

Learning Activity: Argumentative Essay**Learning Behaviours:** *Follow a given structure, interpret and use material given to students***Teacher:** *LWP* **DATE:** *24/5/05* **Class:** *9 English*

This was to follow the point of view essay. In the POV essay the students found all their own information, completed group work and were given very few limitations on how they completed the essay. For this essay the students were given all the information they needed, told the structure they were to follow and the actual writing of the essay was done in a double period, in test-like conditions, much as a VCE outcome would be done. The only thing that I did with this activity was to get the students to complete a What I **K**now/What I **W**ant to know/ What I have **L**earnt activity. The KWL was not on the topic of the essay but on argumentative essays themselves. At the end of this essay I got the students to finish the KWL (the L part) and then we went on to compare the way they had completed both the essays.

Discussion Tool: KWL/Journal Writing

At the start of this essay the students were asked to complete a KWL. Overall the students completed the K and W o.k. but it was much more difficult to get the students to focus on the L part. Or maybe they didn't learn anything!!!

At the end of the essay writing I got the students to complete a journal entry. They were simply given a few questions that asked them to compare the way they did the POV essay and this one.

Overall the students thought the way we did the POV essay was more fun but, to my surprise, most students preferred it to the way we did the argumentative essay because either it was easier, it was over and done with and they could move on to the next task.

Typical comments of both the KWL and the journal writing are below.

Student Comments

ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY

What I know! I know in an argumentative essay you argue a point. It's used in debating.

What I want to know!
I want to know how to set up an argumentative essay and how to show points.

What I learnt
I learnt you how to set up an argumentative essay.
I learnt that you

Comparing the Two Essays.

The time it ~~did~~ took for each essay.
The TV families essay took a lot longer than the Dog essay to complete.

Which way you learnt more?

I think that I learnt more the second way because I had a shorter amount of time and I had to concentrate harder.

Which way was more fun?

The way that we did the TV families essay was more fun because I liked doing the research on different people off TV.

Which way was more effective?

Definitely the second way because I had to concentrate harder and everything was still fresh in my mind when we wrote the essay.

Teacher Journal

I wanted to get the students to complete a similar essay to the POV in a totally different way. I wanted the students to evaluate the different processes and I was hoping they would identify the benefits of finding and interpreting their own information and the value of working with others to develop and form opinions.

The students completed both the essays well and I was quite happy with the work the students produced.

In the first essay I facilitated, in the second one I instructed.

I was hoping the students would identify the way they learned in the different processes but they tended to focus on the ease and length of the exercise, not the learning.

Despite what was said in the journals I felt the students not only enjoyed the POV essay but I feel they got more out of it and produced better work in it.