Technology Designs Lesson Plan Assignment & Reflection

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Concept Formation Lesson Plan

**Class**: 10th Grade World History II, 1500-present

**Topic**: Totalitarianism

**Instructional Model**: This lesson will help high school World History II students understand the concept of totalitarianism through the process of concept formation. Concept formation lessons allow students to develop their own understanding and definition of the concept in a structured and guided way. Students look at some examples of the concept, find the critical attributes of the concept and combine them to form a definition of the concept, and then apply their knowledge to identify examples and non-examples. Concept formation lessons allow students to form a more personally meaningful and applicable understanding of abstract concepts.

**Overview**: Students will likely be introduced to the concept of totalitarianism when learning about the period between the World Wars. During this time, especially in Europe, people were suffering from the repercussions of World War I and a global depression. This led to the rise of strong leadership in several countries, and with new technologies available such as mass media capability, states could intervene and control far more aspects of its citizens’ lives. Powerful leaders used this to their advantage to consolidate control, stifle political opposition, and maintain power, establishing very controlling and manipulative governments. These governments would be defined as totalitarian regimes.

**Rationale**: The concept of totalitarianism is a natural fit for a concept formation lesson. This is an abstract concept students may struggle to understand, especially since they will likely be learning about fascism and the Soviet Union’s implementation of communism around the same time they will learn about totalitarianism. Also, totalitarianism is a concept that applies to future governments in the curriculum, and a firm understanding of totalitarianism will help prepare students for government classes. A concept formation lesson is a great way for students to define an abstract concept in a very structured and guided way by looking at examples, determining critical attributes, forming a definition, and applying their own definitions to identify incidences of their concept. Students will be able to gain a deeper and more meaningful understanding of the concept through the use of a concept formation lesson.

**Objectives**:

* After the lesson, students will be able to identify the critical attributes of the concept of totalitarianism.
* After the lesson, students will be able to distinguish examples of totalitarianism from non-examples.
* After the lesson, students will be able to meet SOL Standard WHII.11b and WHII.11c, which mandates that students should be able to cite causes and assess the impact of worldwide depression in the 1930s and examine “events related to the rise, aggression, and human costs of dictatorial regimes in the Soviet Union, Germany, Italy, and Japan.”
* The lesson will help students meet NCSS Standards 3, 4, and 5 for Era 8, which require students to understand the search for peace and stability in the 1920s and 1930s, the causes and global consequences of World War II, and major global trends from 1900 to the end of World War II.

**Assessment**:

* Students’ responses during whole class discussion will be monitored. As the critical attributes are mentioned, favor those responses and frame their responses so the critical attributes are clearly highlighted.
* At the end of the lesson, students will complete a short worksheet that has a list of 4 examples and non-examples. Students will be asked to distinguish examples from non-examples and point out why non-examples fail to meet the criteria. To ensure that students can clearly differentiate, examples will be given from varied time periods and locations.
* Students will be asked to find two real examples of totalitarianism and to create one fictional example of totalitarianism and to create a PowerPoint presentation that depicts each government meeting the critical attributes of the totalitarianism definition. This task may be assigned in class or as homework.

**Content and Instructional Strategies**:

I. The Concept Definition: Totalitarianism is the practice of a centralized government that is intolerant of other political parties and opinions, rules with a single-party system, and controls all aspects of citizens’ everyday lives through state-controlled mass media, personality cultism, economic control, regulation of speech, mass surveillance, and/or the use of terror.

Critical Attributes:

* Intolerant of other political parties and opinions
* Centralized single-party government
* Government that controls all aspects of citizens’ everyday lives through state-controlled mass media, personality cultism, economic control, regulation of speech, mass surveillance, and/or the use of terror

II. Hook: To spark student interest and thought about totalitarianism, a brief 1-minute video clip from **YouTube’s “**[**Joseph Stalin: Red Terror**](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QF_fOHjWJMo)**” video will be shown on the Promethean board** (the introduction). The video discusses Stalin’s use of terror and execution on political opponents and imagined enemies even within his own party. Students will be asked to **compare Stalin’s government to a democracy**, such as that of the U.S. This will start the concept formation process because **students will have to recognize some differences between a totalitarian government and a non-totalitarian one**.

