LESSON: H-UVII-L2

Crossing Boundaries: Truth and Reconciliation in a Difficult Time

Unit VII: Building Better Futures: Narrative, Recovery, and Responsibility
Grade Levels: 9–12
Time: 240 minutes (3–4 block schedule 80-minute periods or 5–6 standard instructional 40-minute periods)

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Objectives

- Identify and explain various models employed to rebuild relationships in societies facing civil conflict.
- Establish connections between the participants and victims of the 9/11 terrorist acts and truth and reconciliation models.
- Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of truth and reconciliation models in promoting or fostering intercultural understanding and common goals.
- Prepare and defend a plan to implement one or more truth and reconciliation model(s) to reduce the potential for future terrorist violence.

Key Terms

- civil conflict
- terrorism
- truth and reconciliation processes
- rule of law
- terrorist

Lesson Materials

1. Models drawn from a range of societies that have experienced civil conflict as displayed in the Truth and Reconciliation Archive at the U. S. Institute of Peace, available at www.USIP.org/library/truth.html, "Truth Commissions Digital Collection."
2. Eyewitness perspectives of survivors, groups supporting violent resolutions to conflicts, and non-violent advocates of truth and reconciliation processes.
   - Committee on Conscience, Podcasts, "Voices on Genocide Prevention," specifically those listed below (found at http://www.prx.org/series/13041-voices-on-genocide-prevention)
     a. "Narrating Atrocities," Nov. 29, 2007 (found at http://www.prx.org/pieces/22268-narrating-atrocities-voices-on-genocide-prevention)
     b. "Memory and Ethics," Nov. 22, 2007 (found at http://blogs.ushmm.org/COC2/511/)
     c. "Women Changing Rwanda's Future," May 1, 2008 (found at http://blogs.ushmm.org/COC2/566/)
     d. "My Neighbor, My Killer," May 14, 2009 (found at http://blogs.ushmm.org/COC2/642)
     e. "The Arrest of Karadzic," Aug. 7, 2008 (found at http://blogs.ushmm.org/COC2/582/)
     f. "Courage to Forgive and to Bring Hope," Nov. 27, 2008 (found at http://blogs.ushmm.org/COC2/596/)
   - An archive of news reports and updates on prosecution and punishment of perpetrators of genocide is available at the Prevent Genocide International website (found at www.preventgenocide.org, updated

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periodically), specifically under the "Punishment" section.

    • U. S. Holocaust Memorial Museum (found at http://www.ushmm.org), Committee on Conscience, "World is Witness" section which contains updates (photos, videos and text) on current genocides, massive violations of human rights, and potential genocidal situations (found at http://blogs.ushmm.org/worldiswitness).

3. Audio-visual and related materials on alternative models of truth and reconciliation.

    • The film *Facing The Truth* by Bill Moyers, about the process of truth and reconciliation in South Africa after apartheid (found at http://www.pbs.org/pov/tvraceinitiative/facingthetruth/). Facing History and Ourselves has created a study guide for this film which is available through their website as a free download at http://www.facinghistory.org/resources/publications/facing-truth.

    • The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's Special Report on Truth and reconciliation and state-run orphanages (Stolen Children) has a number of articles covering the topic (found at http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/truth-reconciliation/).

    • The FAQ page about the truth and reconciliation commission describes their work and goals (found at http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/story/2008/05/16/f-faqs-truth-reconciliation.html).

4. Chapter 6, "International Action: Strengthening Norms and Institutions" in *Preventing Genocide: A Blueprint for U. S. Policymakers* by Madeline K. Albright and William S. Cohen (Washington, D.C., U. S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2008). The report is also available online at http://www.ushmm.org/genocide/taskforce.

5. Student Assignment: Specification Form: Truth and Reconciliation Models (one copy for each student; see below)

6. Student Assignment: Analysis Sheet: Truth and Reconciliation Models (several copies for each student depending on the number of groups; see below)

7. Prepare an evaluation form that outlines the criteria by which each group's presentation will be evaluated by the class and by the teacher.

Lesson Plan

Day #1

- Introduce the essential question: What is the potential for promoting improved understanding between groups affected by terrorist violence and civil conflict?

- Explore the students' views on the question and define these terms: *terrorist, terrorism, civil conflict, rule of law, truth and reconciliation processes*. Identify issues that the students raise as needing investigation to pursue the essential question, and list them on the board.

- Outline the process by which students will investigate the question and develop a decision about how best to promote improved understanding.

    - Review the essential question and define key terms.

    - Identify key issues and subsidiary questions for study.

    - Locate resources that will contribute to informing the investigation.

- Form groups for student investigation (3–5 students per group; assign moderator, recorder, and researcher roles in each group).

- Distribute the Student Assignment: Specification Form: Truth and Reconciliation Models and have students review the research requirements. Also hand out the Student Assignment: Analysis Sheet: Truth and Reconciliation Models. Then have students begin their research.

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Day #2

- Engage students in preparing arguments for various models of truth and reconciliation that they have studied regarding terrorist violence and civil conflict. See the archive at the United States Institute of Peace concerning truth and reconciliation commissions for examples of country projects on this topic.
- Introduce a model that is employed for truth and reconciliation commissions (South Africa is a good example of one model). Outline the key elements in the model and explore with students the pros and cons of this model. Once the pro and con list has been developed, have students begin preparing their presentations based on their research per the specification and analysis sheets for the project. Be certain to address the issue of cultural reconciliation, not just those concerns related to political conflict.
- If needed, use the film, *Facing The Truth,* from PBS dealing with South Africa, and the related website curriculum materials to amplify understanding of this model.

