



Recommendation Report

For American Virtual Academy

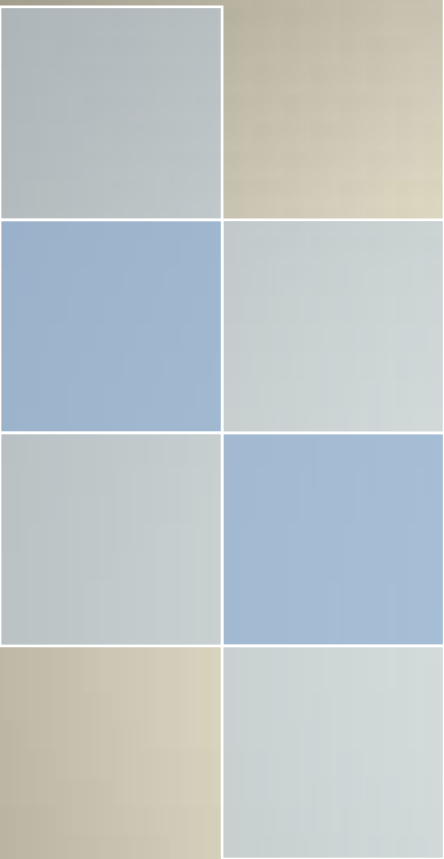


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Introduction

During the interview you had with our class, you mentioned several concerns you had about your American History A course that we want to help you resolve. By implementing our suggestions, you will prevent students from falling behind in the course and create more engaging content for your high school students. The five specific areas we will focus on in this report are listed below:

Recommendations at a Glance

Problem	Solution
Confusing Course Organization	Restructure the course to give students the ability to choose what activities they use to learn the information needed to complete the graded assignments.
Little Student Accountability	Lock course content during tests to prevent students from cheating, give credit for coursework that is currently not graded, and implement weekly deadlines.
Poor-quality Activities	Revise the Workbook questions to short answer rather than fill in the blank, have the students create their own timelines rather than replicate one that is already finished, and use GoogleMaps to create an active annotated map rather than having students print out a worksheet and mark locations by hand.
Little Student-Teacher Interaction	Require mandatory weekly meetings and implement class-wide discussions with the teacher using Adobe Connect.
Little Student-Student Interaction	Modify the daily class discussion board to have students discuss a few questions once or twice a week in a small group. Implement class-wide activities led by the instructor with the students participating individually, in groups, or as an entire class. Assign a collaborative group project once or twice during the course.

We understand that some of the suggestions we are making will be difficult to implement and require significantly more effort on the side of your professors and administrators. We also understand that as an online high school you want to keep a certain amount of fluidity in the course, and having deadlines and group meetings are difficult in an online classroom and may not seem practical. However, they are important. We have done research, which is presented in each section, about online learning and activities, and we firmly believe that if you make these changes, your American History A curriculum will be stronger. Fewer students will fall behind, they will leave the course with a deeper understanding of the content, and they will feel more connected with their teacher and their peers.

Organization

Problem

High school-age students are sensitive to the amount of freedom and choice they experience in their lives, including how much control they have over their own education. When students step away from a traditional classroom to an online one, they are in a position to make personal education choices, and the more in control students feel, the more engaged they will be with the course. Dr. Raymond P. Perry, a professor of psychology at the University of Manitoba, discusses research findings on the effects of a student's perceived academic control, saying that "when students feel 'in control' this leads to increased perceptions of responsibility, decreased negative affect, increased motivation, and improved performance."¹ Students still need accountability and requirements, but they should have choices because when they feel in control of their education, the motivation for success in the class comes from within.²

Another recently conducted experiment explored choice and motivation in high school students. Amber Simmons and Melissa Page, both doctorate students and high school teachers, explain the rationale of their experiment:

We think that individual freedom would motivate students to achieve scholastic excellence and embrace personal empowerment. Teacher control in the classroom has constructed an environment in which we no longer trust students, and they do not trust themselves. We have faith that students want to learn despite the incredible resistance we all face in the classroom. Students aren't resisting learning; they're resisting the whole context in which they are taught.³

Simmons and Page found that their students were empowered and engaged when given choice and accountability in their education.

The way your American History A course is currently presented makes it unclear to students what their requirements are and what they have to do to achieve them. A student looking at the main page of each lesson cannot determine which activities are graded, and therefore required for them to do. Some of the activities' instructions state that the activity will not be graded, but this is not consistent between activities. In order to discover what the requirements for the lesson are, the student has to go through the entire lesson in order to access all the material. Students are confused about which

¹ Perry, Raymond P., et al. "The Interrelation Of First-Year College Students' Critical Thinking Disposition, Perceived Academic Control, And Academic Achievement." *Research In Higher Education* 49.6 (2008): 513-530. ERIC. Web. 12 June 2012.

² Kirkpatrick, Michael A., Kathryn Stant, Shonta Downes, and Leatah Gaither. "Perceived Locus of Control and Academic Performance: Broadening the Construct's Applicability." *Journal of College Student Development* 49.5 (2008): 486-9. ERIC. Web. 7 June 2012.

³ Simmons, Amber M., and Melissa Page. "Motivating Students through Power and Choice ." *English Journal* 100.1 (2010): 65-9. scholar.google.com. Web. 7 June 2012.

activities will be graded and frustrated because they have to go through the entire lesson from the beginning to figure this out.

Solution

Your students are currently being graded on the Workbook, the Daily Checkpoints, the Writing Projects, and the Class Discussions. We will label these four activities the “requirements” of each lesson because they are the only assignments students turn in for credit. We will label the Key Terms and Graphic Organizer “tools” your students use to help them accomplish these activities, and the rest of the activities we will label “resources” they use to obtain the information they need to complete the requirements. Using this terminology, we will discuss two areas we recommend you modify to improve student choice, which will increase student engagement. “Before” indicates what you currently have in your course, and “After” indicates what we are suggesting you change:

- Activities:
 - *Before:* Students must complete each activity before they can move on in the course.
 - *After:* Give students the choice of which activities to do in order to complete the required assignments.
- Requirements:
 - *Before:* Students do not know exactly what is required of them for each lesson.
 - *After:* Create a list of required assignments for each lesson with a list of which activities will help them accomplish each assignment.

Activities

Having a clear understanding of what is required and a choice of how to obtain the information needed to accomplish these requirements will put your students in the driver’s seat. This will help them feel empowered by giving them a sense of control. Our recommendation, then, is for you to include a requirements page at the beginning of each lesson where you clearly outline what the students need to produce and learn from the lesson. You would then offer the activities as resources that provide the information your students need to complete the requirements. We noticed that a lot of the information given in the activities overlaps with information given in other activities, so if, for example, students need to distinguish three similarities and three differences between the Jamestown and Plymouth colonies, allow them to choose which format to get that information from, whether it is through watching a video, reading the textbook pages, or viewing a PowerPoint lecture. This approach will engage your students by avoiding redundancy in the information they are being taught.

Requirements

Below is an example of what your lesson requirements page might look like:

**Unit 1, Lesson 1
Main Page**

Each requirement, resource, and tool will be a hyperlink to the instructions or activity.

Requirement 1: Workbook Day 1

Resources:

- Lecture – Power Point with Audio
- Textbook – The English in Virginia
- Video – Jamestown
- Video – John Smith
- Video – Mayflower Compact
- Video – Massachusetts Bay Colony
- Textbook – The Northern Colonies
- Skills Challenge Game

Requirement 2: Checkpoint Day 1

Resources:

- Lecture – Power Point with Audio
- Textbook – The English in Virginia
- Video – Jamestown
- Video – John Smith
- Video – Mayflower Compact
- Video – Massachusetts Bay Colony
- Textbook – The Northern Colonies
- Skills Challenge Game

Requirement 3: Writing Project Day 1

Resources:

- Primary Source – Jamestown and Plymouth Colonies
- Video – John Smith
- Timeline

Requirement 4: Class Discussion Day 1

Resource:

- Video – Mayflower Compact

Please note:

Many resources provide information for more than one requirement. It would be helpful to look at the instructions for all four requirements before you begin. This will help you know what information you are looking for as you go through the resources.

