

Note: This is the third of a series on the Big6™, the most widely used approach to information problem-solving in the world. Students go through the Big6 stages—consciously or not—when they seek or apply information to solve a problem or make a decision. In addition to considering the Big6 as a process, the Big6 can be viewed as a set of basic, essential life skills that can be applied across situations—to school, personal, and work settings, and to all subject and grade levels. Students use the Big6 Skills whenever they need information to solve a problem, make a decision, or complete a task.

This article includes a brief overview of this Big6 stage by Rob Darrow, followed by articles by two exemplary Big6 teachers, Barbara Jansen and Rob Darrow, offering practical uses of the Big6 in elementary and secondary situations, respectively. Melinda Tooley and Mike conclude the set by introducing a specific function of the new software product, Big6™ TurboTools, relevant to that Big6 stage.

The bottom line of “Location and Access” is getting the needed source in your hands. This involves looking for “buried treasure” in stacks of books, in online databases, on the Web, or from experts. Trained “information treasure hunters” know *where* to look and *how* to find the needed source. In this stage, students should be able to:

- find the sources they need
- use indexes, online card catalogs, and Web searches
- physically locate and check out needed print sources in a library media center
- use the index and table of contents of print sources
- scan Web sites or digital sources for needed information
- save Web sites or articles for more in-depth reading later
- locate experts and develop interview questions

Traditionally, in this location and access stage, library media specialists teach students how to use the card catalog in the library media center, locate the book in the library media center, and then

use the index or table of contents to see if the needed information was in the book. With the Internet and digital libraries, location and



By Rob Darrow

access skills have become even more critical. Teachers can help students improve their “location and access treasure hunting” in a variety of practical ways:

- create a “treasure hunt” to have students locate sources (books, online articles in a subscription database, or an exact Web site)
- teach students how to use indexes—both print and digital
- have students practice using Internet search engines to locate one particular Web site
- teach students how to properly scan for needed information
- teach students how to locate an expert (e.g., search university directories, use Internet phone books, or contact book publishers)

Location and Access leads students through the process required to get the desired source or sources needed to complete an assignment. Often, this is the final stage (or only stage) that occurs under the direction of a library media specialist, so it is important that these critical skills are reinforced with each visit to the library media center. Once the needed resource is found in “location and access,” then students begin the next stage of the Big6, “Use of Information.” ■

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The Big6™

1. Task Definition

- 1.1 Define the information problem
- 1.2 Identify information needed in order to complete the task (to solve the information problem)

2. Information Seeking Strategies

- 2.1 Determine the range of possible sources (brainstorm)
- 2.2 Evaluate the different possible sources to determine priorities (select the best sources)

3. Location and Access

- 3.1 Locate sources (intellectually and physically)
- 3.2 Find information within sources

4. Use of Information

- 4.1 Engage (e.g., read, hear, view, touch) the information in a source
- 4.2 Extract relevant information from a source

5. Synthesis

- 5.1 Organize information from multiple sources
- 5.2 Present the information

6. Evaluation

- 6.1 Judge the product (effectiveness)
- 6.2 Judge the information problem-solving process (efficiency)

American History” grant (2002) that has teachers developing online content based on the California history content standards <www.cusd.com/calonline/tah>. He co-authored the “California Virtual School Report” funded through the University of California College Prep Program (2002) <www.uccp.org>. Rob was the vice president of educational technology for the California School Library Association from 1998–2003. He has been a teacher, library media specialist, and administrator in K–12 schools in California for the past 25 years. He can be reached via e-mail at robdarrow@cusd.com.

The Big6™. Mike Eisenberg, and his co-author Bob Berkowitz, created the Big6 approach to information problem-solving, and have worked with thousands of students (preK through higher education), as well as people in public schools, business, government, and communities to improve their information and technology skills. Visit <www.big6.com> for more information about Big6 Skills. Visit <www.linworth.com> for Big6 titles, posters, and bookmarks.

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