

JAL Library Lesson Plan

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Description of teaching scenario

This session will take place at the JAL Library archives and is geared towards first year history students. Students will learn how to assess authority and bias of two primary sources

from the American South on slavery. The JAL Library teaching philosophy is based within Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. Vygotsky understood learning as a social process and that intelligence is socially constructed and codified. "For Vygotsky, interaction and dialogue among students, teachers, and peers are key to how learners develop an understanding of the world and of the socially constructed meaning of their communities." (Sauders and Wong, p. 56) This idea is the founding principle from which the JAL Library has created this lesson plan.

User analysis

Demographic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The typical age group 18-19 years old.- Diverse backgrounds with varying levels of exposure to historical study.
Knowledge Base	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Will have a base understanding of major historical events, figures- Limited exposure to primary sources and limited knowledge of authority and bias
Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Research skills with secondary sources- Basic essay writing skills, with knowledge on how to write arguments using evidence- Limited experience with historiography and different historical methodologies

Learning style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A variety of learning preferences, including visual, auditory and active learning - Benefit from interactive and engaging activities - Mix of lectures and group work, and hands on activities is needed
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Struggles to differentiate between primary and secondary sources and evaluating their reliability - Guidance in developing critical thinking skills.
Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interest in understanding historical information - Desire to succeed in college and improve academic skills - Some students may be more invested in particular historical periods and events

Learning Outcomes

1. At the end of this lesson students will be able to interpret primary source documents to determine level of authority.

2. At the end of this lesson students will be able to contrast primary sources to determine bias.

Outline and Lesson Plan

Lesson plan date	August 19, 2024	
Librarian Name	Lauren Lundy, Alex Maycroft, Jazmine Harris	
Course & Number	History 101	
Duration (mins)	1 hour	
# of Sections	2	
Teacher Materials	Computer with access to archival website, projector, HDMI cable	
Student Materials	Wifi-enabled computers	
Preparation for Class	Pull sample materials up on the computer before students arrive for ease of instruction.	
Introduction	Welcome students; introduce self Outline goals and agenda for session Review assignment requirements	5 min
Teaching Strategy 1	Instructor – model correct query behavior to find a primary source document on the topic of African Slavery in the American South.	10 min
Comprehension Check	Students replicate the modeled query behavior to find a similar document.	5 min

Teaching Strategy 2	Students continue to search on their own for primary source documents with the instruction to try and find two different perspectives on the same historical event. Instructor walks around the room and answers questions as they arise.	10 min
Comprehension Check	Students think, pair, share about the assets they were able to find. Students will try and identify the level of authority in each other's assets and document this on their worksheet.	5 min
Teaching Strategy 3	Instructor leads class discussion on ascertaining bias and authority in historical documents with examples highlighted from University of Denver Archives collection.	10 min
Comprehension Check	Students write a brief reflection on the biases, authorities perspectives found in their own documents	5 min
Closing	Summarize learning; reflect Students complete worksheet Encourage librarian contact	10 min
Librarian Wrap Up	Return classrooms to original state; review worksheet responses	20 min
Learning Assessment Short Term	Students complete the Library Instruction Evaluation Survey	

Learning Assessment Long Term	Follow up with an instructor survey later in the semester to determine if instruction impacts student work?
Reflection:	What parts of the lesson worked well? What will I do differently next time?

Relevant Teaching Methods and Theories

Our lesson plan blends experiential learning models with sociocultural learning theory. In this way, we hope to challenge and encourage students to understand the role that race and privilege played in the creation of primary source documents of our own history, with the intention of setting them up to put a critical eye towards what identities could be erased or marginalized by the annals of history. In this way, our lesson plan also serves as a very rudimentary introduction into Critical Race Theory, though we do not have the means nor credentials to do so completely.

The focus of the teaching methods lies mostly on experiential learning, which is why we, the instructors, are demonstrating a skill like searching for a primary source and then allowing students to do so. We are also blending sociocultural learning theory and critical pedagogy naturally through the topic that the students are learning by having them learn about bias and authority within primary source documents from the American South during the time of African slavery. In this way students can start thinking about how bias and authority play a role in the social and cultural aspects of history through those primary sources.

Sociocultural theory is based on the principle of serving students, who are themselves multicultural and diverse. “As the population of students becomes more and more

socioeconomically and culturally diverse, information literacy educators must become sociocultural literate to demonstrate the uses for research in a variety of contexts.” (Blas, 2014)

There is an assumption that college students will have a base knowledge shaped by their education experiences thusfar of the civil war and the antebellum south but we recognize that this is an assumption and there will be exceptions. By having students find sources on their own to analyze they will be engaging in research that will allow them to further their knowledge on the topic and improve their ability to critique historical sources. For the students, who didn’t grow up in the United States, we have kept the assignment at an entry level where they shouldn’t feel left out. By including activities like think, pair, share and the worksheet all students can learn from other students and be able to express their thoughts, which stems from their own sociocultural backgrounds.

