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**Lesson Title**: Discovering Meaning of Text Through Film and Poetry

**Estimated Lesson Time**: Five 60 min class periods

**Abstract:** Students will have the opportunity to explore various methods of analysis and begin an introduction to poetry through watching the film Dead Poets Society and completing accompanying assignments. It is fairly common for students to approach the study of poetry in the classroom with a negative point of view or association. This assignment has several purposes; the first is to impassion students to gain interest in learning poetry by allowing the film to introduce the possible meaning poetry holds in the world, in people’s lives, and in a learning environment. The second is to teach students how to analyze and annotate a piece of work, using the film as the subject and analyzing it through journal entries, interactive assignments, and class discussion. Lastly, students will apply these annotation skills used in association with the movie, to analyze a work of poetry.

**Student Prior Knowledge**:

Students are able to recognize various literary devices and work and have a thorough understanding of how to approach literature from an analytic approach. Students will also be briefed on how to use annotation tools on the class YouTube page. Students should also have prior knowledge of a journaling format and expectations in grading. Students will also have previous experience using our class blog on Wordpress.

**Standards**:

LAFS.1112.RI.3.7

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g. visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

**Goals:**

Students will address the meaning that poetry holds, and begin to elf reflect on their own perspectives of poetry by looking at he film and some of the poetry pieces that are used in the film. Students will look at both the film and the actual poetry and analyze them separately as well as seek understanding in the purpose that poetry holds in the movie and in real life.

**Learning Objectives:**

I can communicate my own perspectives on the purpose and meaning of poetry as it pertains to the meaning it holds in the film Dead Poets Society. I can also analyze the film and works of poetry and develop specific opinions/arguments and be able to communicate them in writing and verbally in class discussion.

**Instructor Prior Knowledge:**

* Instructors might want to brush up on the synopsis and analysis of the film
  + <http://faculty.frostburg.edu/phil/forum/DeadPoets.htm>
* Instructors should be clear on how to utilize YouTube Annotations and review the procedure with the class
  + <https://www.youtube.com/yt/playbook/annotations.html>
  + <https://www.google.com/edu/training/get-trained/youtube/advanced.html>
* Instructors should rent/ purchase the movie beforehand and preface some of the sensitive scenes
* Instructors should review this video that walks through thw process of annotating poetry that will be played in class

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9gwRO7RKWZk>

* Instructors should have already been experienced and set the class up using a Wordpress site for the class.\*

**Procedures:**

**Lesson One**

1. You **introduce the poetry u**nit as well as the film and identify specific **concepts** that the students should take notes on while watching the movie

Poetry Unit Information: Refer to Curriculum guidelines for any specific information you might need to include

* Outline what the week is going to look like (format, discussion, assignments)
* Intro to Dead Poets Society
* Mention the poets that are going to be discussed (Byron, Tennyson, Thoreau, Frost, Whitman, Shakespeare)

**Concepts:**

* Go over varying perspectives to look for
  + Character perspectives (father, son, friend, student…)
  + Focus on main characters

1. You and the students will watch the film until there are 15- 20 minutes left in the class where students will be asked to begin discussing the **main characters** and their **various roles/perspectives in the film**, which you will be facilitating and writing down on the board.

* Neil: Todd’s roommate; Neil’s father is very controlling; Neil did summer school
* Todd: Neil’s roommate transferred to Welton; Todd’s brother was “one of school’s finest”; does not like to speak in front of people
* Knox: brown hair; looks like Charlie; his father is a friend of the Danbury’s; he meets Kris and falls in love
* Charlie: brown hair; looks like Knox; very outgoing; sometimes says things without thinking Cameron: short red hair; brown noser; very anal—uses ruler when writing notes
* Pitts: brown hair and crew cut; reads the poem “To the Virgins, Make Much of Time”
* Meeks: glasses and longer red hair than Cameron; considered to be a genius
* Mr. Perry: Neil’s father; tries to control Neil  
  Mr. Keating: English teacher; “seize the day”
* Kris: blond hair; Knox calls her “Mrs. Danbury?”; is dating Chet
* Chet: very spoiled; jerk; is dating Kris

Students will then be asked to write a **journal entry** for homework in which they will write what they think is the purpose for poetry in the film, and what they think current culture thinks of poetry, as well as how they think poetry means to them/ how they can benefit from learning about it?

