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| Research into Practice – Anita Penner  Research into Practice: ESL Strategies  Anita Penner  For my Research into Practice assignment, I looked at incorporating ESL Strategies into the History classroom. With significant diversity in most urban centers in Canada and many English Language Learners in the classroom, ESL strategies often need to be considered even outside the ESL classroom. In an upper level course such as Grade 12 World History: West and the World, this presents unique challenges as the course is heavy on writing assignments and as it introduces many new and complex terms. The teacher must be aware of the language skill level of the students in the class and adjust teaching strategies appropriately.  In preparing for an activity with a focus on ESL strategies, I consulted a document put out by the British Columbia Department of Education entitled *English as a Second Language Learners: A Guide for Classroom Teachers* and a presentation from the University of North Carolina entitled ESL Strategies for Success. Both of these documents dealt specificfically with integrating ESL into a standard classroom (as opposed to a classroom that is solely geared towards ESL students). Both of these documents went through the rationale for including ESL in classroom, advocating for equal opportunities for all students without compromising the integrity of the curriculum.  Many of the strategies recommended in these documents were strategies that would ultimately benefit all learners, not just those with specific ESL needs. Suggested strategies included group work, advance planners, vocabulary lists, speaking in small groups, visual and oral aids, using Bloom’s Taxonomy of critical questions, graphic organizers and scaffolding. These strategies are not specific only to the needs of ESL students and would most likely benefit all students in the class. For ESL students, these strategies provide safe opportunities to use languages in small groups and clarification of concepts and vocabulary. This wide range of approaches would also help other students who may benefit from forms of differentiated learning as they appeal to multiple intelligences. Many of the vocabulary and content based strategies would also help in developing general literacy skills.  Although there are benefits to all students with some of these suggested strategies, there are still challenges to be met when employing ESL strategies in the classroom. In order to be effective with ELL students, the teacher must constantly check their own vocabulary for idioms and pace. They must also be ensuring that students are understanding and may need to repeat or restate ideas. Although this strategy is helpful for ELL students in the classroom, it may be frustrating for other students. It is important to note at this point that it is not the ELL students cannot grasp the concepts being taught, but rather that they struggle with the language itself. Although some of this repetitiveness is unavoidable, there are some strategies the teacher could use which are less disruptive to the class in general – handing out pre-reading using audio version of texts or handouts.  The documents suggested other strategies which would not be reflected in a unit plan as they would occur outside of the traditional classroom. These included strategies like developing a homework club or a peer tutoring community. Although these may not be course-specific, they may engage ELL students in further conversation, creating opportunities for English language use as well as content learning. These homework groups need not be only for ELL students. Rather, they would be effective as groups of students with varying English skills. This diversity allows students to learn from each other.  Resources:  *English as a Second Language Learners: A Guide for Classroom Teachers*. British Columbia Ministry of Education Special Programs Branch. 1999. Web. Feb 12, 2011.  Available at: http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/esl/policy/classroom.pdf  *ESL Strategies for Success.* University of North Carolina. March 2006. Web. Feb 12, 2011.  Available at: http://www.unc.edu/world/Fichter%20ESL%20Strategies%20for%20Success.pdf |
| Research into Practice – Kimberley Shoprio  Research into Practice: Infusing Current Events  Kimberly Shopiro  The instructional focus that I have integrated into my activities for the Cold War unit of grade 12U “World History: The West and the Word” is infusing current events into the classroom. Knowing that one of the aims of educators is to prepare students for citizenship, ensuring that students are aware of the social, political and economic climate that they are a part of is clearly crucial to successful teaching. Many teachers and students, both of whom have noted the benefits of teaching current events in the curriculum, note the importance of this teaching strategy.  Two resources that I used for my Research into Practice were “Student Interest in Studying World History in Relation to Current Events” by Arthur Conan and “Teaching Current Events: Its Status in Social Studies Today” by Mary Haas. Together these two articles provide insight into the attitudes that of all members of the classroom, both students and teachers, have towards infusing current events in the history classroom. In the first article, Conan concentrates on the need to connect history to current events to better engage students. In his study of 40 American history students he found that 65% of those students believed that using current events in the classroom would make their history class more interesting and help them to better understand political, military, religious, social and economic history (Conan 4-5). In the second article, Haas studies a number of teachers’ strategies for teaching and evaluating student knowledge of current events, as well the many benefits and problem associated with using current events in the classroom.  