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Abstract Report

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The lesson plan and oral report presented represents only a small portion of the total impact of my experience in Denmark. A majority of the work for this report was frontloaded with a blog that was kept throughout my stay. I knew from a previous experience traveling with The Center for International Understanding that I would want to capture everything and filter it later for specific use. For instance, my blog can be used to teach journaling and writing techniques, energy conservation, foreign culture, and feudalism. However, for this particular assignment/presentation, I chose to focus specifically on Ancient Denmark and how it relates to our studies of the Anglo-Saxon era and *Beowulf*.

I began by sharing my blog in a 90 minute session with 32 Honors English IV students. In that time, I shared my experiences and pictures. When we arrived at the rune stone section, I pulled out actual rune stones and had students speculate as to their origin, the type of people that would use them, why they would be used, the significance in society, etc. Students came up with a wonderful response, demonstrating knowledge and understanding of our current unit. As one student speculated that the runes may have Greek or Latin origin based on their appearance, another student countered that the particular “Germanic” area (now Denmark) had not been conquered by Greeks or Romans. Another student pulled out her *Lord of the Rings*’ Elvish alphabet and noted how all but 4 rune stones were the same, which led others to believe that the people using the runes must have been at the very least studied by the British author J.R.R. Tolkein.

We continued our discussion by speculating what was valuable to the culture based on the pictures and experience I shared. As I had hoped, the students recognized similar patterns in “water” life, simplicity, and an oxymoronic situation with religion and paganism.

I feel confident that this approach helped students *learn* about the culture and literature, not just “memorize” it for a test and then dump the information. I anticipate students utilizing that skill as we continue through the semester.

Finally, my blog and experience will continue to provide lessons throughout the year, as mentioned above. Currently, 32 students have been directly impacted through this specific lesson. I plan to utilize my materials and generate lessons to impact a minimum of 100 more students throughout the 2009-2010 year. The blog is public and has been posted on academic sites as well as social networking sites and continues to get hits from the general public. I estimate over 100 adults have read the blog, many of which have responded positively with notes, emails, and verbal affirmations of the blog’s impact on their own views and experiences.