Section One: Project/Lesson Overview

Grade: 12

Subject: Political Science 120

Lesson Title: "Vote for Me"

Lesson Description: Exploring local history of municipal and provincial elections, the campaign process and the response of constituents; comparing historical election processes with recent or current elections; using historical and contemporary campaigns to model effective election campaign strategies for students to implement in their own in-school campaigns.

Context for the Lesson:

In order to effectively implement this lesson, students will have already learned about parliamentary democracy, and the differences between Federal, Provincial, and Municipal levels of government.

Time Required: 8 periods

Specific Curriculum Outcomes:

The curriculum outcomes of the Middle School (6-8) Social Studies program include:
1) **Demonstrating an understanding of how citizenship has evolved over time.**
    a. Examining the role and responsibility of the citizen in supporting the rule of law
2) **Demonstrate an understanding of the structure and operation of government in Canada under a federal system**
    a. Describing the operation and responsibilities of government at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels
    b. **Examining the processes leading to the formation** and dissolution **of governments**

The curriculum outcomes of the Grade 12 Political Science program include:

1) **Examining politics at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels**
2) **Provide for the students' understanding of the structure and function of political institutions**

Section Two: Project/Lesson Implementation

Equipment/Materials Required:
    Computer with Internet connection
    LCD Projector
    Images and documents from the New Brunswick Museum Virtual Exhibition "Gatherings"
http://www.nbm-mnb.ca

    Images and documents from the latest election campaign or other elections

Materials and/or data from http://www.elections.ca, the website created by Elections Canada to provide educational resources to encourage the youth to vote.

Lesson Procedures/Teaching Strategies:

DAY 1: Historical Campaigning

Anticipatory Set:
Using an LCD Projector, place an image of a crowd cheering at a newly elected political candidate on the screen, and ask students: "Describe this gathering – what has just happened? How can you tell? What does this suggest about the role of the crowd in the success of this individual?" There are several images available through the search engine, *Google.*

Procedure:
At this point, students should recognize that it is the job of political candidates to convince the public that he or she is the best person for the job. If the public is not convinced, the candidate will not win the job he/she is seeking. As a result, the public has a huge responsibility in the election process, and should understand their roles in order to contribute to an election as informed and fair voters. The Elections Canada website, www.elections.ca, provides excellent information on why people should vote and the role of young people in voting. This site is recommended for introductory material on the election process.

Inform the students that it is important in a democracy to effectively inform the public about candidates and their promises as potential political representatives. Today, students are going to examine historical documents of former candidates who were attempting to inform the public and persuade the public to vote for them. The class will examine these documents and assess their effectiveness and importance in an election campaign.

Begin by asking students whether or not they saw or heard any promotional material for a political candidate in the last election. If they had, how did they see or hear it? Posters? Brochures? Commercials? Newspaper ads or articles? Radio announcements? The Internet? Poll the students – the assumption is that most students saw a political advertisement on television or the Internet.

Ask students to picture the late 1880s to the early 1900s in New Brunswick. What technology used currently by political candidates were non-existent then? [television, Internet] Considering this, ask the students how political candidates promoted themselves for election? [newspaper, brochures, posters, radio]

Have the students examine a candidate's brochure for the public regarding progress within a constituency since the previous election Elections-CBDOC-8(4).jpg; Elections-CBDOC-8(4)a.jpg; Elections-CBDOC-8(4)b.jpg; Elections-CBDOC-8(4)c.jpg; Elections-CBDOC-8(4)d.jpg.

Have students silently read the article and then have them answer the following questions:

1) What improvements have been made to Saint John since the November election?
2) What increase has the council made that seems to have upset constituents?
3) List three of the criticisms made against the council and/or councilors.
4) Why do you think this document was produced for the public?
5) Why do you think an election is being held July 9th when there had been an election eight months before?
6) Today, the City of Saint John holds an election every four years. How often should elections be held? Explain. Are there legitimate grounds to hold an election sooner than planned? Explain.
7) Do you think this brochure is convincing? Explain.

Next, have the students read a poster that would have been mounted in various places around the community OS-F6-9.jpg. Based on their reading, have them answer the following questions:

1) What qualifications does the candidate, George Foster, have for a position in Parliament, according to this poster?
2) What are three of the major issues facing Canadians in 1880?
3) What is Foster's point of view on those issues?
4) Considering poster design, is this an effective way to appeal to voters?
5) What improvements can be made to this poster?

After examining these two articles, ask the students:
1) Do you think there is a difference between the way political candidates appealed to the public then and now? Explain.

Closure:
       For a school campaign, students will not be able to rely on many of the technologies available in current political campaigns. Students will be using similar strategies of candidates in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in New Brunswick. They will not create commercials or place videos online. Instead, students will be creating posters and brochures, as well as preparing speeches and canvassing classes to win votes. Students are asked to consider the brochure and poster examined today in order to consider their own platforms and ideas for material they will produce for their own campaign.

DAY 2: Contemporary Campaigning
Anticipatory Set:
       Having formerly discussed democracy as exercised in Canada, students are to journal about the last election process they witnessed (ideally, a school election for student council or leadership). Ask students to comment on whether or not they attended the speeches, what they thought of the advertising of the candidates (posters, etc.), and whether or not they voted. What did they think of the process? Did they feel the elections were held fairly, or did they feel it was more of a popularity vote? What recommendations would they make to have a school election run more fairly and effectively?

Procedure:
       Inform the students that they will be examining the campaign process for candidates running in a contemporary election. Students will be running their own campaigns, and will use historical images and documents, as well as images and documents from the latest campaign as a guide on how to run a successful campaign.
       To start, ask the students to think about the latest campaign. In a whole-class discussion, have the students' brainstorm what strategies local candidates use to win their seats. Possible responses include:
       Propaganda: slander advertisements/positive advertisements
       Fliers around town or in newspapers or community papers
       Candidates' visits at schools and community centers
       Media & News: editorials and/or letters to the editor about candidates/election
Divide the students into small groups and have them examine one of the above aspects of campaigns.

Each group should have a different type of document. Recommended documents include:
1) Stephen Harper's attack ad on Stephane Dion as a poor leader (propaganda)
2) Brochure from local Member of Parliament's office
3) Newsarticle about a candidate's visit to a school (ie. *Telegraph Journal*'s article about four candidates visiting KVHS on October 1, 2008)
4) A number of articles are located at cbc.ca on the 2008 Federal Election.

In their groups, students are to answer the following questions:

1) What type of audience is this document attempting to reach?
2) What do you learn about the candidate in this document?
3) Does this document convince you to vote for the candidate? Why or why not?
4) How can this document be improved?

Once the students have completed this work in their small groups, they are to share their findings with the rest of the class. The students should take notes as they will be required to make their own documents.

Closure:
Inform students that they will be required to use each of the above methods in their own campaigns. Students should begin to think about the strategies they will use in their campaign.

DAY 3 to DAY 8: Preparing for a Mock Election

Anticipatory Set:
Present the "Mock Election" PowerPoint to the students.

Procedure:
Once students are aware of what is expected of them, students will choose groups of 4 or 5. In these groups, students are immediately to begin preparations for their election campaigns. Throughout the five days, students are:

1) Coming up with a Party Name, Candidate, Vision, Platform, Logo and Slogan.
2) Preparing Advertisements (brochures, posters, pins, handouts, announcements, etc.).
3) Placing advertisements around the school.
4) Arranging to visit various classes during the period to campaign to the students.
5) Memorizing speeches/ Preparing for Election Day

The Teacher will need to:
1) Get a list of students in alphabetical order
2) Get a list of teachers in alphabetical order
3) Prepare ballots of the candidates
4) Assign students to morning, lunch, and after-school duty at the polling station.
5) Email teachers in advance for student visits during the period
6) Book the theatre, and email teachers about attending the speeches

Closure:
The day following the election, the whole class will participate in counting the ballots. Once this is completed, have a whole-class discussion on the successes and failures in the campaign. Ask students:

1) if they noticed any prejudices or disadvantages in the campaign
2) if they felt it had turned into a popularity contest
3) if they would make any changes to their campaign if they could do it over again
4) what was their biggest challenge
5) why they think the winning candidate actually won

Suggested Assessment Strategies:

- Observation Checklists to be completed while students are preparing for the campaign.
- Rubric provided for overall mock election campaign.
- Individual and Group peer evaluation forms to be completed by students upon completion of the campaign.

Section Three: Project/Lesson Resources

Teacher Generated Resources: All of the teacher generated resources contributed to support this lesson are available for download by clicking on the link(s) below:

1) Mock Election PowerPoint
2) Rubric for Mock Election
3) Ballot for Mock Election
4) Notice for teachers
5) 2 Posters for the Mock Election

Supplementary Resources:

The New Brunswick Museum Virtual Exhibition "Gatherings" has several documents used in this lesson plan: www.nbm-mnb.ca

1) Elections-CBDOC-8(4).jpg
2) Elections-CBDOC-8(4a).jpg
3) Elections-CBDOC-8(4b).jpg
4) Elections-CBDOC-8(4c).jpg
5) Elections-CBDOC-8(4d).jpg
6) OS-F6-9.jpg

Web-Based Resources:

1) Excellent information provided by Elections Canada at http://www.elections.ca
2) Useful images on cheering crowds during an election victory social can be obtained from http://www.google.com/images

Disclaimer: The recommended web-resources included here have been scrutinized for their grade and age appropriateness; however, contents on links on the Internet change continuously. It is advisable that teachers preview all links before recommending them to students.

Section Four: Additional Information

Modifications:

The Mock Elections allow for students to contribute in various capacities as there are a number of different responsibilities within each "Political Party" campaign group.

Credits:

Contact Information Including Name, Email, School and District:

Feel free to contact Laura Cote with any questions, comments, corrections, or additional material:
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