

PLANNING A LESSON TO MEET OBJECTIVES

Application 2: Planning a Lesson to Meet Technology and Content Objectives

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Introduction

Every file on the Internet has a unique address, or Uniform Resource Locator, that identifies where it is located, who can access the file, how it is intended to be used, and what type of file it is. To be a well-informed citizen of the digital world, it is essential for students to be able to recognize and understand details about these URLs.

This lesson is designed to help seventh grade students understand how URLs are formed and make informed decisions about existing URLs on the Internet. This learning objective is vital to both their understanding of the Internet's structure and their file management skills. I have taught this lesson and even reorganized it several times before, but I feel that it would be helpful to use the format of this assignment to improve it even further.

Springboard Activity

For this lesson's springboard activity, I will begin class by trying to open <http://cincinatrede.com> on the large screen in front of the class. When the page attempts to load, the school's Internet filter will intervene, telling the class that the page cannot be viewed because of objectionable content. I will then facilitate a short classroom discussion about this experience, helping the students realize that an untrustworthy person or company has purchased this URL to specifically trick Internet users who

misspell the word "Cincinnati" as they look for the official Major League Baseball website of the Reds.

This springboard activity is designed to arouse student interest and elicit an initial understanding of the importance of understanding and using URLs correctly. It will clearly gain the students' attention by utilizing a very popular topic at our school (The Cincinnati Reds) and creating a potentially disturbing or shocking situation. The students will also become aware of the lesson's objective by seeing how dangerous a misuse or misunderstanding of URLs can be. Finally, the springboard activity also draws upon prior knowledge about Internet safety, URLs, and Internet filtration (Lamb, 2006).

Information Exploration

For this lesson's information exploration, students will use Exploring URLs (<http://www.georgiacenter.uga.edu/exploring/urls.html#parts>), an age-appropriate and relevant source of information about Uniform Resource Locators. They will be given a set amount of time to freely explore the website, analyzing the information it contains and attempting to grasp the concepts it teaches. Because I teach in a computer lab, each student will be able to work independently at their own machine to browse through the website and discover the ideas it contains. During this time of self-discovery, I will strategically "wander" through the classroom, monitoring student progress and assisting any students that appear to need help.

The information that is provided will be limited ... they will simply be given a link (from the class website) to Exploring URLs and will be encouraged to read the content and educate themselves on the design and use of URLs. They will also be informed of the two coming applications of their learning (in the active involvement and closure/transfer sections of the lesson). The website is organized in a very logical and clear sequence and contains very appropriate chunks of information.

Active Involvement

In the active involvement for this lesson, students will be given a short list of URLs to analyze and interpret on a digital worksheet. They will record their insights and findings, which they will use in the closure/transfer section of the lesson and also turn in to a digital dropbox. For instance, as they examine http://run4the1.com/cc/2005photos/misc/Images/Wyoming_4.jpg, they might type that it is located in 4 sets of subfolders, that it is an image file, that it appears to be from 2005, or that it seems to be located on a commercial website.

If a student is unclear about how to dissect and describe a particular URL, he will be encouraged to elicit help from his neighbors or to re-examine Exploring URLs. I will again be walking through the classroom, monitoring student progress, and the digital worksheets will be checked and given back to students through another digital dropbox as

soon as possible. Their ability to describe the components of each URL on the digital worksheet will help to determine if their active involvement matches the desired outcomes.

Closure/Transfer

This lesson will utilize learning groups for closure/transfer. Students will form learning groups of 3-4 students to share their results and answer a set of questions about their discoveries. The questions are each designed to evoke critical thinking in the students, drawing upon third level questioning strategies and bringing together the elements of the lesson (Costa, 2000). These questions are:

1. Look at each file and evaluate the organization of its URL. Is it placed in the appropriate subfolders?
2. Imagine that you were asked to redesign this website. How would you organize the subfolders differently?
3. Predict how you will use the Internet differently now that you know the names and meanings of each part of a URL.

Once the groups have had a few minutes to discuss their results, I will then facilitate a short classroom discussion about the major points of the lesson. I will allow students to share important things that they have learned and help them to share with each

other how to apply the content of this lesson in their everyday lives as citizens of the Internet. I will conclude by encouraging their learning and providing positive ways to utilize a knowledge and understanding of URLs. Because this unit is designed to be self-contained, I will not seek to connect it to the next lesson but will instead try to provide closure at the end of class.

Conclusion

Overall, I am thankful for the chance to reorganize and re-evaluate this lesson again using the framework provided in this course. I believe that the changes will make this lesson an effective and important part of my curriculum, connecting pre-existing knowledge with future curriculum and preparing my students to understanding their Internet use and research better. It will also help them to understand the connections between local file management and the structure of the Internet, reinforcing consistent learning. Finally, this lesson will involve each student actively in a process of discovery, helping them learn how to find answers on their own and make well-informed decisions while using the Internet.

References:

Costa, A. and Kallick, B. (2000). *Activating and Engaging Habits of Mind*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Lamb, A. (2006). *Building Treehouses for Learning: Technology in Today's Classrooms* (4th ed.). Emporia, KS: Vision to Action.