

Final Lesson Study Guidelines

Use the following guidelines to prepare your completed lesson study for publication in the [Lesson Study Project Showcase](#). When you are finished, email a single Word or PDF file to catl@uwlax.edu.

PART I: BACKGROUND	
Title	Collective Action Lesson Study
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Discipline(s) or Field(s)	Political Science and Public Administration
Submission Date	June 28, 2013
Course Name	American National Government
Course Description	This course offers an introduction to American National Government. It is offered as part of the General Education curriculum and also serves as a prerequisite for upper division courses in Political Science and Public Administration. The lesson study focused on the threshold concepts surrounding collective action problems. These are central to the course. The lesson spanned two class periods.
Abstract	<p>For the first part of the lesson students played a game called the Isle of Ted. Many collective action problems arise as part of the game and students unwittingly make choices that add to the overall lesson. The second part of the game is an interactive lecture that unpacks the lessons in the game and offers additional examples of collective action problems.</p> <p>Our findings suggest that allowing students to experience collective action problems first hand while playing the game allows them to apply the lesson to American National Government.</p>
PART II: THE LESSON	
Learning Goals	<p><u>Student Learning Goals</u></p> <p>By the end of the lesson students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delineate the decisions within the prisoner’s dilemma • relate the dilemma to problems of collective action and the rise of institutions • discuss the relationship between individual rational choice and collective action <p>As noted above, the lesson includes students working through collective action problems. There are additional activities during the interactive lecture that allow students to struggle with collective action problems.</p>
Lesson Plan	<p style="text-align: center;">Collective Action Lesson Plan</p> <p><i>Day One</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Since this is only the second day of class, make sure any new students fill out a consent form (5 minutes) B. Make a note about the way political scientists think about government – how just what by why C. Play the game (60 minutes) D. Ask students about the object of the game

- E. In the last few minutes ask students to reflect on how the game could be improved to bring about an optimal outcome (write down and bring next time) (5 minutes)

Day Two

- A. Set Up (5 minutes)
- a. Collect reflections
 - b. Review quiz questions, survey, current events, or tweets that fall within today's lesson plan
- B. Collective Action Problems (48 minutes)
- a. Mini lecture on collective action problems and coordination (3 minutes)
 - b. Prisoner's dilemma (30 minutes)
 - i. Have two students come to the front and "play" for today's participation points
 - ii. Have two students come to the front and "play" for participation points for the class (assigning half of the class to each player)
 - iii. Video clip – The Golden Balls
 - iv. Mini lecture on the prisoner's dilemma w/examples
 - v. As a class, can you think of other real life examples of the prisoner's dilemma? How is the prisoner's dilemma an example of a collective action problem?
 - c. Free rider problem (5 minutes)
 - i. Explanation and examples
 - ii. Ask the class to think of examples.
 - d. Tragedy of the commons (10 minutes)
 - i. Mini lecture and examples
 - ii. Discussion – (Think Pair Share) Can you think of examples of the prisoner's dilemma, free riders and/or the tragedy of the commons that were present in the Isle of Ted game? How are free riders and the tragedy of the commons examples of collective action problems?
- C. Institutions (15 minutes)
- a. Mini lecture on the rise of institutions, politics, compromise
 - b. Mini lecture on private, public, and collective goods (Must get at least this far for worksheet activity)
 - c. Discussion – What types of "goods" were present in the Isle of Ted game? What institutions did your class create? How were these born of compromise?
- D. Worksheet (12 minutes)
- a. Have students go back to their original groups and fill out the worksheet (see below). Turn this in. –
- E. Mini lecture on transaction and conformity costs
- a. Ask the class to point out the transaction and conformity cost in the game
- F. Time Permitting – Watch Obama's inauguration speech and ask students to pick out collective action problems
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- G. Power and Authority (prepared in lecture notes for this day)
- H. The Framer's Toolkit (prepared in lecture notes for this day)

Collective Action Post-Lesson Worksheet

Please write out your groups' collective answers to the following questions. Please turn in this sheet with your names on it (for today's participation points). You may leave when you are finished.

1. Reflect on the ways in which you each individually brainstormed ways of improving the game for an optimal outcome for each and every country. Share your ideas.
2. What collective actions did your group engage in during the course of game play?
3. If we started the game over, what would your group (specifically) do differently?

PART III: THE STUDY

Approach

Observation Sheet

The reason for having several instructors observe the class is to gather as much information about the lesson as possible. Your primary task is to observe how the students respond to the lesson and focus on how the LESSON worked. The observation focuses on how students learn from the experience and not on how the instructor teaches the lesson.

