

Gintare Radvila. Lesson Plan A. Friday, March 18.

Title: Dealing with Grief: Formulating Questions and Journaling

Time: 50 minutes

Setting: This classroom is an Honors Sophomore English class. The students are mature and capable of handling respectful class discussions. The demographics of this particular classroom are: 13 female, 12 male. 13 Whites, 5 African Americans, 4 Asian Americans, 2 Latinos (1 ELL Spanish), 1 Native American. One of the students has Asperger's Syndrome. The school is a high school (grades 9-12) in an urban setting.

Theory into Practice Background:

The Question-Answer-Relationship procedure was created by Taffy Raphael as a way for students to create questions about the text they are reading (Tompkins). The procedure has five different question types. The first are "right-there" questions that ask very literal questions that can easily be found in the text. The second are "think and search" questions that require the students to search for the answer in the text. The third are "between the lines" questions that force the students to get into the minds of a character to figure out why they responded in the way they did. The fourth are "author and me" questions that require the students to think about how the author would respond, how they would respond themselves, and combine the two beliefs to formulate an answer. The final questions are "on my own" questions, where the students use their own ideas to answer the questions (Tompkins). Some versions of the QAR procedure do not include the 'between the lines' question type. However, this question allows the students to engage at a deeper level and would be beneficial for the students when making connections to the text.

Jim Burke writes, "Students demonstrate their understanding of a book through the process of developing questions about it" (Burke 302). When students create questions of their own, they most likely will engage with aspects of the book that are most interesting to them. When teachers create questions for their students, the questions may not always be those that are most interesting to the students. The teachers may guide the students to engage with certain aspects, but the QAR method urges students to create their own topics to engage with. Burke writes, "...the process itself is intellectually demanding and a part of their learning; in this way the assessment enriches the curriculum by being integrated into it (302).

Next, the students will be writing journals about particular topics that are dealt with in the chapters they read from the previous night. According to Tchudi and Mitchell, "there are different purposes for writing. Journals and freewrites allow student students to explore those purposes (and different aspects of their lives) without the immediate fear of being criticized for comma placement" (Tchudi 249). The authors also claim that the journaling of students will become the most focused when the students feel passionate

about the work (249). Therefore, I will have the students journal about the passing of Junior's grandmother, who was killed by a drunk driver.

The students will first work on the QAR worksheet in pairs to create questions about the work that they have read. The chapters read for homework from the previous night deal with Junior's reaction to his grandmother's death. The chapters also describe his grandmother's ability to remain tolerant of those who feared eccentricity. After the students create their questions and answer their questions using textual evidence, they will be asked to write their own journal question for themselves, giving the students an opportunity to respond to an aspect of the book that interests them. I will ask that the students show me their question prior to writing their actual journal entry in order to make sure that the questions are appropriate. Once they have completed this, the students will be able to write their journals.

This lesson is linked to lessons to follow because as the students read further into the text, they will encounter the death of Junior's sister, where alcohol was also partly to blame. Beginning this discussion of grief and alcoholism will also be beneficial to the students as they read about Junior's sister's death. Lastly, the students are responding to a topic that interests them. The students will eventually be asked to write about a topic that interests them using pictures the way Junior does. This lesson forces the students to brainstorm about this activity before they even know about it.

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to construct their own questions about the text deepening their connections to the characters in the book.
2. Students will be able to evaluate and debate why Junior reacts the way that he does to his grandmother's death.
3. Students will be able to express their own opinions and interpretations of the chapters required through their journal writing.

Materials:

- QAR worksheet
- Journal worksheet
- Copies of *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*
- Daily schedule written on board
- Picture from p. 160 up on the projector

Preparation:

In preparation for this lesson, the teacher must construct and make copies of a QAR worksheet and a journal worksheet. The picture on p. 160 of the text should be projected on the wall in order to begin a discussion about grief. The students will be working in pairs for the beginning of the lesson, but they will be able to move their desks into the appropriate positions once they have entered the classroom. Because this class is a

mature group of students, I will allow them to choose their partners for this particular activity. I want the students to engage with the text on a deeper level, and the more comfortable they feel with a partner, the more comfortable they will feel with engaging with the text.

Procedure:

9:00-9:07: (7 minutes): Discussion of p. 160 picture, which is projected to the class.

