

Colonial America Unit Post-Teaching Reflection

The social studies unit I taught to my 5th graders was on the 13 Colonies. I was continuously learning and making adjustments to my teaching practices as I taught this unit. When beginning to plan this unit, I really struggled with how I was going to cover the vast amount of material in the time I had to teach. I had to create a unit that was efficient, but still allowed the students to take ownership of their learning. Therefore, I decided the students were going to be researchers in which they were going to find and share the information they learned with their classmates. After I taught a lesson on how to research and take notes, I assigned each group of 5 students a different topic to research on the New England Colonies. This lesson was a disaster. The class quickly became out of control since the students had no idea how to research. The majority of the students needed my help, in which I could not attend to all. As a result, the students were off task and acting out. I immediately realized my students did not know how to research. I learned I can't assume anything. My students needed more modeling and scaffolding of the entire researching process. From here on out, I gave the students detailed research guides that led them through the process of finding the information in the resources provided. I learned how important it is to make adjustments and modifications as one is teaching, depending on how the students are performing.

I continued to make the research guides for each region. This worked out very well for the students. The majority of the students were able to stay on task and could work independently. The students felt much more successful, which helped to improve the

classroom management. This unit not only taught the students about the 13 Colonies, but also researching skills.

I believe this is a very strong unit since it included many diverse lessons and activities. My organizational chart supports this statement by showing a variety of grouping patterns, utilizing a range of Bloom's Taxonomy levels, and allowing for multiple intelligences. There was an assortment of different activities throughout this unit which include the following: researching, presenting information learned, note taking, taking tests, creating posters, analyzing the three regions by comparing and contrasting them, participating in a review jeopardy game, and preparing their presentations on colonial people. One of the high points of this unit was the jeopardy game. The students were very engaged and were able to recall all of the information I was reviewing with them. When preparing the jeopardy game I was worried the students would struggle with this activity since they had to recall all the information without using their notes. At this point in the unit, I had always let them use their notes to help them on their tests and Venn diagram. However, they did a wonderful job. This was an indication to myself that I have done a good job in creating activities in which the students were truly learning the information. Lastly, I was very impressed with the quality and variety of presentations the students gave on their colonial person. I had some students creates posters, present PowerPoint presentation, and other bring their person to life by setting up a Live Museum.

If I were to teach this unit again, I would make some changes to fine tune the quality of this unit. First of all, I may start the unit off with a video of the Colonial Period to hook the students' interests in the unit. This would also give them an image of this time

period, which would help them understand the material they are reading and taking notes on. This may also lead the students to form their own questions about the types of information they would like to learn about this period. In the future, I would like my units to be more student driven. I believe the students will be more engaged and interested in the unit if they feel they have ownership and control of what they are learning. This is something I definitely want to do differently since this time the students didn't have any options of choosing the topics or people they were researching. It was always assigned to them. In addition, I noticed the students were getting tired of the researching process since I followed a very similar pattern for all three regions. In the future, I will try to come up with a variety of ways in which the students could share their knowledge of their topic they researched. Some ways may include creating a poster with illustrations, forming clay figures, enacting a play, or demonstrating a process. In conclusion, I enjoyed teaching this unit and learned a great deal about my students, the topic, the curriculum, my most of all my teaching practices.