Grade 4 - Lessons 8 & 9

Creates a webpage or other multimedia project with research acquired through the Internet and other sources (books, interview); Creates a research bibliography of books and websites with clickable links in Word or PowerPoint

These lessons will take several visits to the computer lab to complete. If portable storage is available, having students begin creating the presentations in the lab, and resuming them in the classroom over a period of a week or two works well for many students.

For more help with using PowerPoint, try the lessons posted at this address: http://www.pumaland.net/Staff_Pages/Henry_Anker/Lesson_Plans.html You can also search the web for additional tutorials just by typing "Powerpoint Lessons (or tutorials)".

Every year that goes by means that less work done by students is done using traditional paper and pencil, and more is done using computer technology. The computer will soon become a tool equal to the pencil in schools, and then surpass it. This is especially true of student projects.

Students by this age likely will have had much experience as a consumer of web content, but it is more important that students also become skilled at creating it. If students can do this, they will be more informed consumers as well, as they will understand what went into creating the sites they use.

The same goes for being consumers of presentations, slide shows and movies. As in Science class, it's one thing to observe a science experiment and make judgments based on being a witness, but it's quite another to perform the experiment and make observations and adjustments along the way, and then reflect back on the process.

1. In this example, students will create a PowerPoint presentation that features events and biographies of leaders in the Civil Rights Movement.

Students can work alone, or in small groups. Begin by showing films, or clips of films to the class. Be sure that you have the approval of your site administrator, and to review the media first, to ensure that the content is age appropriate. Using film will help students be better prepared to read on the topic, both with books, and using computers and the Internet. Examples might include the following:

    a. "From Montgomery to Memphis"

    b. "Mississippi Burning"

    c. "The History Channel Presents Voices of Civil Rights"

    d. "The March on Washington & The Civil Rights Movement"

    e. "The Great Debaters"

    f. "The Tuskegee Airmen"

    g. Citizen King DVD ~ Martin Luther King

Many of these titles may be available in your school's library, or your public library. Remember that public library systems in the City and County of Los Angeles (and many other urban areas) offer online access to their catalogs as well as the ability to request an item that is not in your local library be brought to your library at no charge.

    You likely will not have time to show all these films in their entirety, so cue up to key portions of the film to illustrate a point. This will help students understand that their presentation also will be digest versions that feature highlights and spotlights in a very long and complex time in history.

2. Provide guidance to reading materials, web sites, and CD encyclopedic content students will use to do their research. As students do their research, they will either write by hand, or type their notes into a WP application, mail message, Google Docs, or an AlphaSmart™. Again, be certain students know that copying/pasting information verbatim is not legal. And if they are going to use a direct quote, to be sure and cite it

properly. If students are citing printed materials, here is a guide that you and your students can use to ensure that the citations are listed properly:

3. Once students have completed their research, they can search for images that would go well with specific passages on slides. There should be an obvious connection between the text and the image. If a student's text described the assassination of President Lincoln, a landscape of a Civil War battlefield would not do well to illustrate the text. As part of a mini-lesson, students should be taught how to create a folder on a computer, server, or flash drive. They can even create sub-folders titled "People", "Events", etc… to sort their photos. Some sites even have video clips that students can save for later use.

4. Once the photos are stored and the text is saved, students can begin assembling their presentations. An outline should be provided to students so that can ensure that they are including the right content, in the right order. You may want to create a template and/or storyboard for students to use to plan out their order.

5. A model lesson you'll want to provide is one on design sense. Elements of design you'll want to present to students include the following:

    1. *the "Z scan"* – meaning that it is important for students to understand that viewers typically visually scan across a slide from upper left to lower right.

    2. *appropriate use of color* – meaning good contrast of color, no yellow or light blue text, no garish combinations like red and pink.

    3. *use of bounding boxes* – meaning that text, or images with poor color matching with neighboring items be bound by a bordering line.

    4. *use of appropriate sized text* – meaning that text can be read from a distance, that it is spaced properly, and there is not too much text

on one slide (a good rule of thumb is a maximum of 5 sentences or bullet points).

5. *use of negative space* - meaning that slides are not cluttered, and that there is good spacing between items and edges of the slide.

6. *limit use of transition and animation effects* – remember these two axioms: "less is more" and "just because you can do something, doesn't mean that you should so it". Students often are so excited about using these features that they overuse flipping, flying, spinning effects to the distraction of their audience. It's okay for students to use these features sparingly.

2. Model for students the process of copying and pasting the notes they wrote into the slides. Model for students the process for importing, copying/pasting, or using the drag & drop procedure for adding images to slides.

3. Model for students the creation of bounding boxes, color fills, moving things around on the screen to respect the Z-scan attention of the audience, and preserve negative space. Note: If you want to move an object on the screen precisely, select the object(s), hold down the option key, and tap the arrow key in the direction you want the object to go.

4. After students have worked for a few minutes, or have finished their first slide, remind students to save their file, and walk them through the procedure, if necessary. Remind students to save their work after each slide is completed.

5. Allow students to work independently, or with their partners, as applicable. Use proximity to notice good things that students are doing and provide them positive reinforcement for their creativity and effort. When you notice problems, rather than fixing them for students, find a nurturing way to present them using the projector, and ask students for

suggestion for ways to fix them.

6. Build rigor in the sophistication of the presentations as students show you that they are ready.