

English Language Arts 1: Analysing Relationships and Gender in Literature

Aim/Rationale

Cycle 1: Students will develop critical thinking skills by exploring the concept of “relationships” in relation to a text.

Cycle 2: Students will exercise close reading and critical literacy skills through a framework of “gender” and “relationship” in relation to a text of study.

Trigger Warning

Gendered discrimination and violence

Cycle 1 Competencies

- 1) *Uses language/talk to communicate and to learn*
- 2) *Represents their literacy in different media*
- 3) *Reads and listens to written, spoken and media texts*
- 4) *Writes a variety of genres for personal and social*

Cycle 2 Competencies

- 1) *Uses language/talk to communicate and to learn*
- 2) *Reads and listens to written, spoken and media texts*
- 3) *Produces texts for personal and social purposes*

Lesson

Materials

- Students are expected to come to class with writing utensils and paper.

- Projector, computer, video montage, internet access, black/white/smart board, selected passages/text of study.

Hook [5-10 min]

Cycle 1

Concept map: What does the word “relationship” mean?

- Have the group brainstorm the different kinds of relationships they have (e.g. people have relationships with their siblings, parents, lovers, friends, dates, partners, dentists, teachers etc.). Write them on the board.
- Ask students about what categories these relationships fall into (e.g. family, friends, peers, romantic, interpersonal, sexual etc.) and add these to concept map.

Cycle 2

Add “gender” to concept map

- Guiding questions: Can everybody’s personalities and attitudes fit within socially constructed gender roles? How have gender ideals changed over time? How does gender influence relationships?

Discuss with students that gender, as opposed to sex, is a social construct and does not exist simply as the binaries of male and female.

Development/Teaching Methods [20-25 min]

Cycle 1 Learning Activity

Divide students into small groups and analyze relationships in the pre-selected passages (from text of study). Choose passages that highlight romantic, interpersonal, and sexual relationships if possible.

Students will critically analyze the text.

- What strategies does the author use in order to portray these types of relationships?
- What do students think the author is trying to show by these words or descriptions?
- Why is a particular relationship important to the story?
- How does this relate to sex and sexuality?

Initiate a class discussion where students will report their observations.

Introduce/recap the historical context of the novel setting and publishing eras and have students consider their impact on the text.

Adaptations for Cycle 2

Individually identify all of the relationships in the text thus far. Students will discuss their observations in small groups and explore notions of gender and its relation to roles, relationships, and authority.

The teacher will distribute pre-selected passages for close analysis (structure, context, wording, etc.). What do they notice about relationships in each context and are gender and/or power significant?

How are gender ideals presented? Are they similar/different to what we see today? Students will be asked to consider power dynamics in the relationships within the context of the text. How does the text as a whole accept or reject traditional gender roles? What makes these relationships so interesting to readers?

The teacher will initiate a class discussion on how these questions have changed their initial close reading.

Culmination [5 min]

Cycle 1 and 2

Add any new dimensions of the types of relationships that arose from the discussion of the text to the concept map. Do they think this is a comprehensive list, is there anything to be added? Assign homework and address any questions or concerns.

Performance Objectives

Cycle 1

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Critically analyse the concept of “relationship” in a variety of ways through contextual analysis (based on montage, discussions, passages examined)
- Appreciate alternative perspectives
- Consider the way their perceptions are influenced by the world around them
- Make connections between what they have learned and their own experiences

Cycle 2

- Deconstruct notions of gender and power in relation to relationships
- Identify traditional gender roles
- Understand the importance of contextualization
- Apply knowledge to varying contexts

Assessment Ideas

1. Choose one of the passages studied in class and rewrite it using a different type of relationship. For example, if it was romantic, make it interpersonal.
 2. Choose a song that reflects a relationship in a selected passage and justify the selection.
 3. If possible, watch the film version of the text, have students reflect on the cinematic interpretations of the relationships in the novel.
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