

We Speak for Them

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Solomon Schechter Day School

Day school language arts/social studies activity

6th grade

4 40-minute class periods

Bio:

Deborah Harris is the technology coordinator at the Sager Solomon Schechter Middle School in Northbrook, IL. She has been teaching at the school for thirteen years and oversees all the technology programming and education for students and faculty. The Pre K – 8 school, situated in a northern suburb of Chicago, serves approximately 600 students. She attended the 2011 winter and summer Centropa academies after hearing about Centropa from a colleague.

Summary:

This activity is the culminating activity of a family ancestry unit done with sixth graders. Students begin by reading *Homesteader Bride*, a book about a young Jewish immigrant girl who comes to America. They then complete a family ancestry profile with their parents and research their family's history. When finished, they will explore the Centropa website, choose several photos that interest them, and learn about the people in the photos. The "big picture" thinking in this project is for the students to see themselves and their own ancestors as points along a continuum; "we're all part of history." In addition, we want the students to think of their own histories as stories – how do you tell your family's story? What is your narrative?

Background:

1. Context: This will be taught during sixth grade social studies
2. Enduring understanding: Everyone in our school came from somewhere outside of the US. What do we have in common with people from other countries?
3. Goals/objectives
 - a. Students will "get to know" several Centropa interviewees
 - b. Students will use Centropa photos to create posters
 - c. Students will learn about how people lived in other times and other places

4. This will use Centropa photos and films.
5. Students will use computer skills in PrintShop.

Session One:

- Because this is a culminating activity, there is no set induction. The students have researched their own family's history and have shared family photos with each other.
- Students will work individually to look through the Centropa database and see if there are any photos of people who were in the same parts of the world as their own family.
- Working in the computer lab, students are introduced to the Centropa website and shown how to access the student portal and database. Show the introductory film, 10 Years in 4 Minutes!
- Give students 20 minutes to explore the site and choose a person to get to know using their photos. Write down the person's name.
- Show students the template "We speak for them." In our case, we used PrintShop to create a simple template that the students will customize.

Session Two:

- Save the poster template to your own documents folder.
- Return to the Centropa website and find your person. Choose two photos for your poster.
- Download the photos to your desktop and insert them in the poster template.
- Fill in the text boxes explaining why you chose those photos.
- Using your computer's webcam, take your own photos and place it in the appropriate place.

Session Three:

- Write a two-page paper about the person you chose. Describe who the person was, where he or she lived, and what he or she did during the Holocaust. Add why you chose this person and what you learned by reading his or her interview.

Session Four:

- Students share their posters with the class