

Lesson Plan – Marjorie Margolis, Conant High School, Jaffrey, NH.
The Pyramid of Hate Teach-In, a Learning by Real Problem (LRBP©) Culminating Activity

Time Required: Five 45-minute classes

I. Background

This activity is the final collaborative lesson in a semester long high school elective entitled, “Literature of Witness: Against Forgetting”. Throughout the course, the class referred to the Anti-Defamation League’s *Pyramid of Hate*© as a template with which to examine the events that led to the Holocaust. The Pyramid depicts the escalation of acts of hate: bias, prejudice, discrimination, violence, genocide. Following the study of the Holocaust, the class continued to refer to the Pyramid as they studied the struggle for civil rights in the United States as well as incidents of hate crimes and genocide in their own lifetime.

A main objective of Literature of Witness is to empower adolescents by presenting avenues in which they can contribute to social change. Throughout the course, the class is challenged to work in several different collaborative groupings so by this time in the semester, they are comfortable sharing ideas with one another as well as disagreeing and critiquing. The LRBP© provides students with the opportunity to apply their knowledge in an activity that contributes to the community. In preparation, the teacher contacts someone outside the classroom who is willing to recognize the class as an authority and then request their services.

In the final two weeks of Literature of Witness, the principal visited the class. Having first conferred with me concerning my goals, the principal led a discussion about the value of the course, centering many of his questions on the Pyramid of Hate. He then asked the students if they would help him create a climate of tolerance and kindness in the school by teaching others what they had learned. The mission given, the students enthusiastically accepted the challenge to teach the student body about the Pyramid of Hate. One student suggested that they break up into groups so that they can present to several small groups of students rather than one large group; thus several Pyramids were built and presentations developed.

II. Goals and Objectives

Students’ understanding of the relevance of the Holocaust to current events as well as to their own lives is a powerful tool. Given a task in which they can personally contribute to the fight against hate, they learn first hand that they have the power to make a difference.

The creation and presentation of Pyramids of Hate synthesized the content of the course as the students reviewed what they learned and researched contemporary examples of expressions of hate in each of its stages depicted on the Pyramid. Because their target audience was their peers, the students focused on hate activities in the high school, demonstrating how words and actions taking place everyday in the school corridors correspond to a level of hate on the Pyramid. Their final product required that they understood and could articulate:

1. how hate activities can escalate from bias to genocide
2. how this escalation of hate occurred in Germany between 1933-1945
3. how awareness of the continuing presence of hate activities presents each individual with the choice to not participate, and perhaps even make others aware of the ramifications of their actions.

III. Materials

1. The Pyramid of Hate© graphic
2. Large pieces of cardboard. I found several pieces 5 and 6 foot pieces at the local hardware store.
3. Construction paper and markers

4. Internet access and printing capability
5. Duct tape
6. Box cutters
7. Chart paper
8. Assessment handout

III. Teaching Strategies and Techniques

Day 1

1. (5 minutes)

Distribute the assessment handout and discuss how the final product will be evaluated. Then break the class into three groups:

Pyramid Experts (great for those who prefer to build than to research)

Holocaust Experts

Contemporary Issues Experts

2. (15 minutes)

Have each group assign a recorder. Then have them brainstorm and record the following:

a. Pyramid group

A definition example for each term on the Pyramid

A general example of each term on the Pyramid

Colors most appropriate for each level of hate

b. Holocaust group

Examples from 1933-1945 that correspond to each level of hate

c. Contemporary Issues group

Examples from high school life that correspond to a level of hate

Examples from current events that correspond to the other levels

3. (25 minutes)

Bring all the groups together and record their findings on two pieces of chart paper, which are kept on the board throughout the work periods. Begin the discussion by asking the Pyramid group to explain the bottom level, acts of bias. Then ask the Holocaust group to list how these acts were demonstrated during the Holocaust. Next ask the Contemporary issues group to list how these acts are apparent in the high school. Continue up each level of the Pyramid, following the same sequence of responses: definitions of terms, examples from the Holocaust, and examples from the world today.

4. Homework—bring in resources

a. Pyramid group—large pieces of cardboard

b. Holocaust group—graphics from books and websites that depict levels of the Pyramid

c. Contemporary Issues group—graphics from books and websites that depict levels of the Pyramid

Day 2

1. (30 minutes)

Keeping the same groups, guide them in these activities:

a. Pyramid group—each person cuts out the three large cardboard triangles for the sides of the pyramid. Using a side as template, each member will cut three pieces of chart paper, which will later cover the cardboard. Then they will cut out construction paper of five colors to place on each side of the pyramid, color-coding each level on the Pyramid. They will then glue these colored pieces on each of the three pieces of chart paper

b. Holocaust group—copies several graphics from books and websites that correspond to all levels of the Pyramid

c. Contemporary Issues group—copies several graphics from books and websites that correspond to all levels of the Pyramid

2. (20 minutes)

Now jigsaw the students to form groups of three comprised of

- a. Pyramid expert
- b. Holocaust expert
- c. Contemporary issues expert

These students will complete their side of the Pyramid by adding text and/or graphics to each level. (The Pyramid group will write out each term found on the text of the *Pyramid of Hate*©, while the other two groups might write terms, statistics, or use graphics)

3. (5 minutes)

Each group will tape their three sides together so that the pyramid is self-standing.

4. Homework--Contemplate a presentation for the side of the Pyramid that each individual created

Day 3

1. (30 Minutes)

Return to the groups of three. First they must create a written introductory statement and then they must create a 15-minute presentation. Beginning with the Pyramid expert, followed next by the Holocaust expert, then the Contemporary Issues Expert, have them explain to the group his/her side of the pyramid, one level at a time, beginning with acts of bias and ending with genocide. Encourage them to record key phrases on note cards

2. (15 minutes)

Each pyramid group will practice their presentation again.

Day 4

1. (35 minutes)

Pair 2 Pyramid groups together and have them practice their presentation before one another.

2. (10 minutes)

Reconvene the class and give instructions of which class to report to the next day to deliver their presentation.

Day 5

1. (15 minutes)

Each group practices their presentation

2. (30 minutes)

Each group reports to their assigned class and delivers their presentation.

IV. Assessment

1. Each host teacher is requested to complete the assessment handout, providing a subjective evaluation of the clarity of the Pyramid model and the presentation. Students will use this tool to reflect on their presentation skills.

2. However, the students' understanding of the material is most apparent in their behavior throughout the process of this activity. By carefully listening to their discussions during work sessions and practice presentations, I assess their understanding of

1. how hate can escalate from bias to genocide
2. how this escalation occurred during the Holocaust
3. how acts of hate of each level exist in their lives and in their world

Pyramid of Hate Presentation Assessment Handout

Rate presentation 1-4 (4 being the highest) for evidence of each of the following:

1. Did the group clearly explain what the purpose of the presentation was?
2. Did the group clearly explain the significance of the Pyramid of Hate, how acts of hate can escalate from words to genocide?
3. Did the presentation clearly explain how each level of the Pyramid was apparent during the Holocaust?
4. Did the presentation clearly explain how each level of the Pyramid exists in the lives and world of students today?
5. Did the presentation clearly explain the significance of the graphics and text on each side of the pyramid?