Political Ideology: Prelude to the Cold War

Concept Formation Lesson

Overview

The concept of political ideology is relatively foreign to the majority of 7th graders. This lesson provides a helpful bridge between their current level of understanding and the conceptual foundations of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. Although the concept of ideology has many different critical attributes, this lesson identifies those most relevant to achieving the SOL and NCSS objectives for the unit.

Instruction Model

The concept formation model affords students the opportunity to induce the critical attributes (these can cut across time, place and culture), of a new, complex, or essential concept through an examination of several examples. This leads into an examination of the differences and similarities between each example of the concept. By analyzing the similarities, students are able to identify the characteristics that comprise critical attributes and can then define the concept. This new understanding is extended through the group of students labeling the concept, and culminates in students applying their new understanding of the concept’s critical attributes through classifying examples, fixing non-examples, or coming up with their own example of the concept.

Background Information

The United States and Soviet Union emerged from WWII as world powers. Major differences in goals and ideology (the U.S. was democratic and capitalist and the USSR totalitarian and communist) resulted in rivalry and tension over national security and foreign policy. This dynamic comprised the foundation of the Cold War, which proved to be the central organizing principle in foreign affairs for over forty years (NATO and the Warsaw Pact illustrate these divisions). By analyzing the concept of ideology and its attributes relative to the Cold War, students are able to better understand the driving forces behind this chapter of history.

Rationale

The concept formation lesson provides a helpful lens for analyzing the complex and often convoluted concept of political ideology. This particular lesson framework and historical context allow students to work to understand a concept by having them derive critical attributes from a set of examples of political ideologies. Thus, this framework helps students independently establish a relationship between ideology and the inevitable tension it caused during the Cold War. This instructional foundation will prove critical as the Cold War unit progresses. Additionally, students are able to establish a relationship between ideology and governmental systems, which will prove to be a helpful transition concept between US History II and Civics.
Classroom Setting: 7th Grade US History II

Length: 80 minute block

Objectives

By exploring the concept of ideology through this instructional framework, students will be able to:

- Define political ideology, and list three critical attributes of the concept.
- Recognize and provide 2 examples of “Differences in goals and ideologies between the United States and the Soviet Union” (The United States was democratic and capitalist; the Soviet Union was dictatorial and communist.) USII.8c
- “explain conditions, actions, and motivations that contribute to conflict and cooperation within and among nations” (NCSS Strand VI)

By following the concept formation process in this instructional setting and completing each aspect of the corresponding worksheets, students will:

- a. “ give and explain (1) example of ways that economic systems structure choices about how goods and services are to be produced and distributed”
- give one example that explains “…how values and beliefs influence different economic decisions”

(NCSS Strand VII)

Assessment

The assessment of different skills practiced in this lesson will take place through a series of “checks” throughout each step.

Formative:

- Studying Examples and Gathering Data:
  Students will complete a data gathering chart during the initial phase of the lesson. This chart will be collected in order to determine understanding and participation.
- Reporting Information/Noting Similarities and Differences/Synthesizing
  Students will complete a worksheet that where they will produce two similarities and two differences. After this step, students will combine the similarities into a sentence or statement. These responses will demonstrate their grasp of the concept.

Summative:

- Labeling and Classifying
Students will complete a classifying task wherein they will distinguish between examples and non-examples of the concept. The non-examples will form the basis of the summative assessment of the lesson, as students will correct them in order to make them true examples of the concept of political ideology.

**Content and Instructional Strategies**

**The Concept Definition**

- Political Ideology
  - A belief system that shapes views about how economics, politics, or society should work
  - Lens for viewing the world with specific goals for outcomes.
  - Based on the original ideas/theories of an individual or group

**Hook**

To fulfill their classroom “History Hook” requirement, students will answer the following question (3-4 minutes):

*List one thing that you know about the Cold War.*

*Why is it labeled as “cold”?

Students will watch the BrainPOP video (5 minutes) on the Cold War that explains “politics behind this big-time struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union.”


**Data-Retrieval Chart and Example Analysis**

- Students will be given directions related to the example chart and how they are to complete it (2-5 minutes)
- We will do a think pair share activity as a class in order to complete the worksheet. Students will be paired with their seatmate. Students will take 5-8 minutes to read and answer silently to themselves before sharing with their partner for 5 minutes.

**Defining and Labeling the Concept**

- Students will be given directions related to defining and labeling tasks (2-5 minutes)
- Think, Pair, Share: Students will take 3-5 minutes and individually come up with 3 differences between the examples. Once each student’s list is complete, they will take 2-4 minutes and share with a partner. Each pair will have the opportunity to write their best difference on the board.
• Think, Pair, Share: Students will take 3-5 minutes and individually come up with 3 similarities between the examples. Once each student’s list is complete, they will take 2-4 minutes and share with a partner. Each pair will have the opportunity to write their best similarity on the board.

• Think, Pair, Share: Students will identify 3 critical attributes of the concept and place them in definitional form (5 minutes). Once this is complete, they will take 2-4 minutes to share with a partner. We will conclude with pairs sharing their responses from their seats, with the teacher writing definitions on the board. Finally, as a class we will label the concept (5-7 minutes).

Classifying

In this step, students will apply the critical attributes of the newly formed concept through practice classifying the following types of examples. This will comprise a page in the interactive notebook and students will be responsible for recording the information from this piece of the lesson. We will approach these examples using the chunking and chewing reading process practiced in class, with the teacher leading the activity and projecting her copy of the notes on the board. Students will follow my annotations.

