

Library Letters

Tyee Educational Complex, serving ACE, Global and Odyssey High Schools

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Library Tip #1:

Scheduling time to bring classes to the library is easy and it only takes a few minutes:

1. Pick-up a scheduling form in the library OR use the on-line form sent to you
2. Fill out the form as indicated. Please feel free to conference or collaborate with your librarian.
3. Return form (only when form is returned is your request scheduled).
4. Check calendar through sent link to confirm scheduling request.

Library Tip #2:

If you scheduled a date or time that you no longer require, or if you think you will be more than 15 minutes late, **PLEASE e-mail or call the library to cancel or make special arrangements.** Otherwise, your time may be "recycled" to accommodate other classes.

Library Tip #3:

Remember: Students MUST have a note from a teacher to visit the library during class time. Students without a note, or who have a note but fail to sign in will be sent back to class.

CBA's Are on the Way, Your Library Can Help: Part Two, Services

Having resources readily at hand for students to access is a vital part of any information gathering process; no less so for CBA's. Yet, knowing what to do with these resources is part of becoming information literate, i. e., to be "an effective user of ideas and information." (Eisenberg)

The school library and the teacher-librarian provide a variety of services that can instruct and guide students, and other patrons, toward this end. With the CBA, many of a teacher-librarian's services can help lighten the load.

Currently, there appear to have developed two "methods" (for lack of a better term) teachers use to lead their students through the CBA process. The first is the "full meal deal" and perhaps better reserved for the more sophisticated, higher level class. In this process, students are required to find their own topics, do their own information gathering ("research"), and create their own theses, in addition to reading the gathered materials, analyzing primary and secondary resources, and finally, produce

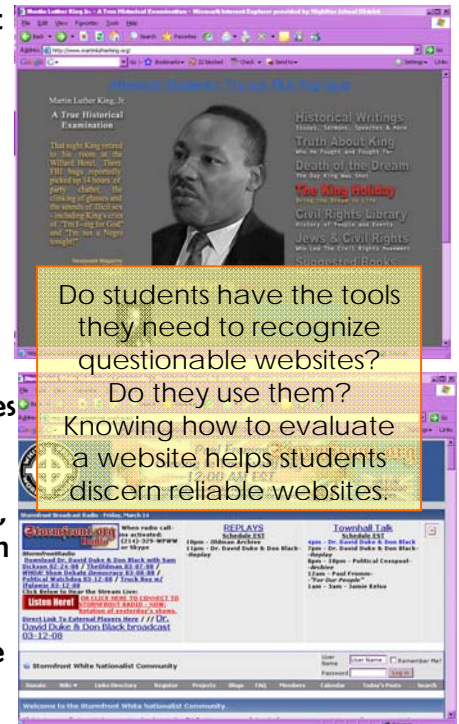
a written document that demonstrates the application of their understanding of the process and their treatment of information.

The second method, which is growing in popularity, greatly reduces or eliminates student searching for and gathering materials, and focuses more on the critical reading and thinking skills needed to complete the CBA product. One of the benefits

of this approach is that the teacher, or teacher-librarian, is selecting the variety of materials to be used, eliminating the problems that arise when students use the Internet to find reliable information.

Regardless of the approach used, the teacher-librarian (T-L) can facilitate many aspects of the CBA process:

1: Teacher-librarians are information specialists. Given a topic and a direction, the T-L can provide books and magazines, find articles



(from databases and magazines), copy relevant excerpts from print sources, review and compile a list of reliable resources, provide primary source materials, and so on. For teachers wanting to streamline the CBA process, or who feel their students need to focus more on reading and analysis, having the T-L provide the information for students to use beforehand can guarantee that the information will be reliable and relevant to the particular focus.

Library Tip #4:



It is advised that teachers not schedule time in the library during an absence. Please make arrangements with the teacher-librarian if this is unavoidable.

Library Tip #5:

Laptops are available for check-out and use *in the library ONLY*. Students must have a student or picture ID to check one out, and it must be returned before leaving.

Library Tip #6:

Food, beverages, cell phones and certain electronic equipment is **not allowed** in the library. If discovered, students with such items either will be required to relinquish them until they exit the library, or they will lose their privilege to remain in the library, depending on each situation.

P.S. It would be appreciated if teachers and staff modeled these behaviors as well.

Library Tip #7:

TEACHERS and STAFF: Avoid checking out books in your name and then loaning them to students. It can result in the teacher paying for them at the end of the year.

CBA's and Your School Library part 2, continued...

2: For teachers wanting their students to do their own searching, accessing and gathering information, the T-L can provide key instruction for evaluating, and thereby identifying reliable websites on the Internet. In the past four years I have developed an effective lesson incorporating a website evaluation guide from Pacific Lutheran University's library. A significant portion of this lesson stresses the importance of really looking at a website, and investigating who created it, who might sponsor it and what biases are apparent. Using tools such as <AllWhols.com> can be very helpful in discovering whether that MLK site is connected with

Creating the Thesis Statement/CBA

Establishing a clear thesis, with further formulating questions can help researchers stay focused.

a credible creator, or with the StormFront white supremacist forum.

3: Creating essential questions and thesis statements as well as defining questions are the best way to keep focus. Simply having a topic, such as WWII, is much too broad and could become very overwhelming. Helping students create a working thesis (what they want to show about their topic, in essence), and creating various closed and open question will help students read for specific content and not get bogged down by

unrelated bits of information.

4: Using databases

like ProQuest, SIRS or FactsOnFile can be remarkably useful for finding up-to-the-minute information on a variety of subjects, from science to literature, history to art. When seeking credible information, books and databases are usually the first places I look, and ideally, could be used to replace any standard Internet search. Of course, some databases are better than others, and nearly all of them require site licenses and charge user fees. This can be a big deterrent. Yet, perhaps a bigger obstacle for students is knowing how to access the information they want. Most databases employ Boolean operators, which might certainly baffle the "whole-language-ask-Jeeves" generation. Teaching students how to use these operators in conjunction with selecting keywords and subject headings, can make searching databases much easier and more effective. The better they become at using such resources, the more they will likely prefer them to the Internet website.

5: In-text and bibliographic citations are perhaps the most difficult components of research. Often, students fail to provide even rudimentary citations on the information they've used, usually because they sincerely do not know how, or because this part of the process is not consistently required. However, copyright law does expect any person

What is a Database?

- An electronic "space" where specific kinds of information are stored
 - Personal
 - Public
 - Academic
- Resembles a library
- Access through internet or computer terminal (network)
- Membership required (often)

Using a database requires a bit of effort, but the benefits are enormous.

accessing and using another person's information to cite that source. Otherwise, that find line between original work and plagiarism can be crossed. The how-to's can be straightforward when dealt with a little at a time and in a step-by-step manner. The key, as with most things, is consistently expecting students to be able to cite their sources, in-text or through a bibliography.

My preference is to initially take students through the process of creating proper citations in a particular format—the "long way", and only afterward provide them with short-cut on-line applications such as EasyBib and Son of Citation Machine, which, although helpful, are limited to the typical references, and have occasionally been in err.

6: All of the CBA's require, or strongly encourage the use of primary resources. The T-L can provide instruction to help students, who are doing their own information gathering, discern the basic differences between primary and secondary sources. For teachers providing students with all of the text materials, the T-L can access, preview and put together packets of primary sources for student use.

There's much more your Teacher-Librarian can do for you for CBA's and other projects, too. Just ask!

Did you know?



The first school library was established in Virginia in 1906.