

# Discovering Community:

Students, Digital Media, and Place Based Learning

## Unit Plan



The Monkton Central School Community  
Past and Present

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<b>Unit Topic</b>	Discovering the MCS Community
<b>Overview</b>	In this project kids will refine their understanding of community, build an in-depth understanding their classroom and Monkton Central School (MCS) communities, and learn how the MCS community has or has not changed through time. Students will use digital media, primarily audio and photography for both research activities and then the creation of multi-media presentations for school assemblies, Town Meeting, and the community at large.
<b>Enduring Understanding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using technology can be an effective way for students to learn about and demonstrate their learning about school community and culture.</li> <li>• Students will understand the link between past, present, and future.</li> </ul>
<b>Essential Question</b>	How has the MCS community changed over time?
<b>Focusing Questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What defines the MCS community today?</li> <li>• How can we find out how it has changed?</li> <li>• What was the experience of people who came to school here in the past?</li> <li>• What has changed and what has remained the same?</li> <li>• What do you think was better in the past? Now?</li> </ul>
<b>ANESU Power Standards</b>	
<p><b>Grade 2</b>  <b>History</b>  <b>2. Students show understanding of the link between the past, the present, and the future by...</b>  b. Describing ways that life has both changed and stayed the same over time.  c. Constructing a time line of events</p> <p><b>Geography</b>  <b>3. Students interpret geography and understand the interaction between culture, themselves and the environment by...</b>  b. Identifying characteristics of a community  d. Identifying ways in which they and people in the community take care of or hurt the environment.  e. Identifying ways culture is expressed in their communities, such as celebrations, legends, and traditions.</p> <p><b>Civics</b>  <b>4. Students show understanding of government, citizenship and a citizen's role in society by...</b>  d. Identifying jobs people do in the community, and the value these jobs bring to the community</p> <p><b>Grade 3</b>  <b>Grade 2 plus the following: Inquiry</b>  <b>1. Students develop, conduct, analyze and/or communicate research by...</b>  a. Asking relevant and focusing questions based on what they have seen, what they have</p>	

- read, what they have listened to, and/or what they have researched
- b. Identifying important information and locating resources for finding answers to their questions
  - c. Giving an oral, written, or visual presentation that summarizes their findings.

### History

#### 2. Students show understanding of the link between the past, the present, and the future by...

- a. Making predictions and/or decisions based on an understanding of the past and the present in their community

### Geography

#### 3. Students interpret geography and understand the interaction between culture, themselves and the environment by...

- c. (13) Identifying expressions of culture ...

### Civics

#### 4. Students show understanding of government, citizenship and a citizen's role in society by...

- a. Demonstrating positive interaction with group members
- b. Identifying problems, planning and implementing solutions in the classroom, school or community.
- c. Participating in setting, following and changing the rules of the group and school.
- d. Defining their own rights and needs – and the rights and needs of others – in the classroom, school, and community

## Other Standards and Grade Expectations

### Reasoning and Problem Solving - Types of Questions

#### 2.1 Students ask a variety of questions. This is evident when students:

- 2.1.a. Ask questions about how things get done and how they work;
- 2.1.b. Ask questions to determine why events occur;
- 2.1.c. Ask questions that compare and contrast, to determine similarities and differences;
- 2.1.d. Ask questions that help make connections within and across fields of knowledge and/or between concepts; and
- 2.1.e. Ask reflective questions that connect new ideas to personal experience.

#### H&SS1-2:1 Social and Historical Questioning Students initiate an inquiry by...

Asking questions based on what they have seen, what they have read, what they have listened to, and/or what they have researched as a class

#### H&SS1-2:2 Hypothesis/Research Statement Students develop a hypothesis, thesis, or research statement by...

Using prior knowledge to share ideas about possible answers to questions

#### H&SS1-2:3 Research Plan Students design research by...

Identifying resources for finding answers to their questions (e.g., books, videos, people, and the Internet).

Explaining what their jobs will be during an inquiry investigation (e.g., drawing pictures after a field trip).

Planning how to organize information so it can be shared.

#### H&SS1-2:4 Conducting Research Students conduct research by...

Following directions to complete an inquiry.

Asking questions and observing during the investigation process.

Recording observations

## Assessments

1. Students will produce three media presentations as they widen their scope of community and learn to use audio and photography equipment as well as multi-media presentation skills, concepts, and tools. Rubrics will be developed with the students for each project and assessments will be based on these rubrics. In addition to the assessing the final product rubrics will include expectations for process and teamwork. The final projects will include presentations on the following “communities”:
  - Student’s family (present to our class and at family share event)
  - Our classroom (present at a school assembly and family share event)
  - Our school over time in collaboration with Kelly Pierpont and Kevin Grace’s classes. (Present to school board, run at Town Meeting, make available to community at large)
2. Students will write a personal essay/reflection paper on each experience.

## Content & Vocabulary

- Definition of community
- Rights and responsibilities of being a member of a community
- Culture of a community – customs, celebrations, traditions...
- Sustaining a community
- Community service
- Point of View/perspective
- Oral history
- Change over time – past, present, future
- Multi-media – audio, photography lingo

## Skills

- Interviewing – asking open ended questions and follow-up questions
- Active listening
- Teamwork
- Using technology effectively to:
  - Record research (i.e. tape an interview, record sounds in a classroom, take meaningful photos)
  - Create multi-media presentation to tell a story
  - Non-fiction writing proficiency
- Writing questions, presentation plan/script, reflection paper...
- Research skills –
  - Developing questions
  - Identifying resources
  - Analyzing findings
  - Determining focus of product
  - Creating product
    - Rough draft
    - Revise
    - Edit

- Final product published
- Compare and contrast (MCS community past and present)

## Suggested Resources

- <http://www.sandbox-learning.com/Default.asp?Page=181>  
Four games to play with children that teach children to ask and answer Wh- questions, stay on topic during conversations, and ask relevant questions.
- [http://primary-school-lesson-plans.suite101.com/article.cfm/teach\\_kids\\_to\\_write\\_and\\_ask\\_interview\\_questions](http://primary-school-lesson-plans.suite101.com/article.cfm/teach_kids_to_write_and_ask_interview_questions)  
Though focused on Thanksgiving, this activity can be modified to any event/holiday. The focus is teaching kids to ask questions about a familiar topic.
- <http://blog.stocksohio.com/2009/06/19/22-ways-to-teach-kids-how-to-think-and-not-just-what-to-think/>  
A very interesting article that is aimed at God and Christianity but one that has some very sound ideas on the need to and methods for teaching children to think – primarily by building questioning and listening skills. This is not something I would share with my students but include it here for my own reference to stimulate ideas and approaches to working with kids in the realm of questioning and thinking. I found this of particular interest because I tell my students that most important I can teach them is how to ask a good question and how to think!
- **Holly Esterline - MCS Technology Educator**  
I will work with Holly, using her expertise and resources to develop, implement, and assess a plan to teach kids how to use digital cameras and audio recording equipment and to create finished products that combine these two media. We will start with photography for the first project, use audio for the second, and will combine both for the third and final MCS Community Past and Present project.
- [www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4538138](http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4538138)  
*This I Believe* received tens of thousands of essays from people from all walks of life.
- **Voices From Vermont**  
A delightful collection of 22 short tales told by Vermonters about uncommon—and usually humorous—events from family and local history
- **Never Done : Farm Life in Vermont**  
Members of farming families tell of life on the farm, past and present. Stories of mischievous cows, logging adventures, and the pleasures of sugaring are examples of the four-minute segments included in this tape.
- **Community Resources**
  - Current staff  
Many folks on the MCS staff have worked there for 20 – 30 plus years.
 

▪ Rich Jesset – principal	▪ Mary Geminagni – special educator
▪ Deb Preston – cook	▪ Gigi McLane – teacher
▪ Anne Collidge – cook	▪ Zandra Cousino – teacher
▪ Dwight Irish – para-educator	▪ Jan Davis – teacher
▪ Lil Cota – para-educator	▪ Suy Way – teacher
▪ Bonnie Huizenga – para-educator	▪ Audri Miller – teacher
▪ Cindy Castle – office (the glue that holds the place together)	▪ Kevin Grace - teacher

