

**IB English Networking Session
Robinson Secondary School
November 18, 2011**

- I. Susan Frenck and Jen Fulton-overview of changes to year one
- II. Mary Ellen O'Shea-overview of assessments training
- III. Discussion of issues affecting both grade levels
- IV. Break
- V. Break into two groups-teachers of seniors and teachers of juniors
- VI. Lunch

Discussion topics:

Affecting both grade levels:

- Appropriate book choices for new guidelines
- Norm grading between the levels with the curriculum change
- Teaching commentary and oral presentation skills
- Align new IB curriculum with state and SOL requirements
- Best practices
- Literature activities that prompt depth of thought
- Syllabus ideas for new English curriculum
- Changes to the assessment criteria

Junior Issues:

- Improving world lit paper scores and aligning grading with IB markschemes
- Preparing students for the IOP
- Plans for the new written assessment and reflective writing
- Changes to the program
- Updates/additions to the PBL
- New textualities: choices and assessments
- What has worked well so far within the new curriculum
- Discussion and presentation components of the written assignment

Senior Issues:

- Changes to parts 2 and 3
- IOC scoring, administration, preparation, for both SL and HL students
- How to pull excerpts and create guiding questions for the IOC
- Old program concerns for this year
- Changes to the IOC

IB English Networking: Robinson Secondary School

- Oral Presentation / Commentary
 - Takes time for students to work on the writing skills but seems to take more time for students to develop speaking skills
 - American Voices
 - Exposure to different American authors to augment
 - 2/3 about presentation skills with the remaining 1/3 covering content
 - Vertical articulation becomes more important for 9th and 10th grade teachers
 - IOP rubric (27 and 28, SL and HL)
 - Modified rubrics based on IB descriptors
 - Criterion B and C emphasize engaging the audience
 - Not about bells, whistles, and PowerPoints; visual aids can detract from the assignments
 - Prior to this shift, teachers worked on content more than skills
 - Group Presentation (IB English Networking 15)
 - Assignment gives students a taste of the group dynamic
 - Offers different approaches to the oral presentation/commentary
 - American Voices and IOP (IB English Networking 24-25) at Robinson HS
- Written Assignment (IB English Networking 4-5)
 - Components
 - Interactive oral – at least one – dealing with cultural elements
 - Response to prompts
 - Supervised writing
 - Production of the essay
 - Reflective statement sent forward to IB with the essay
 - Process-based writing rather than the focus on product
 - Guidance from teachers
 - IB wording is similar to previous years: students are ultimately in charge of their topic
 - Research and Interactive Oral for Chronicle... (IB English Networking 17)
 - Initial research and group collaboration
 - Students share (about two minutes per student) their finding
 - Absences – subtopics help to deal with student absences
 - Class size of 27; 27 different topics become cumbersome
 - Students will write more than one reflective statement; aids students and teachers
 - Reflective Statements (IB English Networking 8)
 - Counting words for a handwritten assignment so that they could gauge
 - In-class v. out-of-class: students are able to write in class or at home
 - Frees up the time

- Discussion must focus on the cultural and literary elements so the discussions stray from the greater thematic elements and meaning of the work
- Group Presentations and reflective writing
 - Must move beyond summary
 - Spread over three days (at Robinson)
 - Students may choose to write about any of the presentations but must address the cultural and contextual elements
 - One teacher states that she asks her class a focused question when they are listing and demonstrating awareness of elements but not really making strong arguments and supporting them. “Based on what you’ve heard from these presentations, how have your perceptions changed? How have you changed your understanding?”
 - Students may write in the 1st person
 - Prompt with references to possible “context” as referenced by the descriptors (IB English Networking 8)
 - Motivation from IB – schools were addressing culture and on text instead of looking at the books in isolation
- Timed writing (IB English Networking 19)
 - Required to offer three or four prompts
 - Different approach to writing
 - Not wholly analytical
- Pedagogical/Philosophical Issues
 - Structural focus on the cultural and contextual adds structure to the very elements that students are to discuss
 - Conflicting information in the IB material
 - Dealing with a new curriculum
 - See OCC resources (blue sheet *Planning for the Recent IB 1 English Curriculum Changes*)
 - Grading – more lenient?
 - Markbands change every year, so every school’s work will change and the markbands will change with that shift
 - IB always err on the side of the student
 - From IBO New Mexico Training: they will take issues into account
 - Pacing Guide (IB English Networking 1)