Type 1: Student decide whether a given item is an example or not (we will discuss this first item on the list as a class, with students recording their answer and rationale in their notebooks).

• Fascism is a political theory in which total power is given to a dictator and individual freedoms are denied. Originally founded by Italian National syndicalists in WWI, fascists believe that the best form of government is one where total power is given to one powerful leader at the expense of individual freedoms. Many fascist dictators led the countries that came to be known as the Axis powers in WWII.

Type 2: Mixed List of Examples / Non-examples (students will take 5 minutes to read silently and decide for themselves how they would classify these examples. They will then take 2 minutes to share their response with a partner. We will regroup and highlight as a class the characteristics of each that make them examples (or not) 10 minutes).

• “The optimism of the 1920s hid problems in the American economic system and attitudes about the role of government in controlling the economy. Many lost everything when the stock market crashed, and the Great Depression had a widespread and severe impact on American life.” (adapted from Virginia’s SOL USII.6d) *(This is not an example, as the “optimism” of the 1920’s is not the same as a concept “based on the original ideas/theories of an individual or group.” A coherent “ideology” for addressing the problems in the American economic later wasn’t seen until the New Deal.)*

• Stalinism is an example of Soviet leader Joseph Stalin’s philosophy of ruling the Soviet Union. Stalin was a dictator, meaning that he answered only to himself, not to the people
that he ruled. Stalin controlled every aspect of citizen’s lives, including their religious, cultural, political, and personal activities. His goals for how the government should work were complete control over the economy and government.

Type 3: Create / Find an example- I have opted not to include this type in the lesson, as I do not think that it is feasible given the student’s grade level and content background. If it were worked into the lesson, it could be simplified as part of the student’s “chew” breaks, which are occurring here through dialogue with a partner.

Type 4: Correct a non-example (5 minutes) As a class, we will discuss how we could make the non-example in the above list an example of ideology.

Resources:
-Copies of data retrieval chart, information gathering worksheet, and classifying practice sheet for each student (150 each)
-Projector
-White board with dry erase markers

Differentiation:
Differentiating within this lesson to challenge and support the learners in the class is best accomplished in the classifying activity, where there is more flexibility in terms of stretching the application of the concept. Students who finish early may correct both nonexamples or produce their own example of the concept.

Adaptations: According to the 504s and IEPs in the class, some of the students may need to have pieces of this relatively reading-intensive lesson read aloud to them. It should be no problem adapting for this, as these needs are accounted for on a daily basis in class. The partnered aspect of the lesson may also help with these needs. Due to the relative complexity of the lesson, I will likely need to provide high levels of structure through explicit directions and breaks (if needed) between activities.

Reflection: This lesson relies a great deal upon individual seatwork and partnered activities, so I may need to be very firm in my requirement that something be written down for each piece of the lesson. I will also need to closely monitor each phase of the activity in order to make sure that everyone is on task. On a general level, there may be some difficulty due to the fact ideology is a more dynamic concept and has many different meanings depending upon context. I still feel that it is necessary to define the concept within the context of US History II, as the students will likely be lost in the rest of the Cold War unit without a firm grasp of the concept. I had a fairly difficult time reconciling dictates of lesson type and SOL framework for class, so it is likely that I may need to revise after receiving feedback.
Reflection after Teaching

While I had originally intended to include this lesson in my Cold War unit, time constraints and breadth of material meant that I could not teach it during this semester. While the lesson promotes strong critical thinking skills, I am not sure that the format would have been conducive to 7th grade mastery of these critical Cold War concepts. If I were to adjust my Vietnam War lesson, I may turn the data collection piece of the listening activity into a concept formation activity- i.e. the students would be diagramming the concept of a protest song.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXAMPLES</th>
<th>Does the example explain how economics, government, or society should work? (yes or no)</th>
<th>Is it based on the ideas of an individual or a group? If so, what is the underlying philosophy? (yes or no)</th>
<th>What is the specific goal of the view in this example? List it here.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communism is an economic and political system based on the theories of Karl Marx in the 19th century. Its supporters believe that the best system is one in which the government has full control of the economy in order to guarantee fairness in society.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capitalism is an economic system based on the theories of Adam Smith in the 18th century. Its supporters believe that private citizens should have the freedom to control the industries that make up the economy, without a lot of government interference.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Democracy is a political system first practiced by Greek city states in 508 BC. This form of government gives citizens the right to rule directly or through elected representatives. Supporters of democracy value the freedom and equality enjoyed by citizens.</td>
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Information Gathering Worksheet

Differences
Take 5 minutes and list 3 differences that you see between the examples. After you have completed the section, brainstorm with your partner and list any additional differences that you come up with.

1.

2.

3.

Similarities
Take 5 minutes and list 3 similarities that you see between the examples. After you have completed the section, brainstorm with your partner and list any additional similarities that you come up with.

1.

2.

3.

Concept Characteristics
Based on your answers to the example questions, take 5 minutes and list three characteristics of the concept. Brainstorm with a partner and list any additional items.

1.

2.

3.
Fascism is a political theory in which total power is given to a dictator and individual freedoms are denied. Originally founded by Italian National syndicalists in WWI, fascists believe that the best form of government is one where total power is given to one powerful leader at the expense of individual freedoms. Many fascist dictators led the countries that came to be known as the Axis powers in WWII.

The optimism of the 1920s hid problems in the American economic system and attitudes about the role of government in controlling the economy. Many lost everything when the stock market crashed, and the Great Depression had a widespread and severe impact on American life.

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Bibliography


