Graphic organizer (see attached) provided key facts and questions to help students keep track of major concepts introduced/discussed in the lesson.

Short readings added insight and alternate perspectives.

Short video clips showed key events of the 1968 – in Vietnam and in the U.S.

Class began with a quick look at the timeline for Vietnam War, 1963 to 1975, and a short review of key events at home during that time. The upcoming assignment for creating a timeline and conducting interviews with Vietnam era subjects was discussed and defined; questions about the assignment were answered.

David informed the students that today’s lesson would address the year 1968 The lesson opened with a discussion related to the question “Who was to blame for the My Lai massacre?” Students had been given the homework assignment to read a handout on the My Lai Massacre and to determine who they thought was to blame for the incident. They were to assign blame to one or more of the following participants: Lt. Calley, military leaders, military/industrial complex, anti-communists, soldiers/officers at the scene, villagers. Students were expected to be able to explain and defend their positions.

Lesson Design: Extremely well-organized and well-paced. Each piece of the lesson was timed well – handouts were short enough to be completed in 5-10 minutes, brief graphic organizer tasks were quick and helped clarify the concepts taught, video clips were very short and carefully chosen to create high impact without taking much time.

Lesson Instruction: Several short activities – graphic organizers to fill in, short readings, brief, focused discussions about specific points and provocative questions, illustrative video clips. The variety and very appropriate nature of the activities kept students involved the whole period. Instruction was engaging, expectations were clear, questions were provocative, and the atmosphere was relaxed and still focused and serious.

Lesson resources: Video very well chosen – used the music of the time to portray they events. The discussion of the role of music during this time period illustrated a major cultural aspect of the era and created interest for the students. Readings were short enough to be completed in

Focus questions: Key questions were well conceived; designed to stimulate critical, independent thinking. They challenged students to consider cause and effect.

Classroom climate:

Students were very involved in the discussion.

Opinions seemed to be quite freely given and there was a wide range of perspectives expressed; all were respectfully accepted and welcomed by David and by class members. This indicates to me that there has been some significant community building in the past. Students seemed to trust
David and their fellow students enough to speak out about their ideas even when they were in the minority. David challenged students to justify and support their opinions and students tried sincerely to do so. At the same time, there was no sense that students were intimidated at all and they were not shy about saying “I don’t know” when they didn’t have an answer.