OIBC TECHNIQUE:  
A Strategy for Synthesizing Information

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Introduction

This strategy was designed to familiarize students with a simplified process for responding to Document Based Questions (DBQs) that have been incorporated into the New York State assessments at the secondary level. The revised format for both State Regents Examinations in social studies (Global History and Geography, June 2000 and U.S. History and Government, June 2001) incorporates a Document Based Question that will constitute 30% of the overall exam mark. (i.e. DBQ = 15%, "Scaffolding Questions" to documents = 15%). To properly prepare students at Iroquois Central for the new assessment format, social studies teachers will be required to utilize productive content and skill strategies in their instructional plans. This particular strategy targets several guidelines in the Level 5 general scoring rubric provided by the State Education Department including: "Demonstrates a...clear plan of organization," "Incorporates relevant outside information" and "Incorporates information from the documents in the body of the essay."

Step 1: Identifying the Strategy

The goal of this lesson is twofold—to assist students to plan/organize a response to a DBQ and to provide a systematic method for incorporating both outside and documentary information into the essay. Students have a tendency to either rely exclusively on information obtained from the documents or base their essay on other information not supported by documentary evidence. To
avoid these extremes, students need to understand that Document Based Questions integrate two essential components—the use of outside information and documentary references. This strategy will aid students in organizing their essays coupled with synthesizing outside and documentary information for support.

The strategy is called the OIBC technique (Organize, Introduction, Body, Conclusion). It consists of a thinksheet with an introductory block, three (or more) divided body paragraph blocks for outside information (left side) and document citations (right side), and concluding paragraph block.

Step 2: Modeling the Strategy

The teacher will distribute the essay question (Principal reasons for War of 1812) to be examined by the students. First, have the students read the question carefully, underlining or highlighting key words, eras, names, issues or categories. Secondly, the teacher asks the students “What does this essay ask us to do?” This requires students to restate the question and indicate a specific position (for or against) before they have written anything. The teacher next asks the students “How would you answer this question if no documents were provided?” Students are given four minutes to briefly write down three facts they know about the topics in the question. Finally, after a brief discussion of student responses, the teacher will distribute the thinksheet and introduce it as a means of simplifying DBQ essay writing.

Step 3: Scaffolding the Strategy

After providing the thinksheet, the teacher distributes the documents (five) to be used in answering the (War of 1812) essay. With both organizers and the complete DBQ question in student hands the teacher will guide the students through the six-step process for responding to Document Based Questions. The steps are:

1. Read the question carefully (Underline key words, eras, issues, categories).
2. Write down the outside information/facts (names, dates, events) you know about the topic.
3. Read and analyze the documents (Write notes in margin, briefly summarize point of view, main idea, etc.).
4. Reread the question (consider documents and your outside Information).
5. Organize your response using thinksheet (OIBC technique).
Chapter Sixteen:
OIBC Technique

- Identify main topics to be discussed in body paragraphs.
- Select documents related to each topic (right side of organizer).
- Write down important information from the documents (right side) and from your outside knowledge (left side) of the topic.

6. Write an organized essay (utilizing OIBC technique)
   - Introductory paragraph
   - Body paragraphs
   - Concluding paragraph

Students should complete steps 1-5 upon completion of a class period (60 minutes in block schedule) with teacher assistance initially. This provides guided practice for the students with a completed essay (Step 6) due the next class meeting. (In block schedule 1-2 days)

Step 4: Providing Additional Practice

It is suggested to begin the year implementing this strategy with each Document Based Essay Question assigned to eleventh grade students. Subsequent skill development strategies incorporating DBQs in directed instruction, repeated practice, and practice with partial DBQs will aid student familiarity and proficiency in writing Document Based Essays as the school year proceeds.

Conclusion

Utilizing the OIBC strategy provides an organizational format while simultaneously aiding effective synthesis of outside and document-based information for secondary students.

Suggestions for Adapting the Strategy in other Grades or Content Areas

Although this strategy is designed for secondary Social Studies, it could be incorporated in other curricular areas (Language Arts) and with minor modifications in lower grades (Social Studies, Language Arts, etc.).

Thinksheet

Copy is attached.
**Thinksheet**

**Organize Your DBQ**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction Paragraph</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outside Information</th>
<th>Documents cited interpretations/explain</th>
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<tbody>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body Paragraphs</th>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conclusion Paragraph</th>
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