

Best Practices of Technology Integration

Title: *The American Dream of the Decades*

Subject(s): Computer Literacy, Social Studies

Intended Grade Level(s): Middle School or High School (Grades 7 – 12)

Description:

The American Dream of the Decades is a unit that allows students to examine the events and people of the United States throughout the past century. This unit is based upon both individual and cooperative learning, in which groups of students will be responsible for developing a multimedia presentation which focuses on a selected decade from the past century. Students will first research their decades on an individual basis through the “eyes” or viewpoints of various roles. Suggested roles are that of a politician, reporter, producer, musician, fashion designer, comedian, lawyer, scientist, and photographer. (Students may also choose a role that they find interesting and is appropriate to their decade.) Each student will then be responsible for creating a multimedia presentation highlighting the events of the decade as seen through the eyes of their selected role. These individual presentations will then be combined into a presentation for each group’s decade which examines the era from the various roles. A key focus of the decade presentation is the group’s analysis of the American Dream for that particular decade, and a brief explanation of why it was chosen. Students will also be responsible for including their personal American Dreams for the present day. Finally, each decade’s presentation will be linked together in an American Dream presentation that highlights the selected decades of the century.

Narrative:

The American Dream is not a stagnant aspiration, but rather an ideal that is molded by events and people.

What is the focus of each decade’s American Dream? How do the events in past decades impact present and future decades? Finally, how does the American Dream of today’s young people differ from that of their parents and elders?

I consider this lesson a “Best Practice” within my classroom because it offers students a brief introduction into the events and individuals who helped define this past century. Today, World War II, the Depression, and other notable events seem very far away to students. Classroom textbooks can offer students facts and dates about various events, but many times they overlook the “human” factor. This unit allows students to research events from a decade of their choice as seen through the eyes of various roles. For example, how did the bombing of Pearl Harbor affect the nation as seen through the eyes of a politician or a photographer? The viewpoints may be very different, even though the facts are the same. Depending upon the grade level of the students completing this unit, this may be the first time that they are introduced to various events. I have seen curiosity heighten as students begin learning about events from their decades. This unit

offers them the opportunity to not only research historical facts and information, but also to “report” such facts from a role other than themselves.

The use of technology within this unit plays an integral role in its success. From the beginning research through the final presentation, technology is very important. Specifically, the Internet is an invaluable tool. Students conduct the majority of their research for this unit online. It is important to remember that the final product of this unit is not merely a “report” about the decade, but rather an informative and interesting multimedia presentation. The Internet allows students to easily obtain graphics, sound files and videos to use within their presentations. It also offers a vast amount of information pertaining to the various decades. Upon the completion of this unit, the students should have created an interesting presentation highlighting the decade of their choice.

This unit meets Teaching and Learning Standards in several ways. First, the students must utilize higher order thinking skills in order to successfully prepare their presentation. The students are responsible for researching and organizing information about the various decades as seen through their individually chosen roles. Substantive conversation is an important element of a successful presentation as well. Team members must communicate with each other in order to merge their individual presentations into a successful presentation about their decade. Additionally, team members must also be able to work together to decide upon a recurrent theme and message to for their individual decade’s presentations. Connections beyond the classroom are also evident throughout the unit. Students have the opportunity to further research topics from their decade they find interesting and create a presentation which focuses on those topics. Instead of merely writing a report about events from a particular decade, students are afforded the freedom to choose which events to include and offer their interpretation of how these events helped shape the American Dream. Each of these Standards plays an important role in students successfully preparing an informative and interesting presentation.

Curriculum Benchmarks:

[MI.ELA.3.MS](#)

Integrate listening, viewing, speaking, reading, and writing skills for multiple purposes and in varied contexts. An example is using all the language arts to prepare and present a unit project on career exploration.

[MI.SOC.I.2.MS.4](#)

Use historical biographies to explain how events from the past affected the lives of individuals and how some individuals influenced the course of history.

[MI.SOC.I.4.MS.3](#)

Identify the responses of individuals to historic violations of human dignity involving discrimination, persecution and crimes against humanity.

