

Analytical Writing in year 10 Media Studies

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Key Points

- Enabling students to analyse complex media texts independently, making reference to issues of representation using accurate media terminology

Purpose

What were your reasons for doing this development work?

GCSE Media Studies students must write an extended essay, up to 3000 words and worth 50% of their Year 10 course work mark, comparing and contrasting two media texts. This analytical writing is challenging to teach. My purpose was to develop students' analytical thinking and the language to express it, to equip them with the tools to be able to achieve excellent outcomes, independently.

Who were the identified target learners?

Year 10 Media Studies students.

What were your success criteria?

- In their extended essay, students would address all the expected points
- Students would achieve their target grade for this work

What did you do? (What success criteria did you use?)

For this extended essay, students are asked to compare and contrast two media texts. They have to choose two scenes to compare in detail, and need to have an understanding of areas of representation, how to deconstruct a scene, key media language and vocabulary and how to make links between the films and wider social messages.

I chose two sports drama texts that would appeal to both boys and girls: Remember the Titans and Coach Carter. Both address issues of interest to teenagers: relationships, racism, achievement in school, etc. The sports aspect was an initial hook for the boys, while the character/emotional development and relationships was appealing to the girls.

This is challenging for students new to Media Studies. In previous years I introduced this work as their first coursework assignment because it was a big piece of work,

but with my current Year 11s, I decided to do it later in Year 10, after they had designed and analysed film posters. I hoped this experience and their confidence with analysis would support them to write better extended essays. After a session with Alison Pyle (Secondary Literacy Consultant) on teaching extended writing, I adapted her ideas to develop the approach and resource I am describing here. I devised a pyramid shape with the description of the scene at the apex, how the scene has been structured immediately below, characters below that, issues of representation below that and at the base, the overall message of the scene and film – all with prompts to promote thinking. (see attachment below)

Using this pyramid resource, I modelled how to deconstruct a scene. The students linked the model text to (numbered) layers of the pyramid, annotating the text with the relevant numbers. They then worked their way up from the bottom of the pyramid, thinking and discussing, using their previous learning, their worldly knowledge and their understanding of characterisation. The pyramid supported their discussion, equipping them with the concepts and language to develop their own analysis, and they were in a position to be able to write independently. It took only four lessons for all the students to be able to do it alone. They chose their two scenes and were flying. My role had changed from teacher to facilitator.

What specific teaching resources did you use?

My pyramid resource *How to analyse a scene* (attached below)

Outcomes and Impact

What has been the impact on pupil learning and teaching?

I am more confident in my ability to equip students with independent analytical skills, as opposed to directing them too much. It has made me realise I need to do much more training with Year 10s to give them these independent skills.

Students have achieved much more highly in their extended essay than when I have taught this previously. They have structured their essays effectively, using the appropriate terminology and developing their material to support their analysis. They have not been content with the first thing that came to mind, but have delved deeply into the texts and found more evidence to support their points. (Example of student work attached below)

Evidence of impact on pupil learning and teaching/leadership

They all achieved or exceeded their target grade for this work.