- Curriculum Changes from IB, presented by Mary Ellen (RSS) from Richard Hood from Upper Canada College (IB English Networking 83-122)
 - Aligning curriculum to the assessments
 - Comparison/Contrast section was an artificial assessment; comparing apples and Volkswagens
 - Doesn't compare with actual university and graduate school requirements
 - Mission aligned: logical and analytical thinkers
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 - Combat a worldwide epidemic in plagiarism (actually stated by IB)
 - Introduce more genres
 - Non-fiction is the leading genre in the last 18 years but there was little emphasis in IB
 - Graphic Novels and films – IB wanted to recognize the importance of arts in the films and their importance to literature
 - Creativity, especially in the IOP
 - More focused on creativity as a hallmark; conveying ideas in a different way and taking risks
 - Both in the writing and in the performances
 - Key teaching points that IB wants to convey: good teaching is still good teaching
 - Six Teaching Points #1: Safety in the classroom
 - Honoring different interpretations
 - Offering different options, e.g. four separate prompts for multiple classes
 - Multiple options for oral performances
 - Encourage them to task risks (clear theme from training)
 - Reflective statement: opportunity to write down what you did not understand
 - Six Teaching Points #2: Scaffolding
 - sound pedagogical technique
 - With writing, development of essays rather than a focus on product
 - Interactive oral: students and teachers need practice; model the interactive oral for them – awful performances, even from the teachers, e.g. *The Sorrow of War* and the necessity for a strong historical connection. Ho Chi Minh and a boring biography rather than a presentation of the major importance of Uncle Ho to Vietnam.
 - Six Teaching Points #3: Appropriate Goals for Growth

- Allow juniors to achieve higher marks for earning 2s and 3s in the new written assessment rubric (IB English Networking 5)
- Six Teaching Points #4: Model for students
 - Don't nail them in September for integrating the quotations, having a strong thesis, nailing the literary elements
 - Model one step at a time, perhaps one major issue a month; students become panic stricken and the approach is not productive
- Six Teaching Points #5: Differentiation
 - Breaking up major units into smaller units
 - Some teachers might teach more steps in the essays as opposed to moving forward when you see mastery
 - Variety of methods
- Six Teaching Points #6: Inquiry-based Learning
 - Our goal is to engage the students; we need to have them have fun
 - Have the students ask the questions as much as possible
- Random Comments
 - Book purchases
 - Encourage students to purchase the texts in first semester because of heavy annotation; students can use the
 - Pacing (primarily for IB 2)
 - Finding poets and poems that contextually inform the second semester works
 - Elongates the second semester study of the four works
 - Prior to the changes, IB was unreasonable in asking senior teachers to present the number of works that they were presenting
 - Teaching poetry in the junior
 - Develop the students' ability to discuss literary elements for the novel
 - Poetry
 - Students will receive one of the (up to) 15 poems that students will read
 - Teachers may model one, two, or three, but students can only have conversations around the remaining poems
 - Under exam conditions: practice is under exam conditions
 - Junior/Senior work
 - Some teachers have juniors listen to seniors' IOCs – juniors score while seniors present
- Best Texts
 - Authors
 - Flannery O'Connor
 - Zora Neale Hurston
 - Erdich

- Kinkaid
- Bessie Head (South African)
- Katherine Mansfield
- Stephen J. Gould
- The Awakening
- Age of Iron
- The Cricibles
- Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf
- Wide Sargasso Sea, Rhys
- Cassandra, by Christa Wolf
- The Bride Price, by Buchi Emecheta
- The Road, by Cormac McCarthy
- Field's Child
- Jane Eyre
- Mrs. Dalloway
- Short stories
 - Hawthorne
- Plays
 - No Exit, by Jean Paul Sartre
 - Oedipus Rex, by Sophocles
 - Streetcar, by Tennessee Williams
 - Hamlet, by some guy from England
- Memoir
 - Running in the Family
- Poetry
 - Langston Hughes
 - W.B. Yeats
 - William Wordsworth
 - John Keats
 - Sylvia Plath (listed as best on at least one list)
 - Carol Ann Duffy
 - Robert Frost
 - Margaret Atwood
 - Dante's Inferno
 - William Blake
 - Robert Pinsky
 - Longfellow
- Translated works
 - View with a Grain of Sand, by Wislawa Szymborska
 - Crime and Punishment, by Fyodor Dostoyevsky
 - No Exit, by Sartre
 - Perfume, Suskind

