UNLOCKING RESEARCH POTENTIAL: INFORMATION SEARCH STRATEGY FOR STUDENT INFORMATION MASTERY

27 March – Research skills among students are not something new. Commonly introduced at the university level, these skills aim to empower students with the ability to conduct research, evaluate and use information effectively for academic or practical purposes. In accordance with this, 27 students from UHE3142 Project-Based Proposal Writing course had participated in an "Information Search Strategy" class organised by UMPSA Library as part of the User Education Programme. This session was held concurrently in both UMPSA Pekan and Gambang Libraries, accommodating students from both campuses. This two-hour class aimed to expose and improve students' research skills, focusing on how to effectively search for information, journal articles, and academic references.

The class session was conducted by Puan Affida Abu Bakar from UMPSA Gambang Library and Cik Rosfadilla Mohamad Zainun from UMPSA Pekan Library. During the session, students were introduced to databases available through the library's subscriptions. They learned how to utilise keywords and Boolean operators to streamline their search results for academic articles. This is one critical skill that allows students to find the most relevant and credible sources efficiently.

Furthermore, students also learned to distinguish between various source types and identify characteristics that indicate the reliability and validity of the sources. It is important to note that critical evaluation of sources ensures that one's research is robust, credible, and contributes meaningfully to their field of study. By honing these skills, students can enhance their research endeavors and produce work of high integrity.

In addition, students participated in an interactive session that allowed them to engage in hands-on activities. During the session, they practised the newly learned skills; searching for articles related to their field and assessing sources under the librarian's guidance. This activity enabled students to explore diverse perspectives and gain practical insights into identifying reliable sources, which are crucial for academic and professional purposes. Moreover, not only does it reinforce students' understanding and provide a dynamic learning environment, but it also allows them to apply these skills in various contexts, such as evaluating news articles, online content, or even personal research. Thus, this practical approach not only enhances students' understanding but also equips them with valuable research skills for lifelong learning.

Feedback from the participants was overwhelmingly positive. Md. Nirob Khan, a student enrolled in the UHE3142 course commented "I gained valuable insights into information search strategies, which significantly helped me in preparing my final project". This session serves as a pivotal step in equipping students, particularly those in their final year, with essential research skills. As part of the broader course

objective, it enables students to create high-quality academic work and fosters a culture of research excellence.

Overall, by learning effective information search strategies, students gain a set of skills that are essential for academic success and professional growth. It is hoped that this session can enhance students' research skills abilities, enabling them to create excellent final-year projects. Ultimately, these skills will serve them well throughout their academic journey and future careers.

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