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## Learned Helplessness: How to Make Students Responsible?

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Learned helplessness- How to make Students Responsible?

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Applied Research EDCI589

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LEARNED HELPLESSNESS AND RESPONSIBILITY

Table of Contents

Introduction.....3

Problem Statement.....3

Rationale.....4

Research Questions.....4

    Learned Helplessness.....4

    How can students become responsible?.....10

    Student Centered Learning.....12

    Examples.....14

Conclusions.....18

References.....19

Appendix.....23

## LEARNED HELPLESSNESS AND RESPONSIBILITY

### Learned helplessness- How to make Students Responsible?

Today's education system is changing. With change there is always a need for adjusting the way things are done. Students today are an ever evolving group of young minds who are constantly being bombarded by social media and with access to the world at the tap of a thumb. Student's attention spans are shorter and teachers are always searching for creative ways to keep all of their students engaged. A New Commission on Skills of the American Workforce (2006) study concluded that K-12 schools need to move away from traditional subject specific curriculum and move towards a constructivist blend that incorporates the culture of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (as cited in Furco, 2007). This idea works to help keep the students more engaged and responsible for their learning. Students are becoming apathetic towards their schooling and they do not understand the full breadth of how it applies to the rest of their lives. Students are also becoming more helpless in their education. In some settings they know that if they wait long enough the answer will be given to them. In other settings the students are not being challenged enough to think for themselves and learn critical problem solving skills. Some students believe that no matter what they do they have no control over their success in school and if this thought prevails this will lead to undesired outcomes as adults. Students are capable of shaping their outcomes and they must be encouraged through success in their own education.

### **Problem Statement**

Students need to take responsibility for their learning. They need to want to learn, but some students do not seem to care. Currently, many students have cavalier attitudes and rely on

## LEARNED HELPLESSNESS AND RESPONSIBILITY

other factors to help them. If students do not take responsibility for their own learning this could have implications for them later in life.

### **Rationale**

We live in a society where individual thought and responsibility are staples of being an adult. Students need to be responsible for their education because they will need to be responsible for their adult lives. The purpose of education is to prepare young minds to contribute to society when they mature. It is crucial that students understand the significance their education plays in their future. High level thinking, problem solving skills, and creativity are all necessary for success as an adult.

### **Research Questions**

1. What is learned helplessness?
2. How do teachers know the difference between learned helplessness and being disengaged?
3. How can teachers help students become more responsible?
4. What is student centered learning and how does it relate to learned helplessness?

### **Literature Review**

#### **Definition**

Learned helplessness is nothing new. The idea has been around since 1967 when dogs were studied under this premise. The dogs were shocked when trying to escape a box a certain

## LEARNED HELPLESSNESS AND RESPONSIBILITY

way and developed passive behaviors even though escape was available via another exit (Tayfur, 2012). Helpless is defined as “unable to take care of yourself or do things without the help of other people” in Oxford Advance Learner’s Dictionary. Learned Helplessness (LH) is defined as “the act of giving up trying as a result of consistent failure to be rewarded in life” by the Collins Dictionary. People sometimes perceive the bad that happens in their lives as uncontrollable. LH fosters a belief that a person’s actions have no effect on the results of a situation (Hooker, 1976). Motivational, cognitive, social, psychological, and emotional deficiencies are all symptoms of LH (Tayfur, 2012; Hooker, 1976). Students with LH develop a cognitive disturbance within their mind where their view is negatively distorted (Hooker, 1976). People are increasingly becoming externally driven meaning that outside sources are what comprise how their lives are dictated. One study shows that from 1960-2002 college/middle/elementary students surveyed have grown in a belief that their lives are controlled by external forces. The percent change between college students in those years is 80% and for middle/elementary students was in the 70% range (Twenge, Liqing & Im, 2004). Students are developing this idea that they cannot control what happens to them. Students with LH are also known as failure-accepting students (Martin & Marsh, 2003). Another term to help understand the idea is *attributions*. This is the “internal explanation individuals devise to explain their success or failure at a task” (Grimes, 1981, p. 91). As negative events in our lives have increased in occurrence i.e. divorce, violent crime, and youth suicide, the trend is to place the blame externally to guard one’s self-concept (Twenge, Liqing & Im, 2004). All these factors have played a part in creating a victim mentality for today’s society (Twenge, Liqing & Im, 2004). LH has created students who are struggling to achieve in school. These students believe that what they do does not affect their outcome.

## LEARNED HELPLESSNESS AND RESPONSIBILITY

Students with LH are different than students who are disengaged. Disengage from Merriam-Webster dictionary is “to release or detach oneself, withdraw”. Students who are disengaged are refusing or rejecting what is being presented (McFadden & Munns, 2002). Disengagement comes from being bored or not finding information relevant to oneself (Schussler, 2009). Further, “a 2006 Yazzie-Mintz study of 80,000 high school students showed their reason for boredom was 75% material that was not interesting and 39% not relevant” (as cited in Schussler, 2009, p. 119). Students with LH are not rejecting the information being presented or bored in the classroom, they simply believe that they cannot achieve no matter what they do. A disengaged learner can achieve. The difference is that he or she chooses not to. To be engaged is to actively participate in instruction (Rock, 2004). A LH student participates in class, but fails to see the connection between his or her actions and the results. LH can lead to characteristics of disengagement. Students may seem like they are rejecting the material when they are actually doing only what they believe they are capable of. LH students are not capable because they choose to be not capable, they are unable to achieve because of perceived and learned failures.

