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Teaching Communication Studies

Mr. Sherry

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Unit Plan Genre Study

The Unit plans that I chose to focus on were-

Understanding Human Rights through Literature (1999) by Jenny Cockrill, Stephanie Hall, Rebecca long

Rebirth (2000) by Kasey Barret, Tara Dean, Amanda Endres, and Julie Stinchcomb

*Censorship: Breach of Freedom or Exception to the Rule? (2004) by Molly Livingston*

1. I chose these Unit plans because they are challenging for the students and force the learner to question the world around them and themselves. The themes of “Human Rights”, “Rebirth”, and “Censorship” are all powerful ideas that raise various questions and require a lot of critical thinking for the students to comprehend the material. In addition to the importance of the content in these Unit plans, the ways in which each student is assessed and challenged is a great way to engender learning. There is a multifaceted approach that allows the students to be tested through an incorporation of media, creative, and formal critical writing.
2. “Understanding Human Rights through Literature” was the best unit plan out of the group because it contained a wide range of material that the students were to cover. From works of Martin Luther King Jr. to the “Diaries of Anne Frank” the material matched very well with the goals of the unit plan. The structure of the unit plan and the portfolio work that the students had to accomplish seemed like the most thought out and detailed plan. This leads me to think that it has the potential to be the best unit plan
3. The one Unit plan that needed the most amount of adjustment would be the “Censorship” unit plan. This had the students watch the entire movie of “Footloose” which shows the ideas of “censorship” but such long periods of time where movies are shown could create a situation where students are being inattentive and off topic. Movies in class should be brief in nature or have more specific guidelines so the student is using this learning experience to the best possible extent. I would most likely shorten the amount of the movie seen to about a fifteen minute clip where the student can still see the “censorship” in the film.
4. Each of the unit plans in this study show similarities in the way they assess the students. There is a student portfolio that is structured to show the students attitudes and opinions over the expanse of the unit plan. They all require the student to write a substantial length paper, use some sort of project including media and technology, and a journal throughout the unit. The idea of a student portfolio is a great idea because it is a good teaching technique to have many forms of assessment and allows for the students to express their different strengths. It is also important because this ability to organize one’s work to show a summative accomplishment will be vital throughout life because it will be used in the work world and is similar to creating a resume. Although there are a few ideas that are similar in the unit plans, the delivery of each of the unit plans is where the difference lies. The material that is focused on changes from each because “Rebirth” unit plan focuses more on large novels along with more interactive group work. “Human Rights” unit plan gets the students to participate in a mock trial to show off their different thoughts and show the knowledge they have learned. So although each unit plan has a wide range of assessments in a portfolio like manner, they vary in the activities and abilities needed from each student.
5. Unit plans all need to state goals and expectations for the students and there is an order that this needs to be done in to have a comprehensive and thoughtful unit plan. Therefore the structure can be very similar because each teacher is trying to make intent and process of the unit plan clear and direct. Some of the differences in the structure of the Unit plans come from the fact that each teacher thinks differently and will add their own touch to their work. Teachers have different ideas on how to assess their students because each classrooms is different and each unit plan should be changed to suit the needs of the students.
6. Content
   1. Detail
   2. Accuracy
   3. Amount Covered

Organization

Professional

Learning activities

Assessment

Lesson Plans

1. From the Unit plans that I looked at it is important for the Curriculum of English Language Arts to incorporate a wide range of credited material. This means that well known authors and works should be considered but also the content being covered should be meaningful in the fact that it challenges the student to think critically. There is also a push in these unit plans to have media and technology involved with the students. Good instructional practice starts with structured lessons plans so that there is a clear message and path that the teacher is going to take. Then it is clear that a varied approach and methods of teaching are needed to satisfy the needs of the students. Ultimately students are going to have to be able to express themselves through several different channels from informal writing, to media projects, persuasive writing, and within a group setting.
2. As one compares the unit plans there are similar ides that reoccur. Variety seems to be one of the major facets that link the Unit plans. The students are assessed using several different activities which forces the student to be able to communicate in more than just writing. The material in these Unit plans is all challenging works that will force the students to ask themselves tough questions.
3. I agree that it is very important to test the students in a variety of ways. Although this is true I believe that there isn’t enough emphasis on critical reading and writing. Sometimes the use of technology can be too much and then serve as a major distraction. More critical papers should be given to make sure the students can adequately communicate to someone else using there writing which will be important throughout life. I think there needs to also be more emphasis in the unit plans on how to ensure that students are appreciating reading. I think this is a difficult task because reading is taking less importance into the technology age we are in so it is important for all future educators and English majors especially to ensure that reading is a sacred and wonderful gift. Although I am not sure how to accomplish this we all need to keep this in mind.