Helpful Tools:

- Graphic Organizer (Note taking)
- Glossary/ Key Terms

As illustrated above, you would give students the requirements for each lesson right up front so they know what is expected of them for each lesson. The resources and tools needed to accomplish the requirements would be provided in a list below each of the requirements. You would then convert the name of each requirement, tool, and resource on the lesson's main page into a hyperlink that takes the student to the page where the requirement, tool, or resource is fully explained. As the students click on each requirement, they are able to learn what is expected for that particular

requirement. They can then go back to the lesson's main page and use the resources provided to accomplish the requirement. By doing this, you will accomplish three things:

- Students will be more engaged because they will be deciding which resources they want to use.
- Students will not be locked into doing any activity or using any tool they do not find helpful.
- Students will not be concerned about whether or not something is important while doing the activities because they will know from the beginning what information they are looking for.

Benefits

Students who perceive that they are an active part of the educational process feel internally motivated. Because of this, students will have a more effective learning experience, which means they will produce higher-quality work because they will gain a greater understanding of the concepts you are teaching. Students will also be able to use their time more effectively, which will help them stay on track with the daily requirements you have specified. And staying on track will help them feel more positive about themselves and the course, which will encourage internal motivation.

Student Accountability

Problem

In this section, we will be covering academic honesty, ungraded course content, and the lack of uniform deadlines. Currently, your students can easily access course notes during the online exam, essentially enabling cheating or creating an open-book test. Academic dishonesty discourages meaningful learning and prevents establishment of a strong work ethic. Data collected from sixty MBA students shows a strong, positive correlation in the relationship between “academic dishonesty” in business students and “work-related dishonesty.” Steps taken to discourage and disallow academic dishonesty today will prevent ENRON tomorrow.⁴ Also, there is a noticeable amount of ungraded content, such as questions and activities, that goes unused by students. It clutters the course while providing no learning experience to the students, which warrants a “clean up” of the current text. We will also address the lack of in-course deadlines.

Solution

Measures taken to prevent cheating will yield greater student success as a means of building integrity in your students. And more fully utilizing ungraded course content will help provide a better learning experience for your students. There are three specific issues we would like to address:

- Testing
 - *Before:* Students are able to access course content while testing.
 - *After:* Lock course content to prevent cheating.
- Ungraded Coursework
 - *Before:* Some activities include coursework like questions or activities that are optional rather than required.
 - *After:* Give this coursework weight by making them graded assignments or assigning them as extra credit.
- Deadlines
 - *Before:* There are no strict deadlines.
 - *After:* Create weekly deadlines.

⁴ Sims, Randi L. “The Relationship Between Academic Dishonesty and Unethical Business Practices.” *Journal of Education for Business* 68.4 (1993): 207-11. Web. 15 June 2012.

Testing

While studying your course, we noticed that students have the ability to look up course notes during tests. Cheating loopholes like these have to be addressed in order to maintain and instill integrity in the student body. With an online high school, this task becomes excruciatingly difficult. Here are three options to consider to remedy this problem:

- You can have a web specialist lock the course content when the test is open.
- Your staff can limit when the test is available and lock the content from student access.
- You can put a timer on the test to discourage the students from spending time looking for the answers.

Our recommendation, however, is that you implement the second option. Many students want to be honest with their coursework, but many also want to graduate with the minimum input of effort. Making notes available only in PDF format will make it more difficult for students to copy and paste during the exam. It may not be possible to cut off all possible routes of dishonesty for exam-taking, but it is in the best interest of the students and the faculty to reduce the temptation of academic dishonesty as much as possible.

Ungraded Coursework

Many of your activities, specifically the Primary Source and Timeline assignments, currently have extra coursework, such as questions and activities, that is not monitored or graded. Although we understand that you include this extra coursework to help students obtain a broader grasp of the learning experience, a student taking your online class is not motivated to take part in these extra learning methods without grades attached to them. Your students will be better prepared for the future by engaging in all of the learning they can get on any given subject. With this in mind, you have three options you can explore:

- Remove the extra coursework completely.
- Incorporate the additional content into each lesson, which would probably lengthen the daily lessons from three to nearly four hours a day.
- Assign extra credit points to the coursework that can be monitored. This will encourage greater student involvement and confidence.

We recommend the third option because students are motivated by coursework that will directly influence their grade. Three hours is already a lot of time to spend on a single class in one day, so making extra credit available for students will motivate them to spend more time learning the subject matter and give them additional opportunities to earn their desired grade.

Deadlines

Installing deadlines into this course will be instrumental in encouraging a better work ethic in your students and staggering the grading your instructors have to do throughout the course so they do not have to do it all in the last one or two weeks of the course. You are currently working with no strict deadlines in a six-week course, so if you implement weekly goals for the assignments, your students will benefit from the greater structure. If assignments are required to be done in a two or three-day period as opposed to a one-week or six-week period, the quality of the students' work will increase and they will build better study habits for college and the career field. In a private study, on average, procrastinators were shown to perform poorer academically in online environments.⁵ By encouraging better time management skills in students, you will better prepare your students to succeed on a professional level.

Benefits

Student accountability will be difficult to mandate and cannot be entirely controlled, but keeping the perspective of the student in mind will help you communicate better with your students as you work toward a unified goal of learning through meaningful course work. We recognize you may not feel it is feasible to incorporate these recommendations, but applying deadlines within this course will encourage students to spend more overall time in the class and help them learn more, better preparing them for the future.

⁵ Michinov, Nicolas, Sophie Brunot, Oliver Le Bohec, Jacques Juhel, and Marine Delaval. "Procrastination, Participation, and Performance in Online Learning Environments." *Computers & Education*. 56:1 (2011): 243–52. Web. 4 June 2012.

Quality of Activities

Problem

Something you do very well for your students is create a variety of activities, which is excellent because no two students are exactly alike. This is one of the strengths we found in your course, and we commend you for it. Since you have a good quantity of activities, we want to help you focus on the quality.

Right now, your activities are too simple for high school students. As we looked through your activities, we noticed that the teacher is giving the students the answers, so they do not have the opportunity to learn and grow within the course. For example, in Lesson 2 Section 9, the students are told what mnemonics are, but they are never required to make their own. Another example is the Skills Challenge. As students prepare for the test, it is easy for them to just quickly click through the answers in the Jeopardy game and act as though they have learned the material. It would be more effective if they created their own questions and answers instead. As the course stands, your students are not actually doing enough. According to research done by another group's hands on research, as presented in their recommendation report, high school students felt like they were being talked down to and were not being treated as adults. They felt the current level was more appropriate for elementary students.

Dr. Damien Hutchinson, an engineering and information technology lecturer at Deakin University, says, "Critical reflection plays an essential role for the students to move beyond receiving the transmission of the content and being able to document what was learned."⁶ Students should be expected to think through problems, form opinions, and provide something tangible to prove they understand the material. We understand your demographic is mostly high school students who have failed this course once and are retaking it, and so we want to help them walk away with a better education and more knowledge.

Solution

Our main suggestion is for you to focus on making the activities dynamic. Right now, a lot of the answers are spoon fed to the students instead of letting them come to their own conclusions. We have chosen three specific activities to focus on that you use through the entire course:

- Workbooks
 - *Before:* Students fill in one blank in a sentence.
 - *After:* Ask for free recall instead of fill in the blank.

⁶ Hutchinson, Damien. "Teaching Practices for Effective Cooperative Learning in an Online Learning Environment (OLE)." *Journal of Information Systems Education* 18.3 (2007): 357–67. *ABI/INFORM Complete*; *ProQuest Research Library*. Web. 8 June 2012.

- Timelines
 - *Before:* The completed timeline is provided for the student.
 - *After:* Ask the students to create their own timeline instead of copying the example.
- Maps
 - *Before:* Students are given an analogue map that asks them to mark specific locations.
 - *After:* Use GoogleMaps to create an active annotated map.

Workbooks

The Workbook activities consist of just one or two fill-in-the-blank questions, and the answer to these questions is one word, such as the last name of the subject of the lecture. This is a problem because it is easy for students to go to the lecture and search for the one-word answer without having read the lecture. This goes back to our suggestions about student accountability. It is easy for a student to get simple answers in an online classroom because everything is open and unsupervised. Instead, you should encourage your students to do more critical thinking. According to the quote by Hutchinson above, critical thinking will help students retain information better.

We will take a current example from the Lesson 1 Workbook to demonstrate how you can help students improve their critical thinking skills. This is what you currently have as the first workbook question in the Lesson 1 Section 1 Workbook activity:

Question 1

The three European countries who successfully established colonies in the Western Hemisphere (North and South America) between 1500 and 1700 were: Spain, _____, and England.

Type your answer here

This question does contain valuable information, and you want to make sure the students are getting the information they need. However, by giving the students two of the three answers, they only need to know one third of the information; instead, you could ask them to learn and remember all parts of the question. It is more beneficial to require the student to remember all three countries for three reasons:

- The workbook will be a more valuable study tool.
- Student will have to actively search for the three answers.
- Student will remember the information better because they sought it out.

Here is an example of a way you could rewrite this question in a more thought-provoking way:

Question 1

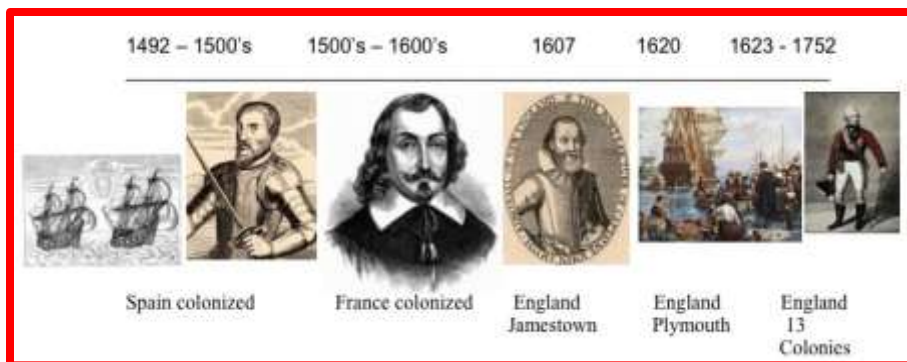
Name the three European countries that successfully established colonies in the Western Hemisphere (North and South America) between 1500 and 1700 and give one fact you found interesting about each of the three countries.

Type your answer here

This new question requires the student to know the same information, but this way the student must remember all three countries instead of just recognizing which one is missing. Also, the student is given the opportunity to form his or her own opinion about the material. This helps them feel in control of their education, which, as discussed before, is important for high school students. It also helps them look back and reflect critically about the information they read. Critical thinking is going beyond the “receiving and the transmission of the content,” so if you modify the workbook questions to include more thought-provoking questions like the one above, the student will be able to “document what was learned.” The answer is still short so that the teacher will not have too much more to grade, but it will help the student much more because they will be more active in pursuing the knowledge.

Timelines

Timelines are effective in a history class because it is a visual way to demonstrate a series of events. The way the timeline is set up in your course, you first provide students with the correct timeline and then ask them to fill in a blank timeline from memory. However, your students will learn more if they have to create their own timeline. This makes them active learners. Right now, they are just regurgitating the information that was given to them, which does not help them. An Indian instructor says this about testing in education: “Here [in India], when we want an elephant to grow, we feed the elephant. We don’t weigh the elephant.”⁷ Asking a student to do something from memory is a kind of test. If you start feeding your students more and weigh them less, they will gain more knowledge. Here is your current Timeline activity in Lesson 1:



⁷ Chen, Milton. “Don’t Weigh the Elephant—Feed the Elephant: Feedback is Key in Assessment.” *Edutopia* (2007). Web. 8 June 2012.

In this example, you have pictures, dates, and labels, which is what you want the student to walk away with. However, you can reword the instructions so that the student has guidance, but not the answer. Provide an example timeline that is not connected to American history so students can see the format of a timeline without being given the content. Here is an example worksheet:

Create your own timeline from the events discussed in the Timeline Story. Include six events between the years 1492 and 1752. Include dates, descriptions and a picture for each event. Use the example below as a guide to create your own.

A VERY POTTER TIMELINE

The diagram illustrates a timeline for the Harry Potter series. At the top, there are seven book covers labeled 'HARRY POTTER' for years 1 through 7. Below these is a horizontal row of years from 97 to 11. At the bottom, there are seven movie posters for years 1 through 7. Lines connect the book covers to the years and the years to the movie posters, showing a clear progression of the series over time.

By getting rid of the existing timeline and instead asking the students to make their own, you are doing four things to improve your students' educational experience:

- The students actively create something.
- The students teach themselves.
- The students will understand the material better.
- The students will feel in control.

These will help them have a richer educational experience by helping them remember the information for the test and understand the material better. Students will also have a stronger study tool because they will understand the product they made better than something that is handed to them.

Maps

In a traditional classroom, a teacher will hand out a map that has certain parts outlined and then ask the students to fill in the corresponding places and events. However, this is not as effective as an interactive annotated map. The Internet provides an opportunity for students, teachers, groups, or whole classes to create these interactive maps. GoogleMaps is an online resource that will achieve the same objectives as an analogue map, but will also give students a chance to learn beyond locating x. Annabel Astbury, a member of the History Teachers' Association of Victoria, believes there is one main problem with conventional map exercises: "I do not think that the task 'Locate x on a map,' in isolation, assists in the process of historical understanding." Astbury then provides an alternative to this exercise:

The remedy to this problem would be to set a task such as an annotated map exercise—where students can still demonstrate their knowledge by including dates, times and location on a map but then locate, perhaps, other resources, and provide some brief annotations of explanations. Annotated maps are great because we can combine the idea of geographical and historical understanding in one. Students enjoy creating annotated maps because they aren't simply "locating x on a map."

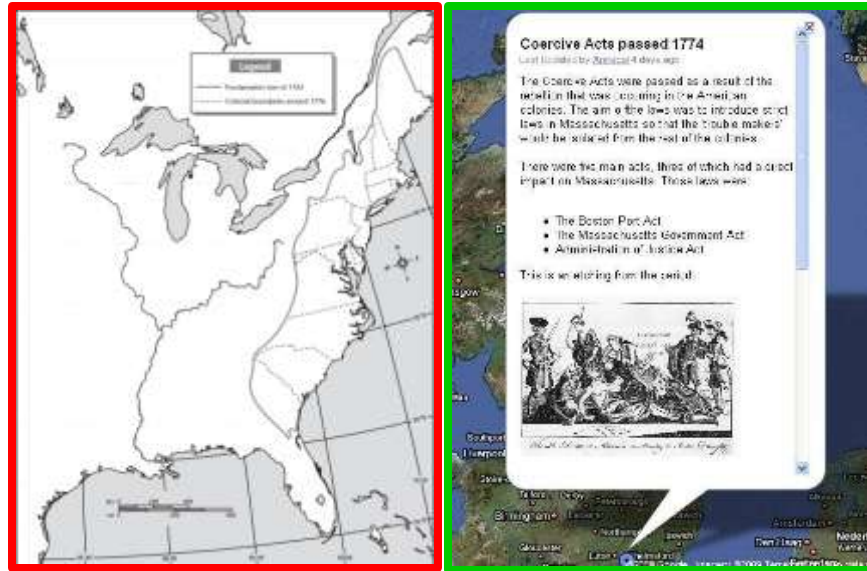
She also links GoogleMaps directly to an online classroom and explains how it benefits students:

In a digital classroom, we can use a digital map, annotate with references from a much broader scope than the books or textbooks in a school library and have a fluid document that can change, be added to or be a truly collaborative effort.⁸

With a tool like GoogleMaps, you can create an annotated map exercise. This means students can go into GoogleMaps and add in their own annotations about places and events. (For information about the GoogleMaps tutorial, see **Appendix A**).

Below is an example of your current Map activity from Lesson 2, and next to it is an example of a GoogleMaps annotated map exercise:

⁸ Annabel Astbury. "Using Google Maps in your History Class." *slideshare*. SlideShare Inc. 1 June 2009. Web. 8 June 2012.



Your current Map activity is a blank, black-and-white map, and the students are instructed to use it to help with the Workbook. However, a blank map will not help them find the answers because the answers are not available on the map. An annotated map, like you or the students can make on GoogleMaps, links the information directly to the map so that students can make connections without needing both the lecture and the map.

There are three specific differences between the two map exercises.

- GoogleMaps is more interactive because it can involve the entire class.
- GoogleMaps encourages students to find follow-up information online.
- GoogleMaps does more than “locate x.”

Here is a four step suggestion plan from Astbury on how to make an effective GoogleMaps annotated online exercise:

Stage One: Locations and dates

Stage Two: Description of event at each location and date.

Stage Three: Select an appropriate image / document which related to the location and date.

Stage Four: Analysis of image or document.

Benefits

By implementing these suggestions, your students will more actively participate in the course and will get more out of it. If they are required to think critically, form their own opinions, and provide a product showing what they learned, they will feel like they are in charge of their education. Activities are something students look forward to, and they should improve their learning experience. If the activities are changed in the ways mentioned above, your students will be proud of their accomplishments because they will have proof of what they did in their Workbooks, Timelines, and other activities.

Student-Teacher Interaction

Problem

As you indicated in our conference call interview, student-teacher interaction is virtually non-existent in your American History A course, and this is a problem because this lack of interaction leads to poorer education. The relationship between your students and their professors must be developed to give students a more well-rounded online educational experience. Dr. Ronald B. Marks, a marketing professor emeritus at the University of Wisconsin, indicates that student-teacher interaction is the most important factor in online learning.⁹ Interaction in an online environment is not simple or natural, but must be fostered in order to provide a learning environment that supports asking critical questions and seeks definitive answers. According to Dr. Brenda Litchfield, an online instructor at the University of South Alabama, “Frequent student-faculty interaction in and out of class is the most important factor in student motivation and involvement.”¹⁰ The amount of involvement and interaction teachers have with students is key to the students’ success in online courses because they are traditionally more comfortable in a learning environment where they can consult with an authority figure about questions and concerns. Also, students who have frequent contact with their teachers are more likely to succeed.

Solution

In order to improve your students’ experience in the online classroom, you need to provide opportunities for them to have richer interactions with their professors. Online technology can provide multi-sensory experiences to enhance learning that can be as good as or better than traditional classroom lectures. Below are three suggestions you can use to implement a stronger online platform for student-teacher interaction:

- Mandatory Online Meeting Times
 - *Before:* Online teacher-student meetings are optional.
 - *After:* Require students to attend weekly online meetings with the teacher.
- Virtual Class-wide Discussion Groups
 - *Before:* Students do not have the opportunity to have class discussions with the instructor present.
 - *After:* Hold virtual, class-wide discussions guided by the instructor using Adobe Connect.

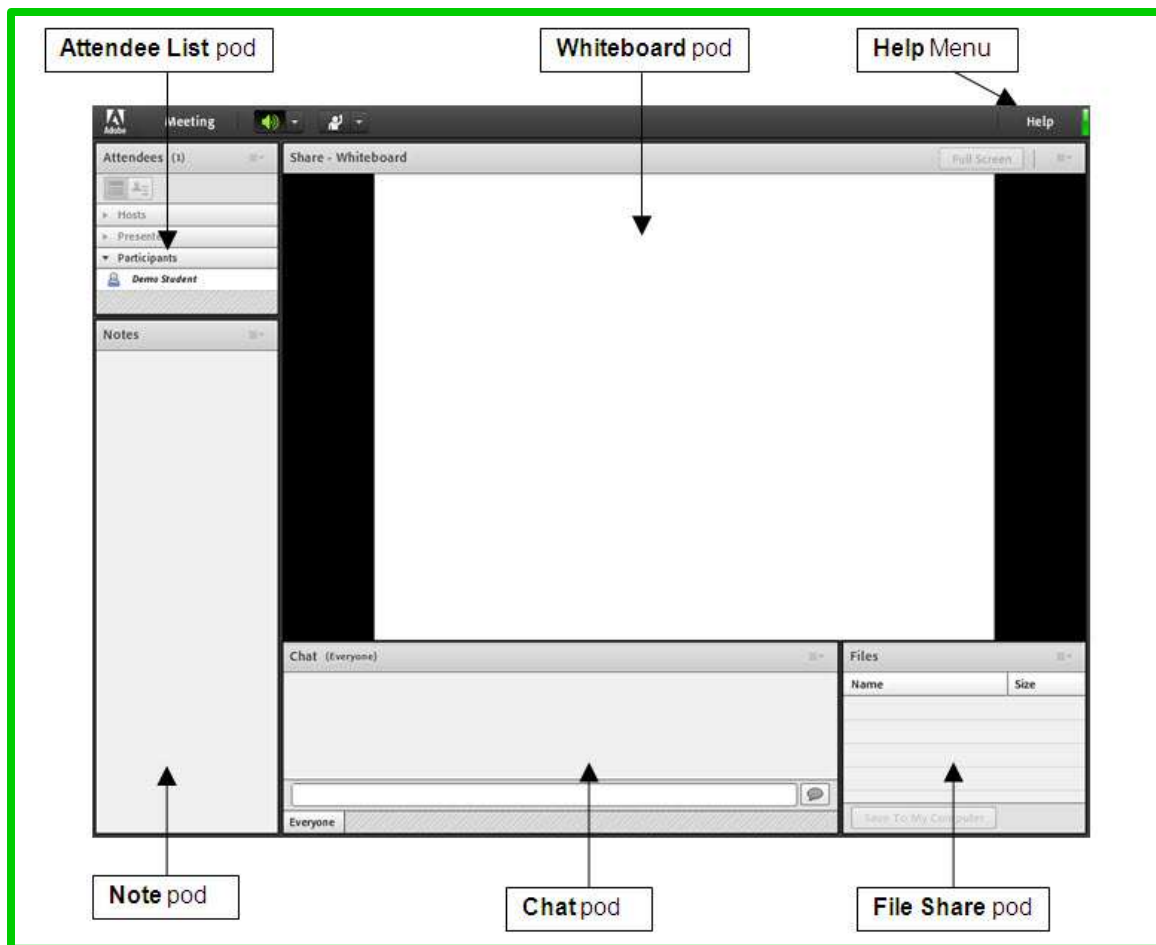
⁹ Marks, Ronald B., Stanley D. Sibley, and J. B. Arbaugh. “A Structural Equation Model of Predictors for Effective Online Learning.” *Journal of Management Education* 29.4 (2005): 531-63. Proquest. Web. 4 June 2012.

¹⁰ Litchfield, Brenda. "Using Online Icebreakers to Promote Student/Teacher Interaction." The University of South Alabama. 2003. Web. 31 May 2012.

Mandatory Online Meeting Times

Mandatory online meetings are beneficial to both the student and the teacher. We suggest that you require a weekly meeting aimed toward discussing students' progress and addressing questions; these can be conducted on a one-on-one basis or in a group setting. Meetings should be structured to facilitate the needs of the student or students. By touching base with students during a weekly scheduled meeting, teachers are able to assess where a student's problem areas might be and then address those problems. Also, meeting times give instructors the opportunity to bring the course material into a real and tangible frame of mind for students, meaning students can transition out of the intangible learning environment of the virtual classroom into real-time interaction with an individual.

In order to make these weekly meetings possible, we recommend that you adopt a new method of student-teacher interaction by using Adobe Connect. This tool, developed by Adobe specifically for online learning, creates an online classroom in which students can have real-time, face-to-face interaction with their teacher and each other. Adobe Connect allows multiple students and teachers to interact at once, creating an online interface that can be highly beneficial to the student because it addresses the need for student-teacher interaction. Below is a screenshot of the Adobe Connect classroom:



As shown on the previous page, Adobe Connect has several features an instructor will find useful during a meeting. It is possible to upload files and share them with students, chat in real time, and write notes on the whiteboard. Features not shown above include video conferencing, audio settings that allow each party to vocally converse even when video conferencing is not initiated, screen sharing, and PowerPoint presentation sharing. (For more information about Adobe Connect and alternatives to it, see **Appendix B**.)

Activities initiated in the Adobe Connect classroom should center on specific student-teacher interactions such as icebreakers, discussions on pertinent class-related material, and student progress. Litchfield discusses possible ideas for online icebreaker activities, and we have listed several below with ideas on how to incorporate each into the Adobe Connect classroom:

- *Special Topics:* Ask students to share their experiences with the topic being studied. Also ask them to discuss why they are interested in this area. Through Adobe Connect, list some of the ideas shared by students on the virtual whiteboard to come back to and discuss further.
- *Meeting Someone:* Storytelling is a wonderful way to encourage students to show their true colors. Ask students to share with you what some of their personal hobbies or favorite activities include during an Adobe Connect meeting, and then share with them some of your own.
- *Tell Us about Yourself:* Ask students to list on the Adobe Connect whiteboard three words they associate with themselves. When they have finished, ask them why they chose those words and why these represent them as a person and a gatherer of knowledge.

Icebreakers like those listed above help students feel comfortable enough to interact with the teacher in the future. Activities of this sort nurture the relationship between student and teacher and create bonds of trust. Beyond the initial icebreaking meeting, which your instructor would hold during Unit 1, weekly meetings should be scheduled to discuss each student's progress and any concerns the teacher or students may have. Weekly meetings will help encourage your students to keep up with their work and provide time for students and teachers to learn from and get to know each other. Also, meetings can be set at any time convenient for the student and instructor, which allows for a great deal of flexibility, one of the goals of your online format.

Virtual Class-wide Discussion Groups

The Adobe Connect software also makes virtual, class-wide discussions a possibility for the online classroom. Virtual class-wide discussions enable you to interact with multiple students in a personal manner all at the same time. The instructor is able to address multiple students' concerns during this meeting, which will ultimately save the instructor time because he or she will not have to address those same questions with each individual student. In addition, students can interact with each other in a personal, real-time environment.

Benefits

Knowing your learner is important for student learning because, if you are familiar with your students' backgrounds and needs, you can better tailor discussions to help them with their concerns. Hutchinson says this about knowing your learner: "Learning has always been at the heart of the higher education enterprise. It is about understanding how people learn and that our role as teachers is not just to transmit or deliver knowledge, but our responsibility is to create rich learning experiences and learning environments for our students."¹¹ In order for you to create a richer learning experience for your students, your instructors need to be devoted and dedicated to learning about their students. Using the Adobe Connect platform, knowing your learner is easier because you are able to interact face-to-face and hear each other's voices. This kind of interaction makes it possible for your students to connect to their teacher, and vice versa, on a more personal level than is possible through text interaction alone.

¹¹ Hutchinson: See pg. 10 footnote 6

Student-Student Interaction

Problem

The current activities for your American History A course are structured mostly for individual work, and they are very effective in teaching the students how to work independently. However, one of the things you mentioned during the class interview was that about 80% of the students taking this course are full-time online students. This makes it essential that they are given the opportunity to have more student-to-student interaction. Hutchinson says the following on student interaction:

The view of learning as a particularly social process with language and dialogue being essential for cognitive development makes social interaction an important element for student learning in collaborative online work groups. This introduces the necessity to facilitate interaction between a social community of learners.¹²

In other words, your students would greatly benefit from opportunities to have social interaction with one another because it is essential to their cognitive development, or ability to learn.

Currently, you have made student-to-student interaction possible through the daily class discussions, but due to the way the course is structured, there is no way to guarantee that this interaction ever takes place. The reason for this is because, as you also mentioned in the interview, about two-thirds of the students will fall behind in the course at some point, so not all the students are necessarily participating on the daily discussion board on the day they should be. This means that these students who are behind will not have the opportunity to be involved in the discussions since the students who are keeping up with the class will have moved on to later class discussions.

Studies have shown that “adequate opportunity to participate in online discussions has been associated with enhanced social presence and increased satisfaction with online courses and discussion forums, particularly when courses use smaller groups within the course to facilitate discussion,”¹³ so there is a need to restructure your discussion boards to make them a more engaging and effective learning method in order to encourage students to both participate more fully and gain more from the discussions. There is also a need for additional student-to-student interaction in this course to help students “enhance social skills and interaction online,”¹⁴ which will make them more engaged in the content they are learning.

¹² Hutchinsen: See pg. 10 footnote 6

¹³ Marks: See pg. 17 footnote 9

¹⁴ Hutchinsen: See pg. 10 footnote 6

Solution

We recognize the difficulty of stimulating student-student interaction in an online setting, but we have identified three online solutions to this problem that you can easily incorporate into what you are already doing:

- Online Discussion Groups
 - *Before:* Students participate in daily class discussions on a discussion board.
 - *After:* Put students into small groups and have them discuss and answer questions together.
- Class-wide Activities
 - *Before:* There are currently no class-wide activities.
 - *After:* Have students participate in class-wide games like Jeopardy or simulations, working individually, in groups, or as an entire class.
- Collaborative Group Activities
 - *Before:* There are currently no collaborative group projects.
 - *After:* Put students into small groups and have them create writing projects, such as writing a choose your own adventure story together.

Online Discussion Groups

To stimulate interaction between the students, you can require the students to have a discussion in individual groups once or twice a week. In order to do this, you would first organize the class into groups of three to four students, with one student in each group made the leader. It would be up to the instructor to decide which students would most benefit from that leadership position, whether it is a student struggling to stay active in the course or a student who is doing very well in the course. You would then have these group leaders decide on a meeting time that works for everyone in the group and then set up an online webinar session using Adobe Connect. (For more information on alternative meeting options, see **Appendix B**.) The groups would then have a discussion on three or four questions that you assign for that meeting, which can come from the list you are already using for the daily class discussion boards. The students would then be required to answer the questions by writing a short paragraph or two for each question as a group using Adobe Connect's screen sharing capabilities.

The student responsible for typing up these paragraphs could be the group leader, or the leader could delegate it to other members of the group. At the end of the week, each member of the group would be required to submit the answers to the questions in order to get credit for the assignment, and the answers would have to match those of the other members of the group to guarantee that they did actually meet and discuss the questions as a group.

We will apply this concept to a specific example in your course, Lesson 5 in Unit 1, for clarification. The current instructions for the class discussion read:

INSTRUCTIONS:

Review the discussion board and continue to post your comments. This is also the time to reflect on what you have learned in these discussions and to write three or four sentences that summarize what you feel.

You would revise the instructions for the last lesson of each unit to instead read:

INSTRUCTIONS:

Your instructor will assign you to groups of three or four with a group leader for this discussion. Your group leader will contact you by e-mail with the date and time you will meet and the means by which you will do so. Review the list of questions beforehand and start formulating answers to help make your group meeting more efficient.

