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A History Teacher Revamping an 8th Grade American Reformers Unit to Integrate the Principles of Motivation and 21st Century Literacy Skills

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Chapter 1: Project

Introduction

Every year, one hundred and ninety hormonal 8th grade students, all with different backgrounds, needs, and strengths walk into my classroom. It has been said, “During the middle-school years, students are more likely to experience academic, motivational, and behavioral problems than previously,” (Anderman & Anderman, 2014, p. 218). A tremendous undertaking for anyone! It is not uncommon for a middle school teacher to hear, “This is boring.” “Why do we have to learn this?” or “Do I have to write this essay?” Is it possible to create a motivating learning environment that ensures that each student’s academic and social needs are being met in middle school? I found that I can create a motivating learning environment for my students, and in the process, they will have social and academic success. It starts with three principles - competency, autonomy, and relatedness.

Problem Statement

Middle school is a time of transition for kids. They are leaving the security of one teacher and one class to seven teachers and multiple classes. They are maturing, becoming more independent, and finding their own identity. Many students struggle with all this change and really don't know how to express how they feel, so many act out in ways that are not appropriate. School can seem unimportant because they are preoccupied with thoughts about personal growth and peer relations (Hootstein, 1994, p. 31). It is very important for middle school teachers to first, recognize this struggle, and second, find ways to motivate their students. This “problem” does not only concern middle school teachers. Lack of motivation is a problem for all teachers, at all levels. When the work gets hard, some students give up. Parents who do not value education can lead to a student’s disinterest in school. Another issue is technology, students

have every answer at the tips of their fingers. It does not take much effort to find answers, and I believe they think school should be this way too, easy without much thought involved. Lack of motivation prevents learning. It is up to the teachers and staff to have a plan to meet the needs of their students socially and academically. The purpose of this project was to address student motivation through the principles of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. With the help of my Professional Learning Community, (PLC), we created a unit covering American Reformers from the 1800's. This unit was created to help educators create a motivating learning environment that ensured that each student's academic and social needs were being met in middle school.

Significance of the Research

In our history classrooms, we found it difficult to focus on both the academic and social needs of our students - time, high numbers of students, and the other obligations of our job make this seem overwhelming. The literature states that a motivating learning environment includes students who feel a sense of competency, autonomy, and relatedness. How does a PLC, (Professional Learning Community) use these motivational principles to create a motivating learning environment by ensuring that our students' academic and social needs are being met? Both are needed to ensure success. Even though motivating students is not easy, it can be done with a plan and determination.

Last school year I tried different strategies that related to each of these motivational needs to see if I would have an increase in student motivation and learning. Progress was made, so this year I included my history PLC. We already had many of the tools necessary to further develop the unit - passionate teachers who were willing to learn and do what is best for students, a team who thrives on collaboration, time built into our school day to collaborate, and a pacing guide to

move the project forward. I understood that having this team to work with added more ideas, different perspectives, and suggestions. “Collaboration is a social imperative. Without it people can’t get extraordinary things done in organizations” (Dufour and Marzano, 2011, p. 2). The unit plan described in this project is intended to increase student motivation and learning in the classroom.

Preview of Literature

Motivation is the act of giving somebody a reason or incentive to do something. Student motivation is an ongoing struggle for many teachers at the middle school level. Due to this, there has been extensive research on this topic. However, there is not one magic answer to this problem. As I read through the literature, I had many questions that I wanted to be answered. How can we help students understand the value of learning? What strategies can we use to motivate students? What specific strategies can we use to motivate middle school students to do their best on written assessments? Will motivating students insure academic and social success? I found many valuable sources to help with my search. John Hattie’s book, *Visible Learning for Teachers*, was the first resource I turned to. His book combines 15 years of research with the largest collection of evidence-based research into what actually works in schools to improve learning (Hattie, 2012). He used effect size as his method for measuring student achievement, the average effect size being 0.40. I used Hattie’s effect size here to demonstrate how certain methods affect student achievement and motivation. The research of Carol Dweck is also valuable. In her book, *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*, she explains, “When we teach people the growth mindset, with its focus on development, these ideas about challenge and effort follow” (2006, p. 10). According to her 30 years of research, human qualities, such as intelligence can be cultivated if you are willing to put in the effort (Dweck, 2006). With support

from the classroom teacher, I found that Dweck's work supports student motivation. As I continued my research and shared the information with my PLC, we discovered a common theme that would help answer many of our questions about student motivation in a book called, *Classroom Motivation* by Eric and Lynley Anderman. After reading about the Self-Determination Theory, I found that the common theme was that students must experience competency, have a sense of autonomy, and a feeling of relatedness to be motivated to learn. These principles are the basis of this project and helped to create a motivating learning environment for students.

Preview of Methodology

The Self-Determination Theory states that humans have three basic needs: the need for competency, autonomy, and relatedness; when these needs are fulfilled, students will become motivated to engage in classroom activities (Anderman and Anderman, 2016, p. 5). The unit plan described in this project is intended to increase student motivation and learning in the classroom. For example, at the beginning of the unit, students know exactly what they will be learning. Every unit begins with a title page that includes the standard they will be learning and learning targets to meet that standard. Right from the beginning of the unit, students feel a sense of competency knowing we will take steps to meet that standard. During the unit students work together as a team to meet their learning targets. With structured discussions, students feel a sense of relatedness as they work together to show understanding of the content. At the end of the unit, students will choose a social movement and reformer of their choice to show what they have learned. They will have the opportunity to use a variety of websites, biographies, primary, and secondary sources to choose from as they research. With this information they will practice their technological skills by creating a magazine in a program called, Lucidpress. We will have

the magazine “published” so students can share their learning with their parents at open house.

The self-determination theory indicates, “teachers who are dedicated to enhancing self-determination in their students positively influence a number of important educational outcomes, including students’ intrinsic motivation and perceptions of competence,” (Anderman and Anderman, 2016, p. 53). Students will feel a sense of competency when they believe they have the skills necessary to complete an assignment. Students will have a sense of autonomy if they understand what needs to be accomplished and if they have a wide range of tasks to demonstrate their knowledge and creativity. Students will feel a sense of relatedness when they work in a positive classroom environment that feels like a community, where the teacher and students work together towards a common goal – learning.

Definitions

Self-Determination Theory – Focus on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Humans engage in activities to meet basic needs - need for competence, relatedness, and autonomy, (Anderman and Anderman, 2014, 8).

Intrinsic Motivation – To engage in an academic task when the student truly wants to learn about something and engages in a task for its own sake, (Anderman and Anderman, 2014, p. 4).

Autonomy – Feeling that one has control over interactions with other individuals, as well as control over the various events that occur in one’s life. Motivation researchers, indicates that as students’ perceptions of control increase, intrinsic motivation also increases, (Anderman and Anderman, 2014, p. 138).

Competency – An individual’s need to feel adept at engaging in academic tasks, (Anderman and Anderman, 2014, p. 138).

Relatedness – The need to feel a sense of belonging, when students feel a sense of belonging in their schools and classrooms, academic performance is enhanced, and engagement in risky behaviors is lessened, (Anderman and Anderman, 2014, p. 138).

Professional Learning Community – an ongoing process in which educators work collaboratively in recurring cycles of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve, (Dufour and Marzano, 2011, p. 22).

Summary of Chapter

Student motivation is a struggle at the middle school level. Working closely with my PLC and including the principles from the Self-Determination Theory of autonomy, competency, and relatedness, our history PLC was able to meet the social and academic needs of our students. The unit plan described in this project was intended to increase student motivation and learning in the classroom.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Motivation is the act of giving somebody a reason or incentive to do something. Student motivation is an ongoing struggle for many teachers at the middle school level. Due to this, there has been extensive research on this topic. However, there is not one magic answer to this problem. As I read through the research, my PLC had many questions that we wanted answered. How can we help students understand the value of learning? What strategies can we use to motivate students? What specific strategies can we use to motivate middle school students to do their best on written assessments? I found many valuable sources to help with my search. John Hattie's book, *Visible Learning For Teachers* was the first resource I turned to. His book combines 15 years of research with the largest collection of evidence-based research into what

actually works in schools to improve learning (Hattie, 2012). He used effect size as his method for measuring student achievement, the average effect size being 0.40. I used Hattie's effect size here to demonstrate how certain methods affect student achievement and motivation. I also found the research of Carol Dweck valuable. In her book, *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*, she explains, "When we teach people the growth mindset, with its focus on development, these ideas about challenge and effort follow" (2006, p. 10). According to her 30 years of research, human qualities, such as intelligence can be cultivated if you are willing to put in the effort (Dweck, 2006). With support from the teacher, I found that Dweck's work supports student motivation. As I continued my research, I discovered a common theme that would help answer many of our questions about student motivation in a book called, *Classroom Motivation* by Eric and Lynley Anderman. After reading about the Self-Determination Theory, I found that the common theme was that students must experience competency, have a sense of autonomy, and a feeling of relatedness to be motivated to learn. These principles are the basis of my project and helped to create a motivating learning environment for students.

Competence

Competence is the need to feel capable of performing certain tasks (Anderman & Anderman, 2014).

Hattie's (2012) study found the following:

Such confidence can come from the student (from having had past success in learning, effect size .65), from the teacher (in providing the quality of teaching and feedback along the way to ensure success, effect size .75), from the tasks (in ensuring appropriate scaffolding along the ladder of success, effect size .75), and from peers (in terms of feedback, sharing, and lack of distraction, effect size .53). (p.59)

According to Hattie, if students experience success in school, they will feel a sense of competency. It is up to the teacher to build up each student's confidence by providing quality teaching to support their learning. Dweck's (2006) work is comparable. She states teachers need to praise the process to foster growth mindset. This can be accomplished through encouragement, teaching students to persevere, and using appropriate teaching strategies to support their effort (Dweck, 2014). This creates a classroom environment where student confidence will grow because they are praised for their effort not results – again, building competency. Providing guidance, support, and feedback can have a profound impact on student motivation. When students feel that they have the ability to complete a task, they feel a sense of competency.

Autonomy

Autonomy is the ability to make your own decisions about what to do rather than being influenced by someone else or told what to do. Research indicates that intrinsic motivation will increase when the teacher provides students with the opportunity of choice and independence. I found that allowing students to track their learning progress provides an opportunity for autonomy. What this means is students who track their progress whether that be goal setting or setting high expectations will encourage students to take ownership of their academic growth (Frye, 2010). Autonomy will also be enhanced in classrooms where the tasks are authentic, opportunities are provided for students to assume ownership of the conception, execution, and evaluation of tasks, opportunities for collaboration are afforded, allowing diverse forms of talents to develop, and opportunities for fun are incorporated into lessons (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris, 2004, p. 21). Putting students in charge of their own learning and giving them opportunities to be creative will give students a reason to actually want to learn. “When students

learn that they do have control over their choices, thoughts, and actions, it means that their teachers have created motivating learning environments” (Daniels, 2010, p. 25).

Relatedness

The need for relatedness indicates the need to feel a sense of belonging. “The student-centered teacher is passionate about each student engaging with and succeeding in what is being taught, and the teacher is aware of each student’s progress from the start to the end of teaching the learning intention” (Hattie, 2012, p. 157). In other words, a student-centered teacher is sincere, fair, empathic, and creates positive relationships within the classroom. Anderman (2014), examined middle school students' sense of school belonging in relation to grade point average, motivation variables, and teachers' promotion of mutual respect in classes. Anderman (2014), found that middle school students identification with and commitment to schooling is influenced by not only their academic success and aspirations but also by the interpersonal relationships they perceive in the classroom.

Summary of Chapter

The Self-Determination Theory states a motivating learning environment includes students who feel a sense of competency, autonomy, and relatedness. The purpose of this project was to include these principles to ensure students had academic and social success. Even though motivating students is not easy, it can be done with a plan and determination.

Chapter 3: Project Methodology

Introduction

Elementary students leave the security of one teacher and one class to middle school, where they have seven teachers who all have different expectations and routines. The work becomes more rigorous and challenging. Middle school students are maturing, becoming more independent, and finding their own identity. Many students struggle with all this change and really do not know how to express how they feel, so many act out in ways that are not appropriate. School can seem unimportant and in the way of the more "exciting things" going on in their lives. According to Gehlbach and Roeser (2002), there is a general decline in motivation to learn as students transition from elementary into middle school (p. 2). A National Educational Longitudinal survey of 25,000 eighth graders found that nearly 50 percent of students claimed they were bored in school half or most of the time (Hootstein, 1994, p. 31).

It is imperative for middle school teachers to first, recognize this struggle and second, find ways to motivate students. This "problem" does not only concern middle school teachers. Lack of motivation is a problem for all teachers, at all levels. When the work gets hard, some students give up. Parents who do not value education can lead to students who do not see the importance of education. It is a vicious cycle. Another issue is technology, students have every answer at the tips of their fingers. It doesn't take much effort to find answers and students think school should be this way too. Easy, without much thought involved. Lack of motivation prevents learning. It is up to the teacher and staff to have a plan to meet the needs of their students socially and academically. From research, students need to have a sense of autonomy, competency, and relatedness to become motivated in school. My PLC's plan was to create a motivating learning environment that ensures that each student's academic and social needs are being met in middle school.

