



Consider the Source: Research Skills for Cell Phone Libraries in a Digital Age, 2019

Curriculum Unit 19.01.02

by Lisa Finch

Content Objectives

As a fifth grade teacher in the New Haven Public Schools system, I have recently noticed that my students are actively on the internet for multiple reasons. My students, like most students in fifth grade at my school, use the internet for social media, such as Snapchat and Instagram. Students can engage in these apps for hours daily while only spending a limited time completing school assignments. Their digitized life has taken front and center of their academic life.

Rationale

How do you get a fifth grader to “Break Up With Their Phone”, to use the title of a popular book by Catherine Price? (1) I feel you should not have them break up with their phone. Instead, teachers should help students find a balance in their digital lives between academics and leisure time. For example, many students who are given a research assignment will simply use Wikipedia to plagiarize the information needed to complete their assignment. Students are not going to the public libraries as did their counterparts in the past. Students of the past would study and read for hours to produce a well investigated paper. What could have led to this decline?

Speaking for the students of my school, this decrease in library usage can be attributed to a number of reasons. One reason is the denial of public library resources for reasons such as the delinquency of unpaid fines for public library books checked out, not returning books, or parents’ unwillingness to take their child to the public library to do the research. Not having the use of the public library is not the only obstacle New Haven Public Schools students have to overcome. The books in my classroom can provide an excellent start to a research paper. However, there are not enough books for my students to complete a research assignment where the guidelines state that at least three references are required. Lack of resources coupled with lack of library courses have made students lose interest in submitting an academically researched paper. Students need to be retaught how to research by using a very resourceful tool at their fingers. Their cell phone could be the revamp that their academic lives need.

The seminar has helped me to establish a balance between my students using the internet as a research tool for school projects and their social media digital lives. If the internet is used for research, it can be a great resource that a student easily has access to at school and home. My objective is to prepare the students to use this tool to help them with research. First, students will need direct instruction on how to select a non-fiction topic to research and inform their target audience. Next, I want to establish guidelines to decipher the difference from an educational journal and a non-credible source. Once the differences have been established, then I plan to teach students how to reference, including how to create a bibliography of their referencing material. Many students who research on the internet will reference their source as the website “http:” address. Many students do not realize that what they are reading is a digital copy of a hard copy. This article can be referenced but it will take more work to find out the needed information in order to give proper credit for the research they are using to complete their school assignments.

A bigger problem than the referencing is finding websites that are suitable for fifth-grade students. When my students have to reference, they are working on a non-fiction writing piece. Many websites that they find are not written in “kid-friendly” fifth grade language. I will create a listing of grade level appropriate websites for research and teach students how to find credible websites and material independently. These objectives will help the students to use their digital resources to benefit them academically. Ultimately, the digital life of a fifth grader would come full circle.

My unit topic will be a guide to researching on the internet using credible sources and properly citing the source in a nonfiction writing piece. My students need guidance on how to choose a non-fiction topic and how to research their topic on the internet using a source of credible information. The main curriculum standard for fifth grade is to research a nonfiction topic using three references. Ideally, hard copy books and magazines would be a first source. Yet, some topics do not have enough information or a large variety of books to choose from in the school library and/or the classroom library. Furthermore, many students do not have the opportunity to go to the public library with their parents to research additional information and check out books. With their *digital lives* via cell phones, all students have access to a digital library. Students need explicit instruction on how to locate educational journals and/or credible sources of information. Once students have located reliable sources on their digital library, students need guidance on how to reference the source in their papers.

As a classroom teacher in New Haven, we are expected to provide material for our students to complete the assigned performance task. The “NHPS ELA Curriculum, Grades Three to Five Reading Unit and Task Outline” for Unit Three requires students to read high interest informational and literary nonfiction closely. (2) Students can use the internet to do research. My students need more remedial training to help them complete “unit three performance task”. My students need help on selecting credible sources and then citing the sources correctly. My goal is to make my fifth grade students proficient in the use of the digital resources to the point that they can research and write a nonfiction piece of writing proficiently.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

Students of today have more research options than their counterparts of yesteryear. Technology has taken us out of the “Age of Print” and into the “Digital Age”. Class members do not need to visit their school library or local library to access research material. Research material is at their fingertips with a click of a button. Fifth

graders need only to acquire specific skills to write a well-researched paper on a grade-appropriate topic of his or her choice. In order for this to happen however, a teacher needs to instruct students how to use technology for research purposes. A student will need to be trained on how to cite these sources in a nonfiction writing piece and create a bibliography. These are all issues to discuss, plan, and implement.

