

Minnesota Writing Project

---Demonstration Lesson---

Title of lesson: Universal vs. Relative Morality

Suggested grade/age: High School

Approximate time needed to complete lesson: 45-50 minutes

Learning objective(s) and significance of lesson:

This lesson is designed to make students analyze their own moral code and how they apply their morals to other people's situations. The lesson uses a jigsaw with newspaper articles to allow students to examine and discuss different moral conflicts and think about their own positions on those conflicts.

Students will be able to read a brief article and form a personal opinion about the situation. They will be able to reflect on their own beliefs and reactions.

Brief summary/outline of lesson:

Beginning: Guided discussion of morality, universal & relative morality (spectrum), and a moral conflict (When might homicide be morally acceptable?)

Middle: Students jigsaw 4 news articles with obvious cultural moral conflicts (e.g. religion vs. LGBT rights). They look for the central moral conflict and write their own initial responses to the judgment or decision discussed in the article.

End: Students reflect by writing in response to a set of questions. They are examining themselves in the context of the universal-relative spectrum. This is an initial reflection designed to get them thinking about themselves in a low affect setting in preparation for later work.

This is the first lesson of a 6-week unit in which students analyze human rights, create a human rights document, and then produce a fuller reflection on a particular moral conflict as a final personal response.

Related Resources:

I use the articles with Google Classroom.

Texts: *Things Fall Apart*, *The Good Women of China*, *They Poured Fire on Us From the Sky*, *Nine Parts of Desire*, *The Late Homecomer*.

Human Rights Texts are drawn from UN documents, as well as individual nation's constitutions.

Possible extensions or adaptations for different purposes/student needs:

This type of activity can also be a part of a tolerance-based lesson, or when discussing perspective, cultural differences, etc. Because the aim is to get students to examine their own viewpoint, any unit in which viewpoint is important would be an appropriate application.

For additional information, contact:

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