**Case Study Insider**

**Richard Lopez**

**Instructor: Michael Sherry**

**Spring 2012Table of Contents**

**1 Title**

**2 Table of Contents**

**3-6 Introduction Observation Day 1**

**6- 7 Day Two Observations**

**7-9 Day Three Observations**

**9-11 Day Four Observations**

**12- 14 Day Five Observations**

**15- 17 Part Two: Rationale**

**18 Lesson 1**

**19 Lesson 2**

**20 Lesson 3**

**Introduction and Synthesis**  
**Day One Where I went, who I observed & what I learned**

My first day at my placement was a little intimidating. I was unsure of what to expect or what I was going to encounter. My placement teacher had previously caused me some confusion and I didn’t even know if I should be there. The first thing I found interesting was how laid back all the faculty and students were. I waited outside for a good five minutes until and student walking with a teacher said, “Let me get your card dad” He then just let me in. I was a little taken back since my experience with high schools have always been extremely hard to get into because of all the safety rules and how strict high schools around me are. When I walked into the front office I saw one mother waiting, and a short thin woman with librarian hair and thin glasses sitting at a desk. The woman sitting at the desk asked me “Who are you?” No introduction, no hello, just a happy quirky “Who are you”. I told her I was here to see Mr. U and that I was his placement from the university. After peering over a few papers, she looks back up to me and says, you’re not on the list but let me just call him”. I began to get nervous again since I was unsure if the teacher knew I was coming. She called up what I can assume was Mr. U and waited scanning me over. Someone answered and she said, “A Mr. Richard Lopez is here to see you from the University?” She shook her head a few times and muffled a few words. With a short little laugh she hung up. “Go right up to room 207” is all she said. Smiled and went back to her paperwork.  
I walked out of the office and looked around. I remember thinking to myself, “where the hell is room 207?” I started to walk up a flight of stairs and saw a crazy huge mural with an older looking man handing a folded piece of paper to a younger looking man. I continued up the stairs and thankfully the first room number I saw was 204, I glanced in quickly and noticed it was an empty room no students, no teacher. I decided that Mr. U’s class should be two or three classes down the hall. I continued past another empty classroom and came to what should have been room 207. I was surprised to see room 212 where 207 should have been. I glanced around and noticed the numbers were not making sense. It took me about three minutes to realize the evens where on one side and odds were on another. About two more classes up was open door with a booming voice echoing out into the quiet hallway. “Of course” I thought to myself.  
I was wondering what this man Mr. U would look like. I was wondering if he would be a miserable old man withered away by years of stress and unruly students. Or maybe he would be a huge Santa-Clause-esk jolly old man who loves poetry, and reads literature with so much enthusiasm you see his cheeks blush red from excitement of every next line. You know the English teacher we all dream about, the Robin Williams one. I finally reached the door and turned the corner. There he was a plain somewhat over weight bald man. Any hair he had left was white and thin. Mr. U was a normal old man who taught English. Not a crazy old kook, not the eccentric man I was imagining. Mr. U, Just a man sitting at his computer desk, helping a female student, nothing more nothing less. Or So I thought.  
I walked in and approached the desk. I could hear the female student say, “If you want to add them up and get an average you just highlight and click auto sum then average.” I was surprised to learn that it was the student was helping the teacher, not what I had originally thought. I began to realize why there might have been confusion from Mr. U’s emails originally. At least I knew he wasn’t just annoyed with me and maybe I could grow to like this guy. Hopefully he would think the same of me.  
I approached the desk and the girl student stopped talking and looked at me. Mr. U looked up as well and said, “ahhhhh you must be Richard? How are you?” Before I could even answer he continued talking. “Just give me one second while Lauren teaches me how to do this.” I kind of smirked because he sounded like Sean Connery. Not with the Accent but similar voice depth and mumbling. I waited and watched as the girl logged him into a PSSA teaching program for teachers to teach students. She finished explaining and started to walk away from the desk. Mr. U just said, “thank you Lauren”. Looked up at me and said, “Lauren is a very gifted young lady.” Lauren smiled and sat down at her desk in the classroom. I just smiled and stuck my hand out and introduced myself. Mr. U took my hand and immediately began talking again. He asked me about ten questions in two minutes and not intentionally but mindlessly didn’t let me answer any. We sat at the desk and he said, “So what are you here for? I have some idea but I don’t really know.” I went to hand him my assignment so I could explain it while he looked it over. He pushed it away and said, “No I’m not reading that, I have to read things all day just tell me.” I explained and he started suggesting students to examine. Mr. U was calling everyone by nicknames so I couldn’t really follow who he was talking about because the students were suing each other’s real names and he was using nick names. Finally he called over Kyle. Kyle was a small tiny framed very quiet looking kid in a hoodie with long hair. I introduced myself, we shook hands and he sat back down. Mr. U explained that they were getting ready for PSSA’s and their schedule was going to be pretty boring. I said that was fine and went on my way. I didn’t realize what he meant by really boring.