**Journal Entry**: *What purpose does poetry play in the movie so far? What does current culture think about poetry? Do you think our culture can benefit from studying poetry (please give a reason for your answer)*

***ALL JOURNAL ENTRIES SHOULD BE SUBMITTED UNDER THE JOURNAL ENTRIES TAB ON OUR CLASS BLOG***

**Lesson Two**

1. You recap yesterday’s class and review characters and plot.
   1. Make sure to pull up class blog and focus on relevant entries that were submitted and preselected by the instructor and have those students explain their entry to the class

2. You and the students watch the movie until there are 15 minutes left in class

3. Then stop the film and begin discussion on how the plot/characters have progressed and students responses on yesterday’s journal entry

4. Students will then receive a quote from the movie to consider for their second journal entry

5. Their second journal entry should focus on purely what the students’ response to what the meaning of the quote might be to them.

**Journal Entry:** *Read the quote below, and then write what you think about it. This could be it’s meaning, or a memory it reminds you of, or even simply whether you like it or not and why.*

**Quote:** “I stand upon my desk to remind myself that we must constantly look at things a different way. The world looks very different up here . . . Just when you think you think you know something you have to look at it in another way . . . When you read, don’t just consider what the author thinks, you must consider what you think. “- Professor Keating

(*The purpose of this exercise is to encourage students to become aware of how they process this more conceptual and analytic approach to literature and poetry that Dr. Keating presents in the movie. This is essentially a free-write to get students comfortable with discussing their thoughts on these topics and their personal opinions*)

**Lesson Three**

1. You recap yesterday’s class and review characters and plot.

• Call on students to summarize the plot and talk about the main characters

* 1. Discuss journal entries- Make sure to pull up class blog and focus on relevant entries that were submitted and preselected by the instructor and have those students explain their entry to the class

2. You and the students watch the film until there are 15-20 minutes left in class, then stop and recap the developing plot and characters as well as journal entries from the night before

a. Within discussion, pay particular attention to the varying perspectives that are present in the film

i. Characters as before, but also in regards to attitudes

3. Students will receive a second quote from the movie to consider for their journal entry for homework and asked to consider it’s meaning in relation to the movie and to real life situations.

**Journal Entry**: *Consider the quote below and respond in a journal entry by considering the meaning behind the quote and how its meaning relates to the movie and relates to you (if it does, if it doesn’t tell me why)*

**Quote:**

“We don’t read and write poetry because it’s cute. We read and write poetry because we are members of the human race. And the human race is filled with passion. And medicine, law, business, engineering, these are noble pursuits and necessary to sustain life. But poetry, beauty, romance, love, these are what we stay alive for.” –Professor Keating

(*The purpose of this assignment is to begin guiding students towards the discussion of connecting and understanding the purpose of studying poetry and how it relates to their own lives*)

**Lesson Four**

1. You recap yesterday’s lesson and finish the movie up

2. With remaining class time you will facilitate discussion on the characters, plot, perspectives, and message in depth

a. You should address all of the journal entries and allow the students to discuss their opinion or arguments with the film

* + Make sure to pull up class blog and focus on relevant entries that were submitted and preselected by the instructor and have those students explain their entry to the class

b. Students should also discuss their opinion of poetry and how they should begin to approach actual poetry

**Tips for approaching poetry:**

* How does Dr. Keating approach poetry in the film?
* What are steps we could take as a class to begin looking at a poem?
  + Read poem aloud
  + Take a look at literature devices (alliteration, personification, synecdoche, allegory…)
  + Take note of these elements on the poem itself
  + Write questions in the margin
  + Highlight unusual words
  + Mark phrases that might indicate the poem’s meaning
  + Determine the poem's theme and draw arrows to the lines that support the theme

3. Students will receive several poems that are mentioned/recited in the film and be asked to choose one and write about why they chose it, what they think about it, and how they could begin to understand it’s meaning, or even what it may have meant in the film.

