

DJ Montague Tech Project

Taking Notes with Inspiration- Reflection

Introduction: This lesson was taught to Ms. Nilson's third grade class, in the computer lab of DJ Montague elementary school. The lab has a lot of great resources, and it provided a comfortable environment for the lesson. The students seem to be quite familiar with the surroundings of the lab, so I imagine they have computer time often. As a result of being comfortable and familiar, the students were very participatory and at ease with all of us. The activity, which involved taking notes and using Inspiration, fit into the curriculum nicely, as the children had a small bit of experience with the program before. Also, the historical figures that we chose, for the students to take notes on, were both prominent figures in modern black history, so students had recently studied at least one of them prior to our lesson.

Objectives/Goals:

- Students will define the word "contribution," identifying their own personal contributions at home and at school
- Students will be familiar with a list of keywords that often precede or follow individual contributions in biographical texts
- Students will use their knowledge of keywords to scan two separate texts (Martin Luther King Jr. and Thurgood Marshall) and extract important contributions to be recorded on note cards
- Students will use Inspiration to create graphic organizers of their findings, manipulating pictures and shapes to create an individualized final product

Materials: To complete this activity, teachers need-

- Index cards
- Computers equipped with Inspiration
- Websites or biographical texts for students to practice taking notes from

Description:

- **Day One:** Start out on carpet. Begin by assessing students' prior knowledge of what contributions are. Attempt to generate a definition with them, identifying key synonyms or other words that appear in conjunction with contributions in text. *If children have trouble with the concept, create a fictitious person and generate some statements about the person (some being contributions and some just facts) Ask the students which are which.
- Briefly review what students already know about MLK. Then after they are seated at computers, have each go to the MLK site, and model taking contribution notes from this site on note cards.
- Have children open Inspiration, and instruct them on how to create a graphic organizer and add pictures. Make one on the big screen with the MLK notes, and have them follow your lead.
- **Day Two:** Refresh knowledge on contributions. Have children re-introduce themselves and share their own contributions. Briefly introduce Thurgood Marshall.
- Have students travel to the Thurgood Marshall web page, where they will identify and record contributions on their own.
- Allow students to independently create graphic organizers from their findings, customizing with pictures etc as time allows.

Evaluation: The assessment of students' overall understanding of the lesson came in the form of their final independent graphic organizers. This not only demonstrated their ability to use Inspiration, but through reading the information they included in their organizers, we could see if they accurately understood the concept of "contributions." A smaller form of assessment came at the beginning of the second day, when students were once again asked to define and share contributions. Every student was given the opportunity to respond, and if any students had any misgivings about the concept, this assessment would catch that so that things could be reinforced for them.

Results: All of the students did extremely well with the lesson. Though they were initially hesitant to define a contribution, they quickly became more verbal, and it was clear that they had a firm grip on the concept. They picked up Inspiration very quickly. I think they had brief exposure to it before, so this helped a lot. Their final independent graphic organizers were great. They included many contributions and most used pictures and shapes very creatively to produce a unique product. Students seemed to find the prospect of the activity challenging at first, but they were quite confident by the end of the lesson, and I think they enjoyed it. The host teacher seemed pleased with the results, and she even made her own graphic organizer along with the students.

Lessons Learned: This lesson taught me a lot of things. First, it showed me how beneficial group collaboration in teaching can be. Team-teaching always seemed as though it would be challenging to implement, but it was actually very easy, and I had a great deal of fun doing it. It was very much a team effort. Also, I got to learn more about an age group that I haven't had much experience with. Third graders are really great to

work with, and I was very impressed with their memories and their ability to quickly pick things up. It was a really enjoyable experience.