**Interview Protocol for a Pre-Observation (Planning) Conference**

**Date:** December 11 & 12, 2013 **Teacher:** Danielle Troetti **Grade Level:** 8

**Subject(s)**: Reading/ Language Arts

**Demographic Information**

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| School: Bethel Middle School | Teacher: Mrs. Danielle Troetti |
| Date: December 11 and 12, 2103 | Period/ time:  Wednesday, Dec. 11: pd 4, 10:32 – 11:12 a.m.  Thursday, Dec. 12: pd 1, 8:23 – 9:03 a.m. |
| Room number: 182 | Grade level: 8 |
| Demographics: 20 total, 35% SPED, 50% male, 50% female, 10% F/R Food | |

**Room set up**

See attached document labeled room 182. My work will be represented through computer projected images and what students will have at desks. There is a flip chart in front of the class where I will post objectives and the unit’s essential question.

**Questions for discussion[[1]](#footnote-1):**

1. How will this lesson address the content area standards?

*Probing further…*

* *ELA/literacy: Is there a text (or multiple texts) at the center of the lesson? Which standards will be addressed through work with this text (or texts)?*

**Standards:**

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.1](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RL/8/1/) Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.2](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RL/8/2/) Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.4](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RL/8/4/) Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.10](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RL/8/10/) By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of grades 6–8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.1a](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/SL/8/1/a/) Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.1c](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/SL/8/1/c/) Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others’ questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas.

**Texts:**

“I Hear America Singing” by Walt Whitman

“I, Too, Sing America” by Langston Hughes

1. What are your learning outcomes for this lesson? What skills or knowledge will students learn as a result of this lesson? How do the learning outcomes connect to the standards addressed in this lesson?

*Probing further…*

* + *ELA/literacy: How will the text, questions, and tasks align with the intent and language of the standards being addressed? What misconceptions can you anticipate from students, and how does your plan help students overcome those misconceptions?*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Date and Lesson Time | Wednesday, 12/11/13, block 4 | Thursday, 12/12/13, block 1 |
| Outcomes | \*Students will understand attributes of interesting, critical questions in order to create their own discussion questions about text.  \*Students will analyze text-dependent, rigorous questions and use them to develop deeper understanding of text (“I Hear America Singing” by Walt Whitman). | \*Students will use annotations to develop text-specific, higher-order, open-ended questions in order to analyze an author’s message, perspective and purpose.  \*Students will collaborate with peers effectively and respectfully to revise questions and analyze text for deeper comprehension. |
| Alignment | Students need to read closely, analyzing specific word choice and patterns of language to determine author’s message (theme), perspective, and purpose. To help them understand these ideas, we are working on the strategy of questioning as a way to deepen comprehension and to evaluate information. Their discourse will further develop their understanding as well. This lesson offers review of question attributes we’ve discussed before, but clarified and organized on a Questioning Rubric. The discussion and models provided are the first part of a gradual release model. | Students need to read closely, analyzing specific word choice and patterns of language to determine author’s message (theme), perspective, and purpose. To help them understand these ideas, we are working on the strategy of questioning as a way to deepen comprehension and to evaluate information. Their discourse will further develop their understanding as well. Students will apply their understanding of text and questioning to develop their own critical questions; they will use them to independently direct their academic conversation about “I ,Too” by Langston Hughes. |

Objectives from previous and following days’ lessons that affect December 11th and 12th:

\*Students will determine authors’ messages, purposes, and perspectives by closely analyzing and questioning texts.

\*Students will compare and contrast authors’ messages, purposes, and perspectives in two texts about the same topic.

Both poems offer snapshots of people living in America; the figures reflect the embodiment or lack thereof of the American ideals of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” By interpreting and asking questions about the details, diction, and syntax of the lines in the poems, students will analyze the perspectives and messages of Hughes and Whitman, in order to start to answer the unit’s essential question, “How does an author’s presentation of information affect one’s understanding of history?” supported by textual evidence. Students are developing their analysis and evaluation skills as independent and proficient critical thinkers/readers as they focus on these texts. These tasks directly support RL.8.1,2,4, (9—in next lesson after 2nd video) and 10. The small group and whole class discourse give students extended opportunity to enhance their understanding of each text as well as the concepts brought forth by each and/or both. Students are held accountable for their preparation for and contributions within discussion. (SL.8.1a and c).

1. What materials or instructional resources will you use in this lesson? What specifically about these materials or instructional resources will help you meet your instructional goals?

*Probing further….*

* *ELA/literacy: What text will be used in this lesson? Why was this text selected? What are the quantitative measures and qualitative features of the text[[2]](#footnote-2)?*

**Texts:**

“I Hear America Singing” by Walt Whitman

“I, Too, Sing America” by Langston Hughes

As an author, Walt Whitman’s “O Captain! My Captain!” is cited as a grade 6-8 Exemplar Text in CCSS Appendix B.

“I, Too, Sing America” by Langston Hughes is cited as a grade 6-8 Exemplar Text in CCSS Appendix B.

