Early Civilizations in the Americas

10 day Unit for 6th Grade Social Studies

By Carolyn Brenner
Rationale

Students
While you have been learning about all of the ancient civilizations, discovering the first cultures in the Americas gives you a foundation for our modern world. Understanding the history of the continent you live on will help you understand where some of the foods and activities you enjoy came from.

Teachers
This unit covers the geography and development of the first civilizations in the Americas. It meets the State of Michigan Grade Level Content Expectations (GLCEs) for 6th grade. It includes a variety of lesson types that should appeal to multiple learning styles, as well as the opportunity for students to master curricular and social outcomes.

Content Analysis

Michigan Grade Level Content Expectations (GLCEs)
6- W 3.1.1 Analyze the role of environment in the development of early empires, referencing both useful environmental features and those that presented obstacles.

6- W 3.1.3 Describe similarities and differences among the Mayan, Aztec, and Incan societies, including economy, religion, and role of class structure.

6- W 3.1.5 Construct a timeline of main events on the origin and development of early and classic ancient civilizations of the Western Hemisphere (Olmec, Mayan, Aztec, and Inca).

Generalizations
- Geography always influences how and when civilizations develop.  
  Focus Question: How did geography affect development of cultures in the Americas?  
- Civilizations developed later in the Americas that in other parts of the world.  
  Focus Question: What were the first cultures in Mesoamerica?  
- Cultures in the Americas developed in a unique way due to their location.  
  Focus Question: What were the first cultures in South America?
Concepts

- Geography
- Continents
- Rivers
- Mountains
- Chronology
- Cause and Effect
- Archeology
- Cultural Diffusion
- Agriculture
- Art
- Religion

Facts

- North and South America have a variety of geography and climates.
- Civilizations developed in areas that supported farming and trade.
- The harsh environment of the Andes Mountain region affected how civilizations developed there.
- The climate in Mesoamerica affected how agriculture developed there.
- Early civilizations such as the Olmec, Moche and Maya developed in the Americas, leaving a cultural heritage that still influences us today.
- The Nazca and Moche developed advanced agricultural practices in the Andes.
- The Olmec developed the first civilization in the Americas, and are considered a “mother culture”.
- Olmec culture was advanced and spread to other groups through trade.
- The Maya also developed an advanced civilization in Mesoamerica, with achievements in art, math, science, and writing.
Early Civilizations of the Americas

Mesoamerica:
- Plains
- Tropical
- Good Rainfall

Andes:
- Mountains
- Cold
- Low Rainfall

Agriculture and Maize/Squash/Beans

Irrigation and Potatoes

Mesoamerica:
- Olmec
- Maya

Andes Region:
- Chavin
- Nazca
- Moche
Early Civilizations in the Americas

I. Geography of the Americas
   A. Mesoamerica
      1. Tropical lowlands
      2. Fertile soil and high rainfall
      3. Developed agricultural techniques and maize/squash/beans trio
   B. South America
      1. Mountains and high plateaus
      2. Cold climate and little rain
      3. Developed potatoes and irrigation

II. Andes Region Cultures
   A. Chavin
   B. Nazca
   C. Moche

III. Mesoamerica Region Cultures
   A. Olmec
      1. First civilization
      2. Influenced later cultures
   B. Maya
      1. Advanced culture
      2. Achievements
         a) Art and Writing
         b) Math and Science
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Michigan Social Studies GLCEs:</th>
<th>Unit Objectives Students will be able to:</th>
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</table>
| **6- W 3.1.1** Analyze the role of environment in the development of early empires, referencing both useful environmental features and those that presented obstacles. | • Identify the physical features of Mesoamerica and The Andes Mountain region.  
• Locate the areas where the first civilizations began.  
• Analyze the impact physical features had on the development of civilizations in those areas. |
| **6- W 3.1.3** Describe similarities and differences among the Mayan, Aztec, and Incan societies, including economy, religion, and role of class structure. | • Describe characteristics of the Chavin, Nazca, and Moche in South America.  
• Describe characteristics of the Olmec and Maya in Mesoamerica.  
• Compare and contrast the cultural achievements and lasting impact of the Olmec and Mayan cultures. |
| **6- W 3.1.5** Construct a timeline of main events on the origin and development of early and classic ancient civilizations of the Western Hemisphere (Olmec, Mayan, Aztec, and Inca). | • Create a timeline that summarizes the rise of the early Mesoamerican and Andean civilizations. |
Pre-Assessment