- Families that have had 2 - 3 generations attend and/or work at MCS
  - Cota/McNamara
    - Lil is a para-educator at MCS who also attended MCS. Her children Lee and Nancy attended the school, and her grandchildren, Megan and Katelyn currently attend. Megan is in Kevin Grace's class and Katelyn is in my class so they will be intimately involved in this project
  - Bennett
    - The Bennett family is an "old time" Monkton family. Jonah is currently in my class. His dad attended MCS and his grandparents were custodians when the school opened.
  - Huizenga
    - Bonnie attended the school and is a long-time para-educator there. Her children attended the school and her grandchild is an incoming Kindergartener this year. Bonnie is a GREAT story teller and was (hmm – continues to be) a bit of a "rule breaker." I'm sure she will delight kids with her tails of life at MCS both then and now.
  - Burritt
    - Another "old time: Monkton family. I don't know the names of the earlier generations (easily attainable.) One is currently – and has long been – the Town Clerk. They live in the center of town and have a deep and wide knowledge of both the town and the school.
  - Cousino
    - Zandra is a long-time teacher at the school. Her children attended and her extended family (whom she will easily connect us with) has attended the school for generations.
  - Miller
    - Audrey is a teacher at the school and both of her sons (now college aged) attended MCS. Again – great story tellers who will delight with there adventures.

## Learning Opportunities/ Instructional Strategies Overview

### Project 1

- Review/define community
  - Morning Chart activities
  - Reading books/articles about Community
  - Discussions
- Identify roles and responsibilities as member of a community
- Intentionally teach and practice asking questions and follow-up questions
  - Games
  - Morning Chart activities
  - Buddy and small group activities
- Created interview questions for family – practice
  - Brainstorm list
  - Each child selects 3-5 thoughtful and pertinent questions to ask family members. Then they:
    - Share answers with small groups
    - Group generates follow-up questions

- Repeat a process a second time
- Create interview questions for family around a specific (to be determined by kids) event, tradition, cultural expression
- Photography – in collaboration with Technology Teacher
  - Teach use of and practice using digital cameras
  - Teach photoshop/photostory tools
- Culminating project/event
  - Kids will create a presentation using photographs and text to tell about their family as a community.
  - Rubric will be developed
  - Assessment will be based on rubric created with the kids
  - Projects will be presented to classmates and families. (If dream of creating a class website comes to fruition they will also be posted there as permissions allow)
  - Kids will write a reflection paper on this project
  - As a class we will “debrief” and identify areas we need to focus on as we move to our next project – our classroom community

### Project 2

- We will continue to develop questioning skills
- Rubric will be developed
- Kids will work in groups to begin to define our classroom community (where they will have by now had some good “deep hang” time.)
  - Each group will have a focus for their work. These will be decided by the class/groups. (i.e. traditions, games/songs, Choice Time, Morning Meeting, Reader’s Workshop, Writer’s Workshop, Rules, etc.)
- Groups will develop interview questions related to their focus
- Kids will learn use of audio recording equipment (in collaboration with technology teacher)
- We will listen to and begin to discover the art of creating an audio piece.
  - We will listen to audio pieces and discuss them to identify key elements. Kids will create some type of visual representation of what they hear.
- Groups will modify their questions and sound recordings to enhance their piece
- Sound editing techniques will be taught in collaboration with Technology Educator
- Culminating project/event
  - Groups will create an audio piece about a facet of our classroom community.
  - Each group will also create a tableau to represent their audio piece
  - Project will be presented at all school assembly.
  - Each student will write a reflection paper

### Project 3

- Planning for this final project will evolve based on successes and failures (did I really use THAT word? 😊) of prior projects. We will also work collaboratively with 2 other classrooms to create this final broader community based piece. I outline the basic steps here, knowing much more detail will be added as the 3 teachers and their students collaborate.
- We will continue to develop questioning/interviewing skills
- Final project rubric will be developed
- Groups to begin to define our school community **today**
  - They will develop and implement:
    - Project plan and assignments
    - Lists of people to interview and questions
    - Photographic and sound recording opportunities

- Other details as identified and needed
- Groups to begin to define our school community **in the past**
  - They will develop and implement:
    - Project plan and assignments
    - Lists of people to interview and questions
      - See resource list
    - Photographic and sound recording opportunities
    - Resources for old photos to be scanned
    - Other details as identified and needed
- Present and past will be compared
- Audio/visual projects will be planned that will answer Focusing Questions
- Culminating project/event
  - Groups will create an audio visual piece about MCS
  - Project will be
    - presented at all school assembly
    - run outside gym during School Meeting and Town Meeting
    - made available to community
    - posted on website
    - receive accolades for such fine, creative, purposeful work 😊