Sociocultural theory is so embedded in our teaching philosophy at the JAL library that we embarked upon a literature review to ensure our lesson plan and curriculum fell within the best practices of the field *Information Literacy in the 21st Century Multicultural Classroom: Using Sociocultural Literacy* by Elise Blas was a seminal piece of literature in shaping our bend towards sociocultural theory. This essay is a pedagogical guide that informs sociocultural literacy as an imperative tool to reach diverse or marginalized students. The essay discusses “teaching widely” which is to say pulling materials from a diverse range to better encompass and relate to any number of demographics a student might fall into. In our lesson, our sample items specifically highlight the experience of enslaved people, as well as the experiences of women and disabled individuals.

Our other basis of practice comes from the essay *Sociocultural Theories and their Application in Information Literacy Research and Education*. This essay by Li Wang, Christine

Bruce and Hilary Hughes is a large-scale research document that “describes how the sociocultural approach enabled the establishment of collaborative partnerships between information professionals and academic and teaching support staff in a community of practice for information literacy integration.” (Wang et al., 2011) In effect, this essay argues for the benefits of sociocultural theory as a means of relationship building with other scholars. While our primary focus is on the undergraduates within our purview, the information literacy programs at the University of Denver are not requirements, and we recognize the role goodwill with the community of scholars within the academy plays in the marketing success of programs such as this. As mentioned above this was a large scale research project in which participants were surveyed after engaging in a socioculturally designed instruction literacy course to determine whether the lesson was effective in reaching the principles of sociocultural theory laid out by the researchers, which was: “(1) knowledge is socially constructed and the social nature of cognitive development serves as a powerful dialogic model for understanding how IL could be integrated into the curriculum in a community of practice; (2) tools play an important role in these social interactions in curriculum integration; (3) internalization can serve as a powerful model when data is generated and analyzed using this research approach.” (Wang et al., 2011) This criteria was also used in our evaluation survey to determine whether the JAL Library team met its goals for sociocultural theory in the mind of the students.

Application of appropriate framework or standards

All lesson plans and materials submitted from this office are in line with the Association of College and Research Libraries. The ACRL puts forward six frameworks to structure information literacy instruction. They are (1) Authority is Constructed and Contextual, (2)

Information Creation is a Process, (3) Information Has Value, (4) Research as Inquiry, (5) Scholarship as Conversation, and (6) Searching as Strategic Exploration. Our lesson plan can fall under several of these frames, but most especially we find that students can explore the concepts of constructed authority through the comparison activity. If this activity is guided effectively it makes this case very plain for students. The introductory portion of our activity also falls under searching as strategic exploration, and helps students in building confidence in their use of finding aids and library resources to locate and use primary sources.

Marketing Plan

We will talk with the professors and instructors who are teaching the level 1000 US history or general history classes and discuss possibilities of having a class session where their students can visit the archives for this oneshot lesson. In these discussions we will discuss the benefits of students learning about these resources and how this one shot lesson could improve any research papers the professors and instructors assign the students.

If instructors are unable to use class time for the information session we will plan to have the lesson outside of class time. In addition we will ask the professor if they are able to advertise the session to their students and ask if they can make it a requirement to attend or give them extra credit to come. We will also provide flyers for the instructor to hand out to their students and also hang them up in the history department.

Assessment Techniques

One method of informal assessment we will be utilizing during the lesson will be worksheets that we hand out to groups and individuals. The worksheet will be turned into the librarian and/or instructor at the end of the session. This worksheet will have five basic questions

for each of the primary source documents that the students will answer during the class activities.

Those questions are:

1. What is the title of the primary source you have selected?
2. What level of authority does this document have?
3. What evidence leads you to that level of authority?
4. What kinds of bias can you identify in the document?
5. What evidence indicates that bias in the document?

We can then go through the worksheets after the class session to determine how well the students grasped the concepts taught in the lesson. At the end of the session we will also give the students a link to fill out a library instruction survey. The purpose of this survey is about our performance as instructors and the lesson itself. In this survey they will be able to anonymously share their thoughts and feelings about the session. The questions in the survey are as follows:

1. Did you find the content of the lesson useful?
2. What was one thing you learned from the lesson?
3. What was the hardest concept to grasp during the lesson?
4. Would you like to attend more sessions like this one in the future? Why or why not?

In addition to these four questions, survey participants would be asked to rank to what level they believe a statement is true from 1 to 5 following the sociocultural theory model named above.

Another type of informal assessment we will utilize in the oneshot is in class discussion and questions. Throughout the lesson, we check for understanding by asking questions throughout the lesson and have periods where the students can ask us questions.

References

- Saunders, Laura. & Wong, Melissa A. (2020). *Instruction in Libraries and Information Centers: An Introduction*. Windsor & Downs Press. <https://doi.org/10.21900/wd.12>
- Bruce, Christine, Hughes, Hilary, & Wang, Li. (2011). *Sociocultural Theories and their Application in Information Literacy Research and Education*. Australian Academic & Research Libraries 42(4), 296-308. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00048623.2011.10722242>
- Blas, Elise A. (2014). "Information Literacy in the 21st Century Multicultural Classroom: Using Sociocultural Literacy." *Education Libraries*, v37, 33-41.
<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1054008>