**Ella Cline Shear School of Education**

**SUNY Geneseo**

CURR 440: Teaching Reading in the Content Areas Day 7: ELA Poetry

Stations: Poetry from the African-American Civil Rights Time Period Time Estimate: 40 min

Grade Level: 11

**I. Objective(s):**

* After brainstorming about vacations on a semantic map, students will analyze three poems written around the time period of the African-American Civil Rights Movement in order to discuss racism’s effect on African-American youth, as portrayed by the poems.
* After reading Langston Hughes’s poem, “Merry-Go-Round,” students will analyze the effect of setting and point of view in order to compose a 3-5 line response to the poem’s narrator as the carousel operator.
* After reading Rob Wood’s “FREDEM,” students will analyze the purpose of the allusion to voter literacy tests in order to explain why the incorrect spelling of the graffiti is inconsequential.
* After reading Countee Cullen’s “Incident,” students will compare and contrast the narrator in stanzas 1 and 3 in order to explain how a cliché saying applies to the poem (i.e. contradiction or agreement).

**II. Preparation**

1. Purpose or Rationale:

After looking at several poems and analyzing their literary elements and author’s purpose together as a class in previous lessons, this lesson will introduce students to several poems – breaking up the tediousness of just focusing on one for the entire class period – that they will work on in groups. The poems are all written around the time of the African-American Civil Rights Movement. Therefore, they provide students with examples of poetry that was used during that time as a means of civil disobedience akin to the sit-ins, boycotts, freedom rides, etc. The three poems offer commentary on racism’s effect on African-American children. Therefore, they appeal to its readers’ pathos just through their characters. The ability of students to relate to the poems will be enhanced by the characters’ youth, and such will be emphasized with the Do Now prompt and concluding compare/contrast discussion. Through the three poems, students will continue to analyze the effect of literary elements – like allusion, point of view, etc. – on poetry themes.

1. Prerequisites

* Students will familiar with close reading poetry and using textual evidence to support their arguments or opinions, as such a skill was encouraged, developed, and necessitated in previous poetry lessons.
* Students will be familiar with the historical topics of the selected poems – like racism, segregation, etc – due to a parallel social studies unit on the African-American Civil Rights Movement of 1955-1968.

**NYS Standards**

**RL.10-11.1** Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain. (p. 38 ELA CCSS).

**RL.11-12.2** Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text (ELA CCSS p. 38).

**RL.10-11.3.** Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced

and developed) (p. 38 ELA CCSS).

**W.11-12.9** Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research (ELA CCSS p. 47).

**a.** Apply *grades 11–12 Reading standards* to literary fiction.

**SL. 11-12.1** Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grades 11–12 topics,* *texts, and issues,* building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively. c. Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives. (ELA CCSS p.50).

**L.11-12.6** Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression (ELA CCSS p. 55).

**NCTE Standards:**

**#1:** Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

**#3:** Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound–letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).

B. Modifications/Accommodations for Learners with Diverse Needs

*Students with ADD/ADHD*: With the three-station setup around the room, students will be switching and rotating between the three activity centers for most of the class period. They switching provides a beneficial shift in focus and attention (a new poem will be analyzed at each station) and a kinesthetic component (physically walking from station to station).

*Students with a Learning Disability in Reading Comprehension*: Students will be working in heterogeneous groups, so the higher-ability students can serve as peer tutors and mentors to the lower-ability students. Additionally, the selected poems for each station were kept short, so they lend themselves easily to rereading. The brevity also ensures that their form is not intimidating or overwhelming, frustrating students before they even read them.

1. Materials and Resources

- Langston Hughes’s “Merry-Go-Round”

- Rob Wood’s “FREDEM”

- Countee Cullen’s “Incident”

- White board or Smartboard

1. Professional References

Gore, M. C. (2010). Key 26: Provide a plethora of examples. In Inclusion strategies for secondary classrooms: Keys for struggling learners (pp. 80-81). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

1. Arrangement of Physical Space and Students

Student desks will be arranged in columns and rows facing the front white board and/or SmartBoard. Once students are assigned to the stations around the room – whose locations will be pinpointed by signs taped to the wall – students can assemble the desks in small groups. However, the desks should return to the column and row format at the end of class.

**Ill. Procedures**

A. Anticipatory Set/Introduction

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| **Steps** | **Key Questions, Comments, Directions** |
| 1. “Do Now” Semantic Map: “Vacation”  2. Students volunteer to share their responses to the “Do Now” semantic map. Teacher compiles class semantic map.  3. Discussion about the Do Now semantic map and its relation to today’s lesson. | 1. As soon as students walk into the classroom, they should begin working on the “Do Now” prompt which will be written on the front white board/Smartboard prior to the class’s start. Students will work quietly and independently on the prompt. It will be a semantic map on “Vacation.” Students will be familiar with the form based on previous lessons. Students must brainstorm what comes to mind when they think of taking a vacation.  2. The teacher will elicit student responses about vacations, compiling the answers on the front white board or SmartBoard.  3. Teacher Leads with Questions and Leads into Lesson Overview:   * Class Hand-Raising Poll: How many enjoy taking a vacation? How many like traveling to a new place? * Today you will looking at three different poems that were written around the time of the African-American Civil Rights Movement. Therefore, they are poetic commentaries on the government-sanctioned racism. Just like the sit-ins and boycotts, the poems were acts of civil disobedience as they raised awareness, exposed the corruption from a poetic angle and expressed discontent. * Therefore, you must think about what you have learned in social studies about the movement to fully understand the poems. * Two of the poems focus specifically on racism’s effect on African-American children. Because of the Jim Crow, these experiences with vacations and new places may be starkly different from your own. |

