Lesson Plan

Around Your School—Bonding Students to Staff

Ridgewood Middle School

Overview
Unfortunately, in our society not every job holds the same prestige and as a result some occupations do not receive as much respect as they deserve. This lesson enables students to see that in every job done well there is honor. Students are assigned a staff member (custodian, librarian, nurse, secretary, cafeteria worker, etc) to interview. Students generate a list of questions that focus on the job responsibilities, skills necessary to complete the job duties, and some on the employee’s life outside of school. After the interview, students create a presentation about the employee to share with the class. This assignment gives the students and the staff a chance to get to know each other on another level, thus creating a more caring school community.

Lesson Objectives
Students will be able to:

▪ work cooperatively in a group to generate a list of interesting and appropriate questions
▪ conduct a personal interview
▪ organize information using an appropriate graphic organizer
▪ write an interesting essay using standard English
▪ create an appropriate visual aid
▪ present information to the class

Materials Needed
▪ Paper
▪ Pencil
▪ Poster Board or Roll Paper for poster
▪ Markers
▪ Optional: digital camera with access to printer to take photo of the employee for the poster

Procedures
Prior to Day 1, ask and secure staff members who are willing to participate, so that they are prepared to be interviewed by the students.

Day 1
▪ Opening Discussion: Why do people conduct interviews? (To get information)
▪ Explain to students that they will be conducting an interview in order to get information about an employee in your building.
▪ Assign students to groups of four (Interviewer, two Note-takers, Presenter)
▪ Go over Handout #1
▪ Demonstrate what a good question sounds like. Steer them away from asking simple yes or no questions.
  Yes/No question: Is your job hard?
  Good question: What is the most difficult thing about your job? Why?
▪ Allow time for students to generate their lists of questions. Each group needs two copies of the final questions.

Day 2
▪ Check questions for appropriateness.
▪ Once questions have been approved, release the groups to conduct their interviews.

Day 3
▪ Students need to organize their notes. Do the two sets of notes match? If yes, everyone in the group needs a copy.
▪ Individually, students will develop a clear thesis and organize the interview notes using a graphic organizer (a 4-square, a web, or an outline)
▪ Homework: Rough Draft of Essay

Day 4
▪ Peer editing with a partner from the original group in order to check for accuracy of information.
▪ Revise rough drafts into final drafts.

Day 5
▪ Discuss: Why do you have visuals in a presentation? What qualities do effective visuals have? (neat, easy to read, eye-catching, etc)
▪ Work day for group poster

Day 6
▪ Group decides which essay they would like the presenter to read.
▪ Presenter in group reads the essay and the poster is presented to class.
▪ Students complete reflection sheet (Handout #2) individually.

Assessment
Students are assessed credit/ no credit on the graphic organizer and the presentation.
Students' posters are assessed using the Poster Scoring Guide.
Students' essays are assessed using the Essay Scoring Guide.

Extensions and Adaptations
▪ Teachers may wish to use this essay assignment as the first of the year and thus as a pre-test of students’ writing abilities. What writing strengths/weaknesses are identified? It can thereby give the teacher insight into what aspect of the writing process to focus on next (thesis, attention getter, sentence variety, etc.).
▪ Teachers may also follow up with the students in month to see if they are in fact doing things to help make the employee’s job more rewarding. Also, students should be sure to write proper thank you notes in friendly letter format to the employees after the interview.
▪ With LEP or LD students the length of the essay can be reduced.
▪ LD students may enjoy being the presenter or the interviewer in the group.
Credit
Ann Asher, an eighth-grade English teacher at Ridgewood Middle School, a 2006 National School of Character, wrote this lesson.