Manufacturing Ideas:

Students Created Media Interpretations of WWII Propaganda

ETEC 510 Design Project

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Key Frameworks

What is the focus of your design project?

Our design project is constructed to facilitate a critical exploration of propaganda usage during the Second World War (WWII) from a global perspective. Through the use of participatory media based activities that will be developed in five mini lessons and framed within a dedicated website, students will collaborate in the construction of their own propaganda influenced artefacts, learning materials, and activities. This will promote a deeper understanding of the role that propaganda played, and still plays, in the war effort, specifically, and politics in general.

Students will also have the opportunity to compare and contrast how propaganda was used during WWII by various groups and in various regions to the tactics used by governments to justify the war effort movement today (e.g., America's war on terrorism, ISIS recruitment of westerners, etc.).

Our primary educational activities are framed around the phenomena of propaganda as a mass manipulative tool through the retrospective lens of WWII, a period in history that offers many benefits to a critical study of propaganda due to the rich collection of material available online and elsewhere.

How are you situating your design activities in the academic literature?

Our design activities are based on the theory of participatory culture and

student constructionism as means of creating knowledge and frameworks of understanding. Utilizing the concepts outlined by Jenkins et al (2009), the individual activities and the overarching forum are framed in a manner that facilitates student's expression via digital media. It also provides opportunities to share their contribution.   Encouraging online commentary and discussions regarding student creations is of particular importance. Manfra and Stoddard (2008), in their work on teaching about genocide and the Holocaust through digital media, identify that social interactions online allow History and Social Studies students to demonstrate that they "...not only understand the concepts they have studied, but [are able] to articulate those understandings."

Pedagogical research supports the use of historical primary documents as a launching pad for students which strengthen critical thinking skills (Harris, 1975). The American History Association recommends history teachers use more primary documents in the classroom and asserts, "to construct historical narratives and arguments" (American History Association). Reasoning, assessment of evidence, and evidence-based claims are only some of the skills that are fostered. Historical thinking acquired from document-based learning can, "restrain, leaven and hone the process of judgement formation" (VanSledright, 2011).

What theoretical insights and perspectives frame your thinking about the particular group of learners your project targets?

The targeted age group given is Grades 9-12 given the nature and

content of the curriculum. The use of Web 2.0 technologies appears to have a general positive impact on student learning. None of the studies reported a detrimental or inferior effect on learning (Hew & Cheung, 2013). According to Kingsley and Brinkerhoff (2011), "An ever-increasing array of Internet tools can help students tackle such projects by facilitating interaction, communication, and planning--and by allowing learners to present information effectively through multimedia products. Use of such tools can enhance motivation as well as provide opportunities for authentic assessment of student learning." Higher level thinking skills are also fostered by using Web 2.0 research methods along with collaborative learning.

Intentions and Positions

What do you intend to accomplish by means of this design?

The intention of our design is twofold. First, through the use of student created artefacts and by tackling the topic from different perspectives that address the political, economic, ideological, and design ramifications, we intend to promote a deeper, more multifaceted understanding of WWII propaganda and its effects on individuals, countries, and the war effort. Second, by encouraging the students to translate what they have learned to present day situations, we aim to promote critical thinking as it relates to the micro and macro political constructs of the student's contemporary world.

What does scholarship in education have to say about placing value on this particular cluster of goals?

While couched in historical research our design clearly promotes learning by doing and building. A Deweyian undertone, where experience is at the core of learning, is the bedrock that unites these perspectives of education (Dewey, 1938). To Piaget, knowledge is not information to be delivered at one end, and encoded, memorized, retrieved, and applied at the other end. Instead, knowledge is experience that is acquired through interaction with the world, people and things (Papert, 1991).

