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The Giver [8th grade]

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Education Department

Understanding by Design Curriculum Units

Trinity University

Year 2005

The Giver

Melissa Garza
Trinity University,

UNDERSTANDING BY DESIGN

Unit Cover Page

Unit Title: The Giver

Grade Level: 8

Subject/Topic Area(s): English/Language Arts/Reading

Designed By: Melissa Garza

Time Frame: 5-6 weeks

School District (One Designer): San Antonio Independent School District

School: Longfellow Middle School

School Address and Phone:

Brief Summary of Unit (Including curricular context and unit goals):

Students will explore the implications of a society where personal freedom is eliminated for the benefit of all. Through the use of provocative questions, studies in contemporary issues in their school and nation, and reading of The Giver students will come to terms with their own understanding of this essential question: How much should a government be able to control your individual rights for the benefit of the society? Other essential questions include: Could something intended for the good of society really be bad? What makes an ideal society?

Content Standard(s)

- (8) Reading/variety of texts. The student reads widely for different purposes in varied sources.
- (10) Reading/comprehension. The student comprehends selections using a variety of strategies.
- (13) Reading/inquiry/research. The student inquires and conducts research using a variety of sources.
- (14) Reading/culture. The student reads to increase knowledge of his/her own culture, the culture of others, and the common elements of cultures.
- (15) Writing/purposes. The student writes for a variety of audiences and purposes and in a variety of forms.

STAGE 1 – DESIRED RESULTS

Essential Questions:

- How much should the government be able to control your individual rights for the benefit of society?
- Could something intended for the good of society really be bad?
- What makes an ideal society?

Students will understand that...

- For a society to function there must be an appropriate balance between individual rights and governmental control.
 - A society is undermined when the government has the ability to control individuals to too great/small of a degree.

Students will know...

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- Basic rules of Jonas’ society and how they are similar/different from their own.
- An author’s use of characterization, setting, and plot (and other literary elements) enhances the readers understanding of a novel’s themes.
- Utopia, Dystopia, and other vocabulary from text.
- Various contemporary issues and controversies regarding governmental infringement on personal freedom.

Students will be able to...

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- *Read a novel and other sources for different purposes.*
- *Monitor their comprehension as they read.*
- *Inquire and conduct research.*
- *Student writes for a variety of purposes and audiences.*

STAGE 2 – ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE

Group Performance Task: You have been chosen by the Counsel of Elders to create a new experimental form of government on an island upriver from The Community. This new community will be subject to the community rules except for changes you and your group members will implement. The elders are very interested in seeing how community members would handle going back to some of the old ways of life.

Key Criteria: Specifically, you are being asked to address the following issues: marriage, family planning, euthanasia, career and educational choices, government monitoring of individual behavior, the elimination of natural feelings and memories, book censorship and the necessity for a Receiver.

Product: Choose 3 of the most important issues and state how and why you would change them. You must justify your reasons in a proposal to the Committee of Elders. You will be provided with the format for the proposal.

Self-Assessment: Each member will fill out a self-assessment. Discuss your contribution to the group, your strengths and weaknesses. What would you do better next time?

Other Evidence:

2 Vocabulary Quizzes, 4 quizzes on plot details and literary elements during the course of the unit. Discuss Patriot Act, new Supreme Court rulings on personal property rights, Ten Commandments controversy, Longfellow Dress Code. Students will judge the level of infringement of personal freedom for the benefit of society by discussing by placing them on a continuum chart. Students must explain their position. Journal—various reader responses, academic prompts

Stage 3 – Learning Plan

The Giver

Learning Activities Sequence

The Giver by Lois Lowry

180 pages, 22 chapters

Estimated Length of Unit 5-6 weeks (including assessments)

Note: The following Learning Activities sequence is based of a chart I formulated in order to organize things more spatially in my mind. The chart outlines all of the key criteria for the assessment; possible questions for discussion that are deliberately provocative; and various assignments and activities that correlate with helping the student delve more deeply into the key criteria. During the teaching of the unit, I would probably refer to this chart to access my discussion questions and journal topics or to switch one learning activity for something that appealed to me more that day. Even as I begin to type this sequence out, there are several new ideas that are occurring to me for more interesting assignments and discussions. I mean this sequence and even the chart itself to be extremely flexible and to be modified class by class depending on what strikes a cord with students. Due to the nature of reading a novel, and the time it takes, many of the provocative issues in the novel may be explored less deeply than others. There are opportunities for more exploration through homework and extra credit assignments. There is a vast amount of timely information on the web about all of the issues in the book. One will never run out of ideas for further exploration or modifications for different types of learners.

Introduction to the Unit:

Day 1: Begin with an entry question (Should the school district tell you what to wear?) to hook students into considering the role that governmental restriction in their life. Students discuss when it is necessary or unnecessary for a governmental body to restrict their personal freedom if it is considered to be a benefit for all. Lead into the 3 EQ's. Connect the student ideas with major themes from The Giver.

Day 2: Introduce literary terms (plot, characterization, theme, setting, tone, etc). Introduce vocabulary terms for the first half of the book. Provide students with character list from the book for familiarity. Guide student understanding with an advanced organizer for them to fill in while reading Ch. 1. (Basic observations and lower level comprehension.) Discuss advanced organizer.

Framework for the rest of the unit:

Reading the text

- Students will read approximately 2 chapters per day as a class.
- Students will be active readers during reading by using a variety of comprehension strategies such as informal checks for understanding, advanced organizers, reader response, making predictions, etc.
- There will be 2 vocabulary exams, one per each half of the novel. There will be four quizzes on literary elements and plot details.

Responding to the text

- Every reading assignment will be precluded with either a relevant discussion or journal writing chosen by the teacher. Discussions will vary based on the predominant theme of the chapters read, relevance to current events, and /or student interest.
- There is no particular order for teaching key criteria although some chapters obviously lend themselves better to some topics than others. All key criteria are labeled with the chapter numbers that correspond best with the particular topic.
- A learning activities chart will be used as a reference tool to make sure all key criteria for performance assessment are addressed and that various activities are readily available.
- Students will actively discuss critical issues in the text after every chapter by revisiting the pre-reading discussion.

Highlighted Learning Activities:

- Read about arranged marriages in India. Class completes a T-chart comparing the pros and cons of arranged marriages.
- Writing— What job do you think you would be assigned in The Community at the age of 12? Tell what you were good at and how you would feel now at the age of 14, two years after working in that job.
- Jigsaw—Articles on Patriot Act from U.S govt. sources and ACLU (opposition). Identify key arguments and judge whether or not the Patriot Act is a reasonable use govt. power.
- Listen to the song Imagine by John Lennon. Discuss the possibilities of such a place and whether or not The Community is such a place.

Assessments:

Pre-assessment (2 Days)

Approximately a week before the end of the book students will participate in a lesson that explores contemporary issues that explore the essential question, “How much should the government be able to control your individual rights for the benefit of society?” and “Could something intended for the good of society really be bad?”

We will discuss the Patriot Act, the new Supreme Court ruling on personal property rights, the Ten Commandments controversy in various states and the Longfellow Dress Code. Students will judge the level of infringement of personal freedom on a scale of 1-10. Students will then judge how much of a benefit to society these laws actually are. Finally, students must judge whether or not these laws, overstep the boundaries of the government. We will discuss as a class but students must explain their personal position on their own paper.

Performance Assessment (1 week) See rubric below

Letter-Writing : Proposal to the Elders

Teacher Name: **Ms. Garza**

Student Name: _____

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Format	Complies with all the requirements for a proposal.	Complies with almost all the requirements for a proposal.	Complies with several of the requirements for a proposal.	Complies with less than 75% of the requirements for a proposal.
Key Criteria Addressed	Addressed 3 key criteria and developed arguments fully for each.	Addressed 3 key criteria and fully developed arguments for most of the criteria.	Addressed 3 key criteria and had poorly developed arguments.	Did not address all 3 key criteria.
Demonstrated Understanding of The Giver	Arguments were developed with accurate information from the book.	Arguments were developed with 1-2 errors in your understanding of The Giver.	Arguments were developed with 3-4 errors in your understanding of The Giver.	You had several errors in your understanding of The Giver.
Use of other background knowledge	You drew on a wide variety of knowledge from current issues to argue your case.	You drew on some of the current issues we discussed in class.	You used very few examples from the current issues we discussed in class.	You did not use any examples of the current issues we discussed in class.
Answered essential questions	You have fully answered all three of the essential questions to the best of your ability.	You have moderately answered all three of the essential questions.	You answered some of the essential questions but with little elaboration.	You barely answered the essential questions or made no effort to answer them at all.

