

Centennial: A Patchwork Quilt..People of Utah

Summary

by Mari Domanski. Individual contributions and the complete picture are all seen from valuable perspectives.

Materials

Partial census information for Utah 1990.

Variety of print or shaded color squares in paper or fabric.

Simple quilt patterns.

Quilts to show to the students.

Pictures of many, varied types of people, including genders, ethnicities, abilities, etc.

The Salt Lake Tribune 'Utah's People of Color' poster or articles.

Student texts, any Utah history.

Background for Teachers

In dealing with diversity, the melting pot, gender issues, and inclusion practices, we sometimes forget that people are the heart of our concerns. Perhaps for our concerns a quilt is a good analogy. We can enjoy the contributions of each piece of fabric, even the piece that joins the others into sharper perspective, as well as the overall effect. These same contributions can be celebrated for individuals and ethnic groups of Utah.

Intended Learning Outcomes

Students will list contributions made to Utah by a variety of ethnic groups.

Students will identify the variety of ethnic backgrounds in their immediate community and in the state.

Students will demonstrate that perspective effects all history.

Instructional Procedures

See preface material for the Utah Centennial Lesson Plans book.

Display some quilts or show slides of quilts. Ask the students to identify the outstanding color of each. A variety of answers will be forthcoming. Discuss why personal perspective makes this happen. Does this happen in extended families as well? Do personal perspectives make this happen here as well?

Discuss how Utah has many different cultures.

Create family trees. Highlight with favorite colors the different nationalities, ethnic backgrounds, genders, abilities, etc. Seek out differences. Work to help make trees as colorful as possible.

Construct a data base of the family backgrounds of the class. Decide with the students how to progress from the data base. With enough diversity or sufficient student interest, select some of the backgrounds to research. It could be an on going project of researching a background a month or by student selected groups for immediate research and presentation.

Research could begin with family members, church members, community members who can tell stories of contributions made by the background under study.

Another beginning is to create parallel timelines. One timeline for the student, from birth to the present, and a blank for the same period of time. The student will then begin research to fill in a chronological history of a specific nationality or ethnic group that parallels their life.

Then research back to the earliest possible connection with Utah. Discuss a way to visually present the information so that each nationality or ethnic group timeline looks different. Perhaps the use of colored or patterned paper would be helpful to relink with the quilt analogy.

Extensions

Record the major contributions of each ethnic group on a 4-inch by 4-inch piece of patterned paper. After prioritizing the contributions for each group design a pattern which shows the groups contributions individually and the interrelationship they have with others. The more student groups that attempt this the greater the variety of quilt styles and historical perspectives that will emerge. Make a real quilt 'The Honor of Diversity' and donate it to an organization, family, charity, etc. Present a 'best of us' show to the community. A 'best of us' show could be done in a series of montages, by panel discussion, readers theatre, or the like.

Create a celebration to honor others' ethnic background. Have students of other backgrounds research, plan and host a celebration. Then, of course, turn the tables and allow others backgrounds to be likewise studied and celebrated.

Select an important point in Utah history and rewrite it as those of a different background may have experienced it. If the point in history is current, interviews may be conducted to record how different backgrounds have experienced it.

Authors

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