The Anne Frank project

Debi Partouche

Introduction
The English staff at Makif Gimel, Beersheva, started working with projects six years ago. Last year, we formulated three guiding principles. First, in order for projects to be meaningful, they must combine the enabling skills incorporated in the portfolio. Second, pupils must be taught how to do a project, and assessment must be planned in advance so that objectives are clear to both pupils and teachers. Third, topics must be level-appropriate.

The Anne Frank project was conceived for the eleventh grade because the Holocaust is taught in history lessons and tested in the history Bagrut examination, thus making the project interdisciplinary. Pupils also begin seminars and workshops in preparation for a twelfth grade trip to Poland. For the project, pupils learned more about the Holocaust and Anne Frank. They read all or parts of her diary and researched a relevant topic. They related this to a current issue and presented the projects in a school exhibit before Holocaust Day.

The project related to the four domains as follows:

Social Interaction Pupils interviewed a Holocaust survivor and emailed a Holocaust institute for information on their chosen topic.
Access to Information Pupils researched their topic through the Internet and other sources.
Appreciation of Literature Pupils read literature connected to the Holocaust.
Presentation Pupils presented their projects in writing to the teacher, and in an exhibit and orally to the class.
Enabling skills:
  • Describing a character from a book or movie
  • Writing interview questions and interviewing for a purpose
  • Writing essays
  • Speaking fluently about a relevant topic

Project steps
Step one: Starting at the beginning of the year, pupils read all or parts of Anne Frank’s diary. The teacher guided the reading and discussed the material. Background information about Anne Frank and her diary can be found at http://www.uen.org/utahlink/lp_res/AnneFrank This site gives suggested lesson plans dealing with issues in the diary. Other sites dealing with Anne Frank are easily accessible.

Step two: Pupils chose one of the following tasks:
1. Choose a character from the diary. Describe the character and explain what especially impressed you about him/her.
2. Choose a diary entry that particularly affected you. Summarize the main points and explain how this entry affected you.
3. Write a letter to Anne Frank and tell her what impressed you in her diary. Ask her questions that you wonder about.
4. Choose a part of the diary that is a relevant issue in a teenager’s life today. Describe how Anne dealt with the problem and how you might deal with a similar problem today.

*Portfolio entry # 1: Task on the Diary of Anne Frank, drafts and revisions

Step three: The class watched a movie about Anne Frank’s life. Pupils knew in advance what their post-movie task was going to be, so they knew what to look for and note down. Pupils were asked to choose between two post-movie tasks:
From the Field

1. Write two paragraphs relating to the movie. In the first paragraph, describe the scene that most impressed you or that you especially enjoyed and give your reasons. In the second paragraph, write what you would change, add, or take out of that scene and why.

2. Choose a part of the movie that can be compared to an excerpt from the book. In the first paragraph, describe the scene and explain why you chose it. In the second paragraph, compare the scene from the movie to the one in the book.

*Portfolio entry # 2: Post-movie task, with drafts and revisions

Step four: Pupils chose an issue of interest to research and made their KW L chart. The chart helped to organize the project and research. (The L part cannot be filled in until later.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>K - what I KNOW about the issue</th>
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<th>W - what I WANT to find out about the issue</th>
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<th>L- what I have LEARNED about the issue</th>
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The class spent a few lessons in the computer room looking for articles, pictures and other relevant information about the chosen topic. Each pupil submitted to the teacher the chosen topic, the first two parts of the KW L chart and copies of two articles chosen from the Internet. The teacher then had to approve the pupils’ choices.

*Portfolio entry # 3: Choice of topic, chart and copies of articles with teacher’s comments

Step five: Pupils read and summarized the chosen articles.

*Portfolio entry # 4: Summaries of the articles with drafts and revisions, and the completed KW L chart

Note: The teacher here introduced and explained steps six and seven, since they required more preparation.

Step six: Pupils decided what other information they wanted to find out about their topic and emailed their questions to institutions such as Yad Vashem, Yad Mordechai, the Holocaust Museum and the Weisenthal Institute.

