strategy: (high school students) and (information seeking)


“The writer discusses information aliteracy and proposes methods of reducing the problem. Students who are information aliterate do not have the motivation or desire to locate, evaluate, and use information in a meaningful and effective way. Information literacy is made up of the essential components of ability, skill, knowledge, and use. However, these components by themselves do not ensure information literacy, and to use information well, there must also be motivation or a reason to do so. Part of the reluctance of the aliterate comes from external factors such as experiences with librarians, libraries, and technology. Finding enough research time is also an obstacle, and students often have a limited understanding of the nature of knowledge, learning, and the opportunities offered by a project. The educational community can reduce informational aliteracy by including involvement as a fundamental element of information literacy and by continuing to integrate information skills and include free time for information exploration.”

Database: Google Scholar

“This study details the activities and strategies that 11th grade students with high academic abilities used during their information seeking and use to complete class projects in a Persuasive Speech class. The study took place in a suburban high school in Maryland, and participants included 21 junior honors students, their teacher, and their library media specialist. Each student produced a 5-7-minute speech on a self-chosen topic. Conducted in the framework of qualitative research in a constructivist paradigm (E.G. Guba, & Y.S. Lincoln, 1998), the study used data collected from observations, individual interviews, and documents students produced for their projects - concept maps, paragraphs, outlines, and research journals. Interview and observation data were analyzed using the constant comparative method (B. Glaser & A. Strauss, 1967) with the help of QSR NVivo 2 (QSR International Pty Ltd, 2002); students' documents were analyzed manually. The findings show that students' understanding, strategies, and activities during information seeking and use were interactive and serendipitous and that students learned about their topics as they searched. The research suggests that high school honors students in an information-rich environment are especially confident with learning tasks requiring an exploratory mode of learning.”


“This article analyzes Web searching behavior for homework assignments of high school students through field observations in class and at the terminal with students thinking aloud, and through interviews with various participants, including the teacher and librarian. Students performed focused searching and progressed through a search swiftly and flexibly. They used landmarks and assumed that one can always start a new search and ask for help. They were
satisfied with their searches and the results, but impatient with slow response. The students enjoyed searching the Web because it had a variety of formats, it showed pictures, it covered a multitude of subjects and it provided easy access to information. Difficulties and problems students encountered emphasize the need for training to all involved, and for a system design that is based on user seeking and searching behavior.”


“The results of part of a research project on secondary school pupils as seekers of curricular information and the role of the public library in meeting their needs are reported. The results showed that English, Afrikaans and science subjects accounted for the majority of information requests. Encyclopaedias in the home language of pupils were the most frequently used reference sources. Non-fiction works from the circulating collections were consulted mainly in-house. Libraries experienced a shortage of available materials when a high demand for information on related topics occurred at any one time. This was ascribed to the lack of communication between schools and public libraries. Among the recommendations made were that pamphlet collections should be extended to meet the need for current, factual materials in Afrikaans and easily readable texts in English for second-language learners. Public librarians should co-operate with school staff to ensure effective information provision to pupils.”


“The goal of this study was to evaluate and describe the Internet search strategies of adolescent learners. Participants were 161 middle and high school students. Collected data included students' descriptions of the search process, observations of student searching behaviors, and audit trail lists of search strings used by students. The students demonstrated three approaches
for locating information on the Internet, seven methods for constructing search strings, and four techniques for recovering from unsuccessful search attempts. The results suggest that when conducting research on the Internet, adolescents tend to resort to familiar cognitive schemata: starting with what they know, maintaining paradigms from the physical world, and adhering to time-tested practices. This information can be used to develop scaffolded instructional environments for adolescents that support more effective Internet searching.”

Database: ERIC [Dialog]
Method of Searching: Keyword Search
Search Strategy: ss (high(school)(student?)) and (research(skill?))


“Information literacy education is central for students as a building block for functioning citizenship in an information rich world. To support students' development of information skills we need an awareness of underlying factors behind information seeking habits. This article will discuss whether differences in middle and high school students' information seeking may relate to their approaches to studying.”

Database: Google Scholar
Method of Searching: Keyword Search
Search Strategy: (information seeking) and (high school students) (date limit set at 1995-2009)


“This study examined the relationship between curricula in secondary-level science classrooms, which support development of information literacy skills, and actual student skills. A vast body of research reflects deep concern with the level of information literacy skill development among secondary and post-secondary students. But even when educational curricula mandate skill development, many students are unable to demonstrate sophisticated information searching and critical evaluation skills. The findings of this study, which we based on analyzing information
seeking tasks and conducting interviews with students in three biology classes in a large urban high school, demonstrated a similar lack of skills.”


