Concept Formation Lesson: Assimilation

Overview:
This concept formation lesson is designed to teach students about the concept of assimilation.

People move from place to place and immigrants often move to places that are very different from their homelands. When people move to new countries, they often learn the cultures and ways of their new country. Often, it is essential to understand the culture and language of the new country in order to be successful. In the United States it is often very important for the immigrants and their families to learn English. Over generations immigrant families often lose the culture of their homelands and accept those of their new nation. The process that takes place over time is called assimilation.

This lesson was designed for seventh grade students studying American History part II and through this lesson students will come to understand assimilation. The students will look at examples of the concept and from those examples derive the critical attributes of the concept. The students will then form a definition of the concept using the critical attributes. Finally, the students will be able to determine the concept that is presented and label it as assimilation. After the concept has been identified, the students will look at a non-example of the concept. In order to demonstrate their knowledge, the students will determine whether the given information is an example or non-example. After the students have declared it to be a non example, they will be asked to change the information so that it is an example of the concept of assimilation.

The students will complete a chart to guide them in determining the critical attributes of assimilation. Using the charts, the students will discuss the similarities and differences between each example that they found throughout the lesson. After the students have determined the critical attributes of assimilation, they will be provided with a non-example that they will have to change to an example. For homework the students will write a paragraph about whether assimilation is good or bad and will discuss why they chose their answer. The lesson should take about an hour, which is equal to one class period.

Rationale: Assimilation is a very important concept that should be dealt with in American history, especially American history part II. During the period from 1877 to present, many immigrants came into the United States. As they came into the United States they often had to adapt to their new environments. Often when immigrants came they faced hardship and discrimination. It was very important for them to fit into the American mainstream and learning English allowed them more opportunities for success. Many people from around the world gave up the cultures of their homelands in order to become and integral part of American society and the mainstream. The concept of assimilation is important and is still discussed today. Assimilation in the United States is very important to understanding the society of the United States. Through this lesson, students should be able to better understand the actions that immigrants took when starting their lives in the United States and their experiences here.

Grade Level/Time: This lesson has been designed for a seventh grade class studying American history part II, but it could easily be used for a world history class. This lesson is being taught during the unit about immigration to the United States. In order to do that, examples of assimilation into societies outside of the United States should probably be included. A few more examples that are written on a higher level should probably also be included in an adaptation for older students. Although the lesson is planned for a forty-five minute period, it could be adapted
for a longer period by including more examples for determining the critical attributes or more examples and non-examples after the concept has been declared.

Objectives:
Academic:
1. Students will be able to list the critical attributes of assimilation.
2. Students will be able to define assimilation.
3. Students will be able to distinguish between examples and non-examples of assimilation.
4. Students will be able to recognize the role that assimilation plays/played in the lives of immigrants.
5. Students will be able to recognize that assimilation in generally easier as the generations continue to increase.

Intellectual:
1. Students will construct their own knowledge of assimilation by determining its critical attributes after analyzing examples and then writing their own definitions of the topic.
2. Students will apply their knowledge and synthesize what they learned by correcting a non-example and writing a paragraph about whether or not assimilation is good.

Standards Met:
USII.1b: The student will demonstrate skills for historical and geographical analysis, including the ability to make connections between past and present;
NCSS 1-5: Culture, Time, Continuity & Change, People, Places & Environments, Individual Development & Identity, and Individuals, Groups & Institutions

Assessment:
For homework, the students will write a paragraph about whether or not assimilation is good and their reasoning along with whether they think assimilation is easier for parents or children.

Resources:
1. worksheets (for each student)
2. projector for video clip & PowerPoint
3. lesson packets (for each student) [includes all example information]
4. marker & erasers to write the similarities, differences, critical attributes and definition on the board
5. paper & pencils

Steps for the Lesson:
I. Concept Definition: Assimilation is (1) the minority adopting the culture of the majority (2) causes the minority group to lose their culture (3) involves the inclusion of smaller groups into a larger group.
II. Hook
A. For the hook, I will show the students a short video about Jewish immigrants and the importance that they placed on school and learning the English language. I will ask the students what the Jewish immigrants changed when they came to America and how their goals changed. After they share their answers I will tell them that the video was an example of the concept we will be learning about today.
III. Data Retrieval Chart
   A. After the hook activity, I will pair the students into groups of two.
   B. Every person will be given a data retrieval chart and a copy of each of the written examples.
   C. After everyone has a copy of the information, I will explain that they should answer the questions in the chart for each example.
   D. We will complete the first example as a class.
   E. Then I will tell the students to look over/read the next two examples and discuss each of them with their partner to gather information for their charts. Then we will go over the chart as a class to make sure that every section has been completed properly.

IV. Example Analysis
   A. Once everyone has finished their charts, I will ask them about the differences they noticed between the examples. While they say differences, I will list them on the board. Then, we will discuss the differences.
   B. After the differences, we will list the similarities and I will write them on the board. I will ask the students which similarities they think are most important and will guide them to correct answers. I will circle the appropriate critical attributes.

V. Defining and Labeling the Concept
   A. After we have determined the critical attributes, I will ask the students to work separately to develop a definition of the concept we are discussing. I will tell them that all of the critical attributes must be a part of the definition.
   B. When the students have written their own definitions, I will ask them to volunteer to share their example with the class. I will listen to their ideas and comment. Then, I will write my definition on the board.
   C. I will then let the students brainstorm with their partners for two minutes to try and determine the concept. I will then take responses from the class and hopefully assimilation will be suggested. If no one suggests assimilation, I will write it on the board and tell the class it is the concept we have been discussing.

VI. Closing
   A. The students will be given the final example of assimilation and will apply the critical attributes to determine why it is an example.
   B. The students will then be given a non-example. I will ask them to determine whether it is an example or a non-example. Once they have determined that it is a non-example, I will ask them to discuss with their partner how to change the information into an example. After about five minutes, I will ask for suggestions of how to make that non-example into an example and why it was a non-example in the first place.

Differentiation: In order to help learners that use various methods most efficiently, I incorporated different types of media and information. In our examples and the hook, I used video, pictures and text. I also read the first example aloud and the students worked in groups so they could help one another.

Adaptations: Adaptations such as larger print and decreased text size will be made for students with learning disabilities related to reading.

Reflection: This lesson was a success in teaching students about the concept of assimilation, but there is much room for improvement. During the lesson I did not allow students appropriate to
elaborate upon their responses for the chart. If I had allowed them to elaborate, the lesson could have been more meaningful and interesting to them. The photos were well received by the students. They enjoyed being able to visualize the examples, but were sometimes confused by the actual images and what they meant. When the students left the classroom, they better understood assimilation. Allowing the students to work more independently and providing them with more examples and non-examples of assimilation will be beneficial when teaching this lesson in the future.