

WASAH Summer Institute
Lesson Plan Project Proposal
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Students in 8th grade are required to learn about the federal system and the powers of federal, state, and local government in the United States, but they are not required to learn how we got to this point in time. I want to explore and learn more about how to teach this in a way that students will understand the beginnings of our government and not just what we have today. In doing this unit I am going to focus on the big idea of what does freedom mean and apply it to our government as it is formed. I hope to gain more knowledge of our government and how to present it to my students in a way that they will be critical thinkers about how our government was formed.

I plan on using the Backward Design Model in US History to develop my unit. I am at an advantage with this one since Ken Ristow works in the Sheboygan Area School District at South High School so when I need help with the backward design method I know where to find him. Then to better understand the idea of freedom and what it means in the different time periods I will use the WASHA Summer Institute professors, Brett Barker and David Voelker to answer questions and bounce ideas off of. The WASHA participants I plan to work closely with are Tina Thone and Jessica Jaeger for support and ideas. I am also going to share my work with the 8th grade social studies department, as I have in the past, along with other topics that I have learned during the WASHA institute. I have really enjoyed this collaboration so far and for my unit I hope to gain optimal resources and ideas from all my colleagues to make my unit a success.

Students at the 8th grade level are required by state standards to complete a unit on government which includes the following concepts: the basic principles of the Constitution, branches of the government and their responsibilities, checks and balances (branches of government), distinguish the differences between levels of government (federal, state and local) and research and the different issues in the development of the Constitution; i.e. Bill of Rights, Amendment Process, Separation of Powers, etc. I will develop a unit that includes lessons on all the above concepts and also include the ideas of government and freedom starting at Jamestown. This unit will take approximately 12 days with a culminating project using choice boards and a unit test covering all standards and benchmarks. Instructional strategies will include many web sites, articles, and music from School House Rocks, textbooks, children's picture books, and our librarian for more resources. I want my students to understand the different time eras of government and what freedom meant to those people at that time and then carry it through the writing on the constitution and beyond to their lives.

I will be teaching this unit to approximately seventy-five 8th graders. They will be taking a class from me called Integrated History and Language Arts. In our team this year I will have about ten English Language Learners and six Special Education Students. The standards and benchmarks that my unit will align with are the following:

Social Studies Performance Standard

C.8.4 Describe and explain how the federal system separates the powers of federal, state, and local governments in the United States, and how legislative, executive, and judicial powers are balanced at the federal level.

Benchmarks

Students will be able to:

Identify the basic principles of the Constitution.

Identify branches of the government and their responsibilities.

Identify checks and balances (branches of government).

Distinguish the differences between levels of government (federal, state and local).

Research and identify the different issues in the development of the Constitution; i.e. Bill of Rights, Amendment Process, Separation of Powers, etc.

Language Arts Performance Standard

A.8.4 Read to acquire information.

Benchmarks

Students will be able to:

Use a variety of methods for organizing information: outline, graphic organizers, and formal note taking.

Implement prereading strategies; i.e. examine bold face, pictures, titles, skim.

Generate questions about the selection to guide reading.

Demonstrate understanding of information by analyzing, paraphrasing and summarizing.

Use reading strategies: questioning, connecting, clarifying, and evaluating to assist in acquiring information.

Recognize and use expository text structures (cause/effect, problem/solution, sequencing, compare/contrast, etc.).

Use visual features of a text to aid in comprehension (graphs, bold text, etc.).

Relevant Books that will me guide my study on the United States Government:

We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution

Call To Freedom: Beginnings to 1877

Understanding the Constitution of the United States By John Charles Thomas

15 Primary Source Activities: American History by Louise Hopping and Lorraine Hopping-Egan

Strategies for Teaching American Government: a Guide for the New Instructor by Fred Whitford

