

Information Literacy Lesson of the Month

Getting to the Workable "Topic"

This forty-five minute lesson focuses on the importance of pre-search thinking about a topic, formulating a "works-in-progress" research question, and identifying key concept terms as well as variations of such terms in order to narrow or broaden one's searching. This lesson ideally should precede any subsequent Information Literacy/Research lessons since it paves the way for later searching.

Here are some highlights of the lesson:

- Three types of research
- Topics vs. Questions
 - Why Questions work better
- Broadening a question
- Narrowing strategies
- Identifying the essential concepts
 - Identifying obstacles in our language/thinking
- Using concept chart (vocabulary brainstorm)



Students then have an opportunity to create an essential question from a larger topic and, using a simple vocabulary chart, brainstorm terms that broaden, narrow or are related to their key concepts. Having done this ahead of time, (I call this "front-loading"), students can better search the Internet or databases for information since terms can be exchanged for others to increase or decrease the number of possible "hits".

Additionally, I stress that a topic question remain flexible throughout the searching process in order to make room for additional concepts that prove relevant, or even eliminate sub-concepts that might be infeasible given the time constraints or data available.

To schedule this or any other Information Literacy lesson, contact me using the link below.

Tyee Complex Library
Lisa Carlson,
Teacher-Librarian

Telephone 988.7230
carlsolm@hsd401.org

"The library is the place in the school that serves all students. You don't have to try out, as you do for sports. You don't have to buy an instrument, as you do for music. You just have to walk in the door."

Ellie Goldstein- Erickson, vice president in charge of legislation for the California School Library Association

WWW.HSD401.ORG/TYEE