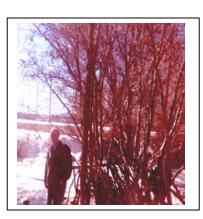# River Walk Newsletters

Grade : Sixth

An integrated lesson plan covering 8 sessions of approximately one hour each.

Lesson-Planning Approach

Some learners perceive their "world" as a whole, where all things are interconnected and dependent upon each other. These "integrated" students face major challenges in coping with our dominant educational, social, and economic systems, which tend to present information in a linear fashion without the necessity of integration into meaningful context. Integrated students are at-risk of failing as they attempt to grasp information in ways that do not match their experience. Among large populations of at-risk students are many from Native American and similar cultures who do not regard their world as a sum of parts but as a blend of all that they experience.

This lesson plan does include some traditional, linear approaches to delivering information (checklists, rules, analysis, problem solving and organization). In addition to the traditional, linear delivery of information, this lesson plan also includes some of the following strategies, designed to appeal to at-risk students as they learn academic/life skills:

- ❖ Integration of technology
- ❖ Story telling/anecdotal information
- ❖ Non-competitive group and team work
- ❖ Performance-based assessment and rubrics
- ❖ Visual presentations and practice through technology and other means
- ❖ Project-based assignments that integrate family and community
- ❖ Activities appealing to multiple intelligences (Gardner)

Lesson Overview

Students will create a Publisher newsletter based upon research that they do on the Mancos River Walk.

Lesson Objectives

Lesson Project: Students will create a Publisher Newsletter using information that they gather from the Mancos River Walk. The will include sections on trees, shrubs, river studies, wildlife studies and any other information that they feel is important to put into the newsletter.

Project Objectives: When students complete this project, they will be able to…
- Use basic Publisher skills to create a newsletter for the rest of the class and school.
- Identify trees and shrubs of the area.
- Use leaf, seed and bark types to help identify any tree.
- Present a scientific investigation in an organized fashion.

Integration of Other Functional/Academic Skills: (Critical thinking is required throughout the lesson.) Students will be able to…
- Write for an audience other than the teacher.
- Work in a cooperative environment to produce a creative newsletter.
- Use a digital camera to take useful photos.
- Use the Internet to navigate a website for information.

State/National Standards (Complete as Appropriate)

Colorado State Standard Science #1 – Students understand the processes of scientific investigation and design, conduct, communicate about, and evaluate such investigations.

Colorado State Standard Science #3 – Life Science: Students know and understand the characteristics and structure of living things, the processes of life, and how living things interact with each other and their environment.

Colorado State Standard Science #5 – Students know and understand interrelationships among science, technology, and human activity and how they can affect the world.

Colorado State Standard Reading and Writing #2 – Students write and speak for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Colorado State Standard Reading and Writing #3 – Students write and speak using conventional grammar, usage, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.

Websites

Required: No Websites Required
Support:
http://www.publicbookshelf.org/public_html/A_Year_in_the_Wonderland_of_Trees_/treeident_bc.html - tree ID site

http://mbgnet.mobot.org/pfg/diverse/temp/leafid.htm - Tree Leaf ID site

http://www.arborday.org/trees/treeID.html **- Tree ID site**

Pre-requisites
- Students should know how to use identification techniques for trees and shrubs.
- Students need to know how to use the Internet.

Required Materials
- Clipboards
- A Tree and Shrub ID Guide Book of Your Choice
- A Bird ID Guide Book

Handouts
- Things to look for…

Required Equipment/Technology
- Computer with Publisher and Internet
- Digital camera

THE LESSON

Note: Students do not learn from what <u>you</u> do but from what you have <u>them</u> do.

Preparation

Activity	Time Estimate	Instructor Notes
Tree/ Shrub Identification	30 min.	Students will use the information that they have learned previously concerning trees and shrubs. They need to be taught how to use the guide the instructor selects. (See Required Materials)

Presentation

Activity		Instructor Notes
Getting the Word Out	5-10 min.	Inform students that we are going to go out to the River Walk and gather some information on the plants, river and wildlife in the area. We want to tell the school about how diverse this place is. What are some ways that we can do this? A Newsletter!

Practice and Performance
(Students help you perform the project steps. You help them perform project steps. They perform steps with little or no instructor help.)

