Iowa History Connections Lesson Plan

Your Name & School: Chris Swales, MS/HS Denver Community Schools

Lesson Grade Level: 6th Grade

Lesson Title: Iowa and the Underground Railroad

Essential Questions:
What constituted freedom in Iowa?

Lesson Abstract:
Students will learn about the Underground Railroad and the experience of African Americans within Iowa. A travelling exhibit provided by the African American museum and digital resources will be utilized with this lesson.

Learning Objective:
1. The learner will understand the purpose and function of the Underground Railroad.
2. The learner will describe the role Iowa played in the Underground Railroad.
3. The learner will evaluate how African Americans were treated in Iowa.
4. The learner will predict and compare their previous knowledge of African American treatment prior to the 1860s & their new knowledge.

Iowa Core Standards:
SS.6–8.H.3 Understand the role of culture and cultural diffusion on the development and maintenance of societies.
- Understand ways groups, societies, and cultures have met human needs and concerns in the past.
SS.6–8.H.4: Understand the role of individuals and groups within a society as promoters of change or the status quo.
- Understand significant events and people, including women and minorities, in the major eras of history.
SS.6–8.H.8 Understand cause and effect relationships and other historical thinking skills in order to interpret events and issues.
- Understand processes such as using a variety of sources, providing, validating, and weighing evidence for claims, checking credibility of sources, and searching for causality.

Materials/Equipment/Websites:
1. Riding the Freedom Train travelling exhibit from the African American Museum
   a. Ordering information: http://www.blackiowa.org/exhibits/traveling-exhibits/
2. Student computers and internet access
3. Student handout with guiding questions during web research
4. Teacher computer and internet access
5. The following websites will be used for student research about the Underground Railroad and Iowa’s role
   c. http://ir.uiowa.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2144&context=annals-of-iowa
      Iowa Fugitive Slave Case (Ralph the slave)

Detailed Procedures/Questions/Activities:

1. A few days before the lesson, the teacher will need to pre-order the “Riding the Freedom Train” travelling exhibit from the African American Museum. After the exhibit arrives, the teacher will need to familiarize him/herself with the exhibit.
2. On lesson day, the teacher will share the travelling exhibit with the class and discuss the student’s prior knowledge concerning the Underground Railroad (Questions: How did settlers of Iowa treat African Americans prior to the 1860s/Civil War), Iowa’s stance on slavery prior to the Civil War, and the role Iowa played in the Underground Railroad. Document this knowledge for future reference and discussion after the lesson is completed. (10 – 15 minutes)
3. Share with the students the websites provided about the Underground Railroad and Iowa’s role. Instruct the students to read over each of the websites, making sure they click on hyperlinks to expand their understanding of these topics. (20 – 30 minutes)
4. While researching these websites, students will answer the questions found on the Iowa & the Underground Railroad worksheet. They will also share/discuss with their fellow classmates interesting tidbits/information learned.
5. Wrap up the research/discussion by bringing the class together for a large group discussion over information learned and misconceptions from the beginning of the class. Looking back at their original opinions and their new opinions. (5 – 10 minutes)
6. Assign a reflection paper requiring each student to write about what they learned about the Underground Railroad, Iowa’s role, and importance of this event in America’s past.

Assessment:

1. Class pre-assessed knowledge over the Underground Railroad
2. In-class discussion between students while researching the Underground Railroad
3. Large group discussion covering any misconceptions
4. Reflection paper over new knowledge learned
Iowa and the Underground Railroad

Directions: Read each question and write the best possible answer in complete sentences.

1. What was the purpose for the Underground Railroad?

2. Give a brief description of the Underground Railroad.

3. Identify Iowans who helped African Americans with their passage along the Underground Railroad.

4. Identify several stops in Iowa along the Underground Railroad.

5. How were African Americans treated along the Iowa Underground Railroad?

Reflective Writing Assignment

Directions: Read the question and answer in at least one paragraph in the space provided.

Do you think everyone in Iowa was a supporter of slavery? Why or Why not? Be sure to provide a minimum of three examples supporting your position.