Choosing and Summarizing Internet Resources

Amy Ogasawara
Miyazaki International College (Miyazaki, Japan)
AOGASAWA [at] pmail.miyazaki-mic.ac.jp
http://www.miyazaki-mic.ac.jp/~aogasawa/Homepage.html

Skills: summarizing, critical thinking

Purpose: This lesson assumes that the purpose for finding Internet resources is for a research paper or project. But the worksheets could be adapted for other, less academic purposes.

Introduction

Students enjoy surfing the Internet, but one of the problems we as teachers have with using this fun new skill, is turning it into a sound and profitable experience for them. Many times, students cruise from one article or topic to another without really comprehending what it is they are seeing on the screen in from of them. They often skim the surface, but end up without an article or any data for their classroom assignment/research. This can prove to be frustrating for both the students and the teachers.

Therefore, the purpose of this lesson is to teach students a step by step process to follow in a) choosing an Internet resource, and b) summarizing the information found for future reference, or use in a paper or writing assignment. It is also designed to begin to teach students the importance of siting their sources.

Overview

After first teaching students the basics of surfing the Internet (should be done in one class period), the following two part lesson provides guided practice of the new skill.

The first part of the lesson focuses on choosing a source. Students have to analyze the information on the screen and make critical judgements as to whether or not it is relevant to their topic.

The second part of the lesson is a practice in the beginning stages of summarizing, and a guide for moving on to the next step in research, via asking more questions. In addition, students are provided with a space for writing down notes, including quotes, statistics, and other important information they may want to include in their findings, writing, or presentation.

Process

Part One:

When students come into the class, ask them to randomly choose one source which they think they could use in their research, and one which is not so relevant to their work. As they are surfing and choosing, it is interesting for the teacher to wander around behind them to see if there is any method they are using to choose sources. You will find that most of them are clicking and watching the screen, while a few of them are taking notes to help them decide on sources to mark.

When it appears that they have chosen their sources, give them two of the first worksheet, "Choosing Internet Resources." They should fill out one for each source. By giving them the worksheet after they found their sources, they are able to see more explicitly how they go through the process of deciding and choosing.

Part Two:

For the second part of the lesson, have the students transfer the information from the one source they want to keep (use in their research), to the other worksheet titled "Summarizing Internet Resources".

When they get to the "questions" box on the worksheet, could either brainstorm for questions stimulated from the article, or in small groups.

Homework:

For homework, students should find one more source on the Internet, using the "Choosing" worksheet as a guide (they need not fill it out each time they look at a source), and filling in the "Summarizing" worksheet for the one they chose.

It is helpful if you are doing a research project covering several weeks if students use the "Summarizing" for every source they use in collecting data.

The Worksheets
Editor's Note: Due to limitations of HTML, there is not as much space displayed for each question as was in the original submission. You may want to save this as text, then edit it to suit your needs.

Choosing Internet Resources

Quick Reference

Title of resource:

URL:

Skimming the Resource

1. Look for bold or colored words. What do they tell you about this resource? Jot down a few key words that tell you what this resource is going to be about.

2. Read the title(s). What added information have you gained?
3. Read the first and last lines in each paragraph.

Analyze

1. Do you think this resource will be helpful to you? Why or why not?

2. What do you like about this resource? (Amount of information? Organization? Graphics?)

3. How will this information help you in your research?

Summarizing Internet Resources

Quick Reference

Title of resource:

URL:

Summarize

- What are the main points in this resource?

- What facts can you use for your research?

- Quotes:

- Statistics:

Questions

An important part of the learning process is asking questions. The more we learn, the more we realize how much we don't know! As you explore each source, you should be asking yourself some questions. Some will be practical and some will be more theoretical. Write **as many** questions as you can think of as you explore this source.

Site Your Source!

Author(s):

Title:

Date: