**English Day 1:**

**Introductory Lesson - Political Poetry and Critical Literacy**

**OBJECTIVES:**

* After brainstorming why people write poetry (the various purposes of poetry) on a semantic map, students will interpret a quote by poet Mary Szybist in order to list affordances and constrains of poetry in a T-chart.
* After watching a video and reading aloud an article on Kabul’s Mirman Baheer poetry society, students will analyze and discuss the texts in small groups in order to list, on their T-charts, the benefits of poetry that the texts suggest.
* After analyzing an article on Kabul’s Poetry Society, students will interpret the validity of the Afghanistan women’s reasons for secret writing in order to compose a short essay expressing and substantiating their stance on the ability of poetry to be an effective and worthwhile means of political activism and expression.

**STANDARDS:**

**RIT.11-12.1** 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 (ELA CCSS p.40).

**RIT.11-12.2** Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text (ELA CCSS p. 40).

**RIT.11-12.7** Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem (ELA CCSS p. 40).

**W.11-12.1** Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts,

using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence (ELA CCSS p. 45).

**a.** Introduce precise, knowledgeable claim(s), establish the significance of the

claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that logically sequences claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

**e.** Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

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

 **b.** Apply *grades 11–12 Reading standards* to literary nonfiction.

**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 (ELA CCSS p.50).

**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.

**#9:** Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.

**MATERIALS:**

* Huffing Post Books 11/20/13 Tweet
* Map of Afghanistan
* BBC News Article: “Dangerous ‘Truth’: The Kabul Women’s Poetry Club”
* BBC Video of “The Kabul Women’s Poetry Club”
* SmartBoard

**DESCRIPTION:**

 In this lesson, students will grabble with the idea of poetry as a powerful form of expression and political commentary to the extent that it could even be considered a means of civil resistance – much like the African-Americans’ sit-ins, protests, and boycotts. By looking at a modern-day and international use of spoken poetry, students will be introduced to how poetry can be – and is being – written as a form of nonviolent, political activism. The purpose of the Kabul Poetry Club’s poetry includes female empowerment and anti-war commentary, so students will expand their thinking beyond romantic or aesthetic purposes of poetry. In a semantic mapping activity, students will begin by brainstorming the purposes of poetry (i.e. expression, catharsis, romantic gestures, etc). After a discussion and the creation of a class list, students will interpret a quote from poet Mary Szbist that was taken from her acceptance speech as winner of the 2013 National Book Award for Poetry. It will be presented to students in the form of a tweet by HuffPost Books: “‘There’s plenty that poetry cannot do, but the miracle, of course, is how much it can do, how much it does do.’ – Mary Szbist #NBAwards.” Students will take such an ideology as an opportunity to expand on their semantic map, creating a T-chart of affordances and constraints of poetry. Then students will be introduced to the idea of poetry as a means of political activism and as a way for one to stand up for himself. They will read a non-fiction article from BBC News: Asia, entitled, “Dangerous ‘Truth’: The Kabul Women’s Poetry Club.” After reading aloud the article and watching an associated video on the Afghanistan women, students will work in small groups to add to their T-charts. Using textual evidence from the article and video, students will include benefits of poetry that are cited in the article (i.e. “stronger than a letter,” etc). Each group will share their additions. Students should record peer responses that they did not already have. Then, as an independent concluding activity, students will take a stance on the use of poetry as political activism. They will argue and defend the opinion that it is either an ineffective, waste of time (i.e. going back to the Twitter quote, is it one of the things that poetry can’t do?) or it is a worthwhile, powerful method (i.e. In Szbist terminology, is it one of the “miracles” of poetry?). Students will be required to use textual evidence from the non-fiction article and video to substantiate their arguments.

**ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING:**  Informal formative assessments will occur throughout the lesson in the form of discussion input, sharing of group work, teacher circling when students are working, and the T-chart (at both stages) of poetry affordances and constraints. As the formal assessment for the lesson, the students will write a short argumentative essay, taking a stance on whether they believe poetry has the ability and power to serve as an effective means of political activism and expression. Students will be required to use evidence from the non-fiction article and video to support their opinions.

**RATIONALE:**

 Ideally, this short unit would be an extension off of a traditional, introductory poetry unit that introduces students to poetry basics (i.e. sonnet, haiku, rhyme scheme, etc) so that this unit could take poetry instruction to the next level via critical literacy and the examination of poetry’s historical significance and the effect of embedded literary elements on its theme and real-world purpose. Alverman (2001) differentiated between two types of education: “empowering education” and “domesticating education” (p. 8). This introductory lesson launches the unit by immediately establishing itself as a unit that will hopefully lead to “powerful literacy, the kind of literacy that leads to positions of power and authority” rather than one that fosters passive, “productive and dependedable” students as it would if it took the form of domesticating education (Alverman, 2001, p. 8). Student realization that poetry can be a powerful means of self-expression as well as a powerful means of political and real-world activism is important. As set by this lesson, this unit will strive to inform students that their voice and words are powerful and that society – or the dominant culture – may not always be for the common good. Therefore, by introducing students to the possibility that poetry can be used as an agent of change, this lesson launches a unit that strives toward the goals of “empowering education” (Alverman, 2001, p. 8). Additionally, it has been shown that “helping children understand real-life functions of text is an important component of growing as a critically literate individual” (Vasquez & Felderman, 2011, p. 263). Through the Kubal Poetry Club, this lesson introduces students to how poetry is being used as a real means of political expression in the modern and global world. Such a unit objective carries into subsequent lessons, especially in the analysis of Javon Johnson slam poem, “Cuz He’s Black.” Mary Szbist’s quote is incorporated into the lesson in the form of HuffPost Books’s tweet. It serves as an untraditional means of critical lens practice. It allows students to practice interpreting a quote, concretely extending its implications through the T-chart activity. Additionally, its form plays into the social studies classroom’s use of Twitter in its concluding Fishbowl Discussion. For a glimmer of unity between disciplines, Szbist’s tweet will begin to breed student familiarity with Tweets, even if, in this initial exposure, it is just through appearance and hashtag use. Later incorporation of tweets (for quote interpretation that also mirrors critical lens practice) into the ELA classroom during this unit will prep students more for the specific language and use of tweets, as they will not be tweets of quotes.

**PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES:**

Alvermann, D. E. (2001). Effective adolescent literacy instruction. [Executive summary and paper

commissioned by the National Reading.] Chicago, Ill. National Reading Conference.

Vasquez, V. & Felderman, C. (2011). 15: Critical literacy goes digital: Exploring intersections between critical literacies and new technologies with young children. In Richard J. Meyer & Kathryn F. Whitmore (eds.), *Reclaiming Reading: Teachers, Students, and Researchers Regaining Spaces for Thinking and Action* (pp. 260-272). New York, NY: Routledge.

**English Day 2:**

**Poetry Form and Theme: Amateur Blackout Poem and Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream Speech”**

**OBJECTIVES:**

* After listing poetry characteristics on a semantic map, students will contrast those brainstormed traits with the features of two poems - Vern Rutsala’s “Salt and Pepper” and Mary Ellen Solt’s “Lilac” – in order to define “poetry” through a class-made list of criteria.
* After defining “poetry,” students will analyze the metaphor in an amateur blackout poem, “The Dream Engine” in order to contrast the poem’s implications with Bryce Avary’s tweet about the necessity of dreams.
* After listening to and reading Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech, students will analyze its poetic delivery and embedded literary elements in order to explain and share the effect of two literary elements in the speech.
* After analyzing Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech, students will identify the “turbulence” King cites in order to relate the speech to “The Dream Engine” and Avary’s tweet and explain how King still advocates pursuit of equality even with his acknowledgement of the “turbulence” that dream is up against.

**STANDARDS:**

**RL.11-12.1** 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 (ELA CCSS p.38).

**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).

**W.11-12.2** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content. (ELA CCSS p. 45).

**b.** Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience’s knowledge of the topic.

**d.** Use precise language, domain-specific vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic.

**e.** Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).

**SL. 11-12.1c** 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).

**SL.11-12.3** Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used (ELA CCSS p. 50).

**L.11-12.5ab** Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. a. Interpret figures of speech (e.g., hyperbole, paradox) in context and analyze their role in the text. b. Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations (ELA CCSS p. 55).