Activity		Instructor Notes
Research	60-120 min.	Walk down to the River Walk. Give students the handout of the things they are looking for. They need to sketch, photograph (using the digital camera), describe, measure, interview --anything they come across in their section of the River Walk. SEE HANDOUT: Things to Look for.
Creating Articles	120 min.	Using the research, students write stories and do layouts of their newsletters.
Rough Drafts	30 min.	Using cut out articles, students create a rough draft of their newsletters.
Newsletters – Final Drafts	120-180 min.	Using the rough drafts, students create newsletters using Microsoft Publisher. Walk them through the different adjustments they can make to templates and then let them experiment before starting. Remind them to proofread before they print. SEE PUB CHECKLIST.

Lesson Assessment Strategy (Formative – As the lesson progresses)

Preparation, Presentation and Overall Implementation (Instructor)
- Are the time allotments enough? Do they need more or less?
- Do the tree and bird guides come in handy? Do we need more?
- Do they need to know more about trees and shrubs before we start this project?
- Would an example of a brochure help or hinder their creativity?

Performance and Practice (Student)
- Are the checklists helpful?
- Is the rubric helpful?
- Is the handout helpful?
- Are the groups working well together? Or would it be better as an individual project?
- Would some more exercises in creative article writing make this both easier and more effective?

Technology
- Is the checklist helpful for Publisher?
- Would a different Publisher style be better?
- Do the students need more instruction with the digital camera?
- Did the groups work well with regards to the computer use?

Things to Look For…

- ❑ Trees –
    - o Diameter of the tree
    - o Bark type
    - o Leaf type
    - o Seed type
    - o Estimated height

- ❑ Shrubs –
    - o Diameter of shrub
    - o Bark type
    - o Leaf type
    - o Seed type
    - o Estimated height
    - o Estimated area covered
- ❑ River –
    - o Estimated depth
    - o Estimated speed
    - o Estimated width
    - o Carrying capacity
- ❑ Wildlife –
    - o Type
    - o How many?
    - o Coloring
    - o Size

Activity Checklist

	Look for all of the trees first.
	Sketch or photograph them.
	Measure the diameter and estimate the height.
	Sketch the leaf and describe it.
	Sketch the bark and describe it.
	Sketch the seed and describe it.
	Do the above for the shrubs also.
	Estimate the depth, speed and the width of the river.
	Any wildlife? Sketch, count and describe it.
	Write your articles. Remember to include as many of the senses as possible.
	Rough draft of your layout for your newsletter. Remember to include your pictures.
	Do the Final Draft using Microsoft Publisher. Proofread.
	Have the teacher look it over before you print.

Technology Checklist

	Open "Publisher".
	From the Wizard, choose "Newsletter".
	Select the style that you want to use.
	From the "Newsletter Wizard," select the colors, column numbers and number of sides that you want. Then close the wizard.
	Begin typing in your articles.
	Remember to save early and often. Go to "Save as" and go to "Network Neighborhoods." Then select "tea" folder and save it under "Newsletters" folder.
	When you have finished have your partner and another student read it over before you ask for me to.
	Print. Only press print once no matter how long it is taking.

Lesson Rubric					
Category	**0-1 points**	**2-3 points**	**4-5 points**	**6-7 points**	**8-10 points**
Research	No research	Research on one topic	Research on two of the topics	Research on three of the topics	Research on all of the topics
Rough Draft	No rough draft	- - - - -	Rough draft partially complete	- - - - -	Rough draft completed
Articles	No Articles	Article on one to two topics. Brief or incomplete.	Article on two to three topics. Brief.	Article on three topics. Interesting and Complete.	Article on four or more topics. Complete and interesting.
Pictures	No pictures or sketches	One or two sketches. No photographs. Randomly placed.	Sketches and photographs randomly placed.	Sketches and photographs placed appropriately.	Sketches and photos placed creatively.
Conventions	Unorganized. Illegible. Not proofread.	Unorganized with sentence structure errors and spelling errors.	Unorganized. Few errors.	Organized. Few errors.	Organized. Few to no errors. Creative layout.
Group Work	No group work	- - - - -	- - - - -	- - - - -	Group worked well together.