

Lesson Plan: Diversity and Tolerance in Colonial America

Length of Instructional Time: 5 - 45 minute periods

Grade Level: 5

Objectives: Students will:

- know the causes and effects of tolerance and intolerance in the Middle and New England colonies;
- recognize the link between tolerance and diversity;
- analyze and graph colonial population statistics;
- explain the early relationships between the English settlers, the Native Americans, and other European populations;
- begin to understand that our country was partially founded on the belief in diversity; and
- examine their own beliefs about tolerance and diversity.

Procedure:

1. Students will have read and been assessed on their understanding of:
 - a. Puritan beliefs
 - b. Puritan motivation for settlement in America
 - c. Quaker beliefs
 - d. Quaker motivation for settlement in America
 - e. New England colonists' backgrounds
 - f. Middle colonists' backgrounds
2. Give students an opportunity to write freely in their journals about their personal experiences with tolerance/intolerance and with people who hold different viewpoints/beliefs or come from different backgrounds. Example questions:

Have you ever felt as though you could have tried harder to understand someone else's opinion?

On a scale of 1 – 10 how tolerant do you think you are of other people's differences?

Do you have many different kinds of friends? Why or why not?

3. Post the following question on the board for students to quietly think about:

Does living with diversity make people more tolerant, or does being more tolerant cause people to allow diversity?

Give the students an opportunity to think about the question without expressing an opinion.

4. If necessary, explain the Human Graphing activity and ask the students to line up on designated lines: one for diversity – tolerance; one for tolerance – diversity; and one for BOTH. Continue with the Human Graphing Activity recording the results on the board.
5. Provide students with population statistics at three different times: early 17th century; mid 17th century; and late 17th century for the Middle Colonies and the New England colonies. The students should be asked to carefully look at the differences in each area and the changes over time and to create two graphs: one for New England population and one for the population of the Middle Colonies.
6. Once they have created the graphs, have them analyze the results and complete a learning log communicating what they have learned.

Assessment: Have the students reflect on both activities by asking them to link what they know about the belief systems of the English colonists in the different regions with the differences in population. Have the students answer the open response questions and use the rubric to assess their understanding.

Human Graphing Activity

Overview: Students are given a question to answer. The questions should be written so that the students have to choose between two or more options. Once they choose, the activity begins.

- Post the question on the board and agree upon the answer choices they will make. (See sample sheet.)
- Designate an area in the room for each answer and ask the students to move to the area that corresponds to their choice of answers. (You may ask them to form lines or they may stand in sections of a circle or in a quadrant of the room.)
- Ask one student from each area/line to explain why he/she chose that answer. Once each group has had a representative defend their choice, the students have an opportunity to change their answer and move to the new location. However, in order to do so, they must explain why they have changed their minds.
- Track the changes in student thinking by keeping a log of responses on the board and by adding and subtracting from the original number of students in each answer group.
- At the end of a predetermined amount of time, have the students return to their seats and write a journal entry recording their final response to the question. They should be encouraged to express the viewpoints of students with which they disagree in order to make their “cases stronger.”

Sample Question

Question posted: Does living with diversity make people more tolerant, or does being more tolerant cause people to allow diversity?

Possible answer groups:

- #1 Diversity fosters tolerance
- #2 Tolerance fosters diversity
- #3 A little bit of both is true

Original Numbers:

- Group #1 - 13 students
- Group #2 - 2 students
- Group #3 - 6 students

Samples of defense for answers:

Defense from Group #1:

- ✓ “Meeting different people allows you to learn how they’re different and to respect them for it. You see that everyone has something different about them.”
- ✓ “We’re not born tolerant, you need to experience diversity in order to respect other peoples’ differences.”
- ✓ “Intolerance comes from not being tolerant with others.”

Defense from Group #2:

- ✓ “Opening your heart to all people causes many kinds of people to want to socialize with you.”
- ✓ “Many different kinds of kids are drawn to me because I respect their differences.”
- ✓ “Because you’re being respectful, they’ll respect you.”

Defense from Group #3:

- ✓ “You meet different people and tolerate them, and that causes more people to want to be around you.”
- ✓ “Most people are different, and those that are different need to be tolerated.”

At the end of the discussion, there were 10 in Group #1, 4 in Group #2 and 7 in Group #3.

Grading Rubric

1	2	3	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Shows a weak understanding of the link between tolerance and diversity. ❑ Shows a poor understanding of the belief systems of the New England and Middle colonists. ❑ Does not understand the effect the beliefs had on the population. ❑ Ideas are poorly stated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Shows some sign of an understanding of the link between tolerance and diversity. ❑ Shows an understanding of the belief systems of the New England and Middle colonists at times. ❑ Does not clearly understand the effect the beliefs had on the population. ❑ Ideas are unorganized. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Shows a good understanding of the link between tolerance and diversity. ❑ Shows a solid understanding of the belief systems of the New England and Middle colonists. ❑ Understands the effect the beliefs had on the population at times. ❑ Ideas are well stated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Shows a strong understanding of the link between tolerance and diversity. ❑ Shows an exceptional understanding of the belief systems of the New England and Middle colonists. ❑ Clearly understands the effect the beliefs had on the population. ❑ Ideas are extremely well stated.