

THE PLANNING PROCESS

Effective class assignments are designed so students not only learn how to find information efficiently, but actually think about and use the information they find. A class can investigate a question by having individual students become “experts” in one aspect of the issue. In this class inquiry model, each student researches an aspect of a focus question in order to discuss or compare and apply their findings. This is a more authentic approach to learning than the traditional “research paper” model, in which students research a topic to submit their findings to the teacher.

Improved learning occurs when students actually *use* their own information as well as *learn* from their classmates. In addition, teachers and library media specialists plan together to ensure students also learn from the research process and can transfer information literacy skills to the next assignment and to other curricular areas. By planning together, teachers and library media specialists improve the odds that students will be successful in research, and provide an opportunity for students to learn from the process by discussing the information skills they have learned, as well as the improved strategies they will employ in future research.

PLANNING STEPS FOR TEACHERS AND LIBRARY MEDIA SPECIALISTS

- Verbalize what students should know and be able to do as a result of the assignment.
- Identify the specific skills students will need.
- Pose a question to focus the inquiry.
- Develop a lesson plan which includes:
 - a written assignment and calendar with interim accountability.
 - a rubric or clear expectation of the grading standards.
 - time to review previous research skills.
 - time to read for background information.
 - time to teach specific search strategies and sample sources.
- Schedule the class in the library to begin searching as a group:
 - plan daily progress checks.
 - provide additional direction, if needed.
- Meet back in the classroom to discuss progress and problem-solve questions.
- Schedule additional time in the library or technology lab to complete the project.
- Provide a structure for students to use and discuss their findings