

17: 7th SocialStudies GoogleMaps MatInt

Speaker 1: The instruction materials used for this lesson ... First off, I went recently to the Google Geo Tech Institute and one of the sessions was on creating a map perfectly on Polynesian island nations. So I'm like, "This is wonderful!" I got the idea from Jim Seal and then for the students today, I started off with ... I thought about just letting them jump right in and play with it, but then I was afraid that it would be too much of an unknown. So I found a YouTube tutorial, so we just did a quick, about 6 minute, tutorial on My Maps. It was a little advanced. He just kind of ran through it and he showed how to do everything. It wasn't for kids and it wasn't for first-timers but I think that was just a good overview.

I liked it because the students who understood what he was saying, they understood right away. The kids who had no idea what was going on, at least they saw what he was doing and they had a point of reference. Then as I came around, I could help them in that sense. To back that up, I had created a slide show presentation that told them what to do step by step and I also had a Google form, which is like a survey, that the students were supposed to do to collect data for their third layer that they actually didn't get to today, but we're going to get to.

The technology kind of fell apart on me so they weren't able to access the slideshow actually and they weren't able to access the form. Some of them got it at the very, very end. So really instructional materials, at that point, were purely the kids. The kids just opened it up and they just started playing with it, and they asked their neighbors for help and that's it.

[00:02:00] My original thought process was that I just want them to jump onto My Maps and go and play with it but as I played with it over the weekend to prep for the lesson, there was a couple things that even though I had gone to the Institute, and gone to the workshops, and I've been to other workshops in the past, there's a few things that I was a little confused about. So I looked for a tutorial, just to give me a basic overview and when I watched it then I thought, "Oh this is good for the students." So I took the tutorials and I put it on our website. We did find today that it's YouTube videos and so the students weren't able to access it. There were a bunch of little problems that as a teacher on my account, I can do certain things and then student couldn't do certain things.

There's a bunch of things that I thought would work out well, but after seeing what their access was today, then I'm going to have to rethink some things. I have you YouTube tutorials to help them. I thought that was important to give them an overview. Like I said, I have the slideshow. I thought that was important because it's the instructions for the project. Instead of giving them a sheet of paper then it was just there. I found that some kids, they like to have concrete directions and some kids, they just like to wing it. They just like to go and play. Some kids are more auditory so they like me just to tell them the directions and then they can continue and then some kids, they just are. They're just very experiential and they wouldn't look at the slideshow, and they wouldn't listen to my directions. They would just jump into it and as they came upon

stumbling blocks, then they would ask questions. I kind of had it set up so it reached the three different types of learners that I anticipated having today.

The thing that I like about the materials for this lesson is I felt that it gave the students enough of a [00:04:00] background, enough of a foundation that if they got stuck or they were confused, they could go to. It also gave them a resource to look at it if I was busy because with this lesson, you know ... it may be that I'm not even helping students. Which is kind of what happened. It wasn't that I was helping students on actually putting the map together, it was helping students who still haven't gotten into their Gmail accounts; they don't know what their password is. Although I had thought about that element, you know, it's not like I had timed it or I didn't print out the passwords. So what that meant is it required me to log in and pull that file so that pulled me away from a lot of it.

I actually, in the lesson that we did today, was not able to help the students hardly at all, especially in the beginning. I had thought that they received something; they didn't receive it. I had thought they could access something; they couldn't access it. I mean, the kids, they really were very patient and they were just rolling with it. Then it just got to the point where I was like, "Okay, just open up My Maps and just try to play with it." So, I had a structure in place; it kind of fell apart but I do think because I had all these resources available, then even just for me I had more of a foundation. So when everything fell apart I could be like, "Okay, let's try this," "Okay that's not working," "Okay let's try this," "Okay, that's not working," "Let's just go for it. Let's just jump right into it. Let's play with it." I had played with it enough myself already to anticipate certain questions that they had.

Then, I think that it really worked out good. I had a little bit more structure that I had wanted them to do but I think they were so enthralled with just zooming in, and finding their house, and just different things. So the kids who've played with it before, they already knew what they were doing and they already kind of went straight to placing place marks and stuff. It's funny because at the Google Tech Institute they said most people the first thing they do in My Maps [00:06:00] is look for their own house. So I heard some of the kids say, "Look, I found my house!" It was good. The point of today's lesson was just for them to get exposure to My Maps and then just be interested in finding out places in the world and realizing there are different places in the world. So although there were many bumps, I think that my end goal was met.