- What do you think Junior means by this picture?
- What does this picture mean to you?
- Why does Junior only have eyes in this picture?
- Why does a circle of hands surround him?
- What does this have to do with the death of his grandmother?

9:07-9:10: (3 minutes): Explanation of Question-Answer-Relationship Worksheet Activity

9:10-9:35: (25 minutes): Students will pair up to complete the QAR worksheet. The teacher must circulate around the room to answer questions about creating the questions. The students must have textual evidence for their responses.

9:35-9:38: (3 minutes): Wrap-up activity. If the students did not complete their QAR worksheet, it is for homework. Pass out the Journal Activity. Explain the Journal Activity.

9: 38-9:50: (12 minutes): Students create and check their Personal Journal Entry Question with me. After I check it in, the students will write their response to the question they asked themselves.

-Assign HW: Read p. 169-199 over the weekend.

Discussion Ideas:

- What does Junior mean when he says, “I’ve learned the worst thing a parent can do is ignore their children” (153)? Why does Junior think this? Do you agree? Why?
- What does Junior mean when he says that his “grandmother’s greatest gift was tolerance” (155)? Why was this her “greatest gift?”
- How would you feel or react if you were Junior discovering that his grandmother was just killed by a drunk driver and forgave him? Why?
- Why does Junior say “Each funeral was a funeral for all of us” (166)?
- Why is everyone laughing as they bury Junior’s grandmother? Is this a normal way to react? What IS a normal way to react in such cases?
- How do we deal with grief?

Bilingual/ESL and Englishes Accommodations:

An ELL student might need a little extra time creating questions and answering them throughout this lesson. However, since the students will be allowed to choose their partners for this activity, the student will most likely choose a partner that he is comfortable with. Thus, the students can work together to create questions. Also, this student might bring new insights and connections to the work that a non- ELL student might have not thought of. Therefore, the students will gain insight from one another while engaging with the material. Also, because the student will be able to choose a journal prompt for himself, it will be easier for him to write a response as he will already have a clear understanding of the prompt.

For an African American English speaker, this activity will be required to be written in “business English,” as the students are required to formulate school appropriate questions and answers. However, this student may respond to their chosen journal topic entry as they please, as it will not be graded for grammar/logistics. Also, since the students are allowed to choose their own topics for their journals, the student can choose which aspect of the book to engage with.

Special Education Accommodations:

The student with Asperger’s Syndrome may have some difficulty working with a partner to create questions and answers about the text. However, I would hope that this student chooses a partner that he routinely works with in order to make the process easier for both students. I will be giving the students “question-starters” in the worksheet, which should lighten the load a bit—especially for this pair. Again, since the students are allowed to choose their own topic for their journal, it will make writing a response to their topic much easier. As always, I will need to circulate around the room as the students are working to make sure that the students are making progress during the time allotted. However, if they are unable to finish the worksheet or journal entry in time, they are allowed to take it home with them to double-check their work and fill in anything that they missed.

I could see a student with Asperger’s Syndrome preferring to work alone on such a worksheet, but part of this lesson is learning to collaborate and combine ideas with another student. Therefore, I would not allow students to work individually. However, if the students disagree on answers to their questions with their partners, they are free to write a different response. (The questions should be very similar.)

Assessment:

I will be assessing this worksheet based on completion. There should be one question written in each box required, followed by a written answer with a cited textual reference. If the students have completed this, they will be given full credit for the assignment. Also, I will be checking in their topic questions for their journal entries; therefore, as long

as this is check, the students will receive credit for this portion of the class period. Lastly, I will read their journal entries and they will not be graded for logistics. As long as the students have responded to their question thoroughly, they will receive credit. Since there is a larger reading assignment over the weekend, the students will only have written work if they did not complete their QAR worksheet or journal entry in class.

Extension Ideas:

Dealing with death and grief can be a very difficult task for many students. The students may struggle if they have recently had a loss in their family or circle of friends or know someone else who has. A potential extension idea would be for the students to write a letter to Junior's grandmother from Junior. Junior is consistently seen receiving letters from his sister, but the readers do not see what Junior writes to his sister. Therefore, after his grandmother's death or after his sister's death would be a great time for the students to write a letter to either of the characters from Junior's perspective. The students could elaborate how Junior feels about them or how they died along with what has recently been happening in his own life at school. The letters could be written informally with pictures (as Junior would write) or formally in a letter format.