**Plan B for this Step**: If there is too much technical difficulty to show the video, the teacher will provide a **mini-lecture** about Stalin and his use of terror in the Soviet Union. Emphasize aspects of Stalin’s government that reflect totalitarianism and reduced liberty.

III. Data-Retrieval Chart and Example Analysis (9-12 minutes):

* Hand out the **worksheet**, explaining to students how they should **fill out the chart** (worksheet is last page of the lesson plan). (1 minute)
* They should first fill out the chart individually. (5-8 minutes)
* As a class, walk through the answers in the chart. Make sure the “right” answers are clear, or future steps will be significantly more difficult. (3 minutes)

IV. Defining and Labeling the Concept (26-28 minutes):

* With a partner, have **students jot down at least 3 differences between the examples in the chart on their worksheet**. (5 minutes)
* As a class, have **students share their responses** to the group. Write down student responses, framing their answers to be in line with the concept. For example, put less emphasis on differences that are irrelevant to the critical attributes and more emphasis on more relevant answers. (5 minutes)
* With a partner, have **students jot down at least 3 similarities between the examples on the chart**. (5 minutes)
* With the chart’s help, students should be able to describe some similarities fairly quickly. As a whole class, have **students share their similarities with the group**. Again, write down student responses on the board framing their answers in a way that correlates with the critical attributes. (3 minutes)
* Ask students to choose 3 critical attributes of the concept out of the similarities. These should be the 3 most important similarities. Again, during this process it is important to scaffold student responses and guide them towards the “right” critical attributes so they can write a good definition and understand the main ideas. **Students should write the final 3 attributes on their own paper**. (3-5 minutes)
* Have students **write a definition using these critical attributes on their own paper**. Give an example of how to combine the attributes to form a definition so students clearly understand what they are being asked to do. (3 minutes)
* Have the class try to guess what the concept is labeled. If they fail to guess it correctly, label it for them. (2 minutes)

V. Classifying (20 minutes):

* **Handout the second worksheet** and ask students to **identify the examples from non-examples**. For non-examples, have students identify which critical attribute the example fails to meet. (10 minutes)
* On the back of the second worksheet, have students either identify two historical examples of totalitarianism and create a fictional example. **Students can use their textbooks to find examples**. They should briefly describe how each example meets the critical attributes. (10 minutes)
* To follow-up this activity, students will **create a short PowerPoint presentation** that depicts each of their examples, both real and fictional, meeting the critical attributes of totalitarianism. There is an attached handout to explain this assignment, which can be done in class or as homework. If necessary, show students the basic ways to use PowerPoint so they will know enough to be able to complete the assignment.
* **Plan B Strategies for the Assignment**: If computers are available and functional for each student, and there is enough instructional time, this assignment can be done in class. If there are not enough functional computers available, this assignment can either be done as homework or in pairs. If computer availability is an issue outside of class, then allow students to write an essay about each of their examples.

**Resources**: **Promethean board or other projector with video/audio capability, computer or laptop with Internet capabilities, blackboard with chalk, 25 copies of all worksheets, World History textbooks, laptop cart with enough computers (which have PowerPoint capabilities)**

**Differentiation**: Students will mostly be following a uniform process until the “Classifying” stage, where students will be allowed to find their own examples of totalitarianism and create one of their own examples. This gives creative students an option that allows them to apply the concept creatively. Also, I will be using a brief video for visual learners, and the use of an example chart will help visual learners as well. The chart should also help break down the information for students who have difficulties reading. This lesson was structured to allow scaffolded interpretation of the concept of totalitarianism and to allow for student creativity in applying the concept. The creation of a fictional example will really force students to think and apply the critical attributes of the definition. Furthermore, this lesson addresses aspects of the three dimensions of UDL principles: recognition networks, strategic networks, and affective networks. Students will receive the information through visual, textual, and auditory means between the chart worksheet and the video at the beginning of class. Multiple means of expression are also allowed, since the post-lesson assignments in the “Classifying” stage include a more concrete worksheet to solidify the concept and a more creative PowerPoint assignment that allows for more application. If students do not want to or cannot complete the PowerPoint assignment, there is an essay-writing activity they can do that achieves a similar purpose. Finally, students will be affectively engaged through the use of an engaging video and the collaborative nature of the assignment, since they will be working with a partner and with the class to come up with a definition.

