

Element 3: Description of the Lesson Implementation

90 minute period – Implementation of Garrison Gold Rush Letter Activity.

I began the lesson by pairing students in random order. I described the scenario listed in the lesson plan and handed out copies of the original letter – one to each pair. Students began transcribing the letter and writing down questions that came up as they worked on this task. (5 Minutes)

After 30 minutes, I pulled the class back together and directed them to use their laptop computers to look for and write down answers to the questions that had come up in the previous activity.

After 10 minutes of allowing the students to look up information and share that information briefly with another group next to them, I handed out the transcription of the letter.

I then gave student pairs the opportunity to read through the transcription, writing down both answers to questions as well as new questions that emerged. Students then used their computers to look up more information to address the new questions that emerged. (15 Minutes).

While students were engaged with reading through the transcription of the letter, I gave each pair of students a letter (A-G) that they would use for the next phase of the lesson.

I then pulled the students back together and directed them to read the section of the Gold Rush information from the PBS website individually. (10 Minutes)

Once they read their information, I directed each pair to talk about the information in their online reading, comparing it to any information in the primary source letter. I emphasized that the letter should either verify or complicate the narrative on the PBS site. (10 Minutes)

The final 10 minutes of the period were dedicated to student pairs writing a synthesis “textbook entry” about the California Gold Rush to turn in as a “ticket out the door.” I explained that students were to make at least two references to the primary source letter as part of their writing.

Students turned in their paragraphs as they walked out the door. A couple pairs in each class asked if they could finish up at home and email the paragraph to me. I told them that would be fine.