



2021 SPECIAL ISSUE: DISRUPTING CURRICULUM HEGEMONY THROUGH COUNTERSTORIES

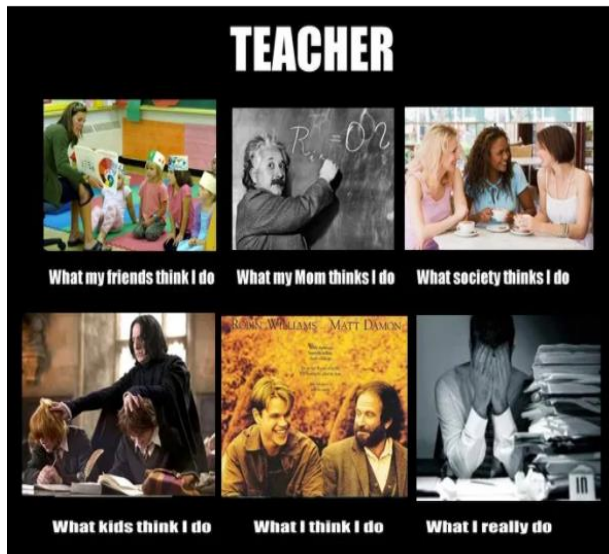
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Evaluating a Pre-Service Teacher Lesson Plan Against a “Teachers Pay Teachers” Lesson Plan Using the *Teaching History* Rubric

Emily E. Dowdy and Sarah M. Straub

To get to the heart of what this paper seeks to elucidate, it is best demonstrated via [meme](#):



This image conveys that our friends think that we spend the day in a cheerful environment of crafts and stories. Our families think that we are the best. Society thinks that we are relaxing. Our students think that we are disciplinarians. We think that we are the best. Moreover, in all actuality, teachers are

overwhelmed. In addition to planning an engaging, scaffolded, standards-aligned lesson, teachers are considering accommodations, modifications, accessibility, supports for emergent bilingual students, the cost of supplies, the grading that goes into each lesson, the feedback that this grading requires, the reporting that must happen to Special Education and the Reading Specialist, etcetera. One way to combat this has been, Teachers Pay Teachers, an online marketplace where educators can share their resources and receive compensation for the time and energy they require.

Theoretically, this is an excellent resource for educators, and it is often assessed with relief and gratitude. However, throughout the exploration required for this particular project, the researcher-practitioner suggests reviewing these sources with a critical lens. Too often, the resources provided by Teachers Pay Teachers do not reflect the multicultural perspectives necessary for accessing history from a critical lens. The resources perpetuate a Eurocentric narrative and simplify how our students

engage with the materials.

Overall, this paper seeks to compare a resource about Stephen F. Austin from Teachers Pay Teachers with one developed by the research practitioner. This comparison will be grounded in an evaluation based on the Teaching History Rubric. All of these elements will be discussed in greater detail below.

Theoretical Framework

My theoretical framework will be based on the NCSS Vision of Powerful Teaching and Learning (NCSS, 2016). NCSS values the idea of a lesson being challenging and engaging for students. That is what I based my lesson on and how I evaluated the Teachers Pay Teachers lesson. I also looked at the idea of silent narratives and how some perspectives are left out when teaching about Stephen F. Austin. I explored hegemonic narratives and discovered how our education system does not stop this from happening. Hegemonic narratives "silence others or deny their existence in order to legitimize their incumbency" (Wyss, 2020). My goal was to break this trend and provide an accurate and open look into who Stephen F. Austin was.

Elements

In this project, I used a Teachers Pay Teachers resource that was very highly rated. Teachers Pay Teachers is a site where teachers can create and sell their lesson plans and activities to other teachers. Many teachers use this site to make their lives easier and not have to create a whole activity from scratch. The rubric I used is a lesson plan rubric from the Teaching History website and compiled by the National History Education Clearinghouse (National History Education Clearinghouse, 2018). This rubric contains multiple sections in which a lesson plan can be rated. This rubric is used to determine a lesson plan's value and determine if it can

thoroughly teach students their most significant potential.

Process

I sought to evaluate the Teachers Pay Teachers lesson and the lesson completed by a pre-service teacher based on a rubric that aligned social studies instruction with critical thinking skills, multicultural awareness, and rigorous instructional practices. That involved several steps, including: (1) searching for highly-rated, frequently downloaded Teachers Pay Teachers, resources aligned with a fourth-grade TEKS, (2) evaluating this selected lesson based on the rubric, (3) developing my own lesson plan and student resources based on the same TEKS, (4) evaluating my own lesson based on the same rubric metrics, and (5) explaining my critical takeaways about planning and curriculum as a pre-service teacher having gone through this exercise.

This paper will begin with my evaluation of the Teachers Pay Teachers resource. Then, it will continue with my evaluation of the lesson plan I created. Lastly, it will address my overall thoughts of both sources and what I learned from this project.

EVALUATING TEACHERS PAY TEACHERS RESOURCE

This Teachers Pay Teachers lesson is a flipbook that consists of different activities about Stephen F. Austin. These activities range from short readings to small writing activities. This lesson is self-directed with minimal need for the teacher's input or instruction. The student goes through this flipbook and answers the questions or reads the short story.

The rubric I used to evaluate this lesson contains three separate parts. Part one contains four different sections. The first section was regarding the content of the lesson. The three questions asked in this

section were (a) was it historically accurate, (b) did it include historical background, and (c) did it require students to read and write? While it has some historically accurate pieces, this lesson does not tell the whole story of Stephen F. Austin. This lesson does not disrupt the hegemonic narrative that has been set in place by our education system. This hegemonic narrative has developed because of people's lack of cultural knowledge and the idea that we have to present historical figures like people who do no wrong. There are issues completely ignored when teaching Stephen F. Austin. One of these issues is slavery. Slavery in Texas was allowed due to Austin finding a loophole within the Mexican Constitution. The Statesman News Network reports that Austin "created a new law that let slavery still happen just under a different name" (Lalani, 2018). While Austin had a significant impact in getting slavery allowed in Texas, it is not mentioned in this lesson. I do think this lesson gives the historical background necessary to complete these activities, but it is very brief and not as detailed as I think a 4th-grade lesson should be. This lesson also lets students read and write throughout the flipbook and gives instructions on each page.

The second section of part one is called analytic thinking. The two issues to be evaluated in this section are: (a) does the lesson require students to analyze or construct interpretation using evidence, and (b) does it require close reading and attention to source information? For both of these issues, I stated that this lesson does not meet these qualifications. The lesson does not allow students to analyze and think deeper. The lesson is very surface-level and does not give students a chance to be able to think deeper. The other issue asks about close reading. This flipbook offers about two total pages of close reading, but it lacks the challenge necessary to be considered as a

fourth-grade resource. We want to challenge our students so that they stay engaged, and this reading lacks that quality.

The third section of part one covers scaffolding. This section asks if (a) the lesson is appropriate for the audience, and (b) does it include materials for scaffolding and support student thinking? I again said that the lesson does not meet either of these two qualifications. This flipbook consists of information and activities that are not challenging and not at the level for 4th grade. The small short stories are better suited for 3rd grade. The other qualification of scaffolding and supporting students is not met in this lesson due to the activity not allowing any teacher involvement. This lesson consists of straight information with no room for differentiation or scaffolding since it is more of a self-taught lesson.

The fourth and last section of part one is over the structure of the lesson. The first qualification asks if the lesson gives assessment criteria and strategies that focus on historical understanding. The lesson lacks the strategies that are important to keep students engaged and focused on the concept. The lesson also lacks historical thinking strategies that allow students to go past surface-level questions and ideas. The other two qualifications I said this lesson does have. These other two qualifications ask if (a) the lesson gives clear learning goals and progresses logically and (b) if it includes clear directions and realistic in a regular classroom setting. Since this lesson is simple, it allows students to see and understand the goals of the lesson. The lesson provides clear instructions on each page as well as overall learning goals throughout each page. Due to the simplicity of each activity in the flipbook, students can complete it very quickly in a regular classroom setting. This flipbook allows for students to mainly work by themselves with minimal instructions needed

from the teacher.

