

Best Practices of Technology Integration

Title: *Laura Ingalls Wilder and Pioneer Life*

Subject(s): Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies

Intended Grade Level(s): 4th grade

Description:

The Big Idea--Michigan Pioneer Trail

The students will be studying Laura Ingalls Wilder and pioneer life. The students will spend three weeks reading the theme of Laura Ingalls Wilder. They will be integrating other subjects such as math, social studies, science, and the fine arts. We will be using maps to measure distances from Pepin, Wisconsin to Kansas. We will then compare that to a place we could travel if we started a Pioneer Trail in Traverse City, Michigan. The students will be looking at the topography of Michigan in the 1870's and how that would affect their travels. The students will be writing a journal entry for 20 minutes a day for a week from the viewpoint of a family member. We hope to integrate the fine arts of art, music, and gym by learning some dances (polka and waltz) and singing frontier songs. We will also be making our own paper to use for our journal entries.

Narrative:

Life on the pioneer trail was different from life today. The Laura Ingalls Wilder reading theme is the foundation for this unit.

Focus Questions:

1. What is a pioneer trail?
2. How was life different in 1870-1880 compared to modern times?
3. What were the physical characteristics of Michigan in 1870 and how did this impact how pioneers traveled to Michigan?
4. How were the expectations of children different in the 1870's than expectations of children today?

Curriculum Benchmarks:

[MI.ELA.4.LE.1](#)

Describe language patterns used in their spoken, written, and visual communication contexts; such as the school, neighborhood, sports, children's periodicals, and hobbies..

[MI.ELA.4.LE.2](#)

Describe how features of English such as language patterns and spelling vary over time and from place to place and how they affect meaning in formal and informal situations. An example is exploring regional language variations in the United States.

[MI.ELA.4.LE.3](#)

Begin to recognize how words and phrases relate to their origin. Examples include surnames and names of bodies of water or landmarks.

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MI.SOC.I.1.LE.1

Measure chronological time by decades and centuries.

MI.SOC.I.2.LE.1

Summarize the sequence of key events in stories describing life from the past in their local community, the state of Michigan, and other parts of the United States.

MI.SOC.I.2.LE.2

Use narratives and graphic data to compare the past of their local community, the state of Michigan, and other parts of the United States with present day life in those places.

MI.MAT.II.3.LE.3

Estimate measures with a specified degree of accuracy and decide if an estimate or a measurement is “close enough.”

Detailed Timeline:

The reading theme will take three weeks. As a culminating activity, the students will be writing journal entries/travel logs as a family member for 20 minutes a day for a week. The math activity of measuring the distance from Pepin, Wisconsin to Kansas and comparing that to where you could go if you started in Traverse City, would take two or three hour-long classes.

Materials/Hardware/Software:

Computers
Aver Key
Internet Access
Reading Theme Books
Journals
Cardboard Egg Cartons
Shoebboxes or Small Boxes for Covered Wagons
Muslin to Cover all Boxes
Maps of United States and Michigan
Videotape Presentations

Aver Key:

Little House Journals-students will be shown examples of good journal entries and poor journal entries

Overhead Projector:

Show map of United States:

- Trace route the Ingalls' family traveled from Wisconsin to Kansas in red marker (this could also be done on the AverKey).
- Fill in names of all the present day states Ingalls family traveled through on the way.
- Designate Mississippi, Missouri and Verdigris Rivers in blue marker.
- Draw miniature house to represent where the Ingalls family settled.
- Shade the Indian Territory (green marker)
- Write the names of the three Native American tribes who lived in territory.

Computer /Internet:

- Research Laura and Mary
- Explore an abandoned Indian Camp.
- Research the Prairie Indian Tribes-what might students have seen if they had gone to the Indian Camp while Indians were still living there (examples: articles of clothing, weapons or tools, home, animals).

Video:

- Show Laura Ingalls Wilder video.
- A size appropriate group prepares a scene from the story for dramatization, acts it out and relates the significance of the scene to the entire book. (This should include costumes, props and sound effects.)

Activities/Procedures:

KWL Chart: Pioneers; discuss vocabulary; read theme on Laura Ingalls Wilder; research on the Internet to collect information about pioneer life; map out covered wagon and kids will decide what they will take with them; mapping and measuring activities which will include a poster and presentation of which route they will take; timeline of their journey; make paper from cardboard egg cartons; write journal entries/travel logs on homemade paper; learn dances from the times such as the polka and the waltz as well as songs from the times; learn games from pioneer life (cats cradle, jacks); make cornbread. These activities will tap into the multiple intelligences as well as work on cooperative teaming, learning and problem solving.

Assessment/Evaluation:

Create a rubric for our timeline and journals.

Theme test in reading.

Assess mapping by students creating a route to travel and listing the possible problems due to topography.

Follow-up Activities:

A possible follow up activity would be presenting a play about Laura's life
Bringing in a fiddler
Guest Speaker: Historian of Michigan
Building a model covered wagon using tech prep training through the Traverse
Bay Area Intermediate School District
Box Social for the families

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