

12th ELA Students Present
Pre-Interview

Interviewer: Why did you choose to teach this lesson?

Teacher: The non-book, book report project covers a requirement to have the students choose a novel from the AP recommended list to prepare for the exam. In the past, the assessment was an essay. I've also had visitors, different principals, different district people, come in and they often will interact with the kids and ask "What are the standards that you guys are learning?" They're like "We don't know but we are really engaged and we love this class, and I know it has to do with these universal themes. I thought, I should increase their awareness of the standards that their hitting, so I made up a different assessment where it crosses disciplines, they are required to ... Besides the ELA 11th and 12th grade "Reading for information standards", they also have to have two literacy standards for science, two for social / history, and they had the option to swap out two math for either of those two.

Interviewer: That's good. There's a lot of people talking about cross-disciplinary. What are the learning outcomes for this lesson and how are they related to the larger sequence?

Teacher: The learning outcomes [inaudible 00:01:40] ... Part of it the learning outcome was for them to demonstrate an understanding, the universal themes and conflicts in the novel, and/or the particular structure that an author chooses to write. The other was ... The big essential question was 'What part of their novel is relevant to today's society?'. The last part of this non-book, book report project, it deals with a public sharing, which incorporates using technology, or a form of social activism or awareness. Public sharing is not limited to the walls of this classroom. Students could post their three dimensional brain model on PTSD effects in their psychology class. Students created video's on technology's negative effects on social etiquette on YouTube, which is ironic, but they had those options.

Interviewer: I like it.

Teacher: That was funny.

Interviewer: The paradox. How would describe the lesson as meaningful, useful, or relevant to the student?

Teacher: So far ... This is the first project that I'm doing. The first time that I'm doing this project. I've received just a handful of assessments, self reflections on the projects. Some students are like "Wow." The question is 'What is one thing you would recommend to the teacher to change about this project?'

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

Teacher: I think it's relevant for the students because they got to play upon their strengths. Whether they are performing artists, someone did the singing of ... Created a modern version of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and she sang it in class. All the four main characters parts and did duets from contemporary rap songs and everything. We have people who are more ... Who want to write, they want to do research, and so they got the option to submit their evidence that way, so it was relevant.

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Interviewer: What skills are they using that they may use later on?

Teacher: From the reflections that I received from the students, a big part of it is time management. "This project requires your own time management system." "I wish I had this and that." That's a good thing that it was challenging. Also, they had to choose their project; because it was so open-ended. For them to pick and choose their strengths ... It's amazing how they then tie it together to their classic novel. Pride and Prejudice, or Crime and Punishment.

Interviewer: What are big questions that you are using to drive student thinking or discussion?

Teacher: The second question was "How was one aspect of your novel relevant to today's society?". That's where the science and the research part comes in, or historical background. Also, the social activism awareness part. One student created this website from Catch 22 based on her reading. A whole website on PTSD and what happens within the brain with the hippocampus and the medulla. As far as ... She has some current songs by artists out there. Amazing art photography as well. She hardly says anything in the class, she just quite by nature, but to see the wealth of knowledge and connections ... She had resources. If you know someone who may be suffering from this, these are some suggested websites, help for you out there. I thought, wow that's great, from reading a novel.

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Interviewer: That's really cool. How are you planning to check for understanding or assess the student outcome?

Teacher: I use the standards that they chose. They could have chosen from ten ELA standards, eight science, eight math, ten history standards. Which ever ones that they chose for their proposal is how I'm going to assess their project. Some of them, in their reflections, they said they started with trying to meet these standards but the energy of the project flowed to another area so I choose these two standards instead Ms. because I think it ... The fact that they're not aware of the standards and what evidence means, I think has been an improvement for the course.

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

Teacher: Totally engaging. Some of the presentations within the class have led to students running or asking, prompting Socratic discussions. They ask "Do you mind if I do a

[00:10:00] discussion instead of just a passive presentation, PowerPoint, Prezi?", "Yeah sure that's fine." Another student said "Do you mind if I take them and we go outside the classroom?" because she had a rating system that focused on the haves and the haves not within society. She had them all line up and for every questions like "Do you own an iPhone 6?", you take a step forward. Sooner than later, after the end of the questions, we saw clear divide between the social and materialism. It was a great activity. Eye-opener for all of us.

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

Teacher: I think the initial proposals was a lot of concern. I said, these are the requirements that I need, the standards, I need the shape of your project and you determine your deadlines and I hold you accountable to that. They're like "Is there a form for the proposal?" "How do you ... ?". As professionally as possible. They took that word professional to mean various things. It was really interesting to see the quality of the proposals. I think that set up the standards. Everybody was like "What are you turning in?", "Oh, you turned in that?", "Oh, you made it like that?". It was fine.

Interviewer: Was there any parameters for how they were going to present or what the presentation was supposed to be as far as audience or presenter behaviors or expectations for how they were going to do it?

Teacher: I think that just comes with the culture of the class that we've been building because we have a lot of Socratic discussions. It's kind of set. Everyone listens, acknowledges someone's points, they may offer another option. Then they wait for that thread, their energy to run down, and somebody says "Is it okay if I change this topic to this next idea?" and everybody is very supportive. Each of their individual presentations have been pretty interesting. I'm looking forward to the last of the presentations.

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Interviewer: Awesome. Cool, go ahead.