

Grade

7

A Letter in a Pocket

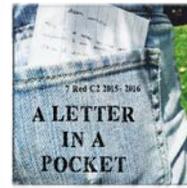
LANGUAGE ARTS



Driving Question: What are working conditions, and why do they matter?

Project Description:

Students investigated working conditions through the novel *Lyddie*, the documentary *China Blue*, and an analysis of a speech by Cesar Chavez, as well as a variety of news articles. Students used their knowledge to write a classroom anthology of letters around the issues of working conditions from the perspective of a worker. Students engaged in critique and revision through peer editing, comments through Google Docs, and audio feedback on the writing using Kaizena. They formed a design team to create the cover image of each anthology, and created a podcast. Finally, the anthologies were published on the web with a site specifically developed for the project.



Student Products

- ▶ Investigate working conditions through a variety of readings and case studies
- ▶ Write an individual story from the perspective of a worker
- ▶ Design a cover for the anthology
- ▶ Create a class podcast

Teacher Reflection

"Looking back on the experience, two elements helped to engage the students and improve the quality of the anthologies. First, student engagement increased when they understood the stories would be published in a variety of formats and places. (Public Product) Secondly, voice and choice was critical to meaningful engagement. Students had choice over the content of the story and how they were going to contribute to the development of the the larger project. (Website, Book, Podcast). These two elements provided intrinsic motivation for each class to create quality anthologies.

In the future, I would engage other curricular areas in the design and creation of the Letter in a Pocket project. For example, in the development of the covers, iBooks, layout art is a logical connection. In the creation of the podcast, working with the music department is a possible collaborative opportunity. Now that there are examples, having anchor and exemplar projects will be beneficial in the next iteration." - Scott Williams

Find out more at:

<http://cards.buildingculturebybuildingpractice.com>