South Dakota Artists Curriculum Unit

Ben Reifel
“Now That’s An Issue!”

Provided by the South Dakota Art Museum
Brookings, South Dakota
South Dakota Artists Curriculum Unit

Unit of Study: Ben Reifel, Native American politician

Title of Lesson Plan: Now That’s An Issue!

Grade Level: 3 – 5
South Dakota Content Standards

U.S. History:

4.US.1.2 Students are able to identify basic environmental, economic, cultural, and population issues of concern to South Dakota.
Assessment Strategies

- Class discussions
- Class Bulletin Board of South Dakota issues
- Individual presentations of South Dakota issues
Learning Objectives

- The student will identify current environmental, economic, cultural, and population issues of South Dakota.

- The student will understand how issues affect citizens in South Dakota.
Time Required

- Day one: 30 – 45 minutes
- Day two: 30 – 45 minutes

Materials/Technology Needed

- Newspapers that can be cut up
- Scissors
- Access to the Internet for research of South Dakota newspapers
- Bulletin Board made with title “Issues of South Dakota”
Background Information

- Ben Reifel worked for the Bureau of Indian Affairs for several years. He started as a farm agent on the Pine Ridge Reservation and also served as the area director in the Aberdeen Office for awhile. He was elected as Republican to U.S. Congress in 1961 and served on Ag and Appropriation committees. He promoted Indian education while serving in Congress as well as promoting other initiatives as well.
Lesson Description

- Discuss with the class the different roles in local, state and national government that Ben Reifel served.

- Discuss with the class the importance of serving in these roles during the 1960’s as well as today.

- Have the class identify basic environmental, economic, cultural, and population issues of concern today in South Dakota. Write these on the board. (They may not be able to identify very many at this point in the lesson.)

- Discuss with the students how they think these issues have changed from the day of Ben Reifel to today.
Lesson Description continued

- Pass out newspapers to the class and have them make a list of 5 issues that they can find in the newspaper concerning South Dakota on basic environmental, economic, cultural, and population issues. (You may wish for the students to do this in groups of 2-3). Give the students about 10 minutes to finish this task.

- As a class, discuss some of the issues that they found in the newspaper and why they concern South Dakota. Make a list of these on the board.
Lesson Description continued

- Construct a bulletin board titled, “Issues of South Dakota” and have the students cut out current newspaper clippings and put on the bulletin board for tomorrow’s assignment. Each student is assigned the task of finding one newspaper article to bring to the class for the bulletin board. The newspaper clippings must be different than the issues that have already been discussed in class.

- The next day, have each student briefly summarize his/her newspaper clipping concerning South Dakota issues aloud to the class before putting it on the bulletin board. Discuss the issues and why they are important to South Dakota. Also, discuss whether this is an issue that Ben Reifel may have faced during the 1960’s while he served in Congress and if so, why has the issue not been resolved.
Enrichment

- Have the students research a specific issue in South Dakota and write an essay telling what the issue is and why it is an issue. Students should give both points of view on the issue and discuss ways to solve the issue.
Bibliography/Resources

- Newspapers of South Dakota
- South Dakota Art Museum Collection
  - Ben Reifel
Ben Reifel Presentation to Students
Ben Reifel

- Born near Parmalee, SD on the Rosebud Indian Reservation in 1906
- Heritage is both German and Sioux
- Member of the Brule or Burnt Thigh tribe of Sioux
- 1925 – 1932
  - Attended South Dakota State College (presently South Dakota State University) in Brookings, SD
Ben Reifel

1961 – 1971

- Represented South Dakota’s first district in the U.S. House of Representatives
  - Only member in Congress with Native American heritage
  - Promoted education on reservations
  - Served on Appropriation and Agriculture Committees
  - Helped secure funding to bring Earth Resources Observation System (EROS) Data Center to South Dakota

- Worked for the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) on the Pine Ridge Reservation as a farm agent and in Aberdeen, SD as the BIA Area Director
Ben Reifel

- Worked as superintendent of the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota
- Died in 1990
Bibliography

- South Dakota Art Museum Collection
  - Ben Reifel

*For more information about Ben Reifel or the Reifel Tribal Art Collection, contact the South Dakota Art Museum*