Design

During my graduate program I took a class on student motivation. This class helped me realize that I wanted to do something about the lack of motivation of many of our students. I chose to focus on three needs that research affirms will increase student motivation: autonomy, competency, and relatedness. Last school year I tried different strategies that related to each of these needs to see if I would have an increase in student motivation. Progress was made, but I knew progress could continue by including my history PLC. We already had many of the tools necessary to further develop the unit - passionate teachers who were willing to learn and do what is best for students, a team who thrives on collaboration, time built into our school day to collaborate, and a pacing guide to move this project forward. I understand that having this team to work with added more ideas, different perspectives, and suggestions.

My PLC met several times to develop the American Reformers unit. Our meeting times were agreed to be every Monday, during late start, and every Wednesday, during our prep. We did this four times before we began the unit and continued to meet during the unit to develop curriculum and to reflect on how each day went during the unit. We agreed that the unit should focus on the problem, goals, and impact the social movement and reformer had on society. We agreed that we would build background by teaching about the Abolitionist and Women's Rights Movements. We decided to start the unit with a title page that has them write down the standard and learning targets for the unit. We felt it was important for students to know exactly what they will be learning. This ensured that right from the beginning of the unit, students would feel a sense of competency knowing we will take steps to meet the standard. During the unit students worked together as a team to meet their learning targets. With structured discussions, students would feel a sense of relatedness as they work together to show understanding of the content. "If

you want to increase student academic achievement, give each student a friend” (Hattie, 2012, p. 88). At the end of the unit, students chose a social movement and reformer of their choice to show what they learned. They had the opportunity to use a variety of websites, biographies, primary, and secondary sources to choose from as they research. With this information they practiced their technological skills by creating a magazine in a program called, Lucidpress. We are in the process of having the magazine “published” so students can share their learning with their parents at open house.

We used our PLC meeting times very efficiently. We shared strategies, lesson plans, looked at student work, reflected on our progress, and shared data. All our plans and the work we developed was kept in our Google team drive so we all had access to the information. This ensured organization and easy communication.

Intended Audience and Setting

This project was implemented with 8th grade middle school teachers. The implementation of this project took place at our middle school in the Central Valley, a predominately agricultural community. We have approximately 1,000 7th and 8th grade students. Sixty-six percent of the students qualify for a free or reduced lunch. Less than 10% of our students are English language learners (ELL). Even though we have a small ELL population, 60% of our students are Hispanic, 30% white, 4% Asian, 2% African American, and 4% other. I used my own students to collect the data. I teach 8th grade U.S. history. My students are 13 and 14 years old. Since the purpose of this project was to increase student motivation, I included all of my students. I have approximately 190 students and 6 class periods. We have a flexible schedule so depending on the day, classes are 40 to 50 minutes long.

Instruments

As stated in the literature review, when students feel a sense of competency, autonomy, and relatedness, their social and academic needs will be met. In other words, when students are engaged, they will learn. For example, students will feel a sense of competency when they believe they have the skills necessary to complete an assignment. Students will have a sense of autonomy if they understand what needs to be accomplished and if they have a wide range of tasks to demonstrate their knowledge and creativity. Students will feel a sense of relatedness when they work in a positive classroom environment that feels like a community, where the teacher and students work together towards a common goal – learning (Dufour and Marzano, 2011, p. 23). The purpose of this project was to create a unit that included these three basic human needs: competency, autonomy, and relatedness through collaboration with my PLC middle school teachers.

The American Reformers curriculum was developed in collaboration with my history PLC. We used some resources from last year, but tweaked some of those assignments, and also created new assignments to continue to add literacy to our curriculum for this school year. We focused on the Abolitionists Movement and the Women's Rights Movement, giving students the opportunity to learn how these groups worked to reform society. While creating the unit, we kept differential instruction in mind. We included videos, music, a tactile sort that included vocabulary, and pictures. According to Hattie, students have different abilities, talents, and interests, which are critical to engaging students in our classrooms (2012, p. 90). Hattie goes on to say that we need to pay attention to individual differences by teaching and conveying our curriculum in several different ways (2012, p. 91). We also included lots of reading, writing,

speaking, and listening since history is supporting English and the Common Core reading and writing standards.

Lenker, Stysliger, and Walker's (2014) study found the following:

We know the use of strategies is key to students being able to read well, and we want students to utilize comprehension-oriented cognitive reading strategies that include activating prior knowledge, making predictions, generating questions, constructing mental images, summarizing, and analyzing structures. (p. 13)

This gave students plenty of opportunities to learn the ideas and to engage in deliberate practice to understand and learn the content (Hattie, 2016, p. 108). Using literacy strategies not only helps students practice literacy skills, it helps students learn history. For example, students used graphic organizers to pull out big ideas and importance information from a reading to learn about history and at the same time they were practicing their literacy skills.

Procedures and Evaluation of the Process

Table 1: Data Identification and Collection Outline

Table 1 is an outline that presents the data that will be collected to increase and analyze student motivation. Motivation is difficult to measure, so my PLC will be implementing multiple procedures and strategies to increase student motivation. Our focus was to establish student autonomy, competency, and relatedness in the classroom which leads to increased learning. According to the book, *Classroom Motivation* by Eric and Lynley Anderman, individuals will be motivated to engage in activities that will help them meet these needs (2014, p. 5). By giving students more autonomy in the classroom, students will feel a sense of

Type of data	The following will help determine what motivates students: *Learning using differential instruction *Working in collaborative teams *Creating a magazine in Lucidpress *Publishing their learning to share with parents during open house	-Creation of student work -Collection of data -Reflection	Student Motivation Surveys Parent Notification of projects and assessments through Parentlink Notification System, email, phone calls
Who will be involved in the collection of data?	500 8 th grade students	Three 8 th grade history teachers	500 8 th grade students Three 8 th grade history teachers
How will data be collected?	Paper copies collected from students Google Classroom	Google Drive and Google Classroom Survey Teacher journals for reflection	Paper/Pencil Survey Parent log showing communication

relatedness or belonging. They will appreciate their teacher for caring enough to include them in

the decision making of classroom practices. Anderman and Anderman explain, “When students believe that they have control over their own outcomes, they are more likely to complete challenging tasks, set higher goals for themselves, and persist when faced with difficulty” (2014, p. 139).

