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Found Poems as a Demonstration of Student Learning
and
A Brief Introduction to Challenge Based Learning
As A Method of Creating Social Action

Overview and Objectives:
The purpose of this EQUIP is to marry poetry as a form of creative expression, insightful note-taking and listening, and the use of technology into a meaningful, authentic, and assessable project that can be published to express students' understanding of literature, power, and their feelings on social issues. I will do this by:

1) Demonstrating how to create found poems as a mode of reflection and assessment and publish them digitally in order to not only create awareness global issues but also to start a conversation between students from all places about how their writing could inspire change.
2) Providing 2 websites that can be used to support and enhance the student writing and publication process.
3) Sharing my facilitation of the poem process as well as writing samples.
4) Asking institute members to participate in the process of recording "power phrases" from an excerpt from Elie Wiesel's interview and then using those phrases to begin the creation of their own found poem.

I did this project in three different contexts this year. First, I used it with a sophomore class as a way to help students note meaningful phrases and words from multi-sensory presentations and then putting them together into poetry to convey a singular theme that fit with the unit of study (in this case, the theme of humanity and inhumanity), then 11th grade students used this form to summarize their feelings at the end of a unit of study over Slavery and the Civil War, finally, 11th graders also used this form to create Character Found Poems that demonstrated a multi-level of understanding about a character of their choice from the novel The Great Gatsby. The students are instructed on the process of gathering insightful tid-bits of information throughout their study, given the traditional format and design of the Found Poem, and are given an example to show them how information is condensed from prose into poetry.

Students today struggle with making real and meaningful connections with what they read and discuss in class, and I have found that journal writing in its traditional form bores them. Because I teach in a 1:1 technology environment, it has been imperative that I find ways to embed the use of technology concepts into the classroom environment. These research and reflection activities have helped support the creation of meaningful and high quality student work, and the students have demonstrated pride in their work by publishing it for the world to see!

Rationale:

The components of this assignment that I find intriguing, useful, and exciting are:
1) Students are encouraged to read their material closely to interpret what is particularly meaningful and what is not.
2) Students are challenged to only write tid-bits of information that fit under a theme, so they have to think critically about what they are writing and weed out what is useable and what is not when they begin the poem writing process, therefore developing note taking skills.
3) Students develop a better understanding of connections between what they are taking notes on and their goals for what they are writing in order for the poem to work.
4) Students are challenged and find this exercise to be like putting a puzzle together. Most really enjoy the challenge of piecing words and phrases together in a way that not only makes sense but is powerful and impacting.
5) Students are excited to publish their work online!

Activities:
1) Hand out Found Poem structure and example and discuss "Bearing Witness" unit I used during 2008/2009 school year and how technology and writing played crucial roles in the learning process and in social action (10 minutes)
2) Have group watch excerpt of "Elie Wiesel Interview" and have them record "Power Phrases" and then arrange them into Found Poems. (handout) (15 minutes)
3) Allow participant to take their power phrases and begin to construct them into Found Poems (15 minutes)
4) Ask 2 volunteers to share their pieces (5 minutes)
5) Hand out other student examples to read (5-7 minutes)

Discussion:

    a. What are the feelings you felt in doing this activity? How did it make you feel about the material presented?
    b. In what ways can I improve this concept to make the process smoother and more impacting?
    c. Are there other forms of poetry that would lend themselves well to this writing activity?
    d. How do I help teach students about asking questions?
    e. What kinds of challenges could we incorporate to really use the CBL model in an effective way for this sort of subject matter?
    f. I want to use this concept in my social responsibility class next year, but I need help brainstorming ideas of how I can get students thinking about using their power to create change in an attainable way.

Resources:

"Challenge Based Learning". Apple Classrooms of Tomorrow, Today. 10 June 2009.
http://newali.apple.com/cbl/.

Dodge, Birnie. "Voices Rescued From the Holocaust". 10 June 2009.
http://questgarden.com/00/00/7/070328164441/.

Leibold, Don. "A Poetic Finale". *Arthur and Rochelle Belfer Exemplary Lessons Initiative.*
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. 10 June 2009.
http://www.ushmm.org/education/foreducators/prodev/beli/2003/lesson.php
?content=leibold.

Wolk, Steven. "Reading for a Better World: Teaching for Social Responsibility With Young
Adult Literature". Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy. May 2009.

Publishing Websites:
http://www.livejournal.com/
http://www.teenink.com/