

Community Description

Beaverton is small city with around eighty-five thousand residents and forty six schools. It is home to dozens of small shops and restaurants, the large Washington Square Mall, Nike's international headquarters and an Intel manufacturing plant. Those businesses enable the local economy to thrive and the residents to enjoy an average household income of 61,795 dollars per year¹. Those residents are also able to enjoy a vast array of parks, green spaces and hiking trails. According to the City of Beaverton's official website there is a park located within a half mile of every home and the City features 30 miles of hiking trails and a 25-mile network of bike paths².

The City of Beaverton also boasts a diverse population that is becoming more diverse each year. In 2000 the census revealed that 74.1 percent of Beaverton residents were white, 11 percent were Hispanic, 9.9 percent identified as Asian or Pacific Islander, 3.3 percent were multi-racial, 1.2 percent were African American and .5 percent identified as Native American³. That census also found that 18.4 percent of Beaverton's residence were foreign born and that 54.6 percent of that population had arrived after 1990⁴. Those numbers reveal a rich cultural diversity that has spurred Beaverton's growth and as immigrants from Mexico, Central America and South East Asia have continued to steadily flow in Beaverton has become the sixth largest city in Oregon. With a diverse population, strong economic model and plenty of scenic beauty Beaverton is truly a model city.

¹ Data Place, *Area Overview*, 02 November 2008. <http://www.dataplace.org/area_overview/index.html?category=2&place=p26.10:4105350&z=1>

² City of Beaverton, *About Beaverton*, 05 November 2008. <<http://www.beavertonoregon.gov/community/aboutbeaverton.aspx>>.

³ Data Place, *Area Overview*, 02 November 2008. <http://www.dataplace.org/area_overview/index.html?category=2&place=p26.10:4105350&z=1>

⁴ Data Place, *Area Overview*, 02 November 2008. <http://www.dataplace.org/area_overview/index.html?category=2&place=p26.10:4105350&z=1>

Within Beaverton there are thirteen neighborhood association committees. These committees give the local residents an opportunity to voice the needs of individual neighborhoods. The Conestoga Middle School is located within the neighborhood of Greenway. Greenway is a well maintained residential area with lots of green space and many nice homes. The neighborhood does not boast many shops or businesses and most residents must commute to work. The area does have public transit in the form of multiple bus lines. Those bus lines connect to light rail stations throughout the western metro area and enable residents too conveniently travel anywhere in the greater Portland region.

Community Walk Through

If one were to wonder through the Greenway community they would find a series of small streets and roads and primarily residential housing. The three main shops in the neighborhood are the two seven-eleven convenient stores located just over a mile apart and the Albertsons Grocery Store. While touring one would also come across the Kindergarten Learning Center, the Westgate Christian School, Southridge High School, Greenway Elementary and of course the Conestoga Middle School. All of these schools, except for the Kindergarten Learning Center which does not receive a rating, have been rated as either exceptional or strong by the State of Oregon. Beside the Southridge High School sits the massive Conestoga Recreation and Aquatics Center. This center is a community hotspot and it provides local residents with a wide variety of after school programs, a fitness center, a pool, a pre-school and a summer camp. This facility is a great resource for the community's youth and is a wonderful way to bring the residents of Greenway together.

The Implications of the Community on Teaching

The community's diverse population and growing number of non-English speaking immigrants may present challenges in the classroom. It will be important to recognize that not all of my students will be able to comprehend English at the same level and that students from different cultural backgrounds may not all learn in identical ways. To meet these challenges I will have to differentiate instructional and assessment strategies, get to know all of my students and continue to increase my cultural competence.

Conestoga Middle School

The ~40,000 square foot Conestoga Middle School was opened in 1999 and serves 990 students and employs 44 teachers and ten other non custodial staff members. The facilities are very nice and the campus houses two computer labs (the only support technician for those labs is the librarian), one mobile computer lab, a large library, gymnasium and computers, televisions and an ELMO in every classroom.

