

CollectEdNY Model Review - Web Site with Multiple Resources

This review by Kate Brandt illustrates the goals of CollectEdNY, to select and review resources that promote high-quality instruction and provide substantive support to teachers. Not all reviews will look the same, but each review should have some essential components shown here. The CollectEdNY submission criteria should also be used for reference when writing a review.

Turning Students Into Historians

Web Site: **Teaching History**

Appropriate for: *Building teacher background knowledge, Use in class, Knowledge of teaching*

Resources Available: *Lessons, Texts/Readings*

Readiness for Use in Adult Education: *Some resources are ready for the adult ed classroom and some would need to be adapted*

Level of Engagement: *2 = engaging, 3 = highly recommended*

Teaching History is so full of useful resources that it can seem overwhelming. The website is divided into three main sections: *Teaching Materials*, *History Content*, and *Best Practices*. You'll find quality lesson plans reviewed by other teachers in *Teaching Materials*. *History Content* is where you'll find engaging resources to deepen your own content knowledge. In *Best Practices*, you can learn how to teach historical thinking and turn your students into historians.

Probably the most useful place for adult education teachers to begin is the *Teaching Materials* section. Lesson plans can be downloaded and include reviews by other teachers. Virtually all lessons are built around primary sources.

I chose the lesson plans below because they didn't need much adaptation to be used with my HSE students. They also provide useful models of teaching history:

- **Jamestown, the Starving Time** from the Historical Scene Investigation website. This website presents history learning as a series of mysteries to be solved. Students read a number of primary source extracts as well as analysis by forensic scientists to try to determine what really happened in Jamestown during the "starving time."
- **Propaganda and World War II** from the American Social History Project website. In this lesson, students work in groups and are assigned to look at the war propaganda of one particular country, then report out on their findings.
- **Differing Versions of the First Thanksgiving** from The Learning Network website (New York Times) Students read textbook excerpts about the First Thanksgiving as well as listening to a Rush Limbaugh version and a version from a Native American perspective, considering how the story is interpreted differently based on political viewpoint.
- **The Triangle Fire: From Industrialism to Progressivism**. This lesson provides pre-reading, reading and post-reading activities to help students consider the issues raised by the Triangle Fire.

Also under *Teaching Materials* are a series of teaching guides, which can be used with most historical materials pertaining to any era. **Teaching Guides** are one to two page step by step guides that help teachers introduce best practices in teaching history. Some examples include:

- **Teaching with Timelines**
- **Writing to Learn History: Annotation and Mini-Writes**
- **Interpreting Political Cartoons in the History Classroom**

Teaching Materials also has resources for **Teaching English Language Learners** with many useful activities for scaffolding content-based lessons for English Language Learners.

Teaching History is useful for building teacher background knowledge both on content and pedagogy. There are useful lesson plans from a variety of history-based websites that focus on primary sources. Most texts and lessons are appropriate for the HSE level. Some lesson plans can be used as they are; others will need to be adapted. Because the site can be overwhelming, I recommend checking out some of the lesson plans and teaching guides listed above to see if it constitutes what you are looking for. Try these resources and please share your experience below.

Choose a title for the review (different from the name of the resource) that helps teachers see why they should be interested.

You will be given a login to Wordpress if your review is accepted. You will then be able to fill out these fields when entering your review.

Give a broad overview of the resource in the beginning of the review.

If the resource is large, make a suggestion where teachers can get started.

Describe a few specific sections within the resource that worked for you and/or your students and that you think would be useful to other adult ed teachers.

Provide URL links to specific tools/content areas within the resource.

Write a conclusion that suggests next steps and encourages discussion from readers.

You'll be asked to write a short bio and supply a photo if your review is accepted for publication.



Kate Brandt

Kate Brandt is a Professional Developer in the adult literacy field in New York City and she loves her job. She loves her job so much that she commutes 2 hours per day, from her suburban home in Shrub Oak, New York, to get to work. She loves working in adult literacy because she gets to work with people who are smart, kind, and dedicated.