

## **Unit 6: Lesson Plan and Learning Design**

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LDTC 630 9040 Collaboration and Design Thinking in Learning Design

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## Analysis

Riverside High School has split its school week into three days in person and two days of online work at home. Without proper support or training, the change has led to teachers struggling to structure their lessons and relying on lectures during their in-person days. During online days, students watch videos or are assigned reading. Passive methods such as these will not engage students or encourage critical thinking. Adding active learning techniques, which are grounded in constructivist learning theory, will allow learners to construct knowledge and connect new information to prior knowledge through experiences, activities, and reflection (McLeod, 2022). Specific challenges include low student engagement, little interaction or collaboration in either setting, and no formal assessment during online days.

## Learning Objectives

- Students will be able to analyze and compare the political, economic, and social arguments of Patriots, Loyalists, and Neutrals in 1776 using primary and secondary sources.
- Students will be able to create and support arguments for each position with evidence from class materials and independent research.
- Students will evaluate and reflect on how being exposed to different perspectives influences your understanding of colonial attitudes and choices.

## Audience

11<sup>th</sup> grade high school students who are enrolled in an American History class

## Format and Modality

### **Blended learning approach**

- Online modules for analyzing assigned reading/materials and primary sources
- Online collaborative activity to apply knowledge
- In-person active lecture
- In-person group project, presentation, and application of knowledge

## Assessment

- **Online**
  - Formative
    - Creative reflection activity
    - Participation in online debate activity
    - Observation of participation in debate activity

- Summative
  - Student reflection writing on debate activity
- **In-person**
  - Formative
    - Participation during active lecture
    - Observation of participation in collaborative inquiry-based activity
  - Summative
    - Group presentation of research results and conclusions

## Resources

- **Online Learning Platform:** Learning management system (LMS) with access to online modules
- **Online Debate Tool or Whiteboard:** Programs such as Kialo.com, Miro.com, or any digital whiteboard
- **In-Person Materials:** (Instructor) laptop, screen, internet access whiteboard, markers, flip chart; (students) Chromebooks, presentation software, notebooks, internet access
- **Content:** *OpenStax U.S. History* textbook: Unit 6 America's War for Independence, 1775-1783; Chapter 6.1 Britain's Law-and-Order Strategy and Its Consequences and curated articles and videos

## Content and Activity Outline

### Module 1: Loyalist Vs. Patriot: Individual Decisions (Online)

- **Introduction of material** (*Gagne's first event: Gaining attention*)
  - Example text: In addition to a struggle for freedom, the American Revolution was a civil war between colonial Americans. John Dickinson wrote "Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania" in 1767-1768 that protested the Stamp Act but acknowledged that America was properly part of the British Empire. By 1776, Thomas Paine published *Common Sense* that argued that independence from Great Britain was the only logical option. *Common Sense* is a best-seller with over 500,000 copies distributed. It fired up the independence movement. At the same time, many colonists are loyal and want to remain a part of Great Britain. Finally, about a third of colonists are determined to remain neutral (Brannon, n.d.). In today's lesson, we're going to explore the reasons why colonists chose sides in the American Revolution.
- **Learning Activity 1** (*Gagne's sixth event: Eliciting performance*)
 

Creative reflection writing activity

  - Example prompt: Imagine that you are a colonist in 1776. Where do you live and what do you do? Which side would you choose? Write a short description of who you

are, where you live, and whether you would choose to be a Patriot, Loyalist, or a Neutral.

- **Unit content** (*Gagne's fourth and fifth events: Presenting content and providing guidance*)
  - Video: Emerging American Identity: John Dickinson's Letters from a Colonial Farmer in Pennsylvania <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tzwqUvo1gRw>
  - Video: The American Experiment: Thomas Paine's Common Sense and Call for Independence <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9scYsuvqIP4>
  - Essay: Loyalist Vs. Patriot <https://billofrightsinstitute.org/essays/loyalist-vs-patriot>

- **Learning Activity 2** (*Gagne's sixth event: Eliciting performance*)

Online debate:

- Example: A private debate board can be set up in a program such as kialo.com or any digital whiteboard. The prompt statement reads: "It's 1776 and the American Revolution has begun. The country is dividing into three groups: patriots, loyalists and neutrals." There are three posting areas labeled: Patriots, Loyalists, and Neutrals. Students are directed to use the class materials and their own additional research and post a reason in each position why a colonist may choose to be a Patriot, Loyalist, or Neutral.