During the first week, before students can begin to research topics, teachers must provide direct instruction on how to research topics with students. According to Vossler and Sheidlower "Humor and Information Literacy", teachers should seek to "...demonstrate specific repeatable behaviors; click here for this, click here for that. In training, strictly lower level cognitive skills are brought to bear. Students are learning how to manipulate specific tools." (3) In understanding Vossler and Sheidlower, I have always felt that the best way for a student to learn how to use technology is to first show a student the basics and then let the student explore for themselves. This can be as simple as having a student google search "Fifth Grade Nonfiction Topics" and look into the many choices and let the student decide what interests himself or herself. Having a teachable guide to use in a kid friendly manner to get students motivated to read about a nonfiction topic and use a variety of sources to investigate their topic thoroughly may sound easier said than done. But, Rome wasn't built in a day...nor will students understand internet research in a day. However, with various opportunities and time, students can become experts.

Brundage "Going to the Sources" states "Before embarking upon this electronic odyssey, it is important to know the object of the search. The selection and refinement of your topic is of course a critical matter." (4) I have noticed that students struggle to understand the difference between a non-fiction writing piece and a biographical writing assignment, which is more for historical writing, such as a Black History Month famous person or a Women's History heroine. In unit three of the New Haven Public Schools ELA department guide, students must write a nonfiction writing piece on a non-fiction writing topic using three sources. Students struggle with burning questions such as "What non-fiction topic interests me?", "Will there be enough research material for me to use?", "How do I know this is a good topic?" and "How do I know my topic is narrow enough and not too broad?" Once students pick a nonfiction topic, then students can begin their research on the topic.

There are a number of preselected databases on the internet for a student to choose from to do a well researched paper. Unfortunately, there are some databases that are not useful to New Haven students. Like Brundage, Storey discussed using an online library catalog called the WorldCat. (5) This is a subscription service that is widely used by scholars to ensure the information that they are using is from a credible and current source. However, it is a service that New Haven Public Schools does not subscribe. In the case of New Haven students, they would have to investigate what similar services their school library offers. If the student's library does not subscribe to any service similar to WorldCat then it is suggested to use the U.S. Library of Congress at <http://catalog.loc.gov>. (6) This site has identified most of the books that are available on any particular subject. Teachers will have to explain to students that the key to the search is how you enter the subject that you are searching into the keyword search. For example, my students are currently working on a research paper about an environmental issue. The students need to write an argumentative essay about a way to solve the issue. As I provided direct instruction on how to research topics in the search engine for this assignment, I told the student that you may need to search more than once. I first told my students to google search or use the suggestion of Storey, which is U.S. Library of Congress search for "Environmental Issues in 2019". I have my students include the year to provide the most updated information. Storey stated, "the key to searching a digital catalog is understanding the way in which the information is organized... To find the right headings, start with a keyword search. In keyword search, it is important to use distinctive words. Type in environmental history and you will get too many entries. Click the subject headings to link to other works on

the same subject.” (7)

My students found several environmental issues in 2019 by doing a google search. The next step is to decide which issue interests a student. Then, the student must google search the environmental issue of interest. One of my students is interested in global warming and the factors that influence global warming. I told the student to continue to narrow his search by google searching solutions to global warming and establishing a hypothesis is to the best solution to global warming. This solution would be what the student would argue as a part of their argumentative research paper, i.e. their non-fiction paper.

Just as I have narrowed my topic for the *Digital Lives* and focused on students using their cellphone as a digital library, students will need to narrow their topic and form a hypothesis. This hypothesis should guide their research. Students should use a self guiding checklist (Figure 3). The student will need to consider their target audience for proving their point or argument. Storey discussed the student crafting a proposal. (8) The self- guiding checklist that the student will help the student throughout their research work.

During week three, teachers need to provide explicit instruction on choosing sources that are credible to read and cite for their non-fiction writing piece. In “Writing History” by Storey, he states “The sheer amount of information that is available can be overwhelming. Thankfully, scholars, librarians, and archivists have selected specific collections of information that are worthy of consideration by scholars and that may be accessed online... available free to everybody.” (9) Storey goes on to explain that many libraries have online library catalogs. The sources on this type of catalog are sources that students can trust are credible sources to research and use as a reference, In addition to the library catalog there are online databases that have a wealth of journals containing peer-reviewed research by scholars in a field, such as Academic Search Premier offered by EBSCOHost. Prior to students using systems such as these, teachers will need the student to understand the importance of the author who wrote a credible piece. The student needs to value the expertise of the writer of the journal and for future reference to understand how to objectively decide what is credible or opinionated when not using a library catalog.

