

On All Fronts

World War II and the NFB

Lesson plan for *Lost Over Burma: Search for Closure*

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Overall Objective

A homemade PowerPoint game will involve students creatively in studying history. A game based on the World War II event treated in *Lost over Burma* is used as an example. Students will also learn how to produce their own questions to target different levels of understanding.

Grade Level

Advanced 9–12 and beyond. This unit can be adapted to younger grades and different courses of study in various Canadian provinces and territories.

Content Areas

Social Studies

Content items used (Film and excerpts used)

Lost Over Burma: Search for Closure, 1997 (43 min 35 s)

Excerpt 1 (8 s – 1 min 42 s)

Excerpt 2 (24 min 10 s – 29 min 5 s)

Excerpt 3 (33 min 53 s – 37 min 26 s)

NB: Content items can be viewed online free of charge at <www.nfb.ca/ww2>.

Materials Required

Access to a computer lab

Internet connection

Microsoft PowerPoint (or other presentation software)

Windows Media Player

Summary

This lesson plan is intended to help students design their own homemade PowerPoint games. Game design is strongly dependent on narrative. Students must research a historical event to find relationships between facts. The historical event becomes an intricate story that must be re-presented in a way that conforms to the interactive nature of a game. PowerPoint provides an excellent vehicle for this kind of game design.

Introduction Activity (1 class session)

NOTE: Teachers should look at the two sample games for *Lost over Burma* found in the Appendix. The film excerpts can be shown and one of the games played as a preparation for this game-making lesson. You may want to introduce another online NFB film about World War II such as *Sleeping Tigers: the Asahi Baseball Story* so students can make new educational games with PowerPoint.

Step 1: Introduce the concept of good games.

- Have students list their favourite games and talk about what makes them good.
- This will generate a list of five or more characteristics of a “good game,” e.g., element of strategy, appropriate amount of challenge, element of luck, various levels of play, opportunity for different age groups to play together, etc.

Step 2: Play a sample homemade PowerPoint game.

- Visit the homemade PowerPoint game Web site (<http://it.coe.uga.edu/wwild/pptgames/index.html>) and select one or more sample game(s) to play or use one of the samples prepared for this lesson.
- As students play, discuss their original list of necessary game components – refining these characteristics based on their experience with homemade PowerPoint games.

Step 3 (Optional): Reinforce concepts.

- Assign one or more readings about homemade PowerPoint games found on the homemade PowerPoint games Web site.

Step 4: Begin planning.

- Outside of class, students should decide upon an idea for their game and begin to develop a story structure.

ACTIVITY 1: Game Design (1 class session)

Step 1: Comparing ideas

- Begin class by having students share their story and game ideas.
- As a class, students discuss how the various game ideas introduce and teach the content, rather than simply quiz or review it.

Step 2: Creating questions

- Download and share the Bloom’s taxonomy handouts found under the Teacher Resources section of the homemade PowerPoint games site.
- Students work with partners to modify their stories to ensure that higher levels of some taxonomy are addressed.

Step 3: Begin the game.

- Download the game template provided on the homemade PowerPoint Game site.
- Students begin entering their revised stories into the game template.

Step 4: Question creation

- Outside of class, students should write five to ten sample game questions.

ACTIVITY 2: Question Creation (1 class session)

Step 1: Creating action buttons

- Students are shown how to create action buttons in PowerPoint to create the slides that will house the game questions.
- In addition, the homemade PowerPoint games site has step-by-step handouts and Windows Media Help files that teach this technical skill under Teacher Resources.

Step 2: Higher-order questions

- Remind students of Bloom's taxonomy and how it can be used to create different, and more challenging, levels of questions.
- Students work in pairs to improve their three sample questions so that the games will promote higher-order thinking skills for their targeted audience rather than simple recall of facts.

Step 3: Game development

- After sharing improved questions with fellow students and viewing model questions from sample games downloaded from the homemade PowerPoint game site, students will use the remainder of this session to work on game design and development (including adding their improved questions to their game template).

ACTIVITY 3: Pilot testing the game (1 class session)

Step 1: Being ready to test

- At the beginning of this session, students should have the directions, story and a sample of questions entered into their game template (essentially about 50% to 70% of their game completed).

Step 2: Pilot testing

- Students work in pairs to conduct formative peer reviews of their games.
- Feedback is provided on strengths and weaknesses of the games and suggestions for improvement (obviously the more of the game the students have completed, the more feedback they will receive).

Step 3: Game revisions

- Students use the remainder of this session to complete game design and development work.

Closure Activity (1 class session)

Step 1: Time to play

- Students share their games with the class – this can be done with individual presentations or using a “poster session” styled format.

Step 2: Time to share the games

- As a class, students may want to select exemplary games to be added to the homemade PowerPoint game database.

Check for Understanding

Throughout the process, students should be working in teams that will help facilitate student understanding. Teachers should also review the sample questions against the Bloom’s taxonomy handout and make suggestions as appropriate.

References and Resources

Homemade PowerPoint Games Web site:

<http://it.coe.uga.edu/wwild/pptgames/index.html>

Evaluation rubric

	Excellent	Average	Unsatisfactory	Total points
Student Appeal	Students in the targeted grade levels will be interested in all aspects of this game. (13-15)	Students in the targeted grade levels will be interested in some aspects of this game. (8-12)	Students in the targeted grade levels will be interested in few or no aspects of this game. (0-7)	___/15
Enhances Education	The game greatly enhances the students' understanding of the content. (25-30)	The game has the potential to enhance some of the content. (19-24)	The game is not designed to enhance any of the content. (0-18)	___/30
Educational Value	The game is valuable enough to devote classroom time to playing it. (25-30)	The game has moderate educational value in the classroom. (19-24)	The game has little or no educational value in the classroom. (0-18)	___/30
User friendliness	All of the materials, the directions, the story and the objectives are accessible via the PowerPoint presentation. Everything is clear and easy to understand. (9-10)	Some of the materials, the directions, the story and the objectives are accessible via the PowerPoint presentation. Some things are not clear. (6-8)	Few of the materials, the directions, the story and the objectives are accessible via the PowerPoint presentation. Significant explanation is needed. (0-5)	___/10
Thinking skills	The game involves significant strategic components that enhance thinking and decision making. (13-15)	The game involves some strategic components that enhance thinking and decision making. (8-12)	The game involves few or no strategic components that enhance thinking and decision making. (0-7)	___/15

Comments:

Total ___/100