There is some difficulty associated with integrating current events into teaching. Haas describes that teachers are overwhelmed by the requirements of the curriculum, and do not feel that they have time to spend on current events. Another problem that teachers face is finding adequate ways to assess student knowledge of current events (though since this article was written, rubrics have likely been more widely embraced) (Haas 24-25).  The benefits of using current events in history classrooms are widespread. Not only will incorporating current events into lessons help students to better understand the world around them, it will aid in their understanding of history and help develop several essential skills, both academic and personal. In his article Conan notes that students are better able to understand current events with a solid understanding of the history that preceded them, and that history is better understood when exemplified by an interesting current event (Conan 2). In this way, using current events is an especially useful teaching strategy in history classrooms. In Haas’s article she stresses the skills that are learned by students when engaged in discussion about current events. Some of the skills that teachers felt were learned through current events include: defining problems, identify bias and assumptions, communicating ideas, identifying different perspectives and contrasting viewpoints, developing a personal opinion understanding sequence and consequences, change and continuity, etc (Haas 16). Additionally, current events have many sources, from newspapers, television, the Internet and magazines, and can be used in a number of student activities, from presentations and discussions to journals and essays (Haas 18-19). Beyond academics, teachers feel that current events can help students to tolerate diverse views, develop compassion and better understand the need to be informed citizens (Haas 17).  Resources:  Conan, Arthur. “Student Interest in Studying World History in Relation to Current Events”. Studies in Teaching. Ed. Leah P McCoy. Salem: Wake Forest University, 1995. 1 – 5.  Haas, Mary E. et al. Teaching Current Events: Its Status in Social Studies Today. West Virginia University, 2000. |
| Research into Action – Kelly McCafferty  Research into Action: Cooperative Learning  Kelly McCafferty  Cooperative learning is an effective teaching strategy in which small groups are formed where each student may have different levels of ability. Each member of the group is responsible for not only learning what is taught but also assisting in the learning process of other group members. Cooperative learning techniques help promote student learning and academic achievement, increase student retention, help students develop skills in oral communication, develop student social skills, and promote self-esteem.  Cooperative efforts in many cases are expected to be more productive than competitive and individualistic efforts. For example, positive interdependence (sink or swim together) is an element of cooperative learning where each group member’s efforts are required and indispensable for group success. This concept can be seen in the “Unit Design” activity required for this class where each group member has a unique contribution whether it is because of his or her resources and/or role and task responsibilities. For the “Unit Design” activity each group member was assigned a role (e.g. manager, presentation manager, research manager etc.) and was responsible for various tasks related to that role (e.g. brochure, annotated bibliography, rubrics etc.). This increases individual accountability in which each group member will be held accountable, resulting in equal participation from each student.  Some educators discover that initial efforts to incorporate cooperative learning into the classroom are met with student resistance and lack of motivation. However, models that provide organization and guidance can help match the unique requirements of any classroom. Some models that were discussed are the Jigsaw, Think-Pair-Share, Round Table, Four Corners etc. During my practicum I incorporated various models of cooperative learning into my lesson plans. In one instance, I provided my Grade 9 Academic Geography class with a Jigsaw activity regarding the Rock Cycle. Because of the difficulty in content this method of teaching provided the students with the tools to effectively work in a collaborative environment and framework from which to learn from one another. Through observing cooperative learning groups in action, I was able to effectively assess students’ work and understanding. In addition, I discovered that cooperative learning groups also provide a unique opportunity for feedback from peers and for self-reflection.  Some disadvantages to cooperative learning strategies is that those students who may have lack of social skills would perhaps not know how to work in groups effectively which could result in conflict. In addition, group grades can cause conflict if one student in the group is not ‘pulling their weight’ but enjoys the grades assigned to other group member’s hard work.  Overall, cooperative learning strategies provide the tools for students to work collaboratively, a skill that in most cases is essential in any work place. During my practicum the geography department worked together as a team through the sharing of resources and tasks. For example, each month a different teacher was assigned to do photocopying for the department, as well each week the teacher cooperatively shared educational resources to enhance student learning as a whole.  I plan to continue to incorporate cooperative learning techniques into my classroom activities but at the same time giving carful thought to who should collaborate with whom and why, and how to balance the attention to both content and cooperative skill building.  Resources:  “Why Use Cooperative Learning?” 05 Feb, 2011.  http://www.edtech.kennesaw.edu/intech/cooperativelearning.html#activities.    T, Roger, and David W. Johnson. *Cooperative Learning: Two heads learn better than one.* 05 Feb, 2011. http://www.context.org/ICLIB/ICL8/Johnson.htm |