MI.SOC.I.4.MS.4

Select historic decisions and evaluate them in light of core democratic values and resulting costs and benefits as viewed from a variety of perspectives.

Detailed Timeline:

The approximate amount of time needed for students to complete this unit is three weeks. The amount of preparation time for the teacher is approximately one class period. Within the three-week period, time should be allocated for students to formally present their completed presentations to the class. A detailed timeline is as follows:

Day 1 –	Teacher Preparation Copying of rubric and student explanation handout
Day 2 -	Introduction of unit to students Dividing of students into teams of four Selection of decades by each student team Selection of roles by individual students
Day 3 -Day 10	Research and preparation of individual multimedia presentations
Day 11 – Day 13	Linking of individual multimedia presentations within the group Completion of group’s interpretation of their decade’s American Dream Completion of individual American Dreams
Day 14 – Day 15	Group presentations of American Dream multimedia presentations to class

It should be noted that the above timeline is based upon students having the required technology skills prior to beginning this lesson.

Materials/Hardware/Software:

Materials –

- 3x5 notecards (for draft of multimedia presentation)
- Reference books from media center pertaining to the various decades

Hardware –

- Computer lab containing a computer for each student
- Scanner
- Digital Camera
- Writeable CD Rom Drive

Software –

- Multimedia Presentation Software (i.e. HyperStudio®, PowerPoint®)
- Scanning/Graphics Software (i.e. Adobe™ Photoshop®, Color It)
- Internet Web Browser (i.e. Netscape™, Internet Explorer®)

Internet Locations –

<http://www.metacrawler.com> (Search under the particular decade)

<http://www.historychannel.com>

<http://lp2cd.com/time/machine.htm>

1920's –

<http://www.angelfire.com/co/pscst/>

<http://www.msu.edu/course/mc/112/1920s/>

<http://www.users.interport.net/~ahajnal/20s.html>

1930's –

<http://www.nde.state.ne.us/SS/1930.html>

<http://www.looksmart.com/eus1/eus53706/eus53710/eus53828/eus326984/eus71848/eus285836/eus536967/eus536982/r?l&>

<http://www.movieactors.com/30s.htm>

1940's –

<http://freespace.virgin.net/ian.bayley/choice.html>

<http://www.filmsite.org/40sintro.html>

<http://www.gmmy.com/>

<http://www.filmsite.org/40sintro.html>

1950's –

<http://www.fiftiesweb.com/fifties.htm>

<http://dept.english.upenn.edu/~afilreis/50s/home.html>

<http://www.liberty.edu/resources/library/public/as/history/american/1950.htm>

1960's –

<http://www.liberty.edu/resources/library/public/as/history/american/1960.htm>

<http://www.my-generation.zetnet.co.uk/>

<http://www.slip.net/~scmetro/sixties.htm>

1970's –

<http://www.liberty.edu/resources/library/public/as/history/american/1970.htm>

1980's –

<http://www.webring.org/cgi-bin/webring?ring=aaron1508;list>

<http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Boulevard/3805/index.html>

Teacher Preparation:

Teacher will need two hours time to verify Internet links and to make copies of handouts before beginning the lesson.

Prerequisite Student Skills:

Before students begin this unit, students should have a working knowledge of the above-listed hardware and software packages. Additionally, they should be able to successfully conduct Internet searches; save images, videos, and sounds from the Internet; and also utilize a graphics software package to enhance or modify images and pictures. If additional instruction is required in order to successfully utilize the hardware or software contained within this lesson, the timeline should be adjusted accordingly.

