



Mapping Your Place

Overview: Students will construct a large map of a place of their choosing. This place will be divided into smaller sections using a string/flag grid system. Each student will take their time to create a map of one portion of the grid to be put together into a larger whole.

Subject Areas: Social Science/History, Science, Information Technology

Grade Levels: K-5, 6-8

Topics: Animals, Biology, Earth Science/Geology, Human Culture, Plants, Water

Great Lakes Literacy Principles:

2. Natural forces formed the Great Lakes; the lakes continue to shape the features of their watershed.
4. Water makes Earth habitable; fresh water sustains life on land.
5. The Great Lakes support a broad diversity of life and ecosystems.
6. The Great Lakes and humans in their watersheds are inextricably interconnected.

Materials:

Cotton String/Twine

Stakes or Flags

Area Maps as available (Physical, Social, Topographic, etc.)

Heavy Bond Paper or Card stock

Pencils

Color Pencils or Markers

Clipboards

Procedure:

1. Have your students select their area of interest (in this case, a little clearing next to Tischer Creek). Once selected, using the string and stakes/flags, divide the area into as many sections as you have students. The sections should be large enough for a student to stand/sit down in but not so large that there is too much detail to capture.
2. Instruct the students to select their spot within the grid or assign them if needed. Give them 5 minutes to get to know their spot, having them pay close attention to the details of that spot.
3. Next, with their pencils and card stock, instruct them to create a map of their spot with as much detail as they can. They can have 15-20 minutes, more if needed and schedule allows. Have the students use the entire sheet of card stock to create their map. Tell them to use the edge of the paper as the boundary of their section.
4. The end product will be a larger map composed of the each students' map of their section (similar to puzzle pieces that are put together to create a coherent picture). Find a place (the ground, the floor, a bulletin board, etc.) to lay out all the pieces and analyze them. Look at what different people emphasized and ask if they know why. Ask about the important parts of each persons' section and discuss differences.
5. The goal of this activity is to construct a basic map to start from that can be modified with different information depending upon which extension you may follow.
6. Extensions:

- a. Social Studies/History: Conduct research about that area to find out how it has been used in the past. Modify the map to take these facts into consideration.
- b. Science: Investigate the ecology, wildlife, and/or plant life of the area of your map. Modify the map to reflect that information. For example, what lives there and why, how many of a particular plant or animal is present at that site, what kinds of habitat are found there, etc.
- c. Human Culture: Investigate the people that have live in that area. How many people? How long did they live there? What did they do there? Why did they live there? These are some example questions.
- d. Using mapping software (Google Earth, ArcGIS, ESRI, etc.) find a map of your area and compare it to the one your students created. What differences are present? What similarities? Similarly, search for existing maps historical or otherwise of the area and look at them as a means of comparison also.

Teacher Reflection:

Please find "comments" section on the curriculum page.