

Three Lesson Plans by Marcie Winograd www.teachin.org

1-- "The Press and the Myths of War"

Orwell's 1984 is a society characterized by militarism, where war is glorified and the military dictates government policies. In keeping with this theme ...

Assignment

Write an essay critiquing Chris Hedges' "The Press and The Myths of War" article that appeared in "The Nation" magazine in April, 2003. Follow the format below:

Introductory paragraphs: Include the title/author/publication/date of publication. Explain Hedges' background and briefly summarize the main points of the article. Establish your thesis. Do you agree, disagree, agree in part, disagree in part? On what basis do you agree or disagree? Hint at the points you will explore in greater depth in the body of your essay.

Body Paragraphs: Explain why you agree or disagree with Hedges. Give examples from personal observations and feelings, other books or articles, newscasts, and stories you've heard others tell. Quote Hedges' in your analysis. Use MLA format. Refute the counter-argument.

Concluding Paragraph:

Restate your thesis and main points. Explain what difference it makes whether Hedges is right or wrong. Issue a call to action.

Minimum length: 5 paragraphs, with 5-7 sentences in each paragraph

Criteria for Assessment: See rubric. (content; organization; word choice; sentence fluency; conventions)

Lesson 2 - Conflict-Resolution Lesson

Students can practice active listening techniques, I-message frames, and conflict-resolution skills as they mediate disputes. These disputes may be real or fictional, for teachers can present real or hypothetical conflicts between students, as well as conflicts between characters in a novel.

Steps in the Process

1. Introduce yourself. Ask your participants their names. Thank them for coming. Example: "I'm _____. What are your names? Thank you for participating in this conflict resolution process."
2. Explain the rules: "There are three rules: No put downs. Tell the truth. Do not interrupt. Can we agree to follow those rules?"
3. As one of the participants/disputants to explain his or her side of the story. (Do not let the other person interrupt!) Example: "Let's start with you. What happened?"
4. Restate what the participant said. "In other words, you're saying ..."
5. Ask the other person to explain his/her side of the story. "Now it's your turn to tell us what happened. What is your explanation?"
6. Restate what the second disputant said. "You're saying that ..."
7. Ask each side if s/he wants to respond to what the other side said. "Is there something you would like to respond to?"
8. Ask each disputant how the conflict could be resolved. "What do you want to see happen?"
9. Ask if the disputants can agree to each other's requests. "Are you willing to?"
10. After the disputants agree on a solution. restate what each person has agreed to do. Next, thank them for coming. "Thank you for participating in this mediation process. I appreciate the fact that you came here."

Active Listening

Students can practice re-stating with the round-robin exercise below. Seated in a circle, the first student responds to the prompt. The next student repeats what the previous student has said and then adds his/her own response. Students continue to restate and respond until all students in the circle have re-stated the previous student's response and offered a personal opinion.

Prompt To Promote Active Listening

A charitable donor has given your school \$10,000. How would you spend the money? (Concerts? Tutoring? New books? Food for the homeless? More teachers? New furniture? Other?) Explain your choice.

I-Messages

Rather than blaming others, students can practice stating their grievances briefly and directly. The key to delivering the I-message is to avoid the word "you" as much as possible, state what is desired, and take ownership for one's feelings.

Example: When people interrupt me, I feel as though they are not interested in what I have to say. I want to finish my sentence.

I-Message Frames

It bothers me when _____ because I feel like _____
_____. I would like _____.

Or

When someone _____, I feel as though _____
_____. In the future, I would appreciate it if _____.

Conflict Scenarios

Max's Story

I'm sick and tired of Don calling me names and telling other people that I'm a creep. Today I was walking up to the cafeteria and he said something about my mother, which I won't repeat. I told him to knock it off and he threatened to punch me. He thinks he can intimidate me because he's bigger. We'll he can't bully me.

Don's Story

Yeah, I've called him names, but that's because I can't stand his attitude. He thinks he's smarter than everyone else and whenever I say something in front of the class, he rolls his eyes or laughs under his breath. I see him laughing at other people, too. Someone needs to put him in his place.

