QEP Pre-Activity Report

Name: Patty Ireland  
Course/Section to be Assessed: ENGL 1010 S07  
Semester Implemented: Fall, 2014  
Control Course/Section (if applicable):  

1. What is the desired learning outcome? *(What do you want the students to be able to do better at the end of the lesson and to what degree?)*

The object of this exercise is to assist students in their understanding of the importance of careful evaluation of both sides of an issue (the supporting arguments, examples used, rhetorical devices/appeals that strengthen the main points, etc.) through critical thinking and to clearly articulate their own resulting conclusions. If they are able to evaluate two texts whose viewpoints are situated in opposition to one another and to define the arguments and supporting points of each in an objective manner, they will then be more capable of learning to defend and structure their own positions within a persuasive essay.

2. What activity/lesson will be implemented to increase mastery of the desired learning outcome?

Students will read Dr. King’s “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” as well as the public statement issued by eight Alabama clergymen which sparked King’s famous letter. They will then be divided into six groups of three to four students each and asked specific questions regarding the appeals, techniques, supporting points and main arguments of both texts. After a full class discussion in which each group will express its findings, students will then be asked to complete a “frame” exercise which will prompt them to define the main arguments, supporting points, differing views and effectiveness of both texts, in addition to encouraging them to express their own resulting views.

3. How will you measure whether the activity improved mastery of the targeted outcome?

Students’ progress will be assessed through the “frame” exercise. Finally, students will evaluate the entire activity through completing the Student Survey form. Please see the “frame activity” below:
“Frame” Exercise

Instructions: After reading Dr. King’s “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” fill in the blanks below with your own views about his argument, the counterargument, and your own conclusions.

Name: ______________________________________________

Dr. King’s main point in this letter centers on the following: ____________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________

The evidence he provides to support his view includes ______________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________

Conversely, the eight clergymen who opposed his views at the time argued that

___________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________

To support their views, they pointed out that _________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________

The issue, then, seems to center on the question of whether _________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________

or

___________________________________________________________________________________________

After reading both sides, I personally feel that _________________________________________________

because _________________________________________________
1. What were the results of your assessment of student improvement regarding the targeted learning outcome?

(Based on the assessment, to what degree was the learning outcome achieved? What information was collected to measure the effectiveness of the activity on the learning outcome? Did any unforeseen factors emerge influencing the activity or outcome assessment results?)

I felt that the learning outcome was successful with this activity. After reading Dr. King's "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" and the document written by eight clergymen which prompted King's letter, students were asked to "frame" both King's argument and that of the opposition. The activity proved to students that, while it may initially seem fairly easy to articulate points of argument after reading both texts and discussing them as a class, the actual process is more complex. No unforeseen factors influenced the activity or its outcome.

2. Based on the results of the learning outcome assessment and semantic differential:

A. Did the students find the activity engaging?  YES ☑  NO ☐

Explain:
The majority of students (14) reported that the activity fell toward the less engaging side; however, most of these same students reported that the activity was beneficial and valuable.

B. Did the activity achieve the desired learning outcome?  YES ☑  NO ☐

(Include and discuss any assessment tools used as well as any qualitative or quantitative results.)

The "frame" exercise achieved the desired learning outcome because it showed students that they MUST do the hard work of reading and re-reading a text to determine its exact arguments, counter-arguments, rebuttals and main points.

C. Will you use the activity again?  YES ☑  NO ☐

What changes (if any) might be made to either the activity or the measurement of its impact on the learning outcome?

I might perhaps allow students to work in groups next time so that the activity might become more engaging to them.
Please record the results of the Semantic Differential:

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Include relevant student comments (if any) provided on the semantic differential: