

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

1. Lesson Title

Culminating Project for 8th Grade: Make a film on a research topic. – Margaret Chasan and Jane Shay, The Jewish Day School of Metropolitan Seattle

2. About the teacher

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Subjects taught: Humanities, History, Jewish history, English to 7th and 8th Grade

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Before we immigrated to Seattle, Washington, I taught English at Cape Town High School. Eleven years ago I joined the faculty of The Jewish Day School, which my own children attended, as a Middle School Humanities general studies teacher. For the past 4 years, I have been also taught an integrated modern Jewish history class for 8th grade. I generally accompany my students on their Israel trip. My 8th graders create a digital family story unit every year. Two Decembers ago I attended a Yad Vashem course studying Holocaust education. I am also the Student Council Advisor.

I first learned about Centropa when my school sent me to last year's Winter Academy in LA. I was very excited about both the work they do and the curriculum they have, especially since my students also attempt to do what Centropa does, needless to say, without the professional expertise. I have used many of the highly effective Centropa films in my 8th grade Modern Jewish History course. Last summer I was lucky enough to attend the Summer Academy in Europe, a profoundly valuable learning experience.

3. Lesson Summary

We started out by using Lauren Granites' lesson called *Making it True, Making us Care: Understanding What Makes a Story Compelling*. Kids knew how to make films, as they had done two previous film projects; the family history film and a short piece making a personal memoir. Throughout the year we have watched numerous Centropa films and analyzed them. As a culminating project we wanted students to use the skills that they had obtained during the year and we also wanted them to highlight material that we did not have time to cover in class. We designed our culminating project (below). Two of the kids didn't like our suggested topics and came up with their own. We allowed them to. Ultimately student buy in is one of the most important indicators of success. We also gave students the option of doing a PowerPoint if they chose. We wanted to give them an out if they had insurmountable technical difficulties or were not comfortable enough with the medium. This project had about 9 or 10 class periods. A film is difficult to make. We didn't have time to have multiple revisions; mostly we were seeing the films for the first or at most second time by the time the kids presented. Every group was successful. We were very pleased with the results.

4. Target Audience/ Total Required Time:

8th grade final project. Students were given about 10 class periods of 42 minutes each total (in both classes). Many students were motivated enough to spend long hours after school and over the weekend.

5. List of classroom supplies required:

1

Students need access to computers with a movie software program and access to the internet. All our students have school issue laptops for their own use. Our school computers are loaded with Serif and Adobe Elements (as well as Moviemaker which no one uses). Several kids used their Macs from home. Macs are superior.

2 Our lesson plan

6. Subject Related Objectives and Skills Related Objectives:

History research skills, writing skills, film making skills (integrating multiple media into an emotionally compelling, meaningful and creative film, communicating a story, conceptualizing), presentation skills digital literacy skills, collaborating, (although some kids worked alone), meeting deadlines, creating a product to show to an audience.

PART 2: LESSON PLAN

1 Contents:

As this is a culminating project, there is the assumption that students know how to make a movie. My Family Film lesson plan shows in detail how to teach students to make a movie. Nick Holton also has tutorials on the Centropa website. Students also use:

- Lauren Granite's lesson plan: Making it True, Making us Care
- [Short story template](#)
- At this point my students have watched multiple Centropa films. Students learn from models. Because my students had seen so many examples of well made films, their own films were likely to be a much better quality.
- [Remain](#) [The St Louis](#) [La Chabon Sir Lignon](#) Examples/Models – student films

2 Lesson Plan Details:

8th Grade Culminating Project: A Jewish Social Studies/Language Arts and Washington State History project.

This is the lesson we gave the students and we've kept it this way so you can copy it for your own students:

You will have an opportunity to use many of the skills you have learned this year including presentation skills, digital literacy skills, storytelling, research skills, group collaboration and the ability to deliver a quality project on time.

Bear in mind the essential question *"How is it possible for human beings to endure some of the most difficult conditions imaginable and still emerge with generosity of spirit and hopefulness? That is, how does the human spirit triumph over the harshest of times?"*

TOPICS - In groups of 1 or 2, you will do a research project on one of the following topics:

1 Japanese Internment - life before, what happened on December 7th, life in the camps, life after camps. You may tell the story through the eyes of an individual, either an adult or a child.

2 Chief Joseph and the Nez Pearce – including where are they today? When you talk about contemporary life, you can use Sherman Alexie and the Spokane Indians as your example as they live close to the Nez Pearce.

3 Le Chambon-sur-Lignon – The story of an entire French Village who rescued all its Jews during WW11.

4 The story of the Danish Rescue during WW11. Denmark chose to evacuate its Jews rather than hand them over to the Nazis.

5 Kinder Transport – explain what this was about and use one individual person as an example. You could tell Lilli Tauber’s story

6 The Exodus – Tell the story of how a group of refugees defeated the British Empire through a PR campaign

9 President Roosevelt/ US response to HC (St Louis). Tell the story of how the US reacted to what was happening during the Holocaust. Focus on the story of the St. Louis.

8 Partisans during WW11 (Bielski Brothers). Make a documentary about partisans during WW11.

9 Make a documentary about Rescuers in general. Elaborate on two individual stories.

Chiune Sugihara

Feng Shan Ho

Irena Sendler

Raoul Wallenberg

Aristedes de Sousa Mendes

Luba Trzszynska

10 Return to Life - those who came back.– Make a documentary about the survivors and the challenges they faced. Use two or three specific examples.

Extra topics kids themselves chose: Nuremberg Laws D-Day

TASK: Do a research project to teach the class about your subject. You can choose whether to make a film or a multi-media PP which will need to include text, voiceover and music. The following elements are required:

- **Introduction – overview**
- **Background information – be sure to have maps and dates.** Historical context – make sure your viewer understands the history of the time and the time before that to ensure historical context. Include both Jewish history and world history. Show the cultural values of the time.
- **Individual story – be sure to include life before/during/after the event.**
- **Conclusion/Reflection – why is this an important topic**
- **Sources listed in correct format**
- **The film needs to be 3 – 5 minutes long**
The PP needs to have at least 15 – 20 slides
- **The final product needs to be carefully edited and ready to be published on the blog.**

This is a multimedia presentation – not a paper. You need to demonstrate mastery of a visual/audio medium and use what you have learned about film making (even in a PP) and storytelling. You may include an interview (fake it), anecdotes, quotes, chapter headings.....whatever you found to be really effective during the film project. Choose your music carefully so that it fits using a royalty free site.

Steps to make your movie – in case you need reminding:

1 Do your research – take notes– be thorough

2 Write your script for your voiceover – Show this to me before you proceed

3 Record your voiceover

4 Import the visuals you have gathered. Insert the visuals and sync them with your voiceover

5 Add music

Bear in mind Daniel Pink's 6 aptitudes that he describes in his book, *A Whole New Mind*.

Consider this:

“The era of “left brain” dominance, and the Information Age that it engendered, are giving way to a new world in which “right brain” qualities-inventiveness, empathy, meaning-predominate. The future belongs to a very different kind of person with a very different kind of mind. That’s the argument at the center of Daniel Pink’s book, which uses the two sides of our brains as a metaphor for understanding the contours of our times. Daniel H. Pink offers a fresh look at what it takes to excel. A Whole New Mind reveals the six essential aptitudes on which professional success and personal fulfillment now depend.” From Daniel Pink’s website.

When you make a film you are using most of the aptitudes that Daniel Pink describes:

Design – not just product, but also creating something that is also beautiful, whimsical and/or emotionally engaging. It needs to be not just functional; it needs to be beautiful and well designed. (Think Apple products)

Story – the essence of persuasion and self understanding is the ability to fashion a compelling narrative. We are overwhelmed with facts in the information age but how do we craft these into an engaging story that your audience wants to hear?

Symphony – being able to see the big picture – crossing boundaries and joining disparate pieces to create a new whole – making your learning your own. Film making is multidisciplinary but the final product needs to look seamless.

Empathy – making us care – the ability to understand what makes people tick/ ability to forge relationships and to care for others. Your audience needs to connect emotionally to your film or they will forget it very quickly. How do you touch the heart?

Play – laughter/lightheartedness/games/humor/playfulness. Find creative, whimsical, playful ways to tell your story if it fits.

Meaning – purpose and spiritual fulfillment is what we need as humans. In your film communicate why the story you are telling is meaningful and why the lives you describe had intention and a connection with what is really important –how does the story connect to life’s enduring values.

RUBRIC below:

Make it true, make it beautiful, make us care.

FILM GRADE RUBRIC		Out of	Grade
1 Bullet summary /your notes		25	
2 Short story template or another graphic that ensures you have a theme and a beginning/middle/end		25	
3 History/Context How well did you research?		25	
4 Voiceover script Theme/coherent. Emotional connection, not just facts. Tell a story.		25	
5 Recorded narrative Must be crisp, clearly audible.		25	
6 Visuals Include maps, documents, stills, videos. Authentic looking		25	
7 Choose Music/Sound Effects Must fit theme/Wordless usually better/ Don't drown voiceover		20	
8 One or Two Quotations Use a text box for this.		20	
9 Introduction and Conclusion (reflection) Beginning, middle and end.	This is very important	20	
10 Well produced- no obvious errors or gaffes, no typos.		20	
11 Deadlines Meet all deadlines		25	
12 Use of Class time/Participation		20	
13 Teacher discretion/overall		25	
TOTAL POINTS		300	