



Lesson Plan from the Registry: Exploring the Registry's Blog, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages and sharing myViews

African-American Registry: Uniting Classrooms through Education, Transforming Communities through Education

Introduction The following lesson, developed for students in grades 7-12, emphasizes practicing reading, speaking, written expression and research skills while giving students the opportunity to bring diversity to their knowledge base as they discover American and African American history, culture and heritage life through use of the Registry. We introduce students to a broader array of people and events that is available in most standard curriculum. This brings African American students a sense of pride in the accomplishments of their community and therefore in themselves. For students without the reality of slavery, segregation and systemic intolerance, this diversification of their knowledge base brings them to a more complete and true picture of American heritage and builds their self-esteem too. Knowledge breaks down stereotypes and assists students to learn to live harmoniously in a multi-cultural society.

The following lesson features the Registry Blog, a monthly thread on African American heritage or culture or our Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages. It is interesting and fun for students to participate in the lesson. To express their views and get involved, they simply click the link at the top of the home page, read the post and make their thumbs up or down, type in a response or retweet or 'like' from the page. This feature gives students an opportunity to explore and share their opinion on many aspects of American life. Our blogs are monthly, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are weekly and with social media they can choose to 'follow' our material too.

Note: For direct teaching of reading and writing skills as a part of the lesson, please refer to the **Supplementary Lessons: Increasing Literacy Skills**. These supplementary lessons are designed particularly for students with academic deficiencies in the areas of reading decoding, reading fluency, vocabulary and written expression.

Instructional Goals:

Students will increase their knowledge of topics relevant to African American life and history and demonstrate their ability of forming and sharing opinions on these topics.

Students will demonstrate improvement in their speaking and active listening skills by sharing their opinions and listening attentively to the opinions of others.

Students will improve research skills as demonstrated by their ability to find valid evidence supporting their opinions (using the Registry or other materials).

Students will practice cooperation and sharing research information.

Students will have opportunities to share feelings and opinions with others on topics involving race and race identity.

Materials needed: Internet access, access to word processing, PowerPoint (or Keynote) or pen and paper (notebooks or index cards), microphone (optional), foam ball (optional)

Preparation: Find the blog at www.aaregistry.org. Click on the "online community" link and the "blog" sub-link or our Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages. Have a copy of the categories of the Registry written materials and the categories of the Voices That Guide Us 'Black Box' (at the bottom of any page of the Black Box) available for students in the circle discussion. These could be printed on the assignment sheet. The assignment sheet should be prepared ahead of time. Choose which parts of number 4 below you will assign.

Procedures:

1. Form a circle with your students. Establish guidelines for the circle (listening with respect, speaking with respect, speaking one at a time). Optional: use a talking piece to help ensure that students speak one at a time.
2. Present the question of the week (or have a student do so). Ask each student to briefly respond to one of the following questions:
What emotions come up for you as you hear this question?
Why is this an important question to ask?
3. Propose to the students that they will be searching the Registry for information that will inform their opinions about the response to the opinion blog.

Discuss and have them take notes regarding the following questions:

Of the categories listed in the Registry which article category(s) would this question come under? Within a particular category, how could they narrow their search for relevant articles that would give relevant information? (Given that the articles are chronological determining time periods to look through may be helpful. Also, skimming the titles could give clues.)

What would be a way to find videos on the Black Box that would have information relevant to the opinion question? (Using the categories at the bottom of the page. Also skimming video titles.)

How might they find a podcast with relevant information? They can skim titles and names of speechmakers

4. Assign the students the following tasks to be completed before the next group/circle meeting; (pick all or some of the following and make a handout of the assignment)

a) Record your gut or initial response to the question.

b) Research the question on the Registry. Assign them to read at least two written articles, listen to two Voices That Guide Us Black Box videos and two podcasts in attempting to find information that would provide information about the question. Each student should write one paragraph for each article, video and podcast that gives a short summary of what they have read, seen or heard. Each paragraph should conclude with one sentence that answers the question: Did this article, video or podcast give you information to help you make a decision about your answer to the question?

c) Whenever you find an article, video or podcast that speaks to the opinion blog question, post the information on your classroom website, newsletter or bulletin board to share with your classmates.

d) Ask an elder to answer the opinion question and what are their reasons having the opinion expressed. The elder could be a relative, neighbor, friend of the family, or other school personnel. Write the Elder's response to the question and write a paragraph describing the reasons given.

e) Use other research tools in the library or on-line to gain information about

the question.

f) Make a decision about whether you want to stay with your first answer or question or change it based on what you have learned from your research.

5. Schedule the class meeting/circle and inform the students. Make individual progress checks periodically to ensure that students are fulfilling the requirements.

6. Gather students in the group/circle and have a go-round with student's answering one of the following questions: What feelings/emotions came up for you as you researched this question? What did you learn about this question that surprised you? What have you learned about African-American life and history as a result of looking at this question?

7. Remaining in the circle, have each student express what their answer to the opinion question was and what they feel is the most compelling argument that supports their opinion. Record and post the results on a bulletin board, class website or newsletter.

Optional Listening Exercise: upon completion of the go-round above, toss a foam or other soft article to one student. The student tosses the object to another student who then states the opinion and evidence for the opinion of the student that tossed the object. In turn that student tosses the object to another student who then does the same for the student that tossed the object to him/her. If opt for this part of the lesson, inform the students before the circle begins.

Optional Class Debate: Divide students into groups according to how they answered the opinion question. Give all groups 10-15 minutes to determine who will speak and what they will say in the time they have to present their opinion. Instruct students to consider how compelling different arguments are and how best to present them to persuade others. Encourage groups to have more than one speaker, perhaps having all members of the group taking a turn at persuasion

CLOSURE: Students will respond to the following question: What impact has doing this assignment had on your life and your racial identity?

Optional use of the Forum sub-link: Students create discussions on-line regarding the opinion question. This could be a discussion within the classroom or with other students in other classrooms in their school or in another school, perhaps one in another part of the country or world.

*Teacher sharing on the various questions above is very important. The teacher

will model authenticity, vulnerability and clarity.

NEXT OPINION QUESTION: At this meeting, or at a later time, introduce the next question from the Opinion Blog or Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages from the Registry.

Evaluation Procedures

Monitor attendance and appropriate participation in the circle discussions.

Students may self-monitor their behavior and level of participation

Set criteria for grading at the outset, if you choose to give grade evaluations.

Distinctions can be made on the basis of evidence gathered and the quality of written expression used.

Keep a running record for each student with comments on group participation and quality of research evidence.

If you incorporate the optional listening exercise in the final circle, record each student's success in summarizing what was said by the person who tosses him or her the object.