**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).

**#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.

**MATERIALS:**

* Mary Ellen Solt’s “Lilac”
* Vern Rutsala’s “Salt and Pepper”
* Bryce Avary’s 10/14/13 Tweet
* “The Dream Engine” Blackout Poem
* YouTube Video of “I Have a Dream” Speech
* Transcript of “I Have a Dream” Speech
* SmartBoard

**DESCRIPTION:**

 Ideally, in this lesson, students will broaden their definition of poetry and understand how literary elements play a role in developing and shaping a poem’s theme. A semantic mapping “Do Now” activity will activate students’ prior knowledge about typical poetry characteristics. The teacher will challenge those brainstormed preconceptions and standardized beliefs with a quick look at two unconventional poems: Vern Rutsala’s “Salt and Pepper” and Mary Ellen Solt’s “Lilac.” With the former poem resembling a short prose paragraph and the latter a highly visual, one-word poem, the two defy the rhyming, stanza-driven beliefs about the genre’s form. After a debate about whether the two still qualify as poetry despite their nonconformity to traditional poetry traits, the teacher will compile a class-list on poetry criteria. Rutsula and Solt’s poems parallel – and thus foreshadow – the primary texts to be analyzed, so Rutsala’s visual poem preps students for the blackout poem and Solt’s prose poem prepares students to analyze Martin Luther King Jr.’s speech as a poem. With “The Dream Engine” poem (“The Dream engine is a routine route for turbulence”) suggesting the coexistence of dreams and obstacles, it calls into question whether dreams are worthwhile. Therefore, by paring the blackout poem with a tweet by Bryce Avary (“Everyone used to dream. You still need to dream”), students will discuss why someone would encourage dreaming – would argue that it cannot be a dying art – even if dreaming comes with hardships and obstacles and “turbulence.” Moving onto King’s “I Have a Dream” speech, students will keep in mind that relationship when listening to and reading the speech. The teacher will briefly explain its place in a poetry unit: King delivers the speech in short bursts rather than the long-winded speech typical of lecture oration, and it is chock full of literary elements. To analyze the effect of literary elements on the speech’s theme, the teacher will first point out (in the video clip of the speech) how King’s first metaphor correlated with the audience’s first round of applause. Then students will read through a written typescript of the speech with a partner and pick out two literary elements, writing their effect in a short description to be shared with the class. Through textual evidence, students will then identify what King cited as the “turbulence” up against the African-American dream of equality. In order for students to further synthesize the blackout poem and Avary’s tweet with the speech, students will write an Exit Ticket using textual evidence explaining how King addresses/defines the “turbulence” and his “dream” and how he advocates continued pursuit of it in spite of – and in full acknowledgement of – the “turbulence” it is up against.

**ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING:**  Informal formative assessments will occur throughout the lesson in the form of discussion comments and input, oral sharing of literary element effect, and identification of “turbulence” in King’s “I Have a Dream” speech. The concluding Exit Ticket serves as the formal means of assessment, testing whether students can synthesize the blackout poem, tweet, and speech in terms of how the speech acknowledges the arguments/themes of the other two texts.

**RATIONALE:**

Since visual poetry – like blackout poetry and Solt’s “Lilac” – and prose poetry – like Rustala’s “Salt and Pepper” and King’s “I Have a Dream” speech are unconventional forms of poetry, justifying its literary merit and challenging students’ rigid preconceptions - and “accepted knowledge” (Moje, 2008, p. 97) – of the poetry genre is important. As Moje (2008) wrote, it is “critical that we work to expand youth knowledge, practices, and texts as a function of education” (p. 97). By introducing students to forms of poetry that will (most likely) contradict their preexisting schemas about poetry, students will expand their thinking and this lesson will teach “young people how to access, interpret, challenge, and reconstruct the texts of the disciplines” (Moje, 2008, p. 100). Additionally, the way in which the two short “Do Now” poems parallel – in form – the two primary poems in the lesson, Rustala and Solt’s poems scaffold and prepare students to receive the blackout poem and speech as poetry (or at least, encourage them to “suspend their disbelief,” since continued skepticism about the texts’ qualification as poetry should not be stifled or belittled). With King’s speech riddled with literary elements, it is an ideal text to examine for how literary elements contribute to a work’s theme. Also, considering how much hatred, racism, and intolerance the African-American dream of equality was up against, it is important for students to consider what makes a dream worthwhile and why King – as well as many others who participated in the civil disobedience of the era - saw it as worthwhile. Such contemplation is mediated by the blackout poem and tweet supplementation. Bryce Avary’s tweet is incorporated into the unit –as another untraditional means of critical lens practice – because of social studies use of Twitter in its concluding Fishbowl Discussion. For a glimmer of unity between disciplines, Avary’s tweet and students’ interpretation of it will breed student familiarity with Twitter language and scaffold student analysis of the language, so they will be prepared to compose their own – and read each other’s – in the social studies activity.

**PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES:**

Moje, E. B. (2008). Foregrounding the disciplines in secondary literacy teaching and learning: A call for change. *Journal or Adolescent and Adult Literacy, 51*(2), 96-107.

**English Day 3:**

**Then & Now Compare/Contrast: King’s “I Have a Dream” Speech and Javon Johnson’s “Cuz He’s Black” Slam Poem**

**OBJECTIVES:**

* After listing prior knowledge on modern-day racism on a semantic map and listening to Javon Johnson’s slam poem, “Cuz He’s Black,” students will identify, with highlighters, specific lines that they found to be powerful or moving in order to analyze and discuss, in a think-pair-share activity, how literary elements within those lines contributed to their poignancy.
* After listening to Javon Johnson’s slam poem, “Cuz He’s Black,” students will choose one African-American “martyr” to which the poem alludes and read a short biography about them in order to explain, in a short writing exercise, how allusion affects the theme and emotion of the poem.
* After listening to Johnson’s slam poem and reading King’s “I Have a Dream” speech, students will compare and contrast the two texts in order to use textual evidence from both to analyze how each advocated for nonviolence but differed in tone.

**STANDARDS:**

**RL.11-12.1** 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 (ELA CCSS p. 38).

**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.11-12.4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful (ELA CCSS p. 38).

**W.11-12.2** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content. (ELA CCSS p. 45).

**b.** Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience’s knowledge of the topic.

**d.** Use precise language, domain-specific vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic.

**e.** Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).

**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).

**SL.11-12.3** Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used (ELA CCSS p. 50).

**L.11-12. 5** Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. a. Interpret figures of speech (e.g., hyperbole, paradox) in context and analyze their role in the text (ELA CCSS p. 55).

**#6**: Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and nonprint texts.

**MATERIALS:**

* YouTube Video of Javon Johnson’s “Cuz He’s Black” Slam Poem
* Transcript of “Cuz He’s Black”
* Highlighters
* SmartBoard
* Front-Page Newspaper Headlines on Sean Bell, Trayvon Martin, Amadou Diallo, Abner Louima, and Oscar Grant.
* Transcript of “I Have a Dream” Speech

**DESCRIPTION:**

 In this lesson, students will understand that racism toward African-Americans in the United States of America did not end in the 1955-1968 time period that they are studying in their social studies classroom. It will modernize the African-American struggle to be seen as equal, enabling students to compare and contrast King’s speech with a current poem about racism. For the “Do Now” activity, students will list everything they know about what racism looks like in today’s world on a semantic map. Students will share their responses with the class after brainstorming with a partner or two. Then students will watch and listen to Slam Poet Javon Johnson’s poem, “Cuz He’s Black,” which is about his reaction and response to his nephew’s fear of the cops. During the screening, students will highlight lines that jumped out to them or that they felt were especially moving. Then, students will work with a partner to look at the literary elements embedded in their highlighted lines and determine how such devices contributed to the emotion, tone, and theme of the poem to make it powerful. Students will share their highlighted lines and their literary element-based analysis of them. Students will then choose one of the six African-Americans “martyrs” that are alluded to in the poem: Trayton Martin, Oscar Grant, Abner Louimas, Amadou Diallos, Sean Bell, or Emmett Till. Students will receive a teacher-made synopsis of the individual. They will read the short biography and write a short paragraph explanation as to why Johnson chose to allude to that person, using the poem’s context to ground one’s explanation. They will receive the opportunity to share their explanations with the class. Then, as a concluding and synthesis assignment to bridge this lesson with the prior day’s lesson, students will compare and contrast Johnson’s slam poem with King’s “I Have a Dream Speech,” analyzing the difference in tone – in terms of optimistic or pessimistic about racism in America’s future – and the similar method by which the speakers urge for activism – nonviolence. In it, students will also briefly describe how Johnson’s poem shows that African-American racism continues to this day. Students will be instructed to use textual evidence in this assignment. Students will be able to complete the assignment for homework if they do not receive the chance in class.

**ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING:** Informal formative assessments will occur throughout the lesson in the form of discussion comments and input, oral sharing of literary element effect and allusion paragraphs. The teacher will be sweeping the room during these mini-assignments, as well, to read students’ work and gauge individual progress and understanding. As the formal assessment for the lesson – which is actually a larger assignment that bridges this lesson with the one prior so it can be finished for homework if not completed in class – students will write several paragraphs comparing and contrasting Johnson’s poem with King’s “I Have a Dream” speech.

**RATIONALE:**

The importance of modernizing the 1955-1968 African-American Civil Rights Movement that students are studying in their history class lies in students’ need for the curriculum to be relevant for it to be engaging, motivating, and applicable to the real-world. Therefore, rather than just analyzing political poetry from that time period, looking at modern-day poetry – and modern forms of poetry, like slam poetry – that illuminates and comments on the racism at play in America today will bring meaning and relevance not only to the poetry analysis, but to the history unit on racism. According to Freeman, Freeman, and Ebe (2011), teachers should ask themselves a question when picking curriculum texts: “Could the story take place this year?” (p. 231). Although geared for teacher’s text selection for English Language Learners, the question is based on the universal finding that “students are usually more interested in reading about the present” and want “books that [are] connected to their lives today” (Freeman, Freeman, Ebe, 2011, p. 231). With modern-day allusions (i.e. Trayvon Martin) mixed with historical references (i.e. Emmett Till), powerful metaphors (i.e. “…seeing cop cars drive / down the street feels a lot / like low-flying planes in New York / City…”), and rhetorical questions, Javon Johnson’s slam poem, “Cuz He’s Black,” lends itself extremely well to literary element analysis while bridging the history of racism with its modern-day vestiges. Students will receive a more factual lesson on modern-day racism via Tim Wise’s lecture and a political cartoon in their history class, but balancing that factual presentation with Johnson’s emotional poem draws on students’ pathos and attempts to help students invest more in the subject through compassion and perspective-taking.

**PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES:**

Freeman, Y., Freeman, D., & Ebe, A. (2011). 13: Bilingual books: bridges to literacy for emergent bilinguals. In Richard J. Meyer & Kathryn F. Whitmore (eds.), *Reclaiming Reading: Teachers, Students, and Researchers Regaining Spaces for Thinking and Action* (pp. 224-235). New York, NY: Routledge.

**English Day 4:**

**Tone & Address: Maya Angelou’s “Still I Rise”**

**OBJECTIVES:**

* After watching a video of Maya Angelou recite her poem, “Still I Rise,” students will discuss the impact of her inflection, physical gestures, and expression on the poem’s tone in order to annotate the tone on a print copy of the poem by underlining the angry words and circling the hopeful words.
* After reading Angelou’s poem, “Still I Rise,” students will identify and analyze the similes and their effect in order to compose their own simile to fill in the poem’s repetitive line, “Just like…I rise.”
* After annotating Angelou’s poem, students will compare and contrast the alignment of hopeful and angry words with the narrator’s use of “I” and “you” in order to identify a pattern and relationship between diction and pronouns.
* After identifying a pattern between diction and pronouns, students will discuss how the directness of the poem through “you” affects the poem’s tone in order to compose their own poems that assume a strong tone and purposefully and effectively make use of an unidentified, but implied “you.”

**STANDARDS:**

**RL.11-12.1** 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 (ELA CCSS p. 38).

**RL.11-12.4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.) (ELA CCSS p. 38).

**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 (ELA CCSS p.50).

**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.

**SL.11-12.3** Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used (ELA CCSS p. 50).

**L.11-12.5** Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. a. Interpret figures of speech (e.g., hyperbole, paradox) in context and analyze their role in the text.

**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).

**#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).

**#6:** Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and nonprint texts.

**MATERIALS:**

* Maya Angelou’s “Still I Rise”
* YouTube Video of Maya Angelou Reciting “Still I Rise”
* SmartBoard

**DESCRIPTION:**

 In this lesson, students will analyze how diction and a specific form of address affect the tone and power of a work. They will also realize that the overall tone of a poem can still be optimistic and hopeful even with an abundance of angry, sad, and accusatory words. To begin, students will brainstorm ideas about bullying and hardship on a semantic map. With a video of Maya Angelou reciting her poem, “Still I Rise,” on YouTube, students will follow along on a print copy of the poem as they listen to her performance. Before listening and watching, the teacher will instruct students to pay special to Angelou’s inflection, expression, and physical gestures because they will discuss how they added to and emphasized the poetry lines that they correlated with. Students will annotate the print copy with margin notes about when Angelou raised her voice, gestured to the sky, etc. so they will know where the correlations happened after the reading. Students will then identify the similes in the poem and compose their own simile by filling in the blank in the following repetitive line, “Just like \_\_\_\_\_\_ , I’ll rise.” Students will share their creations with a partner before they receive the opportunity to share to the entire class. Students will be asked to explain their simile if they volunteer to share. Then, students will reread the poem again, underlining the sad, angry, or accusatory words and circling the hopeful and optimistic words. Students will consider the connotative and detonative meanings of Angelou’s word choice to do so. With the words differentiated between those two main groups, students will discuss the overall tone of the poem: optimistic or pessimistic, hopeful or angry, etc. Then the teacher will present the idea that the poem varies in tone depending on who is being addressed. Students will then analyze the relationship between the hopeful and angry words and the placement of the pronouns, “You” and “I,” to identify a pattern. Students will compose a short paragraph explaining that relationship between tone, pronouns, and diction in the poem. As a concluding activity, students will pick one of five writing prompts to compose their own poems that assume a distinct tone and make effective use of an implied, but not explicitly stated, “you.” Writing prompt possibilities would be: write a poem addressed to another self - your alter ego, your future self, your image in the mirror, etc; write a poem to an anonymous "you," suggesting some secret connection in a mysterious or unique way; write a poem to an emotion. Think about anger, grief, guilt, loneliness, or happiness; write a poem addressed to an inanimate object; and write a poem to a family member or pet.

**ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING:**  Informal formative assessments will occur throughout the lesson in the form of discussion input, poem annotations, sharing of individual work, teacher circling when students are working, and the synthesis paragraph explaining the effect and interworkings of the diction, pronouns, and tone of “Still I Rise.” The concluding activity will be a formal assessment that tests whether students can apply their newfound knowledge about diction, tone, and address to their own writing. Students will compose their own fifteen line poems that has a distinct and consistent tone and talks to an implied audience through the pronoun, “you.”