Table 2 below is the action plan regarding this unit. This outline lays out who was involved and how the unit was implemented. For example, students were able to choose which social movement and reformer they would concentrate on for their project. We involved our students in the decision-making process to ensure the success of student learning. The goal was to create a student-centered classroom to improve student motivation (Eick, 2001, p. 28).

Audience/Consumer of the Finding	What role they play in the implementation	How it will be implemented
8th Grade History Students	Create a “democratic classroom,” by allowing students to have a choice in what they learn. (autonomy) Ask students what motivates them so they can do what they feel they are capable of doing. (competency) Have students work together in heterogeneous groups to support each other in their learning. (relatedness)	Students will choose the social movement and reformer by creating a magazine in an application called Lucidpress. Create a student survey Discussion, checks for understanding
8th Grade History Teachers	Work together to develop lesson plans and strategies to motivate students to ensure their academic and social needs are being met	Late start Monday meetings, Wednesday PLC meetings, professional development, email, Google Team Drive

Table 2: Action Plan

Since this project was focused on increasing student motivation by incorporating the Self-Determination Theory, my PLC administered a survey that included practices to support the concepts of competency, autonomy, and relatedness. The survey was given to students at the end of the unit. It was a simple yes or no, 12 questions survey to measure student motivation. I gave the survey at the end of each class period. The purpose was to see if the practices used increased student motivation and also to find out how students felt about writing. Below are the questions and results of my classes.

<i>Do not put your name on this survey. Please answer honestly.</i>		
	Student Responses	
	Yes	No
<u>Circle yes or no</u>		
1. Do you like school? Yes or No	67	30
2. I want to learn. Yes or No	89	10
3. I feel safe in this class. Yes or No	93	5
4. I feel I can get the help I need in this class. Yes or No	95	5
5. My teacher wants me to do well in school. Yes or No	98	1
6. The teacher gives positive comments to the class often. Yes or No	92	6
7. I want to hear more positive comments from my teacher. Yes or No	72	27
8. Working in teams is helpful. Yes or No	80	18
9. Writing essays is hard. Yes or No	47	52
10. Writing essays is boring. Yes or No	70	29
11. Writing essays is too much work. Yes or No	48	51
12. I would be more likely to finish assignments if I had a choice. Yes or No	76	23

Figure 1: Student Motivation Survey Questions and Results

Summary of Chapter

Student motivation is a struggle at the middle school level. Working closely with my PLC and including the principles from the Self-Determination Theory of autonomy, competency, and relatedness our history PLC was able to meet the social and academic needs of our students. For example, we realized that our students are all individuals with different needs and interests. This is why our unit included differential instruction to keep students engaged and motivated. We made sure students have plenty of practice with concepts and ideas so students felt confident when it came time to start their final project for the unit.

Chapter 4: Revamping an 8th Grade American Reformers Unit

Introduction

Now that our district is deep into implementing Common Core State Standards, we continue to revamp each year to add 21st century literacy skills. History teachers are required to not only teach history but also teach literacy. History is unique in that we do not have our own literacy standards but we are expected to incorporate and have students practice the common core state standards. These skills require students to read, write, speak, listen and use technology efficiently; skills that require deeper thinking and learning. Along with this change, students continue to struggle to meet these new requirements due to lack of skill and motivation, especially in history. I say this because students feel like history is almost like another English class where they have to dig deep to show what they have learned through literacy.

Introduction to the Unit

Each school year as we continue to incorporate literacy skills into our classrooms, we continue to revamp the way we teach. Here we will show how we integrate motivation and literacy skills in history. We start with a pacing guide, (figure 2) for the whole unit. The unit we focused on was social movements and their leaders during the 1800's (what we call the American Reformers unit), California History Standards 8.6.6 and 8.9.1. The unit was about five weeks, covering specifically the Abolitionist and Women's Rights Movements. The unit focused on vocabulary development, analyzing primary source documents, filling in organizers and summarizing information to show comprehension of what they read and to show understanding of the content, including time to develop other literacy skills through videos, music, technology and team discussions.

2019 American Reformers Pacing Guide

Vocabulary:

Contribution, Suffrage, Rights, Abolitionist, Abolish, Reform, Social Movement, Democracy, Rebellion/Revolt/Rebel, Oppressed, Equality, Denied, Fugitive, resistance, discrimination

Day 1

Objective: What is a social movement? What U.S. documents give a social movement power?

Title Page

What is a social movement?

YouTube Videos Me Too Movement and Black Lives Matters Movement – located in our team Google Classroom (Use Infographic link or print out information from team drive)

<https://www.globalfundforwomen.org/infographic-what-is-a-movement/#.WnIOFa6nGii>

Print out excerpt from D of I and Bill of Rights

Complete organizer to show understanding of a social movement.

Day 2

Objective: Describe the reasons for the Abolitionist Movement

Vocabulary Matrix for the Abolitionist Movement using the Underground Railroad Reading, Nat Turner's Rebellion reading, and the Fugitive Slave Act reading

Day 3

Objective: Describe the reasons for the Abolitionist Movement

Finish Vocab and Readings

Complete Underground Railroad reading and questions

Show America the Story of US – Division 25:26-30:46 Frederick Douglass and Underground Railroad On back of Underground Railroad reading with questions - Video with facts (building background to help with understanding of the movie Race to Freedom)

Setup organizer for movie: Race to Freedom

12 historical facts total in a complete sentence with graphic, 4 facts per day

Day 4

Objective: List historical facts that took place during the Abolitionist Movement

Review: Race to Freedom PowerPoint

12 historical facts total in a complete sentence with graphic, 4 facts per day

Day 5

Continue Movie: Race to Freedom

Day 6

Finish Movie and give time to review historical facts from movie

Complete a summary describing the Underground Railroad and its effect on America during the 1800's

Day 7

Describe why women began to question their role in society during the 1800s

Why were women angry?

