ITE 401: Unit Plan



**Unit Plan Explanation Essay**

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Each week is centered on the theme/generalization of Kuleana through the choices we make; how they affect us, impact others and our larger world. The lessons of my Unit Plan address these Generalizations in various ways: reading articles, free writes, brainstorming, watching videos, read aloud, real life applications and hands on participation. Each of those approaches are applied through Literacy Strategies with underlying goals: presenting information and clear ideas through supporting evidence, and the development and evolution of those ideas/central themes through texts leading to a coherent summary.

Many literacy theories are highlighted throughout the implementation of this Unit Plan. The first theory is “Constructivism” through a hands-on and active engagement approach (visiting a Homeless Shelter and distributing sandwiches), discussions of real world contexts (Homelessness in Hawaii, Guest Speakers), meaningful learning with a problem solving exploration (Homelessness Article and Brainstorming Solutions), having students collaborate and share their own experiences and thoughts on the topic (affect of technology, choices in time traveling, idea of paying forward positive actions, reading the story of Wonder) and encouraging their critical thinking skills. Another theory underscored is the importance and crucial role of the student’s “Funds of Knowledge”. Each lesson has the students at the center of the thought making process, which in turn is also based on their own “Funds of Knowledge”. Those “funds of knowledge represent a positive view of households as containing ample cultural and cognitive resources with great, potential utility for classroom instruction” (Moll, Amanti, Neff, Gonzalez, 1992, p. 134) that lead students to feel free to engage in a safe learning environment. There are many different kinds of Literacy Strategies being used through the Unit Plan, but as Yetta Goodman (1997) wrote, “it is extremely important to legitimatize the concept of multiple roads to literacy” (p. 56). In short, “there is no single road to becoming literate” (Goodman, 1997, p. 56). An additional aspect of this Unit Plan is its encouragement to think critically, and be “mind active rather than mind passive” (Erickson, 2001, p. 20). The first week includes a 3 page Free Write, the second week incorporates a movie with a dialogue journal to discuss its major themes, a read aloud with a group one sentence summation, the brainstorming and sharing of ideas to help the homeless community, and a final personal essay discussing their own feelings and emotions. As Erickson (2001) explained, “ When students become personally and intellectually engaged, they are more motivated to learn because their emotions are involved” (p. 20). The Hands-on in the community participation following an introduction to various aspects of personal responsibilities underscores and encourages that emotional involvement.

I will focus here on the second week Wednesday, Thursday and Friday lessons. Those three lessons could be grouped under the title “Homelessness in Hawaii and me”. The first step is an introduction to the issues and problems surrounding homelessness. As the lesson is introduced, I will show them pictures (that I took previously as part of another project on homelessness in Hawaii) of the “Next Step Shelter” at Kaka’ako Park. As I share those pictures, I will also set the context of the article from Civil Beat, “Hawaii Homelessness” (<http://www.civilbeat.org/topics/hawaii-homelessness/>) through the “Probable Passage” pre-reading literacy strategy. I hope to create anticipation and interest through the sharing of images, the chosen vocabulary and in class pre-reading discussion about their thoughts and ideas on this topic. On Thursday, a review of the article with an added brainstorming activity on possible solutions will constitute the second part of the three part approach to this lesson. Additionally, we will prepare sandwiches (50 to 60 Ham & Cheese, Chips, and a bottle of water) to go out and give to the homeless community down in Chinatown and Aala Park. Through a hands-on approach, I hope to trigger an emotional interest and direct application of the previously read article. Finally, on Friday, it is time for reflection and personal thoughts. After writing a short in class personal essay (2 to 3 pages), I would like them to create their own One-Pager based on their own writing. The presentation of those One-Pagers will allow for an in class debriefing of their experiences with, and understanding of the topic of homelessness in Hawaii.

At each step (and through each lesson in the two week Unit Plan), the student empowerment will remain front and center. But one main component of student empowerment will be the “***Responsibility*** and ***partnership*** within the community” by “broadening student’s sense of responsibility” by “making their work matter in the real world” (Haynes) through “service learning” or “ by creating an environment where their efforts will impact other people” (Haynes). Another component is the student feedback which will allow me to evaluate this Unit Plan, its strengths, its weaknesses, where it should be improved, and where it can remain the same. Furthermore, at the end of each class day as well as the end of the Unit Plan (Friday, after the One-Pager presentation), I will encourage the students to self evaluate their learning, prepare remaining questions they may have, and start each class by addressing them.

In conclusion, as we discussed many times in class, Literacy is about “making meaning”. The main objective here, with the help of others through their own disciplines, is to create a coherant Interdisciplinary Unit Plan that will both get the students involved and engaged in their own learning, as well as raise their awareness to new literacy strategies to assist them in their learning. This two week Unit Plan is a small step in that direction.

**References**

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