Students were given a written pre-assessment of 6 multiple choice questions. There were two questions on each of the 3 key outcomes for this unit. I did not expect students to have any prior knowledge on the unit content of ancient American civilizations, so did not think the results would mean adaptation of the instruction. It will be used more to measure student learning at the end of the unit. One change that I made while planning the unit and writing the pre-assessment was to adjust the final summative test. My cooperating teacher has not been happy with many of the test questions that come with the textbook’s pre-made test. In articulating the important outcomes based on the state standards, I realized that the textbook test often does not match up with the standards very well, asking for too many details and yet missing some of the bigger concepts. Fortunately, the text also comes with a test generator that allows teachers to pick individual questions and make their own version of a test. I did that and made a final test that better reflects the standards. This pre-assessment was then based on the same outcomes.

Outcome 1: Identify geographic features of the Andes region and Mesoamerica
Outcome 2: Describe characteristics of Andes region civilizations.
Outcome 3: Describe characteristics of Mesoamerican civilizations.

For each outcome, students were rated
N=no prior knowledge/both questions incorrect
L=low prior knowledge/one of two questions correct
S=substantial prior knowledge/both questions correct

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<tr>
<th>Student #</th>
<th>Outcome 1</th>
<th>Outcome 2</th>
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The results were close to what I expected to see. Clearly, the majority of students had either no or little prior knowledge of the subject in general. A few has substantial knowledge, however, I heard many students say how they were simply guessing on the answers, so they still may not be completely accurate results.

For Outcome 1, about half the class got one of the two questions correct, but most had no knowledge. They have only had geography of the Americas as it related to the Age of Exploration and “discovery” of the New World in 5th grade. They did not retain that knowledge well.

For Outcome 2, the significant majority had no prior knowledge, getting both questions incorrect. They have only studied cultures of South America as it related to the Incas in the Age of Exploration, which occurred 2000 years after the period we will be looking at.

For Outcome 3, the results were more balanced, with the significant majority in the middle with some prior knowledge, and a few at each end with no or substantial knowledge. They have only studied culture of Mesoamerica as it related to the Aztecs in the Age of Exploration, which occurred 2500 years after the period we will be looking at.

All in all, I will go ahead with my lesson plans as written, and do not see the need to adapt the plans based on these results. The unit is written assuming no or very little knowledge, and that is supported by this pre-assessment. Not one student had substantial prior knowledge of all 3 outcomes. Students always have supplemental material available on the textbook website if they are interested in further reading or activities on the subject. My goal for the unit is for each student to get to a minimum of an L rating, with a majority reaching an S rating.
Pre-Assessment Questions

1. What geographic feature is common in Mesoamerica?
   a. jungles
   b. mountains
   c. rivers
   d. volcanoes

2. What geographic feature is common in the South American Andes region?
   a. jungles
   b. mountains
   c. rivers
   d. volcanoes

3. Which civilization was not located in South America?
   a. the Chavin
   b. the Olmec
   c. the Moche
   d. the Nazca

4. Which crops developed in the Andes region?
   a. barley
   b. potatoes
   c. maize, squash, and beans
   d. rice

5. Which civilization was located in Mesoamerica?
   a. the Chavin
   b. the Nazca
   c. the Moche
   d. the Maya

6. Which crops developed in Mesoamerica?
   a. barley
   b. potatoes
   c. maize, squash, and beans
   d. rice
Students of Special Concern