Intro to Women's Rights

Bad Romance Parody – Women's suffrage

Break down song to describe why women are angry and what they are demanding

Video and organizer: Second to None: Inspiring Stories of Extraordinary Women

[YouTube \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gAaqFdNZISI\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gAaqFdNZISI)

Video in our shared Google Classroom

Day 8

Describe how women begin to question their role in society and what they will do to demand equality
Close reading: Women's Suffrage Movement
Vocabulary: Suffrage
Start Women's Rights Sort (match terms with pictures with a partner – tactile sort)

Day 9

Describe how women will demand equality
Finish Women's Rights Sort (answer questions, print slides with notes)

Day 10

Describe how the Declaration of Sentiments supported women's rights
Background and reasons for the Declaration of Sentiments
Declaration of Independence vs. Declaration of Sentiments

Day 11

Describe how the Declaration of Sentiments supported women's rights
Declaration of Independence vs. Declaration of Sentiments Organizer

Day 12

Describe the goal of American Reformers during the 1800's
4 Reformers – biography/primary source document for each
Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman – William Lloyd Garrison – Susan B Anthony
Go over station directions and vocabulary (reform – movement – contribution)
model one station

Day 13

Continue Stations

Day 14

Finish Stations

Day 15

Start American Reformers Project
Go over Project Expectations
Start step 1: Research

Day 16

Step 1: Finish Research

Day 17

Step 2: Writing Organizer

Day 18

Step 2: Finish Writing Organizer

Day 19

Step 3: Type Essay in Google Classroom

Day 20

Step 4: Create Magazine through Lucidpress

Day 21

Step 4: Finish Magazine

Figure 2: 2019 American Reformers Pacing Guide

We start every unit with a title page, (figure 3) that requires students to write down the standard and learning targets. This introduces students to what they will learn about and what they have to master by the end of the unit. It also serves as the title page for their classwork packet to keep them organized and accountable for their work. The packet will serve as background to build knowledge and will be used as a secondary source for the written assessment at the end of the unit. *Having the background knowledge and the packet as a resource will allow students to feel a sense of competency as they complete their final project for the unit. It will enable students to have a strong understanding of the content and the resources available to motivate and engage them as they show what they have learned.* The packet is collected at the end of the unit.

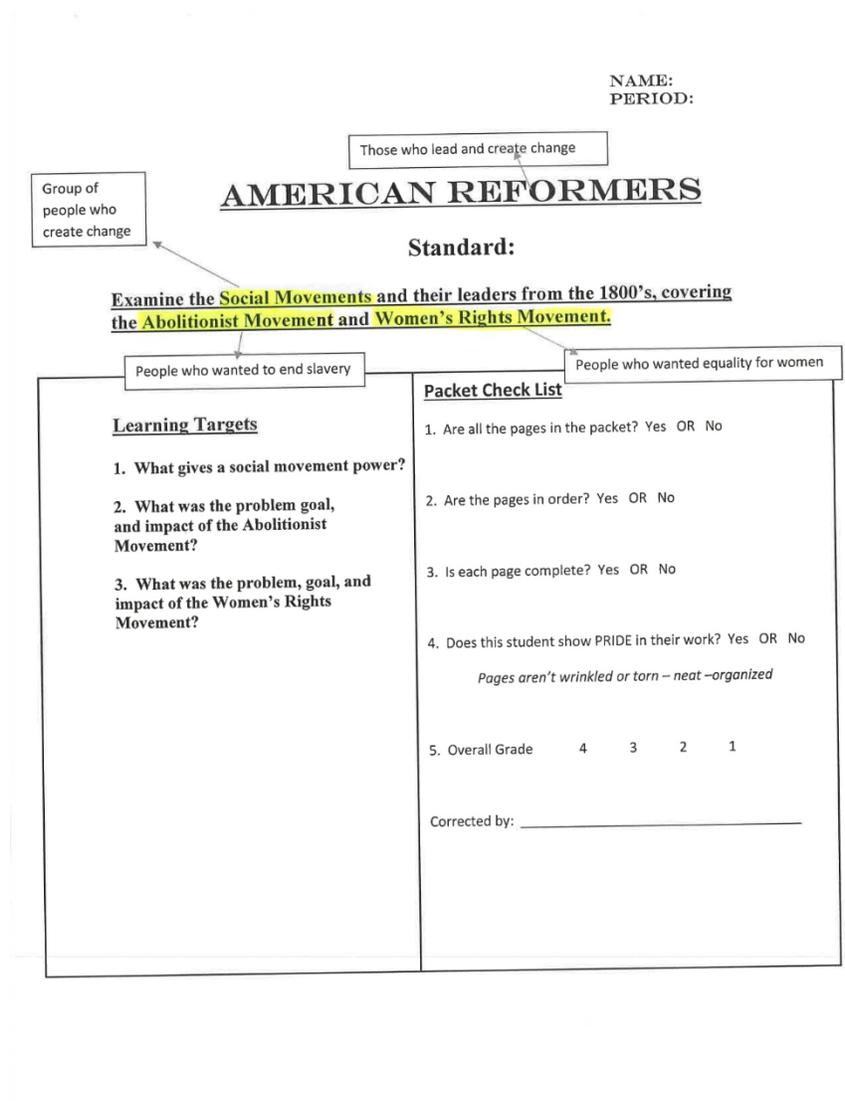


Figure 3: American Reformers Title Page

As a hook to introduce the unit and engage students, we started by showing students videos about social movements that they can relate to, the Me Too Movement [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mmYgdOTPE3w&feature=youtu.be) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mmYgdOTPE3w&feature=youtu.be>) and the Black Lives Matters Movement [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mI7eHX9u4Q0&feature=youtu.be) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mI7eHX9u4Q0&feature=youtu.be>). The Me Too video shows Ellen DeGeneres and her take on the Me Too Movement. Students rather hear what Ellen has to say then what I have to say! Once students watch these videos, we share more

information by having them analyze an info. graphic. The info. graphic is easy to read and pleasing to look at. It focuses on what a social movement is and its purpose,

<https://www.globalfundforwomen.org/infographic-what-is-a-movement/#.WnIOFa6nGii>. As they analyze the info. graphic, they fill out an organizer that asks them questions. One question they have to answer is: Why do social movements get started? They must refer to the Bill of Rights and Declaration of Independence. Copies of these documents are located on their tables. (These are documents that we have already analyzed in the past, so they are familiar with them.) Students began the next period by summarizing the importance of social movements then discussing their point of view about the controversial issue of equality in 2019 with their team of four and the class. The point was to allow students see the connection with the problems of today to the problems of the 1800's. As we begin this unit the purpose is not to just engage students in the content, but also to learn the importance of our rights and responsibilities as American citizens. History teaches students their obligations and rights as American citizens. *As students see themselves in these groups who were mistreated, they will become intrinsically motivated because they will see that what they are learning matters for their future and the continuance of a democratic society.*

Each lesson included in this unit requires students to practice their literacy skills in some way. For example, during the unit we have students analyze a Women's Rights parody, (Lady Gaga - Bad Romance, [YouTube \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8_5o28ioBYY\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8_5o28ioBYY)). First, students watch the video from YouTube. Next, we hand out the lyrics, (figure 4) and have students listen to the song. As they listen, we have them underline all the reasons women are angry. With their team of four, we have them answer the following questions:

1. Why do women feel they are caught in a bad romance? (stanza 1)

2. Why would women be upset about the passage of the 15th amendment? (stanza 3)
3. Why in stanza 10 does it say, “Don’t need to vote,” what could be inferred here?
4. What does stanza 11 mean?
5. Why do women want to wear pants? (stanza 19)
6. What do you think suffrage means?

