

# Nolan vs. Keating essay sample

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Throughout the movie, *Dead Poets Society*, John Keating, one of the English teachers at Welton Academy, and Mr. Nolan, the Principal of Welton Academy, are both brilliant educators, but they teach in extremely different manners. Their beliefs about curriculum and methods collide with each other, because Mr. Keating's thoughts of rebellion and *Carpe Diem* irritate Mr. Nolan's thoughts of conformity. Along with their differences there are positive and negative aspects to the way both teach. Which makes the differences between Keating and Nolan an interesting contrast.

Through out the movie, John Keating expresses his beliefs about conformity, and rebellion, in his approach of teaching as well as his influences. At one point in the movie Keating instructs the kids to rip out the first couple of pages in their poetry books. He does this because he feels that people should be able to read and write poetry for themselves, and interpret it in the way that they want. The boys had forgotten their dreams and ambitions and their parents tried to live vicariously through their children. He encourages the boys to rebel against their parent's wishes, and against the school. Also with the influence of Keating the boys decided to restart the *Dead Poets Society*, which was against school policy. Although it was good for the boys to rebel, and do what they felt right, it brought devastating consequences. Keating is well liked by his pupils, but not so much as by his surrounding faculty because he is changing the traditional way of teaching and that bothered most of the faculty especially Mr. Nolan, who eventually puts an end to it.

Mr. Keating's teaching methods had advantages and disadvantages. A positive out come of his teachings is that he gets the boys to think for

themselves, and not just go by what a book tells them. The students listen to him because he is a fun teacher, and he is someone who the boys look up to. But a negative aspect of Keating's influence might have led to the death of one of his students, Neil Perry, because of his rebellious personality.

Although all of his teachings were intended to be good-hearted, the boys took it one step too far, and he ended up getting in trouble with the school and their parents. Keating admires individuality, free thinking, and those who stand up for themselves and seize the day, or *Carpe Diem*. He got his thoughts across to the kids, and he accomplished his ideal classroom. Which consisted of people who think for themselves, being non-conformists.

Mr. Nolan's methods of teaching are very different to those of Mr. Keating's. Nolan was a teacher at Welton Academy before he became the Principal, and he taught in the traditional manner. Some might consider him boring and tremendously strict. At the end of the movie, after Keating is relieved of his duties, Nolan takes over Keating's class until there is a replacement. During the time that Nolan is teaching, he is very direct and expects all of his pupils in the class to conform. When he calls on one of the pupils to read from the J. Evan's Prichard textbook, which is the English book that Mr. Keating instructed the boys to rip out the first couple of pages, there are no pages there to be read from. This is probably an unspeakable act of vandalism according to Mr. Nolan.

This symbolizes the differences between Mr. Keating and Mr. Nolan. Mr. Nolan seems to do everything from the book, as it is written, he is a very big conformist. Being quiet, correct, and respectable, are probably some of the most important things that Nolan takes into account, when judging the

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students. Although Nolan is quick to the point, and incredibly blunt, the room feels cold within his presence. His negativity in being stern and harsh, makes the classroom feel unfriendly. Even though Nolan is hard on his students, he is also a very good teacher, in that the students will learn from him and most likely get accepted to an extremely good college. Which is a very good advantage. Mr. Nolan's view of a perfect classroom would be with all conforming students, who are always proper and intelligent.

Both Keating and Nolan have very good ways of teaching the students at Welton Academy, but there are also positive and negative outcomes of both. In Keating's case, he was fired because he prompted the boys' rebellion. He was well liked by his students and was able to reach them in a unique and memorable way. Nolan on the other hand, wasn't that well liked, but he taught in a good and traditional form. Their differences in teaching only enhanced the plot of the film, and made it have a more interesting outcome.