Lesson Title: Databases vs. Google

Essential Question(s): What are the benefits of research databases?

AASL Information Literacy Standards/Outcomes: IL 2
Big 6: BS3
Rhode Island Professional Teacher Standards: RIPTS 3-6, 8
Level of Instruction: 7th, 8th or 9th grade students of various abilities
Primary Teaching Methods: Demonstration, discussion
Materials: two brown lunch bags filled with cereal and other food, two paper plates, stop watch or watch with second hand
Time: 15 minutes

Prior Knowledge: In the prior lessons, the students learned about different types of information sources and created a criteria checklist for selecting good resources.

Objectives: Students will:

- understand the advantages of using research databases to conduct a more effective and efficient search (IL 2, BS3)

Part 1: Demonstrating the Value of Databases
  Demonstration (5 minutes)
  Discussion (10 minutes)

Prior to this lesson, the LMS has prepared two brown lunch bags. In the first lunch bag, the LMS has placed cheerios and wheat chex cereal. In the second bag, the LMS has placed Cheerios, Wheat Chex, Rice Chex, crackers, candy and other cereal. She asks two student volunteers to come to the front of the room and sit at two desks placed with the chairs back to back. She places a paper plate in front of each volunteer and one of the paper bags. She informs them that when she says begin, they are to (without looking in the bag) take a handful of cereal, put it onto the desk and sort 10 Cheerios and 10 Wheat Chex on their plate as fast as they can. She shows them what the Cheerios and Wheat Chex look like. After they finish the timed sorting exercise, the volunteer with the first bag of Cheerios and Wheat Chex should finish much more quickly than the volunteer with the second bag. The LMS will explain that the student with the presorted bag of just Cheerios and Wheat Chex had a better advantage than the student with the bag filled with all different food stuff. This advantage is similar to using research databases to find the “good” information when conducting research. Using a search engine, like Google will yield results, but it is a lot less efficient than databases at finding reputable and applicable information. (RIPTS 3-6, 8)

This lesson was adapted from Demonstrating the Value of Information Databases by Kathleen Spitzer from the Big6 Blog Archive (http://www.big6.com/2002/05/31/demonstrating-the-value-of-information-databases/).