Su (2009) expounds how creativity is a key component to lifelong learning. This is similar to the view in *Developing a (Non-linear) Practice of Design Thinking* (Teal, 2010) where the rhizome, as a heuristic device for design thinking, teaching, and learning, is promoted as a device that enables complexity of thoughts and ideas. Both authors explore the idea that it takes two kinds of thinking to create ideas: nonlinear and linear. Su contends that the creative pattern that emerges is implicit in the process rather than conceived prior to the process. Both Su and Teal embrace the Deleuzian approach which values and recognizes the rhizomatic manifestation of the learning processes in the contemporary learner's mind (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). A web-based platform is a natural home for such a process and a familiar place of knowledge sharing at the high school level

Craft (2010) discusses creativity and technology, and their role in

creating new ways of teaching and learning. She examines how playfulness, plurality, participation, and possibilities characterize today's and tomorrow's learner. She discusses how to explore what this means in term of developing contemporary curricula and pedagogy.

By relating to this subject matter through the use participatory media tools, we are attempting to bridge the gap between the informal learning taking place with these digital tools in the lives of students outside of the classroom with the formal learning goals in the classroom. Focusing on the formal learning of this topic through participatory media tools will give students the ability to create a more dynamic space to advance critical inquiry, dialogue, and engagement through new forms of content creation, curation, and dissemination. With these participatory practices our goal is to shift the focus from long established learning structures to focus attention on ways that inspire collaboration an interest-driven learning (Garcia & Morrell, 2013)

Kafai and Peppler (2011) argues from a perspective of instructionist versus constructionist design learning. It states that if teachers approach their educational design strictly through an instructional focus only interested in content, graphical representation, and instructional venues, then they risk alienating students from the discussions, thereby losing out on the potential learning opportunity available to learners who are engaged in the design process.

What might be a counter-argument to placing value on this particular set of outcomes?

Constructivism-based education does have its critics. One research project concludes that constructivist methods which offer minimal direct instruction are ineffective. This research indicates that when working with new information, learners should be explicitly told what to do and how to do it by the teacher rather than be allowed to fumble around for the answer. Furthermore, "false starts that occur during a pure-discovery activity can lead to frustration, confusion, and misconception." Finally, students who learn via discovery show no sign of superior learning (Kirschner, Sweller, & Clark, 2006).

How do the stated goals of your project fit with larger sets of goals (e.g., globalization, a School District position paper, etc.)?

Our lesson will target high school students in Canada. Depending on the province that the students are in, it would target a different grade. In the province of Ontario, secondary school students are obligated to take a Grade 10 course entitled "Canadian History since World War I" to fulfill their Ontario Secondary School Diploma requirement for graduation. In the course, a major unit of study is WWII. One of the specific expectations stated in the Ontario History Curriculum involves looking at propaganda as well. Curriculum expectation C1.4 states, "describe the main causes of some key political developments and/or government policies in Canada during this period (e.g., the passing of the Padlock Act in Quebec; victory bonds; government policies

on wartime rationing, propaganda, and censorship; the decision to intern Japanese Canadians during World War II" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013). Furthermore, the Ontario Grade 10 English Curriculum also covers propaganda. Curriculum specific expectation 3.2 states, "What can you learn from a study of propaganda that can be applied to debating skills?" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007). Similarly, British Columbia History 12 curriculum expectation C3 specifically identifies the use of propaganda by Nazi Germany while curriculum expectation D3 explores the use of propaganda on the home front in Canada (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2006).

For our lessons, we also aim to teach to our adolescent learners about a "big idea" in World War II instead of just looking at individual facts. Following the research of Grant and Gradwell (2009), it is more effective to teach history by creating big idea units, thus our big idea will be about the use of propaganda by various governments during World War II.

Citizenship awareness is crucial in order for people to be able to identify and recognize when propaganda is being used by entities of power such as governments and corporations. In today's multi-informational formats like 24 hour news channels, newspapers, magazines, and the World Wide Web, the potential for propaganda is growing. Students need to connect the use and abuse of propaganda during the 1930's- 1940's to a modern context. The more a student is able to deconstruct and reflect on WWII propaganda, the better they are able to understand propaganda used in our society today.

Key Concepts and Contexts

What knowledge, both conceptual "know that" and procedural "know how", is the focus of your design project?

