

9th ELA Instagram
Pre-Interview

Interviewer: Why did you choose to teach this lesson?

Teacher: Okay, so this particular lesson is a introduction to "To Kill a Mockingbird." They don't know anything about it yet, so this particular activity will get them to think about the context of the time period, the setting, what was happening. It is a springboard, from the curriculum's springboard, but, as I looked at it I modified some things to get them engaged a little bit more, but the bottom line is to get the kids to get an idea of the setting. The geographical, the cultural, what was happening; so they're going to be looking at pictures and coming up with their own inferences; so none of this is from me, all of their conclusions and their own inferences will come from each other, and just from their questioning. Yeah.

Interviewer: What are the learning outcomes for this lesson, and how are they related to that larger sequence?

Teacher: Okay, so the outcome is for them to take a look at the picture to observe, don't need to make any conclusions just yet. They will ask questions about the picture, then that would lead them to thinking about, "Okay, what was happening, truly happening in that time period," and then at the end, after we've done all of the activities, we are going to summarize, "Well, what do you think is happening in that time frame and that time period when To Kill a Mockingbird was written?"

Interviewer: That's going to lead them into then exploring the story and ...

Teacher: Yes, correct, and so then they'll make that connection to the issues in To Kill a Mockingbird.

Interviewer: How would you describe this lesson as meaningful, useful, or relevant to students lives?

Teacher: Okay, so, very tricky, because To Kill a Mockingbird, the setting, they have ... It's so far off from who they are in terms of context, the time period, even the language is very difficult, but the human situations, still the same. What I'm trying to do with this activity, just by looking at pictures, is not have them be so fixated on the time period, and, "What is this picture about? I got to know what it's about. I need to do research before I come up with a conclusion," but it's for them to look at it, and come up with their own natural reaction just because they're humans, and I think that's really important when you read To Kill a Mockingbird, because it's not ...

Yes, it's important to know the setting, but most importantly, "What is happening with people, and does it still happen today," and that is something that they will need to come to a conclusion to; so this particular lesson obviously gets them to think about those things, drawing on who they are, what their values are, what their peers are; and then, they start to also question their own culture. I think that's what, to me, To Kill a Mockingbird is about, and doing this also lessens the anxiety of reading such a difficult

text with so much meaning into it.

Interviewer: What are the big questions you're using to drive student discussions?

Teacher: The questions, it wouldn't come from me, it will be from the students. Part of the lesson is that they observe. They make their notations, they come up with a reflection, and then they come up with their own question; so I'm not going to come up with the question, it's what they're going to come up with, and from there, we can talk about it. I think for a lot of kids, when I asked the question, they get nervous, because they need to know, "Oh, the teacher's asking the question, so I must have the right answer," but when you have the kids ask the question, it's their own curiosity that will lead us to even more questions. For the most part, for this particular lesson, we don't have answers yet, because I don't have the answer, it's about them finding out the answer later on in the novel, or in our next assessment.

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Interviewer: How would you describe this lesson as engaging for students?

Teacher: Okay, so like I said, the original springboard of my assignment was to, yes, jot down the ideas, jot down your questions ... All of that crucial element of this lesson is going to be there, but I added a component where they actually will have to create an Instagram post of the picture, and that in itself, I think is engaging for the kids because that, that's their culture, that's their world, and they will ask me, you know, "Do I need to be formal about this? Do I need to be serious," and it goes back to, "Well, why would you post this in your Instagram post? Why? Why would you have said what you ... "

A lot of that thinking comes back to who they are, and whenever you focus about them, because they're so self-centered, they're 9th graders after all, it becomes very engaging. It's, you know, they're like, "Oh, it's me, it's me," and it's, there's no right or wrong answer, and I do encourage that; so they're familiar, the majority of them are very familiar with that kind of social media, but for those who are not, you don't have a social media account like Instagram, I did pair them up with someone, so it's, within that pairing or triad someone has it. I do allow them to say, "Hey, take out your phone, go ahead, and let's look at what this is about," and so, that already is engaging. They get to use their phone, which teachers ... You will see you can, "Oh, my God, we're looking at social media but there's a purpose to what we're doing," so that is engaging already, because that's their world.

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Interviewer: How do you plan to check for understanding, or assess student outcomes?

Teacher: Okay, so as they're working on this, obviously, this is new for them, they're going to get really excited, so a lot of the ... Walking around, and talking with them, having conversations with them. Eventually, they will be sharing their Instagram post to one another, they'll be posting comments. I always like to do a share at the end, because they get so excited and so proud of what they do, and so that in itself is a great check for understanding at the end, and of course, we're going to summarize it, "What did you

guys think? What did you guys come up with?" Yeah, I think everybody will be checking on each other, not just the teacher, but you also hear it with their, just their excitement, just their chatter of what they want to write about. Yes, it can get silly, but they're silly because they're excited about the assignment. Yeah.

Interviewer: How do you plan to manage student behavior throughout the lesson, starting with expectations?

Teacher: Okay, so I already know, since this is new for them, and it's something that they really want to do, there's going to be a lot of, "Well, what do I do? What should we do? We're uncertain," so a lot of it is in the beginning, I will tell them, "Okay, this is what I want, this is the end product," showing them what example would be, "Okay, this is a great example. Now I want you to move from there," so reminding them to be appropriate. I do allow the chatter, because that's where the learning happens. I do allow the laughter, because that's when the engaging comes in, but ...

[00:08:00] It's more of, kind of pointing them out, "Okay, we only have ... We have five minutes to do this," so a lot of time cues, "Can you finish this up? I know this is important, but let's move on," you know, "Let's move, let's finish this so we can get on to the next," so a lot of, again, time cues. If it gets too loud, of course they know. They'll know what's happening and when they need to refocus, but I will just anticipate a lot of chatter, a lot of laughter, and that's how it should be.

Interviewer: Sounds awesome to me.