### **Causes**

LH comes from failure, a lack of control, and stress. The way our society has developed over the years also plays into students becoming more helpless. LH develops when failure occurs continuously. As the failure continues a student’s expectations are lowered (Rock, 2004). When the student relates his or her failure internally he or she becomes more susceptible to LH (Firmin, M., Hwang, C., Copella, M., & Clark, S., 2004). In the mind of the students they do not connect their effort to the results. The students fail and they believe it is because they are incapable of achieving and not because they may not understand something fully. Students view

## LEARNED HELPLESSNESS AND RESPONSIBILITY

the failure as unavoidable and proceed to continue in a pattern of failure. When students have a stable and internal view on situations, and outcomes like a pessimistic attitude, they are more likely to become depressed and helpless (pessimistic attribution style). Stability relates to the lack of success occurring all the time as viewed by the student. Internal relates to the student having no control or being incapable of achievement (Tayfur, 2012).

LH is strengthened when students believe they have absolutely no control in their lives (Tayfur, 2012). Students do not believe that what they do affects situations. The continued pattern of failure develops a cognitive distortion in their mind. Other factors that can lead to the development of LH are tragic events, and the inability to attain desired rewards (Tayfur, 2012). Not being able to control what happens to them causes students to give up trying to achieve. These students truly believe that no matter what they do it has no bearing on the outcome of their achievement.

Stress can also lead to a student developing LH. As a student continues to fail anxiety begins to develop because of the continued failure. The pressures put on a student to do well can compound the stress as she continues to fail academically. A student who feels she is unable to control her outcomes also develops stress. The stress grows as the student continues to feel helpless in her attempts to do well. With the combination of failure and feeling they have no control, stress can compound an already difficult situation for students. Guler (2006) sees helplessness as “a notion of becoming passive after being exposed to stressors like repeated punishment, failure and adverse conditions and remaining passive even after environmental conditions make change possible” (as cited in Tayfur, 2012, p.418). Socially anxious people can be more vulnerable to LH. A study of mothers with high social anxiety dealing with unruly children supports this idea. The mothers who had high anxiety were more likely to feel helpless

## LEARNED HELPLESSNESS AND RESPONSIBILITY

and give up sooner than mothers without anxiety (Firmin et al., 2004). The stress failure puts on the child in combination with the need to meet standardized scores puts a great amount of burden on students. Though standards are designed to help the students grow, those who continue to fall short develop the mindset that nothing they do can make a difference.

### **Signs**

The behaviors of a student with LH often appear as depression. These students are depressed because of the lack of perceived control and can be quite self-deprecating (Hooker, 1976). Students who experience adversity early as it relates to tests tend to give up easier or struggle with easier questions as the test goes on. This means if a student attempts to work through difficult questions at the beginning of the test and then comes across easier questions later on, it is more likely that the student will also struggle with the easy questions as well (Firmin et al., 2004). Other signs of helplessness include deficiencies in motivation, cognitive, and emotional abilities (Tayfur, 2012). The cognitive delays make it difficult for students to learn that applying themselves can change outcomes (Tayfur, 2012). Students who continue to fail have less motivation to give their best effort. Emotions are usually depressed especially when it comes to academia. These students will demonstrate many apathetic and passive behaviors (Tayfur, 2012). They see their lack of success as a reason not to try. This results in the students completing the bare minimum because they do not believe they can do any better.

### **Results**

Education has been a focus of our government for some time now. Many regulations have been put in place with the idea of improving education. These regulations do not always provide the best environment for students struggling with LH. Students are required to take

## LEARNED HELPLESSNESS AND RESPONSIBILITY

standardized tests. States and local school districts are being held accountable for the results of these tests and the assumed improvement that should be taking place. Students are feeling this same accountability as they work to achieve great scores on tests and adhere to curriculum built around state standards. Unfortunately, academic growth in the U.S. has not improved even with legislation like No Child Left Behind (Furco, 2007). Students are becoming victims not only in their own minds, but also of an education system that needs a lot of improvement. Students with LH can find these pressures to do well on standardized tests overwhelming. This can lead to added stress in the student's lives increasing their LH. Standardized tests also provide a way for the students to judge their work against other students. LH students need a focus on their own academic achievement, but these tests inevitably draw their focus to how well they did compared to their peers. A New Commission of Skills of the American Workforce (Commission) concluded that K-12 schools need to move away from traditional subject specific curriculum to a more constructive blend that incorporates the culture of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Furco, 2007). The students who continue to fail will develop lowered expectations (Grimes, 1981). These same students also become frustrated very easily when working on difficult problems. Students may feel like they have no control in what they are learning. They are taught around information that will appear on a state test and not necessarily on information building on their background knowledge. This focus can leave LH students feeling less in control of their education and the outcomes that result. Students do not see any connection between their action and what results.

As adults, it is crucial that students possess the ability to work in diverse communities and multicultural settings (Furco, 2007). As students with LH grow older they have difficulty learning new things, taking initiative, and coping with difficult situations (Tayfur, 2012). The student's victim mentality grows into adulthood and they are less likely to take responsibility for

## LEARNED HELPLESSNESS AND RESPONSIBILITY

their lives, relying on others to help take care of them. Some studies show that LH factors into the workplace with behaviors like: passiveness, performance decline, tendency to make mistakes, reluctance to speak out or challenge other people, and an unwillingness to report unethical behavior (Tayfur, 2012). External focuses of students as adults will hamper them as they work to contribute to society.

### **How can students become responsible?**

Students need to take control of their learning. A connection must be made between the effort they put forth and the outcomes of that effort. Instead of a surface approach to learning where students focus on repeating information, or rote learning with no substantive value, students need to apply a deep approach to learning where they work to understand the information (Heikkilä, A., Lonka, K., Niemivirta, M., & Nieminen, J., 2011). There are many strategies to help combat LH in students and make them responsible for their learning. Some examples of good strategies are: Volunteer/Service Learning, Student Motivation Wheel, and Student Centered Learning.

Volunteer/Service Learning involves students using their academic knowledge to assist with community problems and find solutions (Furco, 2007). This type of learning provides students the opportunity to learn new skills, develop leadership skills, and develop realistic perceptions (Mueller, 2005). Volunteering gives students a sense of worth and importance and in order for the service to be successful the students need to feel like they are meeting an actual need (Mueller, 2005). Through service learning students are able to expand their view of the world. They are also able to “enhance their academic, personal, social, civic, and ethical development” (Furco, 2007; Mueller, 2005). Service learning allows for students to better

## LEARNED HELPLESSNESS AND RESPONSIBILITY

engage in cognitive tasks and learning (Furco, 2007). Positive relationships with adults and peers help to promote good experiences for students to build their leadership skills (Furco, 2007). Students with LH are able to engage in something that they can be successful at, which leads to confidence in their ability. These students are also able to see the success of their efforts and make connections between what they do and the results of their effort. Critics view service learning as too much, and a distraction to actual academics. On the other hand, studies have shown, “service learning increases standardized test scores, foster content knowledge and skills, improve attendance, and improve grade point averages” (Billig, Meyer, and Hofschire, 2003; Klute and Billig, 2002; Ammon, Furco, Chi, and Middaugh, 2001; Santmire, Giraud, and Grosskopf, 1999; Furco, 2007). Service learning has positive effects on self-esteem, empowerment, and self-efficacy. Students also have high expectations, and perform better academically in school (Furco, 2007).

The motivation wheel is a strategy developed by Martin (2001, 2002) to help improve student’s beliefs and success in school (Martin & Marsh, 2003). If students believe that they are capable of success then they will have better attitudes approaching new material. To encourage success the wheel focuses on four specific aspects in motivation: self-belief, learning focus, value of school, and perceived control (Martin & Marsh, 2003). These focuses help to build a relationship between the student and learning that they have not had before. Self-belief works to prepare students to problem solve. Valuing ones schooling provides the students with the will to push on in times of challenge. A focus on learning and not performance allows students to explore their own achievements. Showing students that they have control in their lives can help to build the relationship between effort and outcome (Martin & Marsh, 2003). Students with LH

## LEARNED HELPLESSNESS AND RESPONSIBILITY

lack that motivation to work harder and achieve better. With a motivational strategy students will build a strong foundation to support themselves as they work to achieve more academically.

### **Student Centered Learning**

#### **What is it?**

Student centered learning (SCL) is an educational strategy that will have great impact on these students who struggle with LH. SCL is, “knowledge that is constructed by students and where the lecturer is a facilitator of learning rather than a presenter of information” (McMahon & O’Neill, 2005). Too often students are being presented information in the same lecture and note way that leads to behaviors that are not favorable for the learning environment. In order for students to combat LH they need to be engaged and actively constructing their own knowledge inside the classroom. In SCL the teacher becomes more of a facilitator for the classroom guiding students through reflection and group discussions. Questions are used to guide the class through discussion and projects, but the students are allowed freedom in how they utilize those questions (Horng, J., Hong, J., ChanLin, L., Chang, S., & Chu, H., 2005). The focus of the classroom centers on what the students can achieve through their learning and being more active in their education rather than passive.

This emphasis increases responsibility and accountability on the student. The students learn to become more interdependent and develop a deeper understanding of subject matter (McMahon & O’Neill, 2005). At times it can be difficult to engage and challenge the wide range of learners in a classroom. SCL allows for students to work at their own pace (Herreid & Schiller, 2013). This gives the students the opportunity to experience success in their own time

## LEARNED HELPLESSNESS AND RESPONSIBILITY

without worrying that someone else has already completed the task. SCL opens the doors for teachers to create an environment of active participation, free expression, and independent thinking (Horng et al., 2005). To keep information moving along it is important in SCL to keep activities time sensitive thus keeping students engaged (Felder & Brent, 2009). Guidelines for SCL must be clear and there should be a solid base for background knowledge for the students to operate effectively within the environment (Horng et al., 2005).

### **How does it look?**

Students are the focus of this strategy and with this in mind a SCL environment should show the students being responsible for their own learning (McMahon & O'Neill, 2005). A cycle is formed in the classroom where students: experience, reflect, generalize, and apply the knowledge being gained (Smart & Csapo, 2007). The experience involves the actual activities that the learners engage in. Reflection begins as the learners form meaning from their experience. Generalizing has students making connections from the meaning of the activities to their actual lives. The whole process concludes as the students have been guided to engage in higher level thinking as they apply their new found knowledge outside of the classroom (Smart & Csapo, 2007).

It is essential that the students become responsible for their learning to improve their intrinsic motivation towards education. Students' participation is necessary for learning and the teacher operates the classroom as a facilitator for that participation. The students effectively become the operators of their own education as the teacher acts as the IT help desk for the learning environment. This interaction breeds relationships that are more equal among the students and promotes their growth and development (McMahon & O'Neill, 2005).

