**Reference Encounter Report Form**

*Part I: Reference Interview with Abductive Reasoning (Designed to transform an explicit question into the tacit question)*

1) What was your patron’s original (explicit) question?

My patron’s question was: “What are the brand names for the drug Mesalamine? Can I get it from Canada?”

2) Describe your patron’s motivation and secret.

My patron’s motivation for asking this question was to find out what the brand names for the generic drug she was taking were and if she could find any of these in Canada. Her secret was that she was a United States citizen planning to move to Canada “in light of recent events” and needed to know if she could still get her prescription after she moved.

3) What clarifying questions did you ask, and why?

The first question I asked my patron was if she was interested in the Canadian brand names in particular, which she was. I then asked if she needed to know some more general information about the drug. My patron said she has been taking the drug and didn’t need to know about what it did. Then I asked if she would need pricing information – she said it would be great if I could find some, but it wasn’t necessary. I saved the trickiest question for last – if she wanted to get the drug from Canada while still living in the United States. I broached the question by asking if she was moving to Canada. She, to my relief, replied yes, which is how I discovered her secret.

4) Summarize the clues you have discovered with your clarifying questions using the FATES method:

Format – What type of media is the patron interested in? (Books, Articles, Ready Facts, Archival Objects, Web Sites, etc.)

My patron was interested in ready facts.

Audience – What level of scholarly sophistication is the patron looking for in their results?

My patron needed this information for her personal use, so the results did not need to be scholarly.

Topic – What is the question about?

The question is about the drug Mesalamine.

Essential Content – What is must be included in the answer in order for it to be complete?

The answer must include a list of the brand names of Mesalamine and say whether you can get it in Canada. If it is available in Canada, the answer should include the brand names of Mesalamine used in Canada. To go the extra mile, the answer would include pricing information for the drug in the Canadian market.

Scope – What are the historical, geographical, or conceptual limits set by the patron’s question?

There is a geographical limit set by the patron’s particular interest in Canada. I need to find out if the drug is available in Canada, what its Canadian brand names are and what the drug costs in Canada. There are no historical or conceptual limits.

5) Recapitulate your patron’s explicit question to reflect your understanding of their tacit question.

“What are the brand names for the drug Mesalamine? Is it available in Canada? If so, what are the Canadian brand names? If you can find Canadian prices for the drug, please include those as well.”

*Part II Determining Where to Begin with Deductive Reasoning (Designed to build a starting strategy)*

6) What do the FATES tell you about how you should construct a search? Example: “My patron’s topic is Golden Age Science Fiction, and they want to know who the editors of Astonishing Tales were, specifically. Because the patron only needs general information on a broad topic not looking for research, I don’t need to search the article databases since those tend to focus on very specific topics. Since this is for personal edification instead of something that need to cite in a paper, the work doesn’t have to be scholarly or peer reviewed. Since they care about the Golden Age, I’ll need to make sure it has coverage for the 1940’s – 1950’s and maybe a little earlier if Astonishing Tales was from the Pulp Age instead.”

My patron’s topic is Mesalamine and she specifically wants to know about the drug’s availability in Canada and what its brand names are. Because my patron needs this information for personal use, I don’t need to search for anything that is scholarly. She needs ready facts, so I want a format with the most straightforward and easy-to-find information possible. Because she is interested in pricing info and brand names in Canada, I’ll need to find facts that pertain to Canada.

7) Given your answer in question 6, which of the following type(s) of reference sources are most likely to hold the answer to the patron’s questions? justify your selection in a way that mentions the purpose or function of the type of reference source. If none of these seem like a good fit, explain why not. Example: “My initial strategy is to consult an almanac because it is the reference source most concerned with facts associated with the time of year and my patron is looking into when is the best time to plant heirloom tomatoes in Florida.”

Almanac, Atlas, Bibliography (Including Library Catalogs and Archival Finding Aids), Biographical Dictionary, Chronology, Concordance, Dictionary, Directory, Encyclopedia, Gazetteer, Guidebook, Handbook, Index (Including Article Databases), Manual, or Yearbook. (Note: The Internet, Scout, and Search Engines like Google and Bing are not types of reference sources.)

My initial strategy is to consult a handbook because it is a source that presents ready facts about a topic in an easily navigable format and my patron needs specific facts about the drug Mesalamine.

8) Using 6 and 7 as your logical building blocks, give your rationale for where you intend to begin your search. Be as specific as possible. (Example: “Given my understanding of the question, and of the types of reference sources that exist, I should begin my search trying to find a retrospective encyclopedia of 20th Century Science Fiction and Fantasy since it will likely have general interest entries for Astonishing Tales. I can then move on to look up any references it sites if the patron wants further details.”

I should begin my search by trying to find a pharmaceutical handbook that either is about Canadian drugs or covers Canadian drugs in a section because it will most likely include an entry on Mesalamine mentioning brand names and potentially pricing info.