I have two students of special concern. One is a boy who does not have an IEP, but always seems to be a little behind in class. He is a slow reader, and doesn’t always turn in his homework. Yet, he often has the right answer when we are discussing things as a class, so he understands the material he is taught verbally. He received 3 N ratings on the pre-assessment, as I anticipated he would. I will be making sure he is following our class reading and discussion throughout the unit, so that he doesn’t fall behind. The other student is a boy who is very bright and always raises his hand to read or give answers in class. However, he also likes to make comments that are off-topic, about something interesting he read, or about why the textbook is wrong. He feels he is usually right and gets bored, and therefore doesn’t always pay attention to the reading material or bother turning his work in. As a result, his grades are a mix of A’s and 0’s, for a C average, when he should be getting A’s. He received 2 S ratings and 1 L rating on the pre-assessment, which was consistent with his performance in class. I am concerned he will not pay attention during this unit because he may feel he already knows the material. I will be checking in with him regularly to make sure he stays on task during class and is turning in assignments.

Student for Learning Analysis

The student I picked for learning analysis is a girl who does not have an IEP, but concerns me with some of her behavior. She is very anxious, plays with her hair constantly, and never raises her hand. She is usually silent in class. She turns in most, but not all of her work, often gets low grades and does not understand the material. She received all N’s on the pre-assessment, which was what I expected of most of the students. However, I am worried about her ability to learn this material. I believe that the detailed, sometimes obscure nature of the tests that have been used this year have contributed to her low grades. I plan to check in with her individually to assess her understanding during the unit. I am hopeful that the re-written test will allow her to show understanding of the big concepts in this chapter and improve her grades.
Unit Overview

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<tr>
<th>Monday 10</th>
<th>Tuesday 11</th>
<th>Wednesday 12</th>
<th>Thursday 13</th>
<th>Friday 14</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heritage Menus Due</td>
<td>Complete Lesson 2 on Andean Region</td>
<td>Begin Lesson 3: Mesoamerica</td>
<td>Begin Lesson 4: Mesoamerica</td>
<td>Complete Lesson 4: Maya</td>
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<tr>
<td>Present menu &amp; class heritage food</td>
<td>Introduce Moche</td>
<td>Introduce Olmec</td>
<td>Introduce Maya</td>
<td>Maya video</td>
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<td>Work on study guide in class if extra time</td>
<td>Homework: reteach guide</td>
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<td>Homework: Sensory Figure on Pacal</td>
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<td>No class</td>
<td>Lesson 5: Cooperative Lesson on Andes vs. Mesoamerica</td>
<td>No class</td>
<td>Finish &amp; Present Culminating project</td>
<td>Lesson 6: Review for chapter test- Review game</td>
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<td>&amp; Begin Culminating project</td>
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Lesson 1 - Direct

I. Topic: Identify geographic features and role of environment in development of the civilizations in the Americas

II. Duration of Lesson: 2 class periods

III. Benchmarks: GLCE 6-W3.1.1

IV. Objective: SWBAT 1) Identify the physical features of Mesoamerica and the Andes Mountain region, 2) Locate the areas where the first civilizations began, 3) Analyze the impact physical features had on the development of civilizations in those areas.

V. Anticipatory Set: Why did civilization start much later in the Americas than in Eurasia? What factors led to the differences in the Western culture and perspective?

VI. Materials: Textbook

VII. Providing Information: Read together from book, pages 284 - 293. Go over map, timeline, chapter story, and geographic features of the region

VIII. Modeling: Will show video of food culture from the early Americas.

IX. Check for Understanding: Ask informal questions throughout lesson.

X. Guided Practice: Students will discuss timeline for this region.

XI. Closure: Ask for one thing they learned about this geography…call on at least three students.

XII. Independent Practice: Students will be completing the geography practice for homework.

XIII. Assessment: Students will be assessed informally through questions during the lesson. Students will be assessed formally in the summative test at the end of the chapter.

