

MARC IB English A1 Teacher Networking Session
Meadowbrook HS
Friday, November 7, 2008
MINUTES

Organizational Structures:

Most schools doing Pts. 1 & 4 in 11th grade and Pts. 2 & 3 in 12th grade; one school does 11th grade year as a prep year and does all the IB assessments in 12th grade. Some schools loop the kids; same teacher teaches 11th grade and then moves to 12th grade with the students.

Books:

Summer reading: *Grapes of Wrath* (before junior year); *Crime and Punishment* (before senior year); *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* (Summer reading between 9th and 10th; series of study questions coming from Lisa Renard-Spicer); *Old Man and the Sea* (look for the elements they read about in *How to Read Literature*; first week, present 10 key ideas they learned from how to read like a professor)

Great Gatsby

Ethan Frome

1984

The Grass is Singing (Doris Lessing—no sparks notes etc. She won the Pulitzer Prize last year, so maybe something will come out)

The Bell Jar (can be used in Part 2 for Oral Commentary, and IB allows it to be counted as autobiography)

The Awakening

Wide Sargasso Sea (prequel to *Jane Eyre*—focuses on the first wife)

Handmaid's Tale

Native Son

Screwtape Letters

Till We Have Faces (C.S. Lewis)

Into the Wild

Annie Dillard for detailed study *Annie Dillard Reader* has a number of different things in it.

This Boy's Life Tobias Wolfe

E.B. White

Genre Study:

Novels

Picture of Dorian Gray

The Sun Also Rises

All Quiet on the Western Front (tie into *Goodbye to All That* which is autobiography of Robert Graves)

Plays

These four as a set: "*Master Harold*"...and the boys, *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *Winter's Tale*

Glengarry Glen Ross

No Exit

Equus

Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolf

Crucible

Doll's House

Miss Julie

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead

Streetcar Named Desire

Resource: *How Plays Tell Stories: Studying Drama as Literature* by Anthony Stevens

<http://www.anagnosis.gr/index.php?pageID=40&la=eng>

Shakespeare:

Macbeth,

Hamlet,

Romeo and Juliet (for Pt.2, because they are already familiar with it, and can spend time doing deep work with language on a few passages)

Winter's Tale (for Part 3, where it has to be considered in comparison with other works)

How do we approach Shakespeare?

- Use Jodi's Character Profile assignment (in packet and on MARC website)
- Rewrite scene and modernize the language; *Macbeth* as drug kingpin etc. Watch *Scotland, PA*.
- Focus on the genre
- Compare scenes in different movie versions and compare director's/actors choices
- Take them to Blackfriar Theatre in Staunton
- They direct and act a particular scene (before they see a movie)
- Resources: BBC series *Playing Shakespeare*: John Barton. One episode is about how to use Shakespeare's language.
http://www.bardcentral.com/product_info.php?cPath=24_205_206&products_id=1162&osCsid=c29cddb09018e754ae0df73d06... According to Poor Yorick, this series is currently out of print. You may be able to get it used from Amazon. Libraries also often carry it. There is a companion book that Yorick does have.
- Activity: What would you cut? How does that change the effect? One example is to use the speech from *Henry V* in front of the gates at Calais. Then show the Kenneth Branagh version of that scene followed by the Olivier version.
- *Romeo and Juliet*: scene comparison between the nurse and Juliet when the nurse comes back from taking the message to Romeo about the time of the wedding. Compare the Franco Zeffirelli version with the Baz Luhrmann version of that scene; the former the nurse is kind of silly; the latter she is cold and mean.
- Resource: *Players of Shakespeare* Series. Out of Stratford-Upon-Avon; collections of essays written by actors at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre talking about playing various roles in various plays. Fabulous!
<http://www.cambridge.org/series/sSeries.asp?code=PLWS> (Amazon.com will let

you search inside the book and look at the table of contents to see both actor and role.)

World Lit 1:

Some works being used: Perfume (also no Sparks Notes), Doll's House, A Day in the Life of Ivan D, No Exit, Stranger, So Long a Letter, Crime and Punishment

- Must be a comparison/contrast based on two Part 1 works.
- Finding interesting, original links between the two works. Brainstorm all the vague topics that might be used: "love," "murder," "death," "gender roles," etc. Then come up with 10 focus points about one, comparing two novels. Then the students turn in their lists, and the teacher makes a packet. They then go home and pick a specific topic and write a thesis for one or more topics (if they do several, then they have a second choice.)
- If you get to true personal response, then you won't have repeats. Could try having students write a justification statement: why are YOU, personally, interested in this topic? What is it in your life that makes this topic matter to you?
- Part of the key to good topics is in the reading: focusing in on images, themes, strategies, and so on. They can identify critical passages and ideas as they read. They can mark relevant passages by highlighting or using color-coded post-its as they read through the book, then by the end, they have already marked material for use.
- Practice this by providing a list of 20-30 things that can be looked for in works as they read during 11th grade or summer reading; then when they do the World Lit works, they have had practice and they already know what kind of things to look for. (This can be a good practice in Pre-IB 9 and 10, too). Emphasize writer's craft: use of animal imagery, structure, etc.
- Preparing Topics: Create a writing plan: Central Idea, thesis, points they are going to make with at least one quotation. Divide into groups; teacher provides focus questions: are there any psychological aspects of the novel? What kind of people groups are there in this book? Different question each group. Each group discusses for 10 minutes or so about that question, with their own potential paper in mind. Then shift to another group with another guiding question. Some of the guiding questions do not necessarily apply to every thesis, but some will. Make the groups split up and change composition each time, or the same one or two students will dominate. Kids can redo their writing plan after that, because some students will come up with something better during the discussion.
- Some sample topics: Mothers and daughters and the effect of poverty in *Crime and Punishment*; the effect of women's influence on (character) in *Crime and Punishment*.
- Developing an argument: Workshop 2 hours; everyone writes the thesis on the board, and each student has to defend his or her thesis. Participation assignment. "I'm going to use this scene and this scene and I'm going to match that up to X from this other work, and I'm looking for this element." Grade is two-fold; part 1 is that you have to challenge the thinking of another student—play the devil's advocate. The person giving the thesis then has to defend the choices of scenes. This helps both the author AND the challenging students to understand the texts

