

# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

## LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

2019/2020

EDB

“Writing a Strong Comparative Analysis”

**Instructor:** Dr. Kira Alexandra Rose

# AIMS & OUTCOMES

The goal of this session is to provide you with useful tools with which to facilitate active in-class learning and give secondary school students comprehensive preparation in the comparative analysis of literary texts. This session introduces strategies for promoting engaged learning and takes a holistic, step-by-step approach to the process and practice of close reading.

As a result of participating in this programme, you will be able to:

- Apply specific strategies in the classroom (formative assessment) to give students comprehensive preparation for writing a comparative analysis under examination conditions (summative assessment)
- Promote the development and application of both generic skills (communication, critical thinking, collaboration, creativity) and subject-specific skills
- Employ a student-centered approach to heighten awareness of the formal and thematic features of literary texts
- Demonstrate connections between literary texts and issues of importance in society (context-based)

# STRATEGIES COVERED

- Designing learning activities for developing close reading and analysis skills
- Modeling the steps for performing a comparative analysis of literary texts, with emphasis on:
  - Identifying the basis and focus of comparison
  - Developing a list of similarities and differences
  - Constructing a thesis statement and an outline
- Exploring strategies for guiding students to write an effective comparative analysis, with emphasis on helping them:
  - Organize ideas with a clear structure

- Discuss two sources in an integrated manner
  - Present points with support from sources
  - Balance description and summary with analysis and critique
  - Reflect the relative significance of each similarity and difference
  - Master the appropriate tone, style, and language for writing a comparative analysis
  - Refer to sources properly in their writing
- Assessing students' work and providing quality feedback for students to improve/revise their writing
  - Introducing useful resources and references for comparative analysis

# **INTRODUCTION:**

**The *What*, *Why*, and *How* of Comparative Analysis**

Let's spend a few minutes discussing the following:

What are some key features of a strong comparative analysis?

What skills do students gain from doing comparative analysis?

**What:** a strong comparative analysis uses form (framework, thesis, structure) to clearly and compellingly communicate content (argument); reveals key similarities and/or crucial differences between two texts; and illuminates, critiques, or challenges something that we might have taken for granted.

**Why:** the practice of comparative close reading enriches critical and creative thinking and communication, both within and outside the classroom. Our goal as teachers is to make the process less daunting (and more fun!) for students unsure of where to begin and how to proceed. One excellent way to do that is through collaborative in-class exercises, which we will practice together today.

**How:** this refers to the building blocks of a comparative analysis essay, such as determining what features of texts to examine, establishing the basis of comparison/frame of reference, formulating the thesis, coming up with a structure, and helping students hone their ideas through feedback.



# COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS: KEY FEATURES

**Frame of Reference:** find a theme, issue, question, or device that both literary works have in common and from which you can draw similarities and/or differences

**Grounds for Comparison:** establish a rationale for your choice

**Similarities and Differences:** think critically about the texts you are comparing and come up with a list about what they have in common and how they differ. Decide whether the similarities outweigh the differences or vice versa.

**Thesis:** create an argument that states your approach to the text. The thesis will reflect whether the similarities outweigh the differences, the differences outweigh the similarities, or whether both hold equal weight.

Example 1: “Although both sources do A, one adheres more closely to B, whereas the other does C.”

Example 2: “While these two sources draw different conclusions about A, they share the crucial feature of B.”

**Structure:** come up with your paragraph topics and decide whether you will first examine text A and then text B (text-by-text) or alternate points about text A with points about text B (point-by-point). You need not give equal weight to similarities and differences. In a case in which text A is a lens for text B, or vice versa, you will spend more time on the text that is your focal point.

# ACTIVITY I

## Comparative Analysis: Film & Fiction

Establishing the grounds of comparison and crafting a thesis

# ***CRAZY RICH ASIANS***

Jon M. Chu, 2018

Time Code: 53:16-47:09

As you watch this scene, think about some of the following:

**Visuals:** Who and what is in it? How is it put together? What is being represented? What is the camerawork like?

**Dialogue and sound:** What is being said? Who is speaking to whom? What are the sound effects?

**Mood:** What do you feel as you watch this? Is that feeling constant? What words/adjectives would you use to describe those feelings?

**Bigger picture:** What do we learn from this scene? How might it set up our expectations for what this movie is about/its main themes?

\*Take a few minutes to note down your observations

## **“Flamingo Valley”**

*Ministry of Moral Panic* (2013)

Amanda Lee Koe

Spend the next 15 minutes reviewing/rereading this short story. Think about the following:

What words and phrases stand out to you?

What is the story’s tone/mood?

What literary techniques does Koe use?

What social, racial, or religious themes are addressed?

\*Note down your observations

# IDENTIFYING SIMILARITIES & DIFFERENCES

Let's first discuss what everyone came up with for the film and short story. We'll then collaboratively create a list of similarities and differences between the two sources, focusing on aspects such as form, content, tone/mood, characterization, theme, cultural context, etc.

# CRAFTING THE THESIS

Get into groups of two or three and spend the next ten to fifteen minutes crafting a thesis statement. We will then go around the room and share some examples.

# ACTIVITY II

## Comparative Analysis: Poetry

Responding to prompts, structuring essays, and providing feedback



# COMPARATIVE PROMPT

Mood in a literary work is often evoked by descriptions of weather and seasons. Illustrate this with reference to Thomas Hardy's "Weathers" and Emily Dickinson's "Like rain it sounded, till it curved."

# INSTRUCTIONS

Turn to your neighbor and spend the next twenty minutes coming up with a short (bullet points) essay outline. Outlines should reflect essay structure, summarize paragraph content, and list supporting evidence from sources. Consider how some of the following features contribute to meaning: form, structure, imagery, rhyme, rhythm, sound, tone, etc.

\*We will then spend some time discussing outlines and will workshop one of yours in order to practice giving student feedback

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

“The Comparative Essay”

<https://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/types-of-writing/comparative-essay/>

“How to Write a Comparative Analysis”

<https://writingcenter.fas.harvard.edu/pages/how-write-comparative-analysis>

“Comparing and Contrasting”

<https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/comparing-and-contrasting/>

“How to Write a Compare-and-Contrast Paper” (pdf provided)

[Kerry Walk, Princeton Writing Programme](#)

“Teaching with Writing” (pdf provided)

[Kerry Walk, Princeton Writing Programme](#)

Writing Handouts, Yale *Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning*

<https://poorvucenter.yale.edu/undergraduates/writing-handouts-and-model-papers/writing-handouts>