

An abstract graphic featuring three blue circles of varying sizes. The largest circle is in the top right, a medium-sized one is in the center, and a smaller one is in the bottom right. Two thin, light blue diagonal lines intersect the circles, creating a sense of depth and movement.

Janice Scenario

Issue Two

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Introduction

Janice is a sixth grade Social Studies teacher who would like to integrate technology into her Social Studies lessons while utilizing the Constructivist approach in the curriculum.

The following instructional technology integration plan incorporates the use of all available technologies within a two month timeframe. By the end of this unit students will have completed a Web quest and a created a video newscast. To achieve these two goals, the overall unit has been subdivided into two smaller four week units during which each week will target one of the four state benchmarks for sixth grade social studies.

Alignment to State Standards

This plan for technology integration aligns to Ohio's social studies skills and methods benchmarks for sixth grade. The following two month unit plan will incorporate available technologies into lessons that aim to achieve the indicators listed below.

Social Studies Skills and Methods

- A. Analyze different perspectives on a topic obtained from a variety of sources.
- B. Organize historical information in text or graphic format and analyze the information in order to draw conclusions.
- C. Present a position and support it with evidence and citation of sources.
- D. Work effectively in a group.

The web quest unit and the newscast unit will each separately dedicate one week to each of the successful master of these indicators. This approach will provide the opportunity for each learner to demonstrate mastery of these skills in two separate applications of the same skills over a two month period to reinforce these skills.

Prerequisite skills

- Students will need to have used and created a variety of graphic organizers.
- Students will need to be able to properly cite sources

Lesson Plan Descriptions

Weeks one through four

Week one

Students will work individually this week.

Objective: Students will be able to analyze different perspectives on a topic obtained from a variety of sources.

Students will begin a four week Web quest which they will work four weekly lessons during computer lab. The premise of the Web quest is that the students are investigative reporters who are in charge of putting together an investigative news team. The problem is that they lack the knowledge of the other roles of the reporting team. The purpose of the Web quest is to research and find out more about the roles of a producer, editor, camera person and also more about their position as an investigative reporter. Students will work individually and as a group as indicated in each lesson.

Constructivist methods and procedures:

Links will be provided with various references including articles, videos, and photos of the various roles found in a news studio. Students should explore the references and become familiar with the roles and responsibilities of the various positions in a news studio.

First assignment: A fire breaks out near the news studio. You and your crew are the first to arrive. In a WORD document, explain the role of each of the team members during the new coverage of the fire. (reporter, camera person, editor and producer). Make sure to include a reference section with sources in APA style.

Resources and materials used: Personal computers with access to the internet and Microsoft Word

Week two

Students will work in groups of two.

Objective: Students will be able to organize historical information in text or graphic format and analyze the information in order to draw conclusions.

Constructivist methods and procedures: Links will be provided with various reference including articles, videos and photos of the various media used throughout the history of news reporting.

Second assignment: Students will review the reference material and create a timeline starting from newsprint to modern news media. The students will post their timelines on a class Wiki that the teacher has created. For each step in the timeline include one advantage the newer media has over the previous media.

Resources and Materials used: Personal computer with access to the internet and a Wiki created by the teacher.

Week Three

Students will work individually

Objective: Students will be able to present a position and support it with evidence and citation of sources.

Constructivist methods and procedures:

Students will choose a news story on Channel One (www.channelone.com) and then use the internet to search for at least two more sources of information about the news story.

Third Assignment: After researching the story, the students will decide whether they agree on the position of the reporter from Channel One or disagree with their views. Students will post a report on their views to the class blog that the teacher has created. The report must include sources used in APA style.

Resources and Materials: Personal computer with access to the internet and a class blog.

Week four

Students will work in groups of four.

Objective: Students will be able to work objectively in a group.

Constructivist methods and procedures:

Students will meet in a chat room set up in Dim Dim by the teacher. The group will discuss the various roles in the Newsroom. They will review the roles and responsibility of each position.

Assignment four: The students will decide which classmate will be assigned as role of reporter, director, editor and camera person for week eight's production of 60 Minutes for Kids. The roles will be posted with the participants' names on the class blog with an explanation of why each person was chosen for their particular roles.

Resources and Materials: Computer with access to the internet, Dim Dim and class blog.

