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Draft of Context

I am still playing with my idea and solidifying what I am going to do. After being in kindergarten in the fall, I am now in 1<sup>st</sup> grade at Samuel Powel Elementary. I moved right across the hall and I am very happy with the decision because I still get to see my fall semester students and it is interesting to see the progression from kindergarten to first grade. The amount of independence is the best part and I know these students can do a lot!

My overarching topic is going to be "*Citizenship*" because I want to implement a Social Studies-heavy unit since there is a huge emphasis on reading and math and I think citizenship can be incorporated smoothly while keeping up with their regular schedule. I constantly come up with new ideas/thoughts everyday and more things I could add, which makes the process a bit harder. Sometimes less is more, but in first grade should I expose them to many different things and scratch the surface – piquing their curiosity or go in depth on only a couple topics? I love the concept of *Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship* and modeling my unit off what a citizen is, how students can be good citizens, character traits of good citizens, roles of various citizens in the community, working together - but there is so much there.

The real-world application to all this is people need to learn to work together at a young age, because that skill is extremely important and beneficial for the rest of their life. Even if people don't agree, they need to learn to tolerate and compromise. Too many adults get in fights that go too far because they never learned/practiced working with others. I want my students to be contributing members of society and take their responsibilities as citizens seriously. I am just having a hard time narrowing that down and where to start.

The point I am at now is trying to figure out what is going to work best together and fits into *citizenship*. It is hard because I do not know where we are going to be in six weeks so I am trying to put together different scenarios so I will have options to choose from once we get closer. I want students to walk away knowing their place (in a location sense) in the world (maps/geographic tools), different roles in the community, different leaders (teacher, principal, Mayor Nutter, Govenor Corbett, President O'Bama). I did a lesson on Me on the Map to start this whole process and introduce the idea of my unit and geographic relevance in terms of size. It actually went very well but we did School, Street of School, City, State, Country, Continent, Planet and we did it in two days because I didn't want to overload it too much. (See below for the example I modeled.)

However, I am also thinking about patriotism and national symbols (US flag), career day with parents (CM idea), science citizenship – being “green” and helping our community by picking up trash, etc., writing letters to the President or for some cause they feel passionate about and mailing them, biographies on good citizens, wants versus needs, and the list goes on. My thought for the career day is to open the students eyes to all the different jobs there are to do and hear people speak about it instead of just reading a story or something – I know there is a parent who is a taxi driver and another who works in the post office. Once we send a letter home we can see what others do and who is willing to come in and speak to both first grade classes.

In terms of classroom dynamic and where this fits in – my teacher is very open and laid back for me doing what I “want” although she did suggest incorporating SS and science if possible because that is the hardest for her. I plan to do it the weeks of March 11 and 18, which is aggressive because I kind of just started in this particular classroom but I feel

ready and there is no reason to not do it then. I plan to stick with their Everyday Math curriculum during the two-week takeover.

My inquiry question is still in the process – I am thinking about incentives and their pros and cons or their effective utilization in a classroom – taking away recess or giving an orange or having a class snack on Friday afternoon and only those who earned it can participate? I am also thinking about classroom dynamic/community and how one student can “steal learning from others” with violent outbursts and how to handle that, although there is probably no single way and each classroom/child is different.