Summary of Online Learning Experience
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ITEC 7481

Overview
My online course is a social studies unit designed for 4th grade students. The goal of this course is for students to create a timeline of United States history from the explorers all the way to the end of the American Revolutionary War. By the end of the course, students will be able to describe key events that took place in the United States during the time of the explorers, the formation of the colonies, the events that led up to the American Revolution, and the war itself. This unit will be done solely online. The standards covered in this course are as follows:

SS4H2 The student will describe European exploration in North America.
a. Describe the reasons for, obstacles to, and accomplishments of the Spanish, French, and English
explorations of John Cabot, Vasco Núñez de Balboa, Juan Ponce de León, Christopher Columbus,
Henry Hudson, and Jacques Cartier.
b. Describe examples of cooperation and conflict between Europeans and Native Americans.
SS4H3 The student will explain the factors that shaped British colonial America.
a. Compare and contrast life in the New England, Mid-Atlantic, and Southern colonies.
b. Describe colonial life in America as experienced by various people, including large landowners,
farmers, artisans, women, indentured servants, slaves, and Native Americans.
SS4H4 The student will explain the causes, events, and results of the American Revolution.
a. Trace the events that shaped the revolutionary movement in America, including the French and Indian
War, British Imperial Policy that led to the 1765 Stamp Act, the slogan "no taxation without representation," the activities of the Sons of Liberty, and the Boston Tea Party.
c. Describe the major events of the American Revolution and explain the factors leading to American
victory and British defeat; include the Battles of Lexington and Concord, Saratoga, and Yorktown.
d. Describe key individuals in the American Revolution with emphasis on King George III, George
Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Benedict Arnold, Patrick Henry, and John Adams.
e. Describe how trade promotes economic activity (such as how trade between the colonies and England
affected their economies).

According to the OCA, modules within an LMS should have appropriate activities that will allow students to master the learning standards and objectives covered. The learner outcomes for this online course are as follows:

1. The students will be able to identify the European explorers and the reasons that each explorer explored the new world with 90% accuracy on the social studies section of the Georgia Milestones Assessment.
2. The students will be able to describe the features of the New England, Middle, and Southern colonies with 90% accuracy on the social studies section of the Georgia Milestones Assessment.
3. The students will be able to explain the causes of the American Revolutionary War with 90% accuracy on the social studies section of the Georgia Milestones Assessment.
4. The students will be able to explain the major battles of the Revolutionary War with 90% accuracy on the social studies section of the Georgia Milestones Assessment.
5. The students will be able to identify and explain the contributions of the key people associated with the American Revolutionary War with 90% accuracy on the social studies section of the Georgia Milestones Assessment.

The students who will be taking this course have been exposed to eCLASS (my LMS) and other forms of technology all year long. They have a very solid understanding of how to navigate eCLASS and the internet in general, and they have also been taught what it means to collaborate and communicate via online resources. These students are very motivated learners, and they tend to strive to do their very best. Finally, they have already been exposed to many of the Web 2.0 tools that they will be required to use throughout the course.

Context

This course is scheduled to begin in January of 2017 as soon as the winter break is over, and it will last for 11 weeks. The class is designed to be done mainly online, but there will also be some synchronous sessions that will either be done face to face in the classroom or in a skype setting. If students are unable to complete any of the assigned work at home due to a lack of technology resources, I will open a computer lab for them at school so that they can still complete all of the required work. Part of this course requires students to work in groups, and it is up to each individual group to decide on how they will meet together. They can choose to meet synchronously using Google Hangouts, Skype, or they could actually meet up together at school or some other location. The schedule for this course will be broken down as follows:
1. Week 1: Course Orientation
2. Week 2 - 3: European Exploration in North America
3. Week 4 – 5: Colonial America
4. Week 6 – 7: The Road to the Revolution
5. Week 8 – 9: Revolutionary War
6. Week 10 – 11: Key people associated with the Revolutionary War

There are a variety of technical requirements for this course. According to Vai and Sosulski (2011), a variety of resources "adds dimension to the learning experience" (p. 129). Students will be using multiple tools as they work their way through the modules. The technical requirements of this course are as follows:
1. Internet connected computer
2. Kidblog account (video tutorial on how to set this up is located in the course resource section of the LMS)

3. Access to teacher's Time Toast account (account information is located on the course resource section of the LMS)
4. Access to teacher's other Web 2.0 tool accounts such as Movenote, Animoto, and Thinglink (account information is located on the course resource section of the LMS)
5. Textbook (eBook): The United States: Making a New Nation. -
6. http://www.eharcourtschool.com/
7. Webcam and working microphone
8. Gmail account (created through the school)

This course will take place in a 4th grade class consisting of 27 students. This class is made up of 26% gifted students, 33% ESOL students, 11% special education students, and 30% regular ed students. Eighty percent of these students are in the free and reduced lunch program.

