

Minnesota Writing Project

--- Demonstration Lesson ---

Title: Working with Difficult Texts

Grade: 11-12 graders

Approximate Length of time to complete the lesson:

The entire project takes 13 days. The pacing is as such:

2 days in computer lab researching who Ben Franklin was and his contributions to American society past and present.

1 day to learn about aphorisms

1 day to read the excerpt from Ben Franklin's Autobiography

7 days to track results of 1 virtue (or vice)

2 days to draft and type up final copy

Learning Objectives and Significance of Lesson:

*Paraphrase difficult text

*Break down long sentences to understand them

*Focus on 1 virtue or vice and monitor for a week.

*Write about their data and make conclusions

Brief Summary Outline: Introduction to Ben Franklin: 2 days in the computer lab to research 10 facts on his inventions, his political work, his childhood and background. Each student will work to produce a brochure, flyer, paper, or power point presentation.

Aphorisms: 1 day. We will read then in class and each student will pick 1 aphorism and illustrate it.

Actual Lesson that I presented: Warm-up: Students will journal on the topic of: What are your virtues and what are you're your vices?

Lesson: Teacher will read aloud the excerpt of Ben Franklin's autobiography in the literature book. Students will write down the 13 virtues and make a 1 page dictionary—goal is to paraphrase the archaic language in the textbook with modern language. Slang, teen vocabulary, hip hop, etc are allowable choices.

Closing activity: Students pick one virtue that they want to track for the week. Teacher will hand out monitor sheet for them to record their information.

Next week: Students bring their completed tracking sheet to class. Students write a draft of their findings. The final piece needs 4 sections--Intro on why I picked this virtue, procedures, data analysis, and conclusion. Then go to the computer lab the next day and type up their findings. The next day in writing groups, students share with other their results.

For additional information, contact: Elizabeth Curran at elizabeth.curran@spps.org