**Poems of choice**:

O Captain! My Captain!

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done; The ship has weather’d every rack, the prize we sought is won; The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting, While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring: But O heart! heart! heart! O the bleeding drops of red, Where on the deck my Captain lies, Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells; Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle trills; For you bouquets and ribbon’d wreaths—for you the shores a-crowding; For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning; Here Captain! dear father! This arm beneath your head; It is some dream that on the deck, You’ve fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still; My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will; The ship is anchor’d safe and sound, its voyage closed and done; From fearful trip, the victor ship, comes in with object won; Exult, O shores, and ring, O bells! But I, with mournful tread, Walk the deck my Captain lies, Fallen cold and dead. —Walt Whitman

To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may, Old Time is still a-flying; And this same flower that smiles today, To-morrow will be dying. The glorious lamp of heaven, the Sun, The higher he’s a-getting; The sooner will his race be run, And nearer heòs to setting. That age is best, which is the first, When youth and blood are warmer; But being spent, the worse, and worst Times still succeed the former. Then be not coy, but use your time, And while ye may, go marry; For having lost but once your prime, You may for ever tarry. —Robert Herrick

O Me! O Life! O Me! O life!...of the questions of these recurring: Of the endless trains of the faithless— of cities fill’d with the foolish;.... What good amid these, O me, O life? Answer. That you are here— that life exists, and identity; That the powerful play goes on, and you will contribute a verse. —Walt Whitman

Show me the heart unfettered by foolish dreams And I’ll show you a happy man. —Tennyson But only in their dreams can men be truly free It was always thus and always thus will be. —

Keating

I went to the woods because I wanted to live deliberately, I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, To put to rout all that was not life and not when I had come to die Discover that I had not lived. —Thoreau

The Prophet

Teach me to Love? go teach thyself more wit; I chief Professor am of it.... The God of Love, if such a thing there be, May learn to love from Me. He who does boast that he has been In every Heart since Adamòs sin, I’ll lay my Life, nay Mistress on’t that’s more; I teach him thing he never knew before; —Cowley Ulysses

...Come, my friends, ‘Tis not too late to seek a newer world... for my purpose holds To sail beyond the sunset,... and tho’ We are not now that strength which in old days Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are; One equal temper of heroic hearts, Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield. —Tennyson

Most men live lives of quiet desperation. —Thoreau  
Dare to strike out and find new ground.  
I sound my barbaric YAWP over the rooftops of the word. —Whitman

The Road Not Taken

...Two roads diverged in a wood And I, I took the one less traveled by And that has made all the difference. —Frost

Shall I compare thee to a summeròs day Thou art more lovely and more temperate. — Shakespeare

She walks in beauty, like the night Of cloudless climes and starry skies; All that’s best of dark and bright Melt in her aspect and her eyes: —Byron

A Midsummer Night’s Dream

If we shadows have offended, Think but this — and all is mended— That you have but slumber’d here While these visions did appear. And this weak and idle theme, No more yielding but a dream, Gentles, do not reprehend; If you pardon, we will mend. And, as I am an honest Puck, If we have unearned luck Now to escape the serpent’s tongue, We will make amends ere long; Else the Puck a liar call: So, good night unto you all, Give me your hand, if we be friends, And Robin shall restore amends. —Shakespeare

**Lesson Five**

1. Instructor will conclude and summarize the week’s **discussion about poetry and how Dead Poet’s Society has either changed students’ perspectives on poetry or given student’s insight on the value of studying poetry.**
2. This class will depend primarily on **discussion**, and asking students to contribute their various thoughts from the week in regards to the actual poetry presented in the film and analysis of its meaning.
   1. Refer to Wordpress entries to guide discussion if necessary
3. This discussion should allow the instructor to **teach the basics of annotation of a work** as the students have unofficially been doing all week with the film.
   1. You will then play this video from Youtube that more clearly and quickly exhibits the process of annotating Robert Frost’s poem “The Road Not Taken” in an engaging and active way. Be sure to answer any follow up questions