*Portfolio entry # 5: Email, reply and information

Step seven: With the help of teachers and other sources, pupils interviewed a Holocaust survivor, or a teacher or a pupil who had been on a delegation to Poland. Pupils submitted a list of possible questions beforehand. Some of the questions had to relate to the chosen topic. The interview was taped and could be conducted in English or Hebrew. If done in Hebrew, it had to be translated into English. If done in English, it had to be transcribed.

*Portfolio entry # 6: Interview questions, transcription or translation, cassette and reflection

Step eight: Pupils wrote a personal essay of about 200-300 words from one of these topics:

1. Would you have hidden a Jewish family at that time, taking all the risks into account? Why/why not?
2. Would you have published the diary of your daughter if she had died? Why/why not?
3. As a Nazi who had to follow orders, would you have sent the family to the camps (knowing that the war was about to end)? Why/why not?
4. As one of the people in hiding, would you have thought only of yourself or of others, too? Explain.
5. Should Anne Frank’s family have accepted another person into their hiding place, knowing they didn’t have enough food for everyone? Explain.

*Portfolio entry # 7: Essay, with draft and revision
Step nine: The projects were presented in three ways: in writing, in the form of a portfolio to the teacher; orally, to the class (including a brief summary of the topic, research and conclusions); in an exhibit to the whole school.

Assessment
Each step of the project was assessed using different means of alternative assessment. (See Appendices A and B for examples of the rubrics for the final project.)

Reflection
Both pupils and teachers reflected in writing on the project. (See Appendix C for reflection form.) The examples below testify to the project’s success.

Teacher’s reflection:
At the beginning I was skeptical about the project. I thought that the subject was difficult for the pupils and didn’t know exactly how to start. I decided to teach the enabling skills first. I taught my pupils to write outlines and then asked them to write a composition based on the outlines; only then did we start to look for material about Anne Frank on the Internet. The pupils found lots of articles about Anne Frank, and each group of pupils was asked to outline the article they chose. The pupils started to show an interest in the subject. The next step was for me to find interesting excerpts from the Diary of Anne Frank. I found myself reading the whole diary. I chose 100 pages of excerpts and asked my pupils to read them and think of three themes they wanted to discuss and research.

I was amazed by the cooperation from my pupils. From the themes they chose, I could see that all of them had read the excerpts. Most came up with interesting themes and wrote good essays, using supporting elements from the diary.

As a teacher, I feel that I myself have learned a lot about Anne Frank and about my pupils, as well. I found a group of sensitive young people willing to learn more about this subject. I feel that my communication with pupils has improved. They come to me to discuss issues concerning the subject. We also have an ongoing written dialogue through their portfolios. This is very important to me because this way I can “talk” to each pupil and help improve language and general knowledge. On the whole, working toward a big project with specific objectives is more work than conventional teaching. However, it has changed my approach to teaching for the better. Teaching has stopped being a burden for me. I am full of enthusiasm.

Pupil reflections (unedited):

Pupil A
In general, I think the project was very interesting and we, the students learned a lot about Anne Frank and her family during the three years of hiding in the secret “Annex.” As I have written before, we, and particularly me, have learned a lot of new things about Anne’s personality and her feelings about each and everyone from the secret “Annex.” I think that this way of working was very good and I wouldn’t change anything because we learned about Anne Frank through movies about her, from articles we read about her and discussions in class. I feel I have improved my English a lot since working on the project because we had to look for articles about Anne Frank on the Internet and it was one way to improve my English.