| Research into Practice – Michael Van den Hengel M  Research into Practice: Creative Controversy  Michael Van den Hengel  For my Research into Practice, I focused on creatively incorporating Controversy into the activities I designed. With a topic such as the Cold War, it is relatively easy to court controversy, however, incorporating it into lessons about conflicts in which millions died is something a little more delicate. Taking into consideration the diversity of peoples and perspectives in classes, I aimed at creating controversy through dialogue, critical thinking and analysis of historical perspectives and events as means to broaden student understanding of all sides of these issues.  In planning activities around Creative Controversy I found that using the Manchurian Candidate, one of the more controversial Cold War film, may be an interesting way to get students to think critically about Cold War media. The film review was guided towards getting students to apply the lens of perspective, bias, and critical thinking that had been constant throughout the unit to American entertainment. Admittedly, by today’s standards the film is not all that controversial, which I believe works in the students favour as it forces them to think from a historical perspective and incorporate knowledge of Cold War society in an analytical piece of writing. The review is based less around the quality of the film than the issues and insights into the era it presents.  The other activity was designed around student analysis of Asian propaganda and its portrayal of the Vietnamese, Korean, Chinese and Americans. Students again are instructed to assess the bias, perspectives and message of each. The real controversy in this activity was the debate, which was largely informed by Kathleen Doyle’s piece ‘Classroom Debates made Easy’. The process she recommends was not in the interests of time for this unit, however, her assertions about the debate being most effective for furthering student learning while courting controversy was well-informed. Upon skimming Diane E. Hess ‘Controversy in the Classroom’ it became more than apparent that debates also develop skills like few other classroom activities. Hess sees a democratic power in debate and with a diversity of views being expressed through prior analysis, student understanding of their own, and opposing viewpoints broaden. Therefore, I wanted students to think critically about the Western and Eastern portrayals of the Viet Cong and American forces as well as policy as a means of understanding the conflict further. I would hope that the diversity of perspectives expressed during debate would lead to a greater understanding and respect towards both parties involved. The debate was aimed at raising the issues of the conflicts to the forefront, and I would hope students would submit to that kind of analysis when the activity is used.  For the debate, I also used the Education World website as something of a guideline. The website offered some insight in how to run a debate when courting controversy in the class as well as links to several other similar websites. Admittedly, I did not use all, but found that some of the strategies would result in an engaging open discussion. I wish I could have given more time towards the formulating of arguments and exploration of perspectives in the activity as that would have fostered a greater understanding of the issues the students were to debate. Regardless, Education World outlined numerous creative ways to conduct a debate. I went with a traditional debate in the end, guiding the direction with the use of a question sheet, however, I would recommend the website for Education World to Teacher’s looking for innovative ways to conduct a debate in their classroom. I will certainly try to find a use for some of their strategies for future lessons and activities. There are also links to other websites which have strategies for conducting debates as well.  Resources:  Hess, Diane E. – Controversy in the Classroom: The Democratic Power of Discussion. New York, Y. Routledge Publishers, 2009.  Doyle, Kathleen M. – Classroom Debates Made Easy – Middle Level Learning 28. National Council for Social Studies. 2007 - http://www.fcpsteach.org/docs/Middle%20school%20debates1.pdf  Education World – Strategies – Debates http://www.educationworld.com/a\_curr/strategy/strategy012.shtml |
