Step 1.

I was assigned topic IV from the NCSS standards book which is Individual Development and Identity.

I brainstormed on several topics that dealt with individual development and identity and eventually came up with the idea of choices and decision making as the main topics of my unit. I choose decision making and choices because this lesson will be aimed at seniors in high school who very shortly will have to start making important decisions that will affect the rest of their lives. Some of the first questions I came up with when I started thinking about decisions and choices included:

1. What goes into making important decisions?
2. How much thought do we give to possible outcomes when we make decisions?
3. Are a lot of choices always a good thing?
4. Is there always a “right” choice or decision in life?
5. How have important decisions been made throughout history?

After thinking over these questions and several others I feel ready to create my “big question”.

**Big Question:**
How will or how have important choices affected us in our daily lives and how have decisions or choices affected mankind throughout history?

Step 2: Goals and Objectives

**Goals:**
1. I want students to begin to think about some of the important choices they will have to making in the very near future and what will go in to making those choices.
2. I want students to think about choices they have already made and think about how those choices positively or negatively affected their lives.
3. I want students to analyze some of the most important choices or decisions that have been made throughout history and understand how these decisions in some cases changed the structure of our country or other cases the structure of the world.

**Objectives:**
1. Students will reflect on how their personal beliefs and opinions have influenced and could influence some of the important choices they have made. NCSS IV (F) (High School)
2. Students will identify one big decision they have to make in the near future and describe how they will go about making it and what factors in their life will play a large part in their decision. NCSS IV (C) (High School)

4. Students will make connections between how these decisions were made and how they make decisions in their daily lives.

5. Students will show and use research skills to complete a final activity for the unit on decisions. Students will be demonstrating the ability to: do internet research for credible sources, effectively find and use other sources in addition to internet and show effective speaking abilities in front of class.

**Step 3: Sub Questions**

1. What is thought process we go through when we make an important decision?
2. How much thought do we give to what the outcome will be to a decision we make?
3. What are important decisions that students will have to make as they leave high school.
4. How have important decisions been made throughout history?
5. Who has made the important decisions throughout history? And has it always been the people you would expect?
6. How can we relate decisions that have been made throughout history to our own lives?

**Step 4: Materials/ Primary Sources**


Textbook: “The Americans” Students will use this book in their research.

Video Clips of advertisements recorded from television.

Website:

Website:

Video:
Binge drinking [videorecording] : the right to party?
Step 5: Assessment Plan

-Students will be graded on a combination in and out of class activities including journals, in class assignments, take home worksheets and a culminating group activity.

-On the first day of the unit the students will begin working on a journal that they will need to have with them every day through out the two week unit. On the conclusion of day one the students will begin to work their journals by writing about one big decision they will be making that will affect their lives in the near future. Students can talk about college plans, work plans, boy or girl friends, marriage or any else important in their lives. The journals will only be read by the teacher and will be strictly confidential.
-As we move through the two week unit the students will write in their journal each day after we complete what ever lesson we are working on for that day. The idea of the journal is for students to try and draw connections to the decision they are trying to make to the topics discussed in class. The students will not be expected to find a connection for each day of class and in some cases will be expected to write about how the in class lesson did not apply to the decision they are trying to make.

Final Project/ Activity
- The students will be split into groups no larger than four that the teacher will chose to work on a final project.
- Once the groups have been chosen the students will be instructed that their task is to analyze one important decision from history that had a large impact on the U.S., the whole world or both.
- The students will be expected to be ready to present their projects by the last two days of the two week unit. The presentations will be 10-15 minutes long and the students will have the choice of creating poster presentation, role play, research paper, video or any other way of presenting their topic that is approved by the teacher.
- The presentation must include: at least five opinions from each side of the decision they are discussing. For example if they were to choose the decision to drop the atomic bombs on Japan they would need to explore at least five reasons the Americans thought the bomb was a good idea and five why they thought the use of the bomb was a bad idea.
- Also the students must include an explanation that states why the decision was made the way it was made and what the outcome and after effects were from each groups chosen decision that they presented on.
- The groups also must use a minimum of 8 sources in their presentations and 3 of the 8 cannot be internet sources. Internet sources also must be credible and sited correctly.
- Each group will also be graded on clear speaking, organization and quality of visuals during their presentations.

