II. Preparation Activity: Social Studies seventh grade

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

For my preparation activity, I chose to make an assumption chart. I created the assumption chart to introduce my unit on World War II. The activity is intended to assess what the students think or already know, as well as motivate them to confirm or disprove their prior assumptions. Since I am not a teacher yet, and I am unsure of the grade level that I will be teaching next year. I designed my activity based on the 7th grade US History class I student taught this past spring.


I chose to use this resource because I love it! It is a rich source of historical facts mixed with heartfelt, sincere primary sources. It is written in a way that appeals to young people, and explains historical events in a way that those who did not experience the times can relate. The primary sources Jennings were not chosen because they were rich, famous, or brilliant. The selections are from average citizens who lived through the experiences of the 20th Century and have stories to share. In additions, the pictures chosen to illustrate the massive changes the world underwent in the 20th Century are wonderful. They bring the text to life.

Title: “World War II Anticipation Activity”

AUDIENCE:

This activity was developed with the 7th graders I student taught in mind. During my internship I found that the school I taught at was a diverse as each of my classes. There were students who had the economic stability, availability to supplemental resources, parental support, and social acceptance that every teacher dreams of for their students. On the other hand, there were students who went home to empty houses every day, who had parents that didn’t speak English, who lived with a different guardian, whose main goal at school was to get a hot meal not read history, and who lacked skills 7th grade teachers assume their students had. This diversity transpired into my classroom.

I taught all US History class, but my ability levels changed. I taught 3 advanced classes and 2 regular classes. Naturally diversity existed in each of these classes as well, but I found more so in my average level classes. I quickly
learned that my average classes, which were supposed to be right on grade level, were not for the most part. I found that my lessons, while they covered the same information, had to be simplified for my “regular students.” In these one of my regular classes I taught 3 students who were in a self-contained classroom for every class but mine. In that same class I had students that truly read right on grade level. It was hard trying to accommodate my lessons to fit everyone’s needs. My advanced classes, on the other hand, were advanced in that they were motivated to do well in school, for the most part, but even still I had students who read and worked on all different grade levels. Nonetheless, I did expect more from them in terms of quality of work and ability to learn from difficult situations without letting frustration overwhelm them. The demographics of my students seemed fairly typical to me, in so far as my educational experience has gone. It was a suburban school. The majority of students were Caucasian, but not overwhelmingly. In a given class, I usually had 5-6 African Americans, 3-4 Asian Americans, and 2-3 of other nationalities.

PURPOSE:

The preparation phase of the PAR framework gives students a reason to read on. Whether they are reading to prove or disprove something they believe or searching for answers to self-generated questions, having some kind of preparation before beginning and inquiry gives students confidence and motivation as they read on.

For me, I see this Anticipation Guide as serving several purposes. The first purpose is that it gives students an idea of what’s to come. It doesn’t make sense to expect students to be ready to discuss and study a topic in depth on the first day. Students need to time to think about it, mull over what they believe or know to be true for them, and figure out what kinds of questions they have about the topic. I think this will lead to more fruitful, in-depth discussions at any age level. During student teaching I found that as topics came up students were excited to go home and talk to parents and grandparents. They loved bringing in artifacts and sharing personal stories. Unfortunately, they usually brought them after the fact and we were no longer on that topic. This way they have an idea of what’s coming and hopefully those things will come in as we talk about them.

Second, the Anticipation Guide gives me an idea of where the students stand in their knowledge of World War II, what their assumptions are about the war, and what I need to spend more time on. Third, it generates discussion. By filling out the Anticipation Guide students are forced to examine what they think and know and then to give justification to why they think the way they do. It provides opportunities for disagreements and conversation. Finally, it gives students a reason and motivation to read and find out if their assertions were right or wrong.
OBJECTIVES:

Students will be able to:

1. prepare for what is coming up in the World War II unit.
2. state their agreement or disagreement regarding aspects of World War II provided on the anticipation guide.
3. assess their prior knowledge on World War II.
4. justify their beliefs to the rest of the class prior to reading the text.
5. show me their strengths and weaknesses in their knowledge of World War II.

