Audits: Point of Inquiry

Purpose

Audits are a tool to help students hone skills of observation, practice research techniques, and collect data about a particular topic or point of inquiry. Audits provide students with a system of organization and data collection to help them analyze a particular topic or issue.

To Assign an Audit

- Create and distribute a handout for the students to fill in, or instruct the students to design an audit tool themselves. See the example provided here.

- Provide guidelines and examples of a variety of audit tools that have been used with the particular topic you are studying.

- Connect the audit to a learning outcome, and link it to an assessment of student understanding.

- Develop a research question. Determine what you want the students to understand and achieve. What is the essential research question?

- Determine the items or data points to be collected. These items can be taken from major concepts in a lesson or major components of a topic.

- Establish the length of time for the audit data collection to be conducted. The time can vary: one day, one week, one month, and so on.

- Instruct the students to record their observations or data entries during the data collection time.

- Select an analysis and reporting mechanism to disseminate the audit findings. Examples of reporting mechanisms can include charts, graphic organizers, observation logs, and so on.

- Provide the students with instructions to fill out the audit.

- Consider having the students write an analysis or report to demonstrate what they learned from conducting the audit.

Example of an Audit Handout

Sample Audit			
Date / Time	**Observations / Concepts**	**Evidence**	**Outcome / Assessment**

Conclusion

Auditing is a data collection technique to help students acquire deeper and more practical knowledge of a subject. Conducting an audit is a good way to initiate discussion and facilitate development of an issue.