- **Learning Activity 3** (*Gagne's sixth event: Eliciting performance*)

Student reflection writing activity:

- Students are asked to review their classmates' responses on the debate board and return to their colonist in the reflection activity. Did the readings and debate change their opinion? They are asked to write another short reflection on their final stance, how it evolved, and how the "debate" affected their thinking. Research shows that this activity improved conceptual understanding of course content, critical thinking skills, and collaboration with other course participants (Kerrigan & Aghekyan, 2022).

## Module 2: Loyalist Vs. Patriot: Colonial Governments (In-person)

- **Learning Activity 1** (*Gagne's first and third events: Gaining attention and stimulating recall*)

Icebreaker group brainstorm

- Invite students to divide into their chosen sides from yesterday activity. Ask each group to decide on their top three reason for choosing their sides and share them with the class.

- **Unit content** (*Gagne's fourth, fifth, and sixth events: Presenting content, providing guidance, and eliciting performance*)

In the online lesson, students explored the early days of the American Revolution and the writings of John Dickinson and Thomas Paine. These writers had influence on individual decisions to become Patriots, Loyalists, or Neutrals. In the in-person

lesson, students will explore how those same decisions were made by colonies and their governments.

- Active Lecture: Instructors will explain the content by using visuals, breaking down information into segments, and incorporating quick quiz questions or polls to test student understanding throughout the lecture.
- Sample content: Colonial governments' different reactions, stressing the differences between different regions
  - Massachusetts (open fighting and rebellion)
  - Virginia (Dunmore's Proclamation)
  - North Carolina (Mecklenburg Resolves).
- **Learning Activity 2** (*Gagne's sixth event: Eliciting performance*)

Group problem-solving activity

- Students will be divided into small groups and chose a colony. Their task is to research and examine the actions of their colony during the early Revolutionary period. Did their leaders take a Patriot position, a Loyalist one, or did they try to remain neutral? What aspects of their geography, economy, or social structures affected their government's decisions?

Group presentation: Each group will share what they learn in a brief presentation to the rest of the class.

- This collaborative learning activity allows students to engage in the social construction of knowledge and develop valuable communication and teamwork skills (UMGC, 2024). This learning structure is known as jigsaw groups, where students become experts in their topic and share their knowledge with others (UMGC, 2024).

## Evaluation and Reflection

- Review student's debate board submissions for participation and accuracy. (*Gagne's eighth event: Assessing performance*)
- Review and grade student's reflective writing papers. (*Gagne's seventh and eighth events: Providing feedback and assessing performance*)
- Collect feedback through class surveys and informal discussions.
- Revise and refine the lesson plan based on student assessment scores, evaluation data, and feedback. (*Gagne's ninth event: Enhancing retention and transfer*)

## Professional Summary Email

Dear Mr. Reynolds,

Thank you for the opportunity to present a lesson plan draft. I am very interested in helping teachers and improving the delivery of high school education (my son just graduated and had so many wonderful teachers!) As requested, I have attached a lesson plan for an American History unit (based on Unit 6, America's War for Independence—Chapter 6.1 in the *OpenStax US History* textbook). The blended-learning lesson focuses on Patriot, Loyalist, and Neutral perspectives and is divided into two parts: an online module where students analyze primary and secondary sources and participate in a structured online debate, and an in-person session where they engage in collaborative group projects and presentations. The learning objectives you provided are incorporated in the lessons: analyzing primary sources, engaging in debates and demonstrating understanding through writing and presentations.

Active learning strategies are central to this design. For the online portion, students take on the role of colonists in 1776, contribute to an asynchronous debate board, and reflect on how exposure to differing viewpoints shapes their understanding of issues and their opinions. Research shows that online debates improve conceptual understanding of course content and critical thinking skills (Kerrigan & Aghekyan, 2022). In the classroom, students participate in an interactive lecture with polls and quick checks for understanding, followed by small-group problem-solving and presentations of their learning to the class. These activities spark curiosity, facilitate discussion, and encourage the social construction of knowledge.

The design of this lesson plan directly addresses problems like low engagement and lack of online participation. By replacing passive video-watching with interactive online debates, the design provides accountability and ensures active participation outside the classroom. In-person, shifting from lecture-heavy instruction to collaborative inquiry helps increase engagement and builds collaboration between students.

I hope my enthusiasm for the project shows in my work. I would love an opportunity to talk to your team about the lesson plan and the other ideas I have for applying active learning principles to your blended learning environment pilot program.

Sincerely,

Cathy Bruce

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