

Unit Overview and Calendar

At the beginning of the unit, students are introduced to the concept of research and why it is important in their lives as students. Connections are made between information literacy skills and other disciplines. Students are then given an online, objective information literacy skills test to assess the knowledge base they currently possess. Students then will study pertinent vocabulary and complete a crossword puzzle that will help reinforce learning. At this time students should understand the general concept of research, how it can be applied to other disciplines and basic information literacy vocabulary. Details of the research process are then introduced through a class discussion. Steps in the research process include thinking, planning, locating information, assessing information and bibliographic references. The last step involves an end product, a presentation in this case, which will be completed as part of the Social Studies class. Student discussions will include the detailed facets of the research process. The next lesson will introduce them to the end product that they will complete within the context of this class. A research questionnaire will be distributed to the class that will list pertinent question related to the required elements of the project. Bibliographic formats will also be introduced. The purpose of introducing this now is to give the students a context by which they can apply the skills they will learn in the upcoming lessons. My concern is that if I teach research skills without giving applicable meaning, the students may lose interest and not retain what is being taught. Next, the mechanics of finding online information is discussed. Searching techniques include keyword and subject searches, Boolean operators, natural language searches, truncation and wildcards. The next two lessons are devoted to reinforcing Boolean logic. The first includes a class game where students sit in a circle and stand up as the teacher calls out parameters. An example would be “all students wearing jeans but not blue jeans.” The next lesson has students performing Boolean searches on the Internet using practice sheets. This will provide some hands on access to practice the skills they just learned from class discussions and the Boolean game. Before the students begin their actual research, it is critical to incorporate a lesson on citing sources and developing bibliographies and for the students to realize the importance of keeping track of reference material. The final two lessons are dedicated to library and online research. The students will then use the information that they extracted to complete their presentation project in their Social Studies class.

Monday	Wednesday	Friday
1. Unit introduction and Information Literacy Skills pretest.	2. Information Literacy vocabulary and crossword puzzle.	3. Introduce research process.
4. Discuss application of research and introduce Adopt a State project.	5. Finding Information.	
6. Boolean Logic game and bookmarks.	7. Practice searching with Boolean operators.	8. Citing Works and Bibliography.
9. Research Day in school library.	10. Research Day using online resources.	

Unit Rationale

This unit is an introduction to the research process and a collaborative effort between Media and Technology class and the students' Social Studies class. One of my professional goals is to work with other teachers on cross-curricular activities that can add more meaningful context to academic instruction. In this case, fifth grade students take on a US State Report project in which they research information on the state of their choice. They will create a slide show in PowerPoint and make presentations in their Social Studies class. As the district Media Specialist I am continually looking for ways to integrate media and information literacy into my curriculum. As this is one of the first formal research projects they complete, students need to have a basic understanding of how to efficiently find information and properly cite their sources. It also provides a vehicle by which context is given to research skills instruction. By providing the foundation of skills and immediately applying them to a real project, students are more likely to realize the importance of research based instruction and thereby derive more meaning from it as they use those skills throughout their academic careers.

Throughout this unit, references will be made to a variety of specific research-based standards including Big 6 Skills and National Information Literacy Standards. Media Specialists are now focusing a great deal of time and energy to coordinate activities with classroom teachers. Collaboration and the integration of literacy standards to academic instruction is gaining more acceptance in schools. Media Specialists are moving beyond traditional support roles and becoming partners with classroom teachers to assist students in meeting academic standards.

Prerequisites

This unit requires students to be familiar with navigating the Internet and have the ability to use a card catalog in the school library. Because this unit is introducing basic research skills, no other specific prerequisites are necessary.

Integration of Disciplines

Social Studies – US Geography

Vocational/Technical – Using technology for online research

Information Literacy – Using media resources to complete tasks

English – Media and Technology