

For young learners, one of the most difficult stages of the information search process is to locate sources and find the information within each source. Once students identify the best sources for answering questions during the Information Seeking stage, they are generally directed to authoritative databases (including library holdings, electronic subscription databases, and reliable Web sites). At this point, teachers might assume that upper elementary students are able to locate sources and find information within sources, but sometimes students need instruction about how to do this important step. There are several reasons most students cannot achieve this step without extensive assistance: Whether the student is locating a book or Web site, 9- to 12-year-old children's levels of cognitive development may not be ready for the multistep process required to find a resource, especially one on the free or fee-based Web. Students must be able to spell correctly if independently using the library media center's online catalog or when searching within a subject directory or search engine. The vast number of books on library media center shelves, returns on a search of the online catalog, and articles that appear from a search of an electronic database may overwhelm a student to the point of rendering him or her helpless and ineffective. Additionally, students learn how to read by reading fiction, therefore they have little experience with nonfiction and in knowing how to read for information.

How can classroom teachers and library media specialists help make this Big6 Stage one that elementary students can manage? One option is to allow easy access to the



By Barbara A. Jansen

exact sources by providing a list of links (see Information Seeking Strategies article in previous issue) and putting library media center materials on reserve for specific topics. Once materials are identified and held for students, instruct them in the skills necessary to use the OPAC, Web directories, and databases on the free and fee-based Web to access the materials.

Locating Materials

Due to limited time for research and students' undeveloped skill level in locating sources, putting materials on reserve and making links available is a viable alternative to having students locate these resources independently. With the location stage of the process done for the students, more time can be spent on teaching skills needed to access information within the source. When providing links and putting library media center materials on physical reserve, consider modeling how you located those materials.

While it is easier and takes less time to put materials on reserve, we do, however, need to begin to teach students how to find some materials on their own. Certainly students in upper elementary grade levels can locate the proper volume of an encyclopedia, use the library media center's catalog to locate a book on the shelf, or learn to navigate through a children's subject directory such as KidsClick <www.kidclick.org>. Teaching short lessons (15–20 minutes) works just as well as longer teaching periods and will help keep students' attention while getting more accomplished in a single session. Students as young as second grade can find the correct encyclopedia volume, learn to seek the letter of a person's last name, or find the appropriate S volume for Saturn or the Sun by identifying the second letter of the word.

Tip: If you are teaching the use of the library media center's catalog

(subject and keyword searching) to locate materials for a class project, i.e., regions of the United States, you can teach the skill and have groups of students practice by locating the books on the shelves. Before the next class comes in for the same instruction, reshelf the books. Once the last class has had the instruction, the books are placed on the reserve cart.

Locating Web Sites Using Children's Subscription Databases

Many library media centers have access to databases targeted at the upper elementary age group: Gale's Kids InfoBits™, NewsBank KidsPage, EBSCOhost Searchasaurus, Sirs Discoverer®, and ProQuest® eLibrary® Elementary, to name a few. While these databases offer safe searching and subject directories, results can still be overwhelming and difficult to navigate. Be cautious when allowing students to search independently; the numerous hits and many links can confuse and frustrate even the brightest students. And, many of the irrelevant search returns can waste precious class time.

How do you maximize the potential power of these databases and use class time efficiently? Do your homework! Explore the best search terms for the upcoming topics and anticipate how your students will use the search features. Try varying your searches to see how the results change and judge the effectiveness of your searches. If students do their own searching under your supervision, you will need to guide students to the most effective search terms and word combinations.

Accessing Information Within a Source

Before instructing students in any information access skills, consider having them identify keywords and make a list of related words for their topics. This step provides more points of access and helps students identify words that may not be in their initial questions,

but that are used in the book or Web site. Teaching or reviewing traditional points of access, such as using an index or a table of contents, helps students find information within a book. Instead of teaching how to use the indexes in individual encyclopedias, help students understand the concept of how an index works as you have them practice with various print encyclopedias simultaneously. When using print encyclopedias,

consider presenting a brief lesson on opening the encyclopedia near the beginning, middle, or end, depending on the second letter of the word, before they begin to look for the exact page on which the article is located. Otherwise, many students try to find the article by going page by page!

Once the student has opened the book or encyclopedia to the chapter or article, demonstrate how

to read subheadings, first sentences in paragraphs, and captions, looking for keywords and related words to find the exact place to begin reading in detail. Skimming and scanning are important skills for efficiently accessing information within a source. While most elementary students find it difficult to skim and scan, mastery may not occur until high school or beyond. You may need to show younger students where to begin reading for information.

When an article is located on an electronic database or an appropriate Web site, the Find feature (Edit . . . Find) on an Internet browser can help students connect to their search terms. Using Find alleviates scrolling through long pages and missing the information altogether. Instruct students to input their keywords and related words into the Find function and perform several searches if the first word does not appear. Students who practice some of these strategies will feel less overwhelmed when collecting information for school projects. ■

SCHOOL LIBRARY MANAGEMENT FOR THE 21ST CENTURY Practical solutions to your toughest challenges.

\$5 off each book!

GET THEM THINKING! Use Media Literacy to Prepare Students for State Assessments
Sue Lockwood Summers

Improve standardized test scores by connecting media literacy and critical thinking! Revitalize your lessons and motivate students with engaging media literacy lessons for K-12.

1-58683-172-0 2005 160 pages \$39.95 \$34.95

DISTRICT LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION: A Big Picture Approach
Cynthia Anderson

Ease demands on your time and budget with this comprehensive guide. Quickly apply efficient and effective approaches to key administrative responsibilities in library system management.

1-58683-154-2 2005 160 pages \$39.95

ESSENTIAL DOCUMENTS FOR SCHOOL LIBRARIANS: "I've-Got-It" Answers to "I-Need-It-Now" Questions
Colleen MacDonell

Deliver the information your customers need, fast! Ready-made forms, checklists, guides, brochures and other support materials help you stand out as your learning community's essential information resource.

1-58683-174-7 2005 128 pages \$39.95

THE ESSENTIAL SCHOOL LIBRARY GLOSSARY
Jo Ellen Priest Misakian

Communicate more clearly with decision makers and others. This handy reference helps you articulate your media program's goals by providing simple definitions for key terms and concepts.

1-58683-150-X 2004 104 pages \$39.95

NEW!

NEW!

NEW!

Linworth
Your Trusted Library-to-Classroom Connection.
Books, Magazines and Online.

ORDER NOW! Call 800.786.5107 or visit www.linworth.com
Be sure to mention offer code HS53.

Copyright of Library Media Connection is the property of Linworth Publishing, Inc. and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.