

Visual Literacy: The Memorial Project

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Related Big6 Skills: All

As a classroom teacher, my kindred spirit at Harper Creek High School in Battle Creek, Michigan is the school librarian, Jackie Tafoya. Perhaps this is due to our shared passion for books. However, I think it is more likely due to our similar approaches and our journeys. We are constantly searching. So, it seemed a natural fit to participate in a workshop that encouraged collaboration between librarian and teacher. The workshop was Big6 and the facilitator was Big6 co-founder, Bob Berkowitz. The opportunity for collaboration was afforded to us due to the vision of Lakeview High School's media specialist, Margaret Lincoln, and the generous funding of an Expert in Residence Grant through the W.K Kellogg Foundation. Jackie and I have always collaborated but Big6 gave us an effective blueprint for the following lesson.

Discussion: I teach a class called visual literacy. It is designed to enable students to become critical readers of their visual worlds. Memorials are one of the many visual products we examine. After deconstructing a variety of memorials, students design their own memorials accompanied by essays of rationale. Given the events of 9-11, they had the challenge of designing a memorial for the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, or Flight 93. In the past, library time has been ineffectual for many students. Jackie and I would have a line of students begging for help and lose others to off task behavior due to their frustration. Students were overwhelmed with the amount of research needed to design a memorial and ill prepared for the endeavor. It was evident that very few students were able to access the data they required; still others appeared unaware as to what information they needed. Valuable research time was wasted as we attempted to tease out the questions that could generate their searches.

Sample in Context: Jackie and I sat down to re-work the memorial assignment after attending the Big6 workshop. We determined that she would come to my classroom and lead the brainstorming session concerning the possible sources for accessing the required information. Prior to her LCD presentation, I prepared a Memorial Task Outline that clearly focused students on the purpose of the research. Students were given a list of memorial requirements that enabled them to easily generate their own questions for research. Thus, before entering the library, students had a clear sense of their needs and a multitude of choices as to possible sources to meet those needs.

The Big6 workshop encouraged me to reflect and reevaluate my use of the school librarian. Too often Jackie's knowledge and expertise never made it past a few select individuals. Her LCD presentation excited the students. They took notes, asked questions, and were engaged by the information presented. At the end of the session, several students were anxious to pursue the information at home that night. It is important to note that the information was not new to them. They had been exposed to a variety of search engines and resource texts prior to my class but never in a setting that demanded full focus on the librarian's wealth of information. In addition, making them responsible for noting possible sources before our library visit placed them in charge of their research. They became researchers. The depth and breath of their research was impressive. More importantly, their investment in their research and designs was exciting and rewarding. Incorporation of Big6 into our instruction provided our students with effective search strategies that they could utilize in other arenas of their lives. We had become a community of learners and active participants in our construction of knowledge. The students were kindred spirits in their desire to search and Jackie and I had discovered fellow companions. Companionship is crucial on a long journey.

Memorial Task Outline

Big6 #1 - Task Definition: Design a memorial for the 9-11 victims of the World Trade Center, Pentagon, or Flight 93. In order to design a meaningful memorial you need to gather and synthesize information concerning this event. Determine the purpose of your memorial. How will you recognize the names of the victims? Determine a location. Locate a quotation you can utilize on your memorial. In addition, what symbol(s) will you utilize? Remember that color, material, and texture also convey symbolism.

Listed below are questions that may offer direction in your quest for information. Add five more questions to the list that you feel are pertinent to your search.

- 1) Size of site damage at the World Trade Towers.
- 2) The number of victims.

- 3) Size of the original towers. The number of floors. What businesses were in the towers?
- 4) What nationality were the victims? What religion were the victims?
- 5) What were the flight numbers of the planes that crashed into the towers and how many people were on the individual flights?
- 6) How many port authority workers were lost, police officers, and fire workers?
- 7) Quotable/Powerful words spoken in the aftermath Possible colors and materials one could use in the memorial and their symbolic significance.
- 9) Possible shapes/images one could use in the memorial and their symbolic significance.
- 10) Interesting information you discovered in your research that you want to consider in the designing of your memorial.
- 11)
- 12)
- 13)
- 14)
- 15)

Big6 #2 - Information Seeking Strategies: List all the possible sources you can to access the needed information.

Big6 #3 - Location and Access: Library Work (Note the sources you did not list above that Ms. Tofoya recommended)

Big6 #4 - Use of Information: Read, view, hear, or touch the sources to engage all the information you have gathered.

Big6 #5 - Synthesis: Design and create a memorial noted in the Task Definition

Big6 #6 - Evaluation: ([See Memorial Rubric](#))

Scale/Traits	Requirements of Project	Organization of Essay	Proper Conventions	Original Thinking
Weights	50%	20%	15%	15%
4	<p>Effectively expresses the following: (Shows talent: high skill, excellent creativity, successful "rule-bending," etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purpose Names Location Quotation Symbol/Color Symbol/Material or Texture 	<p>Introduction draws reader in and introduces the purpose. Body justifies choices very clearly, concretely, briefly. Conclusion brings closure and resolution.</p>	<p>Uses proper capitalization. Uses correct punctuation at the end of sentences. No words are misspelled. Clear evidence that it has been reread for correctness.</p>	<p>Very original (new, fresh, clever, outside the norm, expansive). Originality strongly fulfills clear/specific purpose. Originality has strong impact (evocative, motivating, pleasing).</p>
3	<p>Project quite expressive, somewhat fulfilling student's requirements. Completed neatly, with care and with good design and composition.</p>	<p>Has a clear introduction. Body clearly supports choices. Has a clear conclusion.</p>	<p>Uses proper capitalization and punctuation most of the time. No words are misspelled. Clear evidence that it has been reread for correctness.</p>	<p>Somewhat original. Originality has little impact.</p>
2	<p>Project not very expressive, only slightly fulfilling student's requirements.</p>	<p>Has an introduction. Has</p>	<p>Uses proper capitalization and punctuation most of the</p>	<p>Mildly original. Originality has little or no impact</p>

		a body. Has a conclusion.	time. A few spelling errors but they do not interfere with meaning and it is apparent that the essay has been reread.	
1	Project fails to meet most of the requirements.	Is missing an introduction, body and/or conclusion	Uses proper capitalization and punctuation most of the time. Numerous spelling errors and it is apparent that the essay has not been polished.	Not original.