



Teacher-to-Teacher

Video Series
for Secondary Educators

TITLE: Class Forums: An English Language Arts Lesson for Information Resources

PRIMARY SUBJECT AREAS: English Language Arts

GRADE LEVELS: 10 (adaptable to higher and lower grades)

OVERVIEW: We begin with a series of class forums. Everyone free writes on the topic of the day (Should AIDS infected students be allowed to attend public schools, should marijuana be legalized, etc.) to stimulate ideas and activate prior knowledge. I then share a piece of literature related to the topic (i.e., *The Ryan White Story* excerpt, drug abuse pamphlet, etc.). Our classroom is then divided; students with opposing viewpoints face one another. After ground rules (only the speaker in front on the stool has the floor, alternate sides, etc.) are suggested and adopted by the group, students articulate their positions in successive turns. Inevitably students open notebooks or grab scraps of paper and begin outlining their arguments in preparation for rebuttal. Many times opposing sides join forces and strengthen their positions. When faulty reasoning or distorted facts or sensational statistics are suspected, students usually demand proof.

We are then led, quite naturally, to the school library for an exploration of available resources. So determined to *prove* a point, students sometimes spend days perusing reader's guide suggestions or on-line data. Eventually we return to the classroom to refute the opponents' claims and conclude the forum.

Upon completion, I ask students to reflect, first in writing and then orally, on both the content and process of our activity. Students often comment on the benefits of teaming, researching, note taking, and listening.

After allowing for thorough reflection, we proceed to the next topic. As you can imagine, the arguments and critical analysis become more sophisticated. When three or four forums are completed with accompanying research and reflection, we each select one topic that became particularly important, confusing, or challenging for us and outline the major arguments. We then carry our writings carefully through the writing process and usually end up with well-written, insightful, research-based essays.

APPROXIMATE DURATION: Approx. 2 weeks (10 fifty minute class periods)

LOUISIANA CONTENT STANDARDS:

<http://www/DOE/assessment/standards/ENGLISH.pdf>

Standard Five: Students locate, select, and synthesize information from a variety of texts, media, references, and technological sources to acquire and communicate knowledge.

ELA-5-H1: recognizing and using organizational features of printed text, other media, and electronic information (e.g., parts of a text, citations, endnotes, bibliographic references, microprint, laser discs, hypertext, CD-ROM, keyword searches, bulletin boards, e-mail)

ELA-5-H2: locating and evaluating information sources (e.g., print materials, audio and visual materials)

ELA-5-H3: accessing information and conducting research using graphic organizers, outlining, note taking, summarizing, interviewing, and surveying to produce texts and graphics

ELA-5-H4: using available technology to produce, revise, and publish a variety of works

ELA-5-H5: citing references using various formats (e.g., parenthetical citations, endnotes, bibliography)

GLEs Addressed:

Grade 10

39. Select and evaluate relevant information for a research project using the organizational features of a variety of resources, including:
 - print texts such as prefaces, appendices, annotations, citations, bibliographic references, and endnotes
 - electronic texts such as database keyword searches, search engines, and e-mail addresses (ELA-5-H1)
40. Locate, analyze, and synthesize information from grade-appropriate resources, including:
 - multiple printed texts (e.g., encyclopedias, atlases, library catalogs, specialized dictionaries, almanacs, technical encyclopedias, and periodicals)
 - electronic sources (e.g., Web sites and databases)
 - other media sources (e.g., community and government data, television and radio resources, and other audio and visual materials) (ELA-5-H2)
41. Analyze the usefulness and accuracy of sources by determining their validity (e.g., authority, accuracy, objectivity, publication date, coverage) (ELA-5-H2)
42. Access information and conduct research using various grade-appropriate data-gathering strategies/tools, including:
 - formulating clear research questions
 - using research methods to gather evidence from primary and secondary sources
 - using graphic organizers (e.g., outlining, charts, timelines, webs)
 - compiling and organizing information to support the central ideas, concepts, and themes of a formal paper or presentation (ELA-5-H3)

43. Write a variety of research reports, which include the following:
 - research that supports the main ideas
 - facts, details, examples, and explanations from multiple sources
 - graphics when appropriate
 - complete documentation (e.g., endnotes, parenthetical citations, works cited lists, or bibliographies) (ELA-5-H3)
44. Use word processing and/or technology to draft, revise, and publish various works, including research reports documented with parenthetical citations and bibliographies or works cited lists (ELA-5-H4)
45. Follow acceptable use policy to document sources in research reports using various formats, including:
 - preparing extended bibliographies of reference materials
 - integrating quotations and citations while maintaining flow of ideas
 - using standard formatting for source acknowledgment according to a specified style guide
 - using parenthetical documentation following *MLA Guide* within a literature-based research report (ELA-5-H5)

TECHNOLOGY STRATEGIES:

<http://www.louisianaschools.net/DOE/LCET/curric/k12stand.pdf>

Technology Communication Tools (*Communication Foundation Skill*)

Students use telecommunications to collaborate, publish, and interact with peers, experts and other audiences.

