Re-purposing Technology Lesson Plan

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TE 831

Summary Box

Lesson title: Illinois and Chicago History

Prepared by: Katie McBride

Subject area: Social Studies - History

Technology used: Dipity.com

Length of lesson: 45-60 minutes (likely over 2-3 days)

Suggested grade level: Grade 4

Lesson Objectives: ***The student will be able to:***

- Learn and display important historical events in Illinois and Chicago utilizing the website dipity.com
- Use the internet for additional research, images and videos to input into final project
- Practice digital citizenship when borrowing text, images and/or videos from the internet
- Present their interactive timeline to their peers for feedback, comments and questions

Student NETS Standards Alignment:

- **Student NETS 1b:** Students demonstrate creative thinking, construct knowledge, and develop innovative products and processes using technology. Students will create original works as a means of personal or group expression
- **Student NETS 2a**: Students use digital media and environments to communicate and work collaboratively, including at a distance to support individual learning and contribute to the learning of others. Students will interact, collaborate, and publish with peers, experts, or others employing a variety of digital environments and media
- **Student NETS 3c:** Students apply digital tools to gather, evaluate, and use information. Students will evaluate and select information sources and digital tools based on the appropriateness to specific tasks.
- **Student NETS 5a:** Students understand human, cultural, and societal issues related to technology and practice legal and ethical behavior.

Materials:

- Student laptops or other device with internet connection
- Teacher laptop or other device that can hook up to some projection for examples
- SMARTBoard, Promethean Board, or other source to display student timelines
- Worksheet of timeline dates (without events given)

Lesson Procedure:

Before: Place students into mixed-ability groups of 2-3. (Due to my school's lack of technology resources, this is necessary as there are not enough laptops for every student. If preferred, this lesson could be completed individually.) In order to use Dipity, students will need to sign up for an account, which simply entails entering a username, password, and email address and password. Remind students to use school email accounts and either assign or ask them for their login information.

Beginning:

- Distribute timeline worksheet. The purpose of this is to ensure students are not overwhelmed by the amount of information and also serves to keep their research focused on only main events.
- Ask students to explain the purpose of using timelines. When have you seen/created them? How do they help display information? Additionally, seek out past experience with creating timelines.
- Next, show students a completed paper version of timeline assignment. (This is specific to my teaching situation, as I've always had students construct their timeline on paper.) Explain that students will be creating a digital version of this timeline rather than doing it on paper.

During:

- In order to acclimate students with the website, show some example timelines from the Dipity.com site so they understand what the end product should look like. This task would be best suited if projected onto a Promethean Board or SMARTBoard so all students can see.
    - Allow students to share what features they like and dislike about the different timelines and talk them through how they might go about including some of their favorite features.
- Next, show them a started timeline for the specific project focused on Illinois and Chicago. An example of mine can be found here: http://www.dipity.com/katiemcbride/Chicago-History/
- Explain to students the importance of entering dates with concise titles. More information can be added so when a viewer clicks on that event, they will see additional facts. Also reveal how to search for and input images that correlate with specific historical events.
- Add two-three more events with the help of the students walking you through the necessary steps. To gather information, students may use class readings and articles as well as reputable internet sources (with citations). Students should also include images, and videos if they wish, that pertain to the events. The teacher will need to show them how to do this.
- Break students into assigned groups and distribute laptops. Using the Promethean Board, guide students through the steps of logging on to Dipity.com and opening up a second window to use for research and copying/pasting images.
    - Students may require an introduction and/or reminder for how to copy and paste URLs into their new events.
- Remind students how to add new dates before allowing them to work on their own.

Walk around the classroom to ensure internet searches are appropriate and on-task as well as to troubleshoot any issues that may arise.
- Finally, make sure students know how to edit and add to the information they have started on their timeline.

After:
- If you would like students to finish their project on the first day, explain that Dipity's cloud-based platform will allow students to work on this assignment from anywhere with internet access. (This does not work well, however, if you have assigned your students to work in groups as I have.)
- Bring students back together to discuss any common issues that arose while working or if anyone discovered any features that they included and would like to share with the whole class.
- Looking forward to after the assignment is finished:
    - Students will have the opportunity to share their completed timelines on the Promethean Board
    - Students will be asked to write comments, ask questions and/or offer praise on a minimum of two timelines. This skill will need to first be introduced by the teacher.

Additional Resources:
- If desired, worksheet of dates to use/choose from (not included, as mine was customized to fit the needs of this specific assignment)

Reflection:

For this lesson, I chose to use the interactive timeline website Dipity.com, as it provided the perfect opportunity to repurpose a lesson traditionally created only with paper and pencil, and transform it into a more engaging and technologically-involved project. In past years, my students have not only struggled with this assignment, but found the required attention to detail tedious and frustrating. The most challenging aspect proved to be figuring out a spacing between dates that accurately represented the gap of time. Students constantly erased and started over, growing more discouraged with each new attempt. Observing and reflecting on this experience helped me to realize the focus of this assignment had shifted away from demonstrating an understanding of Illinois and Chicago history to a stressful encounter with spacing and anxiety about lacking artistic ability when illustrating events. Dipity removed these barriers and allowed my students to engage with technology in a meaningful way and enjoy the creative process and flexibility this new and improved project had to offer.

Both TPACK and SAMR were helpful as I planned and implemented my lesson. The Content Knowledge (CK) had been developed over the course of six weeks, with side

projects offering students a deeper understanding of significant people and historical events. The Pedagogical Knowledge (PK) came from revisiting the purpose and goals for this culminating assignment, and realizing the method for teaching this in previous years was simply not adequately meeting these aims. Pedagogical strategies were also employed throughout the lesson. Given my students' lack of experience with the new technology, I knew introducing this lesson would require ample time and modeling prior to working independently. I also know all too well the temptation to utilize the internet for items unrelated to school assignments, and made sure students were on task by circulating the room for the duration of their work time. Understanding that adding a technology component would remove limitations and frustration from this assignment is where the Technology Knowledge (TK) and SAMR model came into play. I believe this lesson was enhanced through Substitution (the interactive timeline for the paper timeline) and through Augmentation (allowing students to integrate actual photos, videos, additional links, etc.). Next time I conduct this lesson, or another lesson I repurpose with technology, I would like to think of ways to achieve "transformation" through the modification and redefinition components of the SAMR model to further promote higher level thinking.

Allowing my students to create their timelines with the assistance of Dipity completely changed their attitudes with regards to this assignment and made for some excellent end results. Certainly, one of the best aspects of this approach is the lack of consideration required for spacing between dates, as Dipity obviously does that for you. Students also found the process of adding new dates and information fairly simple due to the website's intuitive features, and did not have to worry if they forgot to add an event dating back to the early part of the timeline; it was simply rearranged according to chronology. Other affordances of this technology that were not available with the paper method include the ease of adding actual photos of people/events, embedding relevant videos into timelines, and especially the ability for students to make comments on one another's projects. Student feedback had never been an aspect of this project, but I think that became an integral part. Finally, students who don't have the best fine motor skills or aren't artistically-inclined also benefit from the use of a digital timeline. This technology allows for making and editing mistakes, that could be potentially disastrous on paper, and helps the students to focus on the intended purpose of the assignment.

One constraint of this technology in my circumstance was our experience with internet connectivity issues. It wasn't so much problem when using Dipity as it was when

students wanted to gather more information from the internet or search for appropriate images and videos. In the future, I might ask that students try to complete that component at home to avoid slowing down the project. Also, because students were granted freedom to include additional information and items, it did cause the project to take longer than before. Some of them also needed help determining what was a reputable resource to access, however, that has nothing to do with Dipity. As a whole, I would say it is an excellent free tool that has limitless possibilities across the curriculum.

When I first started to explore Dipity, I was thinking it would be a great way for students to display momentous events in their lives. In that case, it would provide a good language arts tool, as students could practice their writing skills to create captions for their images. Along the same lines, a digital timeline could also be used to display a family tree, including immigration and emigration data. For science, students may choose to utilize Dipity as a way to track the scientific process and note hypotheses, observations and conclusions of a long-term science experiment. I truly believe a digital timeline could be adapted to fit the needs of many curricular goals and assignments, and not just as a way to exhibit historical events, as most of us are accustomed to when we think about timelines.

Planning and teaching this lesson has supported my professional development and teaching practice in so many ways. First, I think it has allowed me to become more creative in my pedagogical approaches and opened my eyes to the opportunities to replace traditional instruction methods with a technological component. This simple substitution did more than just improve a project, it engaged my students in digital literacy and facilitated an array of essential skills the former project simply hadn't accommodated. Consideration of technology and TPACK will now be a priority as I plan my lessons, and I will feel confident in encouraging my colleagues to take similar risks in their own teaching practice. Even despite limited resources at my school, I know it's critical that my students receive exposure to technology tools and devices. Understanding the world they will live and work in as adults makes the decision to repurpose and update many of my lessons an easy one.

Katie -

Your re-purposed lesson plan--on Illinois & Chicago History--represents outstanding and exemplary work. It demonstrates knowledge of the content and technology. The lesson meets all the requirements, it is thoughtful, and it provide clear articulation of all parts of the lesson plan (i.e., summary box, lesson

objectives, Student NETS standards, materials, procedures, and additional resources). The reflection section is clear, articulate, responsive to all prompts. The lesson's design indicates that your learning and understanding of self and student engagement/learning is active and clear. The project contains no errors i grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Sources are clearly cited and digital citizenship is exemplified in this lesson's design.

Rubric rating: 4.0
Total points: 300/300