Plagiarism

When a student collects data from different sources, it must be stressed to document the information to give credit to the author of the information. To take the information and use it for one’s own words is plagiarism. Storey stated that plagiarism is the same as “piracy”. (8) He went on to state that by stealing someone’s words is stealing someone’s brainchild. There are penalties for plagiarizing material. For students to avoid plagiarism, they must understand the ways plagiarism could occur.

Ways to Plagiarize

Storey outlines four ways, *direct plagiarism*, *indirect plagiarism*, *inadvertent plagiarism*, and *academic dishonesty*, that students can plagiarize. One way detailed by Storey is direct plagiarism when a student writes word for word from another writer. This happens in my class when students use Wikipedia. Students feel the research is already completed, and do not feel the need to look further. However, as writers, students can borrow words from another by giving credit and explaining why they relate to what the writer’s purpose meant to them. By doing this, the student avoids making a big mistake.

Secondly, Storey explains indirect plagiarism is happening when students attempt to paraphrase. The paraphrasing consists of changing one or two words in a sentence, but the other words in a sentence is directly from another writer. I have noticed many students to fall guilty of indirect plagiarism because many students believe that all non-fictional facts need to be added and do not want to “change history” as my students would explain to me.

Thirdly, Storey discussed inadvertent plagiarism when students do not place quotation marks around a direct quote from a book. Many times, students are in a rush and forget to place the quotation marks. This form of plagiarism could be contributed to students’ digital lives on social media. It could create a shortened attention span as Price stated in her “Breaking Up With Your Phone” book. If this is the case, the teacher needs to provide direct instruction on double checking one’s rough drafts and revising to make inadvertent plagiarism doesn’t happen.

Finally, Storey strongly addressed academic dishonesty when students have other students write an essay for them including purchasing a paper on-line. He continued to talk about students who hand in the same paper to two different teachers. Academic dishonesty can also be explained by the students’ careless study habits.

To combat plagiarism in young writers, teachers should provide examples of plagiarism and have students explain why it is plagiarism. Burkhardt and MacDonald designed an exercise for teachers to complete where the student reads a passage then reads seven different responses to the passage. (9) Students must decide which reading responses are plagiarism and which are authentic writing.

Give credit to the sources

Research is driven by credible sources. The student not only has to tell the difference between credible and opinionated sources, but the student needs to be able to distinguish between primary sources and secondary works. Primary sources can be defined as “sources that originated in the time period that historians are studying.” These works may include personal memoirs, government documents, transcripts of legal proceedings, oral histories, and traditions, archaeological and biological evidence, and visual sources like paintings and photographs. Secondary works can be defined as “books and articles by writers who are interpreting the events and primary sources that you are studying.” I would classify Wikipedia as a secondary work. Wikipedia is a collection of primary sources. This is very confusing to students in the case of Wikipedia, which primary sources are used to provide information.

By week four, teachers are explaining to students how to organize their research into their first draft including the 3 sources that the student found most relevant to their topic. Both Brundage and Storey discuss how to establish a well rounded research bibliography. The final piece of a student’s research is to properly cite research material in their paper and the reading list. Back in my middle school years, I was told to use APA style to reference sources. In today’s world, there are numerous ways to cite your information. Teachers should plan to research the various ways and introduce the most kid friendly way to create a bibliography to their students. This will also include sites to help them understand the parts of the bibliography entries.

As Storey stated on page 30, it is important to “summarize the source and state why you will be using it in your paper.” (10) Throughout a student’s research, the student should be taking notes on the information that they are gathering and from each source. This can be done as Cornell notes, using post-it notes attached to the printed copy of an online book with important points from the page that is posted, or highlight the material of printed text from a digital resource. Each source should serve a purpose to the student’s paper as well as the student understanding the reason for the source. These techniques will be included in my final curriculum

unit as a checklist for students and a daily lesson plan for teachers to guide their instruction of researching topics.

To sum it up, our *digital lives* have evolved to more than just social media. Our phones can be used for more than just passing the time when school is not in session. We can use our phones to improve our knowledge of certain topics and to enhance our interest in unknown topics. We can use online library resources without leaving our homes. We can sit on our favorite cozy chair and learn about the vast world of information. As schools continue to cut funds for resources such as textbooks and limit stocking school library shelves, the digital age will soon take center stage in the educational world. Teachers need to find a way to incorporate cell phones to benefit their students.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

This curriculum unit can be completed in about 4 weeks. During the 4 week unit, the teacher should start with the basics and end with the specifics. Before getting started, the teacher should administer the “Your ‘Digital Loves’ Inventory” (see Figure 1) to students to get a baseline as to how much the student knows about using their cellphone as a digital resource. This same reading inventory will need to be used at the end of the four weeks to assess students’ academic growth. Let’s begin.

Background Building

During this week, students will understand how their cell phone can help them academically. Students will take the cell phone inventory (see Figure 1). Cell phone inventory: Students will answer questions about how they use their cellphones and what potential they believe their cellphones have to complete school assignments. The teacher will need to provide time before the lesson begins to give the inventory. This should take about ten minutes to complete.

Figure 1. Cell Phone Inventory will be given as a pre-test and post-test.

Your “Digital Lives” Inventory (Pre-Test)

- 1.) Do you have a cellphone? If yes, is it a smartphone?
- 2.) Name 5 ways you use your cellphone for school-related activities.
- 3.) Name 5 ways you use your cellphone for socially-related activities.
- 4.) Have you researched a school assignment using your phone?
- 5.) If yes to question 4, how did you use your phone to research?
- 6.) Can you identify what “Fake News” is?
- 7.) How do you identify the difference between a credible source versus an opinion piece?
- 8.) Can you use articles you find on-line to write a research paper?
- 9.) How do you choose a grade-appropriate topic using an internet search engine?
- 10.) What is plagiarism?
- 11.) Can you identify what a credible source is?
- 12.) How do you know if you have plagiarized in your paper?
- 13.) Are credible references important? Why or why not?
- 14.) What is a bibliography?
- 15.) Do you know how to write a bibliography?
- 16.) How are non-fictional writers different from fictional writers?
- 17.) What are some strategies to use to write a research paper?
- 18.) How do you organize your sources and what you have read from a source?
- 19.) Can you use a cellphone to research a paper?
- 20.) Name 1 thing you want to learn or have learned about using your cellphone to do research.

After the inventory has been completed, the teacher should assess the level of understanding students have of their cell phones. Once the teacher establishes this level, then there should be a whole group discussion on “Analyzing the phone’s ability to find information.” At this time, the teacher should allow the students to take out their cellphones in class to explore their cell phones. Teacher can write on the board the following:

On your phone, you should go to the google.com website.

Under the google.com search engine, type in “Sources to Global Warming”

Read the first article that appears that is not a wikipedia article.

Volunteers can read the articles that appear during their search. After reading the articles the class found interesting, the teacher can discuss with the class problems that arose from their cell phone search. In whole group, students should discuss how the articles are relevant to the topic. Whether or not the article is credible should not be discussed at this time. The following days need to include class practice to have students look up given topics on their phone and finding articles that students find relevant. Students can use their writing journal to record daily class practice. This should be the first week of the unit before having the students venture into their research paper.

Modeling and Exploring

During the second week of the unit, students will begin to explore non-fiction topics that interest them. In week one, students were able to build on a familiar source which is their cell phone. By having students do the daily class practice that you placed on the board, the students now have a solid foundation to build strong research skills. It is important for students to have this time to explore independently using a predetermined topic. Now, the student’s search should be geared towards a topic that interests them to research.

For the student, having a predetermined topic eases the extra step of deciding on a non-fictional topic to have to select among the vast topics. For students to improve their study habits and appreciate the quest of knowledge and learning, the student must begin to take this journey on their own. For fifth grade, the first research paper needs to be an informational research paper. The student must research information that is new to the reader. Students need to read about the latest research. While doing this, students need to keep in mind that sources and researchers are constantly updating their findings. Students will need a day to explore different topics that interest them and their target audience.

Once the student has narrowed his or her topic, then the student needs to form a hypothesis to craft a proposal. I created this checklist based on Storey (2013, pp. 29) for the student to help craft the proposal (11):

Figure 3. Self Guided Checklist for Research is used to help students form a hypothesis.

