Evaluation Overview

**9th Grade ELA**

Locating Common Themes in Various Texts

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| **Evidence Notes** | **Indicator** | **Average Score** |
| Learning objective is clear and communicated throughout the lesson: “I can identify or locate common themes in various texts.” The teacher reminds students they are looking for these common themes among the 3 texts they had previously read. It is obvious learning objectives are connected to prior learning. This is supported through students’ responses to teacher’s questions throughout the lesson. Expectations for student performance are clear and demanding. The teacher reminds students to “make sure you connect what you did yesterday,” and she  reinforces this with the students as she circulates around the room. There is also evidence of student mastery though the student responses to teacher questioning. Classwork on this day relates directly to the learning target/objective and students demonstrate understanding of target through small group conversation. Most students were asking questions about what to do to meet the teacher’s expectations. Examples: “Can we split up the words like into sections?” “Can we title it?” “Do you want it like one big sentence?” “How long do you want it to be?” | **Standards and Objectives** | **3** |
| The teacher consistently reinforces effort of the students. She encourages the students to explore the possible connection between the three texts to find a common theme. The content is presented in a logical sequence to allow students to determine the relevancy of each text in relation to the other two texts. Students are all engaged in the learning process and with one another within their groups. However, there is no evidence from the lesson that the teacher made the content relevant to the students. When the teacher asks for volunteers to read the questions on the board, students do not participate until she calls them by name. Once they begin to work in groups, there is an opportunity for the students to explore the texts and ask questions. The teacher reinforces correct answers with, “Alright.” “Ok, good.” “Thank you.” “That’s what I’m looking for, exactly!” “Sweet!” | **Motivating Students** | **3** |
| The teacher is very concise in her presentation of the content. She has numerous questions on the board (which had been used for all three texts) and she reviews these with the students in depth. There is logical sequencing of the three texts in prior lessons, leading up to today’s comparison of the three texts. There are some visuals within this lesson (writing on the board, use of text with color-coded parts) that guide students through the theme work. The written instructions on the board preview the organization of the lesson and are used as reference points throughout the lesson for students to check their progress. The teacher does not model thinking verbally or through the visuals. The lack of modeling led to students being unclear on how to complete the tasks. | **Presenting Instructional Content** | **2** |

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| The lesson begins promptly with a clear beginning, middle and end. The beginning includes students reading the objective and reading aloud the “alphabets” or questions on the board. The middle of the lesson is student small-group work when they are reading the speech for evidence and theme. The end of the lesson includes students receiving poster board and markers and writing summary statements on the posters. The pace allows students to all get to Question D in the assignment and move on to the poster work. The teacher passes out the markers and the poster while the groups are discussing the assignment and no instructional time is lost in the transition. Pacing is brisk and much of the lesson is centered in groups. Group time provides the opportunity for students to reflect on the three texts as they compare them and find a common theme. Group discussion provides supports for students to share their understandings and support one another in learning. There is no instructional time lost in transitions, and routines for distributing materials are efficient. | **Lesson Structure and Pacing** | **4** |
| The activities and materials used in today’s lesson support the objective and challenge students’ thinking (to determine a common theme between the three texts). There is significant time for students to interact with one another within their groups, and the texts are appropriately complex (inferred). Students are required to create two products (graphic organizer and a summary comparison of the three texts). Students are required to analyze the texts and compare them for a common theme. There are many opportunities for student-to-student interaction and curiosity that require students to perform some self-monitoring in order to finish on time. Through having open-ended work, students do have choice in what to include with their group work and their final poster board presentation. The common themes reflected in the texts are relevant to the students’ lives. There is no time provided for individual student reflection – but as a group the students reflect on the three texts in order to reach a consensus on a common theme. | **Activities and Materials** | **3** |
| Teacher questions balance knowledge, analysis (“Where in the text do you get that?”) and evaluation (“Would the speech be the same without those statistics?”). Questions from the teacher and those embedded in the classwork require students to cite evidence; these questions are purposeful and coherent. The teacher asks questions during both whole class and group learning situations although the frequency of questions to students was low and most questions were asked as a whole group, not individually. There was very little wait time and students did not volunteer to answer the questions. Teacher does call on a variety of volunteers including male and female and speakers from various places in the classroom (front, back) in the opening of the lesson. Her questions push students to think deeply about the day’s objective of identifying a common theme between three different texts. There is no evidence of student-generated questions. Most questions asked are to probe into deeper thinking or to redirect student work. | **Questioning** | **3** |
| Oral feedback is given by the teacher throughout the observation. However, the feedback to students is not specific and usually given in the form of a question. The teacher circulates during the group work to support student engagement and prompt student thinking. There is no evidence of students giving feedback to one another. There is very little evidence of assessing individuals and providing them feedback that would move them closer to mastery of the objective. | **Academic Feedback** | **2** |
| The lesson is taught using whole-class and small groups. There is no evidence of how students are grouped (ability, race, gender). However, the move between whole class and groups maximized student understanding of the content. The groups knew their work expectations, but there were no apparent defined roles within the groups. Most students participating in groups appear on task, and some groups have divided work in order to complete the assignment on time. | **Grouping** | **3** |
| It is evident the teacher knew her content and is well-prepared to deliver this content to the students. This focused content has been taught in sufficient depth to foster student understanding. Students are quickly able to identify three key things that should be included in a summary: key details, textual evidence, and academic vocabulary. These obviously have all been taught prior to today’s lesson. The teacher uses a few strategies to enhance the students’ content knowledge such as providing them with different types of literature: poem and speech. The questions on the board allow them to draw conclusions and explain the purpose of the speech. As the teacher moves from group to group, she highlights the key concepts from the texts to connect them to the themes. | **Teacher Content Knowledge** | **3** |
| The teacher makes a point to include various levels of students in reading examples / questions from the board (including allowing a student to stand in front of the board so he can see the writing better). She intentionally calls on students in different parts of the classroom. It is unclear if the texts or group work provided differentiation to ensure each student had an opportunity to be successful. Students seem interested in the content and eager to work together to identify a common theme of the three pieces. The teacher calls students by name/nickname. There is no evidence of incorporating student interests or cultural heritage in this lesson. The teacher does provide students with a graphic organizer to use during the lesson and references it in small group conversations which may be an indicator of anticipating student learning difficulties or needs. There is little evidence the teacher relates the student work or the texts to the students. | **Teacher Knowledge of Students** | **3** |
| The focus of today’s lesson is primarily on analytical thinking – comparing and contrasting the three different pieces they have been reading. The students have the opportunity to generate ideas around a common theme for the three pieces, then reach a consensus (supported by evidence) for their summary. They are asked to cite evidence (explain) their thinking. The use of a graphic organizer provides a visual representation of the compare and contrast of the three pieces. It is not evident the students were aware of their thinking strategies. | **Thinking** | **3** |
| As students work through the compare and contrast activity of the three texts, they generate ideas regarding a common theme. They also have to categorize and draw conclusions in order to complete the graphic organizer. In small groups, students are asked to identify relevant information through citing evidence in the texts (identifying relevant information). They are also asked to generate ideas in the form of a summary sentence that includes all three texts’ themes. These elements are being reinforced, not taught or introduced, in this lesson. | **Problem Solving** | **3** |

**Lesson Average: 2.92**

1. Possible areas of reinforcement:
2. **Motivating students** – There is evidence that that the teacher provides significant verbal encouragement and opportunities within the lesson for students to explore ideas and engage with other students.
3. **Lesson Structure and Pacing** – There is evidence that the lesson is well paced as students are tasked with completing a four-part activity but still allowed ample time for completion.
4. **Activities and Materials** – There is evidence that the activities are aligned to student outcomes, challenge and engage students, and require students to use the text for successful completion.
5. Possible areas of refinement:
6. **Presenting Instructional Content** – There is evidence of students struggling to meet the demands of the standards-aligned task due to lack of understanding and lack of modeling. The inability to identify the problem-solving processes need to complete the task puts student mastery in jeopardy.
7. **Academic Feedback** – There is evidence the lack of specific, academically focused feedback hinders student understanding and progress toward mastery. Students are unable or not encouraged to give feedback to each other. Without the means to identify success or the lack of success, student misconceptions may develop without redirection, hindering mastery.
8. **Teacher Knowledge of Students** – There is little evidence to support relevance of learning to student experiences or that the lesson provided opportunities for students with different abilities to master the content. Without this relevance or differentiation, students of differing abilities may not be allowed the opportunity to show mastery.