

Negotiating Instruction in the Chat Environment

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Negotiating Instruction in Chat

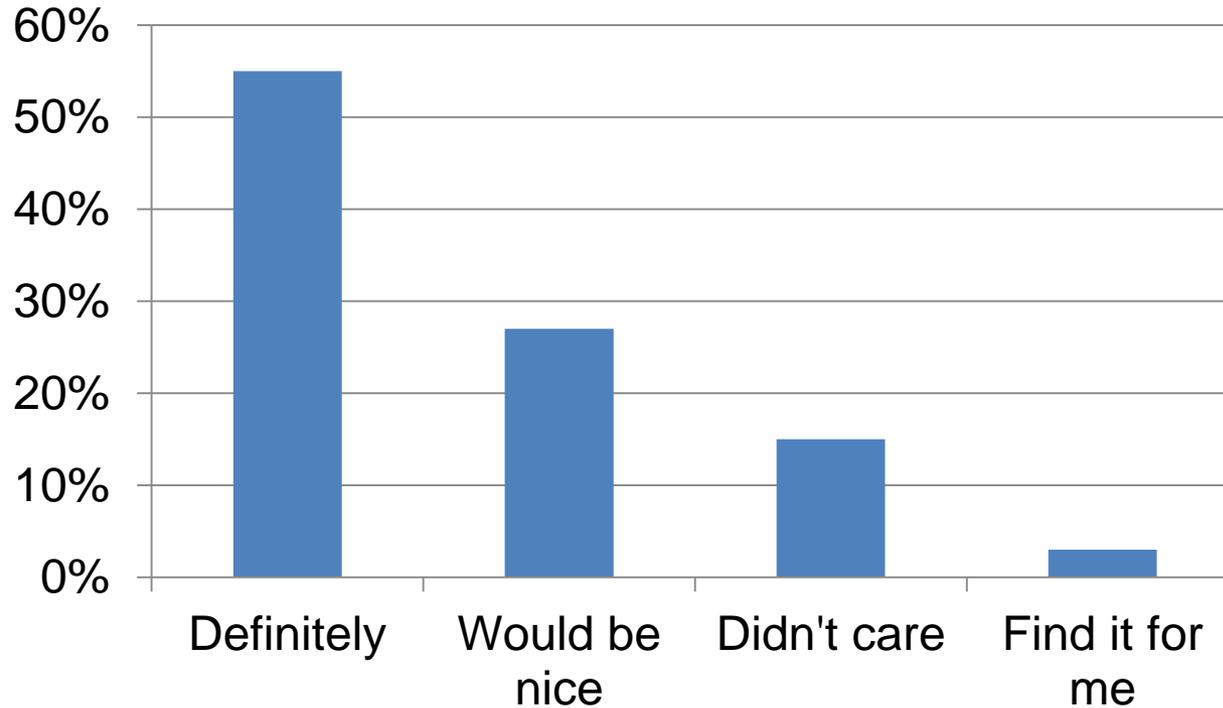
- Previous research
- Librarian experiences study
- Activity

Previous Research



Attitudes Toward Instruction - Users

- Chat users wanted librarians to teach them how to find information for themselves.



(Survey of chat & IM users in an academic library: Desai & Graves, 2008)

Attitudes Toward Instruction - Librarians

- Librarians
 - Believed patrons wanted instruction
 - Wanted to teach
 - Saw barriers in the chat setting
- Librarians were ambivalent about the effectiveness of instruction in chat.

(Survey of mostly academic librarians: Gronemyer & Deitering, 2009)

Evidence of Instruction: Transcript Analysis

- Most chats include instruction
 - Librarians use a limited set of instructional strategies in chat.
 - Compared to face-to-face, chat librarians were:
 - More likely to suggest specific resources
 - Less likely to outline steps to locate information
 - Less likely to lead the patron step-by-step
- (Moyo, 2006 ; Desai & Graves, 2008)

Evidence of Instruction: Transcript Analysis

- Study looked for evidence of instructional strategies grounded in educational theory.
- “Show, don’t tell” was the most common strategy: 43%
- Others strategies were used much less, for example:
 - “Catch them being good”: 2%
 - “Think aloud”: 6%

(Oakleaf & Vanscoy, 2010).

Communication Problems in Chat

- Conversational analysis found communication problems, including:
 - Use of ambiguous terminology.
 - Difficulty of providing and following instructions when the librarian and patron are not in the same physical space.
 - Differences in expertise between librarians and library users.

(Koshik & Okazawa, 2012)

Chat as Collaboration

- Chat equalizes control of the reference encounter between librarian and users.
 - No intimidating desk or other physical barrier.
 - Users can choose time and location to chat
 - Users can choose what they want to reveal about themselves

(Ellis, 2009; Gronemyer & Deitering, 2009)

Librarian experiences study



Librarian Experiences Study

- Open-ended interviews about librarian experiences with chat reference and instruction in chat.
- Six librarians from community colleges, mid-size and large universities.
- Analyzed interviews for common themes and insights.

