

The Big6™ Helps Students Achieve Standards

By Janet Murray

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Standards describe what students should **know** and **be able to do**. The Big6™ Skills is an information problem-solving process that can help students achieve educational standards by giving them strategies to accomplish the “able to do” part of the definition of standards.

A variety of organizations have developed Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) Literacy standards; most school librarians are familiar with the American Association of School Librarians *Standards for 21st Century Learners*. The Association for College and Research Libraries has also published standards that may be a useful reference with secondary students. The TRAILS site gives us an independent tool to help students evaluate their information literacy skills in five categories. Technology teachers are more likely to use ISTE’s National Educational Technology Standards for Students (NETS-S). In the chart below, notice the correlations between Big6 #1 Task Definition and each of these sets of ICT Literacy Standards:

ICT Literacy Standards related to Big6 #1: Task Definition	
AASL	1.1.3 Develop and refine a range of <i>questions</i> to frame the search for new understanding. 1.2.1 Display initiative and engagement by posing <i>questions</i> and investigating the answers beyond the collection of superficial facts.
ACRL	1.1 Defines and articulates the need for information.
TRAILS	1. Develop topic.
ISTE NETS-S	3a Plan strategies to guide <i>inquiry</i> 4a Identify and <i>define</i> authentic problems and <i>significant questions</i> for investigation
Compiled by Janet Murray from " AASL Standards for the 21st-Century Learner ." © 2007. American Association of School Librarians. < http://www.ala.org/aasl/standards >;	
" Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education ." © 2000. Association of College and Research Libraries. < http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/acrl/standards/informationliteracycompetency.cfm >;	
TRAILS : Tools for Real-Time Assessment of Information Literacy Skills < http://www.trails-9.org >; and ISTE. <i>National Educational Technology Standards (NETS-S) for Students</i> .	

Notice the emphasis on inquiry and asking questions. At its most basic level, information literacy means that all students must know how to ask good questions, find appropriate, relevant, reliable sources of information, and synthesize that information to create an original product. The Big6 gives us a valuable tool to teach those skills.

The skills described as ICT Literacy also appear in curriculum standards. Many states subscribe to the Common Core State Standards Initiative in English/Language Arts and Mathematics. “These standards define the knowledge and skills students should have within their K-12 education careers so that they will graduate high school able to succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing academic college courses and in workforce training programs.” Here, too, we find standards pertaining to what might be labeled “research skills.”

Common Core Standards Related to Big6 #1: Task Definition
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Writing	7. Conduct short as well as more sustained <i>research</i> projects based on <i>focused questions</i> , demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
Mathematical Practices	1. Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them: ... plan a solution pathway 4. Model with mathematics: ... apply mathematics to solve problems arising in everyday life
Compiled by Janet Murray and Colet Bartow from The Common Core State Standards Initiative corestandards.org .	

The Big6 Skills is useful to students *not only* when they are doing research. It can be used to solve problems in mathematics as well as everyday situations.

For more detailed correlations between the Big6 and these sets of standards, see

"[Big6 Skills Aligned with ICT Literacy Standards](http://janetsinfo.com/Big6_ICTLitStds.htm)" <http://janetsinfo.com/Big6_ICTLitStds.htm>

"[Big6 Skills Aligned with Common Core Standards](http://janetsinfo.com/Big6_CCSSIStds.htm)" <http://janetsinfo.com/Big6_CCSSIStds.htm>

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