

“Secrecy Among the United”

1.) Curricular Area/Topic: The Underground Railroad – Quilt Codes; Third Grade

2.) Date/Timeframe for Lesson: November 18, 2009; One forty-five minute lesson

3.) Rationale: The quilt codes lesson plan is a great topic to teach third graders because it shows how determined the slaves were to get to freedom. I also think it is a great topic to teach to third graders because it really shows how smart and clever the African American slaves really were. Not only did they have to come up with this plan all on their own, but also they had to think of a way that would help other slaves, without there being any questions from their masters. This topic is age appropriate because it only focuses on one main part of the Underground Railroad. This way there is not too much information being thrown at the students all at one time. The students are able to learn this information and really reflect upon it. The reason for teaching this lesson is to help the students become aware of how serious the Underground Railroad was and to help the students again get a real feel of how life was back then.

4.) ILS (IL Learning Standards):

- ✓ **State Goal 16:** Understand events, trends, individuals and movements shaping the history of Illinois, the United States and other nations.
- ✓ **D:** Understand Illinois, United States and world social history.
 - **Standard 16.D.2c (US):** Describe the influence of key individuals and groups, including Susan B. Anthony/suffrage and Martin Luther King, Jr./civil rights, in the historical eras of Illinois and the United States.
 - **Standard 16.D.3 (W):** Identify the origins and analyze consequences of events that have shaped world social history including famines, migrations, plagues, slave trading.

- **Standard 16.D.4 (W):** Identify significant events and developments since 1500 that altered world social history in ways that persist today including colonization, Protestant Reformation, industrialization, the rise of technology and human rights movements.
- **Standard 16.D.4a (US):** Describe the immediate and long-range social impacts of slavery.
- ✓ **State Goal 18:** Understand social systems, with an emphasis on the United States.
- ✓ **A:** Compare characteristics of culture as reflected in language, literature, the arts, traditions and institutions.
 - **Standard 18.A.1:** Identify folklore from different cultures which became part of the heritage of the United States.
 - **Standard 18.A.2:** Explain ways in which language, stories, folk tales, music, media and artistic creations serve as expressions of culture.
- ✓ **Social Science Performance Descriptors:**
 - **Standard 14B Stage A:** Describe a person who provides positive leadership for others.
 - **Standard 14D Stage F:** Analyze actions taken by governments to improve the lives of people.

5.) Objectives:

- 1) When this lesson is complete students will understand how secret messages were used in the Underground Railroad.
- 2) After this lesson students will understand the value of secret messages in the Underground Railroad.
- 3) When this lesson is finished the students will understand and remember what some secret messages mean.

6.) Materials/Resources/Technology: The materials that will be needed for this lesson include a PowerPoint over secret codes and quilts, several pieces of cloths cut into

several shapes and in several different colors, as well as a bigger piece of cloth in different colors used as a base for the smaller pieces of cloth. I will also need a hot glue gun, which will be used by me, and me only, to glue the pieces of cloths together in the order that the students want.

Chasin, David. (2002). *Quilt Codes: Popular Quilt Codes*. [Online] Available
<http://sheetmusic.berkeley.edu/courses/is182/papers/UGG/Quilt%20Codes.htm#OTHERCODES>

No author. (2009). *Underground Railroad Quilt Craft*. [Online] Available
http://www.parentsconnect.com/do/freedom_blanket.jhtml

7.) *Management/Organizing for Instruction:* There will need to be a lot of management and organization in this lesson. First the PowerPoint will need to be made a head of time and ready to go when class starts so no time is wasted. Then, for the craft project, the teacher will already need to have the big pieces of cloth cut out as well as all the little pieces of cloths cut out, in different shapes and colors, and ready to go before class starts. This may take some time, so the teacher will need to start a couple days or at least the day before class. Since there will be some hot gluing involved, the hot glue gun needs to be plugged in and heated up before the students are finished with their quilts so no time is wasted.

8.) *Lesson Delivery:*

8.1) *Introduce the Lesson:* I will introduce this lesson with a PowerPoint and activate prior knowledge by either showing different pictures of quilts or asking

questions related to this topic. This way the students are not just thrown into a topic and expected to understand it right away.

