

12th History McCarthy Post Interview

Interviewer: How do you think you were effective in communicating a purpose over the lesson?

Teacher: I hope so. I did the slide at the beginning, went through the reasons why. Why did it happen, and the people involved, which is really the nuts and bolts of what they need to remember. I think they're going to get that, happen fear of growing communism. The Soviets were gaining power. There's more. Other lessons around that will help reinforce that. We're going to do another lesson next class about the Arms Race and nuclear power in that way. Understanding who is involved, I think we've hit that pretty hard. Huac is on the side. Remembering Nixon and Huac is a nice tidbit but knowing McCarthy is essential. I'm pretty sure we talked about that enough times that they'll remember. There's the homework that supports that too.

Interviewer: Which parts of your instructional practice do you think were most effective in supporting the students to meet those learning objectives?

Teacher: It's like the book ends thing, because it's an activity that's not strictly about McCarthy, you're going to learn about McCarthy. Here we did this thing, and do you notice you learned about McCarthy? Any time you're going to do this sort of an activity, and I've done this with creating monopolies, in steel industry with Carnegie, and other role plays like this. I always tried to set it up. We're gonna do an activity and you're going to learn about McCarthyism, and the Red Scare and why it happened, and who's involved. We do the whole thing. We discussed it, and now you learned about ... You notice how this connects to ... To me, it's like a book ends idea.

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Interviewer: What role did organization or planning play in this lesson plan and classroom set up?

Teacher: With the classroom set up first, it's really important that everyone can see, and they see each other. When they're in rows, it doesn't work out very well, so I like this setup. The setup also gives me lots of space, so we can walk around, which is important for this activity, and others that I've done. Organization, I was a bit disorganized today because we're having the lunch. That was going on. Usually I prefer to write up the little cards that say red, and green before hand, but I was doing it at the last minute this time. That's something to think about. Next time, maybe plan ahead.

Just having the power point ready to go. Actually, I had done this, not that long ago, with my tenth graders, where I do have some students from China, who really don't speak a lot of English, and so I'd added those slides with the translations of the directions, and I'd forgotten they were in there. I rolled that out, all of a sudden there was Chinese on the screen. I was as surprised as they were that it was there. Perhaps I need to make two versions of the power point.

Interviewer: What role did behavior management play as far as expectations, procedures, routines, discipline?

Teacher: I should have said ahead of time, that you need to not shove each other around. I forgot that this group gets rambunctious in a way or excited about something and then there was a little pushing. I had to go walk over there just to make sure it was going to settle down, and not actually hurt anyone's real friendships. I should have taken care of that ahead of time. I could have just stopped it with out having to deal with it later. In terms of the management, some of the kids, I noticed there was one group where the girl brought her other homework and she was in there reading or studying for probably a test that she has next class. She halfway did the activity. She got a group. She was okay. She was done. That was the first group that I went to to try and instigate some trouble so that she would refocus on what we were doing.

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There were other groups ... Usually I try to ... In this activity, I go to the groups that are checking out first. Try to get things going. Discuss it with them. Make sure at least that they've thought about what I want them to think about, even if they're done and they're settled and they aren't going to change, to make sure at least they've got their cognitive part settled, while the other groups are still fighting amongst themselves about who's in and who's out, and that kind of thing.

Interviewer: How do you think the last one went, with regards to student engagement?

Teacher: Pretty good. I was a little worried during the discussion time because I noticed some students were starting to fade. Some are really into it, and they want to share. Some are a little less so, which is why I kept going back to the cards, because I want them to know like, hey, everyone's going to still be involved, even though certain people want to share a lot, and that's okay. They're not the only ones who get to share. Otherwise, real quickly, it's a class of ten people instead of thirty.

Interviewer: How do you think students found the poem engaging?

Teacher: There was more than I thought it was going to be actually. I never know quite who I'm going to get for readers. I pull cards, and the first reader, who was a little slow about it, and that happens sometimes. It is what it is. That's why I stop periodically and I'll ask questions or I told them to underline or highlight, because it just keeps getting them coming back to it. I tried at the end, more than before, I tried to ask more open ended questions. What do you think about that? Instead of, how does this relate to McCarthy, or something where ... I do want them to get that in the end, and they did. They did come around to that, but I think when it's more open, they're more engaged in it. They're more interested.

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I felt a little bad. There was one girl who kept offering suggestions but she's been sick for like a week and a half. Other kids were getting things because they'd been in class. They were seeing the connections more readily. I think she was a little bit embarrassed by it, so I wanted to make sure to validate. You're right in this way, and ... Instead of saying, "You're wrong," "And," and then get somebody else to add the other component to it. She was clearly engaged in the poem, so that was good. Hopefully they were.

Interviewer: How do you think the students found the lesson meaningful or relevant?

Teacher: They seemed to find some relevance that I wasn't always picking out. Some of them are engaged in the campaign right now, so they see the Trump connection. The whole business about, they don't want to play whatever the band director wants them to play or something, and the idea like, oh we could all stand up to her, and get something different, that was totally beyond what I was expecting, right? Very good, for them and maybe a third of this class is in band so they totally got the analogy. That was great. Those guys will remember this way beyond the test in May, so that's good.

Interviewer: How would you like to develop this lesson in the future?

Teacher: I think I need to add more pictures to the slide, because we talk about the historical examples, but instead of having just one list on a slide, I think maybe I would make a separate slide for each one with pictures, a visual that would help the kids remember or think about who it is, like the McCarthy holding up the papers is an important visual. Probably some of these guys are going to forget that. Over time, they'll forget what he looked like or they may forget that he did the famous speech with the paper and he said, "Here, I have this list."

[00:08:00] Even if they remember part of the idea of McCarthy and McCarthyism, seeing that with the words and talking about it and relating it to the experience they did will be really important, I think. That's something I could do, I think like I said before, the directions need to get smoothed out a little bit. It's a little chunky. It's a little slow-starting. I got to figure out some other way to get the names out to them. It takes too long for me to walk around the room. I don't know how else I can do it. I got to work on that.

Interviewer: Good.