Part two of the rubric asks what characteristics are found in the lesson. The only two characteristics this lesson has are (a) it focused on historical thinking and (b) it is helpful for English language learners. The lesson does not challenge students, but it does lead them in the right direction. The lesson is supportive of English language learners because it involves a significant amount of reading and writing. However, a teacher would need to apply contextual applications for English language learners to determine if the lesson considers the cognitive academic skill level of the learner.

Part three of the rubric asks one to rate the degree of structure. The rating was one through five, with five being the most structured. I gave this lesson a four because the students could complete this independently with a minimal amount of clarifying questions. The teacher may have to give directions on how to construct the flipbook, but the students can work independently with little interaction with the teacher.

Overall, this lesson lacks the challenge necessary to be at grade level, and it does not promote critical thinking. According to the NCSS Vision of Powerful Teaching, a lesson that is challenging should include "a time for discussion, creative thinking, and use of primary and secondary sources" (NCSS, 2016, p. 3). This lesson does none of this, which means students are not getting a complete understanding of Stephen F. Austin. This lesson also does not meet the meaningful value of having students complete a flipbook with no real thought of the concepts put into it. According to NCSS, a meaningful lesson should include "human achievement, but also of human failure" (NCSS, 2016, p. 2). That is a significant part of what is missing in this lesson. Our goal should be to teach historical figures at face value, rather than presenting them as

remarkable people who did no wrong. Further, teachers should target challenging students to do deeper dives in their understanding of the text. In conclusion, this lesson is too simple, and the content was not enough to teach students a complete lesson about Stephen F. Austin.

EVALUATING RESOURCE CREATED BY A PRE-SERVICE TEACHER

The lesson created for a pre-service resource involves students looking at different perspectives and drawing their conclusions about the identity and accomplishments of Stephen F. Austin. The lesson involves students identifying and selecting pieces of evidence from course materials that showcase the accomplishments and mistakes of Stephen F. Austin. This lesson goes beyond the hegemonic narrative that our education system believes students need to learn. It does not promote the "hero-worshipping," which often informs how we teach the myth of superiority in the United States. Overall, this lesson involves discussion, reading, and writing to help students reach their conclusions over Stephen F. Austin.

The rubric used to evaluate this lesson contained three separate parts. Part one contains four different sections. The first section was regarding the content of the lesson. The three questions asked in this section were (a) was historically accurate, (b) it includes historical background, and (c) does it require students to read and write? The lesson includes different perspectives of Stephen F. Austin that paint a picture of his accomplishments and his mistakes. It must be clarified that the sources students are analyzing are predominantly primary sources, and this is one of the strengths of this developed lesson. This lesson does step away from the hegemonic method that is normally taught in education. The lesson

gives the historical background necessary to complete the individual and group assignments. This lesson is created to challenge 4th graders in their thinking as well as skills. This lesson allows students to read and write throughout the lesson with the different sources and note pages.

The second section of part one is called analytic thinking. The two issues evaluated in this section are (a) does the lesson require students to analyze or construct interpretations using evidence, and (b) does it require close reading and attention to source information? For both of these issues, I stated that this lesson does meet these qualifications. The lesson allows students to analyze and think deeper. Students have to critically read the sources and be engaged to comprehend the material thoroughly. The other area asks about close reading. This lesson involves many sources that may be challenging and different than how we speak today. That requires students to analyze each one in order to comprehend it fully. We want to challenge our students so that they stay engaged and learn something new.

The third section of part one covers scaffolding. Scaffolding is when a teacher or student can help another student reach a higher level of thinking. It can be done with individual or group assignments. This section asks if the lesson is appropriate for the audience and includes materials for scaffolding and supporting student thinking. The lesson does meet these two qualifications. The lesson consists of sources that the teacher can use for scaffolding due to the differences in speaking and writing. Differentiation can take place with this lesson by having adaptations of the sources. That may help students who struggle with time allowed for a lesson or reading at a higher level. This lesson also allows students to talk with their peers, which supports each student's thinking.

