Title: Information Literacy Unit: Selecting and Evaluating Resources

Audience: 9th Grade

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Rationale for the instruction: Information Literacy skills are the foundation for much of the work students will complete throughout their high school careers. Incoming ninth grade students have little to no background in information literacy instruction. This unit will provide students with the tools necessary to complete research assignments across all curricular areas. Students will learn how to evaluate resources for credibility, accuracy, and appropriateness, as well as reflect on their own learning.

Goal and Objectives

Overall Goal: The learners will understand the criteria for evaluating print and web resources.

Objectives:
1. The learner will select and apply appropriate resources to answer a series of investigative questions
2. The learner will analyze the authority of print or web resources to determine their credibility and accuracy.
3. The learner will use the I-LEARN model to reflect on what he / she has learned about evaluating resources.

Curriculum area addressed: Ninth Grade English Language Arts
Overview

I. Summary: This unit is comprised of a series of five activities with the overall goal of teaching a group of 9th grade students the skills to effectively evaluate print and web resources. These lessons are designed to be taught in collaboration between the 9th grade English teacher and the school librarian.

The unit begins with a scavenger hunt requiring students to explore a variety of websites and determine the reliability of each site. Following this activity is a lesson in which students locate resources appropriate for answering different types of research questions. The next lesson offers students the opportunity to apply the six criteria for evaluating sources to determine the appropriateness of sources they find on their own. Lesson three uses journals and teacher prompts to encourage students to reflect on the skills they have learned and how they will apply them in the future. During the summary lesson, students draw a topic from a basket and use the skills they have learned to locate an appropriate source and answer the question.

Each lesson in this unit applies a different assessment approach. These approaches include, students writing a five paragraph essay using a variety of sources to answer a research question, a performance assessment that asks students to choose between reliable and unreliable source, and a letter students write to incoming Freshmen based on their journal entries.

II. General Information
   a. Audience: The group is comprised of twenty-eight ninth-grade students. Sixteen students are female and twelve are male. Seventeen are African American, nine are Caucasian, and two are Asian. Five students have Individualized Education Plans that allow for extra time on tests, homework, and other assignments. These students are also allowed to retest any failing tests or quizzes. One student is provided written notes during all lectures. The students average a 6th grade reading level, but the students in the class range from 5th grade to 8th grade levels. The majority of the class could be described as visual and kinesthetic learners, so guided notes, demonstrations and hands on activities are incorporated into the lessons. The classroom teacher modifies the actual assignment to accommodate students who need additional time.
   
   b. Required Resources:
      i. Supplies for students:
         1. Paper and Copier supplies: 25 pages / student @ $.10 / page - $2.50 / student = $70.00
2. Computer and Print Resources: already available - no additional cost
   ii. Planning and Instructional Time: time for teacher and librarian covered by current salary arrangement - no additional cost
   iii. Additional Expenses: an additional $75.00 is budgeted to cover any unforeseen expenses.

c. Facilities for Instruction: The project takes place in the library classroom and adjacent computer lab. Students use the 28 computers available in the computer lab for their online searches. Each computer has a reliable internet connection and the software required for successful internet searches. The print resources required for this project are readily available for students in the library. These resources include, but are not limited to, academic journals, newspapers, magazines, and books.

III. Collaboration and Curriculum
   a. Curricular Standard: Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts, Writing, Grades 9-10:
      **Standard W.9-10.7:** Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation
      **Standard W.9-10.8:** Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.
   b. Teacher Partner: The teacher partner for this project is the students’ current English teacher. She uses the library frequently, values the library program, and is a long standing and respected faculty member.
   c. Rationale for Choice of grade level, teacher and standards: Incoming ninth grade students have little to no experience completing longer research projects that require the use of multiple sources. Ninth grade English teachers have reported that students have serious difficulty completing research assignments because they do not have the prior knowledge and experience necessary to properly evaluate and use information. Ninth grade students need this base of knowledge to be successful in all curriculum areas. All students are required to take four years of English, so English classes were a logical choice for this project. English is also one of the tested content areas on the High School Proficiency Assessment,
which is administered in eleventh grade and is a graduation requirement for all New Jersey high school students. The Common Core Standards for English Language Arts list three standards under the heading “Research to Build and Present Knowledge.” The two standards selected for this unit are appropriate for library instruction. The third standard focuses on literature and literary nonfiction and is beyond the scope of this assignment.

