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English 112B

10 May 2021

Unit of Study: Understanding Survival Mindset Through Literature

**Rationale**

When a person experiences a life or death situation, the only main priority that comes to mind is survival. Since life is valuable, this individual would do whatever is necessary to settle in a better position of surviving rather than doing nothing in a critical moment like this. That is why people should consider growing a survival mindset that provides them the readiness to overcome adversities and care for their own well-being. The state of survival happens for people who are willing to take immediate action in adjusting their lives accordingly to the current circumstance. Most young people in high school these days lack this mindset because their parents and schools are not educating them about the importance of building survival skills. Encouraging students to grow a survival mindset starting at the high school level will benefit them in the future once they are forced to face unexpected situations. Young people are unaware of having a survival mindset due to the distractions from social media to the internet preventing them from shifting their focus to this important matter. By introducing students to works of literature on survival mindset, they can begin cultivating this mindset to prepare themselves on how to survive when their lives are in danger. In addition, the literature in this class will both teach how to analyze literature and uncover the important life lessons depicted throughout the text.

This unit of study will center around William Golding’s *Lord of the Flies* because this canonical text illustrates the survival mindset used by these young schoolboys who have to do what is needed to survive in the rough situation of being stranded on an uninhabited island after their plane crashed. Despite how the story turns dark when most of the boys convey behaviors of savagery and wickedness, their survival mindset has always been a benefit for them since adults were not present to aid them. The young boys are influenced by their survival mindset to go hunt for food, build huts as shelter, collect water, and make a fire on the mountaintop to signal for help as they settle on the island. The boys were all alone on the island, but having this survival mindset prepares them to be mentally tough under distress and have the judgment to do what it takes to stay in survival mode. By tracing how the survival mindset is discussed and portrayed in this story, students will learn how to keep track of common topics that appear through various texts of different genres and settings.

**Launching Into The Text**

Before reading and discussing Golding’s *Lord of the Flies*, students in the class should engage in several pre-reading activities to help them build a general sense of why having a survival mindset is important and beneficial especially during life or death situations.

1. Quick Writing Prompts
2. Ask students to pick a writing prompt from the two below (shown on PowerPoint slide) and write down responses in their journals. All students should have their written responses ready to share when called.

* Think of a real-life survival story about a person or persons who survived in an isolated area. What kept them alive? What were their greatest challenges? Did they survive because of their skills, luck, or both?
* Do you see yourself as a survivor? What qualities, if any might you bring to a group stranded in the wilderness?

1. Call out a couple of students to share their responses to the writing prompt that they picked.
2. Collaborative Group Activity: “Trapped on an Island”

(link to pdf handout: [LOTF Pre-reading Group Activity Handout](https://www.ereadingworksheets.com/reading-worksheets/lord-of-the-flies-prereading-group-activity.pdf))

1. Divide up the students in the class into groups with an equal number of students per group.
2. Provide each group the group activity handout.
3. Read the instructions on the group activity handout and ask students to answer all the questions.
4. Review the answers that the groups have come up with as a class after they have finished.
5. Compare results of each group for question 5.
6. Showing of Youtube video “Top 10 Survival Skills You Need to Know”

(link to Youtube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ncC1R2klvE>)

1. Play the Youtube video (approx. 13 min.)
2. Students should watch and pay attention to the ten survival skills mentioned.
3. After watching the video, ask students what survival skill(s) that they would like to learn how to do and would they do it if they are in a life or death situation in the wilderness.
4. Introducing *Lord of the Flies* to students
5. Introduce the author, William Golding, his general background information, and the historical context of the book / the time period that William Golding wrote this novel. Allow students to understand William Golding wrote this book based on his real-life experiences of witnessing and fighting in WWII and likely composed it starting right after the war ended.
6. Briefly discuss with students how this survival aspect of the novel relates similarly to what is shown in movies, TV shows, books, etc.
7. Remind students to focus on the survival mindset depicted in the characters throughout the novel since this is the major focus of this unit and how this novel helps revolve this topic.

