Unit 2 Self & Society: understanding internet search terms

Objective: to provide further practice of understanding internet search terms, this time within the area of **Self & Society**.

The three-step strategy for developing this soft skill is:

Step 1: Determine what information you need to find. (Ex. A)

Step 2: Choose effective search terms. (Ex. B, Ex. C)

Step 3: Evaluate search results and refine your search if necessary. (Ex. C, Ex. D)

You may decide to highlight this strategy at the beginning of the lesson, and to conduct a short discussion to check that the students understand the skill and why it is useful. However, if you prefer to teach this lesson without discussing the underlying soft skill, this is also possible. The lesson is designed to be engaging and successful either way.

For more information about teaching life skills and ideas for highlighting the soft skill, please refer to p. xi and pp. 18–19 of the Teacher's Book.

MATERIALS:

- board and markers

Lead-in

As a class, have a general discussion about internet use. Ask the students if they use the internet mainly for work, study or for personal use. Elicit the reasons they do internet searches in their work/study, and the kinds of things they look for on internet searches in their personal life. Ask them what search engines they use and why.

A

- Write the following situation on the board:
  Some elderly friends of your parents are visiting your hometown (Vancouver) and are having problems using the internet to find somewhere to eat. You've offered to help them. The lady is a vegetarian and her husband would prefer not to eat Chinese food.
- Give students time to read the situation, and elicit what information they need to look for on the internet (*to find a restaurant in Vancouver that serves good vegetarian, non-Chinese food*).

B

- Write the following search terms on the board:
  - *Vancouver restaurants*
  - *good vegetarian restaurants Vancouver*
  - *vegetarian Vancouver*
  - *What good vegetarian restaurants are there in Vancouver?*
  - *eating out in Vancouver*
  - *recommended vegetarian restaurants in Vancouver*
- Put the students in pairs, and ask them to discuss how effective each search term is. When they have finished, ask them to join another pair to share their ideas. Have a class feedback session.

Possible answers

Vancouver restaurants: this will probably return a list of restaurants in Vancouver, which could be a good starting point. However, it would not give you specifically vegetarian or non-Chinese restaurants.

good vegetarian restaurants Vancouver: this will probably give you some recommended vegetarian restaurants, although the word *good* may appear anywhere on the page and may not necessarily be connected to vegetarian restaurants.

vegetarian Vancouver: this may return recommendations for vegetarian restaurants, but may also return pages relating to vegetarian societies or health food shops, etc.

What good vegetarian restaurants are there in Vancouver?: although search engines can generally handle this kind of natural English search, this question is very specific and is likely only to return matches with the keywords *vegetarian/good/restaurant/Vancouver*. It is generally recommended that smaller words such as *are*, *in*, *is*, *a* and *the* should be left out of search terms.

eating out in Vancouver: this is not a very effective search term. It is too general and although it may return a list of restaurants, it could also return pages with general opinions about eating out in Vancouver.

recommended vegetarian restaurants in Vancouver: this is quite an effective search term, although it is probably not necessary to include the word *in*.

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C

- Remind the students that, in the Student's Book lesson, they saw different ways to refine internet searches. Apply these to the current search terms and write on the board:
  - *"good vegetarian restaurants in Vancouver"*
  - *vegetarian AND restaurant AND Vancouver*
  - *vegetarian OR restaurant*
  - *vegetarian restaurant Vancouver -Chinese*
  - *recommended* restaurant Vancouver*
- Elicit from the students what each of these modifications does.

Answers

"good vegetarian restaurants in Vancouver": this looks for the exact term in direct quotes. This would be a good way to ensure that the word *good* relates to vegetarian restaurants.

vegetarian AND restaurant AND Vancouver: this looks for all three search terms (+ could also be used).

vegetarian OR restaurant: this returns pages with either search term or both search terms in them.

vegetarian restaurant Vancouver -Chinese: this returns pages without the term following the minus symbol, so here it would return pages without *Chinese* in them. (Note that the term needs to follow the minus symbol with no space.)

*recommended * restaurant Vancouver*: this searches for phrases that have any word in the middle where the asterisk is, e.g. *recommended Indian restaurant Vancouver, recommended fast-food restaurant Vancouver*, etc.

D

- Put the students in different groups. Ask them to think of some of the situations in which they use internet searches for personal use or to help others (rather than for work/study purposes). Ask them to choose a specific situation. While they are doing this, write the following plan on the board:
  We want to search for:
  Key phrases:
  Search terms to try:
  Search engine:
- When the students have decided on a situation, refer them to the plan on the board and ask them to copy it into their notebooks and complete it with their ideas. Monitor while the students are working, and give help if needed.
- When all the students finish, invite the groups to share their plan with the rest of the class. Encourage the rest of the class to comment and suggest ways to improve their search terms. Give groups time to amend their plan if they wish.

ALTERNATIVE

In a stronger class, ask students to do Ex. D individually. Then ask them to work in small groups to compare their plans and suggest ways to improve them.

Reflect

- Write the following question on the board:
  What benefits are there to using effective internet search terms?
- Give the students time to reflect individually, and then elicit some ideas, e.g. *it can save time; it can give more useful results; it can give more accurate results.*

EXTRA: HOMEWORK

Ask the students to carry out the search using their plan in Ex. D. Ask them to make a note of (or print out) the results and bring them to the next class. In the next class, discuss some of the results and evaluate which of them would be worth exploring further, and why.

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