

Emily D'Amico
Lesson Plan for 10th grade Lit Course
Topic: Research Question Generating

Rational/ Context for Lesson

In our tenth-grade curriculum, we ask students to write a research paper about a world issue. Previously, the project was framed to have the students read a memoir or graphic novel from a different part of the world while examining a global issue within said text. The paper asks them to research a conflict, problem, or ongoing issue in the book.

The problem with the paper is that it is framed negatively, that is, it asks the student to research a problem and write about a problem, but never calls them to think using a solutions-based mindset.

I designed a lesson using the resources that were introduced to us in the early NCTA sessions to help students think about big ideas in our world, and to think critically about them. This lesson will have students visiting East Asian countries to model the style of search I would like them to use.

Procedure

First, I would ask students to consider my model text: *Tsunami Girl*. If I had just finished reading this text, I would need to think about the country of Japan and consider what sort of research could be done or more specifically what sort of research question could be generated about this text.

As a class, having all read excerpts from this model text that could help students brainstorm topics that they could research. I anticipate that they would not have a large amount of suggestions, so we would turn to our tool: [Nat Geo Map](#). I would show how you can scroll through the layers that can be added. I would model this type of dialogue. [See Video](#).

After asking some questions, as modeled in the video, I would ask students to break into small groups and research different topics they saw reflected in the layers. Ex: how does sitting on a tectonic plate affect a land mass? What is seafloor bathymetry? Etc. By using this small group discussion method students will learn more about topics and also learn more about how these topics “play out” in this East Asian country.

I would ask that each group generate one possible research question regarding Japan, after using this map. These questions serve as the basis for our research. I will also note that some books, like *Tsunami Girl*, have Culture Notes on the national NCTA website ([culture notes](#)), that students can use for their research.

After Researching

After completing research with their groups, and generating their questions, we will share as a class. I love to use these group questions as a place to talk about strengths and weaknesses of the questions that they created. Generating research questions is difficult because we talk about how the questions determines the size and scale of the paper.

After discussing questions, each student makes a plan for research. Students break down what needs to be explained to answer the questions and dive into research databases.

End Goal

After the research process is complete, students will write a two or three part thesis to answer their research question. After writing the papers, students present their research to the class.

Reflection

I think that this lesson is a great entry point for students to learn about an East Asian country, in a world literature class. I recognize in my own curriculum a lack of representation from East Asia, and though I cannot change the curriculum this year, I think that a lesson like this could be a great soft introduction to my students. It is often in these research sessions where I see my students find passion for topics that they never knew existed.

Tsunami Girl by Julian Sedgwick
2021 Winner, Freeman Book Award
<https://www.nctasia.org/award/tsunami-girl/>

Also suggested reading:

Richard Lloyd Perry, *Ghosts of the Tsunami: Death and life in Japan's Disaster Zone*
MCD: 2017