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Action Plan

2012

**Action Plan from Pskov, Russia**

*Strategies for utilizing global teaching strategies in my career:*

**Subject Specific Strategies**

1. ***Wiki page:*** 
   1. Develop a wiki page in which students from different countries can become educated about each other’s culture and countries while simultaneously communicating across the medium through activities (e.g. recipe page, sports page, free time, weather, etc.) that allow students to share things important to them. The goal of this type of strategy would be to increase global awareness, tolerance, and strengthen global networks in school. The long term hope would be that once the students leave the classroom environment they would be interested still in continuing these same types of experiences and will create their own global networks in their personal or work lives.
2. ***Pen Pals:***
   1. Good old fashioned pen pals! Students could do both traditional mail delivery or electronic mail and write to someone either from another culture or their own. Students would discuss their values and why those are important, traditions, belief systems, what they do for fun, etc. Students would be required to write at least one letter a month over the course of a semester or even year if possible and put those letters into a portfolio.
   2. Students would then take those letters and create a Venn diagram where they visually represent the similarities and differences and try to determine if there are overall more differences or more similarities.
   3. Finally, students would write a reflective essay on their experience and the following are topics they could reflect and write on:
      1. What are the biggest differences between you and your pen pal and what value does this have in your life or the way you perceive your pen pal? (i.e. do the differences matter in building a friendship, collaborating, etc.)
      2. What were some surprising similarities between your pen pal and you?
      3. Did you learn something from this experience and if so, what?
      4. Did your expectations before writing to your pen pal match up with the experience that you had?
      5. Would you like to do this type of activity again and do you think communicating with people who we consider different from ourselves is a good thing? Why or why not?
3. ***Twitter Current Events:*** 
   1. Part 1: Develop a twitter forum for my classroom and have students create their own accounts as well. Each week they would search for a current event from across the globe or that deals with culture (i.e. diversity, issues, in politics, in dress, etc.) and post it to the class forum.
   2. Part 2: Every month students will pick one of their posts and write a reflection on it that entails why they chose to post that event, what they learned, and how it affected them and/or their thinking on cultural matters.
   3. Part 3: Students will also choose one of their peer’s posts to reflect on.
4. ***Explore my city activity:***
   1. Students can conduct video tours of their favorite places in their home town. Some options include:
      1. School tour
      2. Home tour
      3. Favorite places to visit (i.e. beach, mountains, countryside, park, etc.)
      4. Daily road travel tour
   2. Students would create storyboards for their video with a rational of why they chose their specific tour and a brochure (created by hand or using a word processor like Microsoft word) to go along with the video. Students could post the videos to a wiki or share links to other accounts like Youtube. These links could even be placed in the Twitter forum mentioned above.
   3. \*\*\*If there are no global networks set up to complete this activity across the globe then students could to a variant of this same idea but within the culture groups that exist in their school (e.g. Jewish culture, Arabic, African American, Southern Carolinian, etc.)
5. ***Multicultural Day:***
   1. Students will organize and host a multicultural day for the school, complete with dress, food and cultural stations of **(a)** different countries, or **(b)** just one aspect per group of **one** chosen country (of their choosing or based on curriculum studies). Either choice would include group discussions and research and would take place over the course of a unit or semester depending on whether (a) or (b) was chosen.
   2. To go along with the station students will also use technology to make some form of presentation to incorporate into their station.
      1. Glogster
         1. Students can use glogster to create their own glob about why someone should visit their country, try the local cuisine, listen to classic folk songs or even introduce some language from another country. Essentially they could advertise reasons to ‘come over!’ like a travel agency.
      2. Video/Voicethread
         1. Students can conduct interviews or timed video that incorporates pre-voiced or produced presentations that link video, voice, and images. Students could interview people from other cultures or even overseas and have these playing at the station.
      3. Prezi
         1. Students could incorporate music videos, images, and fun facts into a presentation that viewers of the station could look at while station workers practice their oratory and presentation delivery skills.
      4. Wallshare:
         1. Students could use wall share to show their group discussions on the culture/nation of their choice that took place between
      5. Vkontakte
         1. Students could use the social network site [www.vk.com](http://www.vk.com) or Vkontakte.ru to share their cross cultural and global network communications. This website also allows for extended video, image, and music upload and could easily be used as a resource for introducing modern culture of different nations from across the globe.
      6. Of course, depending on technology resources if the technology isn’t available posters, brochures, and classic trifold presentations still work!
6. ***Two sides to every story…and what really happened.***
   1. Watch films, listen to music, read primary documents (e.g. letters, propaganda, etc.) and view media (if applicable) that offer a historical and/or cultural perspective from a different country on an event in history (or even current event) – explore the differences in interpretations of the event based on our cultural upbringing and national approach to viewing and/or publicizing event.

