**Summary Description and Learning Outcomes:**

My goal through the creation of the unit ‘Living Through The American Industrial Revolution’ is to provide a deep understanding of what it was like to live during the time period of 1790 and 1850 in the United States, and to demonstrate to the learner participants the transformation of the nation and the world from an agrarian and cottage industry society to one of increasing urbanization, mechanization, and industrialization. My primary historical objectives are to make evident the social, political and economic pressures that led to the transformation of the nation, and set the stage for the eventual lead-up to the American Civil War.

It is also my goal that through participation in this unit, students will get a chance to employ a diverse set of technologies for collaboration and communication, and will be able to engage in both creative storytelling and in the creation of a shared knowledge resource composed of artifacts both found and curated from the Internet as well as created by the students themselves.

Participation in this unit will align with multiple Common Core standards and will promote development of 21st century skills as detailed by p21.org. As this course can be used for either a middle school or high school curriculum, alignment concerns will be with the Common Core English Language Arts Standards for Grades 6-12 “Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, & Technical Subjects”. This unit also meets standards in the “College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards” for reading, writing and language. This unit also prepares students in “Learning and Innovation Skills – 4Cs” (critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity), as well as providing experience with “Information, Media, and Technology Skills”.

**Technology:**

The key technology platforms I will use to implement this unit consists of “Storium” (an online storytelling game application) and “Moodle” (a learning management system platform) to organize collaborative activities such as the building of a classroom knowledge base regarding the people, inventions, and events of the period of the American industrial revolution, from 1790 to 1850. Resources from the Internet will be leveraged for the building of the online classroom repository and the use of multiple media forms will be encouraged.

**Storium (Storium.com)**

Storium is a storytelling game platform with tremendous potential for educational use, but requires a decent amount of configuration and content creation in order to be useful for my purposes. My first task will be to customize a ‘world’ (the context of the storytelling activity) to both set the specific participation requirements the game will have for its players, as well as to create a set of game ‘cards’ to contain elements that support the setting and issues of the American industrial revolution. These ‘card’ elements will be the mechanism by which I can create activities that support the desired learning outcomes of the unit.

It is likely that the time allowed for the study of the unit will be limited, and depending on the time allowed, one or more storytelling sessions may be possible. In any case, it will be necessary to choose the ‘short story’ format within the game, which allows for three ‘acts’ composed of 2, 3 and 1 scenes respectively for each. It will be necessary to keep the story plot and arc concise, and to design each story around a particular problem posed from the time period slice currently in study.

Once the main configuration for the game is set, I (or the instructor) will duplicate the world to create individual instances for each ‘family group’ that will engage in storytelling together. Each family group will be composed of 4 to 6 students each, and each student will control the actions of a single character in the story. While the Storium system allows for players to create their own characters, for the purposes of this unit each student will be assigned a pre-built character as to speed up participation, and to ensure that specific learning objectives are supported. In this way, the narrator can create plots that involve particular aspects of each of the players, and ensure opportunities for equal effective participation that illuminate elements that are key to the learning objectives of the unit.

Depending on the length of time that the educator allows for the execution of the unit, there may be one or more narratives in which the students may engage, but each narrative will require regular participation of each student in order to have a satisfying resolution. The settings for the story will be to have the students write an entry ‘post’ at least once a day. The default settings are to allow the players to write up to 400 words per ‘move’ and 3000 words for each narrator post, but those limits may be increased or done away with altogether, depending on the desired writing participation goals of the educator implementing the system. I will leave the settings for now at the default, in order to encourage more frequent participation over less frequent but more lengthy posts.

The course covers material spanning sixty years of time, and so the narratives will need to be situated in particular periods during the sixty years between 1790 and 1850. Ideally, students would be given an opportunity to write multiple stories with the same character early in their lives (teens), in middle age (30’s-40’s) and later in their seniority (60’s-70’s). Conversely, the students may be appointed different characters from their family tree for each narrative. We will require each player to post at least once a day, and we can give rewards (in terms of game ‘cards’) for more participation.

Dividing the number of narratives assigned by the number of weeks allotted to the unit, the narrative should at the end of each period, sum up the story and begin the next story with plot points based on the results of the previous narrative(s) and other information gathered from the player’s portfolio and the online ‘family tree’ and knowledge database.

Aiding in metacognitive development, Storium has a backchannel discussion board that allows for players to talk out their actions before/while they participate. Participants will be assessed on the content as well as the style of their collaborative story, so they will be encouraged to use the backchannel in order to ensure coherency in their storytelling.

For an older group of students, the curriculum allows for players to share the narration in a round-robin fashion after a first round, and it also allows for students to narrate for other families. Allowing these higher levels of collaborative storytelling extends the writing skills of the participants, and requires students to create narrative plots from the information they have been accumulating through the creation of the knowledge base.

**Moodle**

I make use of Moodle in this curricular unit in order to organize the individual and group activities, and to provide assessment opportunities to track individual and group progress. Moodle comes with a number of modules and activities that I will make use of for particular portions of the curriculum.