Lesson Plan Descriptions

Weeks five through eight

The second phase of this plan utilizes both individual constructivist and group constructivist efforts to create a culminating newscast in week eight. In the culminating week students will create a newscast called “60 Minutes for Kids.” Students will use the resources and materials that they develop in weeks five through seven to create the segments for their news program. Each student will ultimately rotate roles as a news reporter, producer, and editor as they either perform for the video newscast or assist in its production. Upon the successful completion of each weeks activities students will be able to demonstrate satisfactory application of each of Ohio’s six grade social studies skills and methods benchmarks.

During week five, students will rotate working at three different work stations and utilize three different available technologies. At each station students will create a graphic organizer that compares and contrasts the given topics. Station one will use the three computers in the back of the classroom to engage students in analyzing online documents. Each computer will be set to view a different online document, audio recording, or video. The second station will use the film and slide projector to engage students in creating a graphic organizer that compares and contrasts three images and or political cartoons. The third station will engage students in comparing and contrasting three current event issues from a previously recorded Channel One presentation using the TV and VCR. The perspectives that students analyze will become part of a culminating newscast that students will produce in week eight.

During week six, students will create a poster board that incorporates a graphic organizer, an editorial, and a picture of each group member. The graphic organizer will summarize the contributions of each group member by listing the conclusions that they formed for each topic. Students will use the still frame cameras to incorporate pictures of their group members into the graphic organizer. Using their group’s analysis and conclusions, each student will produce editorials that draw conclusions about each topic. Students will use the three computers in the back of the room to write their editorials. Students will use the conclusions that they outline in their graphic organizer as part of the culminating newscast that students will produce in week eight.

During week seven, each student will be presented with a problem in which they must try to solve and defend using evidence to support their case proper citation of sources. For example, a student could be assigned the following question? At which point could the South have won the Civil War?” Students will then use the computer lab to research the Civil War and find ways in which South could have had an opportunity to win the war. Students will use their responses to the question proposed to write a position paper that will be used as the basis for the script that they will need to create for the culminating newscast that students will produce in week eight.

During week eight, students will take on the roles of a reporter, producer, and editor to produce a “60 Minutes for Kids” production. Each group will present the researched questions from the previous week to produce a segment for the show that illustrates the student’s responses to each problem. Students

will use the video camcorder in combination with the film and slide projector to record the video of student reports with changing still image backgrounds that illustrate their report. Still cameras can be used by the students to capture still images, perhaps of the graphic organizers assembled on their poster board during week six, to use in the video production. Each member of the group will rotate roles so that each group will produce a full episode of “60 Minutes for Kids.” Students will use the TV and VCR to review and assess their final production.

Constructivism

A growing trend in education is teaching using the constructivist approach. This approach to learning puts the student’s in charge of “constructing” their own knowledge from their own experiences. “Teachers cannot ‘pour’ knowledge into the heads of students as they might pour lemonade into a glass; rather, students must make their own lemonade.” (Ormond, 2004) The role of the teacher is no longer a supplier or source of wisdom, but a facilitator of the learning environment. This model for teaching frees the teacher from having to be a master of the information being taught. The focus now is on the educational process. Teachers can now focus on instructional practices and designs that lead the learners toward learning experiences. The learner is now responsible for constructing their own meaningful experiences to gain knowledge. Students will need direction however, so “although the learner is in the driver’s seat in the learning process, teachers can provide a road map and offer suggestions about how to move the horse and wagon forward.” (Ormond, 2004)

Constructivist Rationale

Weeks one through four

Web quests are a great tool that utilizes the Constructivist philosophies. Web quests support a goal based learning environment. In a goal based learning students work through carefully planned scenarios created by the teacher with a goal to achieve a higher level of learning. (Tiene & Ingram p. 70). “The teacher facilitates and guides rather than dictates autocratically.” (Yilmaz, p. 167). Goal based learning starts with a scenario or a problem that the students work individually and in groups to solve. Social interaction plays a role in learning (Yilmaz, p.167). Carefully selected resources are provided and the students must construct their own meaning and knowledge while solving the planned problems. Students must also justify and defend their positions in Constructivist learning environments, at times forcing them to change their beliefs, assumptions and conceptions.

