

Secondary Research Strategies Using IIM

(The Independent Investigation Method)

Step 1 – Topic

Immersion activities and a presearch of the literature give students enough background information to choose a topic from the class unit and develop a concept map.

You can:

- Raise controversial issue about class unit topic
- Distribute interest center materials for class browsing
- Dress-up for role play (John Adams, Harriet Beecher Stowe)
- Choose topics from common pre-reading – Textbook chapter, etc.
- Plan a speaker or field trip
- Make class concept map of unit topic
- Combine literature with other subject area – SS, math, science
- Use information from one study (biomes) as foundation for next (paleontology)
- Have curriculum content (geology) and tested skills (narrative writing) drive study

Students can:

- Choose from teacher list
- Develop personal study plan
- Choose one time period from unit to research (Civil War: before, during, after)
- Do a “Quick Write” about topic
- Conduct a presearch of targeted reading to narrow topic
- Record prior knowledge and questions on concept map

Step 2 – Goal Setting

The teacher works with students to set research goals and formulate a research question.

You can:

- Design and post broad Teacher Questions from local, state, and/or national standards as foundation of unit and student research
- Give specific goals for amount and type of resources, and number of notefacts and glossary entries
- Require research and focus questions beyond knowledge level
- Model the use of opinion questions that allow for analysis of information

Students can:

- Develop research questions based on topic and Essential (Teacher) Questions
- Write sub-questions (focus questions) to guide research
- Use activities to vary “focus” question types – cubes, spinner, question starters, Blooms
- Identify several valid resources for Step 3

Your Notes

Step 3 – Research

Students gather data from primary and secondary sources using bibliography and notefact cards.

You can:

- Teach students to take notes from different types of resources
- Teach about different types of plagiarism and how to avoid it
- Continue to monitor for plagiarism
- Let students know you can track plagiarism especially on Internet sites
- Bookmark Internet sites – be sure to preview them
- Partner with librarian, G/T specialist, computer teacher, and/or teachers from other disciplines
- Help students identify key words for library or Internet search

Students can:

- Use variety of sources for formal resources
- Use different formats for notefacts – by categories, grid, KWL chart, cards
- Attach copies of Internet articles to final paper
- Write observation, opinion, new idea at bottom/back of card or beside notefact in different color ink
- Practice notetaking in other assignments as chapter review, main ideas, etc.
- Cite sources using approved format
- Use glossary words for Internet search

Step 4 – Organizing

Students organize, analyze, and interpret their data to draw conclusions about their research and focus questions.

You can:

- Give credit for supplementary notefacts not necessary to prove thesis statement
- Assign graphic organizer to document proof of thesis statement
- Post graphic organizers as learning tool for other students about different unit topics

Students can:

- Organize notefacts by focus question
- Identify sub-categories for large body of information
- Develop thesis statement from categorized notefacts
- Identify notefacts essential to supporting thesis statement
- Represent information on graphic organizer
- Present thesis statement and graphic representation to classmates

Your Notes

Step 5 – Goal Evaluation

Students reflect on the research process using objective and subjective evaluations.

You can:

- Check new vocabulary through written paragraph, poem, acrostic, riddle . . .
- Use Essential (Teacher) Questions for open-ended test
- Use rubric to evaluate process
- Conference with students to review process and new findings

Students can:

- Write paragraph about one focus question
- Write position statement and supporting paragraph
- Play class game to share/review information
- Self-evaluate
- Reflect on the process of being a researcher

Step 6 – Product

After students decide on an audience, they choose and develop products that share key findings. The teacher may also require a research paper.

You can:

- Set standards for quality product on rubric/checklist
- Assign one product type to all students
- Vary products to address different talents/learning styles
- Assign different types of writing that require understanding of notes and eliminate plagiarism (poetry, play, fiction, autobiography, journal, letters, personal narrative, persuasive essay, instructional writing)

Students can:

- Write research paper/report
- Choose from variety of product types to match topic and audience
- Use rubric criteria to design quality product

Step 7 – Presentation

Students plan, organize, and present their findings to an audience.

You can:

- Set up venue to feature student work: museum, theater, courtroom, laboratory
- Set quality presentation standards on rubric/checklist
- Give test based on information from all presentation topics

Students can:

- Identify proper audience for product
- Practice necessary skills
- Record information from other students' presentations on study guide based on (Essential) Teacher Question(s)

Your Notes