

Standard 2(b) Artifact Rationale: Uses knowledge of student development to make learning experiences in the content area meaningful and accessible for every student.

I chose this lesson plan because it demonstrates my knowledge of content appropriate to my teaching position and how to make learning experiences in a content area more meaningful for the students. This lesson is about the Middle Passage or the experience of African slaves as they crossed the Atlantic on slave ships. I wrote this lesson plan for my 7th grade U.S. History class (which covers from Columbus to the American Civil War). It demonstrates the in-depth research I conducted in order to locate primary sources (both textual and visual) which were age-appropriate, engaging, and challenging for my 7th graders. The lesson begins by having the students visually dissect a series of etchings and pictures taken on slave ships during the 1850s. I ask students to speculate about the treatment, condition, and experiences of the slaves aboard the vessel by using visual evidence from the images. This gives the students an idea of what it may have looked like on a slave ship. Then students read a firsthand account of the Middle Passage experience by a freed slave, Olaudah Equiano. This gives students insight into the feelings, thoughts, and experiences of slaves that made the Middle Passage. The students read this passage with the assistance of a vocabulary list to help them understand the old language of the passage. Then students (with a partner) write a story about how they survive the Middle Passage, putting all of their newly acquired knowledge into practice. I also incorporate a tight-packing simulation with this lesson, which allows every student to decide how they would survive on a slave ship. For these reasons, I feel like this lesson creates a meaningful and accessible learning experience for every student.