Exemplary Planning Commentary: History Social Studies

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1a. Central focus of the segment

This lesson sequence examines the French Revolution from its social, political, and economic origins through the rise of Napoleon Bonaparte. As the social studies department at my school studies history through multiple social science perspectives (INSPECT), rather than focusing on mere chronology, units are organized around relevant social science perspectives. This lesson sequence begins with an examination of the social, political, and economic conditions of pre-Revolutionary France before moving on to the actual course of the Revolution itself. The final lesson of the sequence links the ideas that motivated the Revolution to their application in the contemporary world, both in France itself and in comparison to the ideas that motivated and shaped the American Revolution with which they are already familiar from previous studies. The purpose of the central focus is for students to recognize the long-term historical trends that both influenced events in the past and have shaped (and continue to shape) the world they live in.

1b. Linking skills, knowledge, and arguments

As the central focus of the unit is an examination of the events and importance of the French Revolution from multiple historical perspectives, the lesson sequence draws is aligned with multiple state standards in support of this goal. These standards are:

> OSPI Grade 9/10 Social Studies Standard 4.1.2: Understands how the following themes and developments help to define eras in world history: Age of Revolutions (1750 – 1917)
> OSPI Grade 9/10 Social Studies Standard 4.3.1 Analyzes and interprets historical materials from a variety of perspectives in world history (1450—present).

Learning targets (i.e. learning objectives) from individual lessons within the sequence are aligned to standards. The learning target (i.e. learning objective) for the first lesson in the sequence (Describe the social, political, and economic conditions in France that contributed to the outbreak of the Revolution in 1789) requires students to describe social, political, and economic conditions unique to pre-Revolutionary France that distinguish this particular time frame from others ("themes" as used in standard 4.1.2). The learning target (i.e. learning objective) of the second lesson (Describe the chronology and the key people, places, and events of the French Revolution from the convening of the Estates General to the assassination of Jean-Paul Marat and the beginning of the Reign of Terror) establishes a factual basis for later interpretive examination ("developments" as used in standard 4.1.2). The learning target for the third lesson in the sequence (Compare and contrast the American Declaration of Independence with Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen) requires students to apply the historical background examined in lesson 1 and the factual events arising from that background examined in lesson 2 to primary source material.

1c. Explaining how lessons build and link to other skills

This unit follows on from the previous units of study in the course. In keeping with the social studies department's use of social science perspectives (INSPECT), the two previous units of study focused on the rise and practice of absolute monarchy through social and political perspectives and the beginnings of liberalism during the Enlightenment through an idealistic perspective. This unit ties together previously learned material and explores its implications in a broader historical context.

As with other units in the course, a general pattern is followed. What is the background? What actually occurred? What are the consequences? Learning targets within the lesson sequence reflect this by building upon one another to present a coherent picture of the Revolution. Lesson 1 examines the social, political, and economic conditions of pre-Revolutionary France, conditions broadly familiar to students through their studies of absolute monarchy in previous units but narrowed in this lesson to focus on a particular place and time. Lesson 1 is essential background knowledge to any formal study of the Revolution as one must first understand what the French were revolting against. The learning target for lesson 2 focuses on the actual course of the Revolution itself. Students apply this information in lesson 3 by examining primary source documents (documents which continue to animate contemporary political debate) and evaluating them in light of the historical forces that shaped them. Students must make certain inferences in their analyses and support such inferences with evidence from their historical studies learned in lessons 1 and 2 as well as drawing upon background material from previous units.

1d. Opportunities to express learning targets (Washington State only).

Learning targets are displayed on classroom media at the beginning of each lesson. Along with learning targets a success criterion is also displayed so that students will understand what they need to do to demonstrate mastery of the learning target. At the introduction of each learning target or success criterion students are asked to self-evaluate their understanding of the learning target/success criterion. Students communicate their understanding via thumbs up/thumbs down or fist to five (a fist being complete bewilderment, five fingers being complete understanding). If a substantial plurality of the class rates their understanding of the learning target as poor (judgment criteria is listed in the preview section of each lesson plan) I have those students who rate their understanding as high to paraphrase or review the learning target/success criterion for the benefit of the whole class. I then return to the student(s) who rated their understanding as poor and have them restate it in their own words to judge their understanding. This allows me to clear up misunderstanding of what skills students are expected to use, what new material will be introduced, and how new material will fit in to their existing knowledge base. It is only after learning targets and success criteria are fully grasped that formal instruction will commence.

