

Literature-based Lesson: Exploration and Christopher Columbus

The literature-based lesson planning experience was a very valuable one. I believe the assignment was both creative, but also structured in a way that allowed us to be successful in our first teaching experience. Creating and teaching a lesson plan that informs third graders about exploration, and in particular Christopher Columbus, was initially challenging and ultimately rewarding.

I taught this lesson on Friday October 13, 2006 at Kraft Elementary School in Joanne Smith's third grade classroom. As far as first teaching experiences go, I feel that this was a successful one; however, there are some changes I would make before using this lesson again.

I began the lesson by asking students to think about a time when they were in a new and unfamiliar place. I shared my memory with them, but did not have them share aloud. I believe that this activity still tapped into their prior knowledge, but in teaching the lesson again, I would probably have the students share aloud, not only so they could relate to one another, but also as a way for me to assess their understanding of the activity. After segueing into a discussion on exploration, complete with a picture of a large ship taped to the board, we moved on to record our ideas on this topic. To do this, we completed a *KWL* chart as a class.

Outside of completing the *K* and *W* sections of the *KWL* chart on exploration, I presented the book, *Encounter* by Jane Yolen, without much of an introduction. I think this approach resulted in some confusion for the students. If I were to teach this lesson again, I would be sure to inform the students that this story is about Christopher Columbus and his landing at San Salvador. This brief introduction would allow the students to make better connections between *Encounter* and the information packets used during the lesson development phase.