The poems are conceptually related although they reflect somewhat different tones, messages and purposes. Despite obvious differences, students can examine the American ideals of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” as they apply to all citizens; upon close examination (through rereading, annotating, questioning and academic conversations with peers), they should realize that although written in different centuries by poets with different perspectives, they both address inequity (between sexes in “IHAS” and between races in “I,T, SA”) in some way. The language in each poem has specific connotations, and “I, Too, Sing America” directly alludes to “I Hear America Singing.” Deliberate manipulation of sentence & stanza structure and verb tense contribute to meaning. These pieces are also directly related to the conceptual focus for this unit, and mirror students’ current learning in Social Studies, where they are analyzing the Constitution and how it applies historically to different subcultures within America and in present society.

1. How does this learning fit in the sequence of learning or curriculum for this class?

*Probing further…*

* *ELA/literacy: How is this text a part of a sequence of texts designed to build skills and knowledge?*

In addition to the explanation in question 3 (above) which provides the larger conceptual context, the skill and strategy focus for these lessons is based on both curriculum and student performance. Students have been working on close, analytic reading and engaging in academic discussions since the beginning of the year. Formative assessments show that they are improving in their ability to make meaningful annotations (not highlight the majority of a text or omit comments altogether); however, they still see annotations as an end in themselves as opposed to a strategy toward using a text to expand their knowledge. The majority of recently assessed annotations assessed reflect literal or surface interpretations and do not include questions. The unit’s conceptual lens is for students to examine how an author’s portrayal of information in a text affects a reader’s understanding of history; we are using American history to narrow the focus and to complement their Social Studies class, which is American History in 8th grade. Within this frame, we are scaffolding toward having students synthesize information from and analysis of multiple texts to be able to answer this essential question. Since this is the first week of the unit, the strategy of using annotations to develop critical questions is relatively new. As part of this instructional sequence, I introduce a questioning rubric which outlines (reviews) criteria for thoughtful, critical questions. The students are using established Speaking and Listening guidelines and expectations that have been taught explicitly since the first week of school to deepen understanding of questioning, the texts, and the larger concepts presented during the course of these lessons.

1. How will you engage the students in the learning? What will you do? What will the students do? Will the students work in groups, or individually, or as a large group? Provide any tasks, activities or other materials the students will be using.

*Probing further…*

* *ELA/literacy: How will you employ appropriately demanding questions and tasks that are text dependent and text specific?*

December 11, 2013, Block 4

\* Review: “Annotating helps us understand text since we’re keeping track of our thinking; however, we can’t stop there. When I really want to understand what I’m reading and how much I should believe or with what I should agree, I ask questions of the text based on my annotations. Sometimes my questions may be literal, or basic, as I’m trying to figure out the who, what, when and where of the text. But the most interesting questions I create, the ones I think about the most and discuss with others, have 3 main qualities: they are text-specific, higher-order, and open-ended.”

\*Introduce the Questioning Rubric and read through the “Advanced” column; as we review each element, underline the text-specific attribute with red, underline the higher-order attribute with blue, and highlight the open-ended attribute in pink.

\* “Knowing these are the qualities of thoughtful, interesting questions, let’s look back to “I Hear America Singing” to see how to generate some interesting questions.

* Show “I Hear America Singing” with my annotations. “So, where do I go from here?”
* My process:
  + Reread the text multiple times, making annotations each time to keep track of my thinking.
  + Reread through my annotations to look for patterns or places I struggled and need to rethink.
  + Create questions based on text and annotations. Sometimes it helps to have a focus or lens (like seeking to determine theme or evidence of author’s perspective)
* Model:
  + Here are my annotations on “IHAS.” For this unit, the essential question is “How does an author’s presentation of information affect one’s understanding of history?” In order to answer that question, we have to analyze author’s message, perspective, and purpose for writing. So, I’m going to use those as my lenses; I’m going to ask questions that help me determine those elements.
  + Example: I’ve underlined words like singing, carols, delicious, robust, friendly, strong, and melodious: all words with very positive connotations. How do these words reveal Whitman’s tone and perspective?

CLASS USES COLOR-CODED RUBRIC TO IDENTIFY PARTS OF THIS MODEL QUESTION THAT ARE TEXT-SPECIFIC, HIGHER-ORDER, AND OPEN-ENDED. Then,

           CLASS DISCUSSES ANSWERS SUPPORTED BY TEXT EVIDENCE

* In groups, use the Questioning Rubric to identify how your assigned question (A, B, or C) is text specific, higher-order, and open-ended. (Use pens and highlighters to color code question.) Then answer the question and discuss as a group. \*Reminder practice skills related to group work and collaboration (refer to *Academic Conversations* poster in back)
  + A. In the title, the poet says he hears America, the whole country, singing; then he uses repetition, listing various workers and their work, workplace and/or tools. How does Whitman use individuals to convey a message about his vision of the country as a whole?
  + B. Two-thirds through the poem, the list of workers shifts from males and their occupations, each with his own line, to two lines describing female Americans. Compare the poet’s portrayal of females to that of males. What does this reveal, and why might this be important to note?
  + C. Whitman uses possessive pronouns throughout the poem to modify the workers’ songs and tools. Possessives signal ownership; what do these workers own or possess as Americans that allow them to sing “with open mouths their strong melodious songs”? Why does Whitman repeat this possessive language?