XIV. Inclusion of Diverse Learners: High level students have additional reading and other resources available through tips for internet activities included in the textbook and the text website. Average students will do well following the lesson plan as written. This lesson should not be difficult for low level students, though I will make sure to check on any when circulating in the room. They may ask for additional help or time to complete the geography practice if needed. The student who receives accommodations may have extra time to complete it.
Lesson 2 - Direct

I. Topic: Early Civilizations of the Andes Mountain Region

II. Duration of Lesson: 2 class periods

III. Benchmarks: GLCE 6-W3.1.3, W3.1.5

IV. Objective: SWBAT 1) Describe characteristics of the Chavin, Nazca, and Moche in South America

V. Anticipatory Set: What would you need if you lived in the mountains, in the cold? How would you have to adapt?

VI. Materials: Textbook

VII. Providing Information: Read together from book, pages 294 - 299.

VIII. Modeling: Will show photos of the Nazca lines.

IX. Check for Understanding: Ask informal questions throughout lesson.

X. Guided Practice: Students will discuss review questions 3, 4, 5 on page 299 with a partner, then we will discuss answers as a class.

XI. Closure: Ask for one thing they learned from lesson…call on at least three students.

XII. Independent Practice: Students will be completing the study guide and reteach guide for homework.

XIII. Assessment: Students will be assessed informally through questions during the lesson and discussion of review questions. Students will be assessed formally in the summative test at the end of the chapter.

XIV. Inclusion of Diverse Learners: High level students have additional reading and other resources available through tips for internet activities included in the textbook and the text website. Average students will do well following the lesson plan as written. This lesson should not be difficult for low level students, though I will make sure to check on any when circulating in the room as they are working on the review questions. They may ask for additional help or time to complete the study guide if needed. The student who receives accommodations may have extra time to complete the study guide.
Lesson 3 - Direct

I. Topic: Early Civilizations of Mesoamerica - Olmec

II. Duration of Lesson: 1 class period

III. Benchmarks: GLCE 6-W3.1.3, W3.1.5

IV. Objective: SWBAT 1) Describe characteristics of the Olmec in Mesoamerica

V. Anticipatory Set: Why are the Olmec called the “mother culture” of the Americas?

VI. Materials: Textbook

VII. Providing Information: Read together from book, pages 300 – 304.

VIII. Modeling: Will show photos of the Olmec heads. Show pics of archeological digs, Explain how archeologists find and them have to interpret artifacts. Ask what they would think about us if the dug up our town in 2000 years.

IX. Check for Understanding: Ask informal questions throughout lesson.

X. Guided Practice: Students will discuss review questions 3, 4, 5 on page 304 with a partner, then we will discuss answers as a class.

XI. Closure: Ask for one thing they learned from lesson...call on at least three students.

XII. Independent Practice: Student will write a paragraph on what they think archeologists would find from our culture in 1000-2000 years and how they would interpret what we did with those items and what they meant to our culture.

XIII. Assessment: Students will be assessed informally through questions during the lesson and discussion of review questions. Students will be assessed formally in the summative test at the end of the chapter.

XIV. Inclusion of Diverse Learners: High level students have additional reading and other resources available through tips for internet activities included in the textbook and the text website. Average students will do well following the lesson plan as written. This lesson should not be difficult for low level students, though I will make sure to check on any when circulating in the room as they are working on the review questions.
Lesson 4 - Direct

I. Topic: Early Civilizations of Mesoamerica

II. Duration of Lesson: 2 class periods

III. Benchmarks: GLCE 6-W3.1.3, W3.1.5

IV. Objective: SWBAT 1) Describe characteristics of the Maya in Mesoamerica

V. Anticipatory Set: What things did we get passed down from the Maya?

VI. Materials: Textbook, Mayan video

VII. Providing Information: Read together from book, pages 306 – 311 and show video on the ancient Maya.

VIII. Modeling: Will show Mayan video.

IX. Check for Understanding: Ask informal questions throughout lesson.

X. Guided Practice: Students will discuss review questions 3, 4, 5 on page 311 with a partner, then we will discuss answers as a class.

XI. Closure: Ask for one thing they learned from lesson…call on at least three students.

XII. Independent Practice: Students will be completing the sensory figure on Pacal for homework.

XIII. Assessment: Students will be assessed informally through questions during the lesson and discussion of review questions. Students will be assessed formally in the summative test at the end of the chapter.

