Holocaust History: Lesson Three – Conversation Roundtable: The Bielski Partisans

1. **Class**: Holocaust History

**Grade**: 10th-12th

**Content Focus**: The Bielski Partisans

**HSCE**:

7.1.4 Use various sources including works of journalists, journals, oral histories, films, interviews, and writings of participants to analyze the causes and consequences of the genocides of Armenians, Romas (Gypsies), and Jews, and the mass exterminations of Ukrainians and Chinese.

7.2.3 Analyzing the major turning points and unique characteristics of the war

**Common Core**:

RH.11-12.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

RH.11-12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media in order to address a question or solve a problem

2. **Purpose/Relevance**

Students will learn about the impact of the Bielski Partisans in context with Holocaust resistance efforts and the events of WWII. Students will benefit from this, because they will explore, more in depth, resistance against the crimes of the Holocaust, which is a topic that is not often explored or very well-known. Students will want to learn this, because the story of the Bielski brothers is heroic and exciting; additionally, the lesson asks students to draw their own conclusions about the story and later examine whether or not a movie on the same topic is accurate.

3. **Accommodations**

Students will have the support of their peers while working on a summary of several articles addressing the Bielski partisans.

Students will be allowed more time to finish their summaries during the following lesson if necessary.

Students who are uncomfortable speaking in front of the class or who struggle to do so will have the option of not sharing their group’s summary.
4. Resources

Lesson Plan

Computer and Projector

Completed Anticipation Guides from last lesson

Class sets of reading quizzes for focus books: *When Hope Prevails, Man’s Search for Meaning, Sevek, and Night* (respectively by hour)

Seven articles on the Bielski partisans and related content for each group (to be addressed in this order):

Article 1: “Armed Jewish Resistance: Partisans”
Article 2: “The Bielski Partisans”
Article 3: “Operation Barbossa”
Article 4: “Bielski Otriad First Year”
Article 5: “The Final Year of the Bielski Otriad”
Article 6: “Heroes Among Us”
Article 7: “Shadows of Valiant Ancestors”

Notebook paper for summaries

SmartBoard for summaries

5. Performance Objective

The students *(a)* will learn about the Bielski Partisans and their influence on Holocaust resistance *(b)* with the use of a Conversation Roundtable activity *(c)* at 80% proficiency *(d)*.

6. Content Literacy Strategy

The students’ content literacy strategy will be a review of the Anticipation Guide from the prior lesson. The teacher will note on common strengths and common pitfalls in the assignment. The instructor will also explain the purpose of part two of the Anticipation Guide, which is to do the same response work after the focus books have been completed; this will show if the students’ initial views have changed, and if so, why.

7. Bell Work *(5)*

“This Day in History” Clip

Reading Quiz
Quick review of Anticipation Guides

8. Anticipatory Set (5)

The instructor will present the question below on the SmartBoard for students to think about:

How many people need to be saved to call a Holocaust resistance movement “successful”?

Present three reams of paper to be explained at the end of the lesson. Do not need actual reams – may use to put into perspective for students that need a visual.

9. Instructional Method (10)

The instructor will tie in the question from the anticipatory set to the activity for the day, noting that the question will be explored in further depth when the class reads about the Bielski Partisans.

While the instructor will give some brief background on the Bielski Partisans, it is not necessary to give very much away, because the students will be reading and learning about them on their own.

The instructor will inform the students about the activity they will conduct in the following steps:

1. Allow the students to think about the question posed in the anticipatory set and explain the connection between this question and the lesson.
2. While the students are thinking about the question, pass out the seven articles to students. Be sure to give the same article to 3 or 4 students sitting close to each other; they will form a summary group later.
3. Once the articles are passed out, the students will be directed to read by themselves, noting important points from the article on a sheet of notebook paper.
4. The students will be instructed that, once they have read and annotated their article, they will get into a group with students who have read the same article. Together, they will come up with a collective summary of the article. This summary will conclude with 3 “hashtags” that encompass the main ideas of the article.
5. The instructor will provide an example of a summary hashtag using the focus book that the given class is reading. The instructor should also note that hashtag MUST be appropriate to discourage students from being a little too “mainstream” in their hashtags.
6. The instructor will ask if the students have any questions before beginning.

10. Guided Practice (25)
1. The students will read their given article on their own, annotating what is important to the understanding of the article.
2. After about 10 minutes, the students will get into a group with classmates who read the same article. Together, they will write a master summary and 3 hashtags that encompass the main ideas of the article. Make sure that the students have finished reading alone before moving on.
3. With about 20 minutes left of class, the teacher will ask groups to share their summary and hashtags with the class, listing each of the hashtags on the SmartBoard. The instructor should also note who has presented their summaries.
4. The teacher will recap all summaries in order to review all of the information learned about the Bielski Partisans.

NOTE: The lesson should begin to close with at least 10 minutes left of class. If some students have not presented their summary, that’s okay. They can present them on Thursday. Take time from the Guided Practice if necessary.

11. **Lesson Closure** (10 minutes)

With 10 minutes left the class, the lesson will close with a wrap up of each hashtag used to summarize the given articles to review the impact that the Bielski Partisans seemed to have.

Then, the reams of paper presented at the start of the lesson may be explained with the following statistics for student who need a visual representation of the Bielski’s impact:

The 1,200 Jewish people that the Bielski Partisans saved in their resistance efforts illustrated by reams of paper (where each piece of paper is one Jewish individual):

Three reams make up the 1,200 that were saved.

In comparison, one would need 6,000 reams to represent all survivors: the Bielski Partisans saved only .04% of them.

In comparison, one would need 12,000 reams of paper to represent all of those killed in the Holocaust; 1,200 saved is virtually no one. – But does this make their resistance any less heroic? – Return to question presented in Anticipatory Set.

While the Bielski Partisans were incredible, we cannot forget the immensity of the tragedy of the Holocaust. We must recognize both the valor of those who resisted Nazi Germany and the enormous loss suffered during the Holocaust to get a full picture of this time in history.

To tie in to next lesson: Why/How do we recognize the Bielski Partisans and even immortalize them in film? Is this depiction fair?
This will be explored in greater detail at the end of the week when we watch Defiance. (Questions for next lesson: Does the movie fairly depict the work of the Bielski partisans? Do they seem too grand? Not grand enough? What seems left out of the film? Or added for dramatic effect?)

Students will be reminded of the reading quiz the following day.

12. **Formative Assessment**

The instructor will review annotations of each individual student

The teacher will circulate the room to be sure that students are participating in group work and annotating their articles individually.

13A. **Re-teaching Plan**

If summaries are weak or poorly done, the instructor will review strategies for summarizing at the start of the follow day’s lesson, practicing on a new, short article.

13B. **Independent Practice**

Students will individually read, annotate, and summarize their given articles.

13C. **Extension Activity**

Students will learn to formulate a response to their given articles in addition to a summary in order to practice the summary/response assignment commonly given in entry level college classes.

14. **Summative Assessment**

Group Summary with hashtags listed on the SmartBoard

15. **Reflection Notes**

It’s funny because I thought I had prepared for anything to go wrong. I figured that the worst thing that could happen was I wouldn’t have my articles for the activity, which couldn’t possibly happen. Well, naturally, it did. I was short resources and students had to share. Other articles printed with microscopic font. I tried hard not to show my panic, but I think first hour sensed it. However, I was able to find ways to adapt with each hour, and by the end the lesson went by without a hitch, relatively speaking. I like these situations because it forces me to adapt quickly, which I will have to do in my own classroom.

The hashtags were effective, and my supervisor thought the lesson was engaging overall. Sometimes the hashtags were inappropriate given the content, and I had to
reiterate the importance of respectfully approaching the topic of the Holocaust. This is something I should have emphasized during the instructional method. Also, when some students gave the summaries and hashtags of their articles, their classmates couldn’t hear them. This is because the students were actually talking to me, not their peers. I didn’t think to have them stand up and address the class until the last hour of the day, which was very effective. I wish I would have thought to do that sooner!