As our unit is web based, the project offers students the opportunity to create a portfolio of technology-based artefacts such as, podcasts, historically-based digital stories, WWII cartoons-based prezis, virtual presentations, digitally created and exhibited propaganda posters, and so on. Developing all of the requisite skills necessary for creating these artefacts, through teacher-student and/or peer-to-peer training, online tutorials, and other sources, is folded into the projects and is a component of the learning outcomes.

The individual activities are connected through a themed web-based forum created in Weebly, enabling both the provision of teacher instructions, examples, and resources, while also providing a venue for the collection of student created materials and media. Furthermore, the forum utilizes blogging to allow for both peer and teacher comments and feedback on student submitted media. The key feature of the forum is its flexibility, both in its capacity to host and provide links to a variety of media formats, and its easy accessibility through a range of platforms. This format also empowers students by enabling them to use whatever web-compatible device they have at their disposal to create, post, and comment on their media content.

What is the context for your design project? What academic scholarship is relevant to thinking about this particular context?

Each activity is focused on a specific aspect of WWII propaganda (design tools that engage, ways that propaganda shapes perception and engagement, shaming through propaganda, how propaganda shaped perspectives of recruitment in WW2, etc). Once these activities are explored, experienced, and the student artefacts are created, the students use their newly gained knowledge to discuss the following question; How does WWII propaganda shape the way we see war today?

Gary Stager (2014), in his Ted talk on Seymour Papert, states that exposure and access to computers does not necessarily make for better learners. He asks, "does paint make for better art? Does wood make for better houses?" He posits that it is the ability to use these participatory digital tools as a means of exploring, remixing, curating, and investigating through active creation of something tangible/shareable outside our head that is the best way for students to engage in deep learning experiences connected to their personal interests (Brennan & Risnick, 2013).

Through the varied practices, technology can help instigate powerful learning, it is important to recognize that pedagogy of participatory media is not about the latest and greatest of digital tools but should instead be focused on capacities that include critical thinking, complex problem solving and persuasive expression (Brennan and Resnick, 2013).

InterActivities

We are creating an umbrella for our five mini-lessons using the Weebly platform. Each lesson will focus on a specific area of the worldwide WWII propaganda machine. See [Appendix 1](#) for details of each lesson. Each mini-lesson is connected to the homepage from its own tab. In each lesson's page, the instructor can upload the instructions and teaching materials that the students may require in order to complete the activities. Weebly also allows the user to upload a variety of types of media files, such as images, videos, YouTube links, flash, and audio. Furthermore, document files, such as MS Word, Adobe PDF, and PowerPoint can also be uploaded to the page so students can access them.

Under each mini-lesson tab is a discussion page in the form of a blog where students can submit their assignments, discuss their points of view, share ideas, and receive peer or instructor feedback and guidance. Finally, there is a more informal techno café page where students can share what they have learned about the specific technologies they used to create their artefact, offer help to others, and share technological discoveries. As technology evolves, the inclusion of this virtual space allows for continued development and sophistication of the media and its use in exploring and sharing ideas.

Verifications

What kind of activity would verify that your designed educational environment was working in the manner you originally anticipated?

Verifications for this project need to relate to both the individual mini-lessons as well as the overarching Weebly website. It should function as a means of both information dissemination/collection and commenting on student media. Therefore, much of our verification system will rely on providing our educational colleagues, as well as our student participants, the ability to connect with us both formally and informally.

One informal level of verification will be the successful posting and sharing of student media. The fact that students were able to construct and post their creations is in itself a litmus test on the effectiveness of our overall designs. The creation of a forum or student café page in which issues, problems, and successes can be discussed adds a more specific, if still informal, means by which success can be verified.

On a formal level, a survey will be included on the contact page of the website. Using the poll capability of Weebly, participants and reviewers will be asked to gauge how successfully our website and lessons encouraged and enabled students to construct their own media, share their creations, and feel like a valued contributing member of the project. The survey questions will function as an assessment rubric, and will be based in part on the elements of

a successful participatory culture as identified by Jenkins (2009). Additional questions and comments can focus on technical elements, such as the effectiveness of the website's structure and organization, or pedagogical elements that suggest tweaks to the individual mini-lessons.

