

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

Title: Teaching Email Skills to Fourth Graders

Subject(s): Language Arts and Social Studies

Intended Grade Level: Fourth

Description: This project came about as a result of a new computer lab being installed in our building. My goal was to combine the teaching of computer skills with meaningful writing. Using Email Classroom Exchange, I was able to come up with at least five schools in different regions of the U.S. that were willing to correspond with us. Having a real audience to write to greatly increased the student's interest in both the writing process and in learning about their country.

Goals included in this project were:

- 1. To prepare students to use Netscape Mail, including attachments, to correspond with other students in different regions of the United States.**
- 2. To teach word processing skills, using MS Works including editing, and to save as a text file to a floppy disk.**
- 3. To use Kodak Picture Disk or a scanner to incorporate photos and drawings into the email document.**

Curriculum Benchmarks:

Social Studies Benchmarks:

Historical Perspective

[MI.SOC. I.1.LE.2](#)

[MI.SOC.I.2.LE.2](#)

[MI.SOC.I.3.LE.3](#)

Geographic Perspective

[MI.SOC.II.1.LE.3](#)

[MI.SOC.II.2.LE.3](#)

[MI.SOC.II.4.LE.1](#)

[MI.SOC.II.4.LE.2](#)

[MI.SOC.II.4.LE.4](#)

[MI.SOC.II.4.LE.5](#)

[MI.SOC.II.4.LE.6](#)

Inquiry

[MI.SOC.V.1.LE.1](#)

[MI.SOC.V.1.LE.3](#)

Language Arts Benchmarks:

Meaning and Communication

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

[MI.ELA.2.LE.1](#)

[MI.ELA.2.LE.3](#)

[MI.ELA.3.LE.8](#)

Genre and Craft of Language

[MI.ELA.8.LE.1](#)

[MI.ELA.8.LE.3](#)

Critical Standards

[MI.ELA.12.LE.4](#)

Materials/Hardware/Software:

Hardware:

At least one computer with an Internet connection.

A scanner

A digital camera, preferably one that saves directly to a disk.

A printer

Software:

Netscape with email

MS Works or other word processing program

Kodak Picture Disk, available upon request at Meijer's film department.

MS Atlas

MS Paint

A picture viewer or photo editor, such as MS Photo Editor, Adobe Photo Deluxe, or Graphic Workshop (downloadable from Alchemy Mindworks).

Activities/Procedures:

The first step in the unit is to establish contacts with other classrooms in the U.S. that are willing to correspond. I used Email Classroom Exchange, <http://www.iglou.com>, although there are many available. I looked for five classrooms, same age, and grade, in the five different geographical regions of the U.S. Actually, it is better to line up ten or even fifteen classes, because some of them, for one reason or another are not able to follow through with their letters.

Once the contacts are made, divide the class into five different groups, one for each region. The students, including their first names, ages, hobbies, school interests, and any other pertinent information write letters of introduction. Discourage including personal addresses, and especially phone numbers.

Attaching a student photo, artwork, Paint book report, or other relevant Michigan photos, are good ways to help personalize and add visual impact to their letters. This can be done in several different ways.

Using a regular 35 mm. Camera, take individual photos of each student. Develop the film at a processor that offers the Kodak Picture Disk. Along with your original prints, you will receive you photos on a 3 1/2" floppy disk. It also comes with the software you will need to install on your computer. The cost is about \$15.00 for 24 photos, including the software needed to view them.

Since the photos are already on a disk in jpg. format, they are ready to be sent in your email, as an attachment. Open up Netscape mail and click on the new message button. Once your keypal's URL (address) is in place, you are ready to attach. Click on attachment the screen for "from file" or "URL" comes up. Click on from file. Change the directory to 3 1/2 floppy, with your Kodak Picture Disk in place. A listing of all the photos on the disk will now be seen. Find the number of the student photo you want. Highlight that photo and click open. Now you will see your original email message with the choice "send as is" or "as text". Click "as is". Wait a few moments for the photo to load and you are ready to send. Click the send button, and your photo is on its way.

Basically, the same procedure is used to send written text from an MS Works document. The advantage of having the students use Works to write their letters, and save them to disk, is great. Everyone can work on their letters at the same time, assuming you have a computer lab, and only limited Internet access. If everyone has email access, so much the better, but it isn't absolutely necessary. It can be done from one machine with Netscape installed. The procedure differs on the last screen with the choice "as is" or "as text". It is better to send written documents "as text" unless you are sure your recipient also has MS Works installed on their computer. If they don't have MS Works, they probably won't be able to read your Works format.

It is possible to add your photos directly to your Works document using the insert option, but I find it to be awkward at best. It is easier to send each photo and text document as a separate attachment. If you put a lot of attachments onto an email message, the reader may not be able to see them, due to space limits imposed by their Internet provider.

The students really enjoy sending photos of themselves and their surroundings. If a scanner or digital camera is available, they also can be used to add a visual dimension to your letters. The newest digital cameras allow a person to save the photo directly to a 3 1/2 floppy in jpg. format. They are extremely convenient.

A scanner will allow you to send student artwork or illustrations as well. Once the object is scanned and saved to a disk, the attachment process is the same as previously described.

Occasionally, when scanning an object, it will be in a format other than jpg. (A different extension will be on the end of your title). To change this a photo editor, such as Graphic Workshop is necessary. I have had good results with Graphic Workshop. Its simplicity makes it a good choice. It allows you to change the format, E.I. from bitmap to jpg. with the click of a button.

I demonstrate these procedures using a projection unit attached to the computer. It at least gives the students the basic idea of what to do. The next step is to teach one

student who then becomes an "expert". Two or three "experts" can help the whole class become proficient in using these tools.

One last word, if you really want to include a photo in your MS Works document, try to "copy" your photo and then "paste" it directly to the text document. I have had better results with this method, rather than using the insert command.

As you and your students are learning these techniques, enter your own URL in the message, and send it to yourself. This will allow you to see how they will appear to your keypals.

Assessment/Evaluation:

Student learning will be evaluated by developing a rubric with students involved in the process. Criteria would include: number of documents produced, quality of student document (punctuation, spelling, completeness, etc), number of photos and other student produced objects that are included in their messages.

Follow-up Activities:

Some students will want to carry this activity over into the summer months or more.

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