Next, we have chosen four questions from the list you have already generated for Lesson 5's class discussion, focusing on questions that will stimulate the most in-depth discussion in the group. You would list just these four in place of the longer list of questions the students can currently choose from:

Group Discussion Unit 1

- Do you agree that the English colonists only immigrated to America for religious reasons? Why or Why not?
- What was the relationship between the English colonists and the Native Americans like?
- Imagine you lived in England during the late 17th century. You want to go to the American colonies to live but the only way you can afford the trip is to go as an indentured servant. Would you go? Explain your answer.
- Were the colonists justified in dumping the British tea into Boston Harbor? Why or why not?

Finally, instead of having the students submit a comment on the class discussion board, you would create a place for the students to submit their group's answers for grading, much as you have already done for the Workbook answers, which would look something like this:

Group Discussion

Answer Submission

Submit your group's answers here for grading. Each of you should submit the same answers.

Type your group's answers here.

You could retain some of the daily class discussions as they are now, but change the assignment to have the students answer the questions individually rather than on a discussion board to still encourage the students to do critical thinking on their own and also to keep the group work to a manageable level each week. You would then replace the daily class discussion with these group discussions just once or twice a week. This technique could also be applied to the modified Workbook questions we suggested which ask for short answers rather than one-word answers. You could require the students to meet, discuss, and then answer the workbook questions for certain assignments as a group, such as the textbook readings or primary sources, and then submit their answers for credit. To consolidate the workload, you could even use the workbook questions as the students group discussion for the week, eliminating the separate discussion altogether.

Class-Wide Activities

Another way to further encourage student-student interaction is to have them play together. You are already utilizing a Jeopardy-style game in the daily Skills Challenge activity, but the students are currently playing this game with no competitors. Using screen sharing on Adobe Connect, the instructor could instead lead the entire class in a game of Jeopardy at the end of the week using the same game you already have. With the class divided into groups (these could be the same groups the students are placed in for the group discussions), the members of the group would take turns competing with classmates in the other groups with the goal being to earn as many points as possible for their group. The instructor would keep track of each group's score, and the group that wins that week would be awarded something tangible as a prize, such as extra credit, to encourage the students to put forth their best efforts. You could include other class-wide games as well, such as history simulations or online choose your own adventure stories. (For online resources for simulations and choose your own adventure stories, see **Appendix C**).

Collaborative Group Projects

You could encourage further student interaction with the Skills Challenge activity by requiring the students to create collaborative group projects, which is something you specifically mentioned you were interested in doing during the second interview you had with four members of our class. Activities such as writing a newspaper article, poem, story, travel brochure, board game, or other creative writing projects would be a fun way to get the students working together. For example, you could have the students create their own Declaration of Independence, specifying exactly what they

are declaring independence from and why. You could then include a follow-up group activity later on in the course where they write their own constitution specifying exactly what they would have in government if they had the opportunity to choose for themselves. Larger projects like this could be spaced out over several weeks with just part of the project due at the end of each week.

A specific collaborative group project you could add into Lesson 5 as something like a capstone for everything the students have learned in Unit 1 would be to have the students write their own choose your own adventure story focusing specifically on the details they have learned about the lives and experiences of early American colonists. Working in groups using Adobe Connect, the students would be required to respond to a writing prompt with a list of possible events their story can cover. They would choose one of these events to include in their story, and each of them would then individually submit the finished story for credit. When incorporating this activity into your course, you could use these general instructions each time the activity is used:

INSTRUCTIONS:

Your instructor will assign you to groups of three or four with a group leader for this activity. Your goal is to create a choose your own adventure story focusing on the specific events and experiences you have learned about in this unit.

A choose your own adventure story is written in second person point of view (addressing the reader using the pronouns “you” and “your”) and starts with a main story line. You will be required to write at least 300 words for your main story line, establishing the character and the significant events that are currently happening in your story. You then give the reader a choice of action. You will be required to come up with at least two choices for your reader. Each choice then leads to a secondary story line, and each story should be different because of the action the reader chose to do. You will have to write at least 200 words for each of your two secondary story lines, and at the end of each one, give your reader at least two more choices. These choices can lead back to the main story line, to the other secondary story line, or to a new third story line, depending on what the situation is. If you take your reader to a third story line, you may end the story instead of giving the reader further choices. For this assignment, you will be required to write a main story line, at least 300 words, with at least nine connecting story lines, 200 words each.

Make sure your story realistically reflects the lives of the people who lived during your chosen event and that you relate the things that happened before, during, and after your event in correct chronological order. Your group leader will contact you by e-mail with the date and time you will meet and the means by which you will do so.

For Unit 1 specifically, you would include a writing prompt specific to this unit that includes a list of significant events that occurred during the timeline covered in Unit 1:

Group Choose Your Own Adventure Story Writing Project Unit 1

Your group will be writing your choose your own adventure story focusing on one of the following events you have learned about in Unit 1:

- John Smith's expedition
- The colonization of Jamestown
- Settlement of the Northern, Middle, or Southern region of the Thirteen Colonies
- The "Great Awakening"
- Boston Massacre
- Battles of Lexington and Concord
- Creation of the Declaration of Independence
- Battle of Yorktown
- Creation of the Articles of Confederation
- The Constitutional Convention

Either write about a real person or create a fictional character that lived during the time of your chosen event and have him or her experience the things that happened before, during, and/or after the event you choose. Make sure you include specific details in your story about how your character might have felt, thought about, or done in these situations and that you give your readers realistic choices that lead to realistic outcomes.

Here, we have chosen to list two larger-scale events from each lesson for the students to choose from, but you can easily reduce or increase the number of events you decide to list. This activity could be made flexible in three other ways as well:

- Expand it to cover multiple units instead of just one by adding more events for the students to choose from that are covered in those additional units.
- Have the students create an ongoing choose your own adventure story where they just keep adding to the same story every week, covering new material they learned for that week's unit.
- Give the students the option to work in a group to write a choose your own adventure story as a replacement activity for one or two of the Writing Projects they are currently producing every week.

If you choose to use this activity in the fall, it will be up to you to determine the most effective way to use it.

Benefits

By implementing group discussions, you will be creating an opportunity for the students to both teach and have social interactions with one another because "social skills are the keys to a group's productivity."¹⁵ The students will also be encouraged to more actively participate in the course as

¹⁵ Hutchinsen: See pg. 10 footnote 6

studies have shown that online students who are given responsibility “maintained online presence throughout the discussions and participated more frequently,”¹⁶ which will help address the problem of students getting behind in this course. And discussing information with a group will also help the students connect with the content on a more personal level as these discussions will stimulate critical thinking and encourage them to more fully consider their own opinions and perspectives on what they are learning.

In addition, by including more activities where the students are able to interact with one another, whether this is as an entire class or in groups, you will be encouraging the students to really know the material. With the class-wide Jeopardy game, for example, the students will want their group to win each week, and so they will be more willing to study the material so they know it better than the students in the other groups. Or with this choose your own adventure story, students will have to become intimately aware of exactly what happened to the people they are studying, as well as when these events happened, so that they can write a convincing story about it. These activities will help the students better retain the knowledge they are learning because they will be actively involved in the content rather than just passively reading or writing about it.

The biggest benefit to any type of group work, however, is the increase in student accountability. When students work in groups, they are held accountable for the work they need to do because their group will hold them responsible. It also encourages students to be more accountable on their own because what they do or do not do will affect the other members of their group, not just themselves, so they are more likely to participate in group activities.

¹⁶ Vonderwell, Selma, and Sajit Zachariah. “Factors that Influence Participation in Online Learning.” *Journal of Research on Technology in Education* 38.2 (2005): 213–30. Proquest. Web. 8 June 2012.

Conclusion

We have enjoyed the opportunity to go through your American History A course. The areas of our country's history you have chosen to focus on are important to students' education, and you have valuable, solid information for your students. We understand that we have recommended some major changes in the organization, deadlines, accountability, and overall structure of this course, and we also recognize that you may not have the resources to implement all of the changes we have suggested. However, if you do choose to implement our recommendations, you will see significant improvement in your students' engagement and timely participation, and they will also enjoy the course more and retain the knowledge they gain longer. If you have any questions or need additional information about anything we have presented, feel free to contact any one of us. Thank you for the opportunity to work on this project.

APPENDIX A

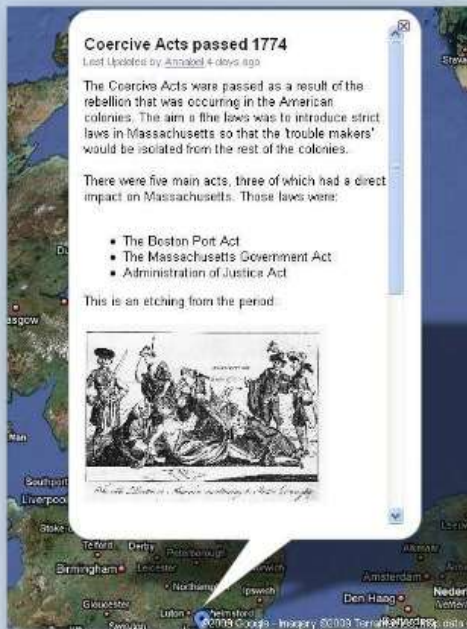
For more details on how to make GoogleMaps a reality in your online class, you can view the whole tutorial at www.slideshare.net/middleclassgirl/using-google-maps-for-your-history-class.

The website contains other specific information on how to create a classroom map, how to share maps, and different ideas for activities. We strongly recommend you take some time to look at this short slideshow because improving this map exercise will help your students get more out of the course.

Use Google Maps for your next Annotated Map Exercise

This video explains how to get started using Google Maps

<http://earth.google.com/outreach/tutorial/mymaps.html>



By placing landmarks, writing content, making links to outside sources, your annotated map becomes very rich in resources.

In Google Maps, an annotation that accompanies a land mark can look like the image to the left here.



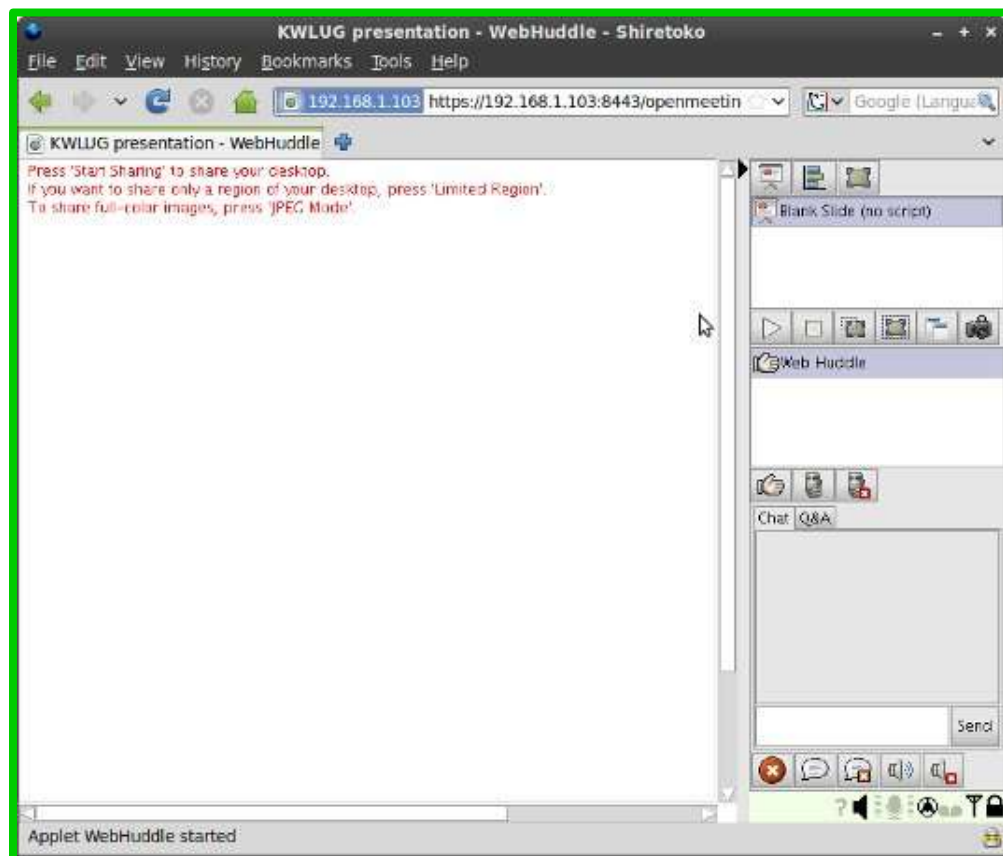
APPENDIX B

Adobe Connect must be purchased in order to enjoy its benefits, which, depending on your company's budget, could prevent you from utilizing it for the implementation of a mandatory weekly meeting and group work. In the interest of serving your purposes, we have included several free options, but it is our suggestion that your company seriously consider purchasing Adobe Connect because it was made for the specific purpose of performing online meetings, and therefore is the most efficient software available on the market. However, we feel confident that the two alternatives below will sufficiently meet your needs:

- WebHuddle
- Google Hangouts

WebHuddle

WebHuddle is our first alternative choice because it was designed to support information sharing. Multiple users have the ability to access the portal at one time, and its platform is free and requires little download time. WebHuddle is generally used by companies to facilitate online board meetings, but lends itself well to an online classroom format because it features a whiteboard that is viewable by all participants, a chat box, and a list of participants. It also allows the sharing of files, PowerPoint presentations, and screens. It closely resembles the Adobe Connect software, but does not feature all that Adobe Connect has to offer and is less intuitive. For more information, you can access WebHuddle at www.webhuddle.com/.



Google Hangouts

Google Hangouts is a free online chat room made available through Google+ at plus.google.com/, Google's version of Facebook. A hangout is an online video conference with up to nine people that allows users to share PowerPoint presentations, create drawings, do screen sharing, or edit Google docs as a group (these are essentially online Microsoft Word documents, but more information can be found at docs.google.com/). However, Google Hangouts was made with families and friends in mind, so its features are significantly less geared toward a classroom setting where it does not allow the user any technical perks such as a whiteboard to post ideas on or group discussion split-off rooms that are offered through Adobe Connect or WebHuddle. We highly suggest that you considered using either Adobe Connect or WebHuddle over Google Hangouts as your standard mode for student-teacher interaction, such as the mandatory weekly meetings we have suggested, because, though Google Hangouts is still a good choice, it is not your best option for these activities. However, because it is more simple and casual, it is an effective option for the use of group work, such as the group discussions and collaborative group projects we have suggested. For more information, you can access Google Hangouts at www.google.com/+/learnmore/hangouts/.



APPENDIX C

There are numerous websites that offer free interactive history activities, but our recommendation is for you to use Educational Freeware's Social Studies Activities section at www.educational-freeware.com/category-Social%20Studies.aspx:

The screenshot shows the Educational Freeware website interface. At the top, the logo features a red apple and the text "Educational Freeware" with the tagline "Reviews of the best free learning games, software and websites". A navigation menu includes "All", "Downloads", "Online", "Reference", "Links", and "About". A search bar is located in the top right corner.

The main content area is titled "Social Studies Activities" and includes a sub-header "Learn history, geography and social studies using high-quality free software downloads and games or free online resources for kids and grown-ups." Below this is a category list: "Categories: • All • 3D • Art • K-12 • Kindergarten • Languages • Mathematics • Music • Programming • Reading • Safety • Science • Social Studies • Toddlers • Typing • Videos • Virtual Worlds".

