

This I (we) believe

by Meghan Sullivan

French and World History teacher grades 9–12, ISSN teacher instructional coach, World Language Department Chair
Oak Hills High School, Cincinnati, Ohio

Grade Level/Subject: K-5 (adapt to your needs)



Interesting topics
make great Classbooks.
Visit studenttreasures.com

Discuss . . .

Students will discuss what they believe is important in a grade school classroom/ environment or in the city/world today. Students will create a class book depicting all of their beliefs.

Primary students always love to share their thoughts. What better way to start or end the school year than asking them to express themselves in a lasting way.

Through the engagement section, teachers will introduce the story of Tarak to their students. He was a seven year old, at the time, in Texas. He was asked by his kindergarten teacher to make

Engage . . .

Describe how the teacher will capture students' interest. What kind of questions should the students ask themselves after engagement?

a collection of 100 things for his 100th day of school. (This would be a great side note for teachers to discuss with students what they did for their 100th day of school.)

Tarak was a very creative boy and decided to collect beliefs about which he felt strongly. (This is an important comprehension point for the students; therefore, it is important to provide examples for the students. For example, as the teacher, you could share some beliefs that are important to you. i.e. I believe that all my students can learn. I believe that chocolate is the best food. I believe that Cincinnati, Ohio is a great place to live. If you desire, you could ask a few students to share some of their ideas also.)

Not long after his 100th day of school, National Public radio heard of his creative, exciting list of beliefs. They thought he would make a great contributor to their weekly broadcast titled "This I Believe." He had a list of 100, but the radio program asked him to pair it down to just 30 of his favorites. (You could ask the students if this would be hard or easy to do.)

For older grades, you could provide a transcript of the radio broadcast, but for the younger children, I would just let them listen. Here is the link for the radio broadcast and the transcript: <http://goo.gl/UVaVUb> (This is where the Common Core Standard ELA-

Literacy.RF.1.4a is being addressed...being careful to be age appropriate. This is providing a text with a personal connection behind it to the students. As the teacher, you are able to modify it based on the needs of your students.)

Explore . . .

Describe what hands-on minds-on activities students will be doing. List "big idea" conceptual questions the teacher will use to encourage and/or focus students' exploration. This will also include the pre-write.

1. After listening to Tarak's NPR radio broadcast, the teacher will break the students into small groups. Without writing anything down, have students brainstorm orally with their groups some of their beliefs. If you have a specific brainstorming pattern in your classroom (i.e. sticky notes,

Materials:

NPR transcript and radio broadcast link:
<http://goo.gl/UVaVUb>

Pre-writing and drafting worksheets (included)

Free Classbook Publishing Kit from Studenttreasures Publishing

Order your kit here:
Studenttreasures.com

An extension activity for gifting possibilities

Common Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.9 - Compare and contrast two or more versions of the same story (e.g., Cinderella stories) by different authors or from different cultures.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.1.7 - Use the illustrations and details in a text to describe its key ideas.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.1.4a - Read grade-level text with purpose and understanding.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.1.1 - Write opinion pieces in which students introduce the topic or name the book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply a reason for the opinion, and provide some sense of closure.

white boards, scrap paper, etc. feel free to use that instead of an oral brainstorm). The teacher should give the students about five minutes to simply talk to each other. You will want to be very specific about the span of their beliefs – are they beliefs about the classroom, their family, their lives, their city, their futures, their world, or anything at all?

2. Have each group take out a sheet of scrap paper. Nominate a paper writer, a speaker, a time keeper and a board writer. Each group will be provided with four slips of paper describing what the roles are and what they have to do. On the scrap paper, have the paper writer write down the group’s favorite ten beliefs from their discussion. They will have 5 minutes. The time keeper should stop them when the time is up. Then the board writer will write them up on the front board. Each group will have the speaker present their top ten to the class.

3. Have each group create five categories that the words might fit into. For example, there might be a food category, a feelings category, a people category, a job category, etc. The older the student the more complicated the categories become. Have them categorize the beliefs. This should take 10-15 minutes.

4. Have class discussion about what categories are NOT represented in their initial beliefs. Why would this be the case?

5. Using the worksheets included for pre-writing, each student will write down their top 10 personal beliefs. This document can be adapted based on the age of the student. After completion, they will share their ten personal beliefs with their small group of four and then turn the paper into the teacher for a formative assessment.

6. Have the students narrow down their list of 10 beliefs to their favorite 2 personal beliefs, they will sit down with a partner to verbally discuss them. (Students will ask each other these types of questions: Why do feel that is important? Is there a specific reason why you thought of that? Which one do you think is more important in the classroom/city/world?)

