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## #Candy: Creating Categories to Introduce Search Strategies

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## #Candy:

### Creating Categories to Introduce Search Strategies

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#### NUTRITION INFORMATION

First-year students come into the academic library with varying levels of knowledge about how information is organized, whether that means books on the shelves, library websites, or databases. Knowing that there is an order to the information they are looking for can help them search more efficiently and strategically.

#### NUMBERS SERVED

Unlimited

#### COOKING TIME

50–75 minutes

#### DIETARY GUIDELINES

This recipe addresses the Searching as Strategic Exploration framework. If students are able to comprehend how information is organized, they can search for and discover relevant resources with greater success. Additionally, since information literacy instruction in the first year often happens in a first-year writing, composition, or seminar course, creating activities that are tied to the goals for college writing can help faculty see the benefits of information literacy instruction.

The Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing places an importance on students

“developing knowledge of writing conventions,” which includes the global issues of organization of writing.<sup>1</sup> In developing creativity and flexibility in organization of ideas, students can use these skills to organize their writing as well as find information.

Students will:

- Comprehend how information is organized and that research is iterative in order to discover materials with more ease.
- Investigate the ways that organization shapes how we experience the world around us in order to apply it to writing for various academic and social audiences.
- Make connections between organizing for different audiences/types of information and writing for different audiences/genres and different writing conventions.

#### MAIN INGREDIENTS

- Candy or a suitable candy alternative (Legos, office supplies, etc.), with one “wildcard” item (we used raisins)
- Tabletops or space to organize and display candy
- Optional: device to take picture of results and/or post to a social media site

#### MAIN COOKING TECHNIQUE

Active learning, individual and group participation

#### PREPARATION

The preparation time for the librarian is about an hour, which could be longer, depending upon the elements (ingredients) the librarian chooses to add, such as homework. The librarian will need to gather materials that are being used in the lesson and prepare any extra information that will be used in class, such as handouts, extra questions, hashtags, etc.

#### COOKING METHOD

1. Hand out a variety of candy (or other items) to students and ask them to sort the items into categories as if they were creating their own candy store, and to consider how to organize their candy so their customers could find it easily.
2. After this, ask the students to form groups of 3–4, and as a group work to merge their “stores” and agree on one organization.
3. Assess how the groups decided to organize their “stores” via preferred method, either discussion, written reflection, or having students peer review others’ organization methods. This can

spark great discussion among the class about methods and reasons for different organizations.

### ALLERGY WARNINGS

This recipe relies heavily on student participation and students' abilities to work together in small groups.

### CHEF'S NOTE

Additional steps may be added to the recipe including:

- The following step can be added to help students realize how organizational and folksonomic concepts extend into their online lives:
  - » Ask students to share their candy shops on social media using two hashtags, one created by the librarian and one created by each student or group of students.
  - » Ask students to add a sentence or two reflecting on how their candy store is organized.
- Peer review and feedback given without explanation by the group or student who organized the candy shop.
- Specific questions for discussion and reflection at the end of class, such as:
  - » Explain the process you used to organize your candy; also, how you merged your shop with that of your group. Was this easier or harder than you thought it would be?
  - » What surprised you about the way that other people organized their candy shops?

### NOTES

1. Council of Writing Program Administrators, the National Council of Teachers of English, and the National Writing Project, *Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing* (2011), accessed 27 April 2016, <http://wpacouncil.org/files/framework-for-success-postsecondary-writing.pdf>.