At the end of the lesson, students independently reflect through a writing response: Describe why women were angry and why they began to question their role in society. They must give specific evidence from the parody. The parody is a fun activity for students. Lady Gaga is relevant and music lifts the spirit. *They are working with their teammates, which gives students a sense of belonging. Students not only find relevance in the lesson, but they are also practicing many skills - reading, writing, speaking, and listening.*

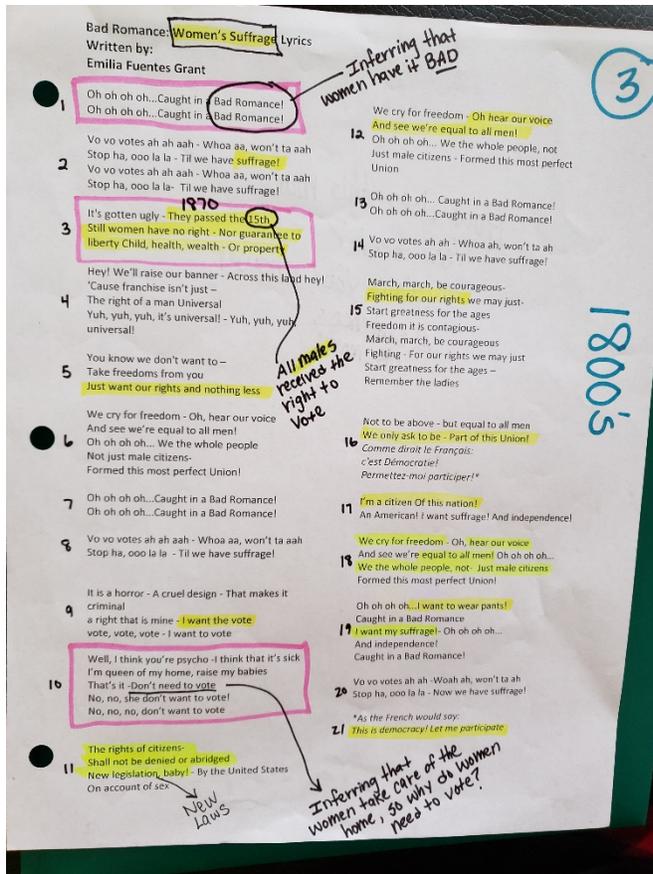


Figure 4: Bad Romance Parody on Women's Rights

Primary source documents are an important part of preserving our history. *These documents make the learning relevant because they are real and they promote a deeper understanding of history. They teach students how people felt about the issues at the time and make these people seem relatable.* Primary source documents also remind us of the ideas our country was based upon and the reminders of how to maintain a free society. During this unit, it is important for students to understand that this is the reason social movements developed. This is why we have students revisit the Declaration of Independence and compare and contrast it to the Declaration of Sentiments. We start by reviewing the Declaration of Independence by writing notes directly onto an excerpt from this document that we print for students, (figure 4). Students

are reminded that the Declaration of Independence is setup like an essay. We discuss the meaning of independence, the main author of the Declaration of Independence, the date it was written, the four sections, and we underline evidence that describes each section. Next, we move over to the Declaration of Sentiments (figure 4) and complete the same process. This makes it obvious that these two primary source documents are very similar but also slightly different.

The Declaration of Independence

IN CONGRESS, July 4, 1776

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America,

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political band which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.-- That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, --That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world:

- He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.
- For Quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:
- For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world:
- For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:
- He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.
- He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.
- He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.
- That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

Declaration of Sentiments

Woman's Rights Convention, Held at Seneca Falls, 19th-20th July 1848

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one portion of the family of man to assume among the people of the earth a position different from that which they have hitherto occupied, but one to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes that impel them to such a course.

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. Whenever any form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of those who suffer from it to refuse allegiance to it, and to insist upon the institution of a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to affect their safety and happiness.

The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world:

- He has never permitted her to exercise her inalienable right to the elective franchise.
- He has compelled her to submit to laws, in the formation of which she had no voice.
- Having deprived her of this first right of a citizen, the elective franchise, thereby leaving her without representation in the halls of legislation, he has oppressed her on all sides.
- He has taken from her all right in property, even to the wages she earns.
- He has so framed the laws of divorce, as to what shall be the proper causes of divorce; in case of separation, to whom the guardianship of the children shall be given; as to be wholly regardless of the happiness of women.
- He has denied her the facilities for obtaining a thorough education—all colleges being closed against her.
- He has endeavored, in every way that he could to destroy her confidence in her own powers, to lessen her self-respect, and to make her willing to lead a dependent and abject life.

In entering upon the great work before us, we anticipate no small amount of misconception, misrepresentation, and ridicule; but we shall use every instrumentality within our power to affect our object. We shall employ agents, circulate tracts, petition the State and national Legislatures, and endeavor to enlist the pulpit and the press in our behalf. We hope this Convention will be followed by a series of Conventions, embracing every part of the country.

Freedom
Author: Thomas Jefferson

Beliefs
Author: Elizabeth Cady Stanton

Introduction: Document's Purpose of Demanded Rights

Complaints OR Grievances

Conclusion: they will solve their problems

Angry with King of England

Angry with men

*Use Page 9

10

Compare and Contrast:

Name: _____

Declaration of Independence	Questions	Declaration of Sentiments
• • •	1. What rights is this document demanding? * Read Section 2	• • •
• • •	2. What grievances (complaints) is the document listing? * Read Section 3	• • •
One Sentence	3. Why was this document written? * Read Section 4	One Sentence
One Sentence	4. Who is affected most by the document? Be specific.	One Sentence
What are the similarities between the documents? • • •		
How will the Declaration of Sentiments help support Women's Rights? Use evidence from the reading to support your response. 5 sentences _____ _____ _____ _____ _____		

Figure 4: Declaration of Independence vs. Declaration of Sentiments

End of the Unit Project

At the end of the unit students will complete a project to show off what they have learned. We will be covering literacy standard, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.6 - Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas efficiently as well as to interact and collaborate with others. With this project students can choose either the Abolitionist or Women's Rights Movement. They will also choose any reformer that helped lead one of these social movements. *We are giving students a choice to encourage engagement and motivation as they work through this rigorous project.* The focus of the project is for students to explain the problem, goal, and impact one social movement and reformer had on America during the 1800's. We divided the project into steps in Google Classroom:

Step 1: Research

Step 2: Writing Organizer

Step 3: Type Essay

Step 4: Create a magazine in a program called Lucid Press, [Lucid Press](https://www.lucidpress.com/pages/usecase/education) (<https://www.lucidpress.com/pages/usecase/education>).

