

Case Study

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EDU 721 Lesson Artifact

## **Lesson Description**

The following lesson will deal with propaganda during the period of the American Revolution, specifically the Boston Massacre. Through the framework of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) students will examine the role of the famous engraving of the Boston Massacre in swaying public opinion on the issues that existed between the colonists and the British on the road to war. Throughout the lesson, students will examine the Boston Massacre through a series of primary and secondary sources. The sources will come in print, picture, movie and first person accounts of the event. Students will examine the variety of sources and eventually determine, through the viewpoint of a character they choose, how their character interpreted the events of the Massacre, and determine the role of propaganda in society. All of the aforementioned concepts will be demonstrated in a website that students will be creating throughout the lesson.

## **Technology to Be Used**

Within the following lessons, two major forms of technology will help to address the needs of the students according to their 504 plans. Although the technology will help specific students and is specifically aimed at a select few students, others will benefit as well.

Digital writing tools will be used in the lesson as a means to address writing and editing. Beach et al, (2009) claimed that digital writing tools help students to improve their overall writing ability “when they learn to self-assess and revise their writing with appropriate reader response and feedback.” The use of digital writing

tools in the following lesson will help students collaborate with each other, revise and edit their work, and actively engage in the digital writing process.

Routman (2005) claimed that when students are aware of their audience and alert to the fact that they are being published, they begin to take more pride in their work. The use of digital writing tools in the following lessons will develop students' awareness of their audience and alert them to the fact that they are being published for all to see, not just the instructor. One of the main hopes is that through the use of digital writing tools, students will begin to take pride in their work and engage in a collaborative effort to improve their writing skills.

Concept maps will also be used to help students plan their writing. According to MacArthur (2009) concept maps are essentially graphic organizers that allow students to make visual representations of ideas and creates connections between topics in the map and content discussed in class. Concept maps are also helpful in helping students to plan their writing and generally help to produce better, more organized essay when maps are used as a guide to writing (MacArthur, 2009). Since planning is an essential part of the writing process, it is necessary to introduce students to concept mapping.

The technology chosen for the lessons is a natural choice to address the needs of the students with 504 plans. The parts of the 504 plans that are applicable to the students deal mainly with planning, writing, structure and editing. The technology incorporated in this lesson will help students address all parts of the writing process, not only in class, but at home as well. Through the use of digital writing tools and concept maps, students will actively engage in the writing process

and collaborate with others. The end result will be a student created web site that will demonstrate their findings. Through the website, students will engage in collaborative writing, planning and editing of each other's work, while building digital literacy skills and improving on their writing skills.

### **Lesson Materials**

The following materials are needed in order to complete the following lesson. Most of the items on the following list are currently located in the classroom, all others can be found on the class website, found on edline.net.

The lesson requires:

- Smart board and projector
- DVD player
- A copy of the movie "John Adams"
- Primary Source Documents: Transcripts of the trial of British soldiers charged with the murder of Bostonians; various versions of the famous engraving of the Boston Massacre
- Laptops, netbooks, or any device that provides access to the internet
- Students will need access to one of several digital tools for writing, planning or word processing. Examples of digital writing and planning tools are weebly.com, wikispaces.com, webspiration.com, or inspiration.com. The aforementioned sites are web based and allow for collaboration among students. It should be understood that the students already have access to weebly.com, wikispaces.com and webspiration.com accounts.

It is important to note the technological requirements needed for the lesson are readily available for students and faculty at LaSalle Academy. The school is equipped with four computer labs, seven mobile laptop/netbook carts, and is completely wire-less across the campus. Under some conditions, students without computers or Internet access will be permitted to work after school in the lab or with a teacher. In short, the school provides complete access to technology.

### **Lesson Goals**

The framework and focus of UDL calls for clear goals to be established by the teacher (Rose and Meyer, 2002). By making clear the goals of the lesson, students can focus on what is to be learned and how to learn it, and the teacher may better address the needs of the students. Setting clear goals gives a greater focus on the content, and materials and will eventually increase student learning.

The goals for the following lesson are as follows:

1. Students will interpret and analyze various formats of primary sources.
2. Students will determine various viewpoints of historical events.
3. Students will determine the role of propaganda.
4. Students will engage in various forms of digital writing
5. Students will engage in the writing process, specifically planning, drafting, editing and publishing their work.
6. Over the lesson, students will engage in activities that will increase their digital literacy skills.

Over the course of several days students will use digital writing tools to help

create a well written, clearly organized, attractive website that will demonstrate student learning.

### **Pre-assessment**

Chapman and King (2005, p. 63) claim that pre-assessment is an important tool in assessing students' previous knowledge of content and also helps to provide a measure of student learning during a lesson and at the completion of a lesson.

Pre-assessment is a major characteristic of differentiation and should be used as a tool to determine the needs of all students and the direction a teacher should go when beginning a lesson.

A form of pre-assessment will take place at the beginning of the lesson so the instructor may determine the course of the lesson. Normal forms of pre-assessment given in this class include discussion, short multiple choice assessments, question and answer forums, word webs, and brain storming activities. However, it is important to note that a short multiple choice quiz, not counted for credit as a quiz, but as a participation grade, is a strong measure of pre-assessment so the teacher may measure the amount of content learned. At the end of the lesson, the instructor may refer to the pre-assessment to see what measure of learning took place as a result of the lesson. The websites will also be a benchmark to measure progress of student writing over the course of the year.

### **Lesson: Day One**

Students will complete a brief pre assessment in two parts. First they will complete a multiple-choice assessment, and they will be asked to write three intelligible statements on the Boston Massacre. Results will determine the course of

action for the next several days. Once assessments are complete, students will be asked to take their pick of one of the following roles that they would like to assume over the next few days. Once students pick their role, they will be encouraged to view the events of the Boston Massacre from the point of view of their character.

Potential choices are, but not limited to:

- Citizen of Boston
- British Soldier
- Colonial merchant
- Loyalist living in the colonies
- A witness to the Massacre
- British citizen visiting relatives in the colonies
- British citizen living in Britain
- A Boston Revolutionary
- A member of the “Sons of Liberty”

## Day Two

Using the smart board and projector, the following image of the Boston Massacre will be displayed.



The picture is to be carefully introduced to the class. Using the screen shade option on the smart board, the picture is to be fully covered. The next step is to reveal *only one* side, left of center *or* right of center, leaving the other side covered by the screen shade. The instructor will then ask the students to write, from the point of view of their character, what they see in the picture. Students should be given several minutes to examine the picture. Encourage students to pick up as many fine details as they can. What is the weather, time of day, location, and emotion? The students should then follow the same procedure for the other half of the photo.

In order to help organize notes, students may use their computer/laptop/netbook to help organize their thoughts. For example, students may use word processing software like Microsoft Word to make notes, or use freemind.com to help create graphic organizers. Students may then use their digital notes to help formulate their concept maps.

Once the activity is completed, students should then pair up with other students that have chosen the same character. Once paired, they will compare and contrast their findings. Upon completion, students will then begin to create a concept map that will organize their perceptions of the Boston Massacre from the point of view of their character.

Day two will culminate with a homework assignment. Students are to begin constructing a website about their character's reaction to the massacre and the engraving. Students will be allowed their choice as to which digital writing tool they feel comfortable with, as long as it allows for collaboration among group members.



The website is to be worked on throughout the lessons and will continually updated and edited each day.

### **Day Three**

By the end of day two students have established a particular point of view for their character. Day three will involve the students in a round table discussion from the point of view of their particular character. The instructor is to facilitate the discussion and ask leading questions. Day three will be structured as follows:

- Time will be given to allow students to pull up their concept maps, skim over them. Concept maps may be used to help present their arguments and view points during the round table discussion.
- Students will be paired with others that have assumed the role of similar characters
- Each character will be called to a podium to briefly introduce themselves and provide a statement on their stance on the Boston Massacre.
- Students will be encouraged to jot notes on other comments. Deconstruction of other character's arguments will also be encouraged, as it will help students validate their own viewpoint.

Once the round table discussion is complete, the students will once again make additions to their concept maps. Students may formulate maps that make connections between characters, whether they disagree or agree with the point of view of other characters. Also among other topics that should appear in concept maps are bits of evidence that link people, places and events together. Student will

again be encouraged to make notes on the discussion, so they may correctly connect materials in their concept maps.

At this time students should also begin to create several pages within their websites. Titles of each page may be chosen by the students, but must reflect the content of their concept maps and the rubric provided. Essentially, they will be using their concept maps as a blue print for their web sites and the writing that will be part of their web pages.

#### **Day Four**

At this time, students have been able to establish their character's perception of the Boston Massacre, as well as the perceptions of other characters. Students should also have been able to delineate between various viewpoints in their concept maps.

Day four will entail that students beginning to decipher the true events of the Boston Massacre. Over the course of the day, students will examine the court transcript of the trial of the British Soldiers accused of murder. Students will be provided the option to either read the court transcript or watch a portion of the movie *John Adams*, which provides a historically accurate account of the trial.

The class will later discuss the findings of the court. As a whole the class will examine how the court's findings align with the opinion of their character, as well as the other characters present. The class will also determine how the famous engraving of the Boston Massacre helped to change public opinion on the British. Students should also consider whether the perception of the Massacre, as it is found in the engraving, is the reality of what happened.

Students will continue to engage in homework assignments based on their findings. At this point, concept maps should reflect the daily activity and subsequent discussion, and their websites should be edited and updated to reflect their progress.

