Using Technology to Teach about Mali

**Project Description:** This unit of study is designed for Technology lessons for grades 2-5, connecting the five themes of geography with the study of Mali and West Africa.

Five Themes of Geography are part of the Social Studies curriculum for Grades 2-5. The five themes and essential questions for geography are:

- **Theme 1 - Location:** Where is it?
- **Theme 2 - Place:** What makes a place different from other places?
- **Theme 3 - Movement:** How are people and places connected?
- **Theme 4 - Human/Environment Interaction:** How do people interact with the environment?
- **Theme 5 - Regions:** What makes it like other areas?

**Social Studies Standards**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard II.1 Diversity of People, Places, and Cultures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All students will describe, compare, and explain the locations and characteristics of places, cultures, and settlements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard II.2 Human/Environment Interaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All students will describe, compare, and explain the locations and characteristics of ecosystems, resources, human adaptation, environmental impact, and the interrelationships among them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard II.3 Location, Movement, and Connections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All students will describe, compare, and explain the locations and characteristics of economic activities, trade, political activities, migration, information flow, and the interrelationships among them.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard II.4 Regions, Patterns, and Processes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All students will describe and compare characteristics of ecosystems, states, regions, countries, major world regions, and patterns and explain the processes that created them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Theme One: LOCATION**

Students will learn about Mali for its specific location (longitude and latitude) and distance from home. Students will also use map skills comparing the United States and its adjacent countries to Mali and its adjacent countries.

**Lesson One: How far is it?**

**Grades:** 4 and 5  
**Class Sessions:** two 45 minute lessons

Invite students to use this website: www.indo.com/distance. Students can calculate the distance between two places. This database includes information for locations from around the world.
After initial exploration time with this website, have students find distances between their hometown and cities in Michigan, throughout the United States, in other countries, and finally, cities in Mali.

Instruct students on making a table in a Word document, 4 columns, several rows. A sample table is shown below. Invite students to predict distances, then use the website to get information about distances. Finally, students can use calculators to determine the travel time between two cities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How Far Is It?</th>
<th>Prediction</th>
<th>Actual Distance</th>
<th>If you were in a car traveling at 60 mph, how long would it take?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lansing to ---</td>
<td>Prediction</td>
<td>Actual Distance</td>
<td>If you were in a car traveling at 60 mph, how long would it take?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Rapids, MI</td>
<td>60 miles</td>
<td>59 miles</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mackinac City, MI</td>
<td>150 miles</td>
<td>203 miles</td>
<td>3 ½ hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago, IL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denver, CO</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles, CA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokyo, Japan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timbuktu, Mali</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bamako, Mali</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Lesson Two: The Shape of the World**

**Grade: 2**
**Class sessions: one 45 minute lesson**

Teacher preparation: visit Google.com—Images. Save maps of several countries, including the United States and Mali. Make these maps available for students by placing them in a file on the district’s network.

Begin by showing students a map of Michigan and then inviting them to draw in the air. Next, show a map of the United States, Mali, and other countries. Invite students to draw each in the air.

Next, demonstrate the Paint program so that students can draw the shapes of the maps, then save to their files. (Programs—Accessories—Paint).

Finally, have students open Power Point and insert two maps on each slide—the map from the map file and the student’s drawing of each country.

**Theme Two: PLACE**

**Lesson One: Hello! Hello! Hello!**

**Grade: 2**
**Class sessions: one 45 minute lesson**
Invite students to use this website: www.ipl.org/div/kidspace/hello to find out about many ways to say “Hello!”

Next, demonstrate the Word Art tool in the Word document, and have students make a 8”x11” poster showing many ways to say hello.

Lesson Two: Weather Watch

Grades: 2, 3, 4, and 5
Throughout the school year

This is a quick activity that can be continued throughout the school year, thus seeing the trends in weather patterns around the world. Assign countries from every continent to students, and ask them to find out and post the weather conditions of their country. Recommended website is: weather.com.

Theme Three: ENVIRONMENT INTERACTION

Students will learn about Mali and how people use the environment—for school, work, and community life.

Lesson One: If the World Were a Village

Grades: 4 and 5
Class sessions: two 45 minute sessions

Read If The World Were a Village by David Smith. Topics in this picture book include religions, food, languages, air and water, natural resources, past and future. Next, invite students to visit this website: www.un.org. Follow the link to CyberSchoolBus, then InfoNation. Students can select countries and categories of information.

Next, demonstrate how to enter data using the Excel program, using data from the book as well as the website.

Lesson Two: A Day in the Life

Grades: 2, 3, 4
Class sessions: two 45 minute lessons

Teacher preparation: select pictures of daily life in Mali —street scenes, school, children playing, etc.

Ask students to list their daily activities—what are some of the typical things that make up a usual day? Next, invite students to visit selected websites to learn about life in Mali.

Demonstrate how to make a table—4 columns, 12 rows. Each row will include time of day, description, photograph, and opinion about similarities and differences. See sample below:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Story</th>
<th>Picture</th>
<th>Same-Different?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9 a.m.</td>
<td>The four girls are friends.</td>
<td><img src="image-url" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>I have a lot of friends too.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noon</td>
<td>The boy is pumping water.</td>
<td><img src="image-url" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>He gets water from a well. I get water from the faucet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 p.m.</td>
<td>There are houses on the street.</td>
<td><img src="image-url" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>The streets in my town are paved. We don't have trees like this. Our buildings are made of small bricks.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Theme Four: MOVEMENT**

Students will learn about transportation, imports/exports, and communication in Mali.

**Lesson One: Honk! Honk! Beep! Beep!**

**Grades: 2 and 3**  
**Class sessions: two 45 minute lessons**

Teacher preparation: collect and store transportation pictures in a file, accessible to students on the school network. Pictures will include modes of transportation in Mali and the United States.

Begin by asking students about the many ways they have traveled, making a list of all of their modes of transportation. Next, show photographs of transportation in Mali, and engage students in conversation about the similarities and differences of transportation from their experience and that of Mali.

Next, demonstrate how to build a PowerPoint presentation, with a title page, picture pages (using transportation images), transition, and animation. Give students enough time to not only make a presentation, but to explore the animation and transition features of PowerPoint.

Finally, show students how to set their presentation on “continuous loop” and have all presentations running at the same time so that students can see each other’s work.

**Theme Five: REGIONS**

Students will learn about the concept of regions, first exploring the regions of the United States, then applying region concepts to world perspectives.

**Lesson: United States Regions—West Africa Regions**

**Grade: 3**  
**Class sessions: four 45 minute lessons**

Teach the concept of “regions” by preparing a PowerPoint about United States and West Africa. Use pictures and information about geography, economics, culture, and points of interest of each place.
Next, divide class into five groups, and assign a region to each group (Northeast, Southeast, Midwest, West, Southwest). Students can research the regions of the United States, collecting information about geography, economics, culture, points of interest, and pictures of each of the states in their region.

Continue by examining countries that make up West Africa. And conduct a similar research project to research West Africa. Engage students in class discussion about the similarities and differences of United States and West Africa.

**Resources:**

1. If the World Were a Village by David J. Smith, Kids Can Press, 2002