EXPLORE Lesson Plan for California Teachers

Lesson Title: Who First Settled America?

Grade Level: 5

Lesson Objectives:
- Students will identify and describe early settlers in America.
- Students will describe early explorations and settlements in the Americas.

Big Idea: People move to improve their lives or because they are forced.

Essential Question: Why do people move and settle in new places?

California Standards:
- HSS 5.1: Students describe the major pre-Columbian settlements, including the cliff dwellers and pueblo people of the desert Southwest, the American Indians of the Pacific Northwest, the nomadic nations of the Great Plains, and the woodland peoples east of the Mississippi River.
- HSS 5.2: Students trace the routes of early explorers and describe the early explorations of the Americas.

Lesson Introduction:
Teacher asks, "Which group of people were the first to settle what is present-day America?" then instructs Students to discuss this question with a partner or in table groups. After a few minutes, Teacher calls on Students to share their ideas, prompts them to explain why they think that group was first to settle America, and records the names of the groups identified on the board (underline the name of the group and leave space below for students to add more information).

Learning Activities:
Teacher projects a map of the United States and explains that America is a name often used interchangeably with the name of our country, the United States. Teacher asks and writes on the board, "Where did these groups settle, who may have settled there, and when did this happen?". Provide time for Students to discuss in pairs or table groups, and then write their responses on the board under the name of the group they identified earlier. Teacher leads a brief discussion about Students' responses and asks them to note responses that are similar and different.

Teacher instructs Students to conduct research to confirm or correct the information they shared. Students are directed to text resources as well as websites they might find helpful. Teacher provides search tips and encourages Students to
consider alternative responses to their own. While Students are working on this, Teacher draws a large timeline on the board for use later.

Once the research is completed, Students come to the board and stand next to their initial answers to share their updated information. Students are encouraged to identify their information sources and explain why they revised or stayed with their original responses. Students add the name of the group and location of settlement to the timeline the Teacher created.

After all pairs/groups have shared their research, Teacher asks for observations and thoughts about the information provide and timeline created. How can there be different answers to this question? If the information on this timeline is correct, which group settled in America first?

If no groups identified Polynesians, ask them who settled present-day Hawaii. Teacher shows the 3-minute video clip “Did the Polynesians Discover America?” (http://www.history.com/topics/exploration/exploration-of-north-america/videos/did-the-polynesians-discover-america) and leads a discussion. Add Polynesians (circa 1000 – 1200 AD) to the timeline.

Teacher explains that regardless of who settled in America first, over a long period of time, many different groups sought a new life in a new place and eventually settled what we know as America today. Students think about why people would have moved and settled long ago, and what that experience might have been like. Students write a 2-3 paragraph description of early settlers and settlement based on questions posed and information shared in this lesson.

Extension: Students think, discuss, and write about why people move and settle in America today. Students gather information from the news and other contemporary reports about immigrants and where they are settling.

Assessment:

5-point Scoring Guide

- 1 point for accurate identification of early settlers to America
- 1 point for accurate location of early settler group(s)
- 1 point for accurate use of dates and chronology related to settlers
- 2 points for appropriate descriptions of early settlement in America

Credits: Lesson plan adapted from original by Michael Coppola. Empires of the Wind NEH Seminar, June 2015.