### **Culminating Project/Assessment**

The final project/assessment has been worked on throughout the project. The culminating assessment is a website that demonstrates how a particular group's character reacted to the Boston Massacre and the engraving that depicted the events of the Massacre. Students should have created a website that has several pages that address the following topics, but is not limited to:

- Clearly identifies their character and their perception of the massacre.
- Clearly addresses their character's reaction to the engraving
- Clearly establishes the relation of their character to others (agree, disagree and demonstrates why.
- Clearly addresses who their character's biggest enemy and ally are.
- Clearly understands the role of propaganda

Student learning will be measured by the rubrics that appear in the appendices at the end of the paper. The rubrics are not final and are meant only to provide a glimpse of how the lesson and rubrics would generally reflect some measure of student learning during the lessons. Students will also be given some sort of formal assessment at the end of the unit and compare the results to the pre-assessment given at the onset of the lesson. At that point the instructor may then decide to reteach some of the information or move forward.

## **Relation of Activities, Lessons and Assessments to UDL and Students**

The activities and lessons mentioned in the lesson relate to UDL in several ways. Not only do the activities meet the characteristics of UDL, but they also meet the needs of the 504 plans for students in this inclusive classroom setting.

The lesson meets all of three major principles of the UDL framework. First, the lessons and activities stimulate the recognition network that is part of the UDL framework. For example, when students are asked to describe parts of the Boston Massacre engraving, they are using the recognition network of the brain to help stimulate their learning experience. They might point out buildings, weather conditions, patterns, people, and places that are familiar with them, and assign a specific meaning to each, as they apply to the time period and context of the content area. Students will also be afforded the opportunity to view different parts of the lesson through different forms. For example, they may read court transcripts, view videos of the trial, and also engage in first person round table discussions in which they play the role of a character and interject their findings.

The lessons also stimulate the strategic learning network that is also a major characteristic of UDL. Students are provided the opportunity to achieve feedback in the writing process that will help them improve their own writing. Collaboration in the form of concept maps will also help student obtain feedback from classmates. Students will also be able to strategically plan their websites via models of other student sites and will have many opportunities to edit their sites through ongoing feedback and support from teachers and classmates. Viewing other student's websites will also provide models for other students that will help guide their

learning and plan their own work as well. Students will also have to incorporate materials obtained from their recognition network into the strategic planning process, highlighting the fact that the three major networks all work together during the learning process (Rose and Meyer, 2002).

Finally, the lessons also help to stimulate affective learning, which is also a part of UDL. The lesson is scaffolded and allows for different levels of difficulty among all the students. Although much of the technology chosen for the lesson is aimed at particular students, all benefit in some way. The lesson also allows for freedom of choice and inquiry. Students are allowed to choose characters that they may identify with on some level and allow them to view the topic from multiple perspectives as well. Within the lesson there is a great deal of flexibility that will encourage and stimulate student learning.

### **Evaluation of the Lesson Plan**

Reflection and evaluation are an important part of education. As is the case with all lessons, the instructor should create a lesson and adapt a lesson as it progresses in order to meet the needs of the students. The instructor should also evaluate the lesson as a whole. The following bulleted list contains a number of questions that the instructor should consider when evaluating this lesson within the framework of UDL.

- Were the students aware of the learning goals and essential questions at the onset of the lesson?
- Were the goals of the lesson met?

- Did the lesson meet the needs of a diverse set of learners? Were the needs of students with and IEP or 504 plan met?
- Did the lesson challenge students of all levels?
- Did the lesson introduce or build upon essential skills?
- Was the technology that was chosen a proper fit for the students? Was the technology easy to use and accessible for all?
- Did the lesson allow for the instructor to give timely and ongoing feedback?
- Is there a way to measure student learning within the lesson? What portion of the students learned an amount of material that is satisfactory for the instructor?

The above list is intended to allow the instructor to evaluate the effectiveness of a lesson or unit within the framework of UDL. It is important to note that even though a instructor may answer “yes” to all, or a majority of all the above questions, it still may be necessary to tweak the lesson from year to year, or class to class. Due to the fact that technology is changing at a rapid pace, it is important for the instructor to continually evaluate technology, its appropriateness and consider other tools that may replace it in the future. Through reflection and evaluation the instructor may improve the learning experience for each and every student.

### **Personal Reflection**

The aforementioned series of lessons is meant to address several areas of the curriculum and reach a diverse group of learners. Over the course of several days, students learn about the content of American history, build literacy skills and work on the writing process as a whole. Much of the lesson is engaging and hands on,

meeting the needs of the students that might have hyperactivity issues. Ample opportunities for movement and dialogue exist between students.

The lesson/unit addressed in this paper can also be changed to allow for other areas of differentiation. For example, the teacher can pair students in order to ensure that a strong reader/writer is paired with a weaker student. This will help during the collaboration during writing and proof reading. Students can also be given their choice of a final project or assessment, depending on the goals of the lesson. In this instance the goal is to use digital writing tools to help students become better writers, yet web site creation is only a small sample of the numerous examples of what could be used.

Overall the lesson seems to meet many of the characteristics of UDL. While it is difficult to assess the effectiveness at this time, it seems as though this lesson/unit, in conjunction with others like it, will build essential writing skills over time. While this one lesson/unit is not going to instantly turn students into better writers, it will help them to think about the writing process as a whole. From the point of view of an IEP or 504 plan, the aforementioned lesson meets the students' needs and goals, and incorporates technology that will help them become better writers over time.