

Minnesota Writing Project

---Demonstration Lesson---

Title of lesson: Darkness and Light

Suggested grade/age: 7-12

Approximate time needed to complete lesson: 2-4 weeks, depending on whether it is used in conjunction with a lengthy piece of literature

Learning objective(s) and significance of lesson:

This lesson is important in the development of students' skills or knowledge because it allows them a personal in-road to the concept of "motif" and how a writer might use this literary device to develop a theme. In addition to analyzing literature with the motif lens, students also apply it to their own lives through the use of mind mapping and personal essay writing. This lesson affirms students' experiences, allows for choice, and teaches them a valuable skill that they can use to analyze literature in a rigorous but accessible way. It is also constructed in such a way as to provide scaffolding for ELL students and reluctant learners.

Brief summary/outline of lesson:

We begin by exploring the concepts of "darkness" and "light," mind mapping each in concrete and abstract terms. Students then follow a character in *Romeo and Juliet*, looking for evidence of the motifs in his or her actions, words, and relationships. Students practice close-reading a selection of the text for these motifs, and they write an analytical piece that shows not only how their characters moved through the motifs but also explains why they surmise Shakespeare's purpose in creating the character in this way. Finally, they mind map and write a personal essay around the following prompt: Do darkness and light work together? Or are they opposing forces? What in your life has taught this truth to you?

The lesson is located at the end of our time together in ELA 9; the personal essay is the last, greatest piece of writing they do.

Related Resources:

This lesson could be used with any piece of literature that has dualities in it. It is easily adaptable to fit with various modes of creative expression, particularly those that are visual in nature, such as iMovie, Haikudeck, and PicCollage.

An article that is referred to in my lesson is the following:

"You Must Make Friends with the Darkness before You Can Enter the Light"

by Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D.

http://griefwords.com/index.cgi?action=page&page=articles%2Fparadox2.html&site_id=5

Possible extensions or adaptations for different purposes/student needs:

It might be helpful to focus on the more concrete examples of the motifs with younger/less advanced students (like words, images, and feelings). More advanced students could align other dualities with the darkness/light concepts, particularly those that are in *Romeo and Juliet* already:

“Why then, O brawling love! O loving hate!

O any thing, of nothing first create!

O heavy lightness, serious vanity,

Misshapen chaos of well-seeming forms,

Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health,

Still-waking sleep, that is not what it is!

This love feel I, that feel no love in this.”

For additional information, contact:

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