## LEARNED HELPLESSNESS AND RESPONSIBILITY

A SCL classroom will incorporate many varied activities that engage the students. Through the experience of the activities students discover and develop the knowledge desired. The students are then able to reflect on their experience and continue to build upon it through class discussions (McMahon & O'Neill, 2005). Teachers pose questions/problems to the class. The students work individually or in small groups to come up with responses. The individuals or groups give responses on the subject/question. The teacher improves the engagement of the environment by calling on individuals/groups to answer questions rather than asking for volunteer answers (Felder & Brent, 2009). All these factors create an environment that focuses on clear objectives, controlled activities and instructional interventions (Smart & Csapo, 2007). Objectives must be clear for students to be able to work effectively through them. The instructor acting as a facilitator is able to provide immediate, necessary feedback to students as they work. The focus of the class becomes the process and competence as content takes a backseat.

### **Examples**

When implementing SCL there are two specific strategies that work very well. Both strategies are built on the foundation of placing the focus on students and making them more responsible for their learning. A Flipped Classroom and WebQuests are two effective ways to actively engage students in their education.

A Flipped classroom is exactly how it sounds, students view tutorials and instructional videos at home and then come to school to participate in active learning in the classroom. The idea is that work done in the classroom with the guidance of a teacher is better suited for students (Herreid & Schiller, 2013). Flipping a classroom allows for more focused learning and teaching and allows for better differentiation of instruction (Kachka, 2012). By flipping the classroom a

## LEARNED HELPLESSNESS AND RESPONSIBILITY

teacher can incorporate all types of learners through visual, auditory, and kinesthetic avenues.

The teacher is in the classroom to facilitate as the students work on activities related to the information presented at home. The use of technology is a way of alleviating the use of one way lecturing (Kachka, 2012). Videos are the main source of instructional delivery. This technology is flexible and appropriate for 21<sup>st</sup> century learning. Videos should be no longer than 10 minutes and the use of various multimedia sources is encouraged. The instructor can monitor student participation through summaries of videos or questions that the students write pertaining to the media viewed. This allows the instructor to better tailor the class around information not understood and not belabor information already understood (Kachka, 2012). Flipping a classroom allows for students to move at their own pace as they complete homework in the classroom which allows the teacher insight into the different learning styles and struggles of students. The instructor can also view what topics are confusing students or causing them trouble (Kachka, 2012). This allows for immediate adjustments to be made to cater to the students and adjust instruction for further success. The curriculum is easier to update/customize and get to the students. Creativity provides a more effective and engaged classroom and has shown to increase achievement/interest/engagement (Herreid & Schiller, 2013). Thinking is promoted inside and outside of the classroom and students who miss school are still able to access content immediately (Herreid & Schiller, 2013).

Concerns arise around the ability for all students to have the correct technological capabilities to participate in the flipped classroom. To counter this it is important to make sure instructional posts are placed in multiple locations and provide many options to allow all students access to the content (Kachka, 2012). Another difficulty centers on the implementation of the flipped class. Students may be resistant in the beginning and there will be difficulty in

## LEARNED HELPLESSNESS AND RESPONSIBILITY

tailoring homework and activities specific to the students learning styles (Herreid & Schiller, 2013). The success of flipping lies in how the instructor utilizes the increased class time to interact with students (Kachka, 2012).

WebQuests are, “an inquiry oriented activity in which some or all of the information that learners interact with comes from resources on the Internet, optionally supplemented with video conferencing” -Bernie Dodge (Kurt, 2012). This activity was introduced in 1995 when internet technology was starting to take off (Abbit & Ophus, 2008). WebQuests comprise of six steps: introduction, tasks, information sources, description, guidance on how to organize information, and conclusion. These activities can vary in length from short (2-3 class periods) to an entire month (Kurt, 2012). WebQuests have guiding questions to assist the learners through the activity to completion (Piercy, 2004). Students work through the quests individually or in larger groups. The quests themselves are designed to require learners to use creative thinking and high-level problem solving skills. Teachers are also able to give students feedback as they work through their quest (Piercy, 2004). Structure and scaffolding are maximized for learners during their use of WebQuests and the strategy is a great introduction to integrating technology in a learning environment (Abbit & Ophus, 2008). Students are guided through interactive activities focused on content. Motivation is positively affected in students participating in quests. Students prefer the quests because of their engaging nature (Abbit & Ophus, 2008).

Many factors contribute to the success of a WebQuest. This is still a relatively new idea and research is still evolving. This strategy presents itself as a great tool for learners to access the information outside of school or anywhere that has internet access (Piercy, 2004). Cognitive load can be overloaded and hinder learners understanding of information. In order to maximize learning quest creators should watch for: Split attention Effect (Use of different sources that

## LEARNED HELPLESSNESS AND RESPONSIBILITY

require attention to be split), Redundancy Effect (the duplication of adequate material within the design of instructional materials), and Modality Effect (presentation of material in more than one modality) (Kurt, 2012). Though students enjoy this type of activity it is crucial not to overwhelm them with excess information. The overall goal for this tool is interactivity to increase the learners motivation, where interactivity is the extent learners can participate in modifying the form and content of an environment in real time (Kurt, 2012). These activities work to provide students a platform to create their own ideas of the information being presented. Murray (2006) and Tsai (2006) suggest that students find WebQuests more interesting and engaging than textbooks and lectures (as cited in Abbit & Ophus, 2008). In another study, Kotecamp & Bartoshesky (2003) found that students relate well to the collaborative nature of WebQuests (as cited in Abbit & Ophus, 2008).