You will be observing the class as a whole and the groups of approximately 5 students throughout the class period. Please do not interact with students in your group, i.e., do not correct misconceptions, clarify instructions, give help or guidance, etc.

Please take detailed notes on your group's activity. Be on the lookout for examples where students' activities or contributions are related to the learning goals.

Day One

Did the students engage in the ways we predicted? Did they:

- Work to get the most points for their group
- Engage in free riding
- Send out multiple agents to different groups at the same time
- Start to establish rules
- Listen to one authority (or did someone try to be the authority)

Day Two

We are interested not only in whether students demonstrate understanding of the prisoner's dilemma (and other collective action problems) but also whether they start to make connections between individual rational choice, collective action, and the rise of institutions.

Be sure to watch for:

- Student engagement in the lesson. Describe students' level of engagement/interest in the lesson, (e.g., energetic exchange of ideas, non-participation, dutiful compliance to the task, tone of the interactions)
- Quality of group dynamics (positive and negative)—dominating members, quiet members, derailing of the process, goal-oriented, built on one another's ideas, questioned, gave examples, clarified, etc.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surprises or unexpected activity that had an influence on student thinking or behavior. <p>Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Given your observations, what aspects of the lesson need to be changed? How could the lesson be improved? 2. What aspects of the lesson should remain the same? What worked well?
Findings/Discussion	<p>The lesson achieved the student learning goals. Although we did not conduct a pre-test student’s ability to explain and apply the threshold concepts of three major collective action problems was much improved over past semesters. This is evident in their discussion and post-lesson worksheet. In addition to this work sheet, student referred back to the game throughout the semester. As part of their final exam they were asked to explain collective action problems found in the film Lincoln. Many students referred directly back to the game and the activities in the interactive lesson as part of their explanation.</p>
References	See Appendix below
APPENDIX	
Lesson Materials	<p style="text-align: center;">The Isle of Ted Simulation Activity</p> <p>Summary of Game Play: For this exercise, your group represents one of the six groups on the Isle of Ted—Alpha, Beta, Cain, Delta, Eagle, or Frost. You must somehow protect yourself from coastal raids by pirates. At the same time, you can increase your resources by building a system of roads throughout the island to be used for trade. Score will be kept for each country (each begins with 10 resource points). Groups can increase total points to a maximum of 20 and cannot go below 0. Points can be gained through trade. Groups lose points if they are successfully attacked. Groups can also use points to build a road network or to provide for defense.</p> <p>Pirate Attacks: One to four raiding parties will randomly attack one of the four outside groups (Alpha, Beta, Eagle, or Frost) each turn. To defeat the attack the island must have a defense strength equal to or greater than the number of raiding parties; therefore, you may want to negotiate with your neighbors for support (defense strength = resource points spent on defense). Each point spent on defense counts for the island as a whole—“One for all, and all for one!” Each raiding party will carry off one resource point from the country they attack unless they are defeated. Both the number of raiding parties and the country to be attacked will be determined at random. The two groups who are at C and D (Cain and Delta) on the map cannot be attacked unless a neighboring coastal country is attacked and is out of points.</p> <p>Trade: Each turn that a road network exists on the Isle of Ted, groups gain points depending on their locations on the map. The road network covers the entire island. Therefore, groups gain points whether or not they help build the road network. These are the additional points per turn each country gets when a road network is built:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">A (Alpha): 2 resource points C (Cain): 1 resource point E (Eagle): 2 resource points B (Beta): 1 resource point D (Delta): 1 resource point F (Frost): 1 resource point</p>

A road costs an initial 8 resource points to build and 1 resource point per turn thereafter to maintain. The cost of building a road may be shared among groups. Points spent on building the road network will carry over until a total of 8 points is reached. Any points spent in excess of 8 will be lost, and any points spent in excess of the one point necessary to maintain the roads will also be lost. If the road network is not maintained, a further 8 points will be necessary to rebuild the road network.

Notes: We will go through several turns. The first turn will consist of two minutes of negotiation within groups. *No discussion between groups can take place during the first turn.* Thereafter, negotiations between groups will be allowed during the two-minute period. At the end of all turn negotiations each groups' choices must be handed in. The moderator will reveal whether or not roads have been built or maintained and also the total points spent on defense. The results of the trade and pirate attacks can then be tallied. Hand in your decisions on the given sheet of paper. They will be kept secret. No one will know who contributed to the defense of the island or to the building of roads. In fact, you may find deception a useful technique for preserving your points.

Figure 1: Map of the Isle of Ted

