**Category:** Detail and Development

**Title:** Lights, Camera, Angles! - Campus Cafeteria Documentaries

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**Lesson Objective:** The goal of this lesson is to help students understand how a specific angle will drastically change their final product, as well as the way they approach their research.

**Introduction:** This exercise asks students to plan a documentary on their school cafeteria and present their ideas to the class. Most, if not all, students should be familiar with the school cafeteria. Providing them with new angles on a familiar subject will only further demonstrate how an angle can change perspective. However, each production team will secretly receive a specific angle that will alter their research and final documentary. Ideally, students will realize how a specific angle or focus can affect the writing process.

**Preparation and Materials:** Because this is a group activity, the instructor must first decide how to divide the class into small group. This lesson plans includes 6 different angles; however, if you have a large class, you will need to create additional angles for those groups. While this requires little physical preparation for the instructor, I find that it is helpful to write or project the information that must be included in their pitch. You may also provide students with a handout that details this information.

**Procedures:**

Divide the class into groups and tell them that they will be acting as a production team, responsible for planning and pitching documentary about the school cafeteria. The “winning” production team will have their documentary put into production by your Broadcasting Network. Their pitch must include:

* + A list of the things they need footage of – what will you film and why?
  + Potential interviewees and roles of those interviewees. Are they the film's subjects, Experts, Opposition.
  + Main questions they would ask or address

Allow students 15-20 minutes to plan their pitch. Walk around to each group and discreetly give provide them with specific angle to take when thinking about their plans. Remind each group to speak quietly so as not let the competing production crews overhear and steal their ideas. Also instruct them to NOT reveal their specific angle during their pitch.

**Group 1 –** How does the student body feel about the school cafeteria?

**Group 2** – What kind of food is being served? How does it compare to other university cafeterias in the state?

**Group 3 –** Profile the head chef in the cafeteria.

**Group 4** – Highlight areas that need improvement in hopes of gaining potential donations.

**Group 5** – Discuss the prices of meal plans and dining packages.

**Group 6** – Examine and discuss the advertisements and promotions used on campus to encourage students to eat in the cafeteria.

**Conclusion:**  Have each production team present their pitch without revealing their assigned angle. After all three groups have presented, ask the class to make observations about the similarities and differences between each pitch. Ask them to guess what accounted for the differences. Next, reveal that each group was provided a different angle and ask the class to guess each group’s given angle. Finally, discuss how the documentaries examining the same subject, the cafeteria, could turn out to be so different. Note and explain how the varying angles not only affect the final product, but also the research questions and methods for obtaining answers (the footage, interviewees, questions asked, etc.)