

Dream of a Nation- Becoming an Issue Expert and Teaching Classmates

Students often learn more effectively when they are tasked with absorbing and analyzing information rather than having it dictated to them. Students also gain a better understanding of information through re-organizing and teaching gained knowledge to their peers or the broader community.

While introducing the topics, issues, and essays contained within *Dream of a Nation*, keep in mind the student-centered approach to teaching content.

While introducing chapters in *Dream of a Nation* to the class, try using the “infographics” at the beginning of each chapter as a discussion starter.

The following strategies and templates are great ways to create an effective and fun classroom environment while allowing students to take responsibility for their own learning:

1. Read-Process-Produce

In this activity, groups of students will be required to read an assigned essay, process the information into graphic organizers, and create products to present to the class.

2. Jigsaw Group Activity

This is an active group strategy requiring student groups to become experts on their assigned reading, then come together with experts on other issues in newly formed groups to exchange information. The new diverse expert groups will create comprehensive products of the total group knowledge.

3. Paideia Seminar

In this activity, the class is assigned a single essay (or a set of related essays) to read. After the reading is completed, the class convenes in a group discussion where the teacher acts as the discussion moderator, prompting questions, while students provide content and express views related to the reading.

4. The Socratic Classroom

This activity can be done individually or as a group. The teacher first prompts the class with a claim that is in opposition to the topic, issue or essay that is to be assigned. Students then are tasked with refuting the teacher’s claim by gathering evidence from the text. All evidence is shared with the class and analyzed for its validity.

5. Student Inquiry Part I

This is another activity that can be done individually or in groups. After the students have been assigned and read a particular essay, have the student or groups create a series of questions that were left unanswered by the author. As students share their questions with the class, give other students a chance to answer the questions if a particular issue was addressed in another essay. Any questions left unanswered are saved and used in the next two template strategies.

The following table lists essays in *Dream of a Nation* and activities that work best with those particular pieces.

1. Read • Process • Produce	2. Jigsaw Group Activity	3. Paideia Seminar	4. Socratic Classroom	5. Student Inquiry Part I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building a “We” Economy (p. 90) • Key Steps for a Healthy Nation (p. 222) • The Rise of the Conscientious Consumer (p. 298) 	<p>*This activity works best when all essays from a single chapter are used.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting Money Out of Politics (p. 20) • Moving the Green Jobs Movement Forward (p. 96) • Making Education Work for <u>All</u> Students (p. 128) • Ending Poverty in America (p. 252) • 0.7% of Wealth: A Small Price to End Global Extreme Poverty (p. 265) • Reallocating Military Spending, Taking Care of Soldiers and Increasing National Security (p. 364) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educating for a Sustainable Future (p. 156) • Building a Conservation Nation (p. 190) • Transforming Urban Injustice into Beauty and Empowerment (p. 312) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building a “We” Economy (p. 90) • Making Coverage Count (p. 128) • Tackling the Profit Problem in Healthcare (p. 240) • Ending Poverty in America (p. 252) • The Rise of the Conscientious Consumer (p. 298) • Establishing a US Department of Peace (p. 376)

1. Read-Process-Produce

Time: 90 minutes

Introduction

The purpose of Read-Process-Produce is to allow students the opportunity to work towards three goals that will give them the tools to understand and process content, as well as transmit their new knowledge to their classmates. Students are placed in groups and each group is assigned an essay; with essay in hand, groups are prompted with three goals for the assignment: reading the essay, processing the information, and creating a product that represents the information.

Procedure

Once groups are created, essays can be assigned. The chapters in *Dream of a Nation* are divided into 12 topical chapters with 3-7 essays in each chapter. By assigning different essays from the same chapter to groups, an entire topic can be covered in a 1-2 class periods. Alternatively the same essay can be assigned to all the groups so a deeper understanding can be attained. Each group will be responsible for the following:

1. Groups will read an essay from *Dream of a Nation* that has been assigned by the teacher.
2. Groups will record main ideas and process essay into a graphic organizer (examples below).
3. Groups will create a product (speech, chart, picture, etc.) to present to the class.