The campus is also quite diverse with 73 percent of the students identifying as white, 16 percent as Asian or Pacific Islander, 13 percent as Hispanic, 4 percent as African American, 1 percent as Native American and 8 percent of students identified as multi-racial. The student body is also diverse in its learning needs with 10 percent of students enrolled in special education services, 9 percent requiring ESL services, 10 percent enrolled as TAG students and 28% receiving free or reduced lunches. With a beautiful campus, modern facilities and rich diversity Conestoga is a model school located in an incredible community.

The school is committed to maintaining its academic excellence and ensuring that its students are prepared to become productive members of the global community.

Conestoga consistently receives a strong rating from the State of Oregon and its students are rated as strong on overall academic progress. One way that Conestoga maintains its strong academic standards is through accountability. The B.O.S.S. program seeks to hold students accountable for their academic achievement and their behavior within the school. B.O.S.S. stands for: Bring it (responsibility), Own it (accountability), Show it (respect) and Share it (compassion). Every student and faculty member is expected to adhere to B.O.S.S. and students who consistently embody the values of the program or perform an outstanding deed are rewarded with B.O.S.S. bucks. Those B.O.S.S. bucks can later be redeemed for t-shirts, school supplies or other prizes. Conversely the students who consistently fail to live up to the B.O.S.S. standards may be reprimanded, called to mediation with their peers or counselors, sent to detention, given in-school suspension or suspended. The program appears to be quite successful and the school currently enjoys a ninety five percent attendance rate and has received a strong overall rating from the State of Oregon.

Implication of School Context on Teaching

The modern, well maintained facilities at Conestoga create an environment that is conducive to student achievement and the B.O.S.S. program and the array of after school activities that are available through the Tualatan Valley Recreation Department can help students to feel connected to their peers, teachers, school and the community at large. As a classroom teacher I will encourage students to live up to B.O.S.S. standards and to maintain the schools academic success. I will also take the time to get to know each of

students and differentiate my teaching and assessment strategies to help ensure the success of each and every one of them.

Classroom

This is a sixth grade geography class that is comprised of thirty students. The class demographics break down as follows: 16 males to 14 females, 22 white students, 5 Asian or Pacific Islanders and 3 Hispanics. Three of the students are on IEPs, two of the students are ELL and one of the students has been labeled TAG. I was not able to find out which students were on free or reduced lunches; however, since 28% of the student body qualifies for free and reduced lunches I will work from the assumption that nearly one in three of the students in this classroom are from low socio-economic backgrounds.

One of the IEP students and one of the ELL students really struggles with reading and writing. The other ELL student speaks and reads well and is capable of completing all assignments on time. The only challenge that he has yet to overcome is spelling and grammar. The second IEP student has been diagnosed with ADHD and is also capable of completing all of his assignments on time. To help these students I plan to implement literacy strategies, work with the student's resource room instructors and alter some of the formative and cumulative assessments.

Literacy Plan to Help IEP and ELL Students

At the front of the classroom that this work sample will be presented in is a poster that reads: "Literacy is Not an Elective". The battle cry on that poster sums up the attitude at Conestoga Middle School and I attempted to adhere to that motto in this work sample. Students will spend two hours per day in this class with fifty five minutes of that time spent studying Social Studies with me and sixty minutes spent studying Language

Arts with Ms. Lorentz. The nice thing about having a combined Language Arts and Social Studies classroom is that texts read during Language Arts will correspond in some way to what the students are studying in Social Studies. Having the opportunity to read about what was learned in Social Studies will increase literacy skills and reinforce Social Studies skills.

During Social Studies I will use graphic organizers, mind maps, timelines and mapping assignments to help visually reinforce key terms and ideas. Those literacy strategies help students stay focused on the primary concepts and give them an easy to read and follow reference sheet to the key terms and ideas from the unit. The Social Studies portion of the class will also use short writing assignments as warm ups, closings and in class assignments to get students thinking about the content and to improve their writing skills. Short writing assignments are a good way to focus students' attention and get them to delve deeper into a specific topic. Finally the Social Studies section will ask students to write two longer essays. One of the goals for sixth grade students is to have them researching or reading assigned materials, then writing well thought out essays of one paragraph to one page that have a good topic sentence, proper grammar and that closely follow the assignment's instruction. Both essay assignments will have students reading assigned articles, gathering information from those articles and then writing essays based upon that information and their personal opinions. The ability to write a strong essay based upon given instructions will be a critical skill in high school and college and the essays assigned in this unit will test the students' abilities meet those standards.