Factors that influence instruction

- Expectations
- Readiness to Learn
- Choices
- Uncertainty
- Assumptions

Expectations

- User's expectations might not match the instructional goals.
- Librarians will adjust their expectations to meet the user's needs or limitations, when possible.
- Librarians try to clarify expectations for user.

“They’re almost never expecting instruction, but I usually find that they’re pretty receptive to what I would consider instruction.”

“I’ve decided that that’s part of my mission, here as a librarian, to tell people when certain things are appropriate for certain venues. Chat is great, but chat is not appropriate for all learning experiences.”

Readiness to Learn

- Engagement and openness = ready to learn
- Attitude/Emotions
 - Frustrated or panicked = not ready to learn.
 - Sometimes possible to address the negative emotions blocking their learning.

One librarian described a student who was new to research, and very frustrated with unclear instructions for an assignment. So the librarian guided the student step-by-step:

“...trying to get them engaged...that’s the instruction right there, getting them engaged...He ended up kind of answering his own questions for most of it.”

“I want to teach, if I can, but I don’t want to be...demanding that they learn what I’m trying to tell them. I want them to be open for it.”

Choices

- User choice of chat vs. other modes.
- When/if to follow librarian's advice.
- When to leave.
- Librarians also make choices in their responses.

“Maybe they’re afraid to come to the desk. Maybe they’re shy and feel more comfortable in the online environment.”

“In a [face-to-face] reference interview they’re stuck talking to you...in chat they leave when they get what they wanted. And it’s not necessarily a bad thing”

Uncertainty

- Chat seen as more uncertain than face-to-face.
- Librarians may be uncertain about the user's:
 - Knowledge
 - Needs
 - Actions
 - Emotions

“If they are frustrated a lot of times you can tell by what they’re saying, but sometimes it’s surprising...I might see a survey that’s negative, then I look at the chat, and it didn’t seem that there was any indication that the student was upset or unsatisfied...you kind of wonder, what were they really thinking?”

Uncertainty

- Librarians use questioning to reduce uncertainty, but don't want to pester users.

“I'm not afraid to ask questions, and clarify...[but] I don't want to inundate them with five million questions.”

Assumptions

- Librarians make assumptions or judgments in order to
 - Manage uncertainty
 - Determine their approach to providing help or instruction.

“If it looks like the question’s coming from a lower, 100 or 200 level class, and the patron’s coming across as rude – at that point I’m usually like, oh, this kid’s freaked out. Because it’s not been my experience that there have been many rude patrons on chat...I really think that’s not rudeness – we’re seeing panic.”

“You need to read between the lines, and sometimes you miss.”

Instruction in chat as a collaboration ...

Achieve this collaboration when librarians recognize user's autonomy:

- Understand that users and librarians often have different expectations.
- Assess whether users are ready to learn.
- Accept that users have, and will exercise, choices.

...with librarian guidance & expertise

- Negotiate uncertainty through questioning and conversation.
- Realize that we are making assumptions about user's behavior.
- Identify opportunities to connect with users and help them become more self-directed in their learning.

Reading transcripts activity



Reading Transcripts Activity

- Individually:
 - Read the 1st part of the transcript and answer the questions
 - Read the 2nd part of the transcript and answer the questions
- Discuss in small groups
- Report out on one key choice that could influence collaboration and instruction.

References

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Reading Transcripts Activity

1. Read the first part of the transcript:

What are you uncertain about at this point?

What choices does the librarian have now? List 2-3 possibilities.

2. Read the second part of the transcript:

Identify a moment when the librarian could have made a different choice to encourage collaboration with the user.

What are one or two other choices the librarian could have made at that point?

Example Transcript – Part 1:

Patron:

16:01:13 can you help me find scholarly articles about psychology parenting styles

Librarian:

16:01:21 Librarian 'Sue' has joined the session.

Librarian:

16:01:29 Hi, I'm Sue, a librarian at Nameless School. I'm part of the cooperative group of libraries that staffs this service and I'll be looking at your question.

Patron:

16:02:10 okay thanks

Patron:

16:02:27 i really need the help

Example Part 2:

Librarian:

16:02:28 Have you looked in the databases under "Social Sciences" on this page?
<http://www.nameless.edu/library/databases>

Patron:

16:03:29 i have not it kinda confuses me

Librarian:

16:03:51 The Psychology Collection would likely be the best place to start. Click on that link and we can get started.

Librarian:

16:05:02 You can do a search on "parenting style" and should get a good number of hits. These will be mainly academic journal articles.

Patron:

16:05:07 ok im going to check it out

Patron:

16:15:38 Patron is no longer connected.

Librarian:

16:16:15 Librarian ended chat session.

Transcript 1

1. Read the first part of the transcript:

What are you uncertain about at this point?

What choices does the librarian have now? List 2-3 possibilities.