Three featured articles are visible:

- Oldmapsonline.org - Browse Old Maps By Age And Location**: Describes a website for finding historical maps from any location and period using Google Maps and a timeline. URL: <http://www.oldmapsonline.org>
- Argumentative: Teach Students How to Reason With Mind Mapping Software**: Discusses a free tool for teaching argumentation through mind mapping. URL: <http://argumentative.sourceforge.net/>
- Simutrans: Try Your Hand at Transportation Simulation**: Describes a transport simulation game. URL: <http://www.simutrans.com/>

Additional articles include "Test Geography Knowledge with the Seterra Geography Tutor Software" (URL: <http://www.seterra.net>) and "6 Great Educational Websites With Blank Maps for Teachers".

The left sidebar contains sections for "About This Site", "AdChoices", and "Social Studies Worksheets". The right sidebar features a "LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!" section and a "NEWS & ARTICLES" section with recent posts.

Educational Freeware has links to a number of different websites with free interactive activities you could use. In our opinion, one of the best activities on this site is Mission US at www.mission-us.org/. Mission US is an online simulation about the American Revolution:

MISSION US A REVOLUTIONARY WAY TO LEARN HISTORY

LOGIN REGISTER

HOME ABOUT PLAY EDUCATORS HELP CONTACT

Mission 1: For Crown or Colony? Will you join the struggle? **PLAY**

Mission 2: Flight to Freedom It's 1848. You are Lucy King, a 14-year-old slave in Kentucky. Will you find a path to freedom? **PLAY**

About Mission US
Mission US is a multimedia project that immerses players in U.S. history content through free interactive games.
Mission 1: "For Crown or Colony?" puts players in the shoes of Nat Wheeler, a printer's apprentice in 1770 Boston. They encounter both Patriots and Loyalists, and when rising tensions result in the Boston Massacre, they must... ([read more](#))


MISSION 1 TRAILER

MISSION 2 TRAILER

THINK FAST!
ABOUT THE PAST
Test your knowledge of history as you race against the clock!
PLAY

We would also recommend you look into the blog of Larry Ferlazzo, an award-winning English teacher at Luther Burbank High School in Sacramento, CA, who has a page on his blog devoted to “The Best Places to Read and Write ‘Choose Your Own Adventure’ Stories” at larryferlazzo.edublogs.org/2009/05/02/the-best-places-to-read-write-choose-your-own-adventure-stories/:

LARRY FERLAZZO'S WEBSITES OF THE DAY...



A Seat At The Table is a “choose your own adventure” game related to hunger issues and is accessible to high Intermediate ELL’s. It’s from Oxford.

Take A Walk is a “Choose Your Own Adventure” game from World Vision. Players assume the role of the head of a Rwandan family, and have to make a variety of survival decisions. It would be accessible to Intermediate English Language Learners.

“**Centre Of The Cell**” is a very engaging and accessible interactive simulation about the outbreak of a flu epidemic in London. Users have to make decisions about what actions should be taken to get the outbreak under control. It’s like a “Choose Your Own Adventure” game — with potential “deadly” consequences.

Klondike: Rush For Gold is an online game from the Virtual Museum of Canada. It’s in the “Choose Your Own Adventure” genre, and the player puts him/herself in the position of being part of the Gold Rush frantically heading to the Yukon. It’s a nice game, though it’s not animated and has a fair amount of text. However, it should be accessible to Intermediate English Language Learners.

The **Medieval Game of Life** is from the Museum of London. The player takes on the role of someone who lived in the Middle Ages and has to make various decisions along the way.

The **Sydenham River** is a “choose your own adventure” game about early settlers in Canada. You get to play the part of a couple coming from Europe. The language is fairly simple and is accessible to Intermediate English Language Learners.

Fairy Tales from Penguin Books (part of its “We Tell Stories” series) seems particularly well-suited to English Language Learners. It’s short, the language is accessible, and the reader actually helps “write” the story.

Niki’s Adventures. I can say with authority, is the only online video game starring a hummingbird. It’s from the Virtual Museum of Canada, and appears to be in the “choose your own adventure” genre. You’re given various options for actions Niki the Hummingbird can take, or responses he (maybe Niki is a she?) can make. It’s a fun language development activity for Early Intermediate English Language Learners.

National Geographic has its well-known **Lewis and Clark Adventure**, where the reader is a member of the Expedition.

The National Geographic has an equally well-known simulation where you play the role of an escaped slave on **The Underground Railroad**.

It’s Your Story is a series of stories designed to teach about the law and abused women.


Against All Odds is an online game created by the United National refugee agency. In it, you play the role of a refugee in various scenarios. It’s probably accessible to high Intermediate English Language Learners.

In **The Jamestown Online Adventure**, you play the role of an early settler in... Jamestown.

Langwitches
[Learning the Language](#)
[Michelle Henry](#)
[MiddleWeb Resources Blog](#)
[The SouBlogger](#)
[The Tomorrow Radical](#)
[This Work In Education Transformed](#)
[United States History Classes](#)

FAVORITE LINKS
[“Words To Live By” — Sacramento Bee Story On Our Home Computer Family Library Project](#)
[“Burbank Students Use Blog To Learn English” — Sacramento Bee Story On Our International Sister Classes Project](#)
[ELL/ESL/ELL Blog Carnival](#)
[Innovative EL Blog](#)
[Larry Ferlazzo’s English Website](#)
[Ninth-Grade English Blog](#)
[Student Showcase](#)
[Theory of Knowledge](#)


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My book, “English Language Learners: Teaching Strategies That Work,” was published by LineOne Publishing in April, 2010.

You can read an excerpt [here](#) and [learn how to order it.](#)

MY PARENT ENGAGEMENT BOOK



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I blog with edublogs
 the largest and hottest blog network for education


ARCHIVES

Select Month

CATEGORIES

Select Category

WEBSITE WITH 5,000 LINKS



Out of the long list of links Ferlazzio includes, we feel that one of the best ones is The Jamestown Online Adventure at www.historyglobe.com/jamestown/popupwindow.html, which is an online choose your own adventure story where you play an early settler in Jamestown.



Another link we would recommend is Go West Across America with Lewis and Clark at www.nationalgeographic.com/west/main.html, which is also an online choose your own adventure story created by National Geographic where you play a member of the Lewis and Clark expedition.

The screenshot shows the 'Go West Across America With Lewis & Clark!' page on National Geographic Kids. At the top is a navigation bar with icons and links for 'LITTLE KIDS HOME', 'MAMA MIRABELLE', 'TOOT & PUDDLE', 'NG EXPLORER MAGAZINE', and 'NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC KIDS'. Below this is a purple banner with the title 'Go West Across America With Lewis & Clark!' and five circular icons: Meriwether Lewis, William Clark, a Native American, a bison, and a bear. A scrollable banner reads 'YOU'RE ON THE EXPEDITION OF THE CENTURY!'. The main text describes the 1804 expedition led by Meriwether Lewis, with goals of mapping rivers, making friends with natives, and finding a Northwest Passage. It invites users to 'sign on' and includes a 'Your Name:' input field and an 'Onward' button. To the right are portraits of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, and a map titled 'The Great Unknown' showing a path across North America with a question mark. At the bottom are links for 'Meet the Crew', 'Parents: Get the Book', 'More About Lewis & Clark', 'Meet the Artist', and 'Credits'.

LITTLE KIDS HOME MAMA MIRABELLE TOOT & PUDDLE NG EXPLORER MAGAZINE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC KIDS

Go West Across America With Lewis & Clark!

YOU'RE ON THE EXPEDITION OF THE CENTURY!

It is 1804. U.S. President Thomas Jefferson has asked Meriwether Lewis to lead an expedition across western North America—unknown territory for all but Indians. The goals: map the rivers, make friends with natives, open the West to trade, and look for a Northwest Passage (an easy water route from coast to coast).

Lewis and his colleague William Clark have chosen a special team for the journey, and you're invited! **Up to the challenge? Then sign on:**

Your Name:

MERIWETHER LEWIS WILLIAM CLARK

The Great Unknown

[Meet the Crew](#) | [Parents: Get the Book](#) | [More About Lewis & Clark](#) | [Meet the Artist](#) | [Credits](#)