The classroom was made up of twelve students. The student that I would be observing sat in the back of the room and seemed to be very tech savvy or at least knew his way around the PSSA program they were using that day for the lesson. There are four girls and eight boys in the class. I sat in the very back and just watched Mr. U explain going through the program. The class seems respectful and eager to learn. No real character though.

**Day Two Observation 1**  
The second day I did my first actual observation. I watched how Mr. U set up his classroom and how he made the students get a computer out and set up the same program he was learning to use the first time I met him. Then it got bad. I was sitting in the back and all the students started quietly going through their program. I watched screens but it was the same thing on every screen. Everything was the same and everyone was learning about the PSSA’s through this program. Mr. U hardly spoke and when he did it was a ready to move on? Or anyone have any questions? I honestly never sat in a more boring class in my life. Then it happened. As I was daydreaming I snapped back and realized the Mr. U had just asked me a question. In front of the whole class! I didn’t hear it. Of course I had asked him what he said. Mr. U said, do you think this is an appropriate place for a comma? I thought to myself. Of course he asks me the first day about grammar the thing I know least about. I had to say I wasn’t sure because if I answered and got it wrong I would look like an idiot and not serious about teaching and I wanted this teacher to like me. I didn’t want to be in the class any longer. I was so embarrassed. It was weird though. Not one kid laughed, no one even looked up from their computer at me. They probably forgot I was even there. I mean these kids were so well behaved I forgot that I was in a high school. I thought there had to be something behind this. I got up when the bell buzzed, asked if I could interview Kyle next week and rolled out as quickly as I could.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Time | Observation | Interpretation |
| 8:52 | Teacher asks student how many problems they got wrong. | I learned this was wrong, but it didn’t seem like a big deal |
| 8:56 | Teacher calls on every student at least once since class began | Not one student hesitated to answer. All Low order questions |
| 9:01 | All Students seem Attentive | Only Kyle was looking at computer the whole time |
| 9:09 | Students begin PSSA Laptop activity | Everyone is well behaved and working hard. |
| 9:20 | Teacher asks student what’s wrong. | Talking increases a little not really disruptive though |
| 9:22 | Kyle has not said one word | Kyle seems very introverted, might not be very easy to get to open up |
| 9:25 | Hardly any communication or discussion | This seems to benefit Kyle because he learns best through technology so far |

**Day Three Student Interview**  
The third day was interesting to say the least. It was the day I got to interview my student. Kyle was hard to get to open up and even harder to get real answers out of. I started to ask my question.  
1. What do you like most about English?  
Writing Prompts. (All he answered)  
2. How do you think you learn best?  
I like to learn from power points and taking notes  
3. What is your favorite book and why?  
Assassin Creed Renaissance; The students response to why was “because I like the video games story.   
4. What is your favorite Genre?  
Action  
5. How does technology help you learn?  
It makes things easier to answer and explain with pictures and videos. This told me the student is largly a visual learner and partly kinesthetic because he enjoys computer programs and video games that are both visual and manipulative. I should probably incorporate this into a lesson.  
6. Do you ever read outside of school?  
No  
7. What’s your home life like?  
I have a sister. A dad and a mom. (We got into a small convo. His father and mother both went to the same school. So did his sister. )  
8. Is English a worthy subject to teach and why do you think that?  
Yes. So that people can learn to read and write and get into college.  
9. Has English helped you succeed in life? How?  
No. I haven’t used it in anything important yet.  
**BASIC INFO**

-Age 17-11th grade on track not gifted or special needs-Doing pretty good in class.  
My third day ended quickly and I left feeling like I hardly knew Kyle. I wasn’t sure how I was going to develop three lesson plans for him. Looking back I should have asked for more details and follow ups to my questions. Something along the lines of: “What about the video game Assassins Creed made you want to read the book? Who are the characters you most relate to and why? The game deals heavily in historical events, would History be an area you would like to explore more?” These questions would help me develop a more personalized lesson plan for Kyle. For instance I could show him cut scenes from the actual video game to entice him to show how he would have done it or described what is going on in that section related to the book. Also I could set up a web-quest where he finds similar stories or events in history to the story in the novel/ videogame and have him explain in a short power point project or video project; since visual/manipulative learning is his forte. Another overlooked observation is Kyle’s attraction to music or sounds. I know from personal experience that “gamers” enjoy the sound effects and quality of the games and usually determine a videogames status whether these are good or not. Maybe this is something I could make him incorporate into his visual project. Maybe have Kyle do something along the line of creating an alternate ending to the video game. This helps Kyle learn about story framing, Character development and language. Kyle would also have to write a short script which would create a writing lesson and he would have to get actors to help him which would introduce a sort of interpersonal connection. Forcing Kyle to be more social, and step out of his comfort zone.

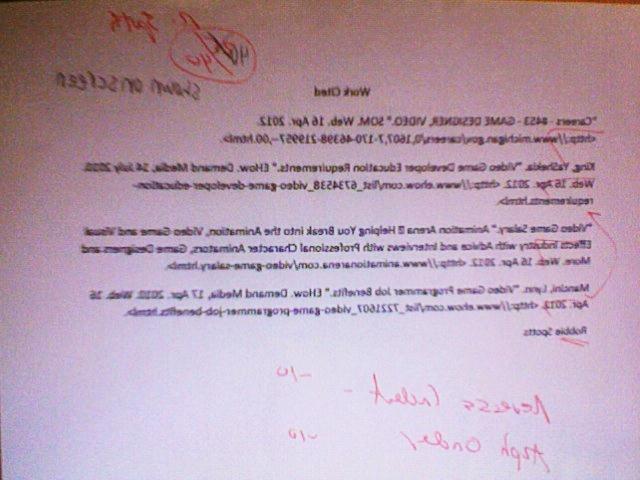
**Day Four Teacher Interview Observation Two**  
My fourth day I interviewed Mr. U. Here are my questions and answers.  
1. Do you think using a quantitative grading scale helps or hinders Kyle progress?  
I think Kyle would do great no matter how I grade him. I think all students when presented with the rubric do better. They know what they have to do. I personally was interested in this question since it was such a hot topic in our class discussion. I know it is specific but it also helps me learn more about Kyle.   
2. Do you think the PSSA’s are hindering your ability to teach Kyle what he needs to be taught?  
I feel that it’s my job to teach him what an eleventh grader needs to be taught. If the school tells me I have to help him do well on the PSSA’s I think that will help him succeed in life. I do what my job is requires me to do and then if there is time I teach them more. PSSA’s take up a lot of time but not as much as you would think when you really look at how much time is spent with a certain class on a certain subject. We devote a whole day to just teaching PSSA’s and that helps us keep other things in that would normally need to be left out.  
3. Your classroom is really well behaved? Is this because of your years of experience?  
I think once you know how to deal with students it gets easier. This year we have a great group of kids. I won’t sit here and tell you that I didn’t have years when I was almost always screaming at least once a day. Students are different every year so I think it is partly luck and part experience.  
4. What would you do if you could make any change to make learning for Kyle more effective?  
I would probably put him in a room with the same students because I think some of the guys in the class help him talk more. I would try to give more discussion chances so that all the students could talk with each other about how they really feel about the material. I would also try to teach more novels to help the students get exposed to some really amazing writing.

I think the answer to this question sums up what Mr. U and I both think Kyle would need to make learning 100% more interesting. Which would in turn, hopefully, cause him to want to be active rather than passive in his learning?  
The interview was short because I only really had like 15 minutes why the students were peer editing. So they got seven minutes for each paper and they were in groups of three. I think that the rest of his lesson was effective. This day I watched as Mr. U set the groups up into four tables with each table having either four or three students. Like he said, each student would get seven to ten minutes to go through the paper and find some mistakes or things they liked. The peer edit was basically a tool to get the students to think about their papers. I don’t think it was really for editing. This is also the first time I saw any type of classroom behavior being addressed. I can understand why the students got a little talkative they were reading each others papers then passing them along. Mr. U shut down the tiniest amount of talking. I think rightly so too because this was for their benefit and they did not have a lot of time for lessons like these with the PSSA’s.

