Saving the Family Album

A lesson in History and Technology

Introduction:

The following lesson plan solves several challenges for the modern teacher. It meets core curriculum requirements in social studies (history, political science), language arts (writing, public speaking), and involves multiple key activities in art and computer science.

Activities involve research into the student's family history and how that family was a part of greater movements in world society. Students also build upon their knowledge of computers (using their multimedia capabilities), writing, and making presentations. Most valuable is that students will save and share these histories on Compact Disk for distribution to family members in time for the holidays. In the future these accounts will be treasured by succeeding generations of the family and might even be used as first hand sources in writing the continuing history of the United States.

At the end of this document is a parent's letter to be sent home enlisting needed support for this project. This can be customized and printed to suit your individual needs.

Lesson Plan: Telling a Family's Story by Creating a Digital Family Album

Objective:

After receiving preparatory instruction in scanning photographs, embedding audio files and the use of formatting features of Photo Presentation software, Students will be able to create a slideshow depicting their family history (or to tell any story) using graphic and audio files and to save and share these presentations using optical disks (writeable Compact Disks or DVD's).

Procedure:

- 1. Explain to students the nature of this assignment and show class a sample slideshow of what the finished product might look like (The included Powerpoint Presentation file called "My Family Story" may be shown as this example).
- 2. Instruct students in the use of Microsoft Powerpoint to write a narrative, and to use the "insert" feature to put photographs, voice files and movies and captions into the presentation. These are the basic skills that will be needed.
- 3. Assemble photographs and other graphics that will be included in each student's presentation.
- 4. Teach students to scan photographs to convert them into a jpeg, or other suitable picture file on the personal computer and to integrate these into a Powerpoint slideshow. *Ideally, students will scan photos at home if they own a scanner or can use a friend's. These image files should be saved on a compact disk or flash*

drive that can be brought to school so the files can be inserted into the presentations.

- 5. Give instruction in use of templates. These will be important to quickly give the presentation a professional look
- 6. Students may assist each other in carrying out creative tasks/steps.
- 7. Use Insert/Movies and Sounds/record sound (to create voice-over files to serve as narrative). Add music or speech files to play at appropriate times during the presentation using the "insert" function.
- 8. Allow students to work on this project at home where scanners and more picture files may be available for inclusion.
- 9. Save the file on the hard drive and burn copies on compact disks or DVD's (see attached instructions below for how to do this using Powerpoint on PC compatible computers).
- 10. Teach students to make extra copies of disks to be shared with grandparents and other family members.
- 11. Present the final presentation to the class using projector or large classroom monitor
- 12. Assess the quality of the presentation in manner described below.

Materials:

- 1. Three writeable Compact Disks or DVD's per student
- 2. Personal Computer capable of writing to such Optical Disks
- 3. Microsoft Powerpoint or software of similar capability
- 4. Any digital file photographs the student may have access to (can be on CD or Flashdrive, etc.)
- 5. Compact Disk containing tasteful and appropriate theme music or movie clips to include
- 6. Flatbed scanner or "All In One" machine
- 7. Projector or large TV Monitor

Assessment:

The students will present their family history in the form of a slide show before the class. Since this is a lesson in the use of technology the presentation will be assessed based on the extensiveness of the use of technology to make a high quality/high impact presentation. Elements to assess are:

- 1. Good flow of story based on logical ordering of photographs and other graphics used. (20% of grade)
- 2. Good integration of voice-over and music with graphics (10% of grade)
- 3. Seamless flow of files in creating the presentation (10% of grade)
- 4. Effective use of hardware (scanners, PC, music and voice sources, downloading, etc. (20% of grade).
- 5. Use of additional graphics and program features (20% of grade)
- 6. Quality of historical information (20% of grade)

Instructions for burning Powerpoint or Microsoft Word files to disks:

A problem with MS Word and Powerpoint is that most versions do not let you simply save a file to the drive that is your CD or DVD Drive using the "save" instruction. Nevertheless, it is easy to accomplish if you follow these instructions:

