Problem of Practice

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I teach grade 3/4 at Calgary Arts Academy. We are a charter school in Alberta and our charter is to teach the Alberta curriculum through arts immersion. We teach through the five fine art forms of dance, drama, visual art, music and literacy. At our school we don’t have desks, which makes for a highly collaborative setting. We don’t use textbooks or worksheets, we are encouraged by administration to take risks and try new things all the time. We are supported to do that by the school paying for PD in any area we are interested in. Right now, in the Kindergarten to Year 4 campus there is only a small amount of technologies used, more being used in Year ¾ than the younger grades. I have two goals in this problem of practice.

1. Improve Engagement - In Social Studies the Year 4s are learning about Alberta. They have been learning about Alberta all year long. Being the middle of May, they are starting to get bored and loosing interest. I believe that the integration of technology can help improve their engagement. The last part of their curriculum is to learn about Alberta’s celebrations and challenges.

2. Teach the students about new creative technological tools.

In this case I will be teaching the how to use Glogster.

3. Integrated technology while still maintaining a creative and arts focus.

I am going to start the unit off with a Google form pretest. In all our units we are encouraged to pretest the students so that we can start to teach them where they are and don’t waste time with things they already know.

Here is the pretest.

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dDVNRXVveTd3cGYwOTgweXlmNEdhWkE6MQ>

After giving the students the pretest, using the program of studies and the results of the pretest, the teacher that I am team teaching with unit and I will come up with a list of 10 different celebrations and challenges in Alberta for the students to choose which one they want to research. This list of ten may change depending on the pretest but for these purposes I have come up with a list.

1. How does the Calgary Stampede create culture and tourism in Alberta?

2. Why did Alberta adopt the holiday Family Day? How does that affect the people in Alberta?

3. What are the challenges of the Oil Sands? How do they affect the environment and the economy?

4. How do recreational sites reflect Alberta’s heritage? How does tourism affect them?

5. How do our actions in Alberta affect endangered animals?

6. How have the Aboriginal people and communities changed over time?

7. What key factors have influenced Alberta’s economy over time?

8. How has multiculturalism in Alberta changed over time?

9. In what ways have music, literature and art contributed to the culture, language and identity of Alberta?

10. How does living in a particular community in Alberta help shape identity?

We will need to do a lesson on researching and taking notes with the students. Also show them how to site sources.

The students would then be split into groups of 4 to research. Two students will be working on researching on the computer while two students are researching with books and magazines. Then they can switch. Each group is expected to have at least 2 Internet sources and 2 sources from texts.

After they are finished researching they will create a Glogster (virtual poster) as a group. Usually we give more choice on how they represent their knowledge but part of the purpose of this unit is to introduce them to Glogs. Their Glog they will present to the class on the Smart Board.

We focus on assessing both skills and knowledge. The skills that we will be assessing will be inquiry and critical thinking, using and managing information, conducting ethical research, organizing interpreting and presenting findings, historical and geographic thinking and defending their opinions. Not all skills will be assessed for each student. That will depend on what research question they choose. We will use both rubrics and anecdotal notes as assessments both formative and summative. The rubric for the presentation and the rubric for the Glog will be constructed with the students. We will also include a self and peer assessment for the students to complete.

Please assess this unit using Goggle forms.

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dHRfMWZTcDJFMkFpOUVWSE9PVFlvSmc6MQ>