Mini-Lecture Series: Concept Briefing Experience

What is a concept briefing?

The concept briefing is a brief research report that allows students to deepen their understanding and to share the result of their research efforts with one another to enrich the learning experience in SLIS 5200.

You will be assigned a topic.

Goals of the CB assignment

- Research a specific concept using print and online resources
- Become acquainted with sources of library and information science literature
- Describe the concept and its implications effectively in writing
- Use and cite bibliographic sources correctly

Format

- Research report - be concise, clear, logical, insightful
- Use CB Template: formatting, structure and sections
- Submission guidelines
  - Send document to 5200 Central
  - Name the file with your last name, the word Briefing.
  - For example: DoeBriefing.doc
- Stay within length limits for each major component – abstract 200 words, main body 750-1000 words (points off for less or more!)

Report structure

- Abstract (page 1)
- Introduction (page 2)
- Definition (no page break)
- Purpose and Implications (no page break)
- Examples (no page break)
- Conclusion (no page break)
- References (last page)

Abstract

- This should be on the first page of report
- Use the Abstract to share major findings and make a succinct case for your research and results
- Present the critical findings of your research
- Don’t repeat the detail or depth contained in the later sections of your Report
- 200 word maximum
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Points to cover in the Abstract
- Briefing objectives and concept definition
- Summary of purpose and implications
- Summary of examples
- Closing comment or recommendation

Partial example of an Abstract
“This briefing describes browsing as an information seeking behavior and show how libraries have been organized to facilitate browsing. Additionally, it discusses how the concept of browsing books in a library has been carried forward into electronic searches. Studies on browsing as a research technique may reveal that browsing is not as valuable as previously believed – with implications that certain library practices can be modified to reduce costs without sacrificing effective information location.”

Introduction
- Start a new page for the Introduction
- Provide a brief introduction to the concept
- Identify 3-4 objectives for your briefing
- This starts the “main body” of the report – continue all sections through Conclusion without any page breaks
- Remember, maximum length is 1000 words from Introduction through Conclusion sections

Definition
- Define the concept briefly
- Enable the reader to understand the concept in the context of information organization
- Rely on professional or scholarly resources for definitions rather than on standard dictionaries, such as Webster’s, or Wikipedia

Purpose and Implications
- Expand on the definition given in the previous section
- Explain why this concept (topic) is important
- Discuss implications of the concept in organizing information
- Add subheadings to this section if it helps clarify your points.

Examples
- Provide a minimum of three examples to illustrate the concept.
- When possible, create your own examples to demonstrate your mastery of the concept
- If your examples come from an outside source, however, cite it!
- Add a subheading to this section for each example
- Clearly communicate how these examples help explain and illustrate the concept
Examples of Examples (From a briefing on Information Seeking Behavior)

Example 1: Behavior during an electronic search

Starting: A researcher begins by reading an article on a Web page by a particular author.

Chaining: Noting a reference in the article, he clicks to follow to the referenced work.

Browsing: He looks in a citation index for other papers that may have cited either of the papers he has reviewed.

Differentiating: Locating a journal with other papers, he scans the table of contents.

Example 2: Behavior during a focus-based process of task completion

Initiation: A student has an assignment to research the Bermuda Triangle, but the only knowledge that the student possesses on the subject is that it is an area of space over the Atlantic Ocean where ships and aircraft disappear without a trace.

Selection: She decides, with confidence, to search the topic of geography because she knows that it involves land and sea.

Exploration: She searches the indexes of many geographical sources, but cannot find the phrase “Bermuda Triangle.” At this stage, she is confused and begins to doubt.

Formulation: She reconsiders the topic, tries another search under aviation to look for aircraft accidents, hoping to find a citation involving the Atlantic Ocean and/or the Bermuda Triangle.

Examples

- Examples should be an elaboration, clarification or illustration of points made in the “Purpose and implications” or “Definitions” section.
- Examples should NOT present new, previously undiscovered concepts or continue or elaborate on discussion from a previous section.

Conclusion

- Provide a brief conclusion summarizing your main points on the concept
- Add your own opinion, prediction, or recommendation related to any issues discussed above

References

- Start a new page for References
- List only the sources cited in the paper
- References must include three scholarly sources beyond the assigned readings
- Don’t use or quote lectures, powerpoints or online modules
- Use APA (6th Ed.) reference style
- Check references for accuracy and style
- Use Tips for Coursework to check your style – remember to use “hanging indent”
- Use www.apastyle.org/elecref.html

Concept Briefing Topic Example

See example concept briefing report on Information Retrieval Systems

Go to Readings and Assignments, Listed under Concept Briefing as: Student Briefing example
What's the Reviewer looking for?

- Fulfill the assignment requirements!
- Be professional
- Be accurate
- Write concisely and clearly
- Support assertions with your research and citations
- Use accurate, complete citations –
  - Use author-date text references within the report
  - Use alphabetical (by author’s last name) reference list of full citations for the Reference section

Final thoughts -- Questions???

- Read (the assignment)
- Research (your topic)
- WriteRight (your content and your citations)
- Draft → Review → Edit
- Revise → Review → Edit
- Revise → Final Proofread → Submit