

HUMANITAS INTERDISCIPLINARY THEMATIC UNIT

School: U.S. Grant High School Grade: 9th

Team Members:

Ronald Arreola

Brock Cohen

Sara Benjamin

Subjects:

Marine Biology ab

English 9ab

Life Skills/Creative Writing

THEME/OUTCOMES

Unit Theme: Ethics: Is Right Really *Right*?

Rationale: Ethics is the subject of constant debate in our society. People make decisions every day that shape the way cultures treat people, animals, and the natural world. These quandaries are reflected in our communities, literature, and scientific fields; they are too vital to the quality of human life to be ignored.

Outcomes: Students will examine the definition of ethics, and realize that ethical decisions have to be made on a daily basis in every aspect of life, in every part of the world. The students will also explore the blurred lines between right and wrong through the varied literature, documentaries, and research within the unit. The students will demonstrate their understanding of ethics through their culminating essay and project.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS Who should be given the responsibility for making rules and setting values? Is it acceptable to impose one's ethics upon another society or culture? Which should take priority: One's personal ethics or the ethics of society? Should the needs of our current generation supersede the needs of future generations? Is it possible (or even advantageous) to live in a society that is free from inequality? Is it more virtuous to live a happy life or a responsible life?

INTERDISCIPLINARY ESSAY PROMPT We live in complex times, in which we often find ourselves in the struggle between right and wrong. Through readings, films, and class discussions, you have been exposed to some of the critical ethical dilemmas that have conflicted humankind for centuries (and continue to do so). For this essay, address the major ethical issues facing society. To accomplish this, choose any four essential unit questions and show how they relate to the literature, articles, research and films that you have experienced in this unit. In your conclusion, make sure to indicate whether or not there should be a common ethical code throughout human society (and, if so, what it should be).

Name: Brock Cohen Subject: English 9ab

Focus Standards:

Reading 1.1: Identify and use the literal and figurative meanings of words and understand word derivations.
Reading Comprehension 2.3: Generate relevant questions about readings on issues that can be researched.
Literary Response and Analysis 3.5: Compare works that express a universal theme and provide evidence to support the ideas expressed in each work
Writing Strategies 1.1: Establish a controlling impression or coherent thesis that conveys a clear and distinctive perspective on the subject and maintain a consistent tone & focus throughout the piece of writing
Writing Strategies 1.5: Synthesize information from multiple sources
Writing Applications 2.3: Write expository compositions, including analytical essays and research reports

Materials:

Excerpts from Plato's *Republic*
Night by Eli Wiesel
Excerpts from Barbara Ehrenreich's
Nickel and Dimed
Steven Spielberg's "Schindler's List"
Excerpts from John Hersey's *Hiroshima*
Documentary "White Light, White Rain"
"30 Days" minimum wage episode
Excerpts from Steve Lopez's *The Soloist*
Excerpts from Asne Seierstad's
The Bookseller of Kabul

Activities:

Inquiry-based discussions
/Socratic seminars
Contemporary issues
team research and debate
Unit Vocabulary Terms
Team Challenge
Culminating assessment
Ethics "Ics" Book

Name: Ronald Arreola Subject: Marine Biology ab

Focus Standards:

Genetics:
2. Mutation and sexual reproduction lead to genetic variation in a population.
4. Genes are a set of instructions encoded in the DNA sequence of each organism that specify the sequence of amino acids in proteins characteristic of that organism.
5. The genetic composition of cells can be altered by incorporation of exogenous DNA into the cells.
Evolution:
7. The frequency of an allele in a gene pool of a population depends on many factors and may be stable or unstable over time.
8. Evolution is the result of genetic changes that occur in constantly changing environments.

Materials:

Life on an Ocean Planet (Text)
Biology (McDougal Text)
"Whales in Crisis" DVD
Petri dishes, agar
bacteria cultures, plasmids
ampicilin, water bath

Activities: In cooperative groups students will research ethical issues in science more specifically Marine Biology and present either a slide show, power point, or video depicting the ethical dilemma. Topics include:
Aquaculture, Whaling
Bioengineering, Navy's Use of Sonar, Transgenic Salmon...
Bacterial Transformation Lab
Culminating assessment
Ethics "Ics" Book

Name: Sara Benjamin Subject: Life Skills/Creative Writing

Focus Standards:

Writing Strategies 1.1: Establish a controlling impression or coherent thesis that conveys a clear and distinctive perspective on the subject and maintain a consistent tone & focus throughout the piece of writing
Writing Strategies 1.3 Use clear research questions and suitable research methods to elicit and present evidence...
Writing Strategies 1.5: Synthesize information from multiple sources
Writing Applications 2.3: Write expository compositions, including analytical essays and research reports
Writing 2.6 Write technical documents
Listening & Speaking 2.3 Apply appropriate interviewing techniques

Materials:

Various articles related to ethics in High School and College.

20/20 documentary on cheating in Universities & the negative effects

Digital/video cameras for Documenting student responses

Paper, printing and binding for handbooks.

Activities:

Students will work in cooperative groups to research the amount of that takes place on high school and college campuses & the long term effects.
Student will interview their peers to gauge their opinions regarding academic cheating
Students will create a handbook on ethics for incoming 9th grade students.
Culminating assessment
Ethics "Ics" Book

The Humanities Connection... Ethics are impacted by and reflected in many aspects of life, including politics, education, art, literature and science. In the **English** class the focus will be on literature, politics, and societal ethics. In **Marine Biology** the focus will be on the ethics dealing with marine life, bioengineering and science. In **Life Skills/Creative Writing** the focus will be on the ethical concerns of modern society and the world of academia. In all three classes the students will create a book (an "Ics" book) on the ethics for a specific group or population, for example "Teacher Ethics," or "Politician Ethics." There will also be the culminating interdisciplinary thematic essay.