

Banana Splits

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1. Task Definition:

1.1 Define the problem. The Information Problem – We are hungry for Banana Splits.

1.2 Identify the information requirements of the problem. Are we going to make the banana splits or buy them? How do we make them? We need to decide how much money we have to spend, what store we will go to? What grocery items we will need? How many banana splits we want to make?

2. Information Seeking Strategies:

2.1 Determine the range of possible sources. We can gather recipes from the Internet, call Dairy Queen, call other ice cream stores, check cookbooks, etc. We can go to the convenience store, the super market, etc. We will need to choose bananas, ice cream, toppings, dishes to put them in, spoons, whipped topping, etc. Find the aisles to get the food items.

2.2 Evaluate the different possible sources to determine priorities. From above list, prioritize the items that best fit our needs, make a grocery list of items.

3. Location and Access:

3.1 Locate sources (intellectually and physically).

3.2 Find information within sources. You are in the right aisle, in the store you chose, now choose the best items for the money and description you need from all of the possible brands.

4. Use of Information:

4.1 Engage (read, hear, view, touch) the information source.

4.2 Extract the information from a source. Begin making your banana split. First you put the ice cream dish on the table, then scoop the ice cream out of the container, peel the bananas. Take each item from its original container and put it on to the table or in bowls, etc.

5. Synthesis:

5.1 Organize the information from multiple sources. Place each of the items in the banana split dish in a neat order, following the recipe or directions chosen. Make sure that it looks “pretty”.

5.2 Present the information. Share the banana split with friends. Everyone eat and enjoy!

6. Evaluation:

6.1 Judge the product (effectiveness). How did the banana split look? How did the banana split taste? Was it good? What was the quality of the ingredients? Would you choose a different banana, different dish or different spoons?

6.2 Judge the information problem-solving process (efficiency). When making the split next time, would you do anything different? How easy was it to find the recipes and did the directions work? What problems did you have when shopping? Would you go to the same store?

Comments:

Banana Split Presentation – Ideas/Modifications for consideration- Suggested by Dr. Nancy Thomas from Emporia State University, Emporia, Kansas. Thanks to Dr. Thomas for taking the time to do this!

Be sure to note that if you present other process models that Kuhlthau’s model is not conceptually the same or equal to the Big6 Model. It is a process model. Kuhlthau’s model was derived from what people actually do in seeking information. It also helps us to plan our professional intervention based upon what she learned about how people feel at various stages in their searches in school and public libraries.

The other models present ways to teach problem solving and project creation and evaluation. Although we can teach the Big6 – we don’t necessarily teach the Information Problem Solving (IPS) as articulated by Kuhlthau.

An idea about the actual banana split presentation – It might be useful to put all of the goodies that people will use to make the banana splits into several plain brown paper bags.

In this way, part of their job will be to decide how they will go about information seeking -i.e. the universe method (unpacking everything and then deciding what is relevant to their needs) or the berry picking method (go through the bags item by item, choosing what may be useful and leaving in the bag items which are not); or other method they might find useful based on their own preferences.

This also means that you may want to provide some items which may have little value to people, instead of providing only what is necessary for making the banana split (we get lots more information than we need when we are getting started in researching a project-and have to decide which information is relevant and which is not. We don't necessarily ever use everything that we find, right?) A monkey wrench, string, crayons, mustard, or scissors, for example, while useful tools for some purposes may be of very little value in this exercise.

You might want to provide some cookbooks which contain recipes for banana splits.

Provide some articles in the bags of goodies that force participants to make some more serious choices among alternatives – i.e., choices which call for evaluation at more than one step in the overall process. This is a way to ensure that evaluation occur at every step.

Maybe define a task as making the most healthful banana split, and thus provide options (sugar free toppings, vs. natural flavor-thus engaging with this activity on a higher cognitive level). Ask that participants consider food preferences of members, or allergies (to nuts).

Finally, provide each group with a large sheet of paper with the Big6 steps indicated – then have one person in each group write down the steps taken and the activities or decisions made at each step. This can serve as a record or journal which can be the basis for discussion about their experience after they have eaten.

Don't forget the moist towels or something to clean up – this activity gets sticky!