There are also numerous informal assessments throughout each lesson. Informal assessments follow each chunk of instruction. Lesson 1 focuses on the social, political, and economic conditions of pre-Revolutionary France. Thus a chunk of instruction would focus on only one of these social science perspectives. Informal assessment then follows instruction on this chunk. These assessments serve a twofold purpose. The first is to give me feedback by which to measure student progress toward learning targets. Poor performance on informal assessment will prompt me to reflect on how content is delivered and may necessitate remediation of a particular chunk of instruction. Lesson 2 follows a similar pattern. As students are primarily engaged in individual or paired work the learning targets are constantly displayed on classroom media and referred to as students are informally assessed during each chunk. As there are two separate but closely related learning targets for this lesson, student answers must refer to both chronology and key people, places, and events to ensure that the learning targets will be met.

The second function of informal assessment is to allow students to monitor their own progress in achieving the learning target. Informal assessment usually takes the form of questioning students on newly learned material. Each informal assessment focuses on newly learned material from the current chunk of instruction but also ties newly learned material to previous chunks of instruction as a way to monitor progress toward the overall learning target and not just the current chunk. By way of introduction to the informal assessment students are prompted to review the learning target to make explicit connections between instruction and goals.

Each lesson ends with a written exit ticket which reflects the success criterion. This exit ticket allows students to demonstrate their mastery of the learning target and is used as a formal measure of the success criterion. Exit tickets are annotated with feedback and returned to the students.

2a. Summary of students' prior knowledge

Although students at this school begin their formal study of world history as sophomores, students are prepared in previous grades to apply social studies skills to the study of history. Students have a basic understanding of world geography and can thus locate France within the continent of Europe. They understand the concept of a historical map showing the changes of political boundaries over time. They are also familiar with the concept of chronology if not yet with cause and effect in a historical sense. As students have progressed throughout this course of study they have become accustomed to looking at historical material through social science perspectives (see Context for Learning, item 3) rather than as a mere list of chronology.

Students have also studied U.S. history from pre-colonial times to the Civil War in middle school. They are familiar with the founding documents of the United States including the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. Their study of the Enlightenment in this course has demonstrated the theoretical foundations of these documents, but as yet students have no other formal exposure to Enlightenment ideas in a wider context.

Within this course students are familiar with general historical background such as the idea and practice of absolute monarchy in Europe though not specifically as it relates to pre-Revolutionary France. Accordingly, lesson 1 begins with a pre-assessment to gauge background knowledge including misconceptions on the French Revolution. Instruction in lesson 1 focuses on the immediate background of the Revolution. This will tie the abstract concepts of absolute monarchy and the Enlightenment studied previously to the unfolding events of this unit. Lesson 2 connects the outbreak of the Revolution with the background conditions that were explored in lesson 1. In lesson 3 students compare and contrast the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights (documents that students are familiar with from studies in prior grades) with the Declaration of the Rights of Man. Thus their comparison proceeds from a known quantity.

2b. Summary of student assets

See the Context for Learning for a discussion of the socioeconomic, racial, and gender makeup of the class. Social bonds between students are very important to the students and the classroom layout of paired desks is designed to encourage social interaction and peer support in learning (Archer). A few students are the children of first generation immigrants, though all but two speak English as a primary language. None of my students have any first-hand experience living in a rigidly defined, class based society comparable to the Estates of pre-Revolutionary France. Some students are children of servicemen at the nearby Navy base and have a healthy (though somewhat immature) appreciation of the founding principles of the United States such as freedom and liberty, ideals which also animated the French Revolution.

As with many teenagers historical material only takes on relevance when they can relate it to their lives or at least the world they have been exposed to through mass media. Accordingly, the lesson sequence begins by noting the current crisis in Ukraine in lesson 1. This crisis bears striking parallels to the French Revolution and ties the historical material we are about to study to current events. This serves to draw connections between course content and real world events with which students may be familiar. Additionally, as mentioned above, many students in the school (and this class) have active duty family members who are stationed at the nearby Navy base and may have a personal stake in the unfolding Ukrainian crisis. Should this lesson sequence be taught in the future, it can be adapted by using a similar contemporary political upheaval.

3a. Selecting learning activities based on prior knowledge and other assets

Several factors influenced my choice of learning tasks and materials. State standards are a key factor. Learning targets and supporting activities are designed to meet these standards (see item 1b above). The social studies departmental guidelines also influenced the way material is to be presented (see Context for Learning, item 3). Thus instead of a bald chronology learning tasks are designed to examine material through social science perspectives.

I intend to use direct instruction in lessons 1 and 2 to cover factual material that students have no prior exposure to. This is intended to link new material on the Revolution to previously covered material from the rise of absolute monarchy and the Enlightenment (Bruner). As the human brain is wired to process visual information (Medina), newly introduced material is supplemented with a PowerPoint presentation to provide multi-sensory input. Additionally,

newly introduced material is presented in chunks to allow students to process and consider the implications of each of chunk (Marzano). Lesson 1 focuses on the social, political, and economic conditions of pre-Revolutionary France, but each social science perspective is introduced as its own chunk followed by a pause for reflection. Students must make explicit connections between each social science perspective before moving on to the next chunk. Similarly, lesson 2 covers the chronology of the Revolution but it is presented in chunks that refer back to the previously covered material from lesson 1. Each chunk is followed by an informal assessment to allow students the opportunity to process newly acquired information. Students are encouraged and in some cases required to interact with their elbow partners to master the material of each chunk (Vygotsky) and integrate it into existing schema (Piaget).

My choice of activity in lesson 3 is informed by my knowledge of students' interest in historical material. It is difficult for students to fully comprehend the significance of historical forces or actors without a meaningful connection to their own lives. As my school is located near a major military installation and many students have strong personal connections to a patriotic military culture, lesson 3 asks students to compare and contrast differing conception of liberty and equality as expressed through the Declaration of Independence/Bill of Rights and the Declaration of the Rights of Man. This draws a more intimate connection between the historical material we are studying and the ideas which touch their own lives in such an immediate fashion.

3d. Managing misconceptions

There are several misconceptions that American society generally holds regarding the French Revolution, misconceptions that my students may share and that this lesson sequence seeks to dispel. Among these misconceptions the most common is that there was no relationship between the American and French Revolutions. Some know that the French aided the American Revolution but their knowledge of the nature and purpose of that aid is itself fraught with misconceptions, chiefly that French government aided the American revolutionaries out of a similar concern for liberty as the Americans. Another misconception is that the French Revolution ended monarchy in France forever.

This lesson sequence takes into account those misconceptions. In examining the economic conditions of pre-Revolutionary France in lesson 1 students are required to make an explicit link between the cost of aiding the American Revolution and the bankrupt French treasury due to France's antiquated system of taxation (slide 3 of instructional material 1.3) The same link is made from a different perspective in lesson 2 (see instructional material 2.2) Lessons 2 and 3 address the misconceptions surrounding France's aid to the American revolutionaries and its unintended consequences (at least from the French government's point of view). Mention is made of the nature and purpose of French aid in direct instruction in lesson 2 while the entry task for lesson 3 recalls the philosophical ideas of such Enlightenment figures as Locke and Rousseau that gave direction to both Revolutions. Finally, though it not addressed in this lesson sequence, it is noted that the material to be covered only forms a portion of the Revolution and gives students a preview of the rise and career of Napoleon. That separate unit of instruction demonstrates that the fallout of the Revolution of 1789 gave rise to reactionary forces that would fill the power vacuum left by the chaos of the Revolution.

3c. Resources for getting help on learning targets (Washington state only)

Multiple opportunities exist for students to identify resources to support their progress toward the learning target. Some of those opportunities are implicit and unstated. Student questions are almost always first redirected to the class at large so that students may use each other as resources. Classroom arrangement is designed to optimize this (see item 2b). I also redirect students to their study material such as guided notes, chronology, or maps. In many cases these methods are sufficient in guiding the student to answer his or her own question.

Formal and informal surveys in the past have revealed that students grasp the broad array of resources available to them. Student responses include, "I can ask the teacher or the librarian", "I can check with my elbow partner," and "I can look in the textbook." The single most common response to the question of identifying resources is, "I can look online or on my smartphone." This reflects the growing influence technology has in the learning environment and indeed in many other aspects of life. Interestingly, this response is quite often a student's first choice in seeking additional resources, but the specifics of what online resources the student would use are vague.

3d. Selecting learning activities for the whole-class and individuals

My lesson sequence uses multiple strategies which meet the learning needs of my students (see Context for Learning for a discussion of class makeup). Lessons 1 and 2 each have a direct instruction component which is broken into chunks. Each chunk is followed by a period of reflection allowing students to "digest" new material. Though students are expected to take notes, they are provided with a format to organize those notes. One particular student's IEP stipulates that she should be provided with classroom notes as her processing speed makes it difficult for her to listen and take notes at the same time (see Instructional material 1.2 and 1.2 Notes). My ELL students are high functioning and rarely request an interpreter but it has been suggested by both my mentor teacher and the ELL coordinator that such notes be also made available so that they may focus on listening while practicing with written English at a later time as spoken English is easier for them to process than the more formal strictures of written academic English.

Lesson 3 relies less on direct instruction than lessons 1 and 2. This is an inquiry based lesson which requires the factual basis established in lessons 1 and 2 (and learning in prior grades about the American Revolution) to fully engage with. Direct instruction is minimal in this lesson. During this inquiry based guided practice students work independently or with their elbow partner. The teacher circulates throughout the room observing and providing guidance where necessary. This scaffolding technique allows the teacher to conduct formative assessments with individuals or with small groups of students. This also allows the teacher to give immediate targeted feedback and to monitor the progress of students such as ELLs or the student with an IEP to ensure that appropriate support is provided.

4a. Identifying the language function

The central focus of the lesson sequence is to describe the French Revolution from multiple historical perspectives. This sequence, then contains, multiple language functions within the learning targets in support of the larger central focus. The language function in the learning targets for lesson 1 and lesson 2 is explicitly "describe". While the learning target from lesson 3 is "compare and contrast", one cannot compare and contrast if one cannot describe both the material at hand and its background and context.

4b. Learning activities enabling practice with the language function

The learning target for lesson 1 is "Describe the social, political, and economic conditions in France that contributed to the outbreak of the Revolution in 1789." The lesson is broken into three chunks of direct instruction. Each chunk focuses on only one aspect of the learning target (e.g. the first chunk only focuses on social conditions). Students are provided with a guided notes template to organize information. My IEP student is provided with a prewritten copy of the notes (Instructional material 1.2 Notes) so she may concentrate on classroom discussions of the material as per her IEP. The key learning task comes during the informal assessments that close each chunk. Students are asked to paraphrase their understandings of social, political, or economic conditions but are also asked probing questions that require them to consider the implications of the material they have just learned (see lesson 1 informal assessments 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3).

4c. Additional language demands

The language function for lesson 1 is "describe". In order to describe the social, political, or economic conditions or pre-Revolutionary France students must understand that those conditions arose out of the rigid class structure of pre-Revolutionary France. As students have no direct experience of such a society a good deal of attention is paid to examining the class structure of the time. They key vocabulary for this lesson are the words "estate" as used to describe French social divisions and "Estates General" to describe the rudimentary legislature of the French absolute monarchy. It is for this reason that the lesson begins with an examination of social conditions since all other issues arose out of class distinctions. Subsequent examinations of political and economic conditions refer frequently to the three estates. Accordingly I give a brief direct instruction lecture on what the term estate means in this context to distinguish the term from its everyday use (the totality of one's property). This distinction is especially important as period documents refer to the estates or the Estates General and assume the audience is familiar with the terms and concepts. Formative

assessment 1.1 specifically refers to the estates to emphasize the importance of this key vocabulary term. Other key vocabulary such as monarchy and democracy students are familiar with from previous units but are examined more closely in a real world context as connections are made between concept and practice in pre-Revolutionary and Revolutionary France.

Discourse in this lesson takes on an especially important role. Historical discourse allows historians to organize content into specific structures. This type of discourse was given formal acknowledgement and instruction at the beginning of the course when the students were exposed to the concept of INSPECT (see Context for Learning item 3). Subsequent instruction (including this lesson sequence) is organized according to discipline specific discourse. In the closure assessment of lesson 1 and the entry task for lesson 2 students draw on this discipline specific discourse to accomplish learning activities.

4d. Supporting language use

There are several instructional supports to help students understand the language function. Although lessons 1 and 2 rely on direct instruction to introduce new material, lesson 1 includes a PowerPoint presentation mirroring the content of instruction (Instructional Material 1.1) to provide multi-sensory input (Medina). Students are also provided with a discipline specific template for guided notes but are expected to transfer oral and visual material into their own notes to reinforce the information. Informal assessments and closure assessments in lessons 1 and 2 encourage students to work with their elbow partners if necessary to process information. Such collaboration allows for scaffolding both between students and between student and teacher as teacher observation demands (Vygotsky). Lesson 3 relies heavily on instructional supports. Lesson 3 demands that students go beyond the factual material studied in lessons 1 and 2 and asks students to apply that factual understanding to primary source documents. Students are given copies of these documents and work with elbow partners or small groups as they compare and contrast the differing conceptions of liberty arising out of the American and French Revolutions. These supports are necessary for full comprehension of material and integrating newly learned material into existing schema.

5a. Assessing student learning

The lesson sequence begins with a pre-assessment (Formal pre-assessment 1.1) that consists of a short series of selected and constructed response items that cover key terms, concepts and events that form the core of planned instruction. Such an assessment allows me to gauge the level of background knowledge of the class as a whole. A few items on the assessment have been covered in previous units. These items are designed to link previously learned material with soon-to-be introduced material and to gauge whether remediation on previously learned material may be necessary. The lesson sequence concludes with a formal post-assessment that is identical to the pre-assessment. Students can thus track their own progress from the beginning of the unit to the end of the unit. Qualitative difference on performance between pre and post-assessment allows me as the teacher to decide which portions (if any) should be remediated.

All lessons contain multiple opportunities for informal assessment. Such informal assessments allow me to monitor student progress both throughout the lesson itself and individual chunks of each lesson. Poor student performance in informal assessments will prompt me to review material from that chunk. Each lesson ends with an exit ticket that relates to that lesson's content and may refer back to previously learned material (whether from this unit or from previous units) that may be necessary for full comprehension of that lesson's material. The formal post-assessment is a comprehensive assessment which covers material from all lessons in the sequence. After each lesson I review the exit slips to assess progress and make adjustments in support activities or remediation if necessary.

5b. Adapting lessons

Formal and informal assessments allow students to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways. Informal assessments are conducted verbally with students selected by a random name generator so no one student will feel as if they are being specially singled out. Informal assessments do not stop with purely factual information, though. Questions on factual information are followed by probing questions designed to deepen content understanding. These

questions are often turned over to the class at large so that students may offer differing perspectives. In this way misconceptions may be identified and cleared up before proceeding with further instruction.

With the exception of the formal post-assessment (which is summative in nature) formal assessments, while written rather than verbal, are still used formatively and allow those students who struggle with spoken English (such as my two ELL students) or students that are hesitant to speak during class to demonstrate their learning (see exit ticket closure assessment in lesson 1 and closure assessment 2.1 in lesson 2). A preponderance of evidence on these assessments dictates whether the lesson or some portion of it should be remediated before moving on to new material.

5c. Student reflection (Washington state only)

At the beginning of each lesson student entry tasks offer an opportunity to elicit written student voice. Subsequent discussion of entry tasks further extends student voice and allows me to gauge student readiness for new material. Introduction of each lesson's learning target and success criterion is another opportunity for student voice. Students discuss among themselves and paraphrase for me their understanding of the learning target. Students rate their own understanding of the learning target or success criterion using either a thumbs up/thumbs down or a fist to five. This allows students to express their understanding of the learning target or success criterion in terms which they may find easier to work with. Establishing this understanding is crucial so that students may monitor their own progress toward meeting the target.

Formal and informal assessments during instruction also elicit student voice and offer students measures of their performance relative to learning targets. These informal assessments occur frequently (see informal assessments 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3). I also will be able to check with individual students during guided practice in lesson 3.

At the conclusion of each lesson just before the closure assessment I return to the learning target and solicit student voice in rating their own mastery of the target. This is a similar exercise to that which opened each lesson save that the former exercise elicited student voice about their understanding of the learning target itself while the latter exercise assumes students have a clear understanding of the learning target and are now expressing voice on their understanding of the material and their own progress.

5d. Strategies to promote student self-assessment (Washington state only)

Students use multiple strategies, both oral and written, to monitor their own progress. Students rate their understanding of the learning target and their understanding of their own progress via a thumbs up/thumbs down or a fist to five as previously described in item 5c. Students also work in pairs or small groups during informal assessments between chunks providing an opportunity for collaboration and evaluating their understanding of material against that of their classmates. Finally students complete an exit ticket at the end of each lesson that explicitly asks students to rate their own understanding of the material and why they felt they merit that rating. Students also offer feedback on instructional methods that they found helped or hindered their learning process. Student strategies are sometimes influenced by my instructional strategies. During formative assessment students are asked to go beyond factual material and to consider its implications. This is designed to deepen student understanding of content. These strategies increase the likelihood of meeting the learning targets.