d. General Schedule for Collaboration:
   i. Meet in the teacher’s classroom to establish a general plan
   ii. Meet in the library to select resources for this project
   iii. Work with the teacher during the instructional sessions
   iv. Meet after the project is completed to discuss what was successful and what should be done differently in the future

e. Roles of the Teacher and the SLiMS: The classroom teacher describes the learners and their base knowledge to the librarian. She provides information about the students’ previous experience in the area of research and evaluating sources. The teacher informs students of the expectations of their behavior before the class arrives at the library. The librarian finds the resources needed for the assignments, develops the handouts or presentations, and makes the photocopies. The librarian introduces and explains the lesson to the students, and provides the instruction. The teacher assists as needed. The librarian informally assesses student learning during the lesson, while the teacher formally assesses their comprehension with later assignments to be graded.
**Strategies, Activities and Materials**

I. Introductory Activity  
   a. Detailed description  
      
   i. Meet with students and their teacher in the Media Center Computer Lab  
   
   ii. Begin a discussion about how the students usually gather information on the web. Include the following questions:  
       
       1. How do you usually search for information on the Web?  
       2. What sites do you visit most often?  
       3. Are your searches usually successful?  
       4. How do you know if a search is successful?  
       5. Are the websites you use reliable?  
       6. How do you know a website is reliable?  
   
   iii. Distribute the “Website Scavenger Hunt,” a packet containing  
       
       1. A list of websites the students are required to explore, some are reliable sources of information and some are not  
       2. Questions that the students must answer using the listed websites  
   
   iv. Challenge the students to find the solution to as many of the questions as possible in 20 minutes  
   
   v. Students work in pairs or independently on the computers to complete the scavenger hunt  
   
   vi. Circulate around the room to assist students as needed  
   
   vii. After 20 minutes check in with the class to see how many questions each student or student pair was able to answer  
   
   viii. Begin a discussion investigating the websites they explored and the information contained there  
       
       1. Students share the answers they found
2. Students share which websites they think are reliable sources and which they think are not reliable and why

3. Discuss what makes a website reliable
   a. Accuracy
   b. Authority
   c. Purpose
   d. Depth
   e. Currency
   f. Relevance

b. Time: 45 minutes
   i. 10 minutes for initial discussion and directions
   ii. 20 minutes for students to complete the scavenger hunt
   iii. 15 minutes for follow up discussion and wrap up

II. Objective #1: The learner will select and apply appropriate resources to answer a series of investigative questions.

   a. Main Concepts
      i. Students become familiar with online databases and select appropriate ones for different topics.

   b. Strategies/Activities/Materials
      i. Ask the students to list three different types of resources they use to answer a question and make a list in their notebook. Next to each resource, explain when they have used that resource. After a few minutes, have the students share their ideas and make a list of the types of resources everyone has used.

      ii. Ask the class to answer several questions about choosing a resource: “If you wanted to know the dates a president was in office, what resource might you use?” “If you were looking for a critical analysis of Romeo and Juliet, where would you look?” “If you wanted to learn more about a current event, where would you search for information?”
iii. Distribute a handout with a list of online databases and resources related to English and Language Arts and space for taking notes next to each resource. Briefly describe the content in the databases as the students take notes.

iv. Give students a handout with four questions and two choices of resources to use to answer each question. Students choose one of the resources to find the answer. After the question is answered, students must explain why the resource they chose was best for that type of question or prompt.

v. As a class, discuss the students’ findings and the resources they chose.

vi. Materials needed:

   1. Notebooks and writing materials
   2. Computers with access to online databases
   3. Guided notes handouts
   4. Question and answer handouts

c. Active Learner Engagement

   i. Students take part in a warm up activity to get them thinking about types of resources they have used.
   
   ii. Students partake in guided note taking while the librarian introduces useful resources and databases.
   
   iii. Students contribute their ideas and findings as part of a full class discussion.
   
   iv. Students collaborate with a partner to seek out answers to a research question in the resources that were introduced earlier in the class.

d. Informal Checks for Understanding

   i. The librarian encourages participation in the full class discussion at the beginning and end of the lesson
   
   ii. The teacher moves about the room to ensure the students are following along as the librarian introduces the Language Arts and Literature resources to the class.
iii. The librarian and teacher move about the room and monitor students as they work in pairs

e. Time

i. The total time for the lesson is two class periods, totaling 1 hour and 30 minutes.

1. 10 minutes for the warm-up activity
2. 15 minutes for explanation of the online resources and notetaking
3. 45 minutes to work on activity with partner
4. 20 minutes for discussion of findings and wrap-up

III. Objective #2 The learner will analyze the authority of print or web resources to determine their credibility and accuracy.

f. Main Concepts

i. The six criteria for evaluating sources: accuracy, authority, purpose, depth, currency, and relevance.

g. Strategies/Activities/Materials

i. Write the following prompt on the board: “How do you know when something is true?” Allow the students to discuss the prompt with a partner for two to three minutes and then ask the class to share responses. Facilitate the discussion for approximately five minutes.

ii. Using the SmartBoard, project the website dhmo.org and direct students to follow along while browsing the website and clicking through some of the links. Read some of the information aloud and ask students to decide how credible the information seems. If students had to write a report on DHMO right now, what would they say about it? After approximately five minutes, reveal what DHMO really is, and ask students what they think of this website in light of that new information. Reiterate that one of the objectives for this unit is for students to determine the authority of a resource.

iii. Distribute a guided notes handout for the six criteria for evaluating sources. Instruct students to follow along while presenting notes using PowerPoint. The students fill in the correct answers and examples on their worksheets.
iv. Place students into small groups of three or four. Students select one of the articles they have found in their research and use it for this part of the assignment. Students re-read their articles, using the guided notes handout to evaluate their sources. Students identify elements of their articles that satisfy each of the criteria for evaluating sources. Distribute different color highlighters for each group so students can color code for each criteria they find in their articles. After ten to fifteen minutes, students swap articles with another member of their group and evaluate that student’s article for the same criteria. If students have articles that are missing some or all of the criteria, they work together to determine what information they should look for in their next search so that they can gather more appropriate resources.

v. The following materials are needed for the lesson:

1. SmartBoard
2. Internet access
3. Guided notes handout
4. Pens, pencils, and highlighters
5. Students need to come to class prepared with at least one article.

h. Active Learner Engagement

i. Students participate in pair-share and whole group discussion. Students engage in respectful dialogue with their peers. Students learn to support their arguments with evidence.

ii. Students participate in guided note taking. Students are attentive during the lecture and listen for the correct answers needed to complete their notes.

iii. Students work in small groups. Students collaborate with their peers to solve a problem.

i. Informal Checks for Understanding

i. The librarian and the teacher monitor pair-share discussion by circulating the room.

ii. The librarian facilitates whole group discussion and encourages reluctant students to participate in small ways.
iii. The teacher circulates to monitor guided note taking while the librarian lectures. The teacher keeps students on task by gently redirecting them.

iv. The librarian and teacher visit each small group during group work to assess their progress. The librarian and teacher ask students questions and evaluate progress on written work.

j. Time

i. The entire lesson is taught in one and a half class periods. The majority of the lesson is practice time for students to apply the skills they have learned in the lesson. Students work together in groups for thirty-five minutes. The librarian provides direct instruction in the form of guided notes for approximately ten minutes. The remainder of the time is dedicated to partner and whole class discussion, and instruction and direction from the librarian.

IV. Objective #3 The learner will use the I-LEARN model to reflect on what he/she has learned about evaluating resources.

c. Key Concepts

i. The steps of the I-LEARN model, with a focus on the reflection part of the model

d. Activities/Strategies/Materials

i. At the end of the unit, the librarian directs students to turn to a blank page in their journals. The librarian posts the following prompts on the board:

1. In what areas of the research process did you struggle the most?
2. What research strategies worked for you?
3. What will you do differently for your next research assignment?
4. What advice would you give to someone just starting a research project?
5. How will you use what you learned here to evaluate resources in the future?

ii. Students write independently for fifteen minutes. Then, as a class, students share their “best” sentences, or more if they choose.

e. Learner Engagement

i. Journal writing allows students to think and reflect without focusing on grammar and structure. Students enjoy responding to writing prompts in journals because they are free to respond in a format they are comfortable with. Students who wish to share their responses may share part or all of their responses with the class, which leads to discussion and personal reflection on their own writing.

f. Informal checks for understanding
i. Before giving the students time to write in their journals, the teacher and librarian give students the opportunity to ask questions if they need any clarification.

ii. While the students are writing in their journals the teacher and librarian circulate to give further prompts to students who may have a difficult time getting started.

g. Time: The total time for this objective is 25 minutes
   i. Completed during the second half of the final class period
   ii. 15 minutes are spent responding to prompts
   iii. 10 minutes are spent sharing responses

V. Summary Activity

h. Detailed description: Compile a selection of interesting and fun questions for the summary activity. Students blindly select a topic from a basket. Students have fifteen minutes to use the library’s resources to find the answer to their question. Students focus on using the skills they have learned to select an accurate and appropriate resource. After fifteen minutes have elapsed, students share their question and the answer they found with the class. Students also explain how they determined the accuracy and reliability of their resource.

i. Time: Five minutes to explain assignment and distribute questions. Fifteen minutes for students to research their question. Ten minutes to share their responses with the class.

Assessing Learning

I. Objective #1:

   i. Give students three essay questions to choose from. Students locate at least three resources, each from a different book, database or online resource that pertain to the questions. Using the resources, students write a five-paragraph essay that answers the question, incorporating information from each of the three resources.
   ii. Essays will be graded based on a rubric. The focus of the rubric is on the selection and application of resources to answer the question.

b. Reasons for choosing instrument: Standard W.9-10.7 states that students will “conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question” and that they will “synthesize multiple sources on the subject.” Standard W.9-10.8 states that students will “gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas.” An essay
assessment requires students to conduct research using multiple resources and synthesize the information to answer a question.

II. Objective #2
   i. Give students two resources on a specific topic. One resource meets most or all of the criteria for accuracy and reliability. One resource only minimally meets the requirements. Students select the more appropriate resource and supply at least five examples of evidence supporting their choice. Students identify reasons why the other source does not meet the requirements. Students fill in their answers on a worksheet and submit for a grade.

b. Reasons for choosing instrument: Standard W.9-10.8 states that students will “gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources” and “assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question.” This assignment requires students to gather information from multiple sources and assess the usefulness of that information.

III. Objective #3
   i. Ask students to compose a letter to next year’s 9th graders, based on their journal entries, describing the way they chose resources before this unit, and what they plan to do differently now that the unit is complete.

   ii. Sample of I-LEARN Rubric

| Reflects on the information process and product | Thoroughly analyzes the process and skills presented in the five activities/lessons in this unit, and creates a letter that: *is thoroughly developed *thoroughly discusses their previous approach to evaluating resources | Analyzes the process and skills presented in a limited manner and creates a letter that: *is partially developed *partially discusses their past approach to evaluating resources *gives a partial explanation of | Analyzes only the process or the skills presented, and creates an incomplete letter that: *discusses only their past or new approach to evaluating resources *does not include an explanation of why changes to their | Fails to analyze the process or skills. Fails to complete a letter. |
b. Reasons for choosing instrument: Standard W.9-10.7 states that students are able to demonstrate an understanding of the subject under investigation. This journaling activity allows students the opportunity to describe what they learn from the assignment as well as to reflect on any difficulties they encountered, thus displaying the depth of their understanding of this subject.
Evaluating and Revising Instruction

I. Evaluating Learners’ Achievement
   a. Describe how to analyze and report outcomes of assessment:
      i. The classroom teacher grades the essays using the rubric.
      ii. The classroom teacher reads and grades the written responses to the performance assessment.
      iii. Use a modified I-LEARN rubric to evaluate the letters students have written to the upcoming 9th graders. While analyzing these responses, focus on the quality of the content rather than the mechanics (grammar and punctuation) of the writing. Compile a written summary of this analysis as a report.

II. Evaluating Overall Instruction
   a. Describe data sources besides direct assessment:
      i. Use questionnaires and surveys to collect data from students about the outcome of the instruction. The information gathered from the surveys is used to write a formal report that can later be presented to school administration, school board members, and parents.
      ii. Conduct student interviews to collect data about the outcome of the instruction. Use quotations from students in the formal report.
      iii. Ask at least one colleague to review the lessons, activities, and assessments.
   b. Describe the data you will collect and why you will collect it:
      i. The student survey provide information about how helpful the students found the assignments, how useful and relevant the students felt the assignments were, and their comfort level in evaluating resources after completing the unit.
         1. Sample Survey Questions:

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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<tr>
<td>The assignments were helpful for practicing what I was taught.</td>
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<td>I feel comfortable evaluating resources for future assignments.</td>
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<td>The topics and assignments were interesting.</td>
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<td>The information covered is relevant to what we</td>
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ii. In the interviews, students describe their confidence in completing these types of assignments both before and after the unit, the most valuable skill they feel they learned, and the reasons why they feel these skills are important. This data is used to determine whether the assignments and activities are helping the students to meet the stated goals and objectives of the unit and if students are making real life connections to the content.

