

The Big6™ can be easily applied to any real-life, information-based situation. This is self-evident and understood by adults, but not necessarily by kids. However, when children learn the connection between the Big6 and real-life situations, they gain special insights and skills into information problem-solving, particularly Evaluation. The final stage of the Big6 is Evaluation—judging the product and the process.

Let's start with an example from my own life. Have you ever had to buy a new appliance? Recently, my clothes dryer started to make loud sounds every time I tried to do a load of clothes. After discovering that a service call would cost a minimum of \$75 plus parts and labor, I decided it was best to buy a new dryer (the noisy dryer was more than 10 years old).

So, my task (Big6 #1—Task Definition) was to buy a new clothes dryer. Before I made my purchase, I decided I would check *Consumer Reports* magazine, read online reviews, view Web sites for stores who sell dryers, visit appliance stores in my area, and talk to experts (Big6 #2—Information Seeking Strategies). After finding these various sources (Big6 #3—Location and Access) and then extracting and comparing the relevant information (Big6 #4—Use of Information), I made my brand and model decision and bought the new dryer (Big6 #5—Synthesis). I'm happy to report that this new dryer dries my clothes so quickly, it's hard to keep up with putting the clothes away! I am satisfied with the product I purchased and the process I used to determine the best dryer for me (Big6 #6—Evaluation). If I were to do it again (which hopefully I won't for a long time because at the time of this

article, my dryer is just three weeks old), I would follow the same process.

Recently, I had the good fortune to work with a group of high school teachers

in Ft. Worth, Texas. We talked at length about how in the Evaluation phase, most teachers focus on the product, not the process. As teachers, we are great at putting together scoring guides and rubrics, or determining grades on assignments. On occasion, we even have students review each other's writing assignments. However, we rarely have students judge the process they used to complete a project. Whether you teach history, English, Spanish, art, math, or science, it is important to have students reflect on the successful parts of the process in an assignment. Whether it is a research report, completion of textbook questions, writing an essay, or performing in the band, evaluating the process causes students to engage in a better process the next time.

As part of judging the process, students need to consider a few guidelines. You might ask questions such as:

- What was the most challenging part of completing this assignment?
- If you had more time on this assignment, what would you change or add?
- Which part of this assignment took you the most time?
- Will you use the same process for future assignments like this one? If no, what would you do differently? If yes, why?

The lesson that follows will help students learn to judge their Big6 process.

### Lesson—Evaluation: Judging the Process

At the end of your students' next assignment, set aside 15 minutes to have them answer the following questions. Then, as a class, discuss their answers. You may need to modify some of the questions or add ones to fit the assignment.

1. Look at the “Big6 Evaluation Process Questions” on the board or on a printout.
2. Identify the assignment to analyze.
3. Answer the questions. (5 minutes)

4. Talk with a partner about your answers. (5 minutes)
5. Share with the class some of the best ways you completed the process. (5 minutes)

### Big6 Evaluation Process Questions

1. Which source was the most helpful for this assignment?
2. Which source was the least helpful for this assignment?
3. Which parts of this assignment were the most challenging?
4. What was the most important thing you learned about doing research for this assignment?
5. Would you do this assignment differently next time? If so, explain what you would change.
6. Describe one new research skill that you learned or some efficient method(s) you discovered during this project.
7. If you could change or add one thing about your finished assignment, what would it be?

(Process questions adapted with permission from Chris Balsano, library media specialist, Downers Grove [Illinois] High School, “Final Reflection on the Research Process” <[www.csd99.k12.il.us/north/library/Research/reflection.htm](http://www.csd99.k12.il.us/north/library/Research/reflection.htm)>).

Check out the grades 7–12 section of the Big6 for Kids Web site for other process activities <[www.big6.com/kidsshowscategory.php?cid=37&subcat=35](http://www.big6.com/kidsshowscategory.php?cid=37&subcat=35)>. Ask your students to evaluate the process of completing assignments and you'll notice their assignments will improve.

Oops, there goes the nice “chime” on my new dryer. I need to go and get those clothes put away so I have more time to write articles like this! ■

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