**RATIONALE:**

 To break up the monotony of student volunteer readers or the teacher as reader, the video integration of Maya Angelou’s reading of her own poem, “Still I Rise,” provides students with a new voice, which could have positive implications on engagement. Hearing the author read her own poem will also give students an idea of how the author intended the poem to be read. With physical gestures and appropriate inflection, Angelou recites the poem with a voice that reflects the meaning of poem, giving students an oral version of the poem to help them decipher and navigate the print version. Having students listen to the poem prior to reading it also caters to auditory learners. Since the title line of “Still I rise” is repeatedly accompanied by a simile, having students come up with their own applicable simile to insert in that line will test whether students understand the literary element and the way it is specifically being used throughout Angelou’s poem. According to Gore (2010), “students’ lives are a rich source of everyday examples that can be more meaningful to students than the examples found in their textbooks” (p. 73). Therefore, soliciting student similes in that mini-exercise will help students put the text in their own words, words that they are more likely to relate to, understand, and remember. Discussing how the literary elements – of diction, tone, and address – work together in “Still I Rise” will show students their purpose in a literary work and how comprehension of the text can be enhanced when one understands their combined effect. Since the poem alludes to the white man’s mistreatment (and misunderstanding) or African-Americans, the poem fits in with the cross-curricular theme of racism and injustice, but since it gives a voice to the maltreated African-American, it also ties into the theme of activism and the importance of standing up for one’s self and persevering. The poem’s message is hopeful and universal, and thus relevant (to the unit and the real-word) and important: don’t let others’ bring you down, so persevere in spite of the bad.

**PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES:**

Gore, M. C. (2010). Key 22: Solicit students’ examples. In Inclusion strategies for secondary classrooms: Keys for struggling learners (p. 73). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

**English Day 5:**

**Dylan Thomas’s “Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night” Part I: Comprehension Within Text**

**OBJECTIVES:**

* Given literary element “Tossed Terms,”” students will define various literary elements - simile, metaphor, imagery, symbolism, and oxymoron - in order to identify, analyze, and discuss the literary elements in Dylan Thomas’s poem, “Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night.”
* After watching compiled excerpts from an episode of the television show, *Grey’s Anatomy*, students will compare and contrast the foil characters – Mr. Gene Steers and Dr. Richard Webber – in order to categorize their similarities and differences in a Venn Diagram.
* After differentiating between the foil characters in *Grey’s Anatomy*, students will analyze Dylan Thomas’s “Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night” in order to summarize – through individual stanza annotations – the poem.
* After reading Dylan Thomas’s poem, “Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night,” students will apply the *Grey’s Anatomy* foil characters to the moral of the poem in order to define and describe, in an exit ticket, what Thomas means by “raging” against and “going gently” into death by linking their definitions with evidence from the character actions in the television episode.

**STANDARDS:**

**RL.11-12.1** 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 (ELA CCSS p. 38).

**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.11-12.4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful (ELA CCSS p. 38).

**W.11-12.2** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content. (ELA CCSS p. 45).

**b.** Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience’s knowledge of the topic.

**d.** Use precise language, domain-specific vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic.

**e.** Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).

**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).

**SL.11-12.2** Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data (ELA CCSS p. 50).

**L.11-12. 5** Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. a. Interpret figures of speech (e.g., hyperbole, paradox) in context and analyze their role in the text (ELA CCSS p. 55).

**#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).

**#6:** Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and nonprint texts.

**MATERIALS:**

* Tossed Term Boxes (metaphor, point of view, simile, metaphor, imagery, and oxymoron)
* *Grey’s Anatomy* DVD of Season 10, Episode 4: “Puttin’ On the Ritz”
* SmartBoard
* Dylan Thomas’s “Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night”

**DESCRIPTION:**

 Ideally, in this lesson, students will continue to analyze the effect of literary elements in poetry and gain an understanding of the literal meaning of Dylan Thomas’s classic poem, “Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night.” To activate prior knowledge and create a shared language for later discussion and analysis of Thomas’s poem, students will complete a “Tossed Term” activity in which they toss a cube – with literary elements on it – to one another in a small group so as to review the definitions of each. The groups should be no more than four people. After the review, clips from an episode of the television show, *Grey’s Anatomy* will be screened. In the scenes, Mr. Gene Steers refuses to accept the fact that the doctors can no longer provide him with further treatment for his terminal cancer. Meanwhile, Dr. Richard Webber refuses all treatment options. Therefore, both are candidates for hospice care. As the doctor overseeing both patients, Dr. Bailey wishes Dr. Webber were more like Mr. Steers and assumes a bold bedside manner to express such a wish. Students will compare and contrast the foil characters via a Venn Diagram, mapping out their opposite approaches to death: surrendering or putting up a fight. Students will discuss which approach is better (i.e. Is Mr. Steers’s admirable?; Is Dr. Webber’s cowardly?; Do you side with Dr. Bailey?) and whether Dr. Bailey has a right to chastise Dr. Webber about his passive approach. During a close reading of Thomas’s “Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night,” students will analyze the effect of literary elements, summarize by stanza annotations, and apply their understanding of the TV characters onto the poem so as to better comprehend the classic text. The television hospital scenes provide students with a concrete visual for what Thomas means when he metaphorically presents two options for facing death: “raging” against it and “going gently.” Therefore, as a concluding writing activity, students will summarize what the poem’s narrator is asking of his father, comparing and contrasting him to Dr. Bailey by using specific details from both the poem and the television episode to substantiate their explanation.

**ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING:** Informal formative assessments will occur throughout the lesson in the form of discussion comments and input, the foil character Venn Diagram, and the summarizing stanza annotations of Thomas’s “Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night.” The formal assessment will take the form of the Exit Ticket that asks students to use textual evidence from both texts to summarize (through an evaluative, not précis, summary) the narrator’s request of his father by comparing and contrasting it to Dr. Bailey’s and explaining whether or not they agree with such advice.

**RATIONALE:**

With both the “Tossed Terms” Do Now activity and the *Grey’s Anatomy* popular culture tie-in preceding the “meat” of the lesson – the literary analysis and close reading of Dylan Thomas’s poem – this lesson is rooted in the theory of “frontloading.” Frontloading techniques “connect to prior interests and stir children’s curiosity about a text,” “trigger the appropriate background knowledge,” and “build on and ‘load up’ students’ minds with the knowledge they need to comprehend the text” (Wilhelm, 2012, p. 74). All such benefits are the hoped-for outcomes of the two aforementioned activities. *Grey’s Anatomy* will probably be a must-see show for at least some students, so it does connect to prior interests. However, more universally, its integration will be odd for students (i.e. “Why are we watching *Grey’s Anatomy*?”) whether or not they are or aren’t avid watchers of the show, so it will stir curiosity about the poem that it is leading up to. The “Tossed Terms” literary element review will activate the necessary prior knowledge for the highly metaphoric language of Thomas. And since the television show characters provide a potential real-life instance of choosing between “raging” against and “going gently” into death that the poem presents, the scenes offer students the general idea of the poem without the metaphor distortion, thereby “loading up” minds with knowledge they can apply to the text.

Since the television episode is viewed at the beginning of the lesson but also “referred to continually throughout a reading” – and must be ultimately synthesized with the poem in a concluding writing activity – the screening adheres to how a “frontloading” technique should be implemented (p. 75). The “Tossed Term” literary element review provides an engaging, hands-on, and social alternative to the traditional vocabulary recall that occurs via worksheets or review sheets (Fisher, Brozo, Frey, & Ivey, 2011, p. 132). Lastly, with this lesson attempting to foster students’ “literal understanding” of Thomas’s poem, which is “essential in processing a text,” it is an important lead-in to the next day’s interdisciplinary take on the poem, which is a “comprehension beyond text” lesson (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006, p. 32). Since “readers must understand the basic message of a text as a foundation for thinking beyond and about it,” this lesson’s stanza-by-stanza summarizing approach and how it presents the narrator’s plea through another modern, visual character - Dr. Miranda Bailey – via the television episode, the lesson takes the time to ensure that “comprehension within text” (and even “comprehension about text” with the embedded literary element analysis, as well) is well-established before students move on to higher level thinking about the text (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006, p. 32).

**PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES:**

Fisher, D., Brozo, W. G., Frey, N., & Ivey, G. (2011). 44: Tossed terms. In *50 Instructional Routines to Develop Content Literacy* (2nd ed.) (pp. 132-134). Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc.

Fountas, I. C. & Pinnell, G. S. (2006). Chapter three: Reading is thinking: within, beyond, and about the text. In *Teaching for comprehending and fluency: Thinking, talking, and writing about reading, K- 8* (pp 32-44)*.*Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Wilhelm, J. D. (2012). Chapter 6: From the known to the new: Building background before and during reading. In *Enriching comprehension with visualization strategies: Text elements and ideas to build comprehension, encourage reflective reading, and represent understanding* (pp. 72-95). New York, NY: Scholastic, Inc.

**English Day 6:**

**Dylan Thomas’s “Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night” Part II: Comprehension Beyond Text**

**OBJECTIVES:**

* After brainstorming about the Holocaust on a semantic map, students will read a short biography about Sophie Scholl in order to discuss how her role in Nazi Germany relates to African-Americans during the Civil Rights Movement.
* After randomly selecting a section of a Sophie Scholl quote, students will interpret and illustrate the quote in order to compare and contrast their original artwork with a *Zen Pencils* webcomic adaptation of the quote, noting similarities and differences in a T-chart.
* After each group briefly presents their own drawing and its associated *Zen Pencils* panels, students will summarize the Sophie Scholl quote in Twitter language in order to explain, in a short writing assignment, how the quote presents a rationale for the African-American Civil Rights Movement that adds to the meaning of Thomas’s poem.

**STANDARDS:**

**RL.11-12.1** 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 (ELA CCSS p. 38).

**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.11-12.7** Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist.) (ELA CCSS p. 38)

**W.11-12.2** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content. (ELA CCSS p. 45).

**b.** Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience’s knowledge of the topic.

**d.** Use precise language, domain-specific vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic.

**e.** Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).

**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 literature.

**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).

**#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).

**MATERIALS:**

* Hat (as a grab bag)
* Sophie Scholl Quote
* *Zen Pencils* Comic Adaptation of Sophie Scholl Quote
* SmartBoard
* Elmo Projector

**DESCRIPTION:**

 In this lesson, students will analyze a quote by Sophie Scholl – and two different graphic representations of it, one of which they compose themselves – in order to understand how it expands the literal meaning of Dylan Thomas’s poem, “Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night.” The lesson will ultimately illuminate how the quote and poem can be seen as a rationale for the “civil disobedience” campaign during the African-American Civil Rights Movement. To activate prior knowledge about the significance of the quote’s speaker, students will brainstorm about the Holocaust on a semantic map and then read a short biography about Sophie Scholl. This start-up activity will prompt students to discuss how Sophie Scholl played a similar role in Nazi Germany to the African-American civil rights activists in the United States they studied in their social studies class. Therefore, students can infer that what Scholl says in her quote will be applicable to the African-American Civil Rights Movement. After the teacher reads aloud the quote to the class (it should be projected on a SmartBoard or written on the main white board), students will pick a slip of paper from the *Harry Potter* “Sorting Hat” grab bag (because such is a literary spin on the traditional top hat or baseball cap that is usually used). Prior to the lesson, the teacher will have chunked the quote into nine sections. Written on slips of paper, each section is put into the hat to be selected randomly by groups of students (approximately two students in each group; some groups will have three). Each group will read, interpret, and illustrate their section. Then, students will receive the *Zen Pencils* comic adaptation quote. After reading it in its entirety, students will identify the panels that correspond to the quote section they illustrated. On a T-chart, students will compare and contrast their original drawings with the Gavin Aung Than’s artwork. One column with be “Similarities,” the other will be “Differences.” Students will be instructed to compare and contrast based on how each interpreted the quote, not based on artistic quality. Electing a speaker to present to the class, student groups will briefly present an overview of their T-chart and their rationale for illustrating the quote as they did. Then, individually, students will summarize the entire quote in a 140-character Tweet. Students will receive opportunity to share. Lastly, in a culminating, individual activity (after students gained a comprehension of the Thomas’s poem in yesterday’s lesson and an understanding of the quote through the drawing activities in this lesson), students will write an explanatory paragraph relating the quote to the poem, suggesting how the quote expands the literal meaning of the poem. On a basic level, the poem offers advice on how to approach death and live one’s last moments. However, in light of the quote, the poem becomes advice on how to live life in general. In the paragraph, students will also describe how the poem and quote offer advice that is upheld by the African-American Civil Rights Movement. This writing assignment can be started in class and finished for homework.

**ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING:** Informal formative assessments will occur throughout the lesson in the form of discussion comments and input and group work and individual work presenting and sharing (compare/contrast T-chart, original drawings, summarization Tweet). During the class activities, the teacher will walk around the room to answer student questions and offer clarification when confusions arise. By doing so, the teacher will be able to assess how – and the extent to which – the groups are accurately comprehending the quote. The formal assessment for the lesson will bridge this lesson with the prior day’s lesson. Students will explain how the quote and Dylan Thomas’s poem, “Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night,” provide the same advice to their readers, and how such advice is upheld by the African-American civil rights activists that they are learning about in their history class.

**RATIONALE:**

 This lesson is heavily founded in visual literary, the dual-coding theory, paired texts, and Critical Lens practice. Students process knowledge in two interconnected systems, coding information in verbal and nonverbal representations (Hibbing & Rankin-Erickson, 2003, p. 759). According to Hibbing & Rankin-Erickson (2003), providing students with external visual aids has been shown not only to motivate, engage, and help reluctant and struggling readers, but it also “help[s] them become more proficient creators of internal visual imagery that supports comprehension” (p. 759). Explicitly teaching and prompting students to generate mental imagery has led to greater recall, a higher ability to make predictions and draw inferences, and two to three times more learning in comparison to students who just repetitively read-aloud a story (Hibbing & Rankin-Erickson, 2003, p. 760). After the quote is chunked by the teacher into nine sections (breaking down the long quote puts it in a less intimidating and less overwhelming form and allows for students to teach one another in the brief class presentations of their original artwork), students will interpret the quote (a skill they will need for the Critical Lens essay on the 11th grade Regents exam) via self-created illustrations. In other words, they are prompted to generate mental imagery to summarize their quote section, a reading comprehension strategy posed by Elliott (2007). Since “low-ability or reluctant readers…no not automatically create images,” text-relevant illustrations “operate beyond the decorative level,” and act as an external, visual “tool to create or confirm understanding” (Hibbing & Rankin-Erickson, 2003, p. 759, 761). Therefore, catering to both visual learners and struggling readers, students will be given the *Zen Pencils* webcomic to which they will compare and contrast their drawing. The external aids will hopefully solidify and act as a way for them to self-check their own mind pictures. This lesson acts in direct conjunction with the prior day’s lesson on Thomas’s poem, “Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night,” bridging the ELA section of this unit. It asks students to relate the quote to the poem – in order to expand their literal comprehension to “beyond text” thinking about the poem (Fontas & Pinnell, 2006). Such will illuminate how both texts urge for activism in life is upheld by the African-Americans Civil Rights Movement (thereby thematically bridging the ELA section with the history section of this unit). After working on a single section of the quote and listening to the other group’s presentations about their sections, students will summarize the entire quote in a Tweet. Such an activity assesses whether students were able to grasp the meaning of the entire quote (their comprehension of their individual section should be evident in their illustration) via listening and reading comprehension. Limiting them to Twitter language teachers students the value of concise writing and is a precursor to their activities with Twitter in their ELA and social studies summative assessments.

**PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES:**

**Elliott, J. (2007). Summarizing with drawings: A reading comprehension strategy. Science Scope, 30(5),**

**23-27.**

Fountas, I. C. & Pinnell, G. S. (2006). Chapter three: Reading is thinking: within, beyond, and about the text. In *Teaching for comprehending and fluency: Thinking, talking, and writing about reading, K- 8* (pp 32-44)*.*Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Hibbing, A. N., & Rankin-Erickson, J. L. (2003). A picture is worth a thousand words: Using visual images to improve comprehension for middle school struggling readers. The Reading Teacher, 56(8), 758-769.