7. The teacher will have the students individually determine their top belief. They will circle it on their belief paper that was returned to them by the teacher.

8. The teacher will inform the students about how they are going to create a class book called “These We Believe” with a page dedicated to each of their top beliefs. The teacher can share that the classroom will have one copy of their publication, but if their parents want, they can buy a book too of their classmates’ beliefs.

Explain . . .

Students’ explanations should precede introduction of terms or explanation by the teacher. What questions or techniques will the teacher use to help students connect their exploration to the concept under examination/evaluation? List higher order thinking questions which teachers will use to help solicit student explanations and help them to justify their explanations. This will take the students through the drafting process.

Elaborate . . .

Describe how students will develop a more sophisticated understanding of the concept. What vocabulary will be introduced and how will it connect to the students’ observations? How is this knowledge applied in their daily lives? This will include the process of revising.

9. On page 2 of the included worksheets there are sentence starters to help students start the drafting process. (This pre-write paper helps to address Common Core Standard ELA-Literacy.W.1.1. This will help them take the thoughts they pulled from Tarak, form a personal opinion about their beliefs and then put it to paper. The pre-write paper helps them to develop their thoughts in a more detailed manner.)

10. Using their student peer review partner (or something similar if you have them already set up), they will peer review before turning the draft into the teacher. This can be used as a formative assessment as well. (If a student is struggling with the sentence starters, a teacher could differentiate by shortening the prompts to 2 or 3 instead of 4.)

11. Using a full classroom discussion, the teacher will pose questions to help students connect this activity to their real life. Questions could include:

Who has to think about their belief system every single day?

What jobs require that they think about their beliefs all the time?

What would happen if adults/children didn't have strong beliefs? (Example: Politicians, judges, moms/dads, etc.)

12. After the peer review and the teacher review, the student will receive back the constructive criticism about their first-draft. They will be given time to revise their work and improve upon their mistakes on the second draft worksheet included paper. The second draft will also include an image of the belief drawn by the student. (This is where the teacher is beginning to solidify the Common Core Standard ELA-Literacy.RI.1.7. This activity lends itself very well to putting picture to word and matching the thoughts to images. This CCSS is easily met using this lesson plan.)

13. The teacher will collect the revised copy of the writing and the picture as a formative assessment. Evaluate- How will students demonstrate that they have achieved the lesson objective? This should be embedded throughout the lesson as well as at the end. This includes the publishing piece.

14. Once the student has a final draft of the writing and an outline/rough draft of their picture, we are ready to start using the Studenttreasures Publishing Kits. (The kits should be ordered before you get to this point in the lesson, of course, just not introduced to the students until now.) This comes with 34 pages for text and 34 pages for images. Each student will receive 2 pages of their own for their text and image. Following the instructions provided in the publishing kits, each student will complete their piece of the book and the teacher return the kit to Studenttreasures for publishing.

15. After the book arrives, read the book as a class and discuss the varying beliefs that are existent in the classroom. Ask the students questions to spark a class discussion:
How are the beliefs similar?
How are the beliefs different?
Do they fall into common categories?
Do you think that your beliefs will change as you get older?
Do you think your parents' beliefs are different than yours? (This is also a way to address Common Core Standard ELA-Literacy.RL.2.9. Since the book will have a multitude of different opinions and beliefs in it, the students can use their skills to discuss why the beliefs might be different and what might come into play when forming a belief system.)

16. As an extension, the you can have each student record their belief using a microphone and a computer and put them together in a compilation. This could be played for the class like Tarak's radio broadcast when the book arrives. This would also be a tangible piece to include in a presentation/gift to an administrator, visiting politician or Board of Education member.

Evaluate . . .

How will students demonstrate that they have achieved the lesson objective? This should be embedded throughout the lesson as well as at the end. This includes the publishing piece.

"This I Believe" Pre-Write



- - - - -
Name: _____

Directions:

1. Write down 10 beliefs that you have.
2. Now put a ★ next to your favorite two beliefs.

- - - - -

- - - - -

- - - - -

- - - - -

- - - - -

- - - - -

- - - - -

- - - - -

- - - - -

- - - - -

- - - - -

- - - - -

- - - - -

- - - - -

- - - - -

- - - - -

- - - - -

- - - - -

- - - - -

- - - - -

- - - - -

- - - - -

"This I Believe" Pre-Write



Name: _____

"This I Believe" Sentence Starters 1st Draft

I believe _____

This is important to me because

With this belief, our classroom/city/world will change because

Without this belief

"This I Believe" Pre-Write



Name: _____

"This I Believe" Sentence Starters 2nd Draft

I believe _____

This is important to me because

With this belief, our classroom/city/world will change because

Without this belief

On the back of this page draw a picture of your belief.