### **Impact on Students**

SCL has lasting effects on students as they continue in their education. Students need to be engaged and their motivation has to come from within. It is clear through both examples that SCL helps to improve motivation amongst students (Abbit& Ophus, 2008; Herreid & Schiller, 2013). The scaffold approaches of SCL create confidence in students and their own ability. Ruddick (2012) study showed that test scores for a chemistry class done flipped and regular lecture style were high for those students in the flipped classroom. The students became more interested in the class and found that content less intimidating (Herreid & Schiller, 2013). Test scores increase when active learning is introduced in a classroom (Prince, 2004). Students are able to advocate for themselves and their education with the immersion in SCL. Choice in what students learn and how they learn allow for responsibility to grow. Assessments provide students the opportunity to self-assess themselves which is essential to getting the student to

## LEARNED HELPLESSNESS AND RESPONSIBILITY

understand their responsibility for their learning (McMahon & O'Neill, 2005). Students participating in SCL develop independent thinking, creativity and are more imaginative (Hornig et al., 2005). Using strategies such as randomly calling for answers requires students to be prepared to respond (Felder & Brent, 2009). Students have to be engaged when they know there is a possibility they could be called on at any time. Their knowledge is regulated by themselves with the guidance of the teacher in the classroom. Students develop higher order thinking skills, and explore their own attitudes and values. As the students experience education it helps them to retain knowledge better (Smart & Csapo, 2007). SCL encourages all areas of a student's education as they are pushed to understand their role in their future. A Helsinki study showed that students involved in SCL developed better study skills and understanding. Another study, Hall & Saunders (1997) showed that student participation and motivation, and grades had increased in classrooms focused on SCL (McMahon & O'Neill, 2005). With skills in hand students will be prepared to adapt to the ever changing adult world. Students will be able to assess their lives and problems that arise in a creative, assertive way. Increased motivation to do well will aid students as they strive to reach the goals they have set for their lives after school.

### **Conclusion**

In the 1960's people believed that hard work would bring them success, unfortunately this may not be as strong a belief in 2013. Our society seems to grow as one that looks to place the blame rather than take responsibility. It is this kind of mentality that is reflected in the youth of today. Students have become increasingly external in their belief of how their lives are controlled. This belief has falsely led these students into a helpless state. Students who experience early failure are susceptible to developing LH. If the failure continues it is almost certain that they will not understand the correlation between their effort and their outcomes.

## LEARNED HELPLESSNESS AND RESPONSIBILITY

Students need a strong academic foundation of success from which they can grow. With the experience of small successes confidence can be built. If these students' issues are not addressed early it makes it even more difficult to try to adjust later in their life. With the improvement of technology our society continues to perpetuate the idea of quick and simple results. No longer does it seem that hard work brings success because it everything is being created to get rid of the work. Students are not learning. They are going through the motions. Our education system has to evolve to meet the changing needs of these students. New 21<sup>st</sup> century oriented lessons and planning is necessary to motivate the young minds of students. They need to see the connections and understand why it is important for them to learn all the things that they are being taught. If students continue to seek help rather than work problems out for themselves they will grow to be adults who cannot advocate for themselves. The goal of education is to prepare a capable mind for contribution to society. Educators need to reflect on the strategies presented and work to educate students on being responsible for their education.

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## LEARNED HELPLESSNESS AND RESPONSIBILITY

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## LEARNED HELPLESSNESS AND RESPONSIBILITY

### Appendix

#### How to Flip your classroom?

To flip a classroom the focus and goal is to move instruction outside of the classroom to allow for more activity oriented time inside the classroom. Here are some key steps for flipping your classroom.

1. Create a lesson presenting the information to be learned through a screencast, podcast, online video, or some other type of outside technology.
2. Create an environment or online community for your classroom to post responses to the material viewed at home. This will also be a great place for other outside interaction between students or for questions they may have for you the teacher.
3. Utilize in-class time to work on activities related to the content viewed at home. You may want to go over some points to review. Use this class time to connect content to the students' lives.
4. Act as a help desk for students working on activities either individual or group.
5. Conduct group discussions and writing sessions about the content discussed.
6. Always provide hard copies for those who may not have complete access to all the technology necessary.
7. Be open for class feedback to be able to better tailor your class to the student's needs.
8. Allow for tiered learning to facilitate the learning speeds of different students. Provide more advanced activities for students who are understanding concepts more quickly.
9. Monitor progress through weekly assessments as well as unit assessments.

## LEARNED HELPLESSNESS AND RESPONSIBILITY

### Great Resources

Google Document for Flipping Classroom- [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1IOI5-tXZvOEVCFhoN5hlscnRa-8\\_77nx3GDdB6C-tE/edit?pli=1](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1IOI5-tXZvOEVCFhoN5hlscnRa-8_77nx3GDdB6C-tE/edit?pli=1)

Web tools- <http://www.edudemic.com/2013/04/web-tools-for-flipped-classrooms/>

More information- <http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/eli7081.pdf>

<http://www.knewton.com/flipped-classroom/>

### How to create a WebQuest?

WebQuests are a great tool to utilize to get your students engaged in high order thinking. They are also a creative more engaging way for the students to learn. Here are a few keys to making a WebQuest.

1. Create an outline for the lesson or content activity that you want to work with.
2. Find a template or create a template to construct the actual WebQuest on.
3. Once you have an outline you then follow the six steps involved in creating a template: Introduction, Task, Process, Resources, Evaluation, and Conclusion. You can also add a home page as well as a teacher page to detail what other teachers need to complete the Quest.
4. The topic/introduction discusses what the content is about. The task is what the students will be doing. The process is how they will complete the task(s). Resources is where you list all your online resources. Evaluation shows the students how they will be

## LEARNED HELPLESSNESS AND RESPONSIBILITY

graded. The conclusion wraps all the parts together and reviews what was hopefully learned through the Quest.

