

Planning for Instruction and Assessment

A. Focus for Learning: Standards and Objectives /Targets

State standards and the Common Core standards for literacy in history and social sciences form the basis for lessons.

A Unit Plan is in place that outlines the major topics and concepts to covered and the related assessments.

The objectives for each lesson within the unit are shared with the students during the class presentation and then a return to “check on understanding was slated for the end of the lesson”.

B. Materials and Resources

This school is on the “paperless” model and utilizes Schoology as a platform for sharing curricular materials, resources and assignments.

The teacher routinely updates the Schoology page following each day/lesson. Students all have 1-to-1 tablet access to e-versions of the text materials and any support resources, as well as the slide deck for each lesson.

The teacher supplemented the electronic resources with additional teaching resources designed to allow for small group work. (manipulatives)

C. Assessment of P-12 Learning

The lesson had a number of formative assessment opportunities planned including initial activities to check on student pre-understandings and connections to previous units/courses that many students had taken.

Student question-response technique was planned to build understanding from existing knowledge, and sharing of individual student responses to provided prompts during guided practice was also planned. Summative for this and all units was scheduled and took the form of quizzes and project-based assessment.

D. Differentiated Methods

The lesson was largely designed as a “conversation” with students that combined lower level recall (knowledge & comprehension) questions with select higher order questions used as follow-up.

There were students in the class with “IEP” like accommodations which often included the use of resources on the tablet. There did not appear to be planned differentiation of instruction or assessment for this lesson.

Instructional Delivery

E. Learning Target and Directions

Opening slides clearly displayed the agenda for the day and communicated a reminder of the classroom norms for interaction given the content of the class.

A review was built in to remind students of pre-requisite knowledge and vocabulary for the days learning target. Learning objectives for the period were stated orally.

A real strength for the teacher is her ability to clearly define the tasks, to address questions and clarifications, and maximize on-task time.

The teacher has a very strong conversational voice during instruction and knows her material well so that she is teaching about the visuals and not reading slides.

F. Critical Thinking

Throughout the lesson the teacher utilized lower level questions to establish student preconceptions regarding a key term for the lesson (symbol) and to connect it to past learning for context.

There were openings for a more “critical questioning approach” and the teacher acknowledged this as an area she is working to improve.

The teacher realizes that with experience they will come to recognize these opportunities more readily and build in more opportunities for students to engage critically with the subject matter.

G. Checking for Understanding and Adjusting Instruction through Formative Assessment

Checked for clarity regarding student responses and expanded to ensure their ideas were included and connected. Frequent and specific praise provided for responses.

Probes – When doing the sorting activity, how could you have probed their choice of placement (phrases in envelope) and made it a higher order question? How could you have played devil’s advocate and challenged student responses and force critical responses? What needs to exist (and it does in your class) for that to happen?

H. Digital Tools and Resources

Hybrid environment with teacher using Schoology as the delivery platform supplemented by her own power point presentations and use of physical handouts and manipulatives as required for planned activities.

The Schoology framework allows for students to access resources throughout the lesson and at home for work completed outside of class time.

The teacher appeared competent and confident in the use of the technical tools to facilitate synchronous and asynchronous learning. The teacher was intentional about having students utilize the Schoology materials throughout the period.

I. Safe and Respectful Learning Environment

Praise for student responses was immediate and specific. For some it was connected to previous items to show the interrelated nature of the content.

Students felt free to express opinions and even those that were contrary or divergent from the “apparent” theme were welcomed and acknowledged with praise for thinking skills.

Some students were perhaps utilizing their electronic devices for activities that were not part of the intended learning outcomes for the class. This was discussed during the debrief and noted as an area for improvement in future monitoring of student engagement.

Assessment

J. Data-Guided Instruction

The teacher followed best practices by intentionally seeking student prior knowledge related to the lesson objective and then supplemented that with key material required to meet the standard. In this way students felt a level of efficacy for the assigned tasks before beginning them.

While the only activity was started and completed in class, the teacher did relate to students the required “work” to be completed from Schoology prior to the next class period.

In terms of her mobility during, the teacher reviewed both the on-task analysis and question distribution data collected. The teacher determined that she does need to work

on a more balanced distribution of questions to include more students and that more movement to all areas of the classroom would facilitate that.

The teacher's strong content knowledge and "storytelling" like lecture style make movement easy as she is not tied to a podium or specific place to access notes. **VERY STRONG.**

Good use of "check-in" during activity to allow all students to complete minimal expectations. This demonstrated the teacher's acknowledgement that students, even gifted ones, do think and work at different rates and in different ways. What would augment this is having planned resources or activities for those who finish early to go on to.

K. Feedback to Learners

Responses to students referenced specific elements of their answers as part of the praise for good thinking and a way to communicate the ideas a second time to the class as a whole.

The teacher also made frequent reference to previously learned material such that connections were made and learning reinforced.

While some praise was given to student responses, at other times it was simple acknowledgment and the question distribution data indicated that 2-3 students seemed to dominate the Q & A opportunities. The teacher did well to say, often, "I would love to hear new voices" as a way of trying to entice reluctant students.

L. Assessment Techniques

Homework was reviewed orally with reference to the visual reminders on Schoology. By using small groups you helped ensure each voice (at least once) had the opportunity to engage with the learning and you circulated to enable that where needed. Q – *I notice that the summative for this unit appears to be a project. Would be interesting to know how that is set up related to the course standards and objectives.*