

Personal Reflection

Xtranormal is a new audio-video medium that encourages students to express ideas and concepts in an engaging and interactive manner. Concepts such as argument and persuasion may be a little difficult for students grasp in a purely academic context, but when paired with the opportunity to design and develop a video, students begin to understand how the specific components of communication and persuasion work together to present a coherent message.

When introducing the basics of argumentation, I have my students select an item to “sell”. In the case of the attached specific assignment, it was the planned and designed community from the novel *The Giver*. The students were to develop a 30-45 second video using Xtranormal. I chose this particular avenue because it allows students almost complete control over all elements of communication (setting, tone, characters, script) and allows them to convey their message in the manner they wish. The discussion after viewing the videos allows for instruction on the importance of word choice, credibility, and coherence. After viewing the individual videos, students were asked to write a one page reflection on their choices regarding setting and character, while analyzing the impact they have on the overall message.

This was an interesting assignment on a variety of levels. First, it allowed students to be creative in their interpretation of the novel while forming an argument. Second, it provided fresh, relevant material as a discussion point for some of the communication aspects of argument. These aspects directly translate to the writing of an argument. Finally, Xtranormal allows students to explore a variety of ways to articulate a message and develop a sense how a meaning can be altered by the delivery of the message.