**Adaptations**: With a few ADHD students in class, I will ensure that they are partnered with focused students to help keep them on task. Also, the very organized and structured nature of this lesson will help students to focus and stay on task.

**Reflection**: One area of concern is the use of multiple transitions. Students will go from individual work to partner work to whole class discussion and back again. These transitions could be problematic from a classroom management perspective, so I will attempt to use a routine to get students quiet and focused quickly. I will have students raise their hand and be quiet when I raise my hand.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Does one party have all political power, or are there multiple and competing parties? | Is the government tolerant of differing opinions? | How much control does the government have? | Does the government use terror, media control, surveillance, propaganda or a personality cult to maintain influence? |
| Saddam Hussein ruled Iraq as a member of the controlling Ba’ath party from 1979 to 2003. His government took control of the Iraqi economy and resources and used propaganda and terror. In 1988, he ordered a poison gas attack on a village he suspected of disloyalty. |  |  |  |  |
| The Nazi party in Germany took power during the 1930s and consolidated all political power. Hitler and the Nazis used propaganda and mass media to influence the people. Additionally, they imprisoned political opponents in concentration camps where they often died from starvation, exhaustion, disease, or maltreatment. |  |  |  |  |
| The Communist party ruled the Soviet Union as a one-party government. Joseph Stalin seized control of the economy, attempting to build heavy industry and improve agriculture. Stalin’s regime used propaganda, media censorship, and attacked religion to maintain control. When peasants resisted his reforms, he had them sent to labor camps, where thousands died from overwork or were killed. |  |  |  |  |

Differences:

1.

2.

3.

Similarities:

1.

2.

3.

Critical Attributes:

1.

2.

3.

Definition:

Concept Name:

**Totalitarianism Worksheet**

**Part I**: Identify whether or not the following cases are examples or non-examples of totalitarianism. If you find it a non-example, explain which critical attribute the case fails to meet.

1. Under Democrat Franklin D. Roosevelt, who held the U.S. Presidency from 1933 to 1945, the Democrat-controlled Congress passed the New Deal, which gave the government far more control in everyday life than ever before. The government created jobs, regulated the stock market and banks, and created Social Security to provide pensions for the elderly. Critics resented the expansion of the role of the government. While Roosevelt seemed all-powerful, his efforts to “pack the Court” to try to get more Democrats in the Supreme Court were thwarted, and the Supreme Court was still controlled by conservative justices. After narrowly defeating the Republican candidate in the 1944 election with 53% of the popular vote, Roosevelt died from a stroke in 1945, and Harry S. Truman became president.

2. Considered an absolute monarch, King Louis XIV worked to increase royal authority, even claiming “*L’état c’est moi*,” or “I am the state.” He never consulted the Estates General, or the council of representatives from each social class, so this legislative body played no role in checking royal authority. Louis XIV expanded the bureaucracy, or government officials, and built up the French army. He regulated trade with mercantilist policies, bolstering the economy. While Louis XIV exerted great control, he never censored the arts or media; instead, he was considered a great patron of the arts, trying to build French culture.

3. Mussolini came to power with the Fascists in 1925, and he suppressed rival parties, rigged elections, imprisoned or murdered political opponents, and used censorship of the press to maintain control. The state was considered all-important, and much propaganda was used to influence the people to work in accordance with state goals. Fascist youth groups were formed to influence children to obey strict military discipline, parading around and chanting slogans such as “Mussolini is always right.” The Fascist party seized control of the economy, controlling industry, agriculture, and trade.

**Part II**: On the back of this sheet, find and briefly describe two real examples of totalitarianism that meet the critical attributes and create a fictional example. Make sure you describe how each example fits the critical attributes.

**Totalitarianism Concept Formation Assignment**

For this assignment, you will be making a PowerPoint presentation that should be about 4 slides in length. You will explain on the slides how each example of totalitarianism met the critical attributes of the concept. You will need to describe two real examples and one fictional example. The slides should be easy to see, yet colorful and should include pictures (you can use Google Image search to find pictures). You will need to include at least one picture on each slide except for the title slide that shows either the leader of the totalitarian regime or shows that government meeting one of the critical attributes of totalitarianism.