The fourth and last section of part one is over the structure of the lesson. The first qualification asks if the lesson gives assessment criteria and strategies that focus on historical understanding. I feel like this lesson requires the necessary strategies to keep students engaged and focused on the concept. The lesson also requires the use of strategies that students understand the history at hand. The remaining two qualifications are present in this lesson as well. These other two qualifications ask if (a) does the lesson give clear learning goals and progresses logically, and (b) does it include clear directions and is it realistic in a regular classroom setting. The lesson does give clear instructions for each area, and the students can easily see and know the learning goals. This lesson is also reasonable in a classroom setting with minimal setup.

Part two of this rubric asks about the characteristics found in the lesson. The lesson has mostly all of the characteristics listed on the rubric. Some of the ones I believe are most prevalent in the lesson are multiple sources, different perspectives, and scaffolding for close textual analysis. The lesson is also adaptable for different types of learners, which is super helpful for different level students.

Part three of this rubric asks one to rate the degree of structure. The rating was one through five, with five being the most structured. I gave this lesson a five because each lesson area is highly thought out and broken down by steps. The PowerPoint also allows students to see these steps to make sure they are on the right track. There is no guess as to what the teacher and the students should be doing in this lesson.

Overall, this lesson provides the challenge necessary to be at grade level, makes students think critically, and has to speak to their peers. According to the NCSS Vision of Powerful Teaching, a lesson that is challenging should include "a time for

discussion, creative thinking, and use of primary and secondary sources” (NCSS, 2016). This lesson allows for all of these things to happen, which will help students reach their full potential in understanding who Stephen F. Austin was. According to NCSS, a meaningful lesson should include “human achievement, but also of human failure” (NCSS, 2016). I think this is the overall message I want students to come to after this lesson. A teacher should want to teach historical figures at face value rather than presenting them to be amazing people who did no wrong. We should also want to challenge our students to go and do more than read the text given simply. In conclusion, this lesson provides a challenge and goes beyond the hegemonic narrative to best teach students about Stephen F. Austin.

CONCLUSION

Overall, both the Teachers Pay Teachers resource and the Pre-Service resource teach about Stephen F. Austin, but the level of difficulty and inclusiveness of different perspectives is quite different. I learned from evaluating these lessons that hegemonic narratives are very prevalent in our education system. The TEKS, in particular for Stephen F. Austin, are very broad and allow for different interpretations. That is where the education system fails students because they get the single interpretation that the teacher believes too often. That is how hegemonic narratives continue to be taught through generations since many current teachers may have been taught the same narrative.

Before the evaluation I completed, Teachers Pay Teachers was a resource that I would consistently use to find lesson ideas and activities. I always was told by mentors and even other professors that Teachers Pay Teachers takes much stress off of teachers. What I have learned, however, is that I cannot be so trusting of lessons I find. It is not

enough to scan over the lesson plan; instead, I need to look at each lesson area with a critical eye. I learned that Teachers Pay Teachers is more like a starting point, and in order to help students reach their fullest potential, I will need to modify or add in different activities within the premade lesson.

Teachers need to prepare themselves by doing their own research. We should also teach students to come to their own conclusions rather than their teacher telling them what they should believe. I also realize from this project that we make American “heroes” into god-like people. Loewen (2018) addresses this issue: “Through [the process of hero-making], our educational media turn flesh-and-blood individuals into pious, perfect creatures without conflicts, pain, credibility, or human interest” (p. 11). We make students believe that these people did no wrong. That is deeply problematic. Loewen discusses the harm that we do to students. He writes, “our children end up without realistic role models to inspire them” (Loewen, 2018, p. 28-29).

We have to show students that people are human and did make mistakes. When we make students think people are perfect, it puts pressure on them and makes them think that in order to change the world, they need to be perfect. We have to emphasize that imperfect people change the world. Continue to receive a change in our education system, students will be getting the same hegemonic narrative, not a complete view of a concept, and the idea that American heroes are perfect.

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APPENDIX A:

Screenshots and Hyperlinks to Teachers Pay Teachers Resources

[Flip Book](#)

[Song](#)

Old Three Hundred
The name "Old Three Hundred" refers to the first three hundred families who received land grants in Stephen F. Austin's first colony in Texas. Austin recruited strong pioneers willing to move to Texas. Austin chose settlers based on whether he believed they would be industrious. All but four men could read and write. The settlers who received their land grants under Austin's first contract made up the first organized and approved immigrants to Texas. Each head of household received a minimum of 177 acres or 4,428 acres depending on whether they intended to farm or raise livestock. The lands would be forfeited if they were not cultivated within two years.