**Classroom Environment Strategies**

1. **Desk arrangement:** 
   1. In the linguistic gymnasium where I taught in Pskov, Russia desks were arranged so that each student had an individual work space, but also has an area for group work. Essentially, there were two classrooms per grade utilized for different purposes. This encouraged autonomy and responsibility for one’s own actions and organizational skills and it started at a young age (kindergarten). This type of arrangement isn’t possible in the same way in most classrooms in the U.S. (at least public school systems). However, I would like to use group desk arrangements in general, but arrange some individual workspaces along a wall in my classroom. This would allow those who need isolation during work more possible (easier to put the “blinders” on so-to-speak). Each work station would have necessary items to work with: dictionary, pen/pencil/eraser/highlighter, scratch paper, earplugs, etc. You can see these in the diagram below on the right of the diagram where the boxes are labeled “cubicle”.

Group

Table

Resource/

Conference Table

Cubicle

Cubicle

Group

Table

Group

Table

Group

Table

Group

Table

Group

Table

****

BC

BC

Tea Table

1. **Comfortable “Get Away” Areas:**
   1. Also, in Russia there were usually some kind of sitting areas in the classroom that were comfortable (e.g. couches, sitting chairs). These were great spots to observe the class from and students and teachers both used these areas during their breaks (which are more frequent and longer than student breaks in the U.S.). Also, plants! Plants are a wonderful way to make an area feel homey. Every classroom should feel like a safe place…and green is good for happiness! Students can swap the role of keeping up the classroom plants. This also helps keep a community feel.
2. **Seek Volunteer Classroom Assistants:**
   1. Most classrooms in the school I taught at in Russia had two teachers in the classroom at any given moment. Even before I left to go to Russia I had decided every classroom could benefit from being constructed this way! I think this won’t happen in the U.S. any time soon, but I did get to volunteer in my middle school classroom as a high school student because I had taken all of the necessary curriculum. This experience has me convinced that there are others in the community, college, high school, etc. that would be willing to work as volunteers in the school system as part time assistance. Even at the school I taught at in America for student teaching there were parents who volunteered to make food for staff meetings and to do all the schools laminating needs. I’d like to seek out volunteers for classroom assistance for whatever time the school system would allow (grading papers, making copies, keeping up the tea table, or any other need that is applicable). Community is one way to help schools succeed when teachers can’t do it all! We have to admit and accept that and so do our administrations!
3. **Built in Breaks:**
   1. Most schools require the teacher teach for an entire class period and building in breaks can be difficult. But, we all have to admit that three minutes between classes isn’t enough time for students to do everything they need to and because they don’t have time they spend valuable class time roaming the halls to use the bathroom, saunter to the water fountain, etc. I’d like to incorporate a “tea” area in the classroom near the comfortable seating. On this table there will be items at any given time for the students (e.g. mini microwave, water, tea, cookies, or snack mix). Students could take turns bringing items in, parents could sign up to bring items in, and I would myself on occasion. Students do not function when hungry!

