

Postc@rds from the Net

Summary

Students develop an appreciation of the community in which they live, taking a closer look at the world just outside their doors and sharing their experiences with their classmates, near and far.

Main Core Tie

Social Studies - 1st Grade

[Standard 2 Objective 3](#)

Additional Core Ties

Social Studies - 2nd Grade

[Standard 1 Objective 2](#)

Time Frame

5 class periods of 15 minutes each

Group Size

Large Groups

Materials

Software

Desktop-publishing (e.g., ClarisWorks for Kids, AppleWorks, Kid Pix Studio, Kid Works), mapping (e.g., Neighborhood Map Machine by Tom Snyder)

Hardware

Digital camera

Other

Index cards

Background for Teachers

Using familiar community locations or landmarks, students take an in-depth look at the unique characteristics and value of their community. They share their insights with their classmates and the worldwide community, working with a helper to create a postcard about their community to send to others.

Note: This activity can take place in both the fall and spring in order to compare and contrast the community environment in different seasons.

Instructional Procedures

P R E P A R A T I O N

Organize resources, both print and electronic. Set up a classroom center focused on the children's "community."

Identify an older elementary class or adult volunteers to serve as partners for the younger children.

Create one or more model tag board postcards and electronic postcards.

P R O C E D U R E

Show original video or digital film clips of locations in the community. Use class discussion to generate a list of familiar locations. Begin with places such as the mall, the bank, the school, the

grocery store, the dentist's office, a neighbor's house, or even students' homes. Provide students with the opportunity to view the video again by setting-up a VCR station for independent use.

Using a tag board model, lead a large group discussion on the correct format for postcards then model an example of a completed electronic postcard. In groups of three (and one helper), students create and critique miniature storyboards using index cards that they will turn into postcards. With assistance from the helper, groups proofread and edit their storyboards.

Using the oversized tag board postcard as reference, students design their own postcard about a community landmark or other local spot. On the left half of one side of the card, students write about the place or landmark. On the right half of the same side, students address the postcard to another child in another classroom in the same school. On the reverse side of the card, students illustrate their selected location.

Students deliver their tag board postcards.

Students create an electronic form of their postcard using ClarisWorks for Kids, Kid Pix Studio, or any other desktop-publishing software, and digital cameras. Students e-mail their postcards to other classrooms, school districts, parents, and keypals.

With assistance from a helper, students use mapping software to create a neighborhood map depicting each place or landmark's location. Younger children need to use a map template created by the teacher or other developmentally appropriate mapping software. Using the copy/paste function, demonstrate reproducing elements of the electronic postcard.

Help each student present and discuss their electronic postcard. Have the class present their neighborhood maps to parents and selected classrooms at a "Postc@rds from the Net" premiere performance.

As a culminating activity, take the class on a field trip to each location identified in the postcards. Take a class picture at each spot using a digital camera. Upon return, have students describe their trip in electronic journals. Journal entries and digital postcards can be posted on a class Web site to elicit responses from online discussion groups.

Extensions

Postc@rds from the Net turned out to be a great art and geography lesson. Students worked hard making their pictures realistic and balanced on the page with interesting features such as the sky and people. Peer mentors and parent volunteers were excellent resources, helping younger children work with the hardware. Mentors and volunteers ensured that the children stayed on-task and focused on the objective of the lesson rather than getting hung-up on the technology.

Assessment Plan

Use a rubric to evaluate the electronic and traditional postcards. Student presentations can be assessed using a performance rubric. (see web site listed below)

Bibliography

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

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