

Meaningful Research Assignments Yield Valuable Life-Long Lessons

Teacher and T-L Tag Team leaves students with “nowhere to hide”

By MaryElise Citton

Last year, our Social Science teacher, Anthony DiMaio, asked me to be involved in creating a new assignment for his Canadian World Politics class. As it was the year of the double cohort, the assignment had to fit both the old and the new curriculum in its scope and evaluation. We both wanted the assignment to be a valuable experience, one the students would accept as real preparation for their post-secondary life. On the advice of an acquaintance at York University, I read *The Craft of Research* by Wayne Booth, Greg Colomb, and Joseph Williams of the University of Chicago.

I began reading the text thinking, “Not another research guide...” As I read the prologue, I found myself grinning and nodding and genuinely excited about the position being

taken by these three laureates. I have since created five new assignments based on their book and the results have been great. Teachers and I are re-creating assignments with the end in mind and students are thankful for their newfound enjoyment of the ‘hunt’ for information.

So, what is different? Not much, really. The assignments are worded much like any performance task that places the student in a realistic role. The new added and more profound differences are the emphasis on the audience and the idea of questioning the information to the nth degree with “so what”? Who is reading/listening to the information? Why should they listen and what difference is your information going to make to them? How is your information different from anything