**Observation Table:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Time | Observation | Interpretation |
| 8:46 | Student chatting with teacher | Open discussion about racism |
| 8:49 | Only seven students in class | Learned some students are on a field trip |
| 8:55 | PEER REVIEW: Students split up into groups of three and took turn speed grading each other’s papers. The papers would rotate clock wise around the table | This should be interesting, I feel like most students even in college take these opportunities to ask the question “was it good” rather than what can I do to improve |
| 9:00 | They use technology for everything | Surprised a tiny little school has so much money for this technology. Mr. u explained that for a small school they compete against other schools that have so much more. Every class I was in had a smart board. Laptops and projectors |
| 9:03 | Students use a quantitative grading scale for peer review | I felt torn between this since we learned this was not the best way to evaluate |
| 9:07 | Teacher notices one paper missing calls out student name | Student calls back and shows him his paper at his table. |
| 9:10 | Students doing group work but not really communicating. The students are peer reviewing but little to none discussion of papers is occurring. It is as if they are reading it and finding grammar mistakes. Or just grading rather than reviewing | I don’t think this method is being utilized the right way. Maybe if Mr. U also made them feel out a worksheet of suggestions that each person is required to have two at the end when they submit their final copy. |
| 9:15 | Teacher starts to talk about the PSSA evaluators and tries to humanize them. | I think this is good but really how will this help them during the test |
| 9:20 | Students get a chance to look over their own papers | Students were somewhat interested but ready to go |

**Day Five Personnel Interview & Student work Artifact Student Work**



This artifact helped me learn that Kyle is the kind of student who learns from his mistakes like I do. Mr. U had him resubmit the Annotated Bibliography. Instead of giving him a bad grade he gave him a chance to resubmit and get a perfect 40/40, instead of 25/40. Also Mr. U had Kyle show him on his screen before he resubmitted rather than print it out because Kyle might have had troubles when it came to the actual printing. Maybe last time something went wrong when he tried to make hanging indents? Either way the resubmission seemed to be of greater quality.

**Personnel Interview**I decided to interview the front desk lady who signs me in everyday. He official title is Attendance Secretary. She has worked in the High School only for thirty six years. She knows Kyle because of his family. She does not directly deal with his education but sees him and knows who he is.

1. Do you think the small school environment helps the overall learning process?
   1. Yes, no one is really a stranger everyone knows everyone. Students learn together grow up together and know everyone’s siblings and parents. There is a smaller ratio of student to teacher, which really helps the students get more one on one. The student can have certain problems addressed rather then letting it slip by.
2. Do you think you could easily talk to a teacher or Paraprofessional if a problem needs to be addressed?
   1. Yes, especially if it an emergency or some type of on going problem. Parents have monthly meetings with guidance counselors and teachers. Everyone is involved in his or her child’s education, not just the teacher. Teachers are easy to contact and if not we have an intercom system
3. How is the Teacher to Paraprofessional to Staff relations?
   1. Great! Everyone treats everyone with respect. I have never heard someone talk down about anyone else. No disrespect issues at all.
4. Does being close to a college campus benefit the school or hinder learning with all the student teachers and placements like my self?
   1. I am really unsure of that. I would have to say it benefits us because students are getting exposed to different teaching styles. I feel like it probably helps the college students more but can be rewarding for everyone.

When the interview was over I left and went on my way. Said my goodbyes and even had Mr. U ask me if I wanted him to right in a request for me to student teach there he would. I had a great time at the school I observed at and hopefully get to go back next fall.

**PART 2 Designing Instruction   
Rational:**

I believe education is a constantly evolving system. I feel that for every student we need to be specific about how we intend to teach them but also make sure we do not give one student too much attention, because in college it becomes completely different. For my lesson plans I will be making a mini unit that caters to Kyle’s personal needs and interests as a student. I believe this method best helps Kyle learn and although probably would not be realistic, could make Kyle one of the most engaged students in the classroom. The novel I chose to work with was Assassins Creed Renaissance. A novel based off a video game that deals with 15th century Italy and a young man attempting to avenge his family from the corrupt ruling bodies. Check out Amazons review here: [Assassins Creed Renaissance](http://www.amazon.com/Assassins-Creed-Renaissance-Unnumbered/dp/0441019293). This book will be great for Kyle for a number of reasons. One is the fact that the novel is Kyle’s favorite book. Second I believe Kyle to be a Visual/ Kinesthetic learner with a minor hint of audio/ visual. This will allow me to talk about something else that is dear to Kyle, videogames. Kyle got into the novel through the video game Assassins Creed. The story was so powerful and adventurous it got a student who hates to read to pick up a book and dive in. Video games are great for students into them. They give the student the images so that the student does not have to struggle with that aspect of the novel. Since they have a mental representation of the characters and settings they can focus on the story. This is great for English teachers. Students like Kyle can do a span of different projects that deal with the video game also incorporate: reading, writing, Language art skills and Linguistics.