Self Guided Checklist for Research

Student needs to consider the following questions before beginning research:

- 1.) What is your topic? Describe it briefly.
- 2.) What is your hypothesis? Tell which question is driving your research.
- 3.) What will your readers learn from this project? Will you be bringing new information to light, or will you be interpreting well known facts in a new way?
- 4.) Why is your project significant or interesting? Discuss the relationship between your project and some broader issue.
- 5.) What are your main sources? Give a short bibliography.

“Consider the source!”

When you are considering the source, you are deciding whether a source is credible. Once students have chosen a topic to research, the student can now explore online resources to investigate the latest information. The internet has a lot of information that a student needs to distinguish between to determine what is a credible source. A credible source is research that has been completed by a professional researcher, doctor or trained professional over a period of time to yield particular results. The findings in a credible source are fact based and are not opinion based. “Fake News” is opinion based and is not derived from fact but often time seems plausible. There are many ways for students to ascertain the intention of a source.

Students should always research on their cellphones with the following burning questions in mind:

What are websites that are notable and well researched?

What are the requirements to publishing researched material?

When was the research conducted?

Is the information relevant to my topic?

These burning questions can be helpful to a student in determining the articles validity. For an informational paper, students have a lot of topics to choose from but not a lot of hard copy resources to use as sources.

New Haven Public Schools’ Reading guidelines recommend using Cornell notes. The student should take notes on the information retrieved from sources. This includes the name of the journal, the relevant or new information retrieved, and the page number the information is found. The student needs to take into account how the researched material can be used in their paper, i.e. what part does each source support in their research paper? The student will also need to use the self checklist (see Figure 2) as a guide. The district’s guidelines recommend a minimum of three references. As students review their Cornell notes, they can start to incorporate each source into their first draft.

Citing references

As Storey stated, it is important to “summarize the source and state why you will be using it in your paper.” (11) As stated during the research process, students should be taking notes as some form. After the research is complete, students will need to organize their notes to draft a flow for their paper. If three references are required, then students should aim to use each source in three separate sections of the body of their paper. The students can also organize their paper based on facts found. For example, if there were four credible sources that all gave similar information, the student could couple the sources in one section. The student should be encouraged to refer to the researcher often in their paper as though the student knows the researcher. The actual research was conducted by the writer of the credible source not the student. The student should remember that the words from your digital library are only borrowed words. The writer is allowing students to use their work. The teacher needs to stress the importance of citing material and emphasizing the importance of authentic work that is not plagiarized.

Final Draft

The students should submit the rough draft to the teacher to receive feedback. Students can make revisions based on the recommendations of the teacher. After the submission of the final draft of the well researched

paper, the teacher should have a discussion about the informational writing process using a cellphone instead of the traditional library research. The teacher should administer a post assessment using the cell phone inventory (see Figure 1). Students will take the same test to show what new knowledge they have learned about their cell phones. The teacher needs to use the information from the inventory to measure growth. The inventory can also be used to evaluate the process and a self evaluation of what worked well and what did not work well.

Conclusion

Even though using a cell phone sounds like a “quick fix” for the underprivileged student who does not have access to great resources, there is still no substitute for conventional research. Using a cell phone for research was not meant to replace or downplay the importance of having library resources and an abundance of hard copy material. Unfortunately, the world that many inner city students like New Haven Public School children live in is no longer conventional or traditional. If students want to get ahead in life, they have to be able to use the resources that they have and not be defeated by what they do not have. As an inner city teacher, I receive a limited amount of resources. These resources seem to become less and less every school year. As I have established I have two choices, either I can complain about not having what I need or I can try to think “outside of the box” and make the most of the material and resources that I do have access. Hopefully, my fifth graders will see their cell phones as the greatest research tool that they have to use to be successful students.

Exit Slip

Students will give feedback on their experience using their cell phone as a digital library.

Notes

1. C. Price, “Your Phone is Changing your brain”, in *How to Break Up With Your Phone*, 51.
2. *New Haven Public Schools English Language Arts Curriculum for Grades three to five*, Reading unit and task outline for unit three, 2012.
3. Vossler & Sheidlower, *Humor and Information Literacy: Practical Techniques for Library Instruction*, 83
4. A. Brundage, “Finding your sources”, in *Going to the Sources*, 35
5. W. Storey, “Getting Started” in *Writing History*, 17
6. U.S. Library of Congress at <http://catalog.loc.gov>
7. W. Storey, “Getting Started” in *Writing History*, 18
8. W. Storey, “Writing History Faithfully”, in *Writing History*, 49-50
9. J. Burkhardt and M. MacDonald, “Issues of the Information Age” in *Teaching Information Literacy: 35 Standards Based Exercises for College Students*, 42
10. W. Storey, “Getting Started” in *Writing History*, 17
11. W. Storey, “Interpreting Source Materials” in *Writing History*, 30
12. Digital Public Library of America Primary Source Sets
13. W. Storey, “Getting Started” in *Writing History*, 29
14. W. Storey, “Interpreting Source Materials” in *Writing History*, 30

