

Springs District Collaboratory

amy turner 2:44pm Jan 19, 2010

Proposed Social Studies Web 2.0 Project

SUMMARY: Through web based research, web based social interaction, and an “in class conference,” students will gain an understanding of the wide variety of perspectives on the economic, political, social, and moral aspects of slavery that existed in the United States on the eve of the Civil War. Each student will create and assume an identity which represents a major viewpoint of the time such as southern planter, southern small farmer, northern immigrant, northern banker, northern textile businessman, abolitionist (northern and southern), or free or enslaved African American. The unit will have the following four components. (1) The class will be divided into North and South. Each region will research their section’s economic and social characteristics and create a wiki (might skip this/see concerns below) describing them, with a particular emphasis on how/why slavery is or is not used. Within each “regional” wiki, students of that region will each create a biography page which describes their individual identity’s background and perspectives. (2) Throughout the process students will be blogging (as their assumed identity) on events and issues of the day. To increase social interaction, blogging will be done across separate classes. (3) Students will meet in class in their identity (costume required) to hold a conference to discuss their perspectives on slavery and what should be done about it (4) Finally, students will post a blog reflecting on the process.

STATE STANDARDS

The Social Studies Standards used include:

#1: [M]ajor ideas, eras, themes, developments and turning point in the history of the United States and New York.

- They will research various online sources (primary and secondary) regarding the issue of slavery and how differing perspectives toward it helped lead to the Civil War

#4: [H]ow the United States. . . develop[s] economic systems and associated institutions to allocate scarce resources. . . .“

- They will be collecting information regarding the economies of the North and South

and analyzing how slavery would pertain to those economies

#5: [T]he basic civic values of American constitutional democracy

- They will be considering how slavery could coexist with the nation’s value of equality as stated in the Declaration of Independence

ELA standards used include:

#1: Reading, writing and listening to acquire information from a variety of sources, both real and virtual

- They will research online primary and secondary sources (written, visual and podcasts) regarding the regional differences of the North and South and their attitudes toward slavery

#3: Speaking and Writing for Critical Analysis and Evaluation

- They will write (blog) as well as orally present information from a point of view which is based on analysis of historical materials

CORE QUESTION: Why did a nation founded on the value of equality continue to approve of slavery?

Essential Questions (from the NYSED curriculum)

1. What were the conflicting perspectives on slavery?
2. What political, social and economic factors caused the Civil War?
3. What is to be done with the institution of slavery?

VISION: I see students “uncovering” the differences between North and South on their own through analyzing data and primary sources on line (via webquest?) but then becoming personally engaged by adopting their own identity. Hopefully, they will become attached to their alter egos and develop an understanding and empathy for their position. Because they rarely get an opportunity to interact with a different social studies class, I think the blogging across “class lines” should be particularly motivating and will hopefully help them formulate their arguments and attitudes. It will also be a way for them to engage with the actual events which led to the Civil War. I’m envisioning research done in class and then blogging done at home as homework. The blogs would be in response to questions that I post, such as “California has asked to join the Union as a free state. What do you think Congress should do and why? How will California entering/or not entering affect you and your family?” Students would have to respond to my question and another student’s post.

I am also hoping to make sure that primary sources are utilized beyond the research phase on the regions. On their autobiography pages students will find a quote and/or visual source which they can use to exemplify their point of view. They could also incorporate some visuals to “illustrate” their autobiography. Periodically, I will post a primary source for them to blog about.

I want students to have a “debriefing” at the end of the unit, where they can write as themselves to their alter ego and communicate their own points of view. This might be particularly important for the person who has been forced to assume a personally repugnant point of view, eg, pro-slavery. In addition to other sources, I am hoping to use materials from the NY Historical Society which has had two great recent exhibits focusing on NYC’s attitudes toward the Civil War and slavery—running the entire gamut from secessionist to abolitionist. (Although outside the scope of this proposal, it might also be interesting to carry forward the identities through the Civil War and “see” how they react—join a side? Spy? Hire a substitute? Riot against the draft? Support Lincoln?)

