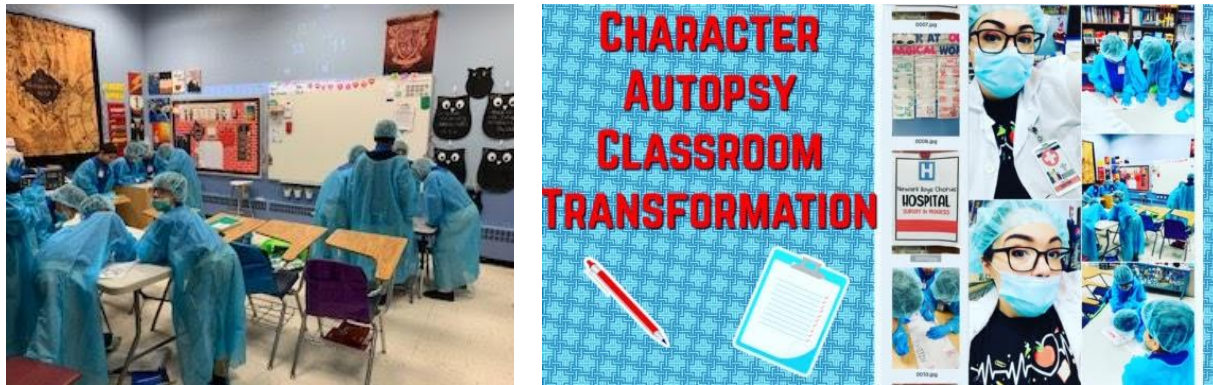


NBCS Teacher Recognized by Danielle Knight (studyallknight.com)

As an English Language Arts and Literature teacher in an urban all-boys school, it's imperative that lessons not only be effective, but fully engaging from bell-to-bell. I take a lot of inspiration from my friends and colleagues on Instagram and I am no stranger to scouring Pinterest or utilizing the fantastic resources on Teachers Pay Teachers. When I come across a resource that not only works, but works better than I could have hoped, I look for as many ways to incorporate it into my lessons as possible.

This was the case when I found Danielle Knight's "Body Biography" activity. Initially, it was the perfect way for my eighth graders to complete individual assessment of character analysis in their *To Kill A Mockingbird* unit, but I knew that asking fourth and fifth graders to do the same would be met with moans, groans, and tears! I needed to not only get their little minds focused on fully understanding words like "intrinsic," "extrinsic," and "motivation," but do it in a way that didn't feel like it required the help of a rocket scientist or brain surgeon.



That's when it hit me! If a brain surgeon is what it required, then that's what I would need! I decided on having my students perform a "Character Autopsy" using Knight's "Body Biography" as the "Character Cadaver." Setting up my classroom was the easy part: I already had plenty of flexible seating options and station tables. I ordered a box of nitrile gloves, medical paper caps, paper gowns, and face masks from Amazon to make sure each little scholar felt like a real doctor! I used another adorable graphic's resource found on TPT and designed hospital staff badges for each of my newly inducted Character Surgeons. I found a video clip on YouTube of a hospital ecg monitor and projected it on a loop to give the classroom the best possible atmosphere for the activity into which I was about to toss my young scholars.

They lined up for class as they would on any normal Thursday, but when I greeted them in my lab coat and gloves, they were stunned into curious silence. They came into class one by one, each receiving their new badge and "uniform," and were told they had a "literary medical emergency."

After "dressing the part," scholars were split into three groups. Each group was given a poster-size, laminated copy of Knight's "body biography" diagram and told to choose one of the main characters from their novel, *Al Capone Does My Shirts*, by Gennifer Choldenko.

The instructions were simple: "dissect" your chosen character by responding to the prompts on the "cadaver." The class was familiar with the terms on the activity page from the lessons

foldables, graphic organizers, and class lectures, and they were showing me exactly what they understood!

The groups collaborated on deciding which intrinsic and extrinsic traits to highlight, which conflicts to mark down, what symbols would best represent their character and interpret meaning behind direct quotes! Even though the activity was likely designed and intended for use in more advanced grade levels, my fourth and fifth grade “doctors” were able to closely examine all of the elements on Knight’s “body biography” activity!

I’m also so excited to say that Danielle Knight featured me, my class, and this activity on her blog earlier this year! Here is the link: <https://www.studyallknight.com/pull-off-the-ultimate-character-autopsy-classroom-transformation-for-any-text/>

You can find more pictures and videos online on my Instagram and YouTube

Instagram: @MsGInstasStuff

YouTube: @MsGTeachesStuff