- Therése Raguin
- Emile Zola
- Chronicle of a Death Foretold, by Gabriel Garcia Marquez
- The Stranger, by Albert Camus
- The Assault
- The Sorrow of War, by Bao Ninh / Ninh Bao
- Things Fall Apart, by Chinua Achebe
- Madame Bovary, by Gustave Flaubert
- Antigone, by Sophocles
- A Doll's House, by Henrik Ibsen
- Candide, by Voltaire
- One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich, by Alexander Solzhenitsyn

- IB 2 Breakout Session
 - Passages for the IOC
 - Rich in literary features
 - Context comments to the longer work
 - Any change or shift in the work
 - I play to their strengths, so I ask them to bring up passages that we have not discussed in class
 - Students creating lists of 40-line passages
 - Students are savvy enough to know when we visit and revisit and revisit passages
 - Not meant to be offered in a list to students prior to the oral, e.g. these three soliloquies from *Hamlet*, these pages from Ondaatje, etc.
 - Success in IOC
 - Not a skill in terms of the assessment; preparing for the skills
 - A student might know the key elements of the text, the thematic ideas of the text; cannot merely walk in and talk about a text
 - Focus on skills
 - Skills and the IOC
 - Students are not simply reading an essay; not what IB wants
 - Difficulty in shaking up their approaches
 - Writing IOCS: that is really not good practice
 - Combination of ideas: (see Lessons for _____)
 - 1 min.: discussion of author
 - 2 mins: overview of the piece
 - 2 mins.: discussion of context
 - Questions: Do students watch the clock then?
 - Answer: I don't know yet. Majority of the students are speaking for only one to two minutes.
 - Six elements of a strong IOC (IB English Networking 45)
 - Even just working with a short paragraph during their junior year enables them to move toward a more involved IOC
 - Overly analytical if their focus line by line
 - Letting them have a guide when they have a markup; only during practice
 - Not in the IOC preparation itself under exam conditions
 - Full group presentation
 - Small group presentation
 - Computer lab for Audacity
 - Have student review over a weekend
 - What does IB want students to say?
 - Line by line or stanza by stanza

- Moderators will mark us down and mark us up, so the human factor comes into play
 - If ideas are being expressed and justified, then IB scores them well
 - Normalization before IOCs themselves
 - After the first few orals, listen to them again to make sure that your scoring is appropriate
 - Schedule
 - 5 weeks with 3 a day = Lee HS
 - Every period gets a day-and-a-half; remove students from class; 21 a day and done in 2 days; evaluated immediately = Robinson SS
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 - Samples
 - High range / medium range / low range
- Skills and Paper 2
 - 7s = the main thing are the connections; all the way through
 - Memorizing passages from the texts
 - Jeopardy in reverse: find a quotation and then create a test question that works with that quotations
 - Reviewed the top scoring papers all have quotations
 - 4s with connections and quotations
 - Designing a whole class around the questions themselves
 - Using questions from as many years back as we can
 - Almost always a point of view question
 - 7s on 7 of 14 papers last year = tearing the texts apart using a specific question; open book discussion of the texts with the question in class
 - Pretty soon they see the metaphorical connections
 - Literary techniques are the biggest weakness
 - Why are students getting the questions in the final semester of the final year?
 - Not logical
 - Offering students in junior year these types of questions
 - Having access to the exams during the junior year
 - Writer's Notebooks
 - Making detailed connections in preparation for the exam
 - Preparing you how to make your ideas understood in life
 - Using less and less of their prepared materials
 - Paired papers
 - Not two different voices; students have a conversation and then write it in the computer lab
- 2013 Changes
 - IOC
 - Segueing into the 2nd 10 minutes of the commentary

- IB envisions the teacher stating that the first 10 minutes is up and that we are moving on to the second 10 minutes
- IB envisions teachers pulling questions from an envelope and then discussing that question for as long as necessary; pulling more questions
- Moving from poet to one of two other works (genres)
- Students get to 7-8 minutes, teachers ask questions, and then we end that discussion at 10 minutes and move to another genre
- Not guiding questions but...? Questions from class but not prepared questions. Only two discussion questions. Cannot choose a second question from the envelope. We are working with the students' skills and their conversation about a text. Difficult aspect of these questions is the fact that we cannot prompt them. Should be an exchange of ideas rather than a teaching moment for the students. Similar to Paper 2 questions. Preparing the students for the same skills in writing E.g.
 - How is Hamlet deemed to be the first Existentialist character?
- Writing skills are developing as their oral skills are developing.
- Choosing works
 - Drama, Poetry, Prose: Other than Non-fiction, Prose: Novels and Shorts Stories
 - Really ends up being prose fiction: short and long
- Removal of Authors and Titles
 - Why?
 - Don't know.