The Information Search Process

Below is a model of the Information Search Process ("ISP"). This process can be applied to many different types of tasks and modified to meet your personal searching needs.

For example, you might need to write a paper on the effects of obesity on the health of children under age 12. Where would you start? How should you plan your search?

This is how the ISP helps.

Initiation

- Set context time constraints, size, and scope of task.
- Establish an approach where is the best place to start?
- Ex. This paper on obesity is due in 2 weeks, should be 5 pages, needs 3-5 scholarly resources. I should start by searching the databases for relevant articles.

Selection

- Brainstorm a few ideas and search terms.
- Think in broad terms what is the big category/subject area?
- Ex. The broadest categories for obesity would be medicine and health. Within that, my major subjects are
 obesity and children.

Exploration

- Begin to search using selected broad terms and keywords.
- Develop a sense of what information is out there.
- Ex. I will start searching my subjects and keywords, not my entire thesis statement, in CINAHL and Health Source databases through RCBC Libraries. I noted there are many different articles on obesity and children.

Formulation

- Use what is learned from exploration to refine research.
- Develop focus/thesis
- Ex. I notice several interesting articles on obesity trends in Chinese children. I decide to refocus my thesis on this topic: "obesity trends in Chinese school-age children".
- Collection

Presentation

- · Target information specific to the focus/thesis.
- Organize as you collect keep track of sources and citations.
- Ex. As I search "obesity" "children" and "China," I make notes of the articles I find interesting. I record titles, authors, and DOI numbers and keep them in order.
- · Conclude research and put it all together
- · Review, edit, check citations, etc.
- Ex. I found 5 useful articles after reading and reviewing 10 of them, I checked to make sure my citations were right, and they were incorporated into the paper.