- 1. Save the file to your hard drive (Usually the C: Drive)
- 2. Go to your Windows desktop and double click on the "My Computer" Icon
- 3. Double click on the Local Disk (C:) Icon. This will bring up a listing of all the files on the hard drive. If you had saved the file to "My Documents" there may be a file here called "Users Documents." In that case double click on that Icon instead of the Local Disk (C): Icon.
- 4. Scroll down until you find the file you just saved and click on it once with the right hand mouse button.
- 5. This brings up a menu. In the center of that menu is the command "send to."
- 6. Next, by clicking on this another menu appears listing the different drives available on your computer.
- 7. Select whatever drive is the Compact disk drive on your computer by clicking on it once. This moves the file to memory to be written to a CD at a later time
- 8. Place a new (unwritten upon) writeable Compact Disk in the Drive you designated
- 9. Go back to "My Computer" from the desktop and double click on the Compact Disk Drive Icon (Probably Drive D: or E: on most computers)
- 10. A listing of all files waiting to be written to Compact Disk will appear
- 11. On the left is "CD Writing Tasks": Click on the first option "Write these Files to CD"
- 12. A CD Writing Wizard will appear giving instructions to burn the file to Compact Disk.
- 13. When the disk is done "burning" the CD drawer will pop open allowing you to remove the completed disk and to insert another new disk inside to make additional copies for other family members.
- 14. You are finished and ready to view your file on the CD.
- 15. Place it back in the CD Drive and go to "My Computer" on the Desktop.
- 16. Double Click on the CD Icon. The list of files on that disk will appear
- 17. Double click on the file you wish to view and it will open for use.

Resource:

Another resource you will need is a letter explaining the project to parents and the extent of the preparation that needs to be done at home. It is important to send such a letter out the week before the project is scheduled to begin in the computer lab.

A sample letter appears on the next page. You may copy and paste this letter onto your school's letterhead and customize it to suit your needs.

Please scroll down to the next page to find that letter.

"Saving the Family Album" Assignment

Dear parents,

Your child has begun a fascinating project designed to archive your family history using photographs and stories he or she will get from you and other family members. Your student will be using these pictures and stories to create a Power Point slideshow telling your family story which they will save on a Compact Disc to be handed down to future generations.

Thank you for helping us with this project. To move forward with it, we would like you and your children to sit down and select a number of pictures you consider important in telling about your family. It is helpful if you could scan these pictures and save them on a Compact Disc or a Flash Drive that your student can bring to school. Most "all in one printers" nowadays have a good scan quality. If you don't have one, perhaps a friend does. Stores such as Walmart, CVS or Walgreens will also scan photos to be saved on a Compact Disc for a reasonable charge. We prefer that you handle your precious and irreplaceable photos outside of school.

We would then ask you to assist your child in writing a short description of each picture reflecting the following:

- Identify the people or places in the picture
- The approximate date or era the picture was taken in
- The significance of the picture and what was special about that person or place

You might have four pictures of grandpa for example and these descriptions:

- This is grandpa when he was a baby lying on a bear skin run in 1906. He was the second of five children born to Grace and Martin Stanley in Newark, New Jersey. He was the first son in a family of ten and the first child to be born in a hospital.
- This is Grandpa Bill in 1910 when he was in 8th grade. He started high school at Newark's George Washington School on 12th street, but did not finish because he had to go to work in a shoe factory to help support his family.
- This is a picture of Grandpa Bill and Grandma Kay with his friends around 1923 in front of his 1920 Oldsmobile at Lake George. They got married in 1928, just one year before the stock market collapsed causing the great depression. Grandma said she "liked grandpa from the start because he had a car".
- This is grandpa and grandma in front of their home in Junction Boulevard Queens holding up my mom in 1930. At the time Grandpa was a banker with Chase. The house was his mother's home and they lived in it until 1983. It was once moved in 1913 ten blocks to where you see it in this picture. Grandpa opened a tailor shop in it during the 1930's (the great depression) to make ends meet.

We recognize that this is quite a commitment we are asking of you, but we are confident that the final project will be something of great value to your family and to succeeding generations as well as a great learning experience for your son or daughter.

We will be working on this project in the computer lab beginning on ______. Please try to complete these tasks prior to that date.

Thank you for your help