KTS Standards 1 (Demonstrates Applied Content Knowledge) and 2 (Designs and Plans Instruction) Rationale

I have chosen my fifth grade social studies unit titled “Exploration” to demonstrate my level of proficiency for KTS standards 1 and 2. I have included my unit guidelines (SOE 1.1), unit guidelines references, unit instructional strategies (SOE 1.3), unit assessment plan (SOE 1.2), and unit organizing and analyzing results (SOE 1.4). All five lesson plans (SOE 2) and lesson reflections (SOE 4) have also been provided. In addition, my parent communication piece has been included along with my pre-assessment, pre-assessment key, pre-assessment analysis chart, post-assessment, post-assessment key, and post-assessment analysis chart. Instructional activity materials have been provided including jigsaw group presentation rubrics, presentation text, textbook information, interactive notebook explorer sheets, and interactive notebook explorer cutouts. “The Age of Exploration” and “Writing Mini-Lesson” PowerPoints have been included as direct instruction materials. Lastly, student work samples have been provided.

By implementing a video, incorporating a read-aloud, and presenting a PowerPoint in lesson one, I effectively communicated the social studies content for the day. I communicated the ELA content by teaching a mini-lesson and modeling a short answer in lesson three. Students were challenged in lesson one to consider how the word “exploration” connects to their own life. Although students may not have explored a new land, many have explored around their house, inside a cave, or along a pond. Some may have even explored a new activity or type of food. Since the content of exploration can be chunked by studying explorers individually, lesson two’s jigsaw activity and presentations allowed students to dive into the life and exploration of one man and then learn about others by listening to their peers. When studying exploration, it is essential to discuss the impact of the age. Therefore, it was appropriate to have students debate on the intensity of various impacts in lesson four. The instructional strategy of using an interactive notebook strongly contributed to student learning by providing students with a visual that could be used to compare the explorers. Lesson one focused on the unit’s topics of study which included motives. Students were encouraged to consider the different reasons why explorers traveled to the New World. Also, the impact debate in lesson four forced students to contrast the viewpoint of the explorers with that of the American Indians. These elements of lesson one and lesson four challenged students to understand the content from different perspectives. Lesson two’s jigsaw presentations and lesson four’s impact debate allowed me to both identify and address misconceptions as students provided oral responses. Students’ formative assessment short answers for lesson three allowed me to identify student misconceptions regarding key ideas and linking words. I then addressed these misconceptions in lesson four during the overview of the test.

My unit guidelines document (SOE 1.1) clearly reveals how I aligned my two unit objectives with a social studies standard and ELA standard. During the planning for this unit, Mrs. Melton and I discussed students’ standardized test scores. Through this conversation, I learned about the ability of this group of fifth graders. Accommodations and modifications provided in students’ IEPs were considered when designing instruction. Pre-assessment data was analyzed and organized into a chart depicting a gap group of students with diverse needs. Pre-assessment results were used to appropriately plan instructional strategies. My unit assessment plan (SOE 1.2) reveals how my pre-assessment and post-assessment were used to measure learning objectives. A formative assessment was completed by students for each lesson besides the last. The content of these formative assessments helped direct my instruction for each individual lesson. Multiple styles of learning were considered when developing this unit. Lesson one’s video and read-aloud appealed to auditory learners along with lesson two’s jigsaw presentations. The jigsaw activity for lesson two benefited interpersonal leaners while using an interactive notebook met the needs of intrapersonal, hands-on, and visual learners. Lesson three’s PowerPoint presentation and modeling appealed to visual learners. Interpersonal learners were supported by the impact debate during lesson four. Students were grouped and partnered strategically in order to best meet all levels of learning. High ability and low ability students were intermixed for lesson two’s jigsaw activity. Students could read the activity’s text independently or have the text electronically read aloud. When preparing for lesson four’s debate, high ability students completed research independently. The students with diverse needs were supported by researching alongside a peer.

Planning and organizing have always been strengths of mine. I truly enjoy preparing lessons and contemplating various ways in which to teach content. When comparing my first lesson plans to the ones I am writing now, it is very evident that I have grown in my ability to differentiate instruction and provide accommodations/modifications. I now feel capable of meeting the needs of all students in my classroom. Also, I have strengthened my ability to identify and then properly address student misconceptions. Through my field experiences, I have learned how best to do this. I would like to seek new and unique ways to connect content to the lives of my students. This is definitely a growth area for me. When designing and planning in the future, I also want to attempt to simplify my ideas. Sometimes less is more when teaching.