

Teacher Work Sample (2021)

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7th-12th Grade Social Studies

Contextual Factors

Community, District, and School Factors

Stephenville, Texas is in Erath County, about an hour outside of the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex. The city has a total area of 11.89 square miles, and serves three major highways: US 377, US 281, and US 67. Stephenville has an estimated population, according to the 2020 US Census, of about 21,200. Stephenville High School, a 4A school, according to their Texas Academic Performance Report, has 1,060 students in grades 9th-12th. The race/ethnicity of Stephenville, Texas is 87.2% White, 2.2% African/Black American, 0.5% Native American, 1.2% Asian, 0.1% Pacific Islander, 15.7% Hispanic/Latino, 7.2% from other races, and 1.7% from 2 or more races. At Stephenville High School, the race/ethnicity makeup includes 1.1% African/Black American, 34.2% Hispanic/Latino, 60.6% White, 0.4% Native American, 1.6% Asian, 0% Pacific Islander, and 2.1% identifying with two or more races. About 13.6% of families and 26.2% of the population in Stephenville were recorded as under the poverty line. At the high school, 462 of the 1,060 students are economically disadvantaged, 9 are in foster care, 8 are homeless, and 343 are at-risk.



The political climate of Stephenville, like many communities in Texas, is conservative, but the community remains stable on political and educational concerns. The Stephenville Education Foundation provides community backing for education. Their objectives are to encourage all students to work at their highest potential, reward instructors for innovation and exemplary teaching, build awareness and confidence in Stephenville ISD, and involve the community for assurance of a quality education for the leaders of the next generation. Some students also lack internet and other online resources at home, making online lessons and coursework difficult to complete after school. Other environmental factors include classroom size and space; school connectedness and rapport built between students and teachers; lighting and noise levels; and air ventilation. In the classrooms at Stephenville High School, I have observed, classroom size and space are adequate based on student teacher ratio on average to be about 15:1. Instructors have built positive rapport with students, both in their classes and outside of their classes. Many instructors support their students in athletics and other organizations and discuss with students about topics relating to their lives. Lighting and noise levels, along with air ventilation is also adequate.

Classroom Factors

The classroom has a concise and nonintrusive layout. The walls are covered in student end of year projects over historical events learned in United States history, along with other visuals relating to social studies. Stephenville ISD has a 1:1 technology initiative with Digital Promise and developed a program known as iChampion. Students in all grade levels have access to iPads for educational purposes, enhancing classroom lessons/activities.

Stephenville ISD also provides an extensive document involving programming parental involvement, including communication through parent newsletters, family nights, and school/classroom social media pages. In the classroom in particular, parental involvement is average, and can certainly be improved through trainings provided by the school district and other professional development conferences/resources.

Classroom rules and routines are very simple and have been created through both teacher and student input and are followed well in every course taught by the instructor. Seating arrangements are not well aligned for grouping patterns, as they remain stagnant for every classroom activity. However, in certain situations, students will sit next to each other when working in groups. Groups are chosen by the student rather than based on ability or other characteristics. Scheduling differs every day in terms of the lessons and coursework assigned, but the class usually begins with lecture, then guided practice, and afterwards independent practice. The classroom arrangement is as follows: the instructor's desk is in the back right corner alongside his instructional resources and other documents. Desks are arranged in rows and are arranged to see the board/projector for lectures/guided practice. Some instructional resources such as atlases and textbooks are in the front of the classroom near the podium, where the instructor's computer and clicker rest.



Student Characteristics

The instructor teaches grades 9 and 11, which includes Pre-AP World Geography, on-level United States history, and AP United States history. Students range from age 14 to 17, and the percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunch, or economically disadvantaged, is about five to ten percent among all courses taught. Males outweigh females in each course taught, where about most courses are comprised of about 50%-75% male with about 25% female. Most students are either White or Hispanic/Latino. Few students identify as Black/African American, Asian, Native American, Pacific Islander, and other races/two or more races. About 75% of students in this classroom are



fluent in English or use English as their first language, but about 25% (some Latino/Hispanic and Asian, especially Vietnamese students) are English language learners. Most students, about 50-75 percent, perform at or above grade level, but some students, like English language learners and disabled students, perform at or below grade level depending on the circumstances.

From what I have gathered, it is likely that some students in this classroom have a specific

learning disability, like dyslexia or dysgraphia; emotional/behavioral disturbance; or are gifted/talented. Percentages are difficult to gather as I have not noticed many challenges or other experiences exhibited from these students, but from overhearing conversations, having discussions with some students, and discussions with my mentor teacher, I am aware that these are very common, and some students may have other challenges I have not been made aware of. Many students are interested and involved in sports, like basketball, football, and baseball, but some students are interested in animation and anime, music, history and law, reading, and even culinary arts. Students' prior learning in terms of history and social studies include United States history since 1877, Texas history, world geography, and world history, and these influence planning for activities gathering prior knowledge, such as anticipation guides and think-pair-share; instruction relying on knowledge and foundations developed in previous courses; and for assessment relying on those foundations and further information learned in these courses.

Instructional implications

After analyzing these characteristics, there are many implications that factors from the community, classroom, and students that affect instructional planning and assessment. For instance, some students do not have access to the Internet or other online resources at home, causing difficulties completing assignments and assessments. Students have access to iPads and iChampion Wi-Fi across the city of Stephenville, but circumstances differ for every student. Alongside this, the completion of other projects and coursework may be difficult for students even with access to the Internet. Some students have two working parents and have the responsibility of taking care of siblings or grandparents; some are homeless and do not have access to resources like writing utensils or a surface to write on; some have parents who do not use English as their first language, and may not understand the instructions and context given for each assignment; some parents are not involved in their child's education or even their lives due to abuse and/or neglect.



Other instructional implications include lack of diverse connections within the community to find content examples or educational resources; at-risk students who experience difficulties with finding reason or motivation to complete coursework; social preferences like peer pressure leading to risky behaviors; students involved in athletics, clubs and organizations, or work that creates conflicts in schedules; how their prior knowledge was developed in previous courses; and finding time to develop their identity through outside influences, such as peers, teachers, parents, media, and other forms of socialization.