**Through The Text**

1. Readings
2. Students will be requested to read three chapters per week and by following this reading pattern, they should complete the entire book in a month. There are twelve chapters in total which makes it four weeks of spending time reading.
3. link to free pdf version if student(s) is unable to get a physical copy:

( <http://kkoworld.com/kitablar/uilyam_qoldinq_milchekler_krali-eng.pdf> )

1. To keep students on track with the weekly readings, they will be asked to write a 300-word journal entry response in a Google Form and should be submitted on time before class every Monday. The written content of each journal entry response should be a selected quote that made them feel connected to and had provoking feelings. It will come to a total of four 300-word journal entry responses.
2. Socratic Seminar
3. Students will be asked to participate in a Socratic seminar after completing the readings of the book.
4. Instructions of the Socratic seminar will be provided one week prior to the Socratic Seminar class date which will give students plenty of time to return back to the text and come up with intriguing open-ended questions, topics, or themes that they want to bring up to this type of discussion. The teacher will not be the one facilitating the Socratic seminar so it is important that the students are responsible for controlling the pace of the discussion and transitioning from one question or topic to another if there are no thoughtful inputs.
5. Students should participate in the discussion at least three times and the teacher will keep track of the number of times each student participates.
6. After the Socratic Seminar, students will write a personal reflection to judge how well they participated in the discussion and also did they prepare enough for the Socratic seminar.

3. Literary Analysis Essay

1. Students will write a literary analysis essay on anything that they want that relates to the context of the book with supporting quotations from the text and detailed explanations of analysis.

**Beyond The Text**

This unit is focused on the importance of developing a survival mindset in a contemporary setting. To go beyond the text, the students can read more young adult novels about survival mindset with a dystopian twist in the setting.

* *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins

In the nation of Panem located in the ruins of North America, the Capitol forces the twelve outlying districts to send a boy and a girl between twelve and eighteen to participate in the annual Hunger Games, a fight to the death telecasted on live TV. This story follows Katniss Everdeen, a sixteen-year-old girl, stepping in to replace her sister’s place in the Games and participates in this fight for survival. In order for her to win the competition, she must decide to do whatever it takes to be the only surviving participant until the end and her survival skills and mindset are put to the test.

* *The Maze Runner* by James Dashner

The story follows Thomas, a sixteen-year-old boy, waking up with no sense of memory about himself except for his name as he finds out that he is stuck in the middle of a maze along with other teens who are like him called the Gladers. Thomas must put his survival skills and mindset to the challenge as he must solve the maze to find a way out to save himself and the other Gladers, who live on a farm in the middle of the maze called the Glade. Every day, he would go join a small number of the other Gladers to become the Runners in finding a way of escaping this maze. Thomas must use his survival mindset to persevere in freeing everyone from this maze.

* *The Eleventh Plague* by Jeff Hirsch

As the story sets in the dark aftermath of a war with America’s physical landscape being ruined and two-thirds of the American population is dead from the deadly spread of influenza, it follows Stephen Quinn, a fifteen-year-old boy, and his family being the only few that survived and become salvagers going out and searching for material to trade. He soon finds himself being part of the Settler’s Landing community after his grandfather died and his father falling into a coma after an accident. He meets a girl named Jenny who denies the reality of how things are and when they pull off a prank that went wrong, chaos fills the atmosphere and they are engaged in the midst of a battle unexpectedly that will change their lives forever. Stephen must use his survival skills and mindset to defend and set everything straight.

If the students like to remain in the contemporary and modern setting when looking into the survival mindset, here are a few novels they can read after the unit.

* *Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen

This coming-of-age novel follows Brian Robeson, a thirteen-year-old boy, traveling in a small airplane to spend the summer with his father. But during the small plane ride, the plane crashed in a hidden part of the Canadian woods which left Brian all alone as the pilot died because of a heart attack. As Brian has a survival mindset, he finds a way to survive during this state of isolation and learns more about himself to become a man.

* *A Map for Wrecked Girls* by Jessica Taylor

This story follows Emma and Henri who are both sisters and best friends. Emma did something terrible to Henri before they were in a boat accident that left them washed to a deserted island with a boy named Alex, who they barely know. All three teens are left stranded on this beautiful island but must rely on their survival skills and mindset to survive. But it seems Emma desires to continue surviving if she can heal her relationship with Henri during the time they are on this deserted island. But instead, she and Henri remain distant from one another and Emma finds comfort with Alex. Alex does not understand why Henri treats Emma in a negative way.

Works Cited

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