Pupil B
In general, I find this project very important both to people’s common knowledge and especially to people who were born after the World War II. Except for historical facts, young people don’t know what really happened to people who lived in that time. That’s why I think that “Anne Frank’s Diary” is a good choice to demonstrate one’s thoughts and emotions during the war. Moreover, the fact that the diary was written by a teenager affects today’s teenagers even more. From the diary, I learnt how deep Anne Frank’s impressions and feelings were and the changes the war made on people’s lives and the scars it made on their hearts. The way we worked on the project was very effective. First, we read the diary and then followed by the assignment, we read it over again in order to base our opinions. When we watched the movie, we knew what was going to happen so we could focus on the English and it helped us improve it. I think, the whole subject of WWII is very important not only for Jews but for the whole wide world. Not only Jews were killed in the war, but also many people from different races. It is the whole world’s interest to prevent this kind of war in the future and that can be done only by speaking about it and learning it from all aspects.
## APPENDIX A
### Rating scale for Anne Frank project

Name of Student ___________________ Date __________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Criteria</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Front page 5%</strong></td>
<td>Many details are missing. Inaccurate language. Poorly organized.</td>
<td>Some details are missing. Written clearly but not correctly. Not well organized.</td>
<td>Includes all details - title, date, name, class, teacher’s name. Written clearly and correctly. Well organized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Table of Contents 5%</strong></td>
<td>No table of contents.</td>
<td>All topics and pages listed but not clearly or correctly.</td>
<td>All topics and pages listed clearly and correctly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bibliography 5%</strong></td>
<td>No bibliography.</td>
<td>Partial bibliography.</td>
<td>Complete bibliography.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task on Anne Frank’s diary 15%</strong></td>
<td>Requirements are not fulfilled. Ideas are not supported with examples. Poorly organized essay. Many mistakes.</td>
<td>Requirements of the task partially fulfilled. Not all ideas are supported with examples from the diary. Partially organized. Some language mistakes.</td>
<td>All requirements of the task fulfilled. Ideas supported with examples from the diary. Organized essay. Accurate language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Email activity 10%</strong></td>
<td>No evidence of email contact.</td>
<td>Evidence of email sent but no response.</td>
<td>Contact was made by email and a response was received.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interview 15%</strong></td>
<td>Very few questions asked. No recording and no transcription.</td>
<td>Some relevant questions. Interview recorded but poorly transcribed.</td>
<td>Relevant and interesting questions. Interview recorded and transcribed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task expressing personal attitude 15%</strong></td>
<td>No supportive data from the sources. Incomprehensible due to language errors.</td>
<td>Essay includes little supportive data from the sources. Not very convincing. Comprehensible in spite of poor organization and language mistakes.</td>
<td>Essay includes supportive data from the sources. Opinion is stated convincingly. There is logical development. Well organized and accurate language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oral presentation 10%</strong></td>
<td>Errors interfere with understanding. Poorly organized.</td>
<td>Project not presented clearly. Some language mistakes.</td>
<td>Project presented clearly and accurately and in an interesting way.</td>
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**Total 100%**

Teacher’s Comments: ________________________________________________

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APPENDIX D
1. Excerpt from Task 1 (unedited)
There is one thing that impressed me about her mother when I was reading Anne’s diary. And it’s of course the relationship between Anne and her mother because I never see that mother and daughter is so bad. I still can’t see the reason that they can’t understand each other. Because my mother, and I we are very close and I always understand her. The line that was made me shiver when I was reading it is: “Mother’s personalities are so alien to me. I understand my girlfriends better than my own mother”. (Sunday, 27 September 1942, page 57).

2. Excerpt from Task 3 (unedited)
My favorite part in the diary is when you began to understand that you are more mature than you should be “Am I really only fourteen? Am I really so inexperienced in everything? I have more experience than most…” (page 348). I think that you were right, the circumstances forced you to grow up very fast and to become more and more independent. I admire your courage and your sense of justice – most of all, you wanted to survive and that’s the most important thing. “I know that courage and happiness are needed first” (page 330) – I find this phrase awfully right, because without them our life and existence means nothing. There was only one phrase in the diary that I can’t accept “I have a better and a truer sense of justice than my mother” (page 330). Your mother has gone through a lot too, and if she was raised on deferent views and principles, that fact doesn’t necessary mean she is wrong, it’s just that her points of views on some things are different. You may have your own opinions but that doesn’t give you the right to judge her.