Day #3

- Using the evaluation form you prepared, present and clarify the criteria by which each group's presentation will be evaluated by the class and by the teacher.
- Have groups meet to clarify their key points, organize their strategy for the presentation, and practice it.

Day #4

- Have each group present their truth and reconciliation model, responding to the essential question for the lesson, but also meeting the requirements for the oral presentation as outlined on the specifications sheet. Each presentation should take no more than 10 minutes and can include audiovisual components.
- Distribute copies of the Student Assignment: Analysis Sheet: Truth and Reconciliation Models for students to complete as they listen to presentations. As the presenters speak about their model, the audience will develop questions to help them identify and discuss the pros and cons of each model. The audience and the teacher can direct questions to the presenters by to clarify key points and to discuss pros and cons.
- Once all presentations are completed, the students will complete their analysis sheets for the presentations and prepare an argument regarding which model or combination of models would serve best to answer the central question.
- Lead a debriefing discussion (or on Day #5 if needed) that examines similarities and differences among the models.

Evidence of Understanding

- Have students complete the research and a presentation per the requirements on the specification sheet and the criteria for evaluation.
- Have students complete analysis sheets about group presentations.
- Have the students write a 3–4 page paper that answers the essential question based on analysis of all models presented, with specific reference to the aftermath of 9/11 and how such a process could help promote an end to terrorist violence and improved intercultural understanding.

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Taking Action and Giving Service

Have students explore a number of opportunities and programs outside of the classroom. Ask them to focus on activities that facilitate peace-building and reconciliation. Have them make a commitment to take an active role in one of the organizations (and bring the message of peace building to their communities) for one school year.

The following represents a selection of organizations:

- International Coalition of Sites of Conscience: http://www.sitesofconscience.org
- Acholi Youth Peace and Reconciliation Initiative (AYPARI) is a youth peace advocacy network within the Acholi sub-region of Gulu district: http://www.insightonconflict.org/conflicts/uganda/peacebuilding-organisations/aypari/
- Seeds of Peace gives rise to new generations of leaders uniquely inspired and equipped to build lasting peace: http://www.seedsofpeace.org
- Glencree is dedicated to providing leadership and support in practical peace-building, and works to transform violent conflict within and between divided communities in Ireland, North and South, Britain, and elsewhere in the world: http://www.glencree.ie
- The Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change ("The King Center") has been a global destination, resource center, and community institution for over a quarter century: http://www.thekingcenter.org
- Listing of a number of organizations from St Benedict's and St John's University: http://www.csbsju.edu/Peace-Studies/Organizations-and-Research-Resources.htm

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Student Assignment

Unit VII: Building Better Futures: Narrative, Recovery, and Responsibility
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Name _____ Date _____

Period/Class _____

Specification Form: Truth and Reconciliation Models

DIRECTIONS: This form outlines the specifications for your research and presentation on a model dealing with truth and reconciliation in societies seeking to recover from years of civil conflict and human rights violations. This same set of specifications will be employed to structure the evaluation of your final product by both your peers and your instructor.

Essential Question

What is the potential for promoting improved understanding between groups affected by terrorist violence and civil conflict?

Specifications

The evaluation form will be designed by your instructor to assess student progress in both of the following areas.

Process

- Has the group established specific roles and responsibilities for each group member?
- Has equity been reinforced in the completion of group responsibilities and development of the final product?
- Have checkpoints been established so that the group can examine its progress and make adjustments where needed?
- Has the group developed a sense of shared ownership for the final product and how it will be presented to the class?
- Has the group practiced their oral presentation, and developed a PowerPoint or Keynote presentation with no more than six slides, with content that is bulleted and which is only a reference point for the presentation (not to be read verbatim by presenters)?

Content

- Has the group identified an actual model dealing with issues of truth and reconciliation that is in use in a post-genocidal society?
- Has the group located a minimum of six sources (at least three print sources and at least three electronic sources), which inform them about the model being investigated?
- Do these sources include content providing eyewitness accounts and/or testimony about the human rights violations and genocidal acts that took place, as well as efforts to seek truth and reconciliation in the society?
- Do the sources provide evidence from both victims and perpetrators?
- What criteria has the group developed to determine if the model being investigated is working to

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promote improved understanding among groups in society?

- What are the concluding judgments of the group regarding the effectiveness of the model being investigated, based on the criteria used to assess the model?
- Can this model be transferred to other world societies facing similar efforts to rebuild after years of civil conflict and/or terrorist violence? If so, what suggests this is possible? If not, what obstacles do you believe would prevent its successful use?

Student Assignment

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Name _____ *Date* _____

Period/Class _____

Analysis Sheet: Truth and Reconciliation Models

Essential Question

What is the potential for promoting improved understanding between groups affected by terrorist violence and civil conflict?

Model Chosen

Where is the model employed (post-conflict society)?

Stated Goal(s) of the Model:

1.

2.

3.

How is the model implemented?

Pros and cons of the model (based on presentation and study of issues; refer back to the essential question for guidance)

Pros:

1.

2.

3.

Cons:

1.

2.

3.