

Lesson Plan

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Goal statement: This unit is designed to meet three social studies standards in the Montana 4th grade curriculum as follows:

Goal 1: Students will identify and practice the steps of an inquiry process (i.e., identify question or problem, locate and evaluate potential resources (e.g., accuracy, relevance, fact or fiction). gather and synthesize information, create a new product, and evaluate product and process). (Standard 1-1)

Goal 2: Students will use information to support statements and practice basic group decision-making strategies in real world situations.(Standard 1-3)

Goal 3: Students will identify and use various sources of information (e.g., artifacts, diaries, photographs, charts, biographies, paintings, architecture, songs) to develop an understanding of the past. (Standard 4-1)

The Title of the Lesson: Montana Capitol – The People’s Place

Assessment of readiness Levels: 4^h grade classrooms across Montana – see attached .pdf file of demographics.

Fourth grade is often the first class in which students will practice research skills and is usually the first class in which they will delve into Montana history. Since there is no textbook on Montana history, teachers often pull together units based on information they have easily available to them. The Internet offers an opportunity to present a larger volume of standardized information to all students, which they can then use in a variety of ways.

The Internet also offers an opportunity to create information which will be accessible to sight-impaired students who have equipment on their computers that read text on the screen, such as JAWS.

Since Montana is such a large geographical state, many students never travel to the capital city. The Internet offers the opportunity to give a virtual tour of the Capitol and other government facilities in Helena.

Pre-Unit Assessment: web quiz on the following topics: (In Development)

- Steps of Inquiry Process
- Sources of Information
- Famous Montanans
- Democratic Values (e.g., democracy, freedom, justice)

- Symbols (e.g., Montana and U.S. flags, state flower)
- Holidays, in the history of Montana, American Indian tribes, and the United States.

Define measurable outcomes:

1. Student will write the steps for solving a test problem utilizing the 6-step Inquiry Process.
2. Student will identify three different sources of information (e.g., artifacts, diaries, photographs, charts, biographies, paintings, architecture, songs) to create a biography of a Montana person.
3. Student will choose at least five researched facts from the biography to create a PowerPoint presentation of his/her chosen Montana person.

Materials:

Pre-test on the Inquiry Process

Blank transparency film (for overhead projector)

Inquiry Process Worksheet and Rubric

Inquiry Process Worksheet and Rubric on transparency film

Collection of artifacts, diaries, photographs, charts, biographies, paintings, architecture, songs on Montana persons – available in the classroom or in the library.

Computer disk for each student

Teacher Evaluation and Presentation Submission Form

Student Release Form (for submitting to montanacapitol.com)

Post-test on the Inquiry Process

Media:

Overhead projector

Computer Lab with Internet access reserved for one hour a day for 10 school days

CD: “Montana Capitol – The People’s Place” WebQuest and “Inquiry Process Tutorial”

Web site: <http://www.montanacapitol.com/learning/index.html>

Methods:

The teacher will introduce the unit by giving an overview on the overhead projector or via the computer presentation system (computer connected to either a projector or TV screen). S/he will review the purpose of the unit, the steps involved, the daily deadlines, the group assignments, evaluation criteria and the resources that are available. S/he will introduce the tutorial on the Inquiry Process and explain his/her expectations on how the students should complete the tutorial. S/he will hand out the "Inquiry Process Worksheet and Rubric" and take the class to the computer lab to begin the tutorial. Each group will have its group members working at adjacent computers so that the members can collaborate as they work through the tutorial.

The tutorial and Inquiry Process Worksheet will guide the process for each group. The teacher will monitor the progress of each group on a daily basis and will be available for consultation. The librarian will also be available to work with individual students who use the library resources for research.

After the groups have completed the research process and PowerPoint presentation development process, they will each present their work to the class for education and critiquing. Each student will critique each presentation using the rubric provided. The teacher will tally the scores and give to each group for inclusion on their worksheets.

The teacher could take this unit one further step by inviting parents and administrators to view the presentations and then have everyone vote on which Montana person should be added to the Capitol displays. This would simulate the process of the Capitol Complex Commission or the Montana Legislature (which must approve each recommendation).

The teacher will give each student a Student Release Form so that each student's parents can decide whether they are willing to have a copy of the presentation submitted for inclusion on the <http://www.montanacapitol.com> web site for sharing with other classes.

The teacher will also complete the Teacher Evaluation and Presentation Submission Form and return to <http://www.montanacapitol.com> so that the unit can be validated or adjusted.

Assessment Strategy:

Each student will be assessed according to the rubric on the Inquiry Process Worksheet. Input will be obtained from the student, from the class members who watch the presentation, and from the teacher.

Since this unit has not yet been presented in a classroom situation, it is hard to judge its validity and reliability. In a real life situation, the teacher may find that the schedule is not workable and may have to adjust it accordingly. Technical problems may impact the schedule and require adjustments.

Since this unit is actually created by the <http://www.montanacapitol.com> web site for the use of Montana teachers, teachers will be asked to complete an evaluation form which will assess the unit and will invite teachers to submit the PowerPoint presentations which are created from the unit. The developer of the unit (myself) can then compare presentations from classrooms all over the state and the evaluations to determine whether the unit is valid and reliable or whether it needs to be adjusted.

(Note: The webquest was originally developed for another Walden class using the Learning to Teach with Technology Studio: <http://ltts.org/> . The next step is to compare this lesson plan with the webquest (cart before the horse?) and resolve any discrepancies. For instance, in the original webquest I gave the students the option of working alone or working in groups (multiple intelligences). I would need to decide whether it is feasible or desirable (in view of society's need for teamwork skills) to require groups or let individuals work alone. (This requirement might depend on how much group learning is used in the classroom already and/or how much time is available for the unit and perhaps could be left up to the teacher to decide.)