CONSTRUCTION OF ACTIVITY:

I have provided a sample and key of the Anticipation Guide:

DIRECTIONS: Do you agree or disagree with the statements below? Before reading pages 105-125 in your textbook, read each statement and write AGREE or DISAGREE to the left of each statement. This will not be graded. It will be used to discuss what you already know about World War II and how or why you know that. I will collect them to see where the class stands on certain points and they will be returned to you to use as you read. As you read, refer back to these statements to either confirm your belief or change it. At the end of the unit we will come back to these statements to discuss whether or not you changed any of your beliefs and why.

_____ 1. The attack on Pearl Harbor was a shock to most Americans.

_____ 2. The United States entered World War II on the Allied side.

_____ 3. Only Jews were murdered during the Holocaust.

_____ 4. Women were encouraged to work outside the home during World War II.

_____ 5. More people died in World War I than did in World War II.

_____ 6. Russia and the United States were enemies during World
War II.

_____ 7. Americans supported the D-Day invasion, even though 75% of the troops were likely to die.

_____ 8. Japanese kamikaze pilots killed themselves on purpose trying to beat the Allies.

_____ 9. The men that carried the atomic bomb to Japan knew what they were carrying.

Key:

DIRECTIONS: Do you agree or disagree with the statements below? Before reading pages 105-125 in your textbook, read each statement and write AGREE or DISAGREE to the left of each statement. This will not be graded. It will be used to discuss what you already know about World War II and how or why you know that. I will collect them to see where the class stands on certain points and they will be returned to you to use as you read. As you read, refer back to these statements to either confirm your belief or change it. At the end of the unit we will come back to these statements to discuss whether or not you changed any of your beliefs and why.

Agree 1. The attack on Pearl Harbor was a shock to most Americans.

Agree 2. The United States entered World War II on the Allied side.

Disagree 3. Only Jews were murdered during the Holocaust.

Agree 4. Women were encouraged to work outside the home during World War II.

Disagree 5. More people died in World War I than did in World War II.

Disagree 6. Russia and the United States were enemies during World War
II.

**Agree** 7. Americans supported the D-Day invasion, even though 75% of the troops were likely to die.

**Agree** 8. Japanese kamikaze pilots killed themselves on purpose trying to beat the Allies.

**Disagree** 9. The men that carried the atomic bomb to Japan knew what they were carrying.

**PROCEDURE:**

1. The first step in this activity is to have students clear off their desks except for something to write with. Then pass out the Anticipation Guides.
2. Then I will explain the directions listed at the top of their sheets.
3. Students are to quietly fill out their anticipation guide.
4. After students have completed the sheets we will discuss each statement as a class. For each statement, I will have a couple of students discuss and justify why they think they are right. I will also include the differing viewpoints.
5. Once we have gone through the worksheet, I will collect them to look over. This way I can get an idea on where the class stands as a whole on these ideas. The worksheets will be passed back the following day and are to be kept in their notebooks for future referral (i.e. a reflective activity).

**EVALUATION:**

Throughout the semester my eyes have been opened to so many strategies that seem so logical now, but I never thought to use. I think back on times in my student teaching where some of these strategies would have fit perfectly. I know that I did a lot of assumptive teaching, and I think a lot of that came from being a beginner and not really knowing that much about the level and age I was working with. As time passed, though, I learned to be less assumptive and to check for understanding often. Nevertheless, it seems so much better to find out what they know in order to plan the most effective lesson.

I think this preparation activity does just that. The anticipation guide is a quick way to make this assessment. It gets the students to think and helps me to teach more efficiently and effectively. Young people love to tell others what they think and know, but they don’t always think to look for the justifications through reading and context. I think that this anticipation guide will motivate my students to do this. I predict successful results.
I can see myself using this particular activity and other preparation activities in the future. I think they are great introductions into material. They seem to give purpose to reading, which will encourage students to do the assignments not for the sake of the grade, but because it will get them information they desire to have.