Lesson Timeline

Explain Activity, Form Groups, Assign Essays and Group Roles	10 minutes
Read and Annotate Essays	20 minutes
Process information in a graphic organizer	15 minutes
Create Group Products	20-25 minutes
Present Group Products	15-20 minutes

Graphic Organizers

Graphic organizers help students to classify ideas and communicate more effectively. Here are some graphic organizers that will be helpful in categorizing information in *Dream of a Nation*.

- Venn Diagrams
- Bubble/Double Bubble Maps
- T-Charts
- Cause and Effect Charts
- KWL Table
- Timeline
- Tree Map

Group Products

Here are some ideas for products that can be created to help groups present their information to the class.

- Infographic Poster
- Stump Speech
- Comic Strip
- Poetry or Song
- Brochure
- Illustrated Poster
- Computer Presentation

2. Jigsaw Group Activity

Time: 90 minutes

Introduction

The Jigsaw Group Activity is designed to engage the class in a dynamic group setting where all students are held accountable. The activity is based on two series of groups. The first groups will allow each student to become an expert on their assigned topic. In the next group, each student will be responsible for the information mastered in their expert groups as they convey it to students who have mastered other information. Jigsaw groups will compile a comprehensive set of information.

Procedure

Students will first convene in **expert groups**; each group will become an expert in a particular topic or essay. After the expert group phase, students will transition into their **jigsaw groups**, where students will create comprehensive group products to present to the class.

During **expert groups**, students should read the assigned essay and process the information with either graphic organizers* or the *Essay Companion Form* available online.

Once in jigsaw groups:

1. Each student expert will discuss his or her topic/essay
2. All expert information will be compiled
3. A comprehensive group product will be created and presented*

Formation of Jigsaw Groups (4 Groups, 4 Students per Group):

Each student is represented by a letter A, B, C or D and subscript number 1,2,3 or 4.

Expert Groups	Jigsaw Groups
1. A ₁ , A ₂ , A ₃ , A ₄	1. A ₁ , B ₁ , C ₁ , D ₁
2. B ₁ , B ₂ , B ₃ , B ₄	2. A ₂ , B ₂ , C ₂ , D ₂
3. C ₁ , C ₂ , C ₃ , C ₄	3. A ₃ , B ₃ , C ₃ , D ₃
4. D ₁ , D ₂ , D ₃ , D ₄	4. A ₄ , B ₄ , C ₄ , D ₄

Lesson Timeline

Form expert groups for each chapter/topic to be assigned	5 minutes
Explain activity; assign essays and group roles	10 minutes
Engage in expert groups	25 minutes
Create jigsaw groups	5 minutes
Engage in jigsaw groups and create products	45 minutes

*See *Read-Process-Produce* for graphic organizer and product ideas.

3. Paideia Seminar

Time: 50-90 minutes

Introduction

A Paideia Seminar is a collaborative, intellectual dialogue about a text, facilitated with open-ended question. The main purpose of the seminar is to arrive at a fuller understanding of the ideas and values in *Dream of a Nation*, of ourselves, and of each other. The Paideia Seminar puts the teacher in a position not to teach, but to simply moderate. By prompting open-ended questions to engage students and closing conversations by asking students to apply information and personalize ideas, the class will gain a better understanding of the information as a whole.

The following lesson is adapted from the original Paideia Seminar from the National Paideia Center. For further classroom instruction models and to learn more about Paideia Active Learning visit www.paideia.org.

Procedure

Students will all be assigned to read one from *Dream of a Nation*; prompt students to read the essay, take notes and write down any questions they have, this can be done in-class or as an at home assignment. After the essay is read, the teacher will assemble the students in a whole class discussion (preferably in a large circle).

During the discussion the **teacher-moderator** will:

1. Ask challenging open-ended questions based on main ideas from the text.
2. Take a variety of notes to record the flow of ideas.
3. Move the discussion along by asking follow-up questions.
4. Note each student's level of participation and his or her contribution to the dialogue.

During the discussion the **students** will:

1. Focus on the ideas and values embedded in the essay.
2. Use other students' names if referring to a point he or she made.
3. Stay focused on the main speaker and wait their turn to talk.
4. Agree or disagree in a courteous thoughtful manner.

Follow-Up Activity

After the seminar thank the students for their participation. Engage the class in a short review/critique of the discussion. Ask them what worked? What didn't work? And how can the class improve for the next time?

After the review/critique, assign the students a short writing assignment where they can either:

- Reflect on the group discussion or their individual performance
- Explain a comment they did not get a chance to discuss
- Further reflect on the content discussed

4. The Socratic Classroom

Time: 50 minutes

Introduction

Socrates often prompted his students with a false claim, only so they would have to work to refute it. In this activity, the teacher will prompt the class with a claim, opinion, or point of view contradictory to that of the essay assigned; it is the students' job to refute said claim. The activity is designed to challenge your students to read an essay, while searching for key pieces of information that relate to and contradict the teachers claim.

Procedure

The activity will start by introducing the topic to be discussed in class. Engage the class in an open discussion where a few student opinions about the topic are addressed. The discussion will stop once the teacher states an opinion, idea or point of view that is contradictory to the essay to be read. Encourage students to write down the contradictory claim. The teacher will then hand out the essay and prompt the students or groups to do the following:

1. Read the text
2. Make note of any evidence that supports the teacher's claim
3. Make note of any evidence that contradicts the teacher's claim
4. Organize the evidence in a graphic organizer (ex. T-Chart below)

<i>Contradictory Claim</i>	
Evidence For	Evidence Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • •

After the individual or group work, reconvene as a class. Ask students to share information and display it to the class (whiteboard, overhead, etc.). Have students classify evidence as “for” or “against” the original contradictory claim. As a class, discuss the validity of each piece of evidence; discard invalid evidences. Review all valid evidence.

Lesson Timeline

Introduce and briefly discuss topic	5 minutes
Provide contradictory claim, explain activity and distribute essay	5 minutes
Read essay and take evidential notes	25 minutes
Share evidence with class and discuss validity	15 minutes

5. Student Inquiry Part I

Time: 50 minutes

Introduction

The student inquiry lesson is designed to teach students to question ideas, explore sources, and research more deeply into a particular topic. This lesson provides an easy transition into Exploring Varying Viewpoints and Real-World Inquiry, the next two lesson modules. By reading an essay and using questions to gain a deeper understanding, students will initiate the research process and begin to explore ideas and solutions outside of *Dream of a Nation*.

Procedure

The teacher will assign a collection of essays to the class (one essay per student or group). The students will be prompted to read the essay while completing the *Essay Companion Form* as well as writing down questions they feel the author left unanswered (assign a certain number of questions). Once completed, the class will come together and create one list of questions, if another student or group can provide an answer for question while citing evidence from *Dream of a Nation*, take the question off the list. Discuss the class questions, and save them for the next two lesson modules.

Lesson Timeline

Assign essays and explain activity	5 minutes
Read, Complete <i>Essay Companion Form</i> , and write questions	25 minutes
Create list of questions and discuss	20 minutes

Transitioning to Modules 2&3 – “Exploring Varying Viewpoints” and “Real-World Inquiry”

The next two modules will challenge students to go beyond the bounds of *Dream of a Nation* and become fully immersed in an issue. Through “Exploring Varying Viewpoints” students will consider alternative ideas on issues, engage in debate scenarios and explore various forms of compromise that focus on solutions. After collecting a broader knowledge base, students will look to effect change in their community in “Real-World Inquiry” before implementing and reflecting on their own solution in the final lesson module “Moving Towards Action.”