1. Sample Interview Questions:
   a. Before beginning this unit, how comfortable were you conducting research assignments and evaluating your sources?
   b. What do you feel is the most valuable skill you learned over the course of this unit?
   c. Why do you think it is important for students to know how to select accurate and reliable sources for their research?
   d. Is there anything that could have been done differently to help you learn better?

c. Describe how you will analyze the data: Use data gathered from the student surveys and interviews to prepare a formal report on the effectiveness of the instructional unit. Work with the teacher to prepare this report, and include his/her professional assessment of the unit. The report also includes a summary of the activities in the unit so stakeholders can see exactly what was accomplished throughout the unit. Samples of student work are also included in the report.

III. Revising Instruction
   a. Three Uses for the Data Collected:
      i. The grades from the three assessments demonstrate the students’ understanding of the subject matter. If numerous students struggle with the assessments there is a lack of understanding during the instruction or on the assessments. Instruction would need to be revised to increase student understanding.
      ii. Data from the student surveys and interviews provide information on whether or not the students found the lessons to be relevant. Revisions could be made to make the material more relevant to class material and real-world information seeking. The surveys and interviews will also demonstrate the students’ evaluation of their own research skills as related to the lesson. Additional practice activities could be added to the lessons if the students do not feel comfortable using the skills taught.
iii. Any comments or suggestions from the colleagues who reviewed the unit could be used to edit or enhance the activities.
Reporting Results

I. Context

a. Audience for your work: Students, parents, school board members, and school administration (principal, vice principal, department supervisor) are all stakeholders.

b. Reasons audience might want this report: Administrators want to see collaboration between teachers and library staff. These stakeholders need to see that the library is a valuable resource. They also want to see students developing the critical thinking skills that will help them to be successful in all subject areas and in their future. School board members want to see evidence of a qualified and competent staff. They also want to see that the budget is being utilized effectively. Parents want to see that the curriculum is relevant and rigorous. They want to know that their children are being prepared for the future. Finally, students are stakeholders as well. They want to be successful and they expect teachers to provide them with the tools for future success.

c. Format and reasons for choice: The final report is a narrative with tables and interview transcripts as appendices. Tables present the quantitative data in a format that is easy to read. Some direct quotes from the students will be included to give the stakeholders a sampling of the responses. The evaluation by a colleague will be included in the report to allows stakeholders to hear the opinions on the unit from another professional.

II. Report

a. The goal and learning objectives

   i. Goal: The learners will understand the criteria for evaluating print and web resources

   ii. Objective 1: The learner will select and apply appropriate resources to answer a series of investigative questions.

   iii. Objective 2: The learner will analyze the authority of print or web resources to determine their credibility and accuracy.

b. Report on data collected: The final report on data collected is composed of several elements. The first section of the report will include table to present the data from the student surveys and a brief summary of the findings. The second section will be a narrative description of the student responses to interview questions. The third section will be a brief evaluation of the unit written by a colleague. Lastly, the report include a brief self evaluation and conclusion written by the librarian and teacher. This will summarize the findings for the stakeholders and present the implications from the results.
c. Report on strategies for revision: This report is based on the self-assessments from both the librarian and the teacher, the evaluation from a colleague, and the data from the student surveys and interviews. The information gathered and data provided in this report will be used to guide the revision this unit in the following ways:

i. The grades from the three assessments demonstrate the student’s understanding of the subject matter. If numerous students struggle with the assessments it indicates a lack of understanding and instruction needs to be revised to increase student understanding.

ii. Data from the student surveys and interviews provide information on whether or not the students found the lessons to be relevant. Revisions could be made to make the material more relevant to class material and real world information seeking. The surveys and interviews will also demonstrate the students’ evaluation of their own research skills as related to the lesson. Additional practice activities could be added to the lessons if the students do not feel comfortable using the skills taught.

iii. Any comments or suggestions from the colleagues who reviewed the unit could be used to edit or enhance the activities.
Works Cited