5. Be sure to create a hard copy of the Quest for those students who may have trouble accessing technology.

### Great Resources

Template for WebQuest- <https://sites.google.com/site/indt501webquest/>

<http://zunal.com/index.php>

<http://webquest.org/index-create.php>

Guide to WebQuests- [http://www.educationworld.com/a\\_tech/tech/tech011.shtml](http://www.educationworld.com/a_tech/tech/tech011.shtml)

<http://www.slideshare.net/yvette21/creating-a-web-quest>

### Flipped Classroom Lesson Plans and WebQuests

#### Flipped Classroom Lesson Plan- Math (SOL 7.14a)

One-Step Linear Equations 7<sup>th</sup> Grade

Content that would be available and viewed at home:

Content Videos- What is a variable?

<https://www.khanacademy.org/math/algebra/solving-linear-equations-and-inequalities/variable-and-expressions/v/what-is-a-variable>

Example: Evaluating an expression

## LEARNED HELPLESSNESS AND RESPONSIBILITY

<https://www.khanacademy.org/math/algebra/solving-linear-equations-and-inequalities/variable-and-expressions/v/variables-and-expressions-1>

Why we do the same thing to both sides: simple equations

<https://www.khanacademy.org/math/algebra/solving-linear-equations-and-inequalities/why-of-algebra/v/why-we-do-the-same--thing-to-both-sides--simple-equations>

One-step Equation Intuition

<https://www.khanacademy.org/math/algebra/solving-linear-equations-and-inequalities/why-of-algebra/v/one-step-equation-intuition>

At home Task: Write a paragraph review of what you learned from the videos and write your own one step equation. Post to the class website.

In-Class Activities: Students will work in groups of 4 and create 20 one step equations that relate to their lives. They will trade questions with other groups and solve the equations. Class discussion on the usefulness of being able to use these equations and questions related to understanding. Students will get back in their groups to create a Newspaper Article for the front page detailing one-step equations.

### **Flipped Classroom Lesson Plan- Science (SOL 6.5)**

Water Cycle 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

Content that would be available and viewed at home:

Content Video- Bill Nye the Science Guy-Water Cycle

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G6FpOdSveIU>

## LEARNED HELPLESSNESS AND RESPONSIBILITY

Interactive Models- Water cycle diagram

<http://earthguide.ucsd.edu/earthguide/diagrams/watercycle/>

Water cycle

[http://www.harcourtschool.com/activity/science\\_up\\_close/308/deploy/interface.swf](http://www.harcourtschool.com/activity/science_up_close/308/deploy/interface.swf)

Evaporation+ Condensation

[http://www.harcourtschool.com/activity/science\\_up\\_close/408/deploy/interface.swf](http://www.harcourtschool.com/activity/science_up_close/408/deploy/interface.swf)

At home Task: Write a paragraph review of what you learned from the videos and any questions you have about the content. Post to the class website.

In-Class Activities: Students will work with partners to create a brochure about a certain part of the water cycle. The class will then take part in a team(4) water cycle jeopardy game. Class discussion about content and how it relates to their lives.

### **WebQuest- Written(Paper Supplement) English 9<sup>th</sup> Grade (SOL English 9.4)**

Poetry? I'm no poet.....yet!

Introduction- Poetry is dumb. I'm never going to need this. It doesn't even make sense. These may be a few phrases that you have said or that you have heard from your classmates. Poetry is a great way to express emotions or tell a story in unique ways. You and your partner are going to become *poets* and discover what poetry is all about. By the end of the week you will perform your partner's poem that they create for the class.

\*Poet- A person who writes poems.

## LEARNED HELPLESSNESS AND RESPONSIBILITY

Task- This Quest will transport you to the world of poetry. When you have completed this Quest you will know the history of poetry and some of its big players. You will develop and understanding of the purpose of poetry and you will create your own poem to be performed by your partner.

Process- Task #1 Take a look at the history of poetry through these two sources [WikiPoetry](#) and [Poetry.org](#). Usually [these](#) items would be linked to the pages that support and give examples of the content stated. For a hard copy version you would provide the information on those specific pages for the student to research. Each partner should write down 10 important facts learned from the history. Together you will create a [timeline](#) with at least 10 specific references to the history of poetry.

Task #2 Now that you have the history down you will need to know what [types](#) of poetry there are and who the major [players](#) were. After reviewing the types of poems and poets you and your partner will write 2 sonnets. The first sonnet will be about poets and the second will focus on types of poetry. Remember the [rules](#) for a sonnet and be creative.

Task #3 You will now become a poet. Both partners will compose their own poem. The poem must be about a *meaningful event* in your life. You may use any type of poem that you like but it must be a decent length (at least 10 lines). Once completed you will work with your partner on how your poem will be [performed](#) for the class. Now prepare to perform!

\*meaningful event- something that has significance or purpose

## LEARNED HELPLESSNESS AND RESPONSIBILITY

Again, the words in [blue](#) represent links to online information for students to access to complete the quest. In hardcopy form you would include this information printed out for students to view.

## Resources-

Linsao, K. (n.d.). *How to perform poetry*. Retrieved from

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*Poetry foundation*. (2013). Retrieved from <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/>

Timpane, J. (2013). *Writing a sonnet*. Retrieved from <http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/writing-a-sonnet.html>

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## LEARNED HELPLESSNESS AND RESPONSIBILITY

## Evaluation- Rubric

	Beginning	Developing	Accomplished	Exemplary	Score
Timeline					/25
Sonnets					/40
Individual Poem					/25
Performance					/10

Conclusion- Look at what a poetry expert you are now. I bet you didn't think you would create a poem to be performed by someone else, but you have done it and it was a success.