Assessment Practices

According to Vai and Sosulski, it is absolutely necessary to "assess online students on an ongoing basis." In each module, students will be assessed in multiple ways. They will take a quiz over the content learned throughout the module. This quiz will be done via Google Forms. Students will also be given a reflection question to answer in a discussion post, and they will also reflect on their learning in every module through a blog post. Students will interact with one another by responding to a peer's discussion post and blog post. Finally, students will work in groups to complete a culminating project – they will have to create a timeline of the events they learn throughout the course. They will work on this project a little bit at a time through each module. Several of these assessments address multiple intelligences; that way, the tactile, auditory, and visual learners' needs are all met. I will be able to take the information that I get from each assessment to determine how each of my students are doing in the course. If I see that a student is struggling or falling behind, I will be able to provide assistance.

Accommodations

This LMS will accommodate the needs of my special education students, ESOL students, and gifted students in a variety of ways. First, each module will consist of both instructional videos and instructional websites for students to access in order to learn the information. Students who may have difficulty reading may focus on the videos instead of the websites. In addition, the online textbook has a read aloud feature. For my ESOL and special ed students, I will be giving them the opportunity to do a video recording of their discussion posts instead of having to write everything out. I named their group the green group so that no one would know why they had a separate assignment. I used Vocaroo to explain the question they needed to answer, and then I included a graphic for them to click on to watch instructions for how to create their video response. In addition, when these students blog about their learning at the end of each module, they will receive a modified blog rubric, and the quiz they will have to take in the middle of each module will be modified – it will only have three answer choices, and it will have a read aloud option for the students. Gifted students will also receive a modified blog rubric for their blog posts every week. Their blogs will require some more critical thinking and in-depth responses as they reflect on their learning. Students with an IEP will receive an outline of the notes discussed in each module.

Universal Design/Accessibility

This course definitely meets the principles of universal design/access as stipulated by WC3 and the American Disabilities Act. First, this course has multiple ways of representation meaning that content is taught in a variety of ways such as the online textbook, videos, synchronous sessions, and websites. Next, this course includes multiple forms of expression. Students will be submitting work in a variety of ways such as blog posts, discussion posts, and quiz answers. In addition, students have lots of choice for their culminating product. All groups are required to use Timetoast to create their timeline, but they can choose which other Web 2.0 tools they would like to link or embed into their timeline. That way, they can pick the tools that they are specifically skilled and talented in utilizing. For example, a student who loves being in the spotlight might choose a tool that would require them to record their voice. A student who is artistic might choose a tool such as Smore or PicCollage since those tools require them to combine pictures, text, and backgrounds together in a creative way. Finally, this course has multiple forms of engagement such as email, phone, synchronous sessions, blogs, and discussion posts.

Differentiation

This course is differentiated in a variety of ways in order to meet the needs of all students. First, as specified in the "accommodations" section, I will be making modifications for my ESOL and special education students. In addition, I will include some higher level websites and some lower level websites in each module so that all students will be able to access a website for research on his/her own level. I have also differentiated the final product by giving students a lot of choice in how they would like their final product to turn out. I listed a variety of Web 2.0 tools for students to choose from, but I even specified that students are not limited to that list. They can be as creative as they want. This will allow them to choose Web 2.0 tools that they feel the most comfortable and confident using. Also, the final product is a group project so that students can work collaboratively on it. This course has a mixture of group activities and individual activities.

References

Online Course Assessment (OCA). Retrieved from
    https://www.softchalkcloud.com/lesson/files/pLq9rStNOHQ5jl/Online%20Course%20Assessment%20(OCA)%202%20without%20point%20scales_arabic.pdf.

Vai, M., & Sosulski, K. (2011). Essentials of online course design: A standards-based guide (2nd ed.) New York: Rutledge.