8.2) Clarify the Purpose and Objectives of the Lesson: The purpose and objectives of this lesson are to teach the students about the Underground Railroad and how African American slaves used this to help escape to freedom. Another purpose is to understand that the slaves used codes, for example, the quilts to help them on their journey. This is a big part in the Underground Railroad and the students need to really get a full understanding how it worked.

8.3) Provide Instruction:

- A.)** First I will start off with a PowerPoint that goes into detail about how the slaves used quilts in the Underground Railroad as secret messages. I will talk about the different patterns that were used that meant different things as well as how the slave owners had no idea that these quilts displayed secret messages.
- B.)** After this PowerPoint has been introduced, I am going to allow the students to split up into groups of at least four. I will allow the students to pick their own groups to give them a sense of freedom in their project.
- C.)** After the students have freely picked their groups they have to decide as a common whole what their project is going to be about. This is also where I will introduce what their project is going to be about. The students will be working together to make their own quilts that could be used in the Underground Railroad. I will let them choose from the

already cut out materials I have, different colors as well as shapes to construct their quilts. They will also have to pick a big piece of cloth to put their little pieces of cloth on. With these materials the students will make their quilt and come up with a secret code that other slaves in the Underground Railroad can understand and memorize. Once their quilts are completed, the students will bring their quilts to me and I will hot glue their pieces of cloth in place.

D.) When their quilts are finished, the students will present their quilts to the class and display their secret message. The groups will have to tell what their secret message is, what it means, and how it will help other slaves in the Underground Railroad in their escape to freedom. While each group is giving their presentation, each member of the group must talk at least once.

8.4) Closure: To close this lesson, we will do a short review about everything that we have learned from the PowerPoint. I will ask the students questions from the PowerPoint with participation from the entire class, and maybe even a little class discussion on how they think the quilts helped slaves get to freedom.

9.) Assessment: For the assessment in this lesson plan, I will be grading on the students presentations of their quilts. Here the students will get in front of the class and explain their quilts, what their secret message is, and how it could help other slaves escape to freedom, as well as other contents. This assessment will be worth sixteen points.

10.) Accommodating Individual Learner:

A.) For the gifted students in my classroom who finish early, I will allow them to go to the library and look up some information on the computer about the Underground Railroad. Here I will want them to find at least five interesting facts that they did not know before and present them to the class, if time allows.

B.) For the special needs students in my classroom, I will not be so hard on grading them during the assessment. There will be some specific things each group will need to mention, but for the special needs students I will mainly just go off a participation grade, and just see if they were willing to talk to the class, if they did talk to the class and contribute to their groups presentation, and what they presented.

11.) *Extending the Lesson:* To extend this lesson, I would have my students write a song about their quilt and the secret message is reveals. The students can go off the example of *Follow The Drinking Gourd*. The students can come up with their own tune for their song, or they can use a tune they already know like *Yankee Doodle*. The students will then sing these creative tunes to the class and the class will vote for which song they liked the best.

12.) *Reflection on Lesson:* One best practice area that this lesson plan covers is debate between the students as well as communication. When my students are working together in their groups and discussing what they think their secret message should be in their quilts, they are debating and communicating about history and culture. The students understand why they are debating and why it is important. I will also be using different

kinds of measurement to assess student understanding by the presentations that they will give over their quilts. This presentation will really give me insight that they understand the Underground Railroad and the secret messages that slaves used hidden in their quilts.

No author. *Best Practice in Social Studies Education*. [Online] Available <http://sommermitchell.tripod.com/>, Nov. 14, 2009.

No author. Social Studies - Best Practice. Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. [Online] Available <http://dpi.wi.gov/cal/ss-bestpract.html>, Feb. 25, 2008.

Presentation Assessment Rubric

Group participation:

Each group member participated equally: **2 points**

Each group member did not participate equally: **0 points**

All members contributed one idea in their group: **1 point**

Not all members contributed one idea in their group: **0 points**

Talking:

Each group member talked during the presentation: **2 points**

Not all group members talked during the presentation: **0 points**

Presentation:

A description of their quilt was included: **3 points**

No description of their quilt was included: **0 points**

A secret message was included: **3 points**

No secret message was included: **0 points**

Explanation on why that message was chosen: **2 points**

No explanation on why that message was chosen: **0 points**

How this would help the slaves was included: **3 points**

How this would help the slaves was not included: **0 points**

Total Points: _____ / 16