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As a technology teacher, one of my standing goals is to bring computer and technology skills to students in a manner that is meaningful and topical to them. My expectations were to allow for a great deal of flexibility so the students would feel a certain amount of ownership with the project. My hope was for a student-created learning experience. I believe, based on the lessons and from student comments, that I achieved this. Many students appreciated the simple idea of being able to choose their own countries and to decide what kinds of information should be included.

In designing lessons for this unit, I attempted to correlate learning activities with the unit goals and objectives. By creating well-defined processes (activities), students should be able to meet these goals and objectives. From the process of creating this worksample, I realize now that defining measurable goals and objectives at the onset is critical to a successful unit. Creating learning activities should come directly from those goals and objectives. It streamlines the process and it makes the unit as a whole a more relevant work.

I used several assessment techniques throughout this unit (see Assessment section). The most present technique was formative through observation. Because there were so many steps and processes involved, it was important to continually monitor the progress of teams. That is where a good part of the learning took place, one on one with each team to address their specific needs. One form of assessment that I did not put much stock into initially was the student evaluation of the unit and teacher. I received some very interesting comments about what they liked, didn't like, or understand. If I am going to foster a student-centered environment, their comments become very important to the learning process. As an educator, that student perspective can be incredibly important as I adjust and rethink my role and responsibilities. By knowing what the students think will allow me to fix any problems and capitalize on any successes throughout the unit.

As well as the unit went there are two things that I would change for the future.

1. Create a more colorful environment. Instead of just doing research on facts and figures, have the students find real travelers information. For example, locate a restaurant menu in Tokyo or a bakery in Paris. This would enhance the realism of the travel experience. The negative, however, is that it would extend the unit. Some students felt the unit was too long as it was.
2. Have the students create more of the grading standards. When I do this lesson again, I will have the students, through a class discussion, create the measurable guidelines for each portion of the unit. It would make the unit even more meaningful if the class was able to build the presentation rubric themselves.

Because this unit was designed around state standards, I feel that successful completion would represent a step toward meeting some benchmarks. Oregon places an enormous emphasis in communication, speaking and teamwork. This unit's culminating activity was to make an oral presentation using PowerPoint as a multimedia tool. This activity is directly measurable through a rubric and relates directly to Oregon State standards.

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Nationally, technology standards were incorporated throughout the entire unit. Students were exposed to a variety of technological resources to complete their tasks and to communicate curriculum concepts.

As a new educator, I am constantly changing the way I do things in my classroom. Many times I feel I am in a mode of trial and error trying to fine tune particular methods of teaching. One of the areas I would like to tweak is how I do lesson plans. As a novice, I am constantly looking for lessons that I can apply in my class. I feel I am looking for activities with little regard to the big picture - goals and objectives. I would like to look at overall goals and find or create lessons that fit the goal, not the other way around. I think this top down thinking will make planning more complete and less fragmented.

As far as me as a teacher, I would like to learn the art of patience. I have a tendency to become frustrated with students who don't understand a concept that was just taught. I will need to learn to heed different learning styles and make accommodations to address each unique one. I would also like to be just a teacher. Currently, I am the district technology coordinator, the district media specialist and the middle school technology teacher. I wear three professional hats and sometimes feel that I am only doing a mediocre job at each of them. It is difficult to fully concentrate on any one job.