XIV. Inclusion of Diverse Learners: High level students have additional reading and other resources available through tips for internet activities included in the textbook and the text website. Average students will do well following the lesson plan as written. This lesson should not be difficult for low level students, though I will make sure to check on any when circulating in the room as they are working on the review questions. They may ask for additional help or time to complete the sensory figure if needed. The student who receives accommodations may have extra time to complete the sensory figure.
Lesson 5 – Cooperative & Culminating Project

I. Topic: Comparing Early Civilizations of the Andes and Mesoamerica and Culminating Project

II. Duration of Lesson: 2 class periods

III. Benchmarks: GLCE 6-W3.1.3

IV. Academic Objective: SWBAT 1) Compare and contrast the cultural achievements and lasting impact of the Andean and Mayan cultures. Social Objective: SWBAT 1) Demonstrate use of teamwork to accomplish task, 2) Practice group skills such as respectful listening and active participation to accomplish task.

V. Anticipatory Set: Explain that the environment always impacts our daily lives and choices. Would you want to live in Florida or Michigan, Arizona or New York if you had the choice? Why? People in the ancient world also had to make choices and live within their environment, and we will look at them today.

VI. Materials: Role cards, poster paper and markers.

VII. Face to Face Interaction and Positive Interdependence: Put them in groups, have them to pick roles, have them discuss what they have learned in prior lessons and complete the activity together. Each has to fulfill their role. The project cannot be completed without each member doing their part. For instance the recorder has to write done the information, the presenter need to make sure they get their viewpoint across to the class.

VIII. Modeling: Will give examples of what each role does: Leader, Writer, Monitor, and Reporter.

IX. Check for Understanding: Ask informal questions throughout lesson. Circulate in the room and interact/ask questions with each group as they are working.

X. Guided Practice: Students will present their results. I will ask questions and emphasize key concepts as needed.

XI. Closure: Ask for one thing they learned from lesson…call on at least three students.

XII. Independent Practice: None for this lesson

XIII. Individual and Group Assessment: Students will be assessed informally through questions during the lesson and discussion of review questions. Students will be assessed formally using the rubric for group and individual performance and in the summative test at the end of the chapter.
XIV. Inclusion of Diverse Learners: High level students have additional reading and other resources available through tips for internet activities included in the textbook and the text website and can contribute more information to the group as needed. Average students will do well following the lesson plan as written. This lesson should not be difficult for low level students, though they may have less information to contribute, they can still complete their role, and feel part of the group. Also, as they get to pick their own roles, those who are less comfortable as writers may want to use skills as the reporter, for instance. I will make sure to check on any when circulating in the room as they are working in groups. Working in groups should facilitate both low and high learning skills.
Supplemental Lesson - Inductive

I. Topic: Analyzing the fall of the Maya and evaluating whether it could happen to America

II. Duration of Lesson: 1 class period

III. Benchmarks: GLCE 6-W3.1.3

IV. Academic Objective: SWBAT 1) Analyze possible factors that led to the fall of the Maya, 2) Determine if history’s pattern is likely to repeat itself in the modern world.
Social Objective: SWBAT 1) Demonstrate use of teamwork to accomplish task, 2) Practice group skills such as respectful listening and active participation to accomplish task.
Metacognitive Objective: SWBAT 1) Evaluate the information to design their personal plan to protect what they deem is important from our culture, and 2) Justify why they chose those things.

V. Anticipatory Set: Why did the Maya decline? Could it happen to us in the modern world? How do you know and how can we prevent it?

VI. Materials: Article on America and fall of the Maya

VII. Providing Information: Put them in groups and give them the articles. Ask them to discuss why the Maya declined and if the same thing could happen to America. Why not or why do they think so? What would they do to ensure our civilization if they were the President?

VIII. Modeling: Will give them examples of other strong civilizations that disappeared.

IX. Check for Understanding: Ask informal questions throughout lesson, and check group status to make sure they understand the purpose of the assignment.

X. Guided Practice: Groups will present their conclusions. I will ask questions and emphasize key concepts as needed.

XI. Closure: Ask for one thing they learned from lesson…call on at least three students.

XII. Independent Practice: None for this lesson

XIII. Assessment: Students will be assessed informally through questions during the lesson and discussion of review questions. Students will be assessed formally in the summative test at the end of the chapter.

XIV. Inclusion of Diverse Learners: High level students have additional reading and other resources available through tips for internet activities included in the textbook and the text website and can contribute more information to the group as needed. Average students will do well following the lesson plan as written. This lesson should not be difficult for low level students, though they may have less information to contribute, they can still feel part of the group. I will make sure to check on any when circulating in the room as they are working in groups. Working in groups should facilitate both low and high learning skills.
Lesson 6 - Direct

I. Topic:  Review for chapter test

II. Duration of Lesson:  1 class period

III. Benchmarks:  GLCE 6-W 3.1.1, W3.1.3, W3.1.5

IV. Objective:  SWBAT 1) Identify the physical features of Mesoamerica and The Andes Mountain region, 2) Locate the areas where the first civilizations began, 3) Analyze the impact physical features had on the development of civilizations in those areas, 4) Describe characteristics of the Chavin, Nazca, and Moche in South America, 5) Describe characteristics of the Olmec and Maya in Mesoamerica, 6) Compare and contrast the cultural achievements and lasting impact of the Olmec and Mayan cultures, 7) Create a timeline that summarizes the rise of the early Mesoamerican and Andean civilizations.

V. Anticipatory Set:  You will be able to review the characteristics of all the civilizations in the Americas, as well as compare and contrast them and their geographic features so you can do well on the test.

VI. Materials:  Whiteboard and markers

VII. Providing Information:  Chart with headings on the board.

VIII. Modeling:  Will show students how they get one chance to fill in a spot on the chart.

IX. Check for Understanding:  The entire review will check their understanding.

X. Guided Practice:  As they give answers, I will point out key concepts or give additional information as needed.

XI. Closure:  Tell them they are ready for the test.

XII. Independent Practice:  Students will be studying independently.

XIII. Assessment:  Students will be assessed formally through the homework and summative test tomorrow.

XIV. Inclusion of Diverse Learners:  High level students have additional reading and other resources available through tips for internet activities included in the textbook and the text website.  Average students will do well following the lesson plan as written.  This lesson should not be difficult for low level students, though I will make sure to check on any as we go through the game.
Post-Assessment

Students were given a written post-assessment of 6 multiple choice questions. There were two questions on each of the 3 key outcomes for this unit.

Outcome 1: Identify geographic features of the Andes region and Mesoamerica
Outcome 2: Describe characteristics of Andes region civilizations.
Outcome 3: Describe characteristics of Mesoamerican civilizations.

For each outcome, students were rated
N=no knowledge/both questions incorrect
L=low knowledge/one of two questions correct
S=substantial knowledge/both questions correct

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For Outcome 1, 16 of 22 students had substantial knowledge, an increase from 3 in the pre-test.

For Outcome 2, 14 of 22 students had substantial knowledge, an increase from 2 in the pre-test.

For Outcome 3, 17 of 22 students had substantial knowledge, an increase from 4 in the pre-test.
Summary of Student Learning

The results of the post-assessment were what I expected to see. There was evidence of a dramatic increase in the students’ knowledge of all benchmarks during the unit. The majority, 12 of 22, now had substantial knowledge for all three outcomes, compared with 0 on the pre-assessment.

For the first objective, geography of Mesoamerica and the Andes region, the pre-assessment showed 10 students at no knowledge, 9 at low knowledge, and only 3 with substantial knowledge. This flipped to 2 with no knowledge, 4 with low, and 16 at the substantial level.

For the second objective, cultures of the Andes region, the pre-assessment showed a majority 13 students at no knowledge, 7 at low knowledge, and only 2 with substantial knowledge. This also flipped to only 4 with no knowledge, 3 with low, and a majority of 14 at the substantial level.

