

9th ELA Flight
Pre-Interview

Interviewer: All right. So, why did you choose to teach this lesson?

Teacher: I teach socratic seminars throughout the year as a way for students to develop their close reading skills, in a way that is student centered. And they get to choose what they talk about and develop their questioning skills and it's just really tied to the common core reading standards and the speaking standards. It's something that I like to hone in on these skills throughout the year and get them better and better so that they're ready to go onto the higher levels.

Interviewer: Sorry. What are the learning outcomes for the lesson and how are they related to [inaudible 00:00:42].

Teacher: The learning outcomes are two fold. They're ... The expectation that students are able to engage in a meaningful discussion with their peers through questioning, clarifying, verifying, inviting others in the discussion, and that they are able to show close reading, being able to site evidence and being able to look at why the author is doing what he's doing. He or she's doing. And that again just fits in with the common core and every text that we do, we are really trying to develop their skills more and more and more so that they're experts at being able to discuss and also read closely. More independently.

Interviewer: And how would you describe this lesson as meaningful while being useful to students?

Teacher: I think it's really helpful as students are entering high school. I have freshmen, so ... That they're learning how to ask questions on their own with out the guide of a teacher always asking, "what is the author doing here?" Or, "Why is this important?" Because it just makes them independent learners and that's what we really want see. Is that, they can do it on their own and think critically. So, when we send them off into the real world, that they can be successful in college and be successful in their careers because they are independent thinkers and learners.

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

Teacher: I think most importantly is ... How can having a discussion about a text deepen a understanding of it? And how can we as a group of peers work together to get at a deeper understanding? I think those are the big questions that I want them to think about as a means of why we're doing this and what's the importance of it.

Interviewer: How are you planning to check for student understanding or assess the outcome?

Teacher: There's a couple different items I'll be looking at. I'm looking at the actual discussion. So there is a rubric that they have and I think of when I'm watching and I check off every time the students demonstrate those skills. So I look at the actual listening to the discussion. I also look at their peer review because they also rate each other. So, I look

at that as a factor of, "are they learning? Are they doing what they're supposed to?" And then, in the end, they reflect on the discussion and they reflect on, "did I meet the standard today?" And then they add anything that they felt like they learned from the discussion. So, I can look at that to see "okay, are they listening and did they actually learn from the conversation?"

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

Teacher: I think socratic seminars are one of the most engaging activities I do because, they are in charge and I sit on the side. And they get to ask the questions and they have a leader and they really like that. And there's also like a coach that I assign. So, they are in charge of coaching another person and there's just this collaboration that you see that I don't see in any other activity. And the kids are just really into that and I think as being a high schooler, it's important for them to feel in charge. So, that adds a lot of engagement.

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Interviewer: And how do you plan to manage student behavior throughout the lesson. Starting with expectation?

Teacher: At the beginning of the year we do ... They come up with their own class rules. That's something that's an expectation already and something that I follow through with. But I think, just in teaching freshmen is just structure and making sure everything structured. Everyone has a rule. Everyone knows what they are doing and just ... If anyone forgets, at any moment, you remind them ... "what are we supposed to be doing now?" And that really helps to avoid any issues. It'll just be kind of looking at "Okay, what's your role? What are you doing?" And that's how I'll manage the behavior.