Activities/Procedures:

Upon assigning the unit *The American Dream*, each student should be given an instructional handout and rubric. The teacher will explain the expectations for this unit and also make sure the students comprehend the score breakdown on the rubric. The teacher will then divide the class into teams of four students. Once the teams are selected, each student will draw two roles out of a hat. Suggested roles to choose from are as follows (although students may elect to choose their own roles and have them approved by the teacher):

politician	reporter
producer	musician
fashion designer	comedian
lawyer	scientist
photographer	

Students will be responsible for reporting on the events of their decade as if they were in their chosen role. Students will be given class time to research their decade and prepare their presentation. The following information is a general outline of how the multimedia presentation should be prepared:

To complete the American Dream students will utilize the Internet and media center to create a multimedia presentation focusing on the American Dream of selected decade. Some questions students will need to think about answering and including in their presentations are as follows:

1. What is the American Dream of your decade?
2. How has the American Dream changed over time?
3. How do diverse cultures view the American Dream?
4. How have significant historical events affected the Dream?
5. How will new opportunities of the 21st century challenge the American Dream?
6. What makes your area of interest (i.e. photography) an effective medium for sharing the American Dream?
7. What is your American Dream?

The multimedia presentation should be prepared similar to the following guidelines:

1. Title card showing decade, roles, and student's name
2. Cards two through five showing information about the decade as seen from the roles selected by the student.
3. Card six showing bibliographical information

As students conduct their research, they are requested by the teacher to take accurate notes from various locations. These notes should be periodically checked by the teacher to ensure that the students are not becoming "overwhelmed" with information. As students create their presentations, they should work on only one role at a time. Each role within the presentation should focus on presenting the decade how an individual in that role would perceive the events.

Creativity is a vital element of this unit. Allowing the students to have the freedom to create a unique and informative presentation, while at the same time following the rubric's guidelines, is important. Upon completing their individual stacks focusing on their selected roles, students will be responsible for linking all stacks from within their decade together to form a concise, creative and interesting presentation. Once the individual stacks are linked together, students within each group will arrive at a consensus as to what exactly is the American Dream of their chosen decade. This belief will be included within the group's multimedia presentation. Additionally, students should also include their own, individual American Dreams and what they hope the future will hold for themselves.

It is important that a basic timeline for this project is explained to the students and followed as closely as possible. (See Detailed Timeline Section.) The teacher should explain that the intention of this project is to "introduce" students to events that occurred in their selected decades. This presentation is not meant as a detailed report, but rather as an informative and creative "glimpse" of the decades in the 1900's.

Assessment/Evaluation:

The student's final assessment for this unit will be based upon two facets. The primary grade will be given on the multimedia presentation itself. A rubric detailing the guidelines and point values should be handed out to students at the onset of this unit (See Appendix A). Additionally, students will also be graded on their presentation skills as they present their decade to their classmates. While the students will present their decade as a group, each student will receive an individual grade based upon their presentation skills.

Follow-up Activities:

A wonderful follow-up activity for this lesson is to combine all of the decades into one multimedia presentation. This final presentation can then be “burned” onto a writeable CD Rom and copies can be distributed to students, staff members, and parents.

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(Appendix A)

THE AMERICAN DREAM HYPERSTUDIO STACK RUBRIC

This rubric is designed to assist you in creating your individual stacks which will be combined to form your group's presentation. As you design your stack, try to keep a current "theme" or design pattern that is consistent throughout your group's entire stack. (This is something that your group will have to work on and decide together, such as certain colors and sizes for text.) Once your individual stacks are created, we will be linking them together with other stacks from your group to form your group's presentation.

Upon completion of your individual stack, your group should include their idea of the American Dream for their decade, how it has changed over time, do different cultures view the American Dream differently, etc.

When the stacks are entirely completed and linked together, your group will then be responsible for making a presentation about your chosen decade. Remember...this presentation is not merely "playing" your Hyperstudio stack for the class to see. Rather, your group will be graded upon how creatively and effectively you present the American Dream of your decade. (More information on this will follow at a later date.)

Stack contains at least 7 cards	_____ 5
Stack contains a title card which tells the roles chosen by stack creator	_____ 5
Creativity is used to present information gathered for each role	_____ 25
Information used is factual and presented clearly	_____ 25
Proper spelling and grammar is used	_____ 10
Creator's American Dream (for the present day) is identified (This can be done collectively on one card at the end of the entire stack. Each member of the group can offer their own version of their American Dream.)	_____ 10
Stack contains various Hyperstudio features (painted text, text object, graphic objects, various sounds)	_____ 15
All cards are correctly linked to each other and to other portions of the stack	_____ 5