

Big6 ^[1]

Type of Speech:

noun ^[2]

Definition:

Problem-solving approach to teaching information literacy skills.

Additional Information:

The Big6 strategies are:

1. Task definition: what needs to be done?
2. Information seeking strategies: what resources can I use?
3. Location and access: where can I find the resources?
4. Use of information: what can I use from the resources?
5. Synthesis: how can I organize and present the information?
6. Evaluation: how will I know I did the job well?

Media specialists and information literate teachers have been teaching students the *Big6 Skills Model of Information Problem-Solving* for years. By using this research approach, students can easily master the six-step process (just 3 steps for K-2!) and take responsibility for both the process and the product of their research. This is an important skill set for student school success, but can this help them even more in Real Life? Perhaps.

Students are faced with all sorts of tests, both in school and beyond, and these tests require not just mastery of the content, but also the process. It is not enough to learn the amendments to the Constitution and the associated landmark court cases; students must see how these historical events have relevance beyond the end-of-course test. Productive citizens need to be able to find and analyze information, organize and evaluate their ideas, and apply this process to their everyday lives. This is profoundly challenging in the media-rich world we live in today.

A key component of the Big6 is the final step — reflection. Too often, students complete an assignment and quickly move on to the next thing without considering the process that got them there. Sure, they get feedback about the final product when they get their grade, but what have they learned about themselves, their work, and the research process? Whether they are pleased with the outcome or want to do better next time, it is important to assess the process, not just the product. Reflecting (or Reviewing for the little ones) provides students with an opportunity to consider their path and adjust according to what worked. Critical assessment of the process provides them with a list of fruitful strategies as well as indicators for areas where improvement or redirection are necessary. Reflective students have a better sense of how to approach their next information problem-solving situation.

How can we encourage reflection? Make reflection part of the process by encouraging students to keep track of their experiences with the research process over time using a blog or journal to record self-assessments. Ask students questions about both the process and the product to jump-start their reflective writing. For example:

- Did you use your time well?
- Does your product meet (or exceed) the assignment requirements?
- Is your final paper a thoughtful response to the assignment?
- Would you be proud for anyone to read this paper?

By teaching an information process like the Big6, we help students not just to know where to start with a major research paper, but more essentially, to think about their thinking, and to understand their strengths and tackle their limitations. By modeling this or another learning and problem-solving process, we demonstrate that we, too, are lifelong learners, and we are willing and able to adjust to new information. Developing and refining a system that incorporates self-correction will prepare students for much more than the test; start your students off with a flexible information problem-solving approach like the Big6 and they'll be learning how to learn in no time!

For further explanation:

The [Big6](#) ^[3] website, including the [Big6 for Kids](#) ^[4] section.

Source URL: <https://ncpedia.org/glossary/big6>

Links

[1] <https://ncpedia.org/glossary/big6> [2] <https://ncpedia.org/category/parts-speech/noun> [3] <http://big6.com/pages/about/big6-skills-overview.php> [4] <http://big6.com/pages/kids.php>