

Sing a Song of Research: Turning the Big6 into a Tune

Author: Enid Davis

The Harker School, is a K-12 independent school located on three campuses in San Jose, California. I am the Library Director and each campus has a library with professional and clerical staff. I also teach the second grade library curriculum that culminates in an extravagant production about fairy tales called "The Ogre Awards." It contains stories and songs about the tales told during weekly classes. One year, I directed a chorus of witches to sing a parody of "I Want to Be a Producer" from *The Producers* by Mel Brooks. It went like this: "I want to be Baba Yaga in a scary fairy tale. I want to be Baba Yaga; she's the witch they all regale."

I love to write a parody, changing the words to a song in order to elicit a chuckle. What enormous fun I had turning Irving Berlin's cowgirl into a librarian with my rendition of "You Can't Get a Man with a Bun." (*Annie Get Your Gun*).

Heather Blair, Dean of Students, and a founding member our Information Literacy Committee urged me (at every meeting) to write a song about Big6. At first I thought: impossible! Write a song about research?

We founded The Harker School Information Literacy Committee during the 2004/05 school year in order to develop a strategy for implementing the continuum recommended in the California School Library Association's [Standards and Guidelines for Strong School Libraries](#). During the first year, seven committee members adapted these guidelines to meet the needs of the Harker School. In addition, we selected *The Big6* as the preferred research methodology for the K-12 range.

This year, the committee has expanded to 25 teachers, librarians, instructional technology staff, and administrators. We meet as lower, middle, and upper school subcommittees. Committee members incorporate many of the skills identified by the continuum for inclusion in their curriculum and use Big6 as their research method. They do so both in their classroom projects and by collaborating with the librarians and the instructional technology teachers on their campus. Committee members are encouraged to promote Big6 among interested teachers in their departments. In addition to using Big6 and the literacy skills with committee members, who act as our grass roots activists, the librarians collaborate with many other teachers on each campus.

Thanks to Heather's persistence, here are two songs for your amusement and use.

The Big6 Song by Enid Davis

Tune: *This Old Man, He Played One*

(Dedicated to Heather Blair; based on the Big6 methodology by Michael Eisenberg and Robert Berkowitz)

WHAT'S THE TASK?

That's step one.

Tell me all that must be done.

With a knick-knack paddy whack,

Research can be fun.

In The Big6 that's step 1.

BRAINSTORM NOW,

That's step two.

List the places I should view.

With a knick-knack paddy whack,

Thinking what to do.

In The Big6 that's step 2.

LOCATE, FIND,

That's step three.

Using search terms helps, I see.

With a knick-knack paddy whack,

Boolean for me.
In The Big6 that's step 3.

HEAR AND VIEW,
That's step four.
Taking notes and citing score.
With a knick-knack paddy whack,
READING is the core.
In The Big6 that's step 4.

SYNTHESIZE,
That's step five.
Look, my project's come alive.
With a knick-knack paddy whack,
Let the pieces jive.
In The Big6 that's step 5.

JUDGE MY WORK,
That's step six.
Is my project worth two sticks?
With a knick-knack paddy whack,
Did I miss some tricks?
In The Big6 that's step 6.

A SUPER 3 SONG by Enid Davis

Sung by the teacher and students.

Tune: *London Bridge Is Falling Down*

Based on the Big6 methodology by Michael Eisenberg and Robert Berkowitz)

Teacher:

Here's a project you can PLAN, you can PLAN, you can PLAN.
We will make a paper fan, my dear students.

Students:

We'll need paper, crayons too, crayons too, crayons too.
Red and yellow, green and blue, my dear teacher.

Teacher:

Now's the time to DO the task, DO the task, DO the task.
Fans for every lad and lass, my dear students.

Students:

Fold the paper, draw a scene, draw a scene, draw a scene.
Sky so blue and grass so green, my dear teacher.

Teacher:

When it's finished, please REVIEW, please REVIEW, please REVIEW.
Can it make a breeze for you, my dear students?

Students:

Folded, colored, breezy, whee! Breezy, whee! Breezy, whee!
Now I know the Super3, my dear teacher.

The songs were introduced to the Information Literacy Committee in September and here are the ways we have used them so far on the different campuses.

- The upper school Library's Big6 Bulletin Board, accompanied by a recording of the song by 4th graders, has amused many students and teachers. The students are becoming very familiar with the Big6 and the song reinforces it in a creative manner.

- A middle school 8th grade English teacher collaborated with the music teacher to instruct the entire 8th grade in the song. This cross-discipline approach enhances our abilities to emphasize the Big6 method.
- The lower school library teachers used the songs while introducing the Super3 and Big6 to the students before and after research projects. The songs help the students to remember the steps and to clarify and reinforce the concepts within each step. They also enjoy the humor. Calling the songs “cool” and “fun,” the children also seemed to *get* the concepts after singing them.

Other plans for using the songs include the following:

- Put the words in the monthly parent newsletter, along with an explanation of how we are using Big6 in the library and in the classroom.
- Teach the songs at a faculty in-service retreat in February during workshops on the Big6.
- Encourage the music teachers in the lower school to include the songs as part of their curriculum in tandem with a research project.
- Put the words of the songs on the library’s information literacy web page.

Therefore, let us *sing a song of research, a pocket full of steps...oh, no! I’d better stop here.*