**Plan for sharing my experiences and what I’ve learned with my school community and/or community in general:**

**Dillard Drive Middle School**

1. **Wikipage Q & A:**
   1. I created a digital record of my time in Russia on a Wikispace and gave the link to my cooperating teacher in the states after I left. He had the link available at his disposal to share with my students during their home room time after lunch. I also had students who wanted to participate in writing letters to Russian students do so and I carried them with me with the intention of starting international correspondences. This was the starting point! Before we start the tour and Q&A we will start a KWL chart on the Smartboard as well as individually on paper. Then, when I visit my school I will use a at least one class period with them going through my webpage, giving a tour, and then allow them to ask questions.
2. **Culture Café:**
   1. Students will then take part in a lesson called culture café (which I will detail in the lesson plan portion of the action plan). The categories of study will be:
      1. Language
         1. Cyrillic Alphabet
      2. Food
         1. Borsht, Pelmeni, Belin, Kasha (Porridge), Plof, Sour Cream, Mayonaise, potato cakes, etc.
      3. Religion
         1. Orthodox
         2. Muslim
         3. Jewish
      4. Important Holidays
         1. Easter
         2. Victory Day
      5. Free time
         1. Banya
         2. Datcha
         3. Rollerblading
         4. Walks
         5. Fishing (Ice)
      6. **History and Location** (Pskov)
   2. Students will each have one category of Russian culture and/or life in Pskov. They will work as groups to investigate pre-made packets of information and become “experts” on their topic. Then they will teach the class about their topic by performing a skit or giving a mini presentation. Each group should make notes as their peers present or after by briefly stating what they learned.
   3. After each group presents we will summarize what we learned by class discussion and closing with an exit slip where each student will write down what they found most interesting or important from the presentations.
3. **Pskov Video**
   1. While in Pskov I bought a film titled “Glimpses of Pskov” featuring Slav Springs, Truvor’s Town, Grom, The Holy Trinity Cathedral, Pskov Chambers, and Russian Orthodox Pskov. It is viewable in both Russian and English and has a run time of about 40 minutes. For the next to last part of the sharing plan the students will watch the 40 minute film. They will try to notice similarities between my photos and the film images (they will if they pay attention! Two different seasons are captured!)
4. **Letter Activity** 
   1. The last part of the sharing plan is to read the international letters. To start:
      1. Students will be given the Cyrillic alphabet and a few key phrases and asked to write just the beginning salutations of a letter to Russian students in the Russian Language. I will have a roster of all of the letters written from Russian students to American Students beforehand to make sure each student gets a response and each American student has a chance to write to Russia. After they scream that writing the letter in Russian is impossible I will tell them why I asked them to do so. Because English is the second language of all of the students in Russia I want the students to appreciate the content of the letters rather than focusing on whatever grammar mistakes may exist inside of them. Respect I think is key with this exchange.
         1. Students will try to write:
            1. Hello \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. How are you?
      2. I will further explain that the students of the linguistic gymnasium learn also German, French, Swedish, Esontian, Russian and English. They are required to learn at least one language after English and Russian.
      3. Next students will get a letter from a Russian student and respond back to them. We will save the Russian letters in a binder and send off the American letters to Russia! Some will even have access to email addresses and will be able to pick up correspondence by email.

**Sample Lesson Plan**

*DAY 2 or 3*

**Title:** Culture Café: Russian Federation and Pskov

**Context:** The lesson will focus on the things I learned about Russia and its culture, more specifically on my experiences in Pskov, Russian. Students will get to experience the parts that make up Russian life! They will learn about food, religion, language, free time activities, holidays, history and location.

**Grade & Subject**: 6th Grade Language Arts & Social Studies

**Overarching Goals:** To share my experiences in Russia with my American students and help them have an understanding of another culture and place from across the world. I would also like to encourage global networking among the students from both countries and schools.

