Internet Research Activity

Grades 6-8

Objectives

Students will plan and conduct multiple-step information searches by using computer networks and modems. Students will research and discuss the role of the visual arts in selected periods of history, using a variety of resources. Students will identify topics; ask and evaluate questions; and develop ideas leading to inquiry, investigation, and research.

Asmat Peoples, Papua, Province of Indonesia (Formerly Irian Jaya), *Ancestor Canoe*, 1980s. Wood with white lime, charcoal, red ochre, fibers, and feathers. Promised gift from the Loet Vanderveen Collection.

Instructional Materials

Internet Research Activity Worksheet

Procedure

Introduction

Use the students' experience with the Art Ark as a springboard for a research project. Encourage students to reflect on objects they've seen, activities they've tried, and new awareness they've developed of other people and places. Have them brainstorm, individually or in groups, topics they'd like more information about.

Object-based Instruction

Complete this lesson after students have toured the Art Ark.

Procedure

After the students have generated some ideas, help them narrow their focus to compose one or two questions worthy of research. The questions should lead them to find facts as well as to draw conclusions from the information they find. Here are some sample questions:

- What are some important functions of beads in African cultures?
- What kinds of Asmat ceremonies include the use of drums?
- How have Adinkra stamps been used in the past, and how are they used today?
- Are some forms of art traditionally created by men and others by women in a particular culture?
- What are some reasons the Asmat people create art? How important are the artists in their society?
- What are some different kinds of African masks, and how are they used?
- Besides bis poles and ibeji figures, what are some other kinds of art that deal with death?
- What do they tell us about the people who create them?

Once they have their questions, help the students determine some key words to use in their search, and remind them to keep their searches focused and specific. Give them some tips for sorting through their search results to find the most helpful information. Review note-taking strategies such as collecting bibliographic information, recording details and definitions, summarizing information, and so on. It may be helpful to give the students copies of a form like the one below.

Assessment

Use the following checklist to assess each student's performance in this activity. You might consider providing the checklist to the students prior to the lesson as a way of communicating the expectations for the assignment. If several of the listed items go unchecked, the student could be asked to spend more time completing them.

- Actively participate in the brainstorming process.
- Come up with a thoughtful question appropriate for research.
- Demonstrate appropriate computer skills - access the internet, use a browser and search engine, apply keyboarding and mouse skills.
- Find reliable online sources and cite them correctly.
- Demonstrate curiosity, and make good judgments about the value of information you find.
- Take useful notes that relate directly to your research question.
- Apply/share the information you find in an effective way.

Adapting and Extending

A research activity like this can easily lead to a written or oral presentation.