“This article discusses a constructivist approach to information age learning environments for children and teenagers, particularly as students in schools. An intervention role for librarians is described for guiding and coaching students in the stages of the information search process (ISP) using the abundant resources of digital libraries. Five strategies for coaching students in the ISP—collaborating, continuing, conversing, charting, and composing—are recommended for adaptation to electronic environments. A theory for creating learning environments in digital libraries is presented based on the concepts in the constructivist approach of acting and reflecting, feeling and formulating, predicting and choosing, and interpreting and creating.”


“Examines information-seeking patterns of high school honors students. Discusses findings in terms of information needs, types of information sources consulted, relationship of information need to sources consulted, outcomes of searches, and student preferences among sources.”

“This paper presents and discusses some major findings of a research project investigating the interaction between information seeking and learning outcomes. A group of 25 high school seniors engaged in a learning assignment were followed during the whole learning process including students’ information seeking and use. Each student was interviewed three times about his/her way of experiencing information seeking as well as subject matter. Interview protocols were subjected to phenomenographic analysis. Three categories of students’ conceptions of information seeking and use based on five aspects were identified. Three categories of students’ conceptions of subject matter were identified based on the variation of learning outcome. There was great overlap between conceptions of information seeking and learning outcomes. Conclusions drawn are that variation in experiencing information seeking interacts closely with variation in ways of experiencing or understanding the content of information. The results provided a deeper understanding of information seeking and use through the description of variation. The findings may provide a foundation for further research on the variation of information seeking as well as a basis for didactic development of information skills instruction.”

Database: Google Scholar
Method of Searching: Author Search
Search Strategy: L Limberg
I thought I would search for other papers this author has written and I found this presentation.


“The use of the World Wide Web by high school students to complete school assignments was studied by interviewing high school students. The author expected to find that students were using the World Wide Web as their primary source of information and that the students had difficulty in evaluating whether information on a web site was scholarly. The author considered Perry's Scheme of Student Development and the unique nature of the World Wide Web to come to these assumptions, which were only partially validated by this study. As is typical in a qualitative study, the sample was small, but some themes that could help provide direction to further research emerged. It was discovered that the students in the study used a good variety of
resources, including libraries and the World Wide Web, to find information for school assignments. However, the students were weak at determining the quality of the information that they found on a web site. Students did poorly at evaluating web site information in the absence of gatekeepers.”


“Electronic search engines like Yahoo! and Ask.com dominate high school students’ information seeking, with Google being the number one information searching option. This paper examines the literature that focuses on students’ searching skills and ways that they are responding to an overload of information. The literature shows that students prefer using the Web over printed text because of the speed of accessing information and the likelihood of locating up-to-date information. Paradoxically, regardless of the level of Internet expertise, students are often not satisfied with search results. This paper therefore explores the techniques that students could be using to retrieve trustworthy and relevant information.”


“The purpose of this paper is to present the main findings of a nation-wide survey of Danish high school students and their use of libraries and digital resources. The presentation of the main findings includes different organisations of the data in clusters and user types. This organisation and analysis gives indications of the factors that influence the high school students’ use of libraries and digital resources and it also explains the preferences and expectations the students have.”

“Most high school students employ the basic search strategy of keyword searching that most search engines use. However, students get frustrated and end up surfing from one site to another or abandoning their search in frustration. In this article, the author discusses several strategies that can be used by students to understand the nature of information and to develop the ability to efficiently and effectively navigate the hypertext environment of the Internet. The author also illustrates that hypertext does present distinct challenges to the teaching and learning process.”

**Database:** ERIC [Dialog]
**Method of Searching:** Keyword Search
**Search Strategy:** ss (high()school()student?) and (information()seek?)


“Although models form a typical outcome of modern research in library and information science, few have been constructed to represent the information behaviour of young people. This article reviews those models that have been developed and outlines several that have emerged from a recent research project undertaken in north-east England with four-to eighteen-year-olds. The first of the new models is devoted to general patterns in the informants’ information seeking, regardless of the type of source exploited. It begins with the development of an information need and concludes with the making of decisions with regard to the completion of a search. The remaining four models are smaller scale in nature, with each covering the use of one of the following - books, CD-ROM software, the Internet or other people. The article concludes by considering the value of the models that have been created to populations beyond the sampled youngsters.”

**Database:** Google Scholar
**Method of Searching:** Author Search
**Search Strategy:** Andrew K Shenton
I searched for other articles written by him since I found an article (unusable for this bibliography) while browsing Google Scholar.