

Writing Comparative Essays:

Analyzing Social Structures in Dystopian Novels

Introduction

This is a concluding unit for a semester long literature class that has just completed reading the novels: *The Giver*, *Lord of the Flies*, *Fahrenheit 451*, *The Hunger Games*, and *Gathering Blue*. The unit is designed to reinforce previous knowledge of the novels, instruct in essay writing skills, and prepare students for future projects. This unit will last for five weeks; four weeks with set content and one week for extra time for unexpected delays. While all students will create their own essays, students will work in groups to draft, develop, and present their writing collectively.

The goal of the unit is for students to produce quality essays and a project. These deliverables will challenge students to recall texts, relate texts to theory, and relate to each other's interpretations. The students have the challenge of creating a response to the themes involved.

Students will be assessed based on three rubrics. The first is essay writing. Students will present first and final drafts along with revision checklist completed by their groups. The second is based on completing group work assignments. The final is based on their presentation of material.

Objectives

- Students will draft, edit, peer edit, and submit one comparative essay
- Students will complete their assignments using Webspiration, Google Docs, & Final Cut Pro App
- Students will create a video presentation to the class that culminates the major findings of each member of the group and explain differences

Assessments

- Students will be assessed individually on deliverables: Outline, Rough Draft, Peer Editing, & Final Draft
- Students will be assessed on their collaboration with other students
- Students will be assessed on their presentation
- All assessments will be made based on rubrics provided to the students prior to the start of each step of the assignment

Technology & Resources

- The class has open access to a computer lab with the latest Apple Mac computers with 17" screens. Each student has access to a computer, internet access, and storage space sufficient to accommodate large video files.
 - All students have reported having computers with internet access at home.
 - Most students do not have access to video editing software at home.
 - All students have video capture devices on their phones or cameras with video capture technology

- Google Docs and Final Cut will be used to promote collaborative and cooperative learning aspects
- Webspiration, with its ability to send completed work to Google Docs will be used to create visual representations of themes and text details

Learners

- Students are twelfth grade students in an urban high school
- Students are racially, ethnically, and economically mixed
- Students range in ability levels and ten percent of the students have learning disabilities.
 - There is a special education teacher in the class.

Unit Overview

Essay Writing Instruction and Background Information

Recalling Previous Knowledge

- Instructor will work with students to review material.
 - Novel Guides and internet research.
- Instructor will review themes covered with each novel

Understanding Webspiration

- Instructor will review Webspiration Classroom basics
- Instructor will use Webspiration in class to create notes and design an outline
- Students will use Webspiration to create an outline

Essay writing basics

- Instructor will review tenants of essay writing
 - Instructor will draft basic essay in class using Google docs
- Instructor will review scoring rubric for essay
- Students will send their Webspiration outlines to their Google Docs account

Essay writing and peer editing

Rubrics and Peer Editing

- Instructor will send and review editing checklists
 - Instructor will edit draft of essay with class using Google docs
- Students will create rough drafts
- Students will peer edit group members work using checklists
- Students will revise and submit final papers with rough draft and peer-editing checklists

Essay Review and Presentation Preparation

Students will share completed essays

- Students will review essays in their groups
- Instructor will present how to use Final Cut Pro
- Groups will draft outline of presentation
- Groups will record presentation for classmates
- Groups will present presentation to class
- Students in class will review presentations

Schedule

- This unit will be completed in four weeks

Week 1

- Instructor will
 - Review with students the main themes and important text based passages in the novels
 - Review how to use novel notes online: bookrags, etc.
 - Provide students instruction and user manual for Webspiration
 - Instruct students in the use of Webspiration and Google Docs
 - Provide students with an exemplar of a concept map and outline
 - Create a concept map and outline with the students
- Students will
 - Review notes and previous work on the novels
 - Identify themes to use for their essay
 - Select two novels to compare
 - Identify text details in those novels that support the theme chosen

Week 2

- Instructor will
 - Create outline on Webspiration with the class
 - Introduce how to transform an outline into an essay
 - Write a quick essay with the class using Google Docs
- Students will
 - Create an outline on Webspiration
 - Write a draft essay using their outline
 - Transfer their outline and draft to Google Docs and share with their group
 - Review peer essays on Google Docs

Week 3

- Instructor will
 - Review peer editing
 - Instruct students how to use Google Docs again
 - Review checklist for peer editing with the class
 - Have students all use the checklist with the sample essay
 - Review the results

- Students will
 - Peer edit the class exemplar
 - Peer edit group member's drafts using checklist
 - Submit completed checklist to Google Docs
 - Rewrite essay
 - Evaluate essay
 - Submit final essay for grading

Week 4

- Instructor will
 - instruct students in the use of Final Cut
 - provide students with an exemplar storyboard and review use
 - provide an exemplar video of presentation
 - provide grading rubric for presentation
- Students will
 - Compare group member's essay
 - Choose common themes or ideas
 - Complete a storyboard
 - Record individual segments
 - Edit segments

Week 5

- Extra time to complete the assignment and presentations

Protocols

- Students will complete all work assigned within the timeframe specified
- Students will work collaboratively and cooperatively
- The instructor will provide the resources and tools to complete the task
- The Instructor will provide instruction in all instructional technology tools
- The instructor will be available and open to communication regarding any topic related to the work
- The instructor will provide individual review of essays prior to submission if requested and time allows
 - The instructor expects that students will communicate any problems related to the group work portion of the unit!

Post-Unit Activities

- Remediation will be provided through after school tutoring. Students will be allowed to resubmit written materials.

