Library Research Seminar V: Integrating Practice and Research

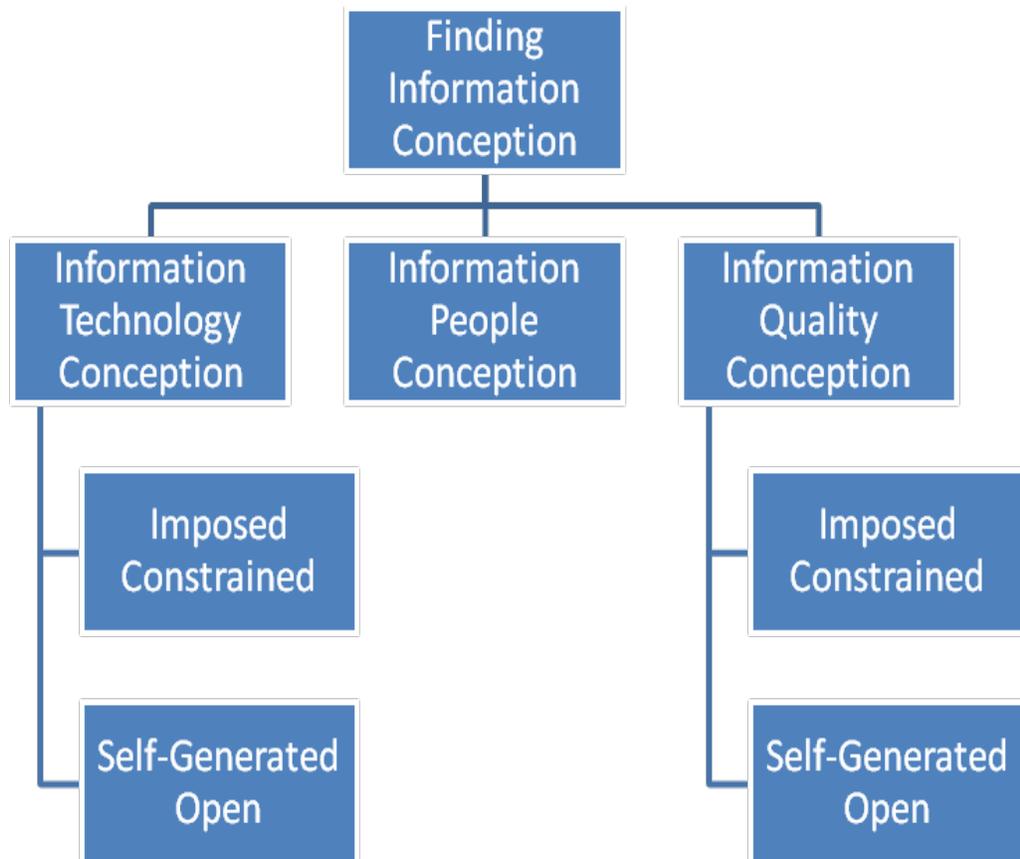**First Year College Students and Information:**

A Phenomenographic Investigation

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Phenomenography, developed by educators in Sweden in the mid 1970s, was chosen for this study as it was designed specifically to describe the relationship between research participants and their experience with a phenomenon and to derive categories of conceptions that allow the various relationships to be discovered (Marton, 1981, 1986). Further, the usefulness of phenomenography to investigate perceptions of information literacy has been demonstrated, beginning with Bruce's groundbreaking research on educators' perceptions of information literacy (1997). The goal of a phenomenographic analysis is to categorize conceptions of a phenomenon and to organize them in what is called the "outcome space" (Marton, 1994). The outcome space expresses the structural framework within which the categories of conception exist. Identifying the categories of conception and understanding the relationship between the categories provides a useful way to develop an understanding of the relationship between these students and information.

Student Perceptions of Information: Outcome Space

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                    ┌─────────────────┐
                    │     Finding     │
                    │   Information   │
                    │   Conception    │
                    └─────────────────┘
            ┌───────────────┼───────────────┐
   ┌─────────────┐   ┌─────────────┐   ┌─────────────┐
   │ Information  │   │ Information  │   │ Information  │
   │ Technology   │   │   People     │   │   Quality    │
   │ Conception   │   │ Conception   │   │ Conception   │
   └─────────────┘   └─────────────┘   └─────────────┘
          │                                    │
   ┌─────────────┐                      ┌─────────────┐
   │   Imposed    │                      │   Imposed    │
   │ Constrained  │                      │ Constrained  │
   └─────────────┘                      └─────────────┘
          │                                    │
   ┌─────────────┐                      ┌─────────────┐
   │Self-Generated│                      │Self-Generated│
   │     Open     │                      │     Open     │
   └─────────────┘                      └─────────────┘
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Related Readings

Bruce, C. (1997). *The seven faces of information literacy*. Australia, Auslib Press Pty Ltd.

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