

Puzzles, not Pieces: Topic Selection (Day 2 of 5)

Summary

This is Day 2 of a 5 day unit teaching students strong research skills for a "white paper" style research paper (can be modified for any pro--con research assignment). For the purpose of this assignment, the white paper is an argumentative piece which introduces a problem and argues a solution to that problem.

In this team- taught lesson, students will learn that researching is not a linear process. They will use "pre-search" to help them test, adjust, or even abandon viable topics from their brainstorming. They will learn to narrow ideas to smaller, researchable concepts.

Main Core Tie

Secondary Library Media (6-12)

[Strand 2: Standard 1:](#)

Additional Core Ties

English Language Arts Grade 11-12

[Reading: Literature Standard 7](#)

Secondary Library Media (6-12)

[Strand 2: Standard 2:](#)

Time Frame

1 class periods of 90 minutes each

Group Size

Large Groups

Life Skills

Thinking & Reasoning

Background for Teachers

Please See Attached Document.

Student Prior Knowledge

Most students will have learned research resources from the librarian previously, so much of that lecture will be a review.

Intended Learning Outcomes

Students will continue to narrow or broaden their topic.

Instructional Procedures

Pacing	Instructional Sequence	Grouping Structure
g	Anticipatory Set: Speed Dating Activity	
20	Students will meet in pairs for 3 minutes and exchange feedback on each other's topic ideas. They will be reminded to give feedback on timeliness and unique	Small Group

perspectives

1. Journal: Write your three favorite topics on a sheet of paper, leaving plenty of room to take notes. Jot down a onesentence description of the topic so you can easily explain it to classmates.
2. If you have a sticker on your desk, this means you will not be moving. Get comfy. If you don't have a sticker, you will follow the arrows taped on the floor. Each time you hear the buzzer, you will rotate one seat in the direction of the floor arrows.
3. How to give feedback in your speed dating partnerships:Which topic was most interesting to you / which topic would you be most likely to read about?Which topic do you think is most timely? Are there any that are on the decline or dead? Any ideas for how to approach those topics? Was anything confusing to you?

Model moving from big idea (Renewable Energy) to narrow idea (solar roadways)

I use the following clip when I introduce white papers. As a pitch for Solar Roadways, this video a) establishes a problem (the need for clean energy), b) identifies the nuances of that problem (money, environment, safety, etc.), and c)

5 - 10 *offers a concrete solution to the problem. I then reference this video throughout the unit to help students continually reconnect with their understanding of the genre.*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qlTA3rnpqzU>

Practice as a class with new topic (e.g. voting). Have students brainstorm smaller elements of this topic (e.g. online voting, primaries, partisan voting, etc).

15 Narrowing Topic Worksheet, teacher and librarian walk around and help students work through ideas. Try to guide them toward ideas that are appropriate in size for a ~6page pager (e.g. "How can voting be more accessible for rural communities" vs. "Voting")

15 - 20 Presearch. Once we have viable topics, we need to presearch. Students will be introduced to Research Resources by librarian EBSCO, GALE, Boolean operators, etc.

20 Students will presearch topics while teacher and librarian walk around and assist students in working through ideas.

Wrapup:

3 - 5 Homework: Students will complete a Topic Proposal for the following class period. In closing, consider having some students share narrowed topics they have come up with.

Whole Group (Teacher)

Individual

Lecture (Librarian)

Individual

Individual

Bibliography

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