**English Day 8:**

**Computer Lab Day for Slam Poetry Exposure**

**OBJECTIVES:**

* After activating their prior knowledge about slam poetry by listing characteristics of Javon Johnson’s “Cuz He’s Black” on a semantic map, students will analyze a variety of slam poetry in order to discuss the benefits of slam poetry as a medium for self-expression.
* After watching Shane Koyczan’s slam poem, “This is my Voice,” students will interpret the poet’s purpose and identify the poem’s main ideas in order to summarize the poem in a Twitter format.
* After choosing at least three slam poems on a list of twelve, students will compare and contrast the form, traits, and purpose of the slam poetry with “regular” poetry in order to identify similarities and differences between the two poetry types on a Venn Diagram.

**STANDARDS:**

**RL.11-12.1** 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 (ELA CCSS p. 38).

**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).

**W.11-12.2** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content. (ELA CCSS p. 45).

**b.** Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience’s knowledge of the topic.

**e.** Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).

**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 literature

**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).

**SL.11-12.3** Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used (ELA CCSS p. 50).

**#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.

**MATERIALS:**

* YouTube Video of Shane Koyczan’s “This Is My Voice” Slam Poem
* YouTube Video of Samuel Hawkin’s “12:01” Slam Poem
* YouTube Video of Sarah Kay’s “If I Should Have a Daughter…” Slam Poem
* YouTube Video of Ben Norris’s “Gravity” Slam Poem
* YouTube Video of Omar Holman’s “Anatomy of a Prayer” Slam Poem
* YouTube Video of Carlos Andres Gomez’s “Pet Peeve” Slam Poem
* YouTube Video of Rudy Francisco’s “Complainers” Slam Poem
* YouTube Video of Sarah Kay and Phil Kaye’s “When Love Arrives” Slam Poem
* YouTube Video of Neil Hilborn’s “OCD” Slam Poem
* YouTube Video of Dylan Garity’s “Giants” Slam Poem
* YouTube Video of Antosh Wojcik’s “My Invisible Friend” Slam Poem
* YouTube Video of Phil Kaye’s “Repetition” Slam Poem
* YouTube Video of Andrea Gibson’s “Panic Button Collector” Slam Poem
* Computers

**DESCRIPTION:**

 In this lesson, students will be exposed to a variety of spoken-word poems and poets. Such exposure will prepare students for the creation of their own slam poem, which is part of their English final unit project. Since students close read Javon Johnson’s slam poem, “Cuz He’s Black,” earlier in the unit, students will brainstorm features of the poem unique to that genre. Students should be able to add to this at the end of the lesson. Added circles could be a homework assignment. The semantic map should be a quick “Do Now” activity before taking students down to the computer lab. After such activation of prior knowledge (which will ensure students realize that they have already worked with – and thus are already familiar with – slam poetry), all students will watch Shane Koyczan’s “This is my Voice.” As practice for their final unit project, students have to summarize the main ideas and point of the Koyczan’s poem in a “tweet.” Although students will compose their 140 character Twitter summaries in a pen-and-paper form (which differs from the unit project, as they will be using the actual social media site to tweet), the activity lets students grabble with the length restriction and hashtag component of tweets. Students will need to pinpoint a specific phrase/line from “This is my Voice” (pulled from the poem as close to verbatim as possible) that they think epitomizes the point of the poem to incorporate as a hashtag in their summarization tweet. Students will move on to a list of twelve slam poems. They must pick three to watch. Students should be allowed to work independently or in pairs for this portion of the lesson. Students may talk with one another about “This is my Voice,” but the summarization tweet should be written individually. In the twelve predetermined slam poems, there is variety in content (i.e. love, hardship/perseverance, complaining, etc.) and in poets (i.e. male, female, homosexual, heterosexual, Caucasian, African-American, etc.). While watching at least three, students will jot down what they believe to be the author’s purpose, using the provided hashtags (which are specific phrases extracted from the poem by the teacher, like the students have to do on their own with “This is my Voice), as a guide. Additionally, students will fill out a Venn Diagram about the similarities and differences between “regular” poetry and spoken-word poetry. When comparing and contrasting, students should be instructed to look at content, form, overarching traits, reader response, etc. Bringing the class back as a whole in a concluding discussion, the teacher should create a Venn Diagram on the SmartBoard (or front white board) based on student responses. As a point of reference and as a shared knowledge base, Koyczan’s poem could ground the discussion of the posed characters of slam poetry can be grounded, if examples or a rationale needs to be provided that everyone can understand.

**ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING:** Informal formative assessments will occur throughout the lesson in the form of discussion input and commentary (during the semantic mapping “Do Now,” partner work, and the concluding Venn Diagram compilation), the summarization tweet, and the bulleted list of “Author’s Purpose.” The teacher will be circling during the entire lesson as students watch the slam poems, monitoring progress and assessing comprehension by skimming these informal assessments. The compare and contrast Venn Diagram is the formal assessment, since the lesson strives to enable students to differentiate between the traditional poetic medium and spoken-word poetry by greater exposure to slam poetry.

**RATIONALE:**

 Prior to this lesson, students only have one experience with spoken-word poetry. However, in their final unit project, students must create their own slam poem. Although they have knowledge of how to integrate literary elements into their poems purposefully and effectively via the traditional poems (since such knowledge is transferable between traditional and slam poetry), students lack adequate knowledge on how elements like tone, voice, inflexion can factor into a poem orally. To better prepare students to write their own slam poetry, exposure to a wide variety of slam poems and poets is necessary. The exposure will make students more comfortable and familiar with the genre. As Gore (2010) stated that a “critical task of teaching is selecting and organizing examples in order to direct student learning” (p. 80). The teacher-determined list of twelve poems that students may choose from varies in content, style, and poet. This is important because “not only do teachers need to provide many examples, but…teachers must also provide a sufficient *range* of examples to adequately define the concept (italics in original; Gore, 2010, p. 80). Students can chose from male and female, homosexual and heterosexual, and Caucasian and African-American speakers. Additionally, they can choose poems that are performed by one speaker or two speakers. They can listen to poems that are delivered in narrative form in by a numbered list. Choice will heighten student motivation. However, since the poems are not political commentaries (since those require too much building of background knowledge for full comprehension to be used to exposure students to the genre) but societal commentaries and life philosophies, they are easily and immediately accessible to students. Poem content varies from love to pet peeves, so the poems are relatable and relevant to students’ lives. Additionally, through the summarization tweet, this lesson further prepares students for their final unit project. Students must send out a “Promotional Tweet,” prior to their Fishbowl Discussion performance of their slam poem. In it, they must summarize their poems and pull a verbatim phrase from them to incorporate into a hashtag that epitomizes their main idea. Part of “questioning the author,” according to Fisher, Frey, & Ivey (2011), involves focus on the author’s message (p. 79). Having students reflect on the poet’s purpose for writing their poems will allow students to see the real-world function of texts. Students are able to practice this summarization skill in a lower-risk activity when they summarize Shane Koyczan’s “This is my Voice” in a tweet. Koyczan’s poem was selected as the must-watch poem of the lesson not just because it alludes to African-American civil rights activists, but also because in it, Koyczan argues why it is important to speak up – to be an activist – in general. So it is a rationale for their final unit project’s modern-day racism slam poem requirement.

**PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES:**

Fisher, D., Brozo, W. G., Frey, N., & Ivey, G. (2011). 26: Questioning the author. In *50 Instructional Routines to Develop Content Literacy* (2nd ed.) (pp. 78-80). Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc.

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.

**English Day 9/10:**

**Final Project: Write-Your-Own Slam Poem about Modern-Day Racism**

**OBJECTIVES:**

* After identifying their prior knowledge of September 11th and the War on Terror on a semantic map, students will analyze Mike Rosen’s slam poem, “When God Happens,” in order to discuss how the political commentary is grounded in emotion and literary elements more than facts.
* After researching their modern-day racism topic in an earlier social studies lesson, students will use a graphic organizer to plan the purpose of each poem stanza in order to write a slam poem that effectively and purposefully integrates literary elements discussed in the unit.

**STANDARDS:**

**RI.11-12.1** 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 (ELA CCSS p. 40).

**W.11-12.2** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content (ELA CCSS p. 45).

**a.** Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

**b.** Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience’s knowledge of the topic.

**c.** Use appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.

**d.** Use precise language, domain-specific vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic.

**f.** Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).

**W.11-12** Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1–3 up to and including grades11–12 on page 54) (ELA CCSS p. 46).

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

**b.** Apply *grades 11–12 Reading standards* to literary nonfiction

**W.11-12.10** Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences (ELA CCSS p. 47).

**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.11-12.5** Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings (ELA CCSS p. 55).

**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).

**#6:** Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and nonprint texts.

**#11:** Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.

**#12:** Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

**MATERIALS:**

* Youtube Video of Mike Hodgen’s “When God Happens” Slam Poem
* Final Project Requirement Sheet
* History Twitter Account
* English Poetry Blog
* SmartBoard

**DESCRIPTION:**

 In this lesson, students will begin by watching a slam poetry performance that puts an emotional spin on a historical event because it will serve as another model (in addition to Javon Johnson’s “Cuz He’s Black,” which was studied in a previous lesson) upon which they should start thinking about how to write their own slam poems on a modern-day racism topic. A brief video clip and tweet with be looked at to make the final project less intimidating. Then the teacher will hand out the final project requirement sheet and go over the instructions and components. The final project for the ELA section of this interdisciplinary unit consists of four main components. Students will work in the same groups as their history Fishbowl Discussion groups. First, students will research a modern-day topic about racism that – to some extent – relates to their history Fishbowl Discussion topic. This topic will be assigned to each group because the two content-area teachers would have collaborated to come up with modern-day topics that aligned – even if only loosely – with the historical events that had to be met in the Fishbowl Discussion. It’s important that they relate because then the motivation hook of the Fishbowl Discussion – students’ ELA modern-day racism slam poems – must make the historical racism topic to be discussed in their Fishbowl relevant and more engaging. Next, students will compose a twenty line slam poem in which they purposefully integrate an implied “you” and at least two of the literary elements discussed in this poetry unit. Students will receive a graphic organizer to help them plan and structure their slam poems. The third step emphasizes the reality that this ELA summative assessment is intertwined with history’s summative assessment, the Fishbowl Discussion. Students must compose a “Promotional Tweet” that summarizes their slam poem in a catchy, but informative way. They must pull out an important phrase from their slam poem to incorporate as a hashtag. The teacher will model this by a premade “Promotional Tweet” for “Cuz He’s Black.” Each group will tweet their summary to the Fishbowl Discussion’s Twitter account, and the teacher will retweet it so all student groups can read it prior to the Fishbowl Discussion presentation. It acts as a sneak preview for their classmates. In the last step, students will upload their poems onto the ELA blog and will have two days in-class to analyze their classmates’ poems in terms of how the literary elements incorporated effects the overall tone, theme, and message of the poem. After the formal requirements of the final project are presented by the teacher and students have time to ask questions, the rest of the period becomes a work period.

**ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING:** The graphic organizer that students can use to plan and structure their slam poems is the informal assessment. The teacher will circulate throughout the lesson to gauge student progress. The question session after the teacher outlines the final project will help the teacher assess student comprehension of the assignment and offer immediate clarifications. In this lesson, students are working on the first stage of the formal, summative assessment for the ELA unit section: writing their own slam poem.

**RATIONALE:**

Students have spent several weeks reading poetry and analyzing the effect of literary elements in them. For the final project, students will apply what they have learned from reading by creating their own poems. The slam poems will incorporate literary elements and it will comment on a real-life issue – modern-day racism – that connects with the corresponding social studies unit and how ELA looked at the ways in which poetry can serve as a powerful means of social and political commentary. Averman (2001) defined effective teachers as ones who “look for ways to integrate reading and writing as often as possible because they know what each process reinforces the other and can lead to improved comprehension and retention of the subject area content” (p. 11). The final project’s write-your-own-slam-poem requirement also taps into what Alverman (2001) stressed about the importance of incorporating student-generated texts: “[Effective teachers] also make room for student-generated visual, oral, and written texts in an effort to provide adolescents with opportunities to weave their own experiences, feelings, and interests into various learning activities” (p. 11). Through the blog, the teacher will emphasize the value of these student-generated texts. The blog and the Fishbowl Discussion performance give the student-generated poems an audience beyond the teacher and a purpose beyond a grade. Continuing with ELA’s twitter summarizations that are the interdisciplinary connection with the history Twitter feed, the final project requires students to send out a summary tweet of their poem the day before their Fishbowl Discussion day. Lastly, the slam poems that students are asked to create not only demonstrate their content knowledge of how literary elements work in a text but also their broader knowledge about how texts can serve real-world purposes. According to Vasquz & Felderman (2011), “helping children understand real-life functions of text is an important component of growing as a critically literate individual” (p. 263) and “supporting children as agents with advocacy in their world is a way of helping them …reclaim the sociocultural contexts of school and reading (p 264).

**PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES:**

Alverman, D. E. (2001). Effective literacy instruction for adolescents. *Executive Summary and Paper Committee.* Chicago, IL: National Reading Conference.

Vasquez, V. & Felderman, C. (2011). 15: Critical literacy goes digital: Exploring intersections between critical literacies and new technologies with young children. In Richard J. Meyer & Kathryn F. Whitmore (eds.), *Reclaiming Reading: Teachers, Students, and Researchers Regaining Spaces for Thinking and Action* (pp. 260-272). New York, NY: Routledge.

**English Day 11:**

**Blog Sharing and Analysis of Student-Generated Texts: Lower-Risk Practice with Historical Biopoems**

**OBJECTIVES:**

* After creating an account on Edublogs and establishing what qualifies as proper blog etiquette, students will read and respond to their peers’ historical biopoems in order to use and navigate the blog and its features effectively and appropriately.
* Given a tweet by YA lit blogger, Sarah Andersen, students will interpret the quote about writing and peer revision in order to discuss whether or not they agree or disagree.
* After uploading their historical biopoems on African-American civil rights activists to the blog, students will read a peer group’s historical biopoem of their choosing in order to write a reader response to the bipoem, asking questions for want of additional information and presenting an opinion on the historical significance of the activist.
* After writing a response to another group’s historical biopoem, students will read the comments on their own group’s biopoem in order to develop, in a response post to one of them, the historical significance of their activist and answer the posed questions via their social studies research.

**STANDARDS:**

**RI.11-12.1** 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 (ELA CCSS p. 40).

**RI.11-12.4** Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text (ELA CCSS p. 40).

**W.11-12.1** Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence (ELA CCSS p.45).

**W.11-12.4** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.) (ELA CCSS p. 46).

**W.11-12.6** Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information (ELA CCSS p. 46).

**W.11-9** Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

**b.** Apply *grades 11–12 Reading standards* to literary nonfiction (ELA CCSS p. 47).

**#4:** Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.

**#6:** Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and nonprint texts.

**MATERIALS:**

* English Poetry Blog
* Historical Biopoems
* Computers
* SmartBoard

**DESCRIPTION:**

 In this lesson, students will learn to navigate and use the features of a blog, demonstrating such technological ability by sharing (uploading) and discussing (responding to) their classmates’ biopoems that they wrote earlier in this interdisciplinary unit in their social studies class. Beginning the lesson by interpreting a tweet by Young Adult Literature blogger, Sarah Andersen, students will informally practice their Critical Lens skills through more exposure to Twitter language that will benefit them in their social studies Fishbowl Discussion. Sarah Andersen tweeted, “Writing is SCARY. Especially sharing it.” In a short “Do Now” activity, students will write a short response to the quote, expressing whether they agree or disagree with it. In a whole-class discussion, students will share their opinion, providing reasons why they find peer review intimidating. The teacher will compile a list on the SmartBoard (or front whiteboard). After reminding the class that sharing of their poetry is a requirement of their final ELA unit project, the teacher will elicit ways to combat these fears and anxieties from students, establishing a list of blog etiquette. Students will brainstorm ways to be analytical and constructively critical of each other’s writing, but not condescending or judgmental. In the brainstorming activity, the teacher will ensure that students understanding understand that their task when reading other’s writing is to analyze literary elements and ask questions about research, not to express dislikes and weaknesses about the writing. The teacher will model how to set up an account on Edublogs and sign up to the ELA poetry blog. A laptop cart should be prearranged to be in the classroom on this day. Students will log on to the laptops and establish an account and upload their historical biopoems. In a two-step task, students will read and comment on another group’s biopoem (they may choose), prompted by a checklist to ask questions about the civil rights activist unanswered by the biopoem and to reflect on the historical significance of the individual. After posting that comment, students will return to their group’s biopoem blog page and read the comments on it. Picking one to respond to, students will then compose another blog post that answers their peer’s questions and elaborates on – and develops – their peer’s ideas on the activist’s historical significance. Students may refer to their social studies research that they used to compose their biopoem when responding to their peer’s questions and ideas (they may use any notes they took on two Jigsaw Activity texts and the texts themselves). In a wrap-up exit ticket, students will reflect on what they liked and disliked about the blog sharing and reader response task.

**ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING:** Informal formative assessments will occur throughout the lesson in the form of discussion input and commentary (during the whole-class quote interpretation and brainstorming session about blog etiquette). However, the formal assessment – based on a rubric that will be provided to students prior to their work on the blog – will be students’ ability to respond to their peer’s original biopoems and comments. They should respond to their peer’s comments as “experts” on their activist, referring to and citing textual evidence from their social studies research. When responding to a biopoem, the writing will be more of a reader-response. However, it should still be text-based (i.e. the questions should come from gaps in the biopoem’s information and the historical significance proposal should be inferred from the biopoem’s information).

**RATIONALE:**

 Since students must share and analyze their peers’ writing in the final unit project, this lesson familiarizes students with the process, hopefully making them more comfortable sharing their writing and allowing them to see the benefit of technology-based, peer discussion of their poetry. By developing reader-response blog posts to their peer’s biopoems, students will be eased into the technology and the peer revision process in a lower-risk activity than the final project. As both practice and preparation for the final Write-Your-Own Slam Poem project, this lesson allows students to set up their blog accounts in advance. By having students brainstorm blog etiquette to lessen student anxiety over peer review, students will assume accountability for their activity on the blog and will allow collaboration to create a safe, comfortable learning environment. A safe, comfortable learning environment will enable students to embrace (and to reap the full benefits of) the “community of practice” that a blog offers (Grisham & Wolsey, 2006, p. 648). For this blog biopoem “joint activity,” students enter with similar levels of knowledge on the African-American civil rights activists because of the prior social studies Jigsaw Activity and they develop one another’s biopoems – “shared resources” – through their questions and reader-response posts, meeting all three components of a “community of practice”: “domain;” “community;” “practice” (Grisham & Wolsey, 2006, p. 648). Although not necessarily preparing them for the analysis of literary elements that they will have to do on the poems for their final project, this blog activity’s poetry reader-response task still holds the potential to increase students’ “self-efficacy,” which is task-specific confidence (Alverman, 2001, p. 6). Not only will the blog writing hopefully increase students’ confidence in their ability to respond to student-generated texts in a digital technology medium, but it will also increase their confidence in their ability to receive peer feedback without taking it personally. With high self-efficacy linked to increased motivation that, in turn, could lead to improved engagement and learning (Alvernman, 2001, p. 6), it is important to increase students’ self-efficacy in their ability to deliver and receive poetry feedback, since such will be a large component of the final project. This lesson falls on one of the social studies Fishbowl Discussion days. Such is ideal because the biopoems are premade texts that students have already shared in a Jigsaw Activity. Therefore, the lesson is not too cognitively demanding on students, since their primary focus will be on their Fishbowl Discussion presentations. No new content is introduced in this ELA lesson besides technology operation. Additionally, the blog activity will refresh students’ memory on the various African-American civil rights activists, especially helpful if some of the slam poems and Fishbowl Discussion presentations allude to them.

**PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES:**

Alverman, D. E. (2001). Effective literacy instruction for adolescents. *Executive Summary and Paper Committee.* Chicago, IL: National Reading Conference.

Grisham, D. L., & Wolsey, T. D. (2006). Recentering the Middle School classroom as a vibrant learning community: Students, literacy, and technology intersect. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 49*(8), 648-660).

**English Day 12/13:**

**Blog Sharing and Analysis of Student-Generated Texts: Slam Poetry**

**OBJECTIVES:**

* After writing a slam poem on a topic about modern-day racism, students will identify the literary elements and themes in their peers’ poems in order to analyze the effect individually and then discuss, on a blog, the effect with their peers.

**STANDARDS:**

**RL.11-12.1** 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 (ELA CCSS p. 38).

**W.11-12.1** Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence (ELA CCSS p.45).

**W.11-12.4** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.) (ELA CCSS p. 46).

**W.11-12.6** Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information (ELA CCSS p. 46).

**W.11-9** Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

**a.** Apply *grades 11–12 Reading standards* to literature (ELA CCSS p. 47).

**L.11-12.5** Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings (ELA CCSS p. 55).

**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).

**MATERIALS:**

* Computers
* Modern-Day Racism Slam Poems
* English Poetry Blog

**DESCRIPTION:**

 In this lesson, students will analyze student-generated texts – their peers’ slam poems on modern-day racism – on a blog over the course of two days (in the computer lab or with classroom laptops). Students are to be reminded that they are looking at the poems in terms of how they use literary elements to enhance their authors’ purpose and theme. On the first day, students will respond to one of the group slam poems (not their own) of their choosing. In a four paragraph essay, students will write an introduction, conclusion, and two body paragraphs that focus on the effect of a specific literary element. The introduction should include a brief summary of the slam poem. Students should be instructed to type on a Microsoft Word Document (so they can save periodically), and when finished, copy and paste it into the comment section of the slam poem to submit and respond. On the second day, students will read their peer’s responses to their group’s slam poem and comment on one of them. Then, they will choose another comment on another slam poem. In their comments, students should add their own insights and comment on what has already been said about the poem. These extension analyses can be more informal than the first day's assignment, so an explicit introduction and conclusion is unnecessary. They must be at least one well-developed paragraph, however.

**ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING:** These blog posts and comments are part of the summative assessment for this English poetry unit. The analyses will be graded on how well students can identify the literary elements and relate their effect to the overall theme and authors’ purpose of the poem.

**RATIONALE:**

As the last lesson of the unit, it asks students to complete a literary element-based poetry analysis on their peers’ slam poems to do what they’ve been doing all unit with the in-class activities on their own. Just like with the historical biopoem analysis, the use of student-generated texts as the final poem analysis is embedded in Alverman (2001): “Effective teachers] also make room for student-generated visual, oral, and written texts in an effort to provide adolescents with opportunities to weave their own experiences, feelings, and interests into various learning activities” (p. 11). Through the blog and the “community of practice” it affords (Grisham & Wolsey, 2006), the teacher will emphasize the value of these student-generated texts, as it gives them an audience beyond the teacher and a purpose beyond a grade. Students’ analyses of their peers’ work will revolve around how their use of literary elements affects the theme and purpose of the work. And since the poems are social commentaries on modern-day racism, student analysis of them will help students understand the “real-life functions of text,” which is a component of growth as a “critically literate individual” (Vasquz & Felderman, 2011, p. 263).

**PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES:**

Alverman, D. E. (2001). Effective literacy instruction for adolescents. *Executive Summary and Paper Committee.* Chicago, IL: National Reading Conference.

Grisham, D. L., & Wolsey, T. D. (2006). Recentering the Middle School classroom as a vibrant learning community: Students, literacy, and technology intersect. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 49*(8), 648-660.

Vasquez, V. & Felderman, C. (2011). 15: Critical literacy goes digital: Exploring intersections between critical literacies and new technologies with young children. In Richard J. Meyer & Kathryn F. Whitmore (eds.), *Reclaiming Reading: Teachers, Students, and Researchers Regaining Spaces for