Civic Ideal & Practices

Lesson Plan: The State of Your Union

"The State of Your Union"

I. Standards Addressed

X. Civic Ideals and Practices

A. Explain the origins and continuing influence of key ideals of the democratic republican form of government, such as individual human dignity, liberty, justice, equality, and the rule of law.

G. Evaluate the effectiveness of public opinion in influencing and shaping public policy development and decision-making.

II. Results/Expectations

Students will learn about key practices in our democratic system of government through the delivery of the State of the Union Address. They will be able to evaluate the influence of public speaking, and ways in which it influences citizenship response. Students will learn a bit about the role of being President of the United States by preparing and typing their own State of the Union address. This will give students the opportunity to use a means of government to express where they are at in life. Since this is geared towards upper-level high school, they will have the chance to explain their past and help gear them towards a future plan.

III. Evaluation

Students will be evaluated by the following criteria:

- Paper 2-3 pages long, double-spaced
- Emulates President's State of the Union Address
- Shows good content and provides insight
- Students show understanding of the State of the Union, why it is delivered, and what its purpose is through participating in classroom discussion and reflecting content knowledge in the layout of their paper.

IV. This lesson plan would work well in a U.S. government class.

V. Instruction

First Day:

Students will be introduced to a typed copy of the State of the Union Address, where they will read through to themselves and find the following areas of the speech:

1.) Introduction

2.) Foreign Policy

3.) Domestic Policy

4.) Acknowledgement of the past

5.) Specific goals/plans for the future

- The students will then watch a video of that same copy of the State of the Union, while taking down notes of the President's body language, use of words, etc.

Specific questions will be asked following the video to ensure class participation (questions below).

First day questions:

- What stuck out to you during the President's State of the Union speech?

- What did the President do that you could do in your State of the Union speech?

- How was their message received?
Second Day:

Students will go to the computer lab with their notes and type up the "State of Their Union" speech. In the students "State of Their Union" speech, they are given the chance to expand on their place in life right now, sharing with the class their past experiences, future goals, family (foreign), and internal (domestic) relationships at this point in their "union." Students have the opportunity to reflect upon their life as well as understanding a very important part of our governmental structure.

Things that must be included in the paper:

- Acknowledgement of their past

- Goals met, challenges overcome, etc.

- Foreign Policy - interaction with family, friends, the outside world and ways you are involved and work as a productive member of society.

- Domestic Policy - Person plan of the students stating where they plan to go in the next few years, goals for themselves, and what they have within them that can make our country a better place.

- Conclusion - summarize all points, and leave on a positive note!

VI. Discussion Questions

- How would our country be if there were no State of the Union address?

- In creating a new State of Your Union, what did you see as challenges the president may face?

- Critique the address you saw the President give. What was good? What could be different?

- Classify the different areas in which the President spoke about in his speech.

- Compare/Contrast what your speech was like and what the Presidents was like? How are they similar and what is different?

- What is the State of the Union Address?
Civic Involvement

MN BOT Standard

X. Civic Ideals and Practices

b. identify, analyze, interpret, and evaluate sources and examples of citizens' rights and responsibilities

d. practice forms of civic discussion and participation consistent with the ideals of citizens in a democratic republic

My civic experience is one I am very proud of. I had the honor and privilege of working as a Campaign Manager for a candidate in a County Commissioner Race. The candidate was my Grandfather, Burdell Coplan, and working for him politically was one of the greatest honors of my life. I was fortunate enough to be given this opportunity, and took full advantage of it.

Seeing what goes on inside of an election is a wonderful experience for anyone going into the Social Studies Program. While being in the position of a Campaign Manager, I was able to make calls, promote the re-election of my Grandfather, and lead new and exciting ideas about getting his message out there. In preparation for the election, I called every number in the Canton, South Dakota phonebook, assuring that person that they should re-elect County Commissioner Burdell Coplan. In doing so, I was able to reach out into the community, ask people if they had decided on who they were voting for, and if their mind had not yet been made up I presented my views on why Burdell Coplan is perfect for the job. I also led a new idea in this re-election. I was in charge of getting the candidates name out on new social networking sites the younger generations use. This is a vital way to spread a candidates message, and remind people of voting dates and places. In creating a group called, "Vote for Burdell Coplan: County Commissioner," I was able to invite eligible voters into a group where his ideas and goals were shared, and reminders of when and where to vote. This was also crucial because I was able to spread the word about absentee voting, as many college students would be absent to vote at the time of the election. If anyone expressed an interest in absentee voting, I was able to send them an absentee ballot to their current location, so they could be sure to vote.

This experience was excellent in preparing me for a job as a teacher because I was able to see the behind the scene view of an election, was able to explore the election process a little more thoroughly, and was also submerged in knowledge of local politics. I am so thankful to have been part of that election process.