For example one of my lessons will have Kyle create an alternate ending for Assassins Creed. Requirements will call for Kyle to write out the ending. Which will focuses on writing skills. Kyle will have to take the story line already provided for him and develop it into his own story. Kyle will have to also use similar language, which will call to the linguistics differences of the time. Kyle’s vocabulary and spelling will be put to test. Along with both grammar and story development, Kyle will have to create characters. This helps with understanding character development and creation. My next lesson will have Kyle utilize his technology skills and transfer his alternate ending into an actual movie. Like a cut scene from a video game or a real life acted scene. Kyle will have to make his story come to life. This allows Kyle to bring his own images sounds and music to life. The creation of the movie will make Kyle have to come out of his shell more. The video will require him to have multiple actors, which will force him to socialize and find other students like himself. Also it helps develop group work skills. Kyle will have to learn to work with others. Also the video assignment will throw Kyle into a leadership position, which will help him learn skills he might not have a chance to develop any other time in high school. If Kyle is artistically tuned then he could do something along the line of creating a graphic novel of his alternate ending. Still forcing him to create a script or transfer his actual ending into the Graphic novel. Having him think about the way images can tell stories in junction with words. Either one will be perfect for Kyle.

My Big Question is: Is it ok to break the law when it is for a noble cause? I believe that my big question brings up many moral questions and challenges many value systems. This is a question that most students will hopefully get excited by. My reasoning is because at this age most students want to question authority and they’re right to be oppressing them. Students will have the chance to bring all types of issues up in class and do projects that span from woman’s rights to gun control to gay marriage. Issues like self defense and police power will be questioned. Things like the age of drinking and the right to use medical marijuana will be brought up. I think my big question hits home for every student and has the ability to associate with any student personally to get him or her interested in how the world works. My question can branch to many other questions. My goal is to get students thinking.

**Lesson 1**

**Rationale:**

This lesson will be an intro into the novel that will be read for class. The lessons are starting in media res or in the middle of the unit. These last three lessons will be the last three in the unit. Here students will determine their learning style and this will lead them to picking a project to best suit their learning style. These next two lessons will reflect the type of lesson catered to cater to Kyle. This lesson will set up for the next two.

**Assessment:**   
The assessment for this lesson will be first to take an in class survey similar to the one we took in the beginning of Lit for Young Adults to determine the students learning style. From there the students will have to pick a project to present on Assassins Creed Renaissance. The student will be required to bring in the first part of the project they chose.

**Big Question:**

Is it ok to break the law when it is for a noble cause?

**Plans:**

The students will be required to have read the novel Assassins Creed Renaissance. The students will be required to do a close read of the novel and have it marked and noted to wear they thought important information was or important themes are being introduced. After words students will be asked to pick from a list of projects according to their learning style. The students will take the multiple intelligence test to determine their top two styles. From their students can pick from a list of preapproved projects ranging from create an alternate ending then make it come to life, to create a sequel/ prequel of the novel. **Lesson 2**

**Rationale:**

This lesson will be to get students to take what they created for their first half of the project and the students will be required to develop a second half of the project. This will help students learn to work in groups and let their creative sides out.

**Assessment:**

Here students will be assessed on their first half of the project. Half of their grade will depend on the written out version of the alternate ending. From here the student will follow the same track and either work separately or in a group to complete the second part of the project.

**Big Question:**

**Is it ok to break the law when it is for a noble cause?**

**Plans:**

For this lesson students should come to class prepared with the first half of their project. For example a student similar to Kyle may have chosen the alternative-ending project. The student should have a written up (typed) version of the ending of the novel that is different and relates to the student and how they think stuff should occur. Maybe the main character doesn’t try to hunt down the rest of the knight’s templar and ect. The students will be required to bring their alternate ending to life so to speak. The student can make a graphic novel or film a movie. The next class the students will be able to work with other students who chose the same project as them. The Kyle like student will be chosen as the leader of the group and they will be making a movie or video game cut scene for the alternate ending.

**Lesson 3**

**Rationale:**

This lesson will be sort of a closing with a viewing like they have in Hollywood. Students will get to present their projects to the class and have it reviewed to incorporate group learning and understanding. This lesson also gives the student the chance to present their work of creativity to the class.

**Assessment:**

Students will be required to present their second half of their project and have it be reviewed by the class students grade will reflect the amount of work that was put into creating the alternate ending and the movie that goes with it. The second half will be worth 50%.

**Big Question:**

**Is it ok to break the law when it is for a noble cause?**

**Plans:**

This last lesson will be the presentation of projects. Each student will be given a chance to describe his or her projects. Then present then get feed back from the rest of the class. The student will be graded on completion, if all the requirements are met and if they successfully present to the class. This will create an interesting class day since students will get to see all different interpretations of the big question brought up into the individual students interpretations of whether or not it is ok to break the law if it is for a noble cause.