

McGlothlin Award

Lesson Plan

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Background

I teach the following classes:

- Two sections of US/VA History
- One section of World History I
- One section of Local History and Technology
- One section of Photo Journalism

The Local History and Technology Classes manages and presents the contents of the Bland County History Archives. The Archives is a thirteen year oral history and technology project of Rocky Gap High School. It consists of over 500 interviews, thousands of scanned photos, the Bland County History Archives web site, and related projects. It is the place-based content from the Archives that drives the project-based learning of technology. The Photo Journalism class manages the high school web site, publishes the student newspaper, *The Eagle Eye*, and produces two episodes a week of WGAP, a student video newscast.

The following lesson plan is primarily for and emanates from the Local History and Technology class, but it also includes, to a great degree, the Photo Journalism class, and to a lesser degree, the US/VA History classes. Our school system does not have an IT department with the capability to make a video of this lesson plan, so I assigned my Photojournalism class the project. It fit neatly into the various directions the lesson plan led.

Any place-based content could be used in the following lesson plan. For instance a local weather station could generate data that could be organized in a database, presented in a desktop publishing venue, used in a weather report on a newscast, or placed on a web site. There are many other examples that could substitute, i.e. any student creative efforts, ecological data, any local statistical data, etc. The key is this: meaningful content drives project-based learning.

It should be noted that all networked devices in my classroom have been assigned local place names. References to Suitor, South Gap, Round Bottom, etc. are all such devices.

General Concept

Place-based learning gives value to student learning. Place-based content gives meaning to cooperative project based learning. Cooperative project-based learning most reflects real life.

Standards

Although Local History and Technology and Photojournalism are not SOL classes several of the Computer and Technology Standards of Learning are addressed in this plan.

They include :

- C/T 9-12.5
- C/T 9-12.6
- C/T 9-12.8
- C/T 9-12.9

Objectives

The specific objectives of this lesson plan include the following:

- The students will learn how people in Bland County celebrated Christmas in the past.
- The students will compare and contrast past Christmas practices with those of today.
- The students will present their findings in a variety of ways.
- The students will choose and learn various technologies to accomplish the objectives.
- The students will learn how to use the contents of the Bland County History Archives.
- The students will learn how to work together in various projects.

Procedure

The lesson plan is evolutionary. It begins at a definite point and has a specific direction. However, where it ends depends on the input of the students and the limits of technology.

- Discuss the way Christmas is celebrated today.
- Ask students how they think Christmas was celebrated 50 to 100 years ago in the county.
- Tell students to use the Archives to find out how Christmas was celebrated in Bland County over the last 100 years.
- Discuss various ways to present their findings. This could include the special Christmas broadcasts of WGAP and the *Eagle Eye*, but see what they come up with in brainstorming.

The products of their work should evolve in directed discussion. As different projects are chosen, evaluate different technologies that could be used. Have all students involved in using the Archives to find the desired content, but when appropriate, have them work in groups on the various projects. Also involve the students of the Photo Journalism class and the regular history classes in working with Local History Technology students on collaborative projects, i.e. WGAP and Eagle Eye specials.

Closure

Closure will occur with the completion of each project. There will also be a group discussion of what has been accomplished, what technologies have been learned, what content has been assimilated, how well worked together, and how we can apply what we have learned to the future.

Evaluation of Student Work

Evaluation in this class is a combination of time spent and quality produced on projects. Points are given toward the six weeks grade for the expenditure of class time and time outside of class. Upon completion of a project a student receives points as well.

Evaluation of Lesson Plan

I have been extremely pleased with the results of this lesson plan. The following products resulted from the lesson plan:

- The Empty Stocking video used on the Christmas edition of WGAP will also be compressed and placed on the Archival web site.
- The several print articles for student newspaper, *The Eagle Eye*, have been expanded and placed on the Archival web site.
- The presentation on Christmas past to the US/VA History class was successful and students want to do more in the future on other subjects. (Great Depression, war, etc.)
- The Christmas section on web site has been developed with text, audio, and video.

I was very pleased with the way the students worked together. They are familiar with the process of collaboration, but have never done so extensively. They have never worked with the Seniors in the Photo Journalism class either.

I have always used elements of the plan, i.e. place-based, project-based, and similar products, but I have never focused on one objective that resulted in such varied products with such cooperation between two different classes. It was so successful that I feel like I can use this idea as a template for future projects. For example the Local History Class could be assigned a subject such as schools, the tunnels, stores, or a community, gather the content, and produce similar products such as the Christmas project.

NOTE

Most of the products of this lesson plan may viewed on the web.

- The Bland County History Archives at <http://www.bland.k12.va.us/bland/rocky/gap.html> look on the first page for special Christmas project.
- The Rocky Gap High School web site at <http://www.bland.k12.va.us/rghs/index.html> Look on the first page for Eagle Eye and view the Special Christmas edition for 2005-06.