

## SIOP Lesson Plan Reflection

The lesson I will be reflecting on is one that I taught to my eight grade gifted and talented United States history class. The ENL students in that class were all at the advanced level and represented about a third of the class population. My topic was issues that divided the North and South prior to the Civil War, and my goal was to simulate the type of debate that occurred between Daniel Webster and John Calhoun. The following is my original lesson plan:

### Objective:

Students will identify and understand the major issues which divided the North and South, focus on one side's position, develop an argument, and debate the opposing side.

### Materials:

Textbook, Transparencies with pictures depicting plantations and factories, map of the United States color coded to show which states belonged to the North and which belonged to the South

### Focus Activity:

Students will write in their journals on the following topic: "Describe the last major argument you had with a friend or family member. How did it end? Did you make up?" After students have written, take volunteers to share experiences with the whole group. Discuss the different levels of arguments people can have and the possible outcomes.

### Guided Practice:

Tell students that they will be reading about a massive argument that led to a war between people living in two different regions of the United States. Discuss and give examples of pertinent vocabulary such as states' rights, slavery, and industry. Read aloud the section of the textbook, pausing to allow volunteers to fill in the graphic organizer on the board which has the North listed on one side and the South on the other.

How did they feel about these things?		
People in the North	VS.	People in the South
	Slavery	
	Western Expansion	
	States' Rights	

### Independent Practice:

Have students meet in small groups to brainstorm a list of reasons why the people in their designated area (North or South) might have felt this way. Have them star the ones that seem most defensible, and write a paragraph on each of the three topics explaining and supporting their point of view. Next, the group brainstorms a list of reasons the opposing side will have for supporting their point of view and any criticisms they might have. The group elects a member to represent them in the debate.

Selected representatives move to the front of the room. Remaining students return to the original seats and become audience members. Give a question and allow representatives from each side to respond.

**Feedback:**

Circulate the room, and speak to each group. Read over their initial brainstormed list and let them know if they are on the right track.

**Assessment:**

When the debate is finished, have students write two paragraphs, one describing which side they thought won the debate and why, and another detailing 7-10 things they learned from this activity.

**Closure:**

Have the class vote, rating which of the three issues was the most divisive, and discuss why they think so.

This lesson worked relatively well until we reached the point of role playing a debate. It then became abundantly clear to me that my students had never been asked to debate before and were unaware of the protocols necessary to keep the debate from becoming a shouting match. I tried too late to guide them through the rules as we went through the debate. I ultimately had two extremes of participants—those who shouted at each other, or those who were too paralyzed from fear to speak.

Therefore, the SIOP component I will focus on is that of building background. There are three different steps involved in building background: linking concepts to students' background and experiences, linking past learning to new concepts, and emphasizing key vocabulary. If I were to rate my original lesson delivery on building background, I would give myself a 2 on linking concepts to background experience because, although I asked them about a previous argument they had had, I did not ask if they had ever witnessed an organized argument, i.e. a debate. I could have given examples of debates seen on television such as presidential debates, the Sunday morning politically-centered news programming, etc. In terms of links made to past learning, I would receive a 0 on this because they were not present. With vocabulary, I did explain and discuss words key to understanding the historical content, but not those central to my language objectives such as "argument," "position," and most importantly, "debate." For emphasizing key vocabulary, then, I would give myself a 1. To fully explain the concept of debate to my students, I would make the following SIOP influenced revisions:

**Objective:**

Students will identify and understand the major issues which divided the North and South. They will recall examples of persuasive arguments they have made and recognize that political debates are on-going and can often be seen on news programs. They will understand the concept and purpose of a debate. They will then role play a political debate after focusing on one side's position and developing an argument.

**Materials:**

Textbook, Transparencies with pictures depicting plantations and factories, map of the United States color coded to show which states belonged to the North and which belonged to the South, a video clip of Crossfire, a transparency of a student’s persuasive essay (preferably written for the English teacher on the team)

**Focus Activity:**

Students will write in their journals on the following topic: “Describe the last major argument you had with a friend or family member. How did it end? Did you make up?” After students have written, take volunteers to share experiences with the whole group. Ask volunteers if they tried to persuade the person they were arguing with to agree with them. If they did, were they successful and what made them succeed. Ask group as a whole when they have had to defend their opinions at school. Ask them what types of assignment have required them to defend their opinions and how they did so. Show example of persuasive essay transparency. Tell them that people often organize their thoughts in writing before they speak so they will not make so many mistakes. Say that even famous people such as presidents and congressmen go through this process (or have someone do it for them). Show video clip of Crossfire.

**Guided Practice:**

Define the words “debate,” “argument,” and “position,” giving examples from the television clip and the persuasive essay. Tell students that they will be reading about a massive debate that led to a war between people living in two different regions of the United States. Discuss and give examples of pertinent vocabulary such as states’ rights, slavery, and industry. Read aloud the section of the textbook, pausing to allow volunteers to fill in the graphic organizer on the board which has the North listed on one side and the South on the other.

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These revisions will make the lesson richer by accessing the students' prior knowledge and introducing real life examples, such as the essays they have had to write and the images of the politicians bickering. Thematically, it brings to focus the idea that political debates still go on and influence our lives, and that a disagreement over ideas left unresolved, can bring about disastrous consequences. Attaching the specific subjects of the North/South debate to that overall idea should help the students remember and recognize their importance.