RESOURCES

- 1.) Brundage, Anthony. *Going to the Sources: a guide to historical research and writing*, fourth edition. Illinois: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 2008. This is a handy guide on examining the sources that you use in your research. It details what is a primary source and what is a secondary source along with why it is important to know the difference.
- 2.) Burkhardt, James M. and MacDonald, Mary C. *Teaching Information Literacy: 35 Standards-Based Exercises for College Students, 2nd Edition*. Chicago: American Library Association, 2003. It provides an exercise in detecting plagiarism by giving different selections and having the student decide if it is authentic work or plagiarized work.
- 3.) Digital Public Library of America Primary Source Sets (web). This is an on-line search engine for students to use to search a non-fiction topic.
- 4.) Library of Congress Digital Collections, with a link to teaching resources (web). This on-line collection is good to use when your school does not have WorldCat. It provides educational resources.
- 5.) Price, Catherine. *How to Break Up With Your Phone*. California: Ten Speed Press, 2018. This novel discusses reframing our phone use to become happier people.
- 6.) Storey, William. *Writing History: a guide for students*. Fourth Edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013. This is the most comprehensive book on writing non-fiction. It was the greatest resource in writing my unit.
- 7.) Vossler, Joss and Sheidlower, Scott. *Humor and Information Literacy: Practical Techniques for Library Instruction*. California: Libraries Unlimited, 2011. This explains the need to allow children to explore lower cognitive skills.

Appendix on Implementing District Standards

This unit implements and plans an original language arts curriculum unit based on The Core Standards and English Language Proficiency Standards under Reading Informational Texts (RI) 5.1, 5.2, 5.4, 5.5, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9 on digital research for my fifth grade class. My students need guidance on how to choose a non-fiction topic and how to research their topic on the internet using a source of credible information. In addition, the main curriculum standard for fifth grade is to research a nonfiction topic using 3 references. Ideally, hard copy books and magazines would be a first source. Unfortunately, some topics do not have enough information or a large variety of books to choose from in the school library and/or the classroom library. Furthermore, many students do not have the opportunity to go to the public library with their parents to research additional information and check out books. With their digital lives through their cell phones, all students have access to the internet. Unfortunately, students do not have explicit teaching on how to locate educational journals and/or credible sources of information. Once students have located sources whether good or bad, students do not know how to reference the source in their papers. The “Digital Lives” seminar will be essential to my

development of my curriculum unit.

As a classroom teacher in New Haven, we are expected to provide material for our students to complete the assigned performance task. The “NHPS ELA Curriculum, Grades 3-5 Reading Unit and Task Outline” for Unit 3 requires students to read high interest informational and literary nonfiction closely. This seems like a “straightforward” and explicit unit focus. The part that is not direct is how the students are to research and have access to the nonfictional material. One suggestion when asked about this problem was to go to book banks such as New haven Reads or Read to Grow. This was valuable to a certain extent. I went to both places and created a classroom library full of non-fiction books. Unfortunately, my library is limited to what was available for me to choose from at the book banks. My limitations become my students’ limitations. I attempted to combine my classroom library by having my students go to the library on mornings that the librarian is at school. (Side note: My students do not have library as a class and our school librarian is only at our school 2 days a week and alternates a 3rd day between my school and another school.). The end result is that this too has its limits. My next step is to incorporate the online resources.

I explained to my students that they can use the internet to do a search. This was a separate lesson that I was not expecting. Some students picked up and others did not pick up on what to do. This brings me to what I want to accomplish by taking the seminar “Digital Lives”. My students need more remedial training to help them complete unit 3. My students need help on selecting grade level appropriate topics and then citing the topics correctly. I have been researching some websites to help with the use of APA style, which is another lesson that will have to be taught and will be incorporated into my curriculum unit. My goal is to make my fifth grade students proficient in the use of the digital resources to the point that they can research and write a nonfiction piece of writing proficiently.

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