| Research into Practice – Lisa Angela Turcotte  Research into Practice: Differentiated Instruction  Lisa Angela Turcotte  For my Research into Practice assignment, I looked at incorporating Differentiated Instruction strategies into the History classroom. *The West and the World*, a grade 12 history course, has a significant amount of focus on honing important skills. In my activity, along with Differentiated instruction, I wanted to teach about the Soviet perspective during the Cold War through the lens of propaganda and its use in the media. Using the design down strategy, at the outset of my planning, I decided to stay within the strand of Methods of Historical Inquiry for considering the overall expectations and specific expectations. In this way I could then tailor my focus on very specific skills pertaining to one strand and maintain my focus on the Culminating Activity. The overall and specific expectations I focused on for my activity are the following:  **Overall Expectations**  **HIV.04** · demonstrate an ability to think creatively, manage time efficiently, and work effectively in independent and collaborative study.  **HIV.02** · critically analyze historical evidence, events, and interpretations;  **Specific Expectations**  **HI2.01** – demonstrate an ability to distinguish bias, prejudice, stereotyping, or a lack of substantiation in statements, arguments, and opinions;  **HI2.04** – draw conclusions based on effective evaluation of sources, analysis of information, and awareness of diverse historical interpretations;  **HI3.01** – communicate effectively, using a variety of styles and forms (e.g., essays, debates, role playing, group presentations);  H**I4.01** – demonstrate an ability to think creatively in reaching conclusions about both assigned questions and issues and those conceived independently;  **HI4.03** – demonstrate an ability to work independently and collaboratively and to seek and respect the opinions of others.  In preparing for the activity with a focus on Differentiated Instruction I consulted the Nonverbal Learning Difference Networking Group of Ontario website (NLD). I focused mainly on different strategies in every worksheet. By maintaining the same process, and giving students a multitude of chances to finish various activity sheets, all students would have many opportunities to build their critical thinking, creative and analytical skills.  First by allowing for multiple right answers, students will be able to feel successful from the beginning of the activity. I did this through the walkabout minds on, allowing students to write down any word that came to mind. By reviewing each set of images with the chart papers, I can easily tie in the words the students wrote with the themes of the image and to the overall issue of propaganda and media. This process moves into the idea of compacting. Giving student credit for what they already know. Whether it’s from the first few activities on the Cold War unit or if it’s just general knowledge they have, students were able to share and be recognized for their previous knowledge.  I focused on attention to social issues, real world experiences and community projects, through the use of primary sources that reflect the issues, events and circumstances surrounding the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Students were also given role play activities and tableaux, to immerse themselves in their authentic situations that they themselves differed from the primary source images of real Soviet citizens. For example in Activity Sheet #3, there is a photo of an East German Soldier escaping to West Germany.  By choosing to teach the unit on the Cold War thematically, students are able to make connections across all the activities and multiple curricular areas. Using the idea of chunking, I broke the lesson up into manageable activity sheets, so that students would have multiple opportunities to practice the same skills. The enduring skills students were able to continually practice were thinking skills, because they were given multiple opportunities through a variety of activity sheets, group discussions, and journal reflections to develop their skills.  In turn this allows for students to develop responsibility, because they are in charge of their own assessment and the assessment of their peers and their teacher. If everyone shares in the responsibility of keeping each other on task, then a group dynamic is inevitably created. The ability for students to excel in groups is perpetuated by the grouping students while working on the activity sheets in mixed-ability groups, but then allowing them for their culminating assignment to choose a like-ability group. For example, students get to choose from three different events towards the end of the Cold War, for their Activity Sheet #15, rather than just being assigned which one they were to participate in.  By consulting this website I was able to thematically create the activity sheets by strategies while keeping to the chronological pace of the Soviet perspective of history, this gives the students an understanding of how learn history from two important views  The second source I consulted was Debbie Nyman and Larry Swartz’s book *Drama: Schemes, Themes and Dreams*. The book is so easy to use, implement and understand. Especially since my focus was on Differentiated Instruction, this book helped me come up with great ideas on how to infuse drama in the classroom without overwhelming students. For example students are given multiple opportunities to write in role, express their ideas through tableaux, discuss thoughts openly through circle teaching, group and pairs discussions all imbedded in the activities.  By infusing drama techniques into this history activity the layout of the class is in constant flux. Again, the process of an activity sheet remains the same so that students know there is structure, but within that structure activities are varied, which allow for all students of multiple intelligence abilities to develop the enduring skills to critically analyze historical evidence, events, and interpretations to demonstrating their ability to think creatively, manage time efficiently, and work effectively in independent and collaborative study.  Resources:  NLD Ontario: http://www.nldontario.org/articles/DifferentiatedClassroom.html  Swartz, Larry and Debbie Nyman. *Drama: Schemes, Themes & Dreams*. Markham: Pembroke Publishers Limited, 2010. |