Mary's Story

Donna and I used to be good friends, but lately she's been really bossy. I can't stand her attitude. She's always telling me what to do, acting like she's my mother or something. I guess it started a few weeks ago when I left my science book in her mom's car. I called her up and asked her if she would read me the homework questions because I didn't have the book. She wouldn't do it, so I told her she wasn't much of a friend.

Donna's Story

I wouldn't get her science book because I didn't even know it was in my mom's car until she called me ... at ten o'clock, after I had fallen asleep with a sore throat. My mom's car was parked up the street because there's never any parking in front of our house and I didn't feel like dragging myself out of bed. This isn't the first time she has left her book in my car. She's always forgetting things. When I don't get them for her, she lays a guilt trip on me.

Lesson 3 - Are You For or Against JROTC?

ELA Strand:

Writing Applications

Standard: (Grades 5 -12)

Write persuasive essays with relevant evidence. Address readers' concerns or counter-arguments. (mid. school: 500-700 wds; high school: 1,000 - 1,500 wds.)

Essay Prompt

Does the JROTC military training program belong in public schools? After reviewing both sides of the issue, write a persuasive letter to your principal, superintendent, and/or school board member asking them to maintain or eliminate JROTC. Include background information on the JROTC, as well as reasons and examples to support your argument. Imagine what your opponents might say and refute their counter-arguments.

(Letters may be sent to LAUSD School Board members and Superintendent Roy Romer at LAUSD, 333 South Beaudry Ave., 24th Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90017

Criteria for Assessment

- β Addresses all parts of the writing task
- β Takes a clear position
- β Supports the thesis with details and examples
- β Organizes the essay logically, using transitional phrases
- β Provides a variety of sentence types
- β Uses descriptive language
- β Convincingly refutes the counter-argument
- β Adheres to standard English conventions

4 - Meets virtually all the criteria (exceeds proficiency)

3 - Meets most of the criteria (proficient)

2 - Meets some of the criteria (somewhat proficient)

1 - Meets few, if any, of the criteria (not proficient)

(See the reverse side for background on JROTC, as well as arguments for and against the military training program.)

Background On JROTC

(From Reporter David Goodman's "Recruiting the Class of 2005" published in Mother Jones Magazine, January, 2002)

β Congress established JROTC in 1916. Though initially concentrated in the southern states, JROTC is now nationwide and expanding rapidly.

β The program took off in LAUSD and elsewhere after General Colin Powell, then chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, visited South Central Los Angeles following the riots in 1992. After studying the ruins, he concluded inner city youth needed more discipline and structure. Following Powell's visit, the number of JROTC units and cadets doubled.

β There are 500,000 students enrolled in JROTC at 3,000 schools in the country. Approximately 40% of students who graduate from JROTC join the military.

What's the status of JROTC in LAUSD?

β JROTC is embedded in over 28 LAUSD high schools, involves almost 5,000 students, and hires retired military officers to teach this "P.E." or "elective" class.

β LAUSD spends approximately \$2,000,000 annually on JROTC. (The federal government allocates another whopping \$2,000,000.)

β Crenshaw and Carson High Schools list classes in marksmanship.

β The United Teachers of Los Angeles (UTLA) Human Rights Committee is circulating a petition to axe high school JROTC programs.

For The purpose of JROTC is to develop leadership, responsibility, and an understanding of citizenship. At risk students learn discipline and enjoy the marching drills and marksmanship classes. Students tempted to join gangs can instead belong to a productive and patriotic group. JROTC gives students who may want to drop out a reason to stay in school.

Against

JROTC does not encourage critical thinking, for it teaches students to march, obey, and blindly follow the leader. Why do we have classes in "marksmanship" when guns are not tolerated at school? The purpose of the program is not to instill leadership, but to recruit front-line soldiers of color for serial warfare. JROTC sets low expectations in poor communities.