

Newcomers Learn Local History

When families immigrate to the United States, it is sometimes challenging for them to learn a new language and become familiar with the community in which they live. In this project, English Language Learners (ELL) use an iPod and other technology tools to help them develop language skills and learn more about their new surroundings. The project incorporates multiple intelligences through the use of text, audio, and image files.

Authors: Irina Belikova-Erickson, ELL Teacher, Janet Schutz, Media Specialist, and Sue Burch, Director of Technology, Grand Island Public Schools, Grand Island, NE

Curriculum areas: Language Arts, Social Studies, ELL/ESL

Grade level: Middle School

Project Description

In this project, English Language Learners (ELL) are assigned a lesson that focuses on research, reading, writing, and presentation skills. The students work individually and in small groups to conduct research on their community. Students compile the results of their research, write a report, and create a presentation slideshow. They add appropriate images to illustrate each area of research. Students use an iPod and a voice recorder to create recordings of their report in both English and their native language, such as Spanish. The audio files are added to the presentations.

Project Steps

- 1 Introduce students to the lesson by asking them to compare and contrast their lives now to their lives as a small child. What has stayed the same? What has changed? What has caused those changes to happen?
- 2 Ask students to envision what the community looked like 100 years ago. What has stayed the same? What has changed? What has caused those changes to happen?
- 3 Before they begin the research, provide students with guidelines for the project and a rubric for assessment.
- 4 Have students develop a list of areas of interest related to their community today as compared to before.
- 5 Students should conduct research by using the Internet and online resources, looking for images and facts about their community. They should use an appropriate format to cite their sources. Have them record their findings using an iPod and a voice recorder both in English and in their native language. They can also take notes by using Pages, AppleWorks, or another word-processing application and then record the text onto an iPod to create audio files.

- 6 Students should connect their iPod to a Macintosh computer and import the audio files into iTunes.
- 7 Have students create a presentation by combining their text, images, and audio files.
- 8 As the presentations are completed, students can conduct peer reviews of each other's projects and make changes and corrections as needed.
- 9 Students can practice delivering their presentations by using an iPod to record and listen to themselves.
- 10 Have students present their research projects in class. They can also present their projects to their families at an ELL Family Literacy Night. Since many of the ELL students' family members do not speak or read English, the addition of recordings in their native language enables all family members to understand their student's work.

Outcomes

After completing this project, students will be able to:

- Understand their community's beginnings and current history, as well as its physical changes over time
- Identify businesses, attractions, and favorite places in the community and how they have changed over time
- Effectively research a topic using a variety of resources
- Organize information gathered to make a presentation
- Demonstrate the results of their research using a variety of technology tools
- Bridge the communication gap for parents by providing audio clips in the presentation of both English and the student's native language
- Cite sources in their research using an appropriate format through footnotes, endnotes, or within the text
- Use effective oral communication skills by delivering a presentation to peers and families to accompany their slideshow

Technology Skills

After completing this project, students will be able to:

- Use a word-processing application and an iPod with a voice recorder to take notes from online research
- Capture and insert images from a variety of sources into projects (for example, CD, Internet, camera, and scanner)
- Use a presentation application to produce a slideshow that includes text, images, and audio

Assessment Suggestions

Student work can be assessed using the following criteria:

- Historical quality (accuracy, quality, and quantity of resources)
- Written material (clear, appropriate, organized)
- Presentation (visual impact, correctly uses images and photos)
- Spoken language (accurately reads text in both languages)
- Technology skills (word processing, recording audio files, creating a presentation, use of Internet)

Preparation and Duration

The project will take four to eight 90-minute class periods.

Tools and Resources

Internet

- <http://education.apple.com/education/ilife/howto/>
iLife How-To guides
- <http://www.pics4learning.com>
Pics4Learning clip art collection
- <http://www.classroomclipart.com>
Classroom clip art

Tools

Macintosh computer, iPods, iPod voice recorders, scanner (optional), digital camera (optional), iTunes, Keynote or another presentation application, Pages, AppleWorks, or another word-processing application

Note: A voice recorder can be used with all iPod models that have a Dock Connector, except for the iPod mini. (The iPod shuffle does not have a Dock Connector.) For more information, see your iPod User's Guide.

Prerequisite Skills

Before attempting this project, ELL students should have the ability to read at a second grade level.

Facilitation Tips

- To start the project, some of the questions that should be addressed in the research include:
 - Who were the first settlers?
 - What were their nationalities?
 - What was the population of minorities then?
 - What is the population of minorities now?
 - What were the first businesses?
 - What businesses are here today?
 - What are the attractions that this community has to offer?
 - What wildlife lives in the surrounding area? Then? Now?
 - What is your favorite place in this community?
- Provide students with a list of website addresses to facilitate research.
- Use an LCD projector to present projects.

Technology Tips

- It's a good idea to name all student audio files as the files are imported into iTunes. A suggested naming format is <StudentName.topic.date>.
- Place the presentation, audio files, and images within one folder.
- Have students practice with the voice recorder to determine the proper distance and volume needed for best results.