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9gwRO7RKWZk>

1. Students for weekend homework are tasked with a **new assignment**

* Assignment includes students leaving the class with writing their favorite scene from the movie on a slip of paper and turning it into the instructor
* Instructor explains that he/she will choose three of the most suggested scenes and post them on the class’ YouTube channel
* Students will then go home over the weekend and use the YouTube annotation program to insert their own annotations into the scenes
  + *The purpose of this assignment is to have students practice annotation in a more creative and interactive way*

***Assignment:***

*Go to our class YouTube channel (directions to already established channel should be included) and choose one of the three scene clips I have posted from Dead Poets Society. Then Use the YouTube Annotation tool to insert your thoughts on the scene. Students should use he steps we have taken as a class when analyzing quotes and poetry to provide comments on the scene, Students may discuss elements from the movie that are not included in the scene directly.*

**Assessment:**

**A rubric** will be used to assess student journal entries and YouTube annotation

This rubric can be used for all assignments. The goal is to grade on progress rather than preciseness, however this rubric should give the instructor specific grading criteria.

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|  | 5  Strong | 4  Proficient | 3  Average | 4  Needs Work | 5  Unsatisfactory |
| Ideas | Clear, focused, engaging, strong, supporting details & analysis | Mostly clear with engaging details that support central idea. Good analysis | Main idea may be general or somewhat cloudy. Some details with some analysis | Purpose & main idea unclears and writing is cluttered with irrelevant details and poor analysis | Lacks focus and development. Analysis is limited or non-existent |
| Organization | Effectively organized in logical & creative manner | Solid order & structure. Writing contains some creativity | Appropriate in some areas. Some order but lacks completion in structure | Lacks cohesive structure and are difficult to follow. Writing lacks substance | No cohesion or logical sentence pattern |
| Voice | Expressive, engaging, & sincere. Strong audience focus | Appropriate to audience & purpose. Evident commitment to topic. Insertion of formulated opinion | May lack originality and personality. Not much audience intention, lacks cohesion | Flat and depersonalized voice. Lacks originality | Writing contains no opinion or personality and gives no evidence to writer’s intention |
| Word Choice | Precise, strong, fresh, vivid images. Clear modifiers | Descriptive language, and engaging writing. Some empty modifiers may be used | Language is functional but writing lacks focus and contains empty modifiers | Most words are irrelevant or incorrect. Writing is full of empty modifiers which defer from assignment’s central focus | Limited vocabulary and little range in words |
| Sentence Fluency | High degree of craftsmanship. Fluid from beginning to end. Effective variations in sentence fluency | Easy flow & rhythm. Good form and variety in sentence length and structure | General control, but lacks variety in structure. Some awkward structure and little fluidity | Writing is choppy, and not fluid. Frequent sentence mistakes | Difficult to follow. Writing is disjointed, confusing, and unstructured sentences |
| Conventions | Exceptionally strong control of standards conventions. Zero to no errors | Strong control of conventions. Very few errors | Control of most conventions, but some occasional errors, but is still understandable | Frequent errors and significant distraction form focus. No audience intention | Many writing errors, which distract the reader. No revisions visible |

**Extensions and Adaptations:**

This week of lessons is primarily focused on using media to learn how to approach poetry and analyze/ annotate text. However, introducing poetry through a film like Dead Poet’s Society aids in breaking through the very common and typically negative associations that students have in regards to poetry. Therefore, once this week of introduction is over, it is important for teachers to head back into actual text and expose students to significant poets and various types of poetry.

\*Should students be unable to access a computer device to complete the journal entry on Wordpress, they should refer to the school computer lab to complete the assignment.