*Wiki*

The wiki will be the primary participation module for Living through the American Industrial revolution, where students will build not only personal pages about their individual characters, but will collaborate with their families to create family histories in context with the historic events of the period, and integrating the results of their Storium participation. They will also build a general knowledge base of information and resources to support a diverse and rich learning experience and to support character development and storytelling through Storium.

*Assignments*

Assignments allow for students to submit work on particular problems posed in the curriculum either as an individual or as a group. I will use individual assignments as an opportunity for students to submit materials to build their character’s background, as well as any particular individual problems I might pose to the student to answer from the perspective of their character. I will pose group assignments to the family groups as problems to solve as a family, integrating the knowledge they accumulate in the wiki with critical and creative problem solving to come up with collective solutions, in the form of narratives or other creative works, such as videos or visual artistic projects.

*Chat*

I will use Moodle’s chat module to have schedule family chats that will be a type of live-action role-play, which each student will ‘speak’ in character, discussing whatever issue or problem they have been posed. The chat transcripts are stored for review of the students’ thought processes and problem-solving techniques, as well as for assessing students’ creative writing and improvisational storytelling capabilities. I will also create class-wide chat opportunities as simulation of larger forum discussions, such as senate debates or town hall meetings.

*Choice*

The ‘Choice’ module allows for simple polls and questions for individuals, groups, and the class at large. I will use the choice module for quick assessments to check student comprehension, or to get quick turn-around on simple decisions made by individuals or families.

*Feedback*

The ‘Feedback’ module allows for me to create a multi-question interview that is non-graded. I will use it as a way to get detailed information from students about their characters and families. I can also pose problems to individuals and families through this medium that I wish to have them respond to without having to assign a grade to the activity.

*Forum*

Through the forum activity I will create both family forums and class forums that will be used to guide student activities around creating the knowledge repository on the American industrial revolution, as well as for discussing activities in class, for collaborating on multimedia projects, preparing for participation in scheduled simulations, discussing Storium entries, etc. I will use the question and answer forum as a way for me to pose reflective questions to the class that they can first answer, then view each others’ responses. For a more focused discussion, the Single, simple discussion would work well, allowing me to create a topic-driven discussion for a family or class.

*Glossary*

I will make use of the glossary activity as part of the digital knowledge repository. The students will collaborate to fill in as robust a glossary on terms relating to the American Industrial Revolution (time period 1790-1850) as possible. Students will be graded on their individual contribution, as well as the overall effectiveness and accuracy of the glossary. I will enable the comments functionality, to allow classmates to refine or suggest corrections to entries. I will set the auto-linking filter on for glossary terms, which will create hotlinks in all content where the glossary terms are used, allowing for the glossary to integrate into the general knowledge base and will reinforce absorption of the vocabulary throughout the course curriculum. For assessment, I can grade the glossary at the individual entry level, as well as the overall effectiveness and completeness of the project.

*Lesson*

The ‘lesson’ activity allows me to create situations with player-controlled choices that have consequences in an engaging way. Through a series of html pages and choices through which I can lead a player through a narrative situation that requires them to make choices in character that might have implications for the overall narrative, and for which I can reward with new opportunities in Storium.

*Quiz*

Periodic assessment is a way for students to reflect on the information they are learning, or might help them learn items that they may not have internalized. I will create checkpoint quizzes just to ensure the students are staying on track with the important issues regarding the American Industrial Revolution as we walk the sixty-year timeline.

*Survey*

The survey module contains some interesting opportunities for periodic assessment of the experience of the learning system, providing feedback for the successfulness of the course to engage and educate, and allows for course-correction of curriculum along the process. I can include COLLES (Constructivist On-Line Learning Environment Survey) for a more standardized approach. I will also add an initial ATTLS (Attitudes to Thinking and Learning Survey) to help identify the quality of discourse to be expected in the collaborative environment and help the instructor form family teams with an appropriate mix of diverse views.

*Workshop*

The workshop activity can be used to promote peer assessment between families. Periodically, I will have each family publish their stories from Storium for others to review. Each student will be required to review at least two other families’ stories for their narrative style, historical correctness, and ingenuity of solutions to problems posed by the narrator.

*Portfolio*

I will use the portfolio module to allow students to upload and present various media that support the story and background of the student’s character in the game. Each student can provide content with links to the wiki and the glossary, and can present a host of files, including materials produced by the student to represent themselves in the Storium game (pictures, audio, textual, video, etc.)

*Youtube submission*

The Youtube submission module allows students to upload videos to Youtube and reference the file in Moodle. This will allow students to upload and manage longer videos, and can create a Youtube channel that is also a site for communities of practice to share their video resources across instances of the curriculum (between different classes at the same school, or between different schools.)

*Badges*

The creation of progress badges might be useful to aid tracking of a player’s success and involvement, and to demonstrate to their peers their own level of progress. Individual badges might be handed out for engaging in certain types of activities (contributing to the wiki for the first time, or to the glossary), or might indicate levels of completeness, or ranks based on levels of engagement.

*Completion tracking*

The completion tracking module might be good to let students know where they are in the progress of completing the course.