

MAISA and the REMC Association of Michigan Best Practices in Technology Integration Plan

Title: Then and Now

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

Intended Grade Level(s): 2-3

Description:

The purpose of this unit is to have students learn about life in an earlier time period and to compare it to present day life. Students, working in small groups, record their prior knowledge of pioneer life in web form. Together they read *Wagon Wheels*. It's an informative nonfiction account of one African American family's reasons for their journey to the west, but with little detail to the many difficulties such a trip entailed. Students add to their web new information they have learned. They then play *Oregon Trail II*, making the many hard day to day decisions the pioneers faced until they have made the complete trip. Again, additional knowledge is added to the web. The completed web is used as a resource for any number of individual or group responses.

Curriculum Benchmarks:

[MI.SOC.I.1.LE.3](#). Distinguish among the past, the present and the future.
[MI.SOC.I.2.LE.2](#). Describe the past through the eyes and experiences of those who were there as revealed through their records.

[MI.ELA.1.LE.4](#). Constructs meaning from selected text
[MI.ELA.11.LE.4](#). Use of a graphic organizer
[MI.ELA.6.LE.2](#). Oral communication skills

Materials/Hardware/Software:

To complete this unit the following items are needed:

- Oregon Trail II CD by Mecc, Version 1.2 for Windows and Macintosh.



- Student Copies of *Wagon Wheels*, by Barbara Brenner
- 1 large sheet of paper per group
- colored pencils or markers
- additional materials based on choice of students' response

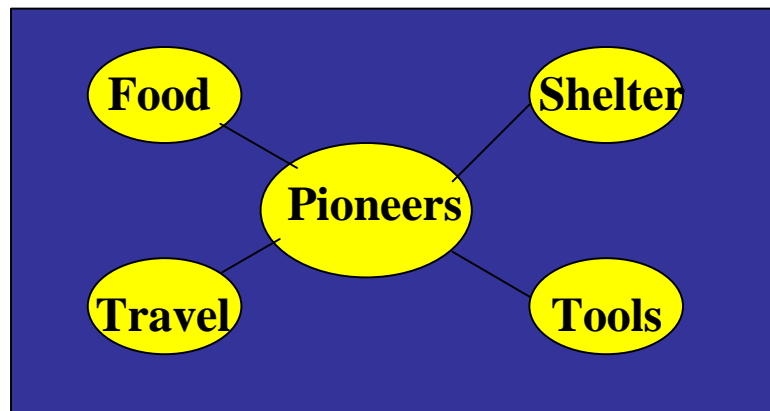
Activities/Procedures:

Teacher pre-activities:

1. Plan small groups of 4 students each which will later split into two students per computer.
2. Provide each group with a large sheet of paper, one black and four blue markers or colored pencils.

Activities:

1. Explain to the students that we are going to learn about pioneers who traveled west in our country's past. Using the black marker have them "Choose one person in your group to write the word *pioneers* in the center of your paper and circle it. We will think about how they traveled. Write *travel* on your paper and circle it." Continue having them also add the words *shelter*, *tools* and *food*. Model this as you go so their papers look like the graphic organizer below.



2. Collect the black markers and instruct the students to web everything they already know about pioneers of the Old West with the blue markers.
3. Provide copies of *Wagon Wheels* and four green markers to each group. They are to read this account of one pioneer family's experience and record on their web any new information they have learned about such pioneers.
4. Introduce how to run the Oregon Trail program. Students will need to know how to save their trip under their names as a trip may take them several class periods. If you choose to add the additional assignment of keeping a travel diary, you will need to demonstrate how to open that file and what your expectations will be for their entries.
5. Place two students from the same group at a computer. Discussing the merits of the various choices they must make elicits higher level thinking skills. Their assignment is to successfully complete a trip from their city of origin to their selected destination.
6. Upon completing their trip, hand out red markers to use in adding additional new knowledge of western pioneer life to their webs.

7. Allow for whole class discussion by making a class pioneer web with contributions from all groups.
8. Make comparisons of “then and now” with one or more of the following activities.
 - a. Make a “my life” web using the same graphic organizer as for pioneers. Present it to the class and compare it to pioneer life.
 - b. Assign written or taped responses to questions such as:
What was the hardest problem the pioneers faced and why? How do we solve that problem today?
Would you like to live back then or now and why?
 - c. Paint or draw a mural depicting pioneer travel and a mural of modern travel.
 - d. Do “Then and Now “skits depicting a day in the life of ...

Assessment/Evaluation:

Criteria: Completion of one trip on the Oregon Trail. [1point]
Participation in developing a web of information on pioneers showing growth from initial recordings. [1 point]
Completion of one project which demonstrates a minimum of one difference between the past and the present. [1 point]
Proficiency: 3 points

Follow-up Activities:

Have the students keep a journal of their group’s trip. This can be done on the Mecc program.

Complete additional trips on the Oregon Trail.

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