

INTERNET INQUIRY PLAN

Application 5: Internet Inquiry Plan

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For this Internet Inquiry, eighth grade students will explore the world of current Technology Gadgets, developing questions and conducting research that illuminates what is on the cutting edge today. This Internet Inquiry will help to excite the students about technology and open their eyes to the amazing possibilities that today's and tomorrow's gadgets have.

In the Question Phase, I will provide a list of categories and sample gadgets that students may want to explore for their project. For example, there will be a category called "Mobile Communication" that includes cell phones, GPS devices, watches, and PDAs. Students will be urged to review the list but will not be required to choose a gadget from it. Instead, they may choose to develop questions about a gadget that they own, a gadget that they have seen or heard about, or a gadget in which they have personal interest. Each student's final choice must be taken to me for approval, and I will also moderate the question-writing session closely, reading the students' questions and offering suggestions for enhancement and revision.

In the Search Phase, students will begin to explore current trends and inventions related to their chosen gadget. They will start their search with Thinkronize, a prescreened directory that offers reliable and easy-to-understand basic information. As their search expands, students will be encouraged to use information from reliable sources, including Wired, engadget, ISTE, ZDnet, slashdot, ThinkGeek, and major news publications. Each time a good source is found by a student in the class, that student will

share the source and a link will be added to the classroom blog for other students to use. I will announce checkpoints throughout the search process, reminding students about their time-management and about the searching strategies that were covered in earlier digital media classes.

During the Analyze Phase, students will examine the information that they have gathered, determining the reliability of the information and the relevancy that each source has to the questions they have proposed. They will be encouraged to examine URLs, search for other works by the authors, determine how recently the information was published, and look for reviews and second opinions by other sources (Leu, 2004). For some students, they may have to revisit their original questions at this time and make slight modifications to their inquiries, getting all changes approved by me.

Next, in the Compose Phase, students will choose two ways to sharing their information ... they can write a review on the classroom blog, storyboard and film a 30-second commercial, create a multimedia presentation, or produce a digital graphic of a conceptual technical drawing (Leu, 2004). Each of these mediums will have separate requirements that will be outlined on the provided rubric. Creativity and expression will be encouraged, and each medium will include a section where the student extrapolates information to predict the effects and results of this gadget's introduction.

Finally, students will share their researched information with their classmates in the Share Phase. Blog reviews will be shared in an informal interactive session, where

each student reads and comments on the reviews independently during a set classroom time. Multimedia presentations and commercials will be alternated during class, allowing students to get up and present their findings in an interactive setting with their peers. Finally, conceptual art will be posted to the blog for reviews and also printed out for inclusion on the classroom bulletin board, where students throughout the school can see their research and creativity in action.

Overall, this Internet Inquiry should serve to excite the students about technology while giving them ownership of its effect on their lives and futures. As students discover resources and begin to share their findings, their enthusiasm should be contagious, igniting their interest and provoking even more higher-level thinking and questioning.

Reference:

Leu, D.J., Leu, D.D., & Coiro, J. (2004) Teaching With the internet K-12: New Literacies for New Times (4th ed.). Norwood, MA: Christopher - Gordon Publishers, Inc.