

21: 8th_SocialStudies_Research_CoTeacherPreInt

Speaker 1: In the overall scheme of this unit we're working really hard to get kids of all levels to look at evidence and develop their own opinions and then back it up with the evidence that they look at. As a teacher it sometimes becomes hard to not show your bias in a lesson so we try to present the information as all facts and let all of our students come up with their own ideas and opinions and back that up with the facts that we give them.

This lesson in particular fits really well into this scheme of our overall unit because it breaks stuff down into multimedia presentations and allows the students, with very little impact from the teacher, to look at something and figure out what they think about it.

The specific learning outcome for this lesson is that they should look at the negative impacts of the Civil War and decide whether the Civil War, despite this really great idea to end slavery, was worth the cost of life because it's the only war we fought against ourselves. Every time we lost someone it was someone's son or daughter who was an American citizen. I don't think our students have a very good grasp on that because war doesn't affect their lives in the same way it used to affect America. When they can look at the impact and see overall what negative things came from the Civil War they can then decide if it was worth it. They are eventually going to answer the question should Lincoln have let the South secede to avoid this war. They need to see all of the different angles to get that. We've dove into slavery. We've talked about plantations and how the way slaves were treated, [00:02:00] and read a lot of primary and secondary resources from that time period. Now they get to see the other angle of it.

We have multiple assessments built into the lesson, throughout the lesson, so that we can intervene if we start to see one of our kids drop off or struggling with the lesson. Some of them are that we just, as both of us as teachers, walk around and we're really interactive with our students. We're looking at the questions that they're answering and using that as formative assessment and getting right to it if they start to struggle. We also have a formative assessment at the end of the lesson where they have to evaluate the overall impact based on all the resources they see. Eventually it builds into our summative assessments which is an argumentative essay where they have to decide if it would have been better to avoid war and let the South become its own country.

Hopefully I don't have to manage student behavior because we're at that point in the school year where the kids understand our overarching expectations, which are that everyone is respectful of each other. We have this big idea of intellectual safety where everyone should feel safe to participate. They're super engaged, and we find that we have very little behavioral issues the more engaged our students are. If we can keep them entertained they don't have time or motivation to act up or do anything. We've developed a really great culture in the classroom at this point where they respect each other and they respect us and they understand that they're here to learn, and there's no shenanigans hopefully.

The biggest one is just evaluate the impact of the Civil War. [00:04:00] Eventually overarching would be that question should Lincoln have let the South secede to avoid a war, but during the lesson to prod some higher level thinking we have a lot of different levels of questions built in. We like to do some warm-ups with our kids. The first question they answer is always that one where they get the feeling of success. We kind of step up the rigor every time, knowing as teachers we're going to have to step in maybe a little bit when they get to the higher level questions. The goal is to give them questions that start with words like predict, or speculate; things that don't have a right answer and just get them talking with us, but also with each other.

There's a lot of movement. As an inclusion teacher I'm always looking to switch activities every five to seven minutes. I can only hold my kids attention for about that long. This lesson has around five to ten minutes of bell work at the beginning with discussion, which is really engaging. The kids like to hear each other's opinions and they like to give their own. Then seven minute stations, which is just enough time for them to access the materials and also engage in discussion with their partners. Then they rotate through those and then the end of it is only.. I believe we have discussion for five to ten minutes as well.

A lot of movement. You don't have any kids falling asleep because they have to get up every five to seven minutes. The multimedia presentations that we're using; there's a lot of resources that are for different types of kids. We have a video for our more visual kids, and our images for our visual kids. Statistics for our more analytical kids. A lot of teacher involvement. Having two teachers in the room is really great. We can each address special needs.

Overall this lesson really latches on to all of the different [00:06:00] learning styles. This is relevant for all students because it's accessible for all students. Every student is given information that no matter their levels they can look at it and develop their own opinion. That's where we really try to hit in the inclusion setting. It's really important that our lessons push the rigor but are still accessible. These particular lessons, these station lessons, they give a lot of movement to our students; a lot of independence. This lesson just fits into that goal of making them decide for themselves as opposed to a lot of our text books that present things in one way. We want to do the best that we can to give all of our kids as much information as possible without any bias.