\*Closure: What are 3 main attributes of interesting, critical questions?

**HW:** Read, annotate, and develop 3 discussion questions based on “I, Too” by Langston Hughes.

December 12, 2013, Block 1

\*Review unit essential question, *How does an author’s presentation of information affect one’s understanding of history*? (As the unit progresses, we’ll examine individual historical events, figures or concepts from various perspectives. To begin, we’re looking at the American ideal of “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” from the perspectives of two poets. It also connects to what you’re learning about in Social Studies right now as you’re studying the foundation of America and American’s rights.)

AND

\*Review our focus on the skill of questioning: Think, pair, share, and be ready to report what your partner said:

*why* we question and one way *(how)* to develop questions (annotate, reread text and annotations--maybe with a lens or focus, and ask questions about patterns, interesting points, or places of confusion).

Review criteria for interesting, thoughtful questions about text we’re analyzing: see rubric and Whitman examples.

>Yesterday, you read, annotated and developed 3 questions about “I, Too” by Langston Hughes. Today, we’re going to use the Questioning Rubric to provide each other feedback on ways to revise in order to create interesting, thoughtful questions that we can use to better understand this poem and to engage in conversations with each other.

* Take out annotated poem and questions you wrote for homework. (You may also want to take out model questions from “I Hear America Singing as a resource.)
* Work with a partner to offer feedback (with rubric and models as reference and guidance)
* Revise your questions accordingly
* List revised questions on an index card with your name on it
* Each table further analyze “I, Too” by discussing questions each table member created and revised
* Submit index card with name and revised discussion questions

\*Differentiation:

-Provide recording/ videos of text ahead of time to those who need it (for fluency and comprehension)

-Question stems will be provided for struggling groups or individuals (linking annotations to types of questions we may ask--e.g., how an author uses a particular literary device to convey a message/theme)

-Strategic grouping (see Q7 below)

*HOMEWORK:* Use your analysis, annotations, and questions to continue chart tracking Title, Genre, Primary or Secondary Source, Author, Perspective, Purpose, Message (see document) .

1. Briefly describe the students in this class, including those with special needs.

*Probing further…*

* *ELA/literacy: To what extent are students able to read and comprehend grade-level complex texts? In what areas (e.g., fluency, vocabulary, syntax, background knowledge) are students strong and/or struggling?*

Out of 20 students, 7 have special needs, ranging from academic to social emotional in nature. Two students are in the highest percentiles in the grade as far as their RIT scores on NWEA’s MAP Reading Assessment administered this October.

1. How will you differentiate instruction for different individuals or groups of students in the class?

*Probing further…*

* *ELA/literacy: How will you support all students in working with grade-level text? (e.g., How will you provide scaffolding for students below grade-level so they can read grade-level text? How will you create opportunities for students who are advanced to engage more deeply with grade or above grade-level text?*

To assist struggling readers, I have played and provided links to readings of “I Hear America Singing” and “I, Too, Sing America” from Youtube.com to assist with fluency. Some have helpful images to assist those with more severe comprehension challenges. Those students who need more time with the text had the readings/videos provided prior to our reading the texts in class so they had some previous exposure with the concepts and language.

I have a model and question stems or starters to scaffold the questioning strategy for students who are struggling with how to ask text-specific, higher-order, open-ended questions based on their annotations of a text.

The groups are constructed heterogeneously based on district reading benchmark assessments and performance in past group activities to balance the conversation with various strengths.

For the more advanced readers in the class, I have prompts to encourage them to analyze the subtler language features of the poems, such as sentence structure, and to draw comparisons to the Constitution, which they are studying in American History this month.

1. How and when will you know whether the students have learned what you intend?  
   Probing further…

* *ELA: As the lesson progresses, how will you know whether students are “with” the text?  
  How and when will you know the extent to which students have acquired the literacy skills addressed in the lesson?*

Formative assessments:

Monitoring of whole class and small group conversations

Annotations on text

Reading Chart (Title, Genre, Primary or Secondary Source, Author, Perspective, Purpose, Message)

Submitted questions and those presented during group work

1. For guiding questions 1-8, see the *CCSS Instructional Practice Guide: Supplement for Reflection Over the Course of the Year* for ELA/literacy or Mathematics for guidance on CCSS expectations for practice over time *(achievethecore.org/instructional-practice).* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Refer to [achievethecore.org/ela-literacy-common-core/text-complexity](http://www.achievethecore.org/ela-literacy-common-core/text-complexity/) for text complexity resources. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)