Lesson Plan Title: What's the Most Important?

Subject area: American Educational History

Recommended course (s):

Teaching and Learning in Elementary, Secondary, and Adult Education

Aligned to NASAFACS Standards:

Objectives:

Students will learn about key events in the history of American education as they explore an educational history time line and make choices about their relative importance.

Materials needed:

-Internet access: computers, tablets, phones, etc
-Paper and pen/pencil
-White board and marker

Resources:

www.http://bit.ly/28REH0c (lesson plan)
www.http://bit.ly/28RELx2 (timeline)

Lesson Summary/Outline:

This Web-based lesson plan is designed to introduce students to key events in the history of American education as they explore an educational history time line and choose events they believe to be the most important. They then discuss their choices in small groups and attempt to reach a consensus on the five most important events in American educational history. The lesson can serve as an introduction to the topic of educational history or as a stand-alone activity.

Motivator/Opening:

Use a quote about education history as a "bell ringer" (samples below or choose own) i.e. "Education is the key to unlock the golden door of freedom."-George Washington Carver; "A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin & culture is like a tree without roots."-Marcus Garvey

Activities:

Assign students the task of reading American Educational History: A Hypertext Timeline and clicking on links to additional information regarding events they believe are interesting and/or important. Explain that their task is to choose the five events included in the timeline that they believe are the most important in the history of American education. Define "important" as events having the greatest impact on American society. Tell them that they should write a short paragraph about each event they choose that briefly describes it and explains why it is important.

During the next class period, divide students into groups of four or five. Direct them to share their lists and then reach a group consensus on the five most important events in the history of American education. They should decide on a rank order for their five events and then write their list on the board in order of importance (with the most important event at the top of the list). Have each group choose a spokesperson.

Assignments:

When all groups have put their lists on the board, ask each group spokesperson to explain their choices. Initiate a whole-class discussion regarding similarities and differences between the lists as well as students' reasons for including their choices. Add any important events you believe the students have overlooked. Write them on the board and explain why you consider them important.

Conclude the discussion by trying to reach a consensus regarding the events the class believes make up the top five. Though actually reaching a whole-class consensus may not be possible, the resultant discussion should prove both valuable and interesting.

Evaluation:

Each student will use the top 5, as decided by the class, and write 2-3 paragraphs explaining what he/she learned from this exercise.

Notes:

Extension: Assign your students the task of using the Internet to identify other important events in the history of American education that do not appear in the time line.
original lesson plan website:
http://www.eds-resources.com/educationhistorytimeline.html

Submitted by:

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Contact info:

Edmund J. Sass, Ed.D

esass@csbsju.edu