

Problem:

How can we enable middle school students to use the Internet to locate, evaluate, and record information on sites pertaining to current conflicts in the Middle East with a final product that answers the question "How does religion play a role in the conflict(s) affecting your region?"

Description of Learner Characteristics:

The sixth grade social studies class I am working with has students of varying abilities. There were several aides to assist students who have trouble focusing on the project at hand. The students have not used the Internet before with this teacher. About 90% of the students have home access to the Internet. They use it for chat rooms, games, talk to friends from camp website, websites for animals and sports, and many other activities. They feel they "know how" to search and why are we teaching this.

Goals:

- To have students use keywords and develop search strategies.
- To give students chance to apply their research terms
- To have students evaluate websites for appropriate information for their country
- To have students take notes from sites and apply to original questions
- To have students synthesize information and apply to original questions
- To have students think about the religion in their assigned country and apply it to the current conflicts

Objectives:

- Students will increase knowledge of the selected countries in the Middle East
- Students will increase their knowledge of using key words to design search strategies
- Students will expand their computer search skills through discussion and application of keyword search
- Students will be able to record information found on websites
- Students will be able to use recorded information to answer questions

Learning Methods and Strategies:

- Guided Learning
- Collaborative Learning
- Problem Solving
- Analysis
- Synthesis
- Evaluation

Materials List:

- Survey of student computer use
- Computers with Internet connections
- LCD projector for demonstration
- Web sites on district home page
- Assessment tools

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Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning. Chicago, IL, American Library Association and the Association for Educational Communications and Technology, 1998.

National Educational Technology Standards for Students. International Society for Technology in Education, 2000.

Description of the Activities:

1. Students will identify and list key words from the question list.
2. Students will record some suggested search terms.

3. The class will discuss some of their ideas for search headings.
4. Students will be introduced to using “ ” marks and + and - in their searches.
5. Students will each get a laptop and log on to the district home page and go to Internet Search.
6. Students will select a search engine from the list available on the home page.
7. Students will enter one of their search headings.
8. Students will begin to take notes to answer the questions.
9. Students, who have trouble finding a good site, will be directed to use some of the sites listed on their sheet.
10. Students will share good sites as they find them.

Assessment:

The students will be taking two quizzes during the unit. These will be relating to the countries and religions they are studying. (The teacher did these on a test maker software and she did not want to download them for me. I can fax them to you, if you want to see them.)

The final product will be evaluated with a rubric.

Middle Eastern Countries Project																			
Key Information					Presentation:					Visual:					Individual Performance (within the group)				
Comprehensive (Covered all required points):					Coordination of Script & Graphics:					Organization & Creativity:					Actively Participated:				
5 4 3 2 1					5 4 3 2 1					5 4 3 2 1					5 4 3 2 1				
Interesting & Informative:					Clarity & Delivery Oral Presentation:					Followed Guidelines:					Respectful of Group Members & Team Focus:				
5 4 3 2 1					5 4 3 2 1					5 4 3 2 1					5 4 3 2 1				
<div>Effort Points:</div> <div>5 – Exemplary4 – Commendable3 – Adequate2 – Limited1 – Minimal</div>																			

Learning Standards:

Information Literacy Standards from Information Power

Standard 1 The student who is information literate accesses information efficiently and effectively.

Indicators:

- Recognizes the need for information
- Recognizes that accurate and comprehensive information is the basis for intelligent decision making
- Formulates questions based on information needs
- Identifies a variety of potential sources of information
- Develops and uses successful strategies for locating information

Standard 2 The student who is information literate evaluates information critically and competently.

Indicators:

- Determines accuracy, relevance, and comprehensiveness
- Distinguishes among fact, point of view, and opinion
- Identifies inaccurate and misleading information
- Selects information appropriate to the problem or question at hand

Standard 3 The student who is information literate uses information accurately

and creatively.

Indicators:

- Organizes information for practical application
- Integrates new information into one's own knowledge
- Applies information in critical thinking and problem solving
- Produces and communicates information and ideas in appropriate formats

Illinois Learning Standards

English Language Arts State Goal 5: Use the language arts to acquire, assess and communicate information.

- 5.A.3a Identify appropriate resources to solve problems or answer questions through research.

Social Science State Goal 18: Understand social systems, with an emphasis on the United States. (Our district uses this goal for other countries, also)

- 18.B.3a Analyze how individuals and groups interact with and within institutions.
- 18.C.3a. Describe ways in which a diverse (U.S.) population has developed and maintained common beliefs

Applications of Learning

- Using technology
- Use appropriate instruments, electronic equipment, computers and networks to access information, process ideas and communicate results.

National Educational Technology Standards

Standard 2-2: Students practice responsible use of technology systems, information, and software.

Standard 5-1: Students use technology to locate, evaluate, and collect information from a variety of sources.

Standard 6-1: Students use technology resources for solving problems and making informed decisions.

Result Summary

The searching using key word was hard for some of the students. It was a life saver to have sites for them to go to.

There were several students that lost their computer privileges the second day of searching. This class had several students with short attention spans and this assignment became too difficult for them. They were given handouts to read with their aide and then to list key points.

The searching was a very small part of a big unit of study. I did not feel that it had the importance to the students, which I would have liked. The time spent preparing the lesson and locating the sites was not appropriate for the small amount of time the students used the information.

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