Alaska Conference 2001: Project Design Template

Project Designer:

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Grade Level/Content Areas:

Grades 4-5 Social Studies, Science, Math, Language Arts, Music, Art, Drama, Technology

Project Title:

Connecting Classrooms and Communities with Online Conferencing and Classroom Web Pages

Project Synopsis

As per fourth grade curriculum, we are studying the geography and culture of the different regions in Alaska. We are using our Alaskan research project to help us gain an "enduring understanding" of the Alaskan Technology Standard: ***Students will use technology to share and exchange information and ideas.***   We are using technology in several ways:

1) We are using the Internet for doing our research on the environment and culture of the different regions of the state. (This includes looking at classroom/student web pages created in all parts of the state.)

2) We are publishing and sharing our research reports (our information and ideas) by creating web pages linked to our classroom web page. On our classroom web page, we will also share information on our classroom "clans" (community service groups), graphs and maps created by cooperative ("jigsawed") groups, and a video clip of our Alaskan State Song.

3) We are participating in an online conference with other classrooms in the state of Alaska. (Point Hope, Diomede, Nome, Naknek, Wasilla, Healy, Sitka, Ketchikan, and Juneau)

Throughout our whole 3-month project, which integrates reading, writing, math, science, social studies, music, art, and drama, students are expected to be thinking about how it feels to use technology, and whether or not they think it is useful. In other words, they will consider what the benefits are of sharing and exchanging information and ideas using technology.

Project Rationale

Why do I want to use technology for this project?

1) It builds community in the classroom: Clan Web Pages, Cooperative Groups, Jigsawed Activities, Student "experts" teaching/helping each other.

2) It connects school and home: In addition to using the computers at school, students are able to log onto the conference at home (or in the library, or here at school) and show their parents what their peers all over the state are sharing about issues of concern to the students (global issues, community issues, environmental issues, future issues). At a Parent Night, students will present their finished web pages to their parents (using the 3-M projector)

3) It connects students from classroom to classroom (within the same town, state, country, or world). It lowers the walls of the classroom.

4) It highlights the community service done by the students in their own schools.

5) It shares and exchanges information and ideas in a way that integrates all content areas, adapts to all needs, actively involves the students in their own learning, has real-life applications, and prepares students for the digital world in which we live.

Identifying Desired Results

What are the main concepts I want students to understand as a result of this unit?

- The boundaries of our world can be greater than the four walls of our classroom, or the borders of our town. With technology, we can communicate with students all over the state – and even all over the world.

- With technology, we can share our ideas, and others will read them. We can have a "voice" in this world. What we think and write matters.

- Reading, writing, and math have authentic purposes.

- Students from other cultures and places have meaningful ideas and things to say. Different perspectives are interesting.

- The Internet can be used as a resource for gathering information and doing research.

- The Internet can be used for communicating with people all over the world.

- The Internet can be used for sharing and exchanging our ideas and information.

What will the students understand as a result of this unit (standards/curriculum)?

> **Technology Standard D:**
> A student should be able to use technology to express ideas and exchange information.
> ___
>
> From the focus on Alaska:
>
> **Geography Standard B:**
> A student should be able to utilize, analyze, and explain information about the human and physical features of places and regions.
>
> **Geography Standard E:**
> A student should understand and be able to evaluate how humans and physical environments interact.

What is the "overarching question" that will frame this unit?

> What are the benefits of using technology to share and exchange information and ideas?

What are the essential questions that will focus this project?

> For the Internet research and the information being published on the web pages we create (individual and group projects), the essential question is:
>
> *How do the environment and culture of an Alaskan Region affect the lives of the people and animals who live there?*
>
> For the Online conference, students are sharing their ideas about the past, present, and future of Alaska. Questions include:
> - *Describe the town/village you live in. What do you like best/least about where you live?*
> - *What was your town/village like when your grandfather was a kid?*
> - *What do you think your town/village will be like in 20 years? What do you WISH it would be like?*
> - *How do you think you can make a difference in your town, or in Alaska? (present or future)*

Culminating Performance Task: Describe the task that will show students understand the concepts I targeted:

1. **Internet research:** Students will write a conclusion to the "essential question" about how environment and culture affect the lives of people.

2. **Web Site:** Students will create a web page for publishing their individual and group research projects, and for sharing the community service their clans have engaged in this year.

3. **Online Conference:** Each clan is in charge of a different week of the online conference. During that week, the members of the clan note down sample responses from each region of the state (i.e. What do people like best about where they live?)

4. **The "final" task:** Students will write a "reflection" on the "overarching question." They will write about how the online conference, and the web page creation/publishing, made them feel about learning, and about living in Alaska. They will consider how it felt to use technology in this way, and whether or not they found it useful.

Which type(s) of understanding does this performance emphasize?

[X] Explanation	[ ] Interpretation	[X] Application
[ ] Perspective	[ ] Empathy	[X] Self-Knowledge

Dipstick Assessments: What will you use along the way to check student understanding? (Quizzes, tests, reflections, observations, work samples, dialogues, academic prompts, etc.)

This project is divided into seven steps, not counting the online conference, and there is a due date and rubric for each one.

1. Clan Web Page (group work)
2. Guide 1A (individual work – collection of information)
3. Guide 2A (group work in clan – interpretation of data via map/graph)
4. Guide 2B (group work in region – interpretation of data via Venn Diagram)
5. Guide 1B (individual work – written conclusion on "essential question")
6. Guide 3 (creation and presentation of web page)
7. Guide 4: (individual work – written reflection of "overarching question")

Student Self-Assessment

Students will each fill out a rubric following the completion of each step in this project. For group projects, each member of the group will individually fill out a rubric to assess the group work, and turn it into the teacher. The teacher will look them all over and then sit down with the group, and a blank rubric, and share what parts of the rubric students had disagreement/agreement over – with no names. Together, the students & teacher will fill out the final rubric for the group assessment.

Diversity

This project is modifiable to a variety of ability levels.
- Students with greater ability:
    - Extend their research and/or the design of their web pages.
    - Students with experience in creating web pages form a small group of "experts" to work with the teacher in advance so that they may be "teacher's assistants" when the whole class works on creating web pages.
    - Enter the "conference" as often as they like.
- Because each student is a part of two different groups, students with special needs are able to have support of their peers in both groups. "Students helping students." Writing in online conference may be scribed or typed.
- ESL students: Computer programs allow for matching pictures and words, reading text, translating languages, connecting cultures

Learning Styles and Multiple Intelligences that are tapped during this project:
- **Kinesthetic:** Hands-on, active participants in project, "multicultural dance," tactile/movement aspect of typing, lot of moving around during group/clan work.
- **Visual:** Computer graphics, drawing logos/pictures, taking or finding photographs, choosing background/text colors, making decisions about design of web page
- **Auditory:** A lot of cooperative group activities that involve discussing ideas and brainstorming, thinking out loud, presentations of web pages
- **Linguistic:** Lots of reading and writing
- **Mathematical/Logical:** Lots of data interpretation, graphing
- **Musical:** Singing Alaska State Song, Making "video," Optional adding sound to web page
- **Interpersonal:** Lots of cooperative work and jigsawed activities, communicating with other classrooms.
- **Intrapersonal:** Lots of individual work, self-reflection

Example questions for Six Facets of Understanding:

Explanation:
- What does the land look like? What kind of landforms would you find?
- What kinds of natural resources exist in your region?
- What types of habitats would you find? What animals live in the habitats?
- What is the largest group of indigenous people in your region? What language do they speak? What are some of their traditions?
- What do people do for food? (Hunt? Fish? Gather? Order? Grocery store?)
- What are the average prices of gas, bread, milk…in a village of your region?
- What is the average snowfall and average winter temperature of your region?
- What is the population of your region (or of a typical town in your region)?
- How much sunlight does your region get on the shortest day/longest day of the year?

Interpetation:
- How do the animals adapt to survive in your region?
- How do the people use the animals, resources, and landforms of your region to survive?
- What interesting historical events happened to change life in your region?

Perspective:
- What do people like best about where they live?
- Focus on a town:
  - What was it like when the grandparents were kids?
  - What is a typical "day in the life" like in the summer/winter there?
  - What has changed for kids? (for women?)

Empathy:
- How would you like to live in one of the villages that the students we are conferencing with are living in?
- How would it feel to live in Juneau back when your grandfather was a kid?

Application:
- What do you think you can do now to make a difference in your school? town? state? country? world?
- What do you think you can do as an adult to make a difference in your town? state? country? world?
- What can technology be used for? What are the benefits of using technology to share and exchange information and ideas?

Self-knowledge:
- Reflect on how online conferencing, and web page creation/publishing, makes you feel about learning, and about living in Alaska.