Source of Activity:

I would like to thank my future cooperating teacher for this idea as she introduced me to the QAR practice when I visited my school. Obviously, I would like to thank Taffy Raphael for creating the QAR procedure. I would also like to thank Jim Burke and Tchudi and Mitchell for their insights into creating questions and journal topics for students to engage with. Though having the students write their own journal topics was an idea of my own, it would not have formed without the insight of both Burke, Tchudi, and Mitchell.

Resources and References:

Alexie, Sherman, and Ellen Forney. *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian*. New York: Little, Brown and, 2009. Print.

Burke, Jim. *The English Teacher's Companion: a Complete Guide to Classroom, Curriculum, and the Profession*. 3rd ed. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2008. Print.

Tchudi, Stephen, and Diana Mitchell. *Exploring and Teaching the English Language Arts*. New York: Longman, 1999. Print.

Tompkins, G. E. "Question Answer Relationships | Education.com." *Education.com | An Education & Child Development Site for Parents | Parenting & Educational Resource*. Pearson Allyn Bacon Prentice Hall, 2006. Web. 11 Dec. 2010. <<http://www.education.com/reference/article/question-answer-relationships/>>.

Illinois State English Language Arts Goals:

1.B.4a Preview reading materials, clarify meaning, analyze overall themes and coherence, and relate reading with information from other sources.

This standard will be accomplished as the students create answers to the questions they created during the QAR activity/worksheet. The students need to relate what they read to the overall theme of the novel as they write their questions to engage at a deeper level with the text and the characters.

1.C.4b Explain and justify an interpretation of a text.

This standard is accomplished when the students must cite textual evidence in the answer column of their QAR worksheet. The students must justify why their answer is correct as they explain their response. Also, the students must justify their personal interpretation of the text as they write their journal entry responses.

3.B.4a Produce documents that exhibit a range of writing techniques appropriate to purpose and audience, with clarity of focus, logic of organization, appropriate elaboration and support and overall coherence.

This standard is accomplished when the students are writing their QAR questions. They must exhibit a range of writing skills as they attempt to write questions AND answers themselves. Their questions must be logical, with clarity of focus as they must understand them well enough to answer them.

QAR

“QUESTION ANSWER RELATIONSHIP” WORKSHEET

(Adapted from Hinsdale South High School)

Name: _____

Partner's name: _____

DIRECTIONS: In order to receive full credit for this assignment, you must:

- Have a question in each appropriate box.
- Write an answer to your question in the appropriate box.
- Cite evidence of where you got your answer or how you got your answer.

Question Type:	Questions:	Answers:	Evidence of Answer:
<p>1. RIGHT THERE!</p> <p>(This question may begin with: who is, where is, what is, when is, how many, when did, name, what kind of...)</p>			
<p>2. THINK AND SEARCH!</p> <p>(This type of question may begin with: summarize, what caused, contrast, retell, how did, explain, find two examples, for what reason, or compare...)</p>			

<p>3. BETWEEN THE LINES!</p> <p>(This type of question may begin with: why does the person involved do, how does the person feel about, what is the effect of, why is this topic so controversial, why does the character do, how does the character feel about...)</p>	<p>Question:</p>	<p>Answer:</p>	<p>Evidence:</p>
<p>4. AUTHOR AND ME!</p> <p>(This type of question may begin with: what is the author saying about, how does the author feel about, what is the main idea, what is the message/purpose/lesson, what is the bias...)</p>			
<p>5. ON MY OWN!</p> <p>(This type of question may begin with: how do you feel about, recall a time when you, how would you, what would you do, what do you know about...)</p>			<p>(You may skip this box! No evidence needed!)</p>

MY OWN JOURNAL ENTRY TOPIC!

NAME: _____

DIRECTIONS: Write down a question, quote, or observation that interests you about *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*. You will respond to your own question in the form of a journal entry. *NOTE: You must have your question, quote, or observation checked by me before you begin writing.

JOURNAL TOPIC:

APPROVED? _____

RESPONSE TO TOPIC: