



## KATHERINE DELMAR BURKE SCHOOL

# Information Literacy

## The Research Process

### INTRODUCTION

#### A Continuum of Experiences Lower School Library Program

“Information literacy” is all-important for citizens of an information-rich, technology-driven democracy. The Lower School Library Program of Katherine Delmar Burke School therefore takes seriously its responsibility to prepare students to assume responsibility for pursuing and processing both information and ideas.

The term “information literacy” refers to the set of abilities and understandings needed to engage effectively and responsibly in the research process. Learning experiences needed to develop “information literacy” are intertwined but do fall into two categories: 1) strategies and skills 2) social responsibilities.

The long-term goals of developing “information literacy” can be summed up as follows: To grow curious, competent, confident, and personally connected learners—learners who are able to fully and responsibly process information and ideas and who have a life-long love of learning. It is also important to note that “information literacy” applies to academic, professional, and personal goals at present and for the future.

There are many accepted approaches to developing “information literacy.” The BURKE’S Lower School Library has tailored it own, drawing with appreciation on “The Big Six,” developed by Mike Eisenberg and Robert Berkowitz. Although the BURKE’S approach appears methodical, there is recognition that actual research is sometimes non-sequential and inconclusive. Emphasis is on providing students with manifold and meaningful research experiences.

The BURKE’S Lower School Library program proceeds along two tracks—“information literacy” and literature appreciation. Each has its own set of discrete and detailed benchmarks, but the two tracks are inextricably blended when it comes to curriculum design and learning experiences.

The BURKE’S Lower School Library “information literacy” benchmarks suggest a continuum of research experiences from kindergarten through fourth grade. Those research experiences are girded by important principles and supported by helpful teaching strategies aimed at attaining “information literacy” goals for Lower School students.

## Principles

Learning experiences that promote “information literacy” are

- designed to be developmentally appropriate. (child-centered)
- designed to foster personal interest. (curiosity)
- designed to foster personal investment. (connection)
- designed to foster integration of specific abilities and understandings (integration)
- grounded in the overall grade-level curriculum. (contextual)
- developed around units in the grade-level curriculum. (integrated)
- embedded in every subject area. (cross curricular)
- designed to recognize the value of supported but increasingly more difficult research experiences. (comfortable challenge)
- are both linear and circular. (spiraling)
- designed to foster diverse research experiences that draw on many times, places, cultures, and areas of inquiry. (mirrors of diversity)
- meaningful within the curriculum and with regard to life experiences. (relevant)
- designed for research conducted with traditional sources and/or technology. (broadly applicable)
- seen as foundational in a society with open access to information and ideas. (intellectual freedom)

## Teaching Strategies

Learning experiences that promote “information literacy”

- are introduced with specific examples as to process and product. (modeling)
- allow for practice of developing abilities and understandings in research and presentation of information (application)
- provide necessary and specific repetition for developing abilities and understandings in research and presentation of information. (guided practice)
- build on, deepen and expand on specific abilities and understandings. (incremental)
- use meaningful, hands-on activities and appropriate materials. (active learning)
- use meaningful rubrics to assess development. (authentic assessment)
- provide opportunities to apply developing abilities and understandings in a meaningful research project. (culminating project)

**Information Literacy Goals for Students**competence in the research process

Learning experiences that promote “information literacy” are intended to

- develop students who research information and ideas efficiently and effectively. (confidence in research strategies/skills)
- develop students who communicate research findings efficiently and effectively. (confidence in expression)
- instill in students a sense of pride in original work. (ownership)
- nurture in students the spirit of inquiry. (curiosity)
- nurture in students a personal investment in research. (connection)
- nurture in students a commitment to sound research. (accuracy)
- develop students who use research for academic, professional, and personal goals in the future. (life-long learning)
- promote in students evaluative/analytical skills. (creative and critical thinking)
- develop in students a commitment to high standards in conduct of research. (excellence)
- develop students who pursue excellence in research on their own. (independence)
- develop students who pursue excellence in research as part of a community of learners. (collaboration)

social responsibility in the research process

Learning experiences that promote “information literacy” are intended to

- instill an understanding of the library as a shared resource. (cooperation)
- foster individual and group learning. (independence/collaboration)
- teach ways to avoid plagiarism. (original work)
- instill respect for intellectual property and fair use. (crediting sources/citation)
- foster safe and ethical behavior with regard to information and information technology. (responsible use)

**CONTENT**  
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**STRATEGIES AND SKILLS**

- STEP #1     DEFINING NEED/QUESTION OR INFORMATION GOAL (wonder and ask)
- STEP #2     DEVELOPING SEARCH STRATEGY (determine, identify, and evaluate)
- STEP #3     LOCATING AND ACCESSING INFORMATION (find and sort)
- STEP #4     UTILIZING INFORMATION (engage and extract)
- STEP #5     INTERPRETING INFORMATION (organize and present)
- STEP #6     EVALUATING RESEARCH (reflect on product and reflect on process)

**SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

- POINT #1    SHARING SPACE AND RESOURCES (cooperation)
- POINT #2    PRODUCING QUALITY WORK INDEPENDENTLY AND IN COLLABORATION (responsibility and motivation)
- POINT #3    PRODUCING ORIGINAL WORK (counter plagiarism)
- POINT #4    CREDITING SOURCES (citation)
- POINT #5    USING ELECTRONIC SOURCES IN A RESPONSIBLE WAY (safe and ethical behavior)

**SOURCES**

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