

Where in the World is....? – Grade 2

Comments on teaching this lesson – Donna Bass

Throughout the week of January 15th -January 18th, I taught the "Where in the World is" lesson to my second grade class. My classes were composed of 44 students, 22 in each class, one class included GT students, while the other class ranges on various levels of intelligence, such as "over-achievers", to the typical second grade student. Instead of teaching the entire lesson in one day, I decided to maximize the lesson into several "mini" lessons, which had many different products.

On the first day, I introduced the lesson with the power point slide show of the children in Mexico, which I had created by including many different photographs of the children going about their daily activities. My students were actively engaged in this lesson, due to the fact that they knew that I had been to the Yucatan. They all paid very close attention to the smallest details in the photos. One child stated, "The pictures make me want to go to the Yucatan."

As a class, we then constructed a Venn diagram to note comparisons and contrasts between Mexico to that of the United States. Each student used an atlas to locate the United States and Mexico, during which time I introduced how to use a map scale to estimate the distance from one place to another. The students applied this new concept by using string and the map scale to calculate the estimated distance from Nacogdoches, Texas to Celestun, Mexico by air, land, and water. This concept proved to be slightly challenging for the average second grader, however, it was not a problem for the GT students, or higher-level second graders. Therefore, I would recommend that this lesson be moved up to a third grade level for a better comprehension of this skill. We had to complete this section of the lesson together as a class, which was not necessary for the remainder of the lesson. I then gave the students a model word problem in which they had to substitute their information into the problem. They were assigned a mode of transportation to use, such as, air, land, or water.

One other difficulty that we encountered is that there is not currently a resource for information on the exact distance from the United States to Celestun, Mexico. It would be very beneficial to teachers, as well as students, if there was a website that we could go to for the accurate distances by different means of transportation from here to Mexico.