We made sure to give explicit directions for each step and we included a scaffolded writing organizer to help students who struggle with writing. *This will make them feel a sense of competency as they work through each step.* We have never used Lucidpress in our classes, so this was a challenge for some students to figure out. What we noticed was students helping one another and showing each other how to use the application. It was wonderful seeing students work together through the struggle. The point is to have students practice and use a variety of applications so they are literate using all different types of applications. This will prepare them for the work force and for the continuous changes and advancements in technology, (Lenker,

Styslinger, and Walker, 2014, p. 16). We will have the magazine published by our district print shop and plan to have students present their magazine to their parents for open house. *This will make the project more authentic and give students a stronger reason to do their best work,* (Conner and Moulton, 2000, p. 1). *It will be their creation to share what they have learned with their parents.* I have included the rubric that I handed out to all students, (figure 5).

* Please Read *

Rubric: American Reformers Project

↪ Cross off as you complete

	4- Advanced	3-Proficient	2-Basic	1-Below Basic
Organization	-Cover page with 4 paragraphs and work cited page: introduction, 2 body paragraphs, conclusion -All sentences are well constructed and in proper paragraph form.	-Cover page with 4 paragraphs and work cited page: introduction, 2 body paragraphs, conclusion -Most sentences are well constructed and in proper paragraph form.	-Fewer than 4 paragraphs -Few sentences are well constructed and in proper paragraph form.	-Fewer than 4 paragraphs -Lacks a main idea, focus, and/or proper paragraph form.
Evidence	-Evidence is clearly cited and appropriately supports the topic. - 6 sources cited, primary and secondary sources <i>(3 pieces of evidence for each body paragraph).</i>	-Evidence is cited and supports the topic. - 6 sources cited, primary and secondary sources <i>(3 pieces of evidence for each body paragraph).</i>	-Evidence is not cited -Evidence attempts to support the topic. -Did not use 6 sources.	-Evidence is missing or does not support the topic. -Did not use 6 sources.
Historical Content	-Demonstrates a strong understanding of the content that clearly supports the topic through writing and pictures.	-Demonstrates an understanding of the content that supports the topic through writing and pictures.	-Demonstrates little understanding of the content and may lack support of the topic	-Fails to demonstrate understanding of the content and lacks support of the topic.
Conventions	EDIT -Contains few errors in the conventions of the English language <i>(errors do not interfere with reader's understanding).</i>	EDIT -Contains some errors in the conventions of the English language <i>(errors do not interfere with reader's understanding).</i>	-Contains frequent errors in conventions of the English language <i>(errors may interfere with reader's understanding).</i>	-Contains serious errors in conventions of the English Language <i>(errors interfere with reader's understanding).</i>

Figure 5: Rubric: American Reformers Project



Lucid Press.Women's
Rights Project.ab.pdf

Figure 6: Student Example Project

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

Middle school is a time of transition for kids. They are leaving the security of one teacher and one class to seven teachers and multiple classes. They are maturing, becoming more independent, and finding their own identity. Many students struggle with all this change and really do not know how to express how they feel, so many act out in ways that are not appropriate. School can seem unimportant and in the way of the more "important" things going on in their lives. It is very important for middle school teachers to first, recognize this struggle and second, find ways to motivate their students. This "problem" does not only concern middle school teachers. Lack of motivation is a problem for all teachers, at all levels. When the work gets hard, some students give up. Parents who don't value education can lead to students disinterest in school. Another issue is technology, students have every answer at the tips of their fingers. It doesn't take much effort to find answers and I believe students think school should be this way too, easy without much thought involved. Lack of motivation prevents learning. It is up to the teacher and staff to have a plan to meet the needs of their students socially and academically. From research and my personal experience as an educator of middle schoolers for 11 years, I have found that students need to have a sense of autonomy, competency, and relatedness to become motivated in school. Our American Reformers unit is a resource to help

educators create a motivating learning environment that ensures that each student's academic and social needs are being met in middle school.

Each school year as we continue to incorporate literacy skills into our classrooms, we continue to revamp the way we teach. The unit focused social movements and their leaders during the 1800's (what we call the American Reformers unit), California History Standards 8.6.6 and 8.9.1. The unit was about five weeks, covering specifically, the Abolitionist and Women's Rights Movements. The unit focused on vocabulary development, analyzing primary source documents, filling in organizers to show comprehension of what they read and to show understanding of the content, including time to develop other literacy skills through videos, music, technology and team discussions.

Lessons Learned from the Process

This project helped me realize how critical literacy is for our students. Students need practice with thinking, reading, writing, speaking, listening, and use of technology to prepare for a very competitive world. With the support of my PLC, we built a unit that focused on these skills. In order to motivate the students to practice these skills we had to ensure that the unit included the principles of the Self-Determination Theory – competency, autonomy, relatedness. When students feel they have the capability to learn, have a choice in how they learn, and feel that their school and teacher cares about them, they will learn!

As mentioned, the American Reformers unit included critical thinking, reading, writing, structured discussion, and the use of technology. We were able to keep students engaged and motivated by including music, videos, readings that are controversial, and by using technology other than Google products, (technology that they haven't used on a regular basis). We wanted to use technology that required them to be challenged, to struggle through so they are prepared to

work with technology that maybe hasn't even been developed yet. "Teachers in the real world recognize that although personalization has the potential to improve learning, our first job in applying any approach is to engage students in the learning process," (Ferlazzo, 2017, p. 28).