**Grading Rubric**

Easy to see (5 pts): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Colorful (5 pts): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Includes picture on every slide (5 pts): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Includes a title slide with name(s) (5 pts): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Included 2 real examples and one created example (10 pts): \_\_\_\_\_\_

Example 1 (10 pts): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Meets all three critical attributes (5 pts): \_\_\_\_\_\_

Thorough description of the regime (5 pts): \_\_\_\_\_\_

Example 2 (10 pts): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Meets all three critical attributes (5 pts): \_\_\_\_\_\_

Thorough description of the regime (5 pts): \_\_\_\_\_\_

Example 3 (10 pts): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Meets all three critical attributes (5 pts): \_\_\_\_\_\_

Thorough description of the regime (5 pts): \_\_\_\_\_\_

**Totalitarianism Lesson Plan Reflection**

**UDL Principles**

This lesson was designed specifically with several UDL principles in mind. It addresses at least one principle of each of the major networks: the recognition, strategic, and affective networks. For the recognition network, there are several ways for students to receive the information about totalitarianism. The lesson opens with a video, which is useful for visual and auditory learners. The rest of the lesson is largely text-based since the students will be reading the examples on the worksheet, so the lesson definitely caters to linguistic learners as well. Furthermore, the chart definitely helps guide their information processing and manipulation of the concept. As for the strategic network, there are multiple means of expression provided to demonstrate their knowledge of the critical attributes. Students will complete a worksheet on which they distinguish examples of the concept from non-examples, and they will be able to complete a PowerPoint presentation in which they will be able to creatively apply their knowledge of the concept in a different medium. Finally, the affective network is engaged, since students will be engaged by the hook activity and the video in the beginning. Demands will be varied to optimize the challenge for students. The concept will be further engrained since students will be asked to demonstrate their knowledge through varied assignments.

**Technology, Content Focus, Pedagogy**

The technology fits fairly well with the content focus. For this lesson, I tried to provide alternative means of showing examples of totalitarianism. I included Stalin’s example for the hook as a video since the other examples are on pre-made teacher worksheets. These pre-made teacher worksheets were necessary from a pedagogical standpoint. With this content focus, I could have probably included some visual examples of government propaganda and more videos or speeches instead of relying so heavily on text, though history is a highly text-based area of study, and literacy is a necessary component of historical understanding. As for the final assignment, PowerPoint gives them a medium to be creative and also apply their knowledge of totalitarianism in a more constructive way. PowerPoint will also force them to imagine they were creating a presentation, and alternatively, teachers could have students or groups present these slides.

The technology fits very well with the pedagogical purposes of this lesson. The video is used as an engaging way to draw students’ interest both intellectually and affectively. This piques their interest and gets them directed to the concept of totalitarianism. The pre-made teacher worksheets are necessary pedagogically because they are very much guided and directed to help students tackle this abstract concept. The chart, specifically, is necessary to help students break down examples of the concept. Finally, once students have grasped the concept, they will be able to constructively and creatively apply their knowledge to create a short PowerPoint presentation that will assess their knowledge of the critical attributes of the definition.

The technology fits well with the pedagogical purposes and the content focus with the UDL principles in mind. While the pre-made teacher worksheets are a dry medium for working with the concept, they are necessary to achieve the right amount of scaffolding. The video about Stalin’s totalitarian government is a perfect example of content, pedagogy, and technology blending well for the lesson’s introduction. The introductory video about Stalin is an affective and engaging way to pique student interest and to get them drawn into the lesson, and it is an alternative technology or medium for presenting the information to another text-based example. Finally, the PowerPoint assignment allows for a lot of student creativity, which the rest of the lesson admittedly lacks for pedagogical purposes, and achieves the pedagogical purpose of allowing students to demonstrate their knowledge constructively.

**Advantages of Technology**

Technology is used in the lesson to help address the UDL principles along each network, and it helps allow for student creativity and increases student engagement. The introductory video in particular engages students and provides an alternative medium to the dry textbooks and worksheets they are used to reading and will be working with during the lesson. While the worksheets are necessary for the pedagogical purposes of scaffolding, the PowerPoint assignment should really get students excited to create their own example of totalitarianism and to artistically design PowerPoint slides. This is a fun assignment that also forces students to *constructively* apply their knowledge rather than break down examples and distinguish them from non-examples. Additionally, PowerPoint is a good medium for sharing information and presenting it, and it allows teachers to have students present their PowerPoint presentations as the teacher sees fit.