4/1/14

Grade Nine World History

Unit: The Italian Renaissance

Lesson: “Humanist Education and the Renaissance Man”

Enduring Understandings:

* The goals of a society’s education system ideally match the values and ideals of that society.
* The tension between specialization and being well-rounded presents conflict on social, political, economic, and philosophical levels.

Essential Questions:

* What does a humanist education system look like?
* What are the goals of our modern American education system and do they match the values and ideals of our society?
* What is the meaning of the term “Universal/Renaissance Man” and how did the term develop?
* In today’s world, is it better to be a “Renaissance Man/Woman” or to specialize and become an expert in a single area?

Standards:

* CC.8.5.9-10.A: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.
* CC.8.5.9-10.B: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.
* CC.8.5.9-10.I: Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary or secondary sources.

Set-up:

* Connect my computer to SMART Board
* Make copies of *The Book of the Courtier* passages

Activities:

1. **Do-Now (10 minutes):** When students enter the classroom they will sit in their assigned seats and follow the instructions on the SMART Board. They will first be asked to review the definition of humanism that was introduced and discussed at length in yesterday’s class. I will also provide the following definition on the SMART Board: “Humanism: An intellectual movement focused on human potential and achievement.**”** They will then be asked to respond to the following question in their notes:

“What does a humanist education system look like? Is our American education system humanistic?”

Students will have 5 minutes to record their thoughts in their notes, and then we will come together as a class to discuss student answers. This will build into a broader conversation about the role of an education system, and how an education system reflects the values and ideals of a society. I will also explain that later on in class we will be exploring the effects of humanism on the education system of the Renaissance, and investigate whether or not our education system is still affected by this movement.

1. **Brief Lecture (5 minutes):** I will present one slide about how the convergence of humanism and inspiration from classical Greece and Rome led to the development of a liberal arts education and the ideal of the “Universal Man” (later Renaissance Man). To arrive at this understanding we will review the development of humanism in 13th century Italy (decline of the feudal system, rise of city-states, a capitalist economy, and a wealthy merchant class) that was discussed in yesterday’s class. We will also review the components of a “classical” education that students learned about during the Byzantine Empire unit. I will then introduce *The Book of the Courtier*, written by Baldassare Castiglione in 1528, which popularized the idea of the “Universal Man” as a courtly gentleman who excels in all areas.
2. **Primary Source Analysis (25 minutes):** Students will work in their “letter groups” to analyze passages from *The Book of the Courtier*. Each person in the letter group (composed of 4 students) will have a different passage from *The Book of the Courtier* outlining the areas in which the “Universal Man” must excel. Additionally, at the bottom of their handout, students all have the same passage from *The Book of the Courtier* pertaining to the expectations of a “Universal Woman.” Students will analyze *The Book of the Courtier* according to the following 5 steps:
3. Read your assigned passage from *The Book of the Courtier* on the “Universal Man.”
4. In your notes, record the areas of study your passage indicates the courtier must excel. Why does Castiglione say this area is important to master?
5. Share your answers to part 2 with your group
6. Read the passage from *The Book of the Courtier* on the “Universal Woman.”
7. In your notes, record Castiglione’s expectation for women. How do they differ from his expectations for male courtiers? According to Castiglione, what is the “nature” of women?

We will then come back together as a class and students will share out their responses to part 2 of the assignment. As students report the areas Castiglione says the “Universal Man” must excel, I will list them on a T-chart on the SMART Board in the column titled “Renaissance Period.” When we have a complete list, I will ask students to share their responses to part 5 of the assignment, about Castiglione’s expectations of the “Universal Women.” I will then return to the T-chart and ask students to think of modern-day equivalents of these areas in which the “Universal Man” must excel. If they cannot think of any direct modern-day equivalents, I will ask students to think about the reasons why Castiglione says it is important to excel in that area, and then think about what we do today for those same reasons. I will ask students to share their responses and I will record them on the opposite side of the T-chart under the column labeled “Modern Day.”

1. **Final Question (10 minutes):** After reviewing our lengthy and varied list of areas in which a modern-day “Renaissance Man/Woman” must excel, students will be asked to respond to the following final question in 2-3 complete sentences their notes, and then discuss their answers in their “letter groups”:

“In today’s world, is it better to be a “Renaissance Man/Woman” or to specialize and become an expert in a single area?”

 Finally, we will come back together as a class and discuss student responses to this final question.

Homework:

* None