

7-2018

Lesson Plan: Topic Brainstorm

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Recommended Citation

Markowski, Brianne and Dineen, Rachel, "Lesson Plan: Topic Brainstorm" (2018). *Information Literacy*. 17.
<https://digscholarship.unco.edu/infolit/17>

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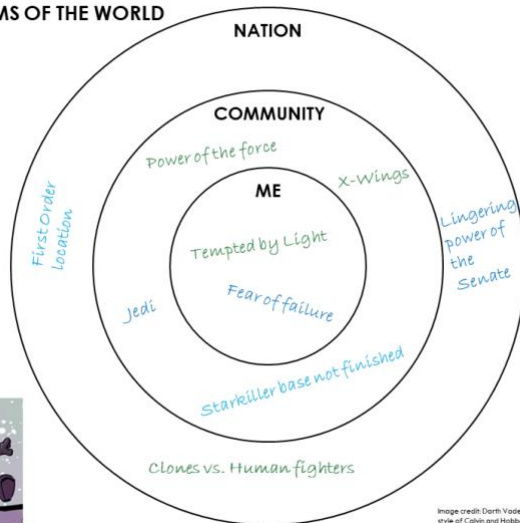
Lesson Plan: Topic Brainstorm

Problems of the World Activity (20 min.)

If you remember back to last class – the first step of the research process is defining the need or problem. Today we are going to do a brainstorming activity to identify the big problems of the world from your perspective. We'll use this as a jumping off point for selecting the topics you will research this semester.

- a. Draw a circle and label ME – list of problems or things you'd like change in your own personal world
- b. Draw larger COMMUNITY circle – list problems you perceive in the communities you are part of
 - i. What things would you like to change in the UNC community?
 - ii. What problems are families in our local community (Greeley/Colorado) facing?
- c. Draw larger NATION circle – what do you think are the most important problems we face as a country?
- d. Finally, think about the great problems you believe are facing the people of the WORLD. Write these around the outer circle.

PROBLEMS OF THE WORLD



10 min to brainstorm problems – You are not tied to these topics— brainstorming activity to get some ideas flowing. If you are having a hard time thinking of problems in our community, the nation, or world – local newspapers, national, international newspapers

2 min share with a neighbor – quad share if time – did you identify similar problems? Different problems?

Adopted from:

Werner-Burke, N., Knaus, K., & DeCamp, A.H. (2014). *Rebuilding research writing: Strategies for sparking informational inquiry*. New York: Routledge.

Assignment: Topic Exploration

Purpose: The purpose of this assignment is, as Turabian puts it, to “find a question worth answering about a topic you care about.” While I don’t expect you to find a question tonight, I do want you to be thinking about topics that interest you and to start thinking about how you might turn that interest into a manageable topic and a worthwhile question.

Task:

Come up with a list of 2-3 problems/solutions you are interested in learning more about this semester. You can pick your favorite topics from the *Problems of the World* activity we did in class on Thursday or if you don’t love any of those topics, you can follow one or more of Turabian’s suggestions for choosing a topic.

Once you’ve decided on 2-3 potential problem/solution topics, do a bit of internet research about each topic. You might read up on your topic on Wikipedia or skim online news articles, blogs or websites. As you are exploring, be on the lookout for things that make you think “Wow! I didn’t know that!” or “How can that be true?”

Finally, ***document your exploration process so that I can see what you are thinking.*** Tell me:

- Your 2-3 potential problem/solution research topics
- The most interesting 2-3 sources you found for each topic (***include links to the websites***)
- A sentence or two about what caught your attention in each source
- Lastly, tell me how you think you might narrow or focus each topic. Remembering that a specific topic is ultimately a better source of questions than a general one.

The tone of this assignment can be informal. What I’m really interested in is seeing what your interests are so that I can help you come up with a manageable topic and worthwhile question that you care about!

Submit your topic exploration document to Canvas.

Criteria: The assignment will be graded for participation. If you put thoughtful effort into the assignment, you will receive all of the points.