

Best Practices of Technology Integration

Title: *Flat Stanley Travels to U.S. Regions*

Subject Area: Language Arts/Social Studies

Intended Grade Level: 4

Description:

Students will read the book *Flat Stanley* by Jeff Brown. In the story a bulletin board flattens the main character. He is then sent in an envelope to a friend in California. During a fantasy genre language arts unit, groups of students will make their own Flat Stanley and join an on-line project. This project includes sending Stanley to other regions of the United States. Students will include questions with Stanley that they would like to have answered about the region of the U.S. in which Stanley is traveling. Students receiving Stanley will write a story about his adventures and return the answers to regional questions when they return Stanley. Lessons pertaining to all the U.S. regions will be presented in the classroom.

If five classrooms in five different regions of the United States are collaborating on this project, four groups within each classroom can be assigned to each of the different regions.

An option to videoconference with other participating classrooms will also be offered. Students can share the answers to the regional questions on-line with audio conferencing, through Email or during videoconferences.

The purpose of this lesson is to provide a highly motivational interdisciplinary unit of study integrating social studies, language arts and technology.

Narrative:

Integrating language arts, social studies and technology benchmarks into an interdisciplinary unit is a necessary part of teaching effectively and meaningfully. This unit brings together a fantasy story, regions of the United States and technology. The addition of an on-line project into an already busy technology-using classroom should prove to be motivational. By organizing video conferencing with the other classrooms involved around the country, students can get immediate feedback to questions that come up during the educational exchange.

Curriculum Benchmarks:

MI.SOC.I.3.LE.3

Compose simple narratives of events from the history of the state of Michigan and the United States.

MI.SOC.II.1.LE.3

Locate and describe the major places, cultures, and communities of the nation and compare these characteristics.

MI.SOC.II.4.LE.5

Describe the Great Lakes ecosystem, and explain physical and human processes that act upon them.

MI.SOC.V.1.LE.1

Locate information about local, state and national communities using a variety of traditional sources, electronic technologies, and direct observations.

MI.ELA.1.LE.1

Use reading for multiple purposes, such as enjoyment, gathering information, learning new procedures, and increasing conceptual understanding.

MI.ELA.3.LE.1

Integrate listening, speaking, viewing, 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 a selected state or country.

MI.ELA.8.LE.1

Identify and use mechanics that enhance and clarify understanding.

MI.T.2.LE.3.

Retrieve and communicate information using a technological system (voice, data, video, graphics, etc.).

Timeline:

This lesson could take place at the beginning of the school year and continue throughout the year. The exchange between the participating classrooms could span the entire school year or only last until the stories are written and Flat Stanley is returned along with the regional answers (approximately 4 weeks).

Materials/Hardware/Software:

Classroom or lab Internet access with Email

Flat Stanley by Jeff Brown (classroom copies for all students is optional)

Optional: I-C-Q camera or some other video conferencing package

Large pieces of cardboard and markers to construct Stanley

Envelopes and postage to send Stanley

Word processing program and computer to publish Flat Stanley's adventures.

Teacher Preparation:

Teachers will need to visit the project URL to sign up for the project.

(<http://www.public.usit.net/lcave/flatstnly.html>)

Teachers could visit a list serv and find 4 other classrooms willing to join the project from each region if no Flat Stanley project is currently running. Make sure all participants agree to length of project, conferencing technology and time to conference have Email access, and understand the writing objectives of the project. The amount of regional questions can also be agreed upon at this time. Communication between teachers participating in this project is key.

Teachers should also have a plan as to how the United States regional information and learning will be facilitated in students.

Prerequisite Student Skills:

Students will need to know how to Email and videoconference with other classrooms. Prior knowledge about their own region is important because they are sharing this with the other classrooms involved in the project. Initially using the Internet to find information regarding Michigan would be another nice addition to this unit if your school were linked. Social studies lessons about our country's people and environment would also benefit students before beginning the on-line activities.

Activities/Procedures:

1. Students participate in a fantasy genre literature unit.
2. Students read flat Stanley.
3. The idea of making our own Flat Stanley and sending him around the country is introduced.
4. The on-line project commences with cooperative groups of students creating their Flat Stanley and sending him to another classroom participating in the project.
5. Students Email other classrooms when they receive their Flat Stanley.
6. Students study the regional material sent by other classrooms.
7. Cooperative groups of students write about their adventures in Michigan with the Flat Stanley they received from another classroom. Students are asked to try to include information about Michigan in their adventures with Flat Stanley. They also need to

answer the questions about our region that were sent with the Flat Stanley from another region.

8. Video conferencing takes place with an exchange of questions about each group's region.
9. Flat Stanley and the regional answers and stories are sent back to the original owners.
10. Students share the adventures of Flat Stanley with their classmates.

Assessment/Evaluation:

A writing rubric is used to score and give feedback to students on the creative story they write about Flat Stanley's adventures in Michigan (included below). A copy of this story is filed in their writing portfolio.

Grades will also be given to groups for the correctness, completeness and details included in the answers to the regional questions.

Students will also be assessed on their knowledge of Email and success in sending messages. Video conferencing knowledge can also be assessed by observation.

Flat Stanley Adventure

Assignment/Rubric/Assessment Checklist

Assignment: Write a fantasy story.

Your fantasy story needs to illustrate Flat Stanley's adventures in Michigan. Stanley needs to have at least four adventures. Geographical, economical, historical and natural resources of Michigan should be included in this creative writing.

Fantasy Rubric

3 - Superior competency: This story shows that the student has put original thoughts together to make a story with a beginning, middle and end containing many clear and supportive details. The story is a fantasy. The story includes a setting, characters and events. The social studies content is integrated into the fantasy creatively. The student demonstrates knowledge that all sentences have correct punctuation, grammar and capitalization. The writer has used sentences to make up paragraphs. The writing is neat and presentable.

2 - Good competency: This story is good but less imaginative writing. The topic is loosely developed and the organizational pattern has some inconsistency. Errors in grammar and mechanics create confusion for the reader. There are minimal errors in spelling and the sentences tend to be short.

1 - Limited competency: This story lacks flair, but the story can be described as adequate writing. The topic is poorly developed and lacks focus. The writing is often unclear, lacking logical organization. Poor use of mechanics, grammar and spelling may overwhelm the content. The vocabulary is somewhat bland - "tired words".

Checklist

	<u>Teacher</u>	<u>Student</u>
Title for story	_____	_____
Title page with author and illustrator	_____	_____
Correct punctuation, spelling & capitalization	_____	_____
Complete sentences	_____	_____
Story has beginning, middle and end	_____	_____
Characters are developed	_____	_____
Neat handwriting	_____	_____
Regional information included	_____	_____
Descriptive language	_____	_____
Paragraphs indented	_____	_____

Follow up Activities:

It would make sense that students would Email their friends around the country during the remainder of the year. Videoconferences could also be extended to exchange information even after the project is finished. Students will be able to use the answers from other classrooms as they study different regions of the United States during the school year. The Flat Stanley stories from all the participating classroom could be shared with all regions as well.

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