The Battle of Saratoga 1777 (Lesson 4)

Concept & Academic Vocabulary

1. Cannonade
2. Bombardment
3. Saratoga

Target Learning Outcomes/Objectives:

1. Students will be able to interpret and evaluate the validity of a primary source account.
2. Students will be able to infer from a primary source the nature of the fighting that occurred during the Battle of Saratoga.
3. Students will be able to identify one flaw in British military leadership that led to failure and surrender at Saratoga.

Essential Questions:

1. Who is Frederika Charlotte Louise? How reliable of a witness was she to a) General Burgoyne’s leadership and b) the experience of combat?
2. What does the presence of the baroness, her children, and the wives of several British officers suggest about the nature of eighteenth-century warfare?
3. In what ways was General John Burgoyne an ineffective military leader? Why did they call him “Gentleman Johnny”?

Lesson Standards (WMAS):

1. B.12.1 Explain different points of view on the same historical event, using data gathered from various sources, such as letters, journals, diaries, newspapers, government documents, and speeches.
2. B.12.2 Analyze primary and secondary sources related to a historical question to evaluate their relevance, make comparisons, integrate new information with prior knowledge, and come to a reasoned conclusion.

Materials/ Resources:
The materials needed for this lesson include an iron shot-put, movie clip from *Patriot*, a Guided Imagery narrative, and the primary source narrative of nurse Frederika Louise.

**Prior Knowledge:**

- Students would need to have prior knowledge of the overall British military strategy, which consisted of a three pronged attack--from the south, north and west--upon Albany, New York.
- To prompt prior knowledge I would assign my students a video on the Battle of Saratoga to watch prior to class.
- At the start of class I would give my students a brief pre-assessment based upon the video they were supposed to watch. This pre-assessment would ideally be done through a SMART Response clicker system or Socrative.com.
- The pre-assessment and video would allow me to know what my students already understand regarding the battle of Saratoga. This prior knowledge will help me gauge what to cover during my lesson.

**Anticipatory Set**

I would hook students into the activity by first distributing pictures related to the primary source they would be reading. Pictures relating to the scenery, location and specific events would be relevant. For this activity I would pick four pictures, number the students off by two and set a picture face down on each desk. I would instruct the student to describe the pictures with a partner without giving it away. Below are the sample pictures I would use.
Activities (Step by Step):

1. After the picture description task I would pass around a basic 6lb Iron shot put. As I passed around the shot put I would play the video scene from The Patriot depicting the battle of Camden in which a soldier is decapitated by a cannon ball.

2. As the shot put made its way across the class I’d ask the students to imagine their house, or their room. With a partner I would have them describe what it might look like if a cannon ball had gone through it.

3. After each partner had sufficiently imagined and described the aftermath of their home/room. I would administer the guided imagery narrative to the class.

4. I would have them sit with their eyes closed as I read the Guided Imagery narrative.

5. Once finished reading the guided imagery narrative I would pass around copies of the primary source testimony, “Voices From Abroad: Baroness Von Reidesel and The Surrender of Burgoyne, 1777”.

6. The students would read the document individually.

7. After they were finished reading I would conduct a class discussion in which we would address the essential questions of the lesson.

8. I would also, if time permitted, ask my students to draw a picture of what they saw or imagined while reading the primary source account.

Closure:

I would assess my students based upon their responses during the in-class discussion. Their responses to the essential questions should indicate to me whether or not my lesson objectives were met. The picture drawing task should allow me to see how my students visualized and imagined the historical event depicted in the nurse’s narrative. Based upon the detail of the drawings I should also be able to see to what extent my students are drawing in proper historical context (i.e. making it look as it might have actually looked in 1777).

Extensions/ Adaptations:

This lesson is adaptive to student needs and learning styles because it incorporates a physical prop (an iron shot-put) a visual presentation (the Battle of Camden from the Patriot), a piece of writing (a nurse’s narrative from Saratoga) and a guided imagery narrative. Those together present a holistic picture of what battle was like during the Revolutionary War. This lesson appeals to almost every leaning style and therefore enables students to have more meaningful insight into the lesson.
Guided Imagery Reading

1. Imagine you are a battlefield nurse. You are camped inside a forest. You see brown tents scattered about the camp site.

2. Men in dirt stained uniforms, brownish-red, are sitting at tables, playing cards, walking in and out of barracks. They are dirty and exhausted.

3. You inhale a breath of air and smell aromas of bonfire, gunpowder and the dampness of the forest.

4. It begins to rain. Great sheets of water cover the forest floor. Mud runs throughout the camp, weaving in between trees, and settling in pools and crevices.

5. You go into a tent to dry off.

6. Suddenly loud cracks of thunder are heard in the distance.

7. Soldiers are running into camp from the forests edge. Panicked and with the look of shock on their faces, they announce that the booming was american cannon fire and that colonial troops are on their way. They say they are scattered and hiding. They shoot and you can't see where they are coming from.

8. Your eyes peer out from inside the tent. You imagine men in grey and blue uniforms morphing out of the rain, marching through the trees towards the camp.

9. There is a small village a few miles south. The military commander orders you to have the injured and sick taken into the village and lodged there temporarily.

10. You begin running towards the village alongside other soldiers, distraught wives and confused children who follow alongside you. On your way you notice a cabin with blue shutters tucked away in a spot of dense trees. You run to it and make your way inside.

11. In the lower level of the cabin there is a cellar. The cellar is dark and the floor is damp. It’s black and you can see nothing. You are cold.

12. The sound of rain tapping on the windows and the punctuating thunderclaps of distant cannon fire echo against the cellar walls.

13. Its not long before other retreating soldiers discover the cabin. Soon the house is filled with wounded men. The worst cases are brought down to you in the cellar.

14. Then bang! A jolting crack shakes the house. There is a numb wringing in your ears. Dust falls from the ceiling into your eyes. You cough as you inhale dry splinters of wood and paint.

15. Bang! Bang! Sounds of glass exploding and wood splintering, doors ripped from hinges, the cabin shakes from cannon fire.

16. You crawl into a fetal position, nestling your body into a dark damp corner.

17. The abominable smell, the cries of the injured, and your own anguish of mind do not permit you to close your eyes for the entire night.
18. The advancing colonial troops have surrounded the cabin. Their cannonade bombardment continues throughout the night and into the morning.