

Maps - A Matter of Survival (A Mythic Unit)

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This session will outline a fun, interactive and imaginative approach to a unit on Mapping for primary students with a description of lessons which engage students' senses and encourage understanding of the heroic qualities of maps.

Introduction to the importance of mapping (creating wonder):

Lesson 1:

- In groups, students are asked to find a Post-It note with their number on it somewhere in the class in less than a minute. (games)
 - Ask: Did you succeed? Why not? What could have helped you?
- Groups are now given a map of the classroom to help find the Post-It note in less than a minute.
 - Ask: Did the map help you? How?
- The story of the map:
 - “cartographie” → comes from 2 Greek words ‘khartes’= carte (map) and ‘graphein’ = écrire (to write) “cartographie” means the art and science of creating maps
 - Students see images of cave paintings, ancient maps from Greece, Babylon, Asia, etc. They understand that there is evidence the use of maps as old as 8000 years
- Big idea – Essential Questions: Why are maps important? Why were they created/used? (Heroic quality – Reliability)
- Journal entry:
 - What do you think of maps? Are they useful?
 - Could we survive easily without them?
 - How, in your life or your family’s life, are maps used?

Lesson 2:

- Students are in partners. Partner A chooses an object in the class and has to make Partner B guess what it is. The trick – cannot walk, talk, nor indicate by pointing a direction. (game)
 - What strategies did you use?
 - Were they clear, precise, reliable?
 - Did you succeed?
- Students imagine they are on a deserted island and their partner finally discovered some food and/or water. The partner’s throat is parched and so he/she can’t speak and he/she has collapsed from fatigue upon his/her return. It’s a question of survival – how will the partner communicate this information to them? (mystery/puzzle)
- After concluding that a map would be useful, students explore several different kinds of maps (find samples – maps of parks, cities, Children’s Festival, etc.).
 - What are these maps of?
 - What are the similarities and differences between them?
 - Why would these similarities exist? Do they make maps more reliable?(heroic quality)
- Students read a text on what a map is.

Lesson 3:

- Review of the similarities between the maps. Highlight the compass (rose des vents).
 - How does telling where the directions are on a map make it more reliable?

- Help the students to name the 4 cardinal directions. Post them up accurately in the room. Students face North and repeat, “Nord, Est, Sud, Ouest”. Have them do the actions (*gestures*):
 - Nord – both arms up
 - Est – both arms point to the right
 - Sud – both arms point to the ground
 - Ouest – both arms point to the left
- Practice a few times and then ask how we could better remember the cardinal directions?

Je ne veux pas me perdre,
 Alors, qu'est-ce que je fais?
 C'est la rose des vents
 Qui va sûrement m'aider (*poem – rhyme, rhythm*)

- Ask them to create a rhyme
- Or, offer them the following:

Les points cardinaux
 Les points cardinaux
 Ce n'est pas un gros test
 Nord, Est, Sud, Ouest
 Je les connais à l'aide des gestes
 Nord, Est, Sud, Ouest
 (students do the actions while saying the directions)

Rest of the unit:

- Games to practice the cardinal directions – written activities to practice
 - Key elements of maps
 - Climbing up a ladder to understand the “bird’s eye view” concept (*engaging senses*)
 - Going outside to see, observe, then map the playground (*engaging senses*)
 - Imagining there is a new principal who needs to know where the different rooms are. How could we help? Students complete a map (started by me, but I couldn't finish) of the school in groups. They actually walk the school and complete the map as they travel.
 - Create a model of British Columbia with plasticine on a paper plate
 - *Jokes/Humour*:
 - Qu'est-ce que le cartographe a donné à son amour le jour de la St. Valentin?
 - 12 roses des vents
 - Que font pousser les cartographes dans leur jardin?
 - Des roses des vents
 - Pourquoi le Bogey Man sait-il tous les symboles d'une carte?
 - Parce qu'il est une légende.
- Why did the Bogey Man know all the symbols of the map?
 Because he was a legend.