

TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY PROJECT

EVOLVING VIEWS ABOUT MINORITY RIGHTS IN THE UNITED STATES ***from Stephanie Loughran***

Grade - 10 (General Level)

Length of class period – (6 days - 55m periods)

Inquiry – (What essential question are students answering, what problem are they solving, or what decision are they making?)

"What happens when minority rights are not protected by powerful institutions within society that reflect majority views and what happens when these views change over time?"

Objectives (What content and skills do you expect students to learn from this lesson?)

Students will:

- identify specific facts of the case and then analyze what happened to the unempowered minority in the specific historical example assigned to each student group
- apply their understanding of the above by taking a position themselves on the issue at hand as if they lived at that time
- evaluate the four conflicts in light of the essential question
- identify some current minority/majority rights issues that are also going through reassessment today
- analyze the process now used and roles played by various segments of society today to reach the legal decisions defining minority rights
- compare/contrast past experiences in this area with these current issues
- classify those current issues that seem to be "long term" or "fads"
- illustrate an understanding of the language used in each primary source
- apply cooperative learning skills within individual groups and as a class
- understand process, goals and assessment of unit

Materials (What primary sources or local resources are the basis for this lesson? – (please attach)

- Primary sources for Salem Witchcraft Trials, specific persons, especially those whom the students would recognize from “The Crucible”. This includes accusers, judges and defendants.

<http://etext.virginia.edu/salem/witchcraft/texts/transcripts.html>

TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY (Resources link). Salem in History (www.saleminhistory.org), primary sources, famous trials.

- Plessy V. Ferguson primary sources. Excerpts from actual court decision, majority and dissenting positions.

www.landmarkcases.org (Excellent teacher source!)

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/aap/aaprot.html> (print/audio)

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/aap/timelin2.html>

<http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/scripts/getcase.pl?court=US&vol=163&invol=537>
(actual Plessy v. Ferguson decision)

- McCarthy Hearings primary sources. These include audio speech by McCarthy. Also excerpts of testimonies released in 2003.

TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY (Resources link) History Matters.

www.historymatters.gmu.edu, primary sources, includes COLLIER's assessment of hearings and friendly and not friendly testimonies.

www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/welch-mccarthy.html (print/audio)

www.chron.com/cs/CDA/printstory.mpl/side2/1896338

- Primary sources from Brown v. Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas. Editorials written at the time.

www.landmarkcases.org/brown/reaction.html (Again, excellent source, with other teaching ideas that include suggestions for those with class/curriculum time limits, etc. Excerpts from regional editorials at the time available.)

www.findlaw.com (actual Brown v. Board decision)

- Current newspapers and/or magazines to be used by groups to review current conflicts.

Activities (What will you and your students do during the lesson to promote learning?)

Day 1:

-Teacher introduces scenario that principal of school has decided that all left handed students and faculty must now learn to write right-handed. In the process of the discussion, students will experience some of the emotions as well as form questions about exercise of power surrounding minority/majority rights issues.

-Introduction of project, review of goals and expectations (rubric).

-Introduce students to some current minority/majority rights conflicts, using newspapers, magazines. Have students be thinking about which one they individually will want to write about later.

-Review primary sources being given to students if necessary and provide suggestions for other Internet sources available.

-Break up group into four smaller groups – Salem Witchcraft Trials, Plessy V. Ferguson, Joseph McCarthy Hearings, Brown v. Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas.

Day 2: and 3:

-Working in groups in library media center, each group will research their historical example using a worksheet provided by teacher as a guide, reflecting the appropriate level of ability and goals.

-Each group will prepare a power point and organize a class presentation of the “5 w’s” of their topic and the majority and minority views found during research. Emphasize use and citing of primary sources.

Days 4 and 5:

-Presentations will be given in class. Students not presenting will use “ballot” supplied to each to note core information, majority and minority positions presented. They will also note which side they think they would have supported if they were living at that time. They will need to give a reason for their position. Lastly, they will answer the essential question, applied to the particular presentation. After each presentation, there will be a short question period from the "audience". Ballots will be turned in, counted and results shared with whole class.

-Identify who will serve as class moderator during Day 6 discussion and provide a moderator guide. (Offer extra credit to participant) Questions need to be prepared by student.

Day 6:

-Return ballots for use by students during discussion. (Ballots should have been reviewed/graded by teacher already.)

-Talk briefly to moderator re the moderator's guiding questions prepared by him/her.

-Closing discussion. Important to focus on links between Salem Witchcraft Trials and McCarthy Hearings, Plessy v. Ferguson and Brown v. Board of Education, that powerful institutions have changed social and legal positions over time, sometimes not intentionally, and that this can be a positive experience for the larger society. Review the impact this has had on American life and individuals. Encourage students to use the particulars found on the ballots.

-Follow-up homework: In a CAPT-style essay, choose a current struggle between minority and majority rights and answer the following question: From what you have learned in class, how do you think this issue will be resolved at this point? Give three reasons for your view and then, in your conclusion, explain where you think this issue will be in 50 years and why.

How will you assess what student learned during this lesson?

-Rubric, including quality of research, cooperation within group, use of time, etc.

-Presentation to class by group, using power point

-Audience ballot

-Effective argument presented in CAPT essay

-Overall participation

Connecticut Framework Performance Standards:

1. Historical Thinking

-gather, analyze and reconcile historical information, including contradictory data, from primary and secondary sources to support or reject hypotheses

-use primary source documents to analyze multiple perspectives

2. Local, U.S. and World History

-demonstrate an understanding of major events and trends in...U.S. history...from all historical periods...

-explain relationships among the events and trends studied in local ...national ...history.

3. Historical Themes

-identify various parties and analyze their interest in conflicts from selected historical periods

4. Applying History
 - describe and analyze, using historical data and understandings, the options which are available to parties involved in contemporary conflicts or decision-making
 - describe relationships between historical subject matter and other subjects they study, current issues and personal concerns
 - describe, explain and analyze political, economic and social consequences that came about as the resolution of a conflict
 - demonstrate an understanding of the ways race, gender, ethnicity and class issues have affected individuals and societies in the past
5. U.S. Constitution and Government
 - apply an understanding of historical and contemporary conflicts over Constitutional principles
 - analyze historical and contemporary conflicts through the respective roles of local, state and national governments
 - analyze, using historical and contemporary examples, the meaning and significance of the ideal of equal protection under the law for all persons
 - evaluate the contemporary roles of ...associations, media groups in local, state and national politics
6. Rights and Responsibilities of Citizens
 - evaluate whether or when their obligations as citizens require that their personal desires, beliefs and interests be subordinated to the public good
 - establish, explain and apply criteria to evaluate rules and laws
 - take a position on a current policy issue
7. Political Systems
 - evaluate the importance of developing self-government so as to restrict arbitrary power
 - analyze and evaluate the advantages of limited and unlimited government
 - describe how constitutions may limit government in order to protect individual rights and promote the common good
 - explain how purposes served by the government have implications for the individual and society
 - provide examples of legitimate authority and exercise of power without authority.