Stephen F. Austin
Stephen F. Austin is known as "The Father of Texas." In 1821, Austin's father, Moses Austin, died near San Antonio. Austin inherited a land grant in Mexican Texas from his father. Austin traveled to San Antonio where he hoped of reauthorizing the land grant in, at the time, Mexican owned Texas. Austin wanted to start a colony in Texas, so he went back to Louisiana to advertise the opportunity for settlement and land in Texas. By the end of 1821, with the guidance and help of Austin, the first colonists traveled from Louisiana to Texas. By 1832, there were 11,000 colonists living in Texas.

Stephen F. Austin

Use adjectives to describe Stephen F. Austin. Write the words in the boxes.

Words That Describe Stephen F. Austin

How would you feel if you were moving to a new colony traveling by horse and wagon? Describe your journey below.

STEPHEN F. AUSTIN

Created By: _____

Texas?

4. Who were the "Old Three Hundred"?

5. Where did the settlers travel to Texas from?

Comprehension





Cut And Discard This Portion

Stephen F. Austin
Cut Stephen F. Austin in the boxes.

Facts About Austin

Cut And Discard This Portion

How Would You Feel



That's Alright Texas!

(The Story of Stephen F. Austin)

That's alright Texas

The Mexican Revolution

That's alright for sure

In 1821

People selling land they call them

Got a new government and

Empresarios

Said "Stephen, you're done"

That's not right, no that's not right

Chorus

That's alright, That's alright

That's not right now, Mexico

That's alright now Texas

Stephen was here before you

Stephen is here for you

Stephen took his contract

Rode a horse to Mexico

The government was quite impressed
and said,

Moses he done told you

"Stephen you do not have to go!"

Papa done told you too

"No, No, No!"

Get yourself to Texas boy

"Stay in Texas, Stephen!

I've got some land for you

We love the work you do!"

(Chorus)

