THE PEDAGOGY OF INFORMATION LITERACY: USING I-LEARN TO TEACH

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UNDERLYING RESEARCH

- Studies with elementary and middle-school students in three public schools in Philadelphia
- Several presentations at past ECIL conferences
- Chapters in ECIL Proceedings
I-LEARN (NEUMAN, 2011)

• I: Identify a researchable question/topic
• L: Locate information that might address it
• E: Evaluate the information
• A: Apply the info. to answer/address it
• R: Reflect on the process and product
• kNow: Instantiate the knowledge to use in the future
FULL SPECTRUM OF INFORMATION LITERACY

• Begins in information seeking:
  – Identify, locate, and evaluate information

• Culminates in learning:
  – Apply the information to answer a question, reflect on what’s been learned, use the new knowledge to generate new ideas
TEACHERS’ STRATEGIES AND METHODS

• Project-based learning
  – Independent work with strong teacher guidance
  – Worksheets, handouts, modeling, etc.
  – Students create (and often present) final projects to show what they’ve learned
IDENTIFY

• In general, individual projects within teacher-generated questions/topics: what makes a city special, why is a house made of brick/mud/straw, what problem exists in my neighborhood and what can I do
LOCATE

- Information seeking from a variety of sources—books, people, Internet
- Classroom collections (not libraries)
- Field trips, guest speakers, interviews with parents
- General websites, sites for children when guided
EVALUATE

• Teacher questioning, probing
• “Short-hand” criteria (e.g., Google isn’t reliable; *Wikipedia* isn’t as good as a “real” encyclopedia; .org is more credible than .com)
• Commercial checklists
APPLY

• Brochures, drawings, maps, posters, etc.
• Role of technology: *Little Bird Tales*, *Weebly*, *PowerPoint*, *StoryKit*
• Presentations to fellow students and others
REFLECT

• Teachers’ exit interviews with students

• [Are there other things teachers did? Since this is about *their* strategies, I don’t think we can include *our* interviews.]
KNOW

• Teacher questioning, probing, assessment of students’ projects

• One teacher had students create a task force with a mission statement, suggesting ongoing application of knowledge
WHAT WE’VE LEARNED: RESEARCH-BASED INSIGHTS

• Each stage must be addressed directly
• Students need guidance throughout their use of I-LEARN—and so do teachers
• The researchers’ next task should be to develop teacher materials: instructional guides, suggested activities, etc.
IDENTIFY

• Students’ environments strongly influence the questions they ask
• Older students are skilled in targeting important issues
• All students need teachers’ guidance in formulating researchable questions
LOCATE

• Students need guidance in locating credible, reliable sources—and so do teachers
• Librarians can provide this guidance, BUT
• What happens when a school doesn’t have a librarian or a teacher decides to do a project solely within the classroom?
EVALUATE

• Students need guidance in how to evaluate sources and information— and so do teachers
• Many tools are available to help, BUT
• The best tool is someone who understands how information is organized, presented, etc.
APPLY

• Teachers are skilled at helping students envision products that demonstrate their learning BUT

• Teachers as well as students need guidance to use digital technology to create solid, high-quality products
REFLECT

• An underused stage, probably because of constraints on time, AND
• Both teachers and students need guidance in understanding the importance of reflection and in developing and applying strategies for doing it
• Students are generally adept at expressing their views, BUT
• It is difficult to tell whether those views are acquired through information-seeking
• Teachers need guidance in assessing information-based knowledge
SO …

• We are working to identify credible indicators of knowledge based on following the model’s first five steps
CANDIDATES

• Asking a new question that s/he couldn’t ask without learning the information
• Proposing a solution based on the information
• Consistently advancing ideas based on the information
• Suggestions welcome!
THANK YOU!

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