*Part III: Documenting Your Search Process with Experimental Reasoning (Designed to illuminate your decision making)*

9) Tell the story of how your search unfolded. Here you will leave a breadcrumb trail, beginning with the starting point your deduced in question 8, then documenting each subsequent source you visited in your search process. Provide the following for each: A). The name of each source used during your search (especially those you used unsuccessfully), B). A statement of why you selected that source, and C). how you knew this resource would not answer the question and it was time to move on to the next resource. You may find it useful to type up this section as an outline. At the end of this section, please include the unique identifier(s) you gave to your patron so that I can examine your final sources. Examples of a unique identifier are a full bibliographic citation, a digital object identifier (doi), or a webpage permalink. If no unique identifier was available, explain what you did to ensure the patron could access the source(s) you provided.

I began my search by searching “mesalamine” on Google so I would know what it was used for and could utilize synonymy. I saw that it was mainly used to treat ulcerative colitis, so I made a mental note that this and gastroenterology were potential search terms. I decided I’d begin my official search by searching “ulcerative colitis” as a keyword and “handbook” as a title in Amelia. I chose ulcerative colitis because I knew it would return more results than Mesalamine but wasn’t as broad as gastroenterology. This search returned one result that wasn’t what I needed, so I went back and searched “ulcerative colitis” as a keyword only. This led me to a book, *Medical Therapy of Ulcerative Colitis*, which has a chapter titled “Oral Mesalamine.” I downloaded a PDF of the chapter and found a list of the brand names. Although this wasn’t the most user-friendly format, I had found the answer to one of my patron’s questions and decided to shift focus to her questions about Canada. I tried many variations on searches that included “Canada,” “Canadian,” “prescription drugs,” “drugs,” “handbook,” “manual,” and was eventually led to check out a source titled “National drug code directory,” which included a link to the FDA’s website. This led me to the idea that if I could find a way to access the Canadian equivalent of the FDA, I might be able to find some answers. However, I didn’t know what they called this branch of government in Canada and had to Google “Canadian department of health” to find out. Their department is called Health Canada, which does not lend itself well as a search term. After trying unsuccessfully to access Health Canada through the UA Library, I had to tell my patron I would get back to them with an answer.

I read through the Health and Medicine database listings, trying to find a promising source. I tried CINAHL Plus, but the results I was getting from my searches were all more concerned with clinical studies or effects of the drug rather than its availability. I was frustrated because I knew the Canadian government’s website was a legitimate resource, but I couldn’t figure out a way to access it through library resources. I tried the research guides on drug information with similar results. I even tried searching Medline Plus after it was mentioned in lecture in the hope it would link somewhere to the Canadian government website. Although I did find a more user-friendly listing of Mesalamine on Medline, I couldn’t find anything connecting it to Canada. I even tried searching all the brand names in the catalog and turned up nothing. After spending a lot of time searching with no success, I was forced to admit defeat to my patron and could only supply her with the brand names.

*Medical Therapy of Ulcerative Colitis*:

Lichtenstein, G. R. (2016). *Medical therapy of ulcerative colitis*. Springer-Verlag New York.

Medline Plus listing for Mesalamine:

Mesalamine. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://medlineplus.gov/druginfo/meds/a688021.html

10) Per your patron state did you complete the reference encounter successfully? If not, what else might you have done?

My patron was satisfied with the brand name listings, and she appreciated that I tried very hard to find an answer to her other questions. I think it was good that I ended the reference interview when I did – it is becoming less difficult for me to accept that I’m not always going to find an answer in a short amount of time. I do wish I had asked about whether using a government website as a source would be acceptable. I assumed that since I could not find a way to access it without Google, I wouldn’t be able to use it as a resource. I feel that if I had at least clarified the answer to this I would have at least been sure I had tried every source available that I could find.

11) Please reflect on what you learned about user services because of answering the patron’s question.

This was a frustrating question for me because this was something I’d normally Google and have the answer to in a short amount of time. I am used to being able to type in whatever string of words I want and always coming up with answers. During my preliminary search of what Mesalamine was, I saw a list of its brand names right there in the search results page. Although I would have had to look a little harder to find a credible source, it was hard for me to ignore an answer staring me in the face. In my difficulty finding any information about the Canadian availability, I did a Google search about that out of curiosity. I wasn’t going to include what I found in my answer; at that point I just needed to know. I found a lot of shady-looking website listings selling Canadian drugs online which made it seem that Mesalamine was indeed available in Canada, but there wasn’t anything that came up that would have been a credible source. Searching for this made me realize what I would personally take as confirmation enough for an answer would not fit the standards of a professional reference encounter. I am still learning how to navigate the professional resources that come with the task, but this week I saw more clearly the benefit of credibility that those resources have. I knew I could trust Medline Plus and give that source to my patron with confidence. I’m not totally okay with not being able to come up with an answer to the rest of her question; I’ll be curious to see what my classmates did to find answers.