

Focus on the Reasons for Going to war in THE GRAND SEDUCTION

"Young men go to war. Sometimes because they have to, sometimes because they want to."
Mitch Albom

View the Unit 5 Gallery, The Seduction of War. As you do so, make a list of the reasons offered by these young people for going to war. Bring these to the next class.

Below is a list of reasons for going to war that students may generate:

- To have a great adventure
- To see the world
- To fight for a worthwhile cause
- To escape poverty
- To escape domestic violence and forced marriage
- To experience the danger and high energy of war
- To be patriotic
- To receive food, shelter, clothes and a secure job
- To belong with others and be part of a group
- To have something to do in places where schools have been closed because of insecurity
- To seek revenge
- To follow a boyfriend or girlfriend into battle
- To feel safe and powerful

Then...

PAPER TALK: What comes to mind when you think about the seduction of war? What connections can you make to others' responses? What questions arise as you think about this idea and the thoughts of others?

Purpose:

- Learners engage with ideas, questions and problems by silently responding in writing to the responses of their peers.
- Silent writing provides time to think, to consider other points of view and to make comments.
- This activity provides opportunities for collaboration with others, to expand students' thinking on these issues. The opportunity to respond anonymously is freeing.

Steps:

1. Write on the board "*Why do youth go to war?*" Write each of the reasons generated by the students in a circle in the middle of separate sheets of chart paper. Place each paper on a table with markers. (Or give a marker to each student.) Create small groups which will move together from paper to paper through this activity.
2. *Present the Paper Talk prompt.* Direct students to think about their responses to the question "Why do youth go to war?", talk about their reasons in their small groups and write their ideas and questions around each reason for going to war. Encourage them to respond to others' comments with thoughts and questions. Their comments can be written in all around the paper so that many can write at the same time. Those who wish can sign their first names so that students can meet up with one another for further discussion.
3. *Circulate.* Provide time for the small groups to move from paper to paper. Give each group 3 - 5 minutes per reason, and then 5 minutes to return to the page where they began this activity to see the responses to their comments and questions. As groups move from paper to paper, they will silently read what has been written there, discuss and add their comments and questions.
4. *Facilitate.* Prompt groups to connect ideas, elaborate on others' ideas and pose questions. Participate yourself to model how to comment and add new thoughts. Watch the clock and announce when it is time for groups to move on.
5. *Share the thinking.*
 - a. Direct students to return to their starting point to read what others have written on their page.
 - b. If there is time, direct them to view other papers.
 - c. Ask:
 - i. "What common responses and reactions have emerged?"
 - ii. "What ideas or questions have surprised you?"
 - iii. "How did your thinking develop during this activity?"

Tips:

- Time this carefully. If time is short, consider combining reasons for going to war, or selecting only some reasons and setting out a paper on which learners can propose other reasons.
- Start this activity in one session and conclude in the next.

Source: This activity is called a Chalk Talk in Church, M, Morrison, K. & Ritchhart, R. (2011). *Making Thinking Visible: How to Promote Engagement, Understanding and Independence for All Learners*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

The next class: **Direct students to identify what they consider the best reason(s) for participating in a war.**

- Affix the Paper Talk papers around the room.
- Provide each student with 5 sticky dots or stars with which to "vote".
- Direct them to affix these dots or stars beside the reasons which make most sense to them.
- They may "vote" for 5 reasons, or only one with five dots or stars, or three reasons with 2 and 3 dots or stars.
- Count up the number of dots or stars to determine the 4 or 5 most understandable reasons for choosing to go to war.
- Discuss the results of this survey, exploring support for and reasons for rejecting each reason. "Has anyone changed his or her mind after this discussion? If so, why?"
- Focus on the most highly rated reasons and discuss what measures could be put in place to discourage children from participating in war.

ALTERNATIVE activity after students have generated a list of reasons to go to war.

Create a Concept Map using these steps: (GENERATE – SORT – CONNECT – ELABORATE)

Each student will create his or her own concept map revealing a rating of reasons for going to war. Once students have completed their individual maps, put them into small groups (three – four) and ask them to create a group concept map.

Purpose:

- Concept maps are intended to activate knowledge and organize thinking in order to express how ideas relate to other ideas.
- This activity encourages students to develop their capacities to organize ideas and understand concepts.
- This activity can be used at the beginning of a unit to reveal prior knowledge or later on to determine how students are responding to and making sense of ideas.
- A concept map at the end of a unit can help students prepare for a test or writing an essay.

Steps:

1. *Ensure that students know what a concept map is.*
2. *Generate* by asking the class to study the list of reasons for choosing to go to war. Are there any more to add?
3. *Sort.* Direct them to individually write the best reason for going to war in the middle of a piece of paper and to place the 5 or 6 other most reasonable reasons toward the outside in a circle. The more reasonable ideas should be closer to the circle and the less reasonable ones farther away, toward the edges of the paper.
4. *Connect* by drawing lines between the different ideas to show how they are linked. Explain these connections by writing on the line
5. *Elaborate.* For each reason, create subcategories which break the ideas into smaller parts.
6. *Share the thinking.* In groups of 4, students share their concept maps and together, create a group concept map based on their discussion and consensus.
7. *Share group maps* with the class. Explain the debates which occurred as you worked together.
8. *Discuss common themes observed in the sorting process.*

Source: This protocol for developing Concept Maps is found in Church, M, Morrison, K. & Ritchhart, R. (2011). *Making Thinking Visible: How to Promote Engagement, Understanding and Independence for All Learners*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.