In Lesson one, students will begin to explore roles in a news studio. The students may already have some idea of these roles. This first activity will force the students to rethink some of their preconceived notions and construct new meaning for those that they were unfamiliar with. Forcing the students to synthesis their understanding of the positions and relate them to a real life problem, will lead them to a

higher level of thinking rather than just reciting the job descriptions of each role. The students will also gain practice in using Word and in citing resources utilizing APA style.

In Lesson two, students will work in groups of two. As mentioned previously, social interaction plays a critical role in learning. Hearing different views and discussing situations, can help a learner to construct new meaning of previous knowledge. The various media is purposely not included so the students are forced to problem solve to figure out the various media throughout the years. They must then go further in their understanding by being able to state why each new stage is an improvement over the last stage.

In Lesson, three the students work individually and are able to choose the news report that they will further research. Choosing the subject to research, one that interests the learner, helps to engage and motivate the students and helps them to take an active role in their learning. This is a large part of the Constructivist theory, making students active learners (Tiene & Ingram, p. 64). The students are also not just rote memorizing current news information, they are taking it a step further by doing additional research and then coming up with their own conclusions.

In lesson four, students will work in groups. Collaborating with other children allows the students to see other perspectives, and if necessary, change their thinking about a subject and create new meanings.

Constructivist Rationale

Weeks five through eight

Each of the activities in this unit builds upon and scaffolds the objectives of the learner toward the culminating project. The opening two weeks of this unit will frontload the students with essential information on various topics selected by Janice. The final two weeks will engage the student in a more detailed study of a related topic. This approach scaffolds the constructed knowledge closely together from week to week. (Steffe & Gale, 1995) Additionally in this unit, the teacher “sets up problems and monitors student exploration, guides the direction of student inquiry and promotes new patterns of thinking.” (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 1995) While utilizing the constructivist approach, students will work on some tasks individually and some tasks as a group.

During week five, students will create three graphic organizers based upon given topics chosen by Janice. Students will need to analyze the information and then discuss within their group how to construct a graphic organizer that organizes the information in a way that will compare and contrast each item in a simple and visual manner.

During week six, students will assemble a poster board display of their group’s graphic organizers and supplement each graphic organizer with an editorial created by each group member that analyzes the decisions that culminated in the conclusions that were drawn about each topic. These editorials are

then arranged to form an overall graphic organizer of the group conclusions of the three workstations from the previous week.

During week seven, students will investigate the answer to a question. Students will articulate their response to this question in a position paper that is supported by evidence and proper citation. This investigation in a specific problem based question will serve as the basis for the final phase of scaffolding that will lead to the culminating project.

In week eight, students will use the investigative report that they created in week seven to produce a video production. Each student's production will serve as a video segment of a group of video segments that are developed by a team of individuals working together to create an entire video program.

Overview of Unit Plan

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| Web quest | Week 1 | Objective: Students will be able to analyze different perspectives on a topic obtained from a variety of sources. |
| | | Resources and materials utilized: Personal computers with access to the internet and Microsoft Word. |
| | Week 2 | Objective: Students will be able to organize historical information in text or graphic format and analyze the information in order to draw conclusions. |
| | | Resources and materials utilized: Personal computer with access to the internet and a Wiki created by the teacher. |
| Newscast | Week 3 | Objective: Students will be able to present a position and support it with evidence and citation of sources. |
| | | Resources and materials utilized: Personal computer with access to the internet, class blog. |
| | Week 4 | Objective: Students will be able to work effectively in a group. |
| | | Resources and materials utilized: Computer with access to the internet, Dim Dim and class blog. |
| | Week 5 | Objective: Students will be able to analyze different perspectives on a topic obtained from a variety of sources. |
| | | Resources and materials utilized: Three mid range computers, film and slide projectors, VCR, TV Monitor, still frame cameras. |
| | Week 6 | Objective: Students will be able to organize historical information in text or graphic format and analyze the information in order to draw conclusions. |
| | | Resources and materials utilized: Three mid range computers and still cameras. |
| | Week 7 | Objective: Students will be able to present a position and support it with evidence and citation of sources. |
| | | Resources and materials utilized: Computer Lab |
| | Week 8 | Objective: Students will be able to work effectively in a group. |
| | | Resources and materials utilized: Video camcorder, Film and slide projector, Still cameras, VCR, TV Monitor. |

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