OUTLINE:

PREPARATION (Obviously help and feedback are welcome on all aspects of this but I have indicated “need help” where I have absolutely no idea how to proceed)

1. Right now, it looks like mid April to mid May.
2. Decide whether all four classes can do this
 1. one class is on the lower end and would require some substantial differentiation

2. does every student have a computer and reliable internet access at home?
3. Create a webquest for “uncovering” regional differences **(Need help)**
 1. Write “guiding” questions for the webquest
 2. I have to make sure each group is familiar with the other region—should they read the other region’s wiki and take notes on a graphic organizer or blog about the differences?
 3. Gather internet sites/sources with particular focus on those at appropriate reading levels
4. Assign groups to the North and South
 1. How many students?
 2. What are their individual roles within the wiki—eg historian, graphic artist, researcher?
 3. How will students obtain personal identities? Student choice or teacher assignment or random? Should each identity be represented by one student or a pair of students?
5. Create wikis for the North and South **(Need help)** //**may delete this—see “major concern” section below.**
 1. How will students work together to write a profile of their region— do I give them a format for their wiki—ie what the headings should be?
 2. Determine what the roles will be for writing the regional wiki— e.g., historian, writer, graphic artist
6. Create individual wiki pages for bios linked to appropriate region **(Need help)**
 1. Make a list of required info for the biography page
 2. Find actual historical figures who the students can use as partial or complete models
7. Where do I post instructions for this unit? Do I have a separate wiki that is linked to the regional wikis? **(Need help)**
8. Set up a blog **(Need help)**
 1. Write blog questions
9. Plan conference format
 1. Do I want an evaluative audience from a lower grade?
 2. Organize a “physical set”
10. Write the outline for the Phase 3 self evaluative blog-

PHASE 1

1. Assign students into North and South groups
2. “Assign” personal identities

3. Complete a webquest on regional characteristics

PHASE 2

1. Each group writes a wiki profile of their region
2. Students read the other group's wiki and takes notes (?) on differences from their regions
3. Using knowledge gained from research on their region, student researches their own identity (should this be in phase 1?)
4. Students write a wiki page biography including their points of view on slavery and related issues
5. Students will blog about issues and events of the day
6. Hold in class conference presenting their points of view on what should be done about slavery

PHASE 3

1. Students will post a blog or series of blogs in which they
 - discuss the difficulties and benefits of assuming an identity;
 - express how they feel about their alter egos
 - explore what they would say to their "alter ego" if they could about slavery or any other issue;
 - assess how web 2.0 tools affected their learning;
 - and evaluate their wiki biographies and blog posts based on a rubric

EVALUATION

1. The in class presentation could be filmed and excerpts shown at a Board of Education meeting
2. The best wiki could be shared by the student creators
3. Students could nominate the best blog posts and/or wiki bios for sharing

MAJOR CONCERN

Not knowing how steep the learning curve will be for me and the students, I am concerned that a webquest, "regional" wiki, wiki pages for biography, and blog may be too much writing and not entirely necessary. I am considering skipping the regional wiki. Instead the webquest could be designed so that they end up with well organized information on their section's characteristics which they can later refer to in blogs and biographies.

[EditDelete](#)

Bram 12:27pm Jan 20, 2010

#1

Awesome work, Amy!

Wow - this is HUGELY ambitious and VERY exciting! I will do whatever is needed to help you with any of it - and am delighted you indicated places for help - and believe we'll have to pare this down in practice.

For ease of collaboration, I've recreated your post on our Wiki section (it's the Documents menu item, next to Blogs, on our planning forum). You can get to it directly here:

<http://planning.springsdistrict.org/in-service/book/civil-war-project>

You'll see the "pages" at right.

I'm calling this a Wiki because you and I (and anyone else you want to involve as a collaborator, like Bill) can edit it, and rather than a Blog post (which we "move on from") this is a shared planning document we continue to refer to.

I made two little changes as I moved it there:

- I positioned the "class conference" in Phase II as a "Constitutional Convention" that answers the question, "What if we had worked within the constitution to answer the slavery question with ammendments, rather than going to war over it?" - which is a REAL nifty question and will be poignant as your students learn about the human tragedy that the Civil War was.
- I separated Evaluation into Student Evaluation and Phase III: Sharing. The Student Evaluation piece (and the filming of the class conference with follow-up reflection) needs to happen in the Spring, but the sharing (with the Board, with Education Conferences) requires repackaging and making safe of the materials. That could be done as a summer project with students interested in adding cool things to their college applications.

When can you and I skype (with Bill, too, if possible) to look this over together? I'm free 3:30 on Thursday and Friday afternoon this week, or at other free periods you may have ... but Irene says this is testing week for her, maybe it is for you, too.

-Bram

amy turner 12:50pm Jan 20, 2010

#2

Hi Bram--Thank you for all of the comments and reorganization--makes it a lot easier to "digest". I'm sure it's overambitious, but I thought it would be easier to delete than add so maybe we can "condense" it somewhat.

I can skype on Thursday or Friday at 3:30-(3:00 would be better, can you do that?). Billy, do you want to join us? The only other time I have free that the computer room is free for skyping is 6th period--12:05 to 12:47--I'm free that period any day but Wednesday.

Thanks again--I look forward to it--Amy

Bill Hallman 1:21pm Jan 20, 2010

#3

Amy, I am free after school on Thursday. I have an appointment at 4:30, but I can start with you and Bram and