

Frame for Social Studies Instruction

I have chosen a lesson from my social studies practicum to demonstrate my proficiency in teaching social studies. This lesson coincided with the curriculum that my eighth grade practicum students were studying. The assignment for ED618 was to use primary sources in a social studies lesson. The topic was suffrage and the use of primary sources was very well suited for this learning opportunity. This lesson was a two day exploration of artifacts and documentaries in which the students were highly engaged (Harvey, & Goudvis, 2007).

There were six stations with different things for students to explore and discuss. Each station had a set of questions that students had to answer in writing and then tape into their social studies journal (see lesson). The documentaries featured letters and documents written by women in the suffrage movement; their firsthand accounts. I retrieved suffrage cartoons (siding for and against the cause) and copies of pamphlets of the era. I matted them for students to study and contemplate (Lesh, 2011; Moline, 2012). Students rotated stations in groups and my host teacher and I conducted formative assessments of their discussions and checked for understanding (Lemov, 2010). Some groups needed some prompting with initial questions to get the inquiry and the discussion going.

This constructivist style of lesson was engaging and the students learned more through exploring artifacts than if they had to sit through a lecture on suffrage (Slavin, 2012). The lesson was also accommodating to visual learners and students who benefit from peer support (Tomlinson & McTighe, 2006).

As a partner teacher in an immersion program, I don't teach social studies as a subject. My partner teacher does that on the foreign language side. What I do through literature is supplement the social studies curriculum being taught by my partner teacher. This gives students exposure to the concepts in both languages for a more solid understanding. When my partner teacher started her unit on Alaska last school year, I borrowed two dozen books from the Loussac Library and brought in many of my own books about Alaska. The collection for our unit included books on Alaska's animals, climate, and people, all facets of the social studies curriculum.

During national recognition months, events, or days (e.g. Black History Month, MLK Jr. Day, Earth Day, the Iditarod Race) I cull my book collection for relevant trade books on the subject and use them for read-alouds. I set them apart from the regular classroom library so students will select them for reading to self. We watch BrainPop© videos about these social studies topics during snack time, and use these themes for writing assignments.

The new Reach For Reading © curriculum that the Anchorage School District has adopted is rich in informative texts. Students have the opportunity to learn about people, places, and history from the picture and chapter books provided in the curriculum. I use these reading materials to not only teach reading strategies but to afford students an opportunity to explore and learn the content.

[Link to Social Studies Primary Sources Lesson](#)

References

BrainPOP. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.brainpop.com/>

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