Everyone has feelings and people deal with them in different ways. You now have the knowledge and expertise to express yourself through sonnet or haiku. As you mature into an adult take what you have learned and use it to your benefit. Sometimes poetry is a great tool to have when you have feelings that you need to express immediately in a neutral form. Do not overlook the power poetry can provide you.

*"Poetry is the rhythmical creation of beauty in words."*- Edgar Allan Poe

## LEARNED HELPLESSNESS AND RESPONSIBILITY

**WebQuest- Computer Screencast Civics 8<sup>th</sup> Grade (SOL CE.1)**

Here is an example of a Civics lesson designed for two weeks. To reach this lesson online visit:

<https://sites.google.com/site/womackswebquest/home>

## Home

Womack's WebQuest

Search this site

Home

Introduction  
Task  
Process  
Evaluation  
Conclusion  
Credits  
Teachers Page  
Sitemap

## Home

### Do you really have to be 21 to drink???

This WebQuest is geared towards 8th grade students taking a Civics course. Students will use the internet to research the topic of lowering the drinking age to 18 years old. They will come up with political cartoons and create maps mapping individual state laws. In the end the project will culminate with a debate on whether the drinking age should be lowered or not.

**It is focused on the Virginia SOL standard:**  
**CE.1** The student will develop the social studies skills responsible citizenship requires, including the ability to

- examine and interpret primary and secondary source documents;
- create and explain maps, diagrams, tables, charts, graphs, and spreadsheets,
- analyze political cartoons, political advertisements, pictures, and other graphic media;
- distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information;
- review information for accuracy, separating fact from opinion,
- identify a problem, weigh the expected costs and benefits and possible consequences of proposed solutions, and recommend solutions, using a decision-making model;
- formulate an informed, carefully reasoned position on a community issue;
- select and defend positions in writing, discussion, and debate.

**WebQuest Contact**  
 Justin Womack, Locust Grove Middle School  
 jwomack88@gmail.com  
[Via Twitter](#)

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## Introduction

## LEARNED HELPLESSNESS AND RESPONSIBILITY

Womack's WebQuest

Home  
Introduction  
**Task**  
Process  
Evaluation  
Conclusion  
Credits  
Teachers Page  
Sitemap

**Introduction**

*Should the drinking age in the United States be lowered from 21 to 18 years of age?*

*Should it be legal for seniors in High School to be able to drink?*

*With many young students drinking well before the legal age what is the point of keeping the drinking age so high?*



You and a partner will become lobbyists to investigate together this hotbed topic in our society today. You will research the necessary information and create documents to analyze the information that you find.

In the end you and your partner will make a stand in support or against this idea. You will explore debates to help assist you with preparation and use the documents you previously created to assist you in your debate prep.

Are you ready to go head to head with your classmates in this heated debate?

*Drinking Age: Should it be lowered from 21 to 18 years of age????????????*

**Touch gloves and do not begin to fight until you hear the bell!**

## Task

Womack's WebQuest

Home  
Introduction  
**Task**  
Process  
Evaluation  
Conclusion  
Credits  
Teachers Page  
Sitemap

**Task**

With this assignment you will immerse yourself in the world of social issues. More specifically you will decide: Should the drinking age be lowered from 21 to 18 years old?

When you have completed this Quest you will be able to research a topic and decide which facts are pertinent. You will create a map detailing drinking laws and design your own political cartoon. In the end you will be able to take a position on this social question and debate the issue against your peers.



## Process

## LEARNED HELPLESSNESS AND RESPONSIBILITY

Womack's WebQuest

Home  
Introduction  
Task  
**Process**  
Evaluation  
Conclusion  
Credits  
Teachers Page  
Sitemap

## Process

### Stop #1

You will choose a partner to work with during this quest. Together you will both begin researching and compiling notes on the subject of the national drinking age. You need to focus on the question, Should the drinking age be lowered from 21 to 18 years old? Start here with the actual law. [THE LAW](#)

You will need to decide on this Quest what is relevant information (fact), and what is just filler or opinion (fiction).  
Good places to start would be:

[Pro vs. Con Drinking Age Act-Wiki](#)

Great Blogs and articles:

[Why is the drinking age 21?](#)  
[Should the US lower the minimum drinking age?](#)  
[Lower drinking ages lead to more binge drinking](#)

Between both partners there must be at least **2 full pages of notes (1 page each)**.

### Stop #2

You and your partner will now look at the individual state laws in the United States. Together you will create a map detailing the variances in state laws as it pertains to underage drinking. You will use the map file at the bottom of this page to create your map. This map should encompass the entire United States and be **color/symbol coded including a key to identify meanings**.



## Evaluation

Womack's WebQuest

Home  
Introduction  
Task  
Process  
**Evaluation**  
Conclusion  
Credits  
Teachers Page  
Sitemap

## Evaluation

This is how your work will be evaluated. The entire project is worth 220 points. That will be divided between group work and individual pieces of the Quest. The last 20 points relates to your group participation. If you are not contributing to your partner work or talking excessively about unrelated topics your participation grade will be lowered.

Partner Rubric					
	Beginning 1	Developing 2	Accomplished 3	Exemplary 4	Score
State Law Map	Map is incomplete and looks sloppy.	Map with a key that is difficult to follow. Map has some organization.	Detailed map with a key that is easy to follow. Map has some organization and looks good.	Detailed map with a key that is easy to follow. Map is organized well and looks great.	/25
Political Cartoon	Lacks humor or sarcasm. There is no color and Cartoon is not complete.	Completed title, but missing the humor/sarcasm. Not much color.	Good title, humor and colorful.	Great title and humor that gets the reader thinking, and colorful.	/25
Defense of your position Paper	Paper is incomplete with multiple paragraphs missing. Little thought used to	Paper is incomplete. Missing defense points and unorganized.	All required paragraphs are present and organized. Good information used to defend position.	All required paragraphs are present and organized. Detailed information used to defend	/25

Individual Rubric					
	Beginning 1	Developing 2	Accomplished 3	Exemplary 4	Score
Notes	Fewer than half a page of notes.	Has written half a page of notes with little organization or detail.	Has written one complete page of notes with some organization and detail.	Has written one complete page of detailed notes with great organization and thought.	/25
Political Cartoon Review	Did not complete all reviews with little effort was given.	Completed 3 reviews with little thought.	Completed 3 reviews with some insight.	Completed 3 thoughtful reviews of cartoons. Made connections to higher thinking.	/25
Debate Observations	Less than 3 observations.	Wrote 3-5 observations and was not detailed.	Wrote 7 observations, but did not go into detail about the understanding of the debate.	Wrote 7 meaningful observations that showed higher understanding of the debate.	/25
	Paragraph is	Understanding	Understanding	Understanding	/25

## Conclusion

## LEARNED HELPLESSNESS AND RESPONSIBILITY

Womack's WebQuest

Home  
Introduction  
Task  
Process  
Evaluation  
**Conclusion**  
Credits  
Teachers Page  
Sitemap

Conclusion

And the winner is.....YOU!

Great job! You have researched a topic, decided what is fact and fiction, formed your **OWN** opinion, took a stance, and debated your position. You did all of this while creating your own map depicting laws and political cartoon. This Quest asked you to read about a topic that you may or may not have been familiar with. You familiarized yourself with the topic and gained enough information to make your own informed decision. As you become an adult you will be constantly analyzing information and making educated and informed decisions. Take what you have learned here and apply it to your daily life. Take the lead in **THINKING**.

*Rarely do we find men who willingly engage in hard, solid thinking. There is an almost universal quest for easy answers and half-baked solutions. Nothing pains some people more than having to think. - Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.*

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## Credits

Womack's WebQuest

Home  
Introduction  
Task  
Process  
Evaluation  
Conclusion  
**Credits**  
Teachers Page  
Sitemap

Credits

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Hulu. (Performer). (2012, October 15). Saturday Night Live - Cold Opening: Vice Presidential Debate [Web Video]. Retrieved from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3-cKuprkYOc>

JFKLF. (Performer). (2010, September 21). [Web Video]. Retrieved from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gIxcRKqLSRw>

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Super teacher worksheets-usa blank map. (2013). Retrieved from <http://www.superteacherworksheets.com/maps.html>

## Teacher Page

## LEARNED HELPLESSNESS AND RESPONSIBILITY

Womack's WebQuest
Search this site

[Home](#)  
[Introduction](#)  
[Task](#)  
[Process](#)  
[Evaluation](#)  
[Conclusion](#)  
[Credits](#)  
[Teachers Page](#)  
[Sitemap](#)

## Teachers Page

**Introduction**

This is a class project centered around the question: Should the drinking age be lowered from 21 to 18 years old?

Through this project I want students to be able to research information and draw their own conclusions on a topic. I then want the students to think for themselves and take a stand on the position. I want students to be able to be knowledgeable about a subject and be able to defend their belief through debate.

**Students**

This lesson is designed for an 8th Grade Civics course. This lesson could definitely be used for any grade in High School. You may want to add more in depth assignments, or ones that require a high level of comprehension to the projects. There is no prior knowledge needed for this project.

**Standards of Learning**

This project is focused on students developing strands from the Virginia SOL:

CE.1 The student will develop the social studies skills responsible citizenship requires, including the ability to

- a) examine and interpret primary and secondary source documents;
- b) create and explain maps, diagrams, tables, charts, graphs, and spreadsheets;
- c) analyze political cartoons, political advertisements, pictures, and other graphic media;
- d) distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information;
- e) review information for accuracy, separating fact from opinion;
- f) identify a problem, weigh the expected costs and benefits and possible consequences of proposed solutions, and recommend solutions, using a decision-making model;
- g) formulate an informed, carefully reasoned position on a community issue;
- h) select and defend positions in writing, discussion, and debate.

The goal is that students will be able to review information for relevance and separate fact and opinion. This project also works for students to look at problem and decide for themselves the the benefits or costs associated with a solution. In the end the most important goal is that students will be able to take a stand on the position and defend themselves in a debate.

Students will develop critical thinking skills while participating in this project. They will need to think about the information they are researching and what it means to the question being asked. They will have to learn to communicate well with their partner whom they are researching with. They will also need to acquire the tools necessary to defend their position on the topic. Students must learn to communicate well with their partner and discover the different ways people communicate. The students will then learn what is the best way to communicate with their partner.

**Process**

This lesson is planned for a two week period. Students will have two days to complete each except for stop 4 and 6 where those will be one day (Note: Depending on class size Stop 6 may take two days as well). A basic introduction can be given about the subject of political/social issues. Students will be broken into pairs for this Quest. If you have a class that is more "free spirited" I would assign the pairs myself. If you trust your class you can let them choose their pairs. You will assign each pair a side to defend during the debate. This is to make sure that you have an even amount of pairs to debate and why the students have a paragraph to explain their actual decision. Pairs have to work well and not talk things not related to the quest. Direct your students the the Evaluation page so they can see how they will be evaluated. Let them know that 20 points of their group work will be related to participation. If one group member is doing a bulk of the work remind them of this.