In and out of class activities.
- In class advertisement activity.
- Project topics turned in by day 4.
- Iraq war letters mini paper due on day 6.
- 10 journal entries
- List of reasons why college students drink day 7
- To drink or not to dink poster: in class.
- Top ten lists: in class
- Presentation viewing worksheets: in class
- Final reflection due the Monday after unit ends.

**Step 6: Lesson Plans**

Lesson 1-Opening activity 50 minutes

Age: High School Seniors

Material Needed: Note books, pens and pencils.

Procedures:

1. Class will begin with a web activity dealing with choices and decision making. I will write the words choice and decision on the board and circle them. Next the students will be asked to speak up and tell me anything that comes to their minds when they think about making decisions or choices. After the students have listed several aspects of decision making we will make a of the most important aspects of decision making in general.

2. Next the class will compile a list of important decisions that are coming up in their lives after they graduate. The students will then be instructed to write out what the biggest decision they have to make on a personal level is after graduation, weather it’s what college to go to or were to look for a job. The decision they write will be kept private and entered into their journal.

3. Now I will introduce the unit the class will be working for the next two weeks. I will introduce the unit to them by stating the big question which is “how have or how will important choices affect us in our daily lives and how have decisions or choices affected mankind throughout history?” After stating the big question I will explain to them what some what the main assignments will be throughout the two weeks including the journals and the final presentations.

4. To finish off the day I will introduce the journal assignment to the students. The students will be informed that they will have to write in their journal at least once during every class period for the next two weeks and usually will have the last five minutes to journal. To start their journal the students have to think of one important decision or choice that they have coming up in the near future or after they graduate and describe it. As the teacher I will make it clear that no one else besides me will read what they write in their journals.

5. Since it is the first day I will give them the last 10 minutes to think of what decision they want to write about. I will make it clear to them that they will be thinking and writing about this decision for the next two weeks.

Lesson 2- “What influences our decisions?”

1. Once the students are seated and class has started I will begin class by showing several video clips that have been recorded for television commercials. I will try
and show commercials for everything from beer and liquor, to cars, fast food, clothes, shoes and even advertisements for local universities.

2. After about 20 minutes of watching videos I will break the students into groups of three or four and instruct them to make a list from the most effective to least effective advertisements they saw. Once they have made their list they will create a poster or handout that shows what they feel are the best advertising strategies to get the attention of young adults. The groups will then briefly present their findings to each other. Each group will hand in their poster or handout for participation points.

3. The students will have the remaining few minutes to write in their journals. Their assignment will be to think back to the decision that they wrote about on day one and discuss some of the advertisement strategies that were examined in class. The students will think of the advertisements and write about any influence advertising or the media in general will have or has had on their personal life decisions.

Lesson 3-“Decisions Throughout History” Introduction of Final Project

1. As the students enter class there will be several historical events listed on the board for them to look at. The events will all deal with important decisions that have been made throughout history including: the decision the confederates made to break away from the union starting the civil war, Rosa Parks deciding to not give up her seat, the colonists deciding to declare war on Britain, the U.S. decision to drop the atomic bomb and others.

2. The students have to take out their journals and pick one of the historical events off the board and spend the next ten minutes writing at least five factors that they feel weighed in on the decision they chose. These are not right or wrong the idea is just to get them thinking about decisions throughout history.

3. Once the students are done journaling I will introduce their final project which will center on an important decision from history. The students will receive a hand out that goes over the instructions for the project(see assessment section) and the I will go over the hand out answering any questions.

4. Next I will put the students into groups of four by randomly drawing names from a hat. The students will be given time to meet in their groups to discuss what topic they want to do their project on. Each group will be assigned to come back the next day with a topic picked out. Each group will have to write their topic on a sheet of paper and turn it in at the beginning of day 4.