better. (He is able to create a two-hour block of classes by trading off with another IB teacher who has all the same students. They swap class/plan time and can periodically have the kids for two hours.)

World Lit 2 Creative Paper:

- The statement of intent is the make or break part of the assessment.
- A creative paper probably should be practiced ahead of time.
- Can have students practice the statement of intent; great practice in understanding authorial intent (reading analytically can be thought of as approaching a work of literature from the perspective of the writer)
- Pre-IB teachers could have students write some creative work as preparation.
- Could do a practice round with a photograph or music or piece of film (can't use for the real thing)
- Sample 7 paper will be posted on MARC website.

World Lit 2: Can be a comparison, but the second book may NOT be a World Lit. Difficult to compare two different genres, but is allowed.

IOP:

- Can be done using a photograph or piece of music and talking about why that stimulus is an appropriate representation of something that is going on in the work they are talking about. (See handout on *Great Gatsby* essay using photographic stimulus.)
- Mini orals all the way up to practice talking about literature
- Conference about topics
- Could do the statement of intent exercise here, including a justification of the format that they are using and any visual aid or PPT or handouts that they intend to use
- Full-scale practice in public (we schedule after school in library and invite 10th graders, teachers, admin, etc.)
- Students teach a story, essay, poem, etc. to the rest of the class as a preparation for the IOP. Example: *Dorian Gray* and how classic Victorian flower symbolism is used in the novel.
- TOK issues as IOP topics or preliminary preparation
- Oral tests or quizzes: 27 quotations, in a bag, student pulls the number out of the hat and must immediately make an oral presentation to the class on the significance of that quotation; can use questions too. Variation: board divided into sections, students have to come up and make notes, and then answer the question for the class. Five standing at front of class at once.

Poetry:

Have students rewrite a poem purposefully changing the tone. Example: Take "Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening" and rewrite it with a dark, threatening tone. Helps students understand how word choices affect the outcome of the poem.

Getting Students to Read:

- Reading quizzes—facts and interpretation so that kids can't get everything off of Sparks Notes.
- Response logs
- Quotation logs (should be a handout on MARC website with one teacher's assignment for this)
- Check logs randomly; don't tell students when.
- Socratic Seminars
- Inner Circle – Outer-Circle; switch partway through, have students grade the inner circle. When switch, new inner circle cannot repeat anything that previous group said.
- Analytical log: first novel give them a list of symbols or motifs or whatever you want them to look for, and then they explain why that is important. Move to having them choose the elements in the next novel. Maybe suggestions, but not requirements 2nd novel, then no suggestions third. Move them toward independent.

What is personal response?

It's in the voice, the liveliness, the specificity and individuality of the topic. Students can say "I"; not in foolish ways ("I'm going to write....")

Pre-IB Issues:

- Writing: Work with shorter pieces of writing first, and work with them to develop highly analytical writing, well-structured.
- Identification of sentence types—topic sentence (claim), quotation, explanation that relates quotation to topic sentence and thesis
- O-E-A formula: Observation, Evidence, Analysis; AP terminology is C-E-W: Claim, Evidence, Warrant
- Focus on how to connect all of those parts together
- Difference between description and analysis
- You never start or end a paragraph with a quotation (body paragraphs)
- Analysis of transition—between sentences and between paragraphs
- Pre-IB teachers can work on all these skills in short papers; they need to cycle around and get the same again each year, working with ever more sophisticated texts, ever more sophisticated ideas as topics for papers, and longer, more complex pieces of writing.
- Not only "How did it make you feel," but also "How did the author get you to feel that?" Work toward less trite emotions, but at the beginning, trite is not surprising. Do you like Romeo? What did he do or say to make you feel that way? Then what words that the author used made you feel that way? Eventually, we're up to "Do you feel that Nick is admirable?"
- Pull a comment from a literary critic, and give it to students to refute or defend.
- Grammar: subjects and verbs; pronoun-antecedent. Grammatical elements that indicate significant relationships. Verb tense shifts that signal movement in time in a text.

Extra Materials Sent by Participants:

Daina Lieberman sent some materials using Barack Obama's victory speech from 11/4/08. These include: the text of the speech, a sheet of texts to which Obama alluded, and a commentary on the text in a *New Yorker* article. As she suggested, it may come as a surprise to students to discover that some people in real life do the kind of thinking about language that we are asking them to do!

Two teachers who were unable to attend also sent materials:

Michael Phillips sent a mind-map on *As I Lay Dying*, a document with guidelines for students on how to prepare for an oral commentary during the 20-minute preparation period, and a document detailing five functions of a thesis statement.

Joan Vannersdoll sent some materials for *Chronicles of a Death Foretold*.

Thank you very much!!!!