The greatest empresario

Stephen got to Texas

Father of Texas too

Got himself a colony

Moses would have been so proud to

People came from all around

Name the capital after you

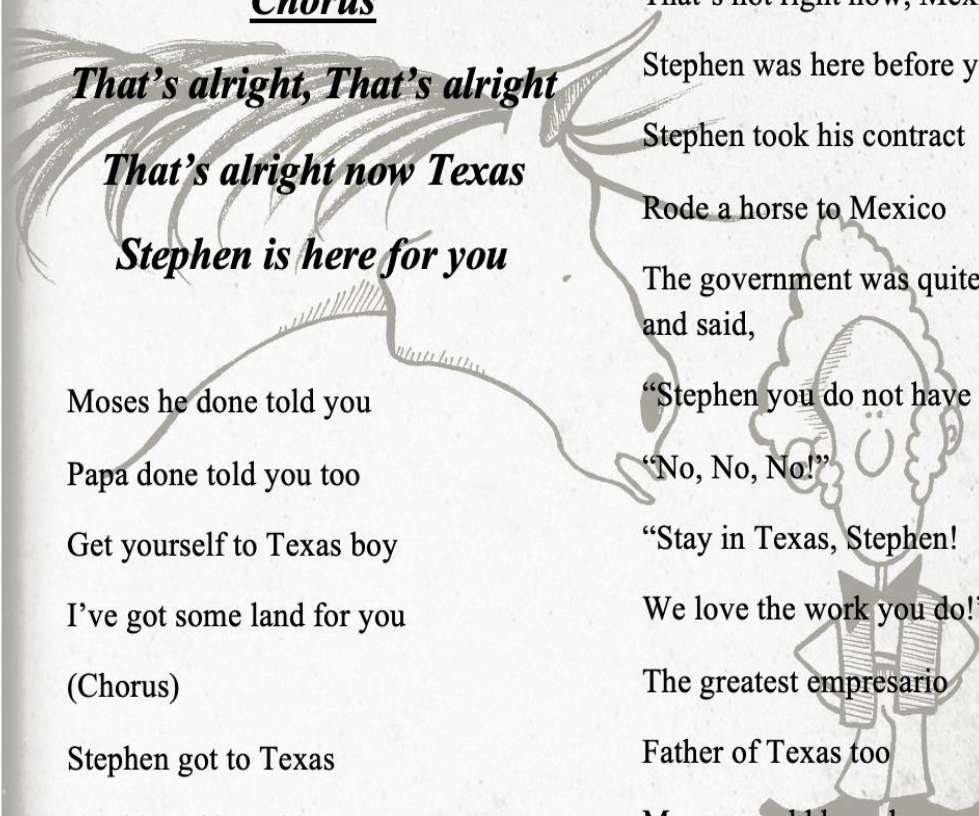
Three hundred families

Yes that's true

(Chorus)

Austin Texas, Stephen

They love the work you do



APPENDIX B:

Teaching History Rubric Evaluation for TpT Resources



LESSON PLAN RUBRIC

PART I: USE THE RUBRIC BELOW TO EVALUATE THIS LESSON PLAN

		Yes	No	Comments
Content	Is historically accurate		X	Lacks the negatives about his life and impact.
	Includes historical background	X		
	Requires students to read and write	X		

Analytic Thinking	Requires students to analyze or construct interpretations using evidence		X	All students are required to do is fill out packet information
	Requires close reading and attention to source information		X	While there is some reading taking place it is very little and does not challenge the students.

Scaffolding	Is appropriate for stated audience		X	This assignment is borderline too easy for students in this grade. This lesson lacks the challenge that is necessary.
	Includes materials and strategies for scaffolding and supporting student thinking		X	There is nothing in this lesson that can be used to scaffold. It is straight information and different activities.

Evaluating a Pre-Service Teacher LP against a TpT Lesson Plan (Dowdy & Straub, 2021)

		Yes	No	Comments
Lesson Structure	Includes assessment criteria and strategies that focus on historical understanding		X	Lacks that strategies which would help students stay engaged.
	Defines clear learning goals and progresses logically	X		
	Includes clear directions and is realistic in normal classroom settings	X		

PART II: FROM THE LIST BELOW, CIRCLE THOSE CHARACTERISTICS THAT ARE FOUND IN THE LESSON.

- Multiple Sources
- Focus on historical thinking
- Opportunity to analyze causation
- Scaffolding for close analysis of text
- Useful for differentiating instruction
- Useful for English language learners
- Further resources for teaching this content
- Inclusion of multiple perspectives

PART III: RATE THE LESSON ON ITS DEGREE OF STRUCTURE.

Please rate this lesson on a scale of 1-5. A score of 1 would be a lesson that is primarily useful as a packet of materials from which to design instruction and a score of 5 would be a directive lesson that tells teachers what to do and when to do it.



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APPENDIX C:

Pre-Service Teacher Lesson Plan and Resources

Teacher: Emily Dowdy
Date: 11-10-2020
Subject / grade level: 4 th grade Social Studies
Materials: Links to sources for students to pull up on their tablet or printed out copies per group, poster paper for each group, primary sources markers, pencils, and PowerPoint . source 1 , source 2 , and source 3
TEKS: 4.b (2) History. The student understands the causes and effects of European exploration and colonization of Texas. The student is expected to: (E) identify the accomplishments and explain the economic motivations and impact of significant empresarios, including Stephen F. Austin and Martín de León, on the settlement of Texas.
Lesson objective(s): SWBAT explain who Stephen F. Austin is by reading through primary sources and creating a poster from what they have learned. SWBAT debate if Stephen F. Austin’s impact was positive or negative by sharing their thoughts after creating their poster. Language objective(s): (c)(4)Cross-curricular second language acquisition/reading (F) use visual and contextual support and support from peers and teachers to read grade-appropriate content area text, enhance and confirm understanding, and develop vocabulary, grasp of language structures, and background knowledge needed to comprehend increasingly challenging language; (c)(4)Cross-curricular second language acquisition/reading (G) demonstrate comprehension of increasingly complex English by participating in shared reading, retelling or summarizing material, responding to questions, and taking notes commensurate with content area and grade level needs;

ANTICIPATORY SET/HOOK

- Describe how the teacher will capture students' interest.
- Connect with prior learning and to future learning
- What kind of questions should the students ask themselves after the engagement?