Alternative Assessments and Grading to Help IEP and ELL Students

This class has two ELL students. Student G is from Mexico and has been in the United States for four years. He speaks English pretty well and I have never had a problem communicating with him. The only assignments that were modified for him in any way were the two writing assessments. Student G was expected to complete both assignments and to follow all of the same directions and criteria as the rest of the class. The one modification that was made came as I corrected the assignments. While correcting I did mark all spelling and grammatical errors; however, I did not mark the papers down for each spelling and grammatical error.

Where student G did very well was on his Mapping Mexico assignment. It was so good that I have included under the student examples section of tab four in this work sample. Student G not only followed all direction and included all of the required information, but he went above and beyond with excellent art work and very clear hand writing. His work on the Map is also free of both spelling and grammatical errors.

The other ELL student in this class arrived from Vietnam in September of 2008. This student goes to the resource room for language emersion during language arts and is beginning to gain some understanding of the language. Communication with student R is very difficult and determining how much information he is absorbing is quiet a challenge. According to my CT his goal during social studies is to be around other students in the hopes of absorbing more English. Fortunately for my CT and I there is a student in the room whose parents are from Vietnam and while she (Student AB) is not fluent she is able to communicate basic directions to student R.

Student R did very well on both the physical map and the Mapping Mexico assignment. He scored a five out of five on the physical map and a ten out of ten on the

Mapping Mexico project. Those two scores were impressive and when coupled with his twelve out of fifteen on the post assessment it demonstrates that he was able to fully grasp the mapping portion of the class and that he did retain information throughout the course of the unit.

For the two writing assessments I did have to alter instruction and expectations for Student R. On the writing assignments I required Student R to follow all of the directions and to meet all of the standards with two exceptions. First I highlighted the most important lines from the articles that students were expected to read prior to writing the two papers. Student R was only required to read the highlighted sections and he was required to work with Student AB whose role it was to provide an explanation of complex words. The second exception came as I graded the assessment. Student R was not marked down at all for spelling or grammatical errors. Just as with Student G I corrected errors for the students own growth and did not penalize.

This class has just two IEP students and unfortunately one of those students, Student I, was absent for six of the ten lessons covered in this work sample. With only four opportunities to work with Student I it is hard to assess his learning gains. He was there for the pre test, the seventh lesson, the ninth lesson and the post test. He failed to turn in his physical map, Mapping Mexico project, timeline, Mexican Democracy Essay or Modern Topics letter. When he came in for lesson seven he did ask me how he could catch up and I gave him the graphic organizer for the unit, the ancient people's reference sheet, the study guide for the post assessment, a copy of my lectures and asked him to read the material. I informed him that if he studied and did well on the post test that I

would excuse the other assignments as it was too late to make them all up. To his credit he scored a twelve out of fifteen on the post test and I will excuse those assignments.

The other IEP student has ADHD and has been a pleasure to work with. His IEP says that he has trouble staying focused and that he often needs to be reminded to remain on task. I did not personally notice him having any problem remaining on task and his scores were generally very high. As of right now his grade for Social Studies is a B and that is only because he was absent the day of the post assessment and has yet to make it up. He excelled on both writing assignments receiving a 100% on both and received a 100% on the timeline and the physical map as well. I did not alter my assessments for this student at all and my CT informed me that she does not either. My CT claims that his impairment does not affect his grades very much. Instead she said that his condition makes it difficult for him to sit through long lectures or movies and that as long as there was something for him to that he was fine.

Physical Layout of the Classroom

The children are seated in rows of nine and columns of three rows facing the front of the room. The front of the room consists of a poster covered wall, an overhead projector and the teacher's desk. The posters on the front wall advertise books, movies and other academic subjects. There are also posters that outline the classroom rules and schedule. On the left hand wall as you face the instructor there is a television with a VCR and a DVD player and a large bookshelf. The right wall contains a computer station with two operational computers and along the rear wall there is a sink and a set of storage cabinets. The room is spacious enough to comfortably hold all of the students,

contains all of the necessary technology and other than its lack of windows I believe that it will be a great environment to teach in.