B. Body of the Lesson/Lesson Development

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| **Steps** | **Key Questions, Comments, Directions** |
| 1. Students break up into heterogeneous groups by counting off by six. Students gather at their assigned station with their group members.  Each station should last 10 minutes.  2. Station 1/4: Langston Hughes’s “Merry-Go-Round” (Segregation)  3. Station 2/5: Rob Wood’s “FREDEM”  4. Station 3/6: Countee Cullen’s “Incident” | 1. On one side of the room, there will be stations 1-3 – indicated by a sign – that each has one of the three poems to be analyzed during this lesson: Hughes’s “Merry-Go-Round,” Cullen’s “Incident,” and Wood’s “FREDEM.” On the other side of the room, there will be stations 4-6, each one having one of those three poems as well. Students will be rotating through the three stations on their half of the room. Having six stations disallows the groups’ to become too large. Each group will have approximately 4 members. The teacher will circulate among the stations to offer assistance and gauge student comprehension and progress.  2. Read Langston Hughes's poem, "Merry-Go-Round." Write a 2-3 sentence summary. Then answer the following questions:   **Setting:** Is the merry-go-round in the North or South? Explain how you know its location.   **Point of View:** How would the poem be different if the narrator wasn't implied to be an African-American youth? Assuming the role of carousel operator, write a 3-5 line response to this boy's confusion.  **Critical Thinking:** African-American youth grew up only knowing racial segregation. How has the narrator's exposure to racial segregation affected his mentality and his self-perception - and thus, his ability to have fun?  3. Read Rob Wood's poem, "FREDEM." Write a 2-3 sentence summary. Then answer the following questions:  **Text-to-Self Connection:** On your sheet on loose-leaf, sketch your own brick wall and write in an abstract noun that represents your dreams. You may spell is phonetically if you wish.  **Allusion:** Why does the author mention the literacy tests that prevented African-Americans from voting? How are the literacy tests limited in their power, according to the poem?  **Critical Thinking:** Why would seeing "FREDM" written on a wall be more powerful than any of these synonyms or even the correct spelling of the word? Consider these alternatives:          Liberty         Free Will         Independence         Freedom         Sovereignty          Autonomy  4. Read Countee Cullen's poem, "Incident." Write a 2-3 sentence summary. Then answer the following questions:   **Text-to-Self Connection:** Bullies often use name-calling to mock others. List several  names you're heard people call others (i.e. "wimp," "freak," "fat," etc).   **Compare & Contrast:** How does the narrator change from Stanza 1 to Stanza 3? Brainstorm appropriate adjectives. Identify whether this is a positive or negative change.  **Annotation:** Think of Stanza 2 as the turning point for the narrator. On the poem, underline the event - the "incident" - that causes the narrator's change.  **Critical Thinking:** Interpret the cliche, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me." Does this poem prove or contradict that statement? Why does the name-calling have such a big effect on the narrator? |

C. Closure/Concluding Activity

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| **Steps** | **Key Questions, Comments, Directions** |
| 1.Whole-Class Discussion about Poems  2. Compare/Contrast Exit Ticket | 2. 1. The teacher will encourage a discussion among students about the poems. Students should be prompted to offer opinions about the poems, answer the station questions, and tie the poems to how they are commentaries on the African-American Civil Rights Movement.   * Which poems directly alluded to aspects of the African-American Civil Rights Movement? What did they allude to? * How does the fact that two of the poems – “Merry-Go-Round” and “Incident” are written from the perspective of an African-American child influence the meaning of the poems? How does the point of view make them more powerful? * Does anyone want to share their 2-5 line response as the carousel operator? How would you clarify the boy’s confusions? How would you explain the difference between the North and the South during the reign of Jim Crow.   2. In a brief paragraph, students will compare the experiences of the two narrators in “Merry-Go-Round” and “Incident” with their own experiences with travel and visiting new places. Starting points:   * Have you found vacations and trips to be better experiences than the narrators? Why weren’t their vacations “fun”? * Did you ever find yourself feeling out-of-touch with the customs in any place you’ve traveled to? (Think “Merry-Go-Round” for this one). |

1. **Possibilities for Follow-Up Activities: Independent Practice, Enrichment,**

**or Reinforcement**

For homework, students can write a brief paragraph explaining which of the three poems – “Merry-Go-Round,” “Incident,” or “FREDEM” – they think is the most effective political commentary on the Jim Crow South. They must use text evidence from the poems to show why it is the most effective (i.e. how does it appeal best to readers’ emotions, how does its literary elements add to its theme, etc).

**V. Evaluation**

1. Of Student Learning

* Were students able to compare and contrast the narrator between stanzas 1 and 3 in “Incident” and identify the catalyst (the cause) of the change in attitude?
* Were students able to identify literary elements in the poems?
* Did students understand how the narrator impacts the tone of, and reader-response to, a poem?
* Were students able to articulate the connection between the poems and between the poems and the African-American Civil Rights Movement?
* Were students able to contrast their own experiences with travel and vacations to the narrators’ experiences?

1. Of Teaching Processes
   * + Did students express confusion over any of the station questions?
     + Were students able to navigate and comprehend the poems independently in their groups or did they have a lot of questions for the teacher?
     + Did each of the stations work in its approximately 10 minute time frame? Or were students rushing to finish?
     + Were students able to break up into groups after the 1-6 count-off efficiently and swiftly with minimal confusion?
     + Did students better understand the how poetry can be used as a medium to raise awareness and gain support for a political stance?