A.2.4 Script—Casey and Doeckel

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| Is this your goal? Then, you have to choose the right college. How will you choose a college that meets your needs and interests? |
| The best way do this is by using an inquiry process, but what is an inquiry process? |
| An inquiry process is a way of researching that lets us decide what we want to learn about and ask and answer questions that we may have along the way. |
| So now you're probably thinking, “Can't I just Google it?" That's a really good point. Google is a great tool for finding facts quickly, but just finding facts doesn't help you to dig deeper and get to the really important parts of a problem. You wouldn't want to take short cuts when it comes to something as important as what college you are going to spend four years at. It's a big decision that is worth investigating. |
| Inquiry just means that you are investigating a topic that is important to you and getting beyond the surface facts. There's a great inquiry process called The Learning Cycle (TLC). Let me to explain how to use it to find your perfect college. |
| You have already completed the first step of the process because you've chosen your topic: Choosing a college that's right for you! |
| Now that you have your topic, you need to get an overview of it.Sounds easy, right? But where do you start? There are over 4,000 colleges in the United States. It is important to look at the big picture here. College is your topic, but saying you are researching colleges is just the tip of the iceberg. You need to see the whole picture before you can start to narrow your topic down |
| Once you've looked at the big picture and understand the true size and scope of the topic of "colleges," you can begin to focus your search. You won't be able to research every college, so you will need to narrow your topic down. Since you're a student in Texas, you could research schools which are located in Texas. That would be a great place to begin! |
| Next you want to focus your research by writing a purpose statement for your topic. For example, you might say, "The purpose of my research is to use reliable sources to help me find a college that meets my needs and interests."  After you've written your purpose statement, reflect on it. Does it represent an effective concept for my research? If it doesn't, then make changes to the purpose statement. |
| Now you're ready to begin your research, but how do you know what information you need to make the best decision? Think about what you want from a college. Do you want a 2-year or 4-year degree? Do you want a college that offers online classes? What about student life? Are you looking for a college that has sororities and fraternities? Do you want to be a student in a large school or small school? What majors interest you? Consider your needs and interests and write research questions that will help guide your research. |
| After you've written your research questions, reflect on them. Will the questions help you find the information about colleges that you want to know?  Now it's time to make a plan. How are you going to research the information? Should you use a database, a book, a search engine? What is the best way to find the information you need to answer your questions? Once you decide what resources you will need, it is a good idea to reflect on your choices. Will you be able to find the information you need using the resources you chose? |
| Once you've decided that you are ready to begin your research, go ahead and find that information you've been looking for. This is the fun part. This is where you get answers to the questions you came up with earlier. Make sure that the information you find is valid and credible though. The internet is open to everyone. Because of this, it is really important that you analyze and evaluate the sources you are using. Can you trust the website where you found your information? How do you know? |
| Typically, trustworthy websites look professional. There are no blinking titles or banner ads. The website may be from a nationally recognized news company, like Time, or have .edu or .gov at the end, indicating that it is a school or government run website. If you use online journals, check to see if they have been peer-reviewed. It is important to make sure the answers to your questions are coming from a reliable source. |
| Once you know you have solid, reliable information, it is a good idea to check back and make sure the info you found will help you to answer your original research questions. At this point you should start taking notes about the most important information and create a bibliography. |
| The librarian will help you to understand how to format your bibliography by showing you examples of work cited in an MLA format and answering your citation questions as they arise. It is important that you don't just copy someone else's words without using quotations and giving them credit. After all, if you made something, you wouldn't want others to take credit for it, would you? |
| Before proceeding to the next step, ask yourself: Is my research complete? If you feel that you don't have all the facts, continue researching until you do. |
| Now that you have finished researching about a variety of colleges, you will need to make some conclusions about the information you gathered. This will involve organizing your information. You might consider using a web, table, or other graphic organizer to arrange the information visually to help you make sense of all of the facts. |
| Congratulations! You've used the TLC inquiry process to choose a college that is right for you! The final step is to present your information. Before creating a final product, consider your audience. Is your presentation being viewed by your teachers, your parents, or your peers? Choose a method that helps you present your information in a way that is easy for your audience to understand. |
| Now that you've learned an inquiry process, you can apply it to many other situations where you need to use research to find information, such as researching a debatable issue for a persuasive essay for English class or researching information about the most impactful president in U.S. history. You could even apply this process of inquiry when you need to buy a new cell phone or when you’re old enough to start driving and want to buy a car. The ideas are limitless! |
| It has been said that our future lies with “students who are nurtured to think, to ask questions, to seek multiple sources of authority and opinion, and to contribute to their classes and school learning community” (Ogle).  It is so important that you learn the skills that will allow you to think critically and answer your own questions because we need leaders who can help all of us to have a brighter future. Your teacher and librarian are here to help you with these skills. Your teacher and I invite you to use your inquiry steps to learn about college in the classroom and in the library. There are plenty of resources from the computer, to books, journals, and magazines ready for you to use. Your teacher will provide you with time to work in class and here in the library. I will also be here before and after school to help you in any way I can.  Using TLC in the library and classroom will give you the skills needed not only to choose a college, but to become independent learners and leaders in our school and the community. I can’t wait to get started! |