For the materials that I have so far, changes definitely that I need to make sure is that the kids have access. That's hard. I mean, it's not hard but one thing I could do is either hijack the kid's account and jump in as a student and see from that point of view or, you know, just have a student with me and run through it to see what they can access. I do think that the slideshow is good even though no one saw it. I think for some students it'll be good. I think the tutorials are good even though they couldn't access it here at school but when they're at home, I think it's important because when they're at home they won't have me to ask questions. So from home they'll be able to access the tutorials and they'll be able to look at that. I think that's still good, even though that didn't work.

Then the form to collect data, they were able to access it at the very end. So it just became homework. You know, they're just going to go home and do it for homework. I think that's okay. So I think the materials are okay. It was just the access to them. Definitely in the future, I have to make sure that I not only run through it from my account, but from a student account.

We're in the library today so one thing at least that I didn't have to worry about was the wireless connectivity. If we're in my room and we had the laptops, or the iPads, or something then that would've been a [00:08:00] concern. So that's specifically why we're doing it in the library today so at least it's hardwired ... Technology is a lot of fun; the kids like it but when it doesn't work, the kids can get really impatient. Thankfully today, I thought the kids were wonderful. They just were rolling with it and I think they ended up liking it better because they had more time to just play. Then once they kind of played, I said, "Okay! Now try place your place marks," and some of them did it and some of them didn't. The ones who didn't, then, they just kind of looked over at their neighbor and said, "Hey! How do you do that?" So it worked out because there was a lot of collaboration. Then, the ones who couldn't figure out at all, then they asked for help from me. So I was able to help them.

I think all in all, I think if they didn't actually post something, like place an actual marker, I don't think anyone walked away not knowing what to do. I don't have ... That's just my observation; I don't have hard proof with that. Tomorrow when we come back, then I'll have everything in place and then we'll just step back, and then we'll try again, and then we'll see. I think the same thing's going to happen: the kids who want the slideshow, they'll look at it and the kids who don't want the slideshow, they're just going to run with it and then ask me questions when they get stuck.

They're connected to the students life basically because the students were looking at their life through the instructional materials. The original tutorial, you know, it was kind of hinky. It was funny, I liked it, because he talked about animal sightings and creepy paths and everything. So the kids were engaged. They were just like, "What? What does this guy?" And his voice and stuff. They were interested at least. Then I told them that we're going to make a map and we're going to map stuff about yourself. So then they were already excited. I think because they knew [00:10:00] they were going to map something about themselves that I think they were more engaged in the tutorial because they wanted to find out, "Okay, how am I going to do this so that I can plot my points." Then, once they got into it, it was all about them: places that they've been, places that ... and in the beginning since everything kind of fell apart, I just said, "Go play."

So it was all about them. It was wherever they wanted to go check out. I heard some people went straight for their house and some people went straight for Disneyland or something like that. They played around with it, something that's close to home. Some people they went for the Eiffel Tower, something big and exotic. Then, when you go in through My Maps and you create a map, you see things differently than if you're just looking at My Maps in general. Some of them figured out that you could change the view so you could see a satellite view versus just a land view. If you were in the regular

My Maps and not creating a map, you could take peg man and drop him down and go into street view. I saw some of them playing and this one boy was on street view and he was driving down the road and he was like, "I know this road!"

It was fun just to see the kids locating a place on the map and then checking it out. Some places they'd seen before and some places they hadn't seen before but, you know, they all seemed engaged because they could do what they want. It's all goes to the grander purpose of preparing them to now have those skills and applying it to content. I think that was important because if I just took them straight into content, they wouldn't have the same engagement. Now that they're engaged, and they're hooked, and they know how to use it then that eliminates one of the stressors of a project. Because if they don't know how to use it and then they're asked to manipulate information that they don't know, it's too much stress at one time. Now they have a foundation; they know how to play with it. We'll probably play with it for another day so that they have all of the basics down [00:12:00] and then I'll slowly start introducing the content.

With the content, again, they're going to still play because they're still going to look, and they're still going to search, and they're still going to blow it up. Then they'll Google search for images and videos. So they're still exploring and it's good because it's inquiry-based. The students are all choosing their own topic. Today they're choosing their own topic of where they're going to go, places that they've been, places that they want to go, and then when we get into actually the content-based map, then still it's places that they wanted to research so that they're choosing their own groups. For the most part I'm going to give them their first and second choice. I have to kind of look at the group dynamics, but even then it'll hopefully still be engaging because it was an inquiry-based project that they were able to drive.