The teacher will first display a picture of Stephen F. Austin. The teacher will then tell students on the board is a picture of Stephen F. Austin. The teacher will ask students to quickly fill out the K and W of their KWL chart. The teacher will quickly go over the KWL chart. (The K area is where they write about what they know and the W is what they want to learn.) After students have time to complete this, they will be asked to share what they wrote with their classmates. The teacher can also be writing these down on a chart on the whiteboard in order to create a class KWL chart that everyone can refer to.

INTRODUCTION TO NEW MATERIAL (INM)

- Provide direct instruction of content; What vocabulary will be introduced
 - o Include 3-5 key points that you will emphasize
- Model new skills
- Check for understanding
- List higher order thinking questions, which teachers will use to solicit *student* explanations and help them to justify their explanations.

Key Points: What an empresario is, Austin's motivations included, what Austin's impact was

Essential Question: What characteristics does a good leader have? Is Stephen F. Austin a good leader?

Teacher will provide a brief overview of Austin's life.

1. This teacher will define vocabulary words such as empresario to get students prepared for the group practice. This is where the teacher will explain the group practice.
2. The teacher will state how they will be working in their table groups. The teacher will explain that each table will receive three different primary sources explaining Austin and his impact.
3. The teacher will instruct the students to read these documents and come up with a summary of his motivations and his impact.
4. The teacher will also pass out the note sheet created for this group work. This note sheet lets students write down their ideas from each source as well as answer the key points that are used in this lesson.
5. The teacher will state that they want the students to come up with a "whole look" and define this as including the positives and negatives. The students will then create their poster including Austin's motivations and his impacts.
6. The teacher will also state how they are going to be sharing their posters and thoughts after everyone finishes.
7. The teacher will end this introduction with stating by the end of class you will each be able to describe what an empresario is, what was Austin's motivations, and what was Austin's impact.

Questions:

1. Who was Stephen F. Austin?

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. What did you observe from reading the sources? 3. What examples can you find that show Stephen F. Austin’s impact? 4. Discuss the pros and cons of Stephen F. Austin 5. What characteristics make a good leader? 6. Whether Stephen F. Austin a good leader? Yes, no or both
<p>Guided PRACTICE (GP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Facilitate student work · Align the task to the objectives · Major opportunity for collaboration
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students will start by reading the three sources picked out by the teacher. These sources all portray Austin differently and give a more detailed look into what he was like overall. 2. The students will then discuss and come up with their ideas and whole view on Austin for each section. The sections are motivations and impact. The teacher during this time will be walking around and listening to the discussion taking place. The teacher can also lead students in the right direction if it looks like there is confusion. 3. After the students have had enough time to work on their posters, the teacher will call everyone back to have a discussion as a group. The teacher will call on each group to share what they took as Austin’s motivations and impact. This will lead to a broader discussion of who Stephen F. Austin was.
<p>INDEPENDENT PRACTICE (IP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · How will students demonstrate that they have achieved the lesson objective? · This should be aligned to skills/tasks modelled throughout the lesson so that it can be used as an accurate assessment of student learning
<p>Students will independently work on answering the question “who is Stephen F. Austin?” again.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The students will be instructed to write at least a small paragraph (4-5 sentences) for each section that we covered in the poster. 2. The student can also include their thoughts of Austin from what they have learned. 3. The student also needs to include the vocabulary words of empresario and Stephen F. Austin.
<p>CLOSURE (EXIT TICKET)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Have students briefly summarize their learning (this can be a short exit ticket or a CFU that allows for a quick analysis of the teacher for how successful the lesson has been. · Could be having students share answers to an essential question based on the content learned during class that day
<p>Students will complete their KWL chart by writing a brief paragraph of what they learned about Stephen F. Austin in the L area. The students can reflect to see if any of the questions form the W area were answered as well. Students can then share these answers with their peers and finish the class KWL that the teacher wrote during the hook.</p>