*Student Learner Objectives “Students will be able to…”*

**SWBAT: (Common Core)**

* ***{Writing}*** Research (9) Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research
* ***{Speaking & Listening}*** (1) Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher led with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly
* ***{Speaking & Listening}*** (2) Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study
* ***{Speaking & Listening}*** (4) Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task

**Materials:**

* Timer (or Smart Board and internet/computer access)
* Access to vk.com
* Access to Wikispace: Teachlovelearn –Russian Website
  + Videos, images, music, etc.
* Exit slips (scrap paper for each students
  + ~90 total for whole group at Dillard Drive Middle
* KWL Charts from previous day as reference tool
* Students will need their class journals
* Pre-arranged packets for Culture Café Activity
  + Primary documents on each topic
  + Images of food, dress, location, architecture (monasteries to outhouses!), etc.
  + Alphabet print of Cyrillic Alphabet
  + Print out of Russian words with English translation of important cultural features (e.g. Sour cream, Kasha, etc.)
  + Map of Russia and Map of Pskov
  + Artifacts from Russia
    - Rubles, Lacquer box, jewelry, whistle toy, story book, music samples (access to vk.com), wooden Easter egg, victory day ribbon,
  + Paper plates, tea cups, “Don’t drink the water” sign

**Procedures:**  *Total Class time = 47 minutes*

**Bridge:** **Journaling:**

***5 Minutes:***

Students will start the class period by reviewing their person and class KWL. In their journals they will free write for a 5 minutes on what interested them the most, what they found boring, what they found shocking, etc. In general they are just reflecting on the previous day’s lesson and how they were affected by it.

***2-3 Minutes***: Next they will discuss in their groups their reactions as a whole.

***1*-2 Minutes:** Students who wish may share their reaction with class as a whole.

**Lesson:** ***Culture Café Investigation and Creation***

***18-20 Minutes***

Next I will explain the directions for the “Culture Café” Assignment. They will have about 15-18 Minutes to investigate their packages **AND** prepare a mini presentation or skit. Each package contains a different element to life in Russia, culture, or Pskov. Each member must participate. There will be enough documents in the packet that everyone will be able to read something or view an image and discuss. I’ll ring the a bell at 10 minutes to let groups know they should begin planning how they’ll present the information they’ve viewed.

* (1) Designated writer/Note taker
  + (Note take still has to investigate something)
  + Information/Group management skill practice
* (1) -IF- the group creates something there may be an artist
* Perform in skit/presentation of information
  + Each person has to speak at least once and this may include their reaction to the information rather than just regurgitating the information.
    - (Personal connection/feeling will make the verbal practice easier).

The categories of study will be:

* + - Language
      * Cyrillic Alphabet
    - Food
      * Borsht, Pelmeni, Belin, Kasha (Porridge), Plof, Sour Cream, Mayonaise, potato cakes, etc.
    - Religion
      * Orthodox
      * Muslim
      * Jewish
    - Important Holidays
      * Easter
      * Victory Day
    - Free time
      * Banya
      * Datcha
      * Rollerblading
      * Walks
      * Fishing (Ice)
    - **History and Location** (Pskov)

***Culture Café Presentation & Brief Journal Response***

***10-13 Minutes:***

After each group is ready they will present their information to the class. Each group will have up to two minutes each to present their information. Groups will be labeled group 1-6 and each group should write at least one sentence on a piece of paper to summarize the main idea of each group’s presentation and one sentence as a brief response to the information. They will complete this in their journals.

***Response as a Class – Brief discussions of what we learned***

***1 Minute***

**Closing:** ***Exist Slips***

***2 Minutes***

Students will write down two things:

* One thing they took away from their group’s information (e.g. something they learned, changed their mind about because of the presentation (e.g. stereotype), or what their topic was in general and if they found it interesting.
* One thing they took away from one of the other group presentations with the same criteria as the above (e.g. which one was most interesting, something they learned, etc. etc.)

They’ll drop these off in the exit slip basket and be ready to watch a video on Pskov the following day.