Lesson 4- “How do we make decisions”
1. When the students come into class I will immediately collect their sheets of paper with the topics for their group presentations.

2. Once the topics collected I will pass out six different letters that have been written by soldiers who are fighting in the Iraq war. There are about 30 students in the class so there should be about four to five students per letter. Each group will have about 10-15 minutes to read over their letter and discuss it.

3. After war letters have been read the groups will breakup, and participate in a jigsaw activity were they will explain what their letter was about to a group of students who each had a different letter to read. The jigsaw will last 15-20 minutes depending on how big each group is.

4. Once the jigsaw is over I will introduce the topic of the day which is “how do we make decisions?” I will discuss with the class what they think some of the reasons where the soldiers they read about joined the army. Before the end of the hour I will give them their assignment.

5. The students will be assigned to write a 1-2 page double spaced paper about what it takes to make a decision. The students will have to write the paper from the standpoint of a high school student who is trying to decide weather or not he or she will join the military. Using the information they gained from reading and hearing about the various war letters and any information they can gather on their own they will weigh the pros and cons of the military and ultimately decide if they will join up or not. The paper will be due on day 6 or Monday of the second week of the unit.

6. If any time remains the students will have the rest of the class to write in their journals. Since they have read about the war they will write about their how they feel about the war in their journal. If they don’t want me to know how they feel about Iraq they can write about any war and what they think of it.

Lesson 5/6- Workdays
1. Students will have days 5 and 6 as work days to get ready for their final projects.

2. I will try and meet individually with each group on day 5 to approve each group’s project topic. Students will also be given time in computer lab to research on the internet.

3. Students will be graded on participation for these two workdays.

4. At the start of day 6 their 1-2 page papers will be collected.

Lesson 7- “Drugs and Alcohol”
1. I will take day 7 to discuss the choices the students will have to make in the future or have already made when it comes to drugs and alcohol.
2. I will start off the first 20 minutes of lesson by showing the video “Binge Drinking: the right to party” which shows many scenes of binge drinking on college campuses.
3. Next we will discuss as a class, why so many college students decide binge drink. Individually the students will list why they think college students decide to binge drink and turn their reasons in for participation credit.
4. For the last 15-20 minutes of class the students will work in their final project groups and create a two posters; one that defends a college student’s decision to drink or do drugs and one criticizes the student’s decision to drink or do drugs. Each poster will have to give reasons why or why not the student decided to drink or use drugs and show the consequences the student will face from the decision to use drugs and alcohol or not to use drugs and alcohol.
5. The posters will also be turned in for participation points. The students will have the remaining time left in class to write in their journals. They will discuss how drugs and alcohol could have an influence on the decision they wrote about on day one.

Lesson 8 “What goes into a choice”
1. Students will look back through their journals and assignments from the past week and a half and create a top ten list for making a choice.
2. Students will work in their project groups for the first 25 minutes of class and come up with the top ten most important aspects of making a choice. The groups will have to agree with each other on what the ten most important steps that goes into making a choice are.
3. After the groups complete their collaborative top ten lists the students will create their own personal top ten lists in their journals.
4. The students will have the rest of the hour to meet with their groups to prepare for presentations.

Lesson 9/10 presentations
1. The groups will present their project to the class for the last two days of the unit.
2. The students who are not presenting will be expected to pay attention to their class mates who are presenting. The students will fill out a work sheet for each group that presents. The questions on the worksheet will be as follows:
   a. What is the historical decision this group is talking about?
   b. List at least two reasons for and two reasons against the decision the group is presenting.
   c. What overall impact did the decision have on either the U.S. or the whole world
   d. Do agree or disagree with the decision.
3. The last 10 minutes of day 10 will be reserved for final journal entries. The students will finish their journaling by discussing how this unit has helped with making the big decision that they wrote about on day one.
4. I will close by putting the big question back on the board and assigning a one-page reflection due on Monday. The reflection will be a summary of the student’s thoughts on the unit as a whole and if they feel the unit was able to answer the big question.