

Overview

Planning

Colonial Perspectives
Project

Assessment

Reflection

Martha Andrews
5th Grade5th Grade Social
Studies Curriculum

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Multiple Means of Assessment

Andrews uses both informal and formal assessments to gauge her students progress as a part of her own "cycle of inquiry" to determine how her initial plans are working and to shape her instruction for the future.

Informal assessments involve observing and recording the work of individual students as well as documenting whole class discussions on charts. Keeping track of the questions students ask and the comments they make allows Andrews to understand how individual students are processing their learning as well as to "take the pulse" of the whole class. In addition, meetings and public presentations with other classes, parents, and others also give the students a chance to demonstrate what they are learning. Formal assessments include a variety of assignments that students complete as part of their projects. These assignments both help to keep students "on task" and allow Andrews to see whether students are ready to move on. Every student at the school also keeps a portfolio of work from kindergarten until 5th grade. The students review their work over time, regularly selecting new pieces to include in the portfolio. This activity gives Andrews further opportunities to consider what her students are learning.

In her assignments, Andrews strives to use a mix of different kinds of assessments to give students a range of ways to explore issues and demonstrate their learning.

Written pieces in different genres, oral presentations, book reports, and cartoons are among the choices Andrews offered the children for the Colonial America study.

ASSESSMENT as a Means of Reflection

The school does not give children grades, but rather follows the New York City mandated progress report, which has teachers rate student work on a scale of 1-4. Andrews also supplements that report with her own and her students' reflections. Andrews uses the students' portfolios as a means of reflecting on their learning over time:

"We keep the kids' work. They periodically go through it and pick out what they want to save. It's actually really neat when they get to fifth grade because we have a file that follows them from class to class. It has their kindergarten work, . . . a few pieces of work from each grade. I ask kids to pick out pieces that show their best work and also pieces that show their learning. For some of those we're picking out pieces of work where they're going to be making revisions, because they've learned something and they want to change it. So one of the things we need to do is look through our Social Studies notebooks and pick out the pages we want to photocopy and put in the portfolio." Andrews

ASSESSMENT THEMES

Download a selection of quotes (pdf) from Andrews' and Falk's conversations about Assessment.

Themes detailed in the PDF:

- Assessment by "walking around"
- Meetings as a means of assessment
- Assessment's role in informing instruction
- Using different forms/styles of assessment
- Progress Reports
- Rubrics
- Expectations
- "Revisiting"
- What the students have learned

Video Reflections:



- **Observing Students' Progress:** Andrews talks about the progress she saw over the course of this unit (video).
- **Observing Students' Progress over Two Years:** Andrews and Falk talk about the nuanced nature of progress (2:25 min. video).
- **Ways of Assessing:** Andrews talks about different ways of assessing (video).

- **Observing Students Listen to and Help Each Other:** (video).

"I think particularly in their writing, to see kids, happily sit down and write two pages about a made-up experience they had with another British citizen, and to use paragraphs, and in the first paragraph to set the scene, and a lot of their work definitely shows that they've developed an understanding of narrative and of ways to be good writers...."
Andrews