Technology Productivity Tools (*Resource Access and Utilization Foundation Skill*)

Students use technology tools to enhance learning, increase productivity, and promote creativity.

Technology Research Tools (*Linking and Generating Knowledge Foundation Skill*)

Students use appropriate technology to locate, evaluate, and collect information from a variety of sources. Students use technology tools to process data and report results. Students evaluate and select new information resources and technological innovations based on the appropriateness to specific tasks.

Social, Ethical, and Human Issues (*Citizenship Foundation Skill*)

Students understand the ethical, cultural, and societal issues related to technology. Students practice responsible use of technology systems, information, and software. Students develop positive attitudes toward technology uses that support lifelong learning, collaboration, personal pursuits, and productivity.

INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS:

Civics: Citizenship and Government, Economics: Interdependence and Decision Making

OBJECTIVES:

1. The learner will use organizational features of printed text (e.g., endnotes, list-servs), Internet, and other media to locate information.
2. The learner will select and evaluate information from multiple sources for specific purpose(s) or real-life problems.
3. The learner will choose and narrow research topics.
4. The learner will synthesize information by surveying, interviewing, outlining, note-taking, paraphrasing, and summarizing relevant information from research.
5. The learner will write a research report, including a bibliography.
6. The learner will paraphrase ideas and words of others.
7. The learner will draw conclusions from research.

MATERIALS:

Physical Resources:

Literature Connections to Topics (examples)

AIDS: *The Ryan White Story*

Marijuana: informational pamphlets

Death Penalty: *Time* articles

Smoking: *My Daughter Smokes*

by Alice Walker

Library Access for Research

Internet Access for Research

People Resources

School Nurse

Experts in Topic Area

TECHNOLOGY CONNECTION:

Hardware: Computer with Internet access

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The students should be able to read, comprehend, and respond to literary text. They should have the ability to apply basic reasoning and problem solving skills. A beginner's knowledge of technology will suffice.

LESSON PROCEDURES:

1. Everyone free writes on the topic of the day (Should AIDS infected students be allowed to attend public schools, should marijuana be legalized, etc.)
2. Share a piece of literature related to the topic (i.e. *The Ryan White Story* excerpt, drug abuse pamphlet, etc.).
3. Divide classroom; students with opposing viewpoints face one another.

4. Establish ground rules (only the speaker in front on the stool has the floor, alternate sides, etc.)
5. Students articulate their positions in successive turns.
6. We are then led, quite naturally, to the school library for an exploration of available resources
7. Return to the classroom to refute the opponents' claims and conclude the forum.
8. Upon completion, ask students to reflect, first in writing and then orally, on both the content and process of our activity.
9. Proceed to the next topic.
10. When three or four forums are completed with accompanying research and reflection, select one topic that became particularly important, confusing, or challenging.
11. Outline the major arguments.
12. Carry writings carefully through the writing process

REPRODUCIBLE MATERIALS:

N/A

ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES: Teacher observation is a major assessment component in this activity. Teacher can create rubrics to address specific components and/or goals. (i.e., expectations for notebook/writing entries, rubric for group participation, etc.). Culminating writing activity can be evaluated according to LEAP 21 criteria or unit/course-specific criteria.

ACCOMMODATIONS/MODIFICATIONS:

Collaborative learning allows for peer support in smaller setting. Constant teacher monitoring/listening allows for clarification as needed.

EXPLORATION AND EXTENSION:

Select one topic that became particularly important, confusing, or challenging and outline the major arguments. Carry writings carefully through the writing process to create well-written, insightful, research-based essays.

RESOURCES: Louisiana Department of Education Content Standards obtained @: <http://www.doe.state.la.us/DOE/asps/home.asp?l=CONTENT>

REFLECTIONS:

This lesson has worked well with students at varying levels of writing competency. Activities correlate well to GEE 21 Information Resources Section. Students are truly encouraged to examine their views on a variety of controversial topics.

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