The verification methods outlined will also provide the creators with the opportunity to make timely changes to the design. As a living project, new iterations and/or "patches" can be quickly implemented allowing reflective feedback from students and teaching colleagues alike.

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Appendix 1

Breakdown of Mini-Lessons	
Name	Analyzing WWII Propaganda Cartoons
Summary	Students are required to preview several WWII propaganda cartoons created by studios like Disney and Warner Brothers on YouTube. After selecting two cartoons, they create a presentation that analyzes the use of propaganda with the rest of the class as their audience, using PowerPoint or Prezi. Photographs can be downloaded and made part of the presentation, as can quotes, maps, diary entries etc. The technology used can include: computers with access to the Internet, digital projector with speakers, PowerPoint or Prezi slide presentation apps.
Name	Propaganda, Race and Culture
Summary	What is propaganda? How was it used to deal with the subject of race and culture in WW2? Beginning with instructor lead discussion, students will examine primary propaganda document examples. Working in groups of 2-3, they will discuss the questions above, categorizing discussion through the use of an online mind map and other web 2.0 tools. Areas of interest on the topic of Race and Culture will be developed into a "social story" using the web 2.0 tool, Storify. This tool will be used to explore the topics raised by the original questions and create a socially constructed artefact giving students the ability to explore the role propaganda/anti-propaganda plays in their own daily lives, considering; who is the intended audience? who is the author of the message? why does the message or medium work or not work and where are their examples of this type of messaging being presented today?

Name	The Radio and Propaganda
Summary	Students consider the technological and cultural contexts that made radio such an important medium for propaganda for any or all states involved in the conflict. The educational tools are sound recording hardware and editing software. Students make a podcast in the form of a lecture, interview, newscast, public service announcement, or any other form they desire. The educational technology (podcasts) reflects the medium that they are studying (radio). The intention is that the students gain some technical skills in audio manipulation while at the same time becoming engaged with the strengths and limitations of "radio" as a medium, as well as learn to locate and identify primary and secondary documents via online resources and compare what they have found with the contemporary world situation.
Name	WWII Though the Japanese Lens
Summary	This mini lesson has students looking at WWII propaganda from the perspective of Imperial Japan and then connecting this historical propaganda to propaganda used in today's conflicts. The focus is placed on how wartime propaganda was different in Japan compared to the United States, that is killing the enemy (US), versus dying for your country (Japan). Students also compare the similarities between Japanese and American wartime propaganda. The second part my lesson focuses on how Japanese and Nazi German propaganda compare with each other, especially in the areas of race purity. In the third part of the lesson, using the internet, students research present day conflicts and analyse the propaganda used by these government and organizations. Finally, using their phones, dslr's Imovie, stop motion applications and/or other video platforms, the students create a counter-propaganda video against a chosen faction. The videos will then be viewed in class, and peer critiqued as to their effectiveness in communicating the anti-propaganda message.

Name	The Art and Design of Propaganda
Summary	This mini-lesson is divided into 2 activities that focus on the influence of art and design in the creation of propaganda poster art. First, using web sourced artefacts from the various factions/countries involved in the WWII effort, and supported by the propaganda mechanics analysis developed in the other lessons, the students learn to analyse the role of design, colour, text placement and composition in conveying and enhancing the overt and covert messages behind WWII propaganda. Second, the class is split into 2 "sides". The students then develop a fictional conflict scenario and a propaganda objective, and take on the role of propaganda artist(s). Using Photoshop, iPad drawing apps, stock and captured images, drawing, and any other media at their disposal, each group creates a propaganda poster based on the ideology and goals of their assigned side. Each side then critiques, compares and contrasts each other's propaganda art. The art itself is then exhibited either in a virtual gallery space, a Padlet or on a page of our Weebly site, alongside the WWII propaganda that inspired the design components used to communicate the messages in the student work.