2. Read the second part of the transcript:

Identify a moment when the librarian could have made a different choice to encourage collaboration with the user.

What are one or two other choices the librarian could have made at that point?

Transcript 1 – Part 1

Patron:

11:19:21 Hello, would you help me search for something in the databases.

Librarian:

11:19:38 Librarian 'Vanessa' has joined the session.

Librarian:

11:19:47 Hi, I'm Vanessa a librarian at Nameless Institution. I'm reading your question and I'll be with you in a moment.

Librarian:

11:20:25 Hi - I'll be glad to help. Tell me about your project.

Patron:

11:21:43 I'm trying to find an article that talk about how religions affects the education at a secondary level in America. I only need one article but when putting in key terms I'm not able to find a research talking about this.

Transcript 1 – Part 2:

Librarian:

11:24:00 Hmmm Help me understand exactly the kind of article you would like to find by giving me some more info. What class is this for?

Patron:

11:26:12 It's for an Education class and the question being asked is..In what ways does the variable religion of affect the classroom experiences and academic achievement of K-12 students? It should be a research on this. It can pretty much be anything. I've done this before for race, gender but I'm having a hard time finding anything about religion/

Librarian:

11:27:34 Thanks the info you sent really helps me understand. I think we may want to use the database ERIC for this. Have you used ERIC before?

Patron:

11:28:19 No But I have used different ones such as Jstor

Librarian:

11:29:01 Find ERIC and login. I'll help you figure out a good way to enter your search.

Patron:

11:29:41 Under what data base would Eric be under?

Librarian:

11:32:48 Look for ERIC in the list of databases here:

Librarian:

11:33:24 <http://www.nameless.edu/library/databases/>

Patron:

11:34:06 Okay I'm under it

Librarian:

11:34:33 I'm going to take a couple minutes to figure out a search for you ...

Patron:

11:34:44 Okay Thanks!

Librarian:

11:36:42 Academic Achievement and Religion are both "official" subject headings in ERIC, so you can search this way ...

Librarian:

11:38:59 Put Academic Achievement in the first box, then drop down to the box underneath and put in Religion, then before you hit search also ...

Librarian:

11:40:13 change the last thing on both lines from in "anywhere" to in Subject Heading
[TRANSCRIPT CONTINUES]

Transcript 2

1. Read the first part of the transcript:

What are you uncertain about at this point?

What choices does the librarian have now? List 2-3 possibilities.

2. Read the second part of the transcript:

Identify a moment when the librarian could have made a different choice to encourage collaboration with the user.

What are one or two other choices the librarian could have made at that point?

Transcript 2 – Part 1

Patron:

12:07:32 What do I do when my secondary sources keep leading to secondary sources? The general topic relating to my research proposal is autism and I want to begin my introduction stating that a specific intervention is considered to be important. Many of my sources state this but always cite another source, when I find that source it leads me to another... it is endless. Help please!

Librarian:

12:08:00 Librarian 'Victoria' has joined the session.

Librarian:

12:08:25 I'm reading your question.

Librarian:

12:09:51 Secondary sources often lead to other sources. What sources are you using? What database are you using?

Patron:

12:11:08 I'm using the psycINFO database as recommended by my professor and the sources are peer-reviewed journal articles on the topic of ABA therapy and autism

Transcript 2 – Part 2

Librarian:

12:12:47 When is this due? What information are you hoping to find? Can you use just primary sources?

Patron:

12:18:18 This is due this upcoming Tuesday, just the introduction and references I've used. I am trying to give a general importance to the topic and state my hypothesis. I want to start-off by saying that the intervention I'm studying is the intervention of choice for those with autism and therefore has importance, leading into my hypothesis that fidelity to the intervention should be studied. The problem is that pretty much every study I find shows importance for the intervention and it dates back a long time. My professor also wants us to use primarily recent sources. Do you think it would be OK for me to state that recent studies show that the intervention is the best and state some relevant recent studies?

Librarian:

12:20:07 I think you need to email your professor to explain what you are doing and find out if that is okay.

Librarian:

12:22:22 Could it be that there are no current studies?

Patron:

12:22:25 I wish I could, she decided not to check her email over spring break to rest

Librarian:

12:23:22 What is the date of the most recent article you found?

Patron:

12:26:07 There are current studies that state what I'm trying to say, but they continue to date back to other studies and when I find those they cite other ones. It keeps going on and on and I can't possibly read and cite every source on the issue. The most recent study I found was 2011

Librarian:

12:29:33 Can you find the original study they are citing?

Librarian:

12:30:54 Is this information being updated in the current studies? Is the information similar in the new studies?

Patron:

12:33:00 Well that's the problem, each study leads to another 5 studies... the original study dates back to early 80's, I cannot find it and the information in it is largely outdated. The current studies are updating the information and continuing to prove that the intervention is important, can I pick some and use them as examples?

Patron:

12:42:21 Are you there? [TRANSCRIPT CONTINUES]