

A Twisted Love Poem

Pillar: Positive Social Environments

Division IV

Grades: 10-12

Core Curriculum Connections: English Language Arts

I. Rationale: Promoting positive social environments is the focus of this ELA lesson which aims to heighten students' awareness of dating violence, a common social issue in adolescence, and provide them with strategies to get out of abusive relationships. Students will read a poem written by a victim involved in an abusive relationship and then discuss, interpret, and respond to the meaning of this poem. By viewing a video and/or researching this topic further, students will learn more about the various facets of unhealthy relationships - both physical and emotional. Finally, students engage in discussions about the meaning of "A Twisted Love Poem" and then compose an essay that reflects their newly acquired knowledge, interpretations, and reactions to it.

II. Activity Objectives:

The students will:

- become aware of the many facets of dating violence (emotional as well as physical), its warning signs, examples of violence, statistics, and how to leave an abusive relationship.
- be able to interpret a poem's meaning and to apply learned information to that interpretation.

III. Materials:

- **Option 1:** PBS *In the Mix* video: ["Twisted Love: Dating Violence Exposed"](#) and TV/VCR
- or -
- **Option 2:** [Dating Violence Information Web sites](#) list and computers with Internet access
- enough copies of a ["A Twisted Love Poem"](#) for each student

IV. Curriculum Outcomes:

English 10-1/2, 20-1/2, and 30-1/2

1.1 Discover possibilities

1.1.1 Form tentative understandings, interpretations and positions

1.2 Extend awareness

1.2.1 Consider new perspectives

1.2.2 Express preferences, and expand interests

2.1.3 Engage prior knowledge

2.1.4 Use reference strategies and reference technologies

<p>2.1 Construct meaning from text and context</p> <p>2.1.1 Discern and analyze context</p> <p>2.1.2 Understand and interpret content</p>
<p>2.2 Understand and appreciate textual forms, elements and techniques</p> <p>2.2.1 Relate form, structure and medium to purpose, audience and content</p> <p>2.2.2 Relate elements, devices and techniques to created effects</p>
<p>2.3 Respond to a variety of print and nonprint texts</p> <p>2.3.1 Connect self, text, culture and milieu</p> <p>2.3.3 Appreciate the effectiveness and artistry of print and nonprint texts</p>
<p>3.1 Determine inquiry or research requirements</p> <p>3.1.1 Focus on purpose and presentation form</p> <p>3.1.2 Plan inquiry or research, and identify information needs and sources</p>
<p>3.2 Follow a plan of inquiry</p> <p>3.2.1 Select, record and organize information</p> <p>3.2.3 Form generalizations and conclusions</p> <p>3.2.4 Review inquiry or research process and findings</p>
<p>4.1 Develop and present a variety of print and nonprint texts</p> <p>4.1.1 Assess text creation context</p> <p>4.1.2 Consider and address form, structure and medium</p> <p>4.1.3 Develop content</p>
<p>4.2 Improve thoughtfulness, effectiveness and correctness of communication</p> <p>4.2.1 Enhance thought and understanding and support and detail</p> <p>4.2.2 Enhance organization</p> <p>4.2.3 Consider and address matters of choice</p> <p>4.2.4 Edit text for matters of correctness</p>
<p>5.1 Respect others and strengthen community</p> <p>5.1.2 Appreciate diversity of expression, opinion and perspective</p>

V. Procedure:

1. a. **Option 1:** Show the video, "Twisted Love: Dating Violence Exposed"

-or-

b. **Option 2:** Assign the research homework assignment during the previous class period. Give each student the list of [Dating Violence Information Web sites](#), which includes a list of the following topics so they know what information to collect:

- Dating Violence definition and statistics
- Why are abuse and love often equated?
- Examples of physical violence
- Examples of emotional violence
- Why it's difficult to leave an abusive relationship
- Where and how to get help

2. Follow up the assignment or video by giving some examples of various dating violence situations (i.e. telling your girlfriend that she's stupid, ignoring your boyfriend when you're with your friends, exploding in a rage when your girlfriend talks to another boy, etc.)

3. After each situation, ask students if they feel these can be described as "violent" reactions. Did they learn anything in the video or research that surprised them?
4. Ask a student volunteer to read ["A Twisted Love Poem"](#) to the class.
5. Conduct a brief discussion about the meaning of the poem.
6. Instruct students to compose an essay in which they interpret the meaning of the poem, one line at time. Ask students are to give additional examples of the six topics listed above, as well as discuss their personal feelings about the poem. The length of the essay should be determined by how long it takes the writer to cover the topics completely.
7. If you viewed the video in class, assign the essay as a homework assignment; if students prepared by doing research, the essay should be an in-class exercise.

VI. Assessment Ideas:

When grading written responses, teachers should use a rubric that corresponds to their individual assessment plan, grade level expectations, and pre-determined areas of focus. However, possible criteria to be addressed in the essay may include the following:

- dating violence statistics and definition
- why abuse and love are often equated
- examples of emotional violence
- examples of physical violence
- the reasons for difficulty in leaving an abusive relationship
- resources for help available for the abused
- personal feelings about poem

VII. Extensions and Adaptations:

- Student essays could be posted in the classroom.
- Speakers from domestic violence agencies, battered women shelters or local law enforcement or court officials would be valuable assets for class presentations.
- The class could contact the battered women's shelter in their area and ask about the needs for the shelter (i.e. Food, clothing, toiletries, children's toys, suitcases, etc.). Students could organize a drive to collect these items for the shelter. Their drive could extend into the community.
- Students could organize a school wide dating violence awareness campaign targeting early warning signs, statistics, how to get out of an abusive relationship, and where to go for help. This could extend into the community with posters and local radio talk shows and/or radio spot announcements.

VIII. Source:

- Lesson idea adapted from the web site: PBS.org
- web sites listed on the [Dating Violence Information Web sites](#).