Recommendations for Implementation

Democracy is one of the most important words we teach in 8th grade history. We define it as follows: A government where the people rule because they vote for those who will lead. "How can we prepare students to function in a democratic society if we don't model democracy in our schools and classrooms?" (Eick, 2001, p 28). This sentence made us realize the importance of student autonomy in our classrooms. We included autonomy by giving students a voice in the classroom. Autonomy in the classroom will lead to competency. Given choices, students will feel they are capable of the work. For example, students were able to discuss their point of view with their team of four and the class on the controversial issue of equality in our country in 2019. The point was to allow students see the connection with the problems of today to the problems of the 1800's. Students working together with common opinions led to relatedness. Students came up with reasons for their opinion and worked together to express this to the class. We also gave students the opportunity to choose which social movement they wanted to focus on. We wanted to encourage students to choose a social movement that they were interested in and passionate about. We hoped that the controversial topic would bring passion to their writing and the fact that students would share their writing response with their parents all helped to bring relevancy to the project. No stickers, no Jolly Rancher candy, no extra points were given—students were motivated by the authenticity of the assignment and the prospect of sharing their hard work with their parents, (Davis and Forbes, 2016, p. 15).

Limitations

When I think of limitations, I think of what was out of my hands. What I didn't have control over. I don't have control over parents. I don't have control when students are absent. I had one student who started at my school on March 7th, from that date until June 7th he missed 12 days of school. That is an average of 4 days a month. I had another student who had 19 absences throughout the school year. When students don't come to school, they aren't learning. It's frustrating. These boys were not motivated to learn and their parents enabled them. It is very difficult to change someone who has created bad habits. It took these kids 14 years to become who they are, changing who they are in one year is very difficult. With these two boys in particular, I had to make a connection with them just to get them to do any work. I had to let them know I cared about them and remind them constantly the importance of their education. I had to explain to them the importance of making goals so they have a reason to come to school. I spent lots of time with these boys. I worked with these students during intervention time, many lunches, and after school. Not only did I help them catch up when they were behind, but I got to know these boys. One of them told me he was worried about his family because they were here illegally. He was afraid they would be sent back to Mexico. His parents worked until 9pm, he was responsible for taking care of his younger siblings, but I want him to be motivated to learn history. The other boy lived in a household with multiple families. He struggled to get rest at night because of all the children living in the house. He had no father and is being raised by his grandmother. But I want him to be motivated to learn history. "Once turned off from school, students limit their chances to become lifelong learners and are likely to turn to maladaptive activities" (Gehlbach and Roeser, 2002, p. 42). Breaking bad habits is difficult. The student who is here illegally barely passed. We were working two days before graduation to make sure

he made it. The other boy did not make it. He failed, but it was just out of my hands, (absences, behavior problems in school, and lack of motivation in general).

Conclusion

“There is no greater gift we can give to our students than our full, undivided attention. Perhaps it is as simple—and as complicated—as that” (Davis and Forbes, 2016, p. 18). The research and theories are a start to helping our students, but it’s more complicated than that. It’s not always possible to give students in middle school autonomy because many of them need so much structure. I have an average of 185 students each year, it’s difficult to make connections with them when I spend an average of 45 minutes a day with them. How do I tell kids that they can do it, when some of them have struggled in school since day one! It’s a balancing act for sure! My PLC incorporated these motivation principles in our classrooms. We were able to get kids who refused to work in other classrooms to work in ours. Concerning our American Reformers unit, 80% of students were proficient on their final project. That is approximately 348 students out of 435. The 80% are motivated and because of that, they are learning 21st century skills in our history classrooms. As for the other 20% or 87 students, unfortunately, it’s complicated. They struggle in school for a variety of reasons: excessive absences, behavior problems, emotional problems, and/or lack of parent support, all of which prevent these students from learning. The theory is called, the Self-Determination Theory and all we can do is not give up on the 20%. We must continue to support our students and guide them on their educational journey by caring about them and proving to them that education is important by making it real. We must make them feel like they are in control of their learning, which will lead them to feeling capable that they can indeed learn.

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Appendix A

American Reformers Title Page



American Reformers
Title Page.docx

Appendix B

What is a social movement?

Info. Graphic and Organizer



Infographic.what is a
movement.docx



What is a Social
Movement organizer.:

Declaration of Independence and Bill of Rights



The Declaration of
Independence.docx



The Bill of
Rights.docx

Appendix C

Abolitionist Movement Vocabulary

Vocabulary Organizer and Readings



Abolitionist
Movement Vocab.201



Underground
Railroad.vocab readin



Nat Turner's
Rebellion.vocab readi



The Fugitive Slave
Act.vocab reading.201

Appendix D

Race to Freedom: The Story of the Underground Railroad Organizer



Race to Freedom
Organizer.docx

Appendix E

Bad Romance Parody

Lyrics and Questions



Bad Romance Parody Lyrics.docx



Bad Romance Parody Questions.docx

Appendix F

Video: Second to None: Inspiring Stories of Extraordinary Women

Video Organizer and Questions

[YouTube \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gAaqFdNZISI\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gAaqFdNZISI)



Video Facts Leaders
of the Women's Right

Appendix G

Close Reading: Women's Suffrage



Women's Suffrage
Close Reading.2019.d

Women's Rights Sort

(Print slides with notes and cut up terms in strips so students can match them with a partner)



Sort.Women's Rights
Movement.2019.pptx

Appendix H

Declaration of Independence vs. Declaration of Sentiments



D of I vs. D of S.pdf



Compare and
Contrast D of I & D of

Appendix I
American Reformers Stations
Biographies, Primary Source Documents, Organizer



Station #1 Frederick
Douglass Biography.2



Station#1 Frederick
Douglass Document.2



Station #2 Harriet
Tubman Biography.2



Station #2 Harriet
Tubman Document.2



Station #3 Susan B.
Anthony Document.2



Station #3 Susan B.
Anthony Biography.2



Station #4 William
Lloyd Garrison Biogra



Station #4 William
Lloyd Garrison Docun



American Reformers
Organizer.2019.docx

Appendix J
American Reformers Project

Rubric



Rubric American
Reformers Project.201

Step 1: Research



Step 1
Research.2019.docx

Links for Research

[Cornell Library \(http://rnc.library.cornell.edu/abolitionism/index.htm\)](http://rnc.library.cornell.edu/abolitionism/index.htm)

[VCU Libraries \(https://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/woman-suffrage/woman-suffrage-movement/\)](https://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/woman-suffrage/woman-suffrage-movement/)

[Woman History \(https://www.womenshistory.org/\)](https://www.womenshistory.org/)

Step 2: Writing Organizer



Step 2 American
Reformers Writing Or

Step 3:

Write Essay in Google Classroom using Google Doc

Step 4:

Go to Lucid Press and Create Magazine

[Lucid Press \(https://www.lucidpress.com/pages/usecase/education\)](https://www.lucidpress.com/pages/usecase/education)

Scaffolded Writing Organizers



Women's Rights
Movement Writing Or



Abolitionist
Movement Writing Or