For the third objective, cultures of Mesoamerica, the pre-assessment showed a 6 students at no knowledge, 12 at low knowledge, and 4 with substantial knowledge. This also turned around to only 2 with no knowledge, 3 with low, and the highest number of 17 at the substantial level.

Student for Individual Analysis

The student I tracked for learning analysis did not do that well on the final test, earning a 69%. However, I was still encouraged by a few things. One is that she did participate in the group project. I saw her communicating with the group and contributing to the final poster. If we had not done this culminating project, she would not have had the opportunity to work with other students, as she usually sits silently in class. I did check in with her regularly during the unit to see if her homework was up to date or she had questions. Also, she did get 100% on the map questions, another improvement for her. She missed some of points on the essay questions, but the majority of her incorrect answers were on the details in the basic multiple choice. We had discussed all of those topics thoroughly in class, and she did complete all her homework for the chapter, but it really came down to having to study the material at home. I feel this was as successful as I could help her be without having a meeting with other teachers or the parents.
Reflection and Evaluation

I was pleased with these results of the unit. The evidence of significant learning is in both the pre/post-assessment and the summative chapter test. I felt using the pre/post-assessment was an important tool to measure where the students were just prior to the chapter test, and allowed a re-teach of the big concepts as needed. They took the post-assessment as part of the review for the summative test on the last day of the chapter. We corrected it together and I used them as we reviewed and re-taught the concepts that the most students had wrong.

The shift in knowledge was substantial in all three outcomes, but the learning changes were biggest in three statistics. Outcome two, cultures of the Andes, had the most students with no knowledge in the pre-test. Therefore it had the biggest reduction, from 13 students with no knowledge to only 4, a change of 9. I believe this is because it was the most unfamiliar to students and had the most room for learning new information. Outcomes one and three, generally geography and cultures of Mesoamerica, had the largest increases of numbers, from 3 to 16 and 4 to 17 in substantial knowledge, both a change of 13 students. I believe this is due to more familiarity and slightly easier material than the cultures in the Andes region.

In addition to the results of the post-assessment, students had already completed the culminating project in which groups had to research one of the two regions we learned about. The project incorporated all three outcomes as groups were assigned one region, but everyone had to include geography of their area. Therefore, doing the research on their own as well as learning when the other groups presented their material served as both an assessment and further review for the test. The students did well on their projects, both in group work and showing mastery of their subject.

Overall I felt the students were well prepared for the summative assessment on the chapter test. I asked questions and reviewed each day of the unit as a formative assessment and the students consistently knew the answers and showed understanding of the big concepts. I had confidence they would do well. The chapter test given on the day after the post-assessment. The class average was 88%, an increase from the 84, 86, 81, and 85% on the previous four chapter tests. More importantly, most students got full points for the essay questions which show the true mastery of the benchmarks. Further, all but one student in the class earned 100% on the map skills page. This was a dramatic improvement from the tests throughout the year when the students would consistently do poorly with maps. After re-teaching and reviewing these critical skills each of the last three chapters, I finally saw serious across-the-board progress on them.

In all, I feel the unit was successful and that the students did demonstrate significant learning of the benchmarks. The culminating project, post-assessment and summative test all showed mastery of the content. Tracking the scores on the post-assessment and summative test was evidence of that learning and the biggest sign of a successful unit was that the class average on the summative went up 4% over the previous four units. I do wish there was more time for each unit. Especially with the number of snow days from this winter, I felt I had to sacrifice working with supplemental material in order to complete the unit in a timely manner. If we had gotten to this unit a month earlier, I would have added a day or two or additional activities. However, I was happy with the results of the unit, and would not change the way I taught it.
List of Unit Teaching Materials

Textbook: *Ancient Civilizations*

Video: “Ancient Maya”

DVD player

Overhead projector

Handouts and books on the Ancient Olmec and Maya

Role cards

Poster boards

Markers

Pens/Pencils

Paper
Resources


"What Happened to the Ancient Maya?" About.com Latin American History. Web. 05 Mar. 2014.

"Will America Fall Apart Like the Maya?" Will America Fall Apart Like the Maya? Web. 05 Mar. 2014.