Into the Next Millennium

Summary

"Into the Next Millennium" develops a major concept of time. The main purpose of this learning activity is to put world history in perspective, utilizing a variety of visual resources in combination with textual historical information to give readers a global view of happenings in widely separated parts of the world. Student developed projects using new technologies of networked multimedia and the Internet enable students to use a constructivist approach along with a technology focus to re-create a global sense of time.

Time Frame

5 class periods of 90 minutes each

Group Size

Large Groups

Materials

Software

- Presentation (e.g., HyperStudio, PowerPoint, Digital Chisel), word-processing (e.g., ClarisWorks, Microsoft Word), multimedia-encyclopedia

Hardware

- Scanner, digital camera, video camcorder, TV/VCR, QT-VTR

Other

- Encyclopedias, textbooks/books

Background for Teachers

Students are asked to develop a project that demonstrates their knowledge of an overview of time, dating from the ancient world to the 20th century, eventually projecting to the 21st and 22nd centuries. The project requires:

- Researching three major time-related categories (people, places, and events) using resources available to students, accessed via a variety of indices (maps, timelines, and digitized archives of documents)
- Narrowing down a topic from one of the major categories and tracking its evolution, from origin to the present
- Synthesizing and recording material in order to create a sequence
- Projecting into the next millennium to predict change
- Producing an evaluated presentation product that shares information with an audience

This project utilizes an Internet resource that provides a synchronoptic history chart and a digital timeline using visual art forms (maps, graphics, and colors) in combination with historical information. (Synchronoptical means "seeing at the same time." A synchronoptic chart enables the viewer to see many things at the same time.)

Instructional Procedures

Preparation

- This set of activities should occur after students have a geographical and historical overview of the eastern and western hemispheres. General knowledge of cultural, historical, and political aspects of the world would be helpful, but not necessary. Timelines and chronology dating from recorded history to the 20th century should be introduced to explain the concept of B.C. and A.D.

Students should then be directed to a variety of Web chronologies and timelines. Books, software, Internet resources, and videos should be made available and organized in stations for easy access.

Note: When developing their project, students should be proficient with presentation software (e.g., PowerPoint, HyperStudio), and/or Web page creation software. E-mailed interviews to scientists online and local resources are ideal tools to help students project into the next millennium. Web conferencing with other individuals with comparable technology, to obtain information from field experts, can enhance student learning. Virtual reality enhancements produced by QuickTime sites can encourage futuristic thinking as students make predictions about change. For instance, if a student chooses "famous people," he or she can actually conduct an e-mail interview with an astronaut and virtually interview Leonardo da Vinci, and so on. (See Tools and Resources.)

Procedure

Students assess and become familiar with the Web site: HyperHistory Online in a group setting with teacher direction using a projection system or lab setting (see Tools and Resources). After demonstration and discussion, students decide which of the three major category groups (people, places, or events) they are interested in joining.

In these groups, students individually decide on a topic of focus within their major category (art, music, literature, politics, wars, religion, economy, etc.) that they will trace throughout history. At this time, students can decide ways to reveal their future predictions of change as it relates to their topic (e.g., have the audience help with predictions and produce a hands-on facsimile of their topic using digital images, etc.).

Students should be encouraged to choose high interest and/or strength-based categories in the following lists of focus topics, or suggest their own. For example, if four students in the "people" group love music, they could trace the origin of musical instruments, dances, types of music, or musicians. One member of the group could trace clothing design trends while another could research famous leaders, and so on. Students can then form subgroups to decide collectively how each of the topics will evolve in the next millennium.

PEOPLE

Each student picks one topic, or aspect, to trace from its origin:

- Cultures and their recorded contributions to civilization
- Origin of food crops
- Artists and art forms
- Composers and music
- Actors and theatre
- Clothing and fashion trends
- Famous leaders

PLACES

Each student picks one topic, or aspect, to trace from its origin:

- Origin of cities
- Origin of maps
- Famous cities
- Famous buildings
- Architecture and dwellings
- Landforms

EVENTS

Each student picks one topic, or aspect, to trace from its origin:

- Wars and their causes throughout history
- Inventions and inventors
- Money and the evolution of economics

Writing and communication
Education and schools
Careers and occupations
Transportation

After students have chosen their category, have the group discuss the specific strand each student will research and which technology mode they will use to share their information, collectively or individually, with an audience. In addition, have each group decide which aspects they want to emphasize and which decades they want to focus on. Each student can assume a role in the constructing, sharing, and disseminating of information. Students should be encouraged to use a variety of technology hardware and software to complete the product. For example, if students pick topics that correlate well, such as money and education, they may produce their material simultaneously.

Utilizing Web sites, books, CD-ROMs, and periodicals within station settings, students can record their findings on paper, in sequential order, from origin to the present, in either a storyboard or journal note-taking form. Students can keep an ongoing electronic file of Web sites and CD resources.

Collectively, have students decide which technologies they will use to produce their final product. Encourage them to use multiple technologies and to enhance their presentations in interesting ways (e.g., they can dress in costume, perform, bring food, invite a guest, etc.). As students project changes into the next millennium, they should decide how far they want to project (e.g., 100 years, 1,000 years, etc.). For example, if they choose to track computers, they could envision and create tiny devices that could be connected to humans, then actually demonstrate their usefulness with 3-D imaging, and so on.

Note: Cooperative groups should be given ample time to create, plan, and practice their final product. Journals and charts should be created to help guide them.

Extensions

Students have created HyperStudio presentations tracing events from 1920 to 1998. Pairs of students were instructed to include text, animation, sound, graphics, and video onto three cards to depict their story. Research and planning occurred before they went to the computer, so they worked from a preplanned paper storyboard. When they were finished, they presented their story with TV projection, taking turns with the script. Students brought props, such as hula hoops and records, and demonstrated dances and fashion. They had a blast and learned about many historical events along the way.

Assessment Plan

Students and teachers can produce a rubric to evaluate presentation products (HyperStudio, PowerPoint, and Web page creation). Students and teachers can also produce a rubric to evaluate organization of and cooperation in group work. Written notes and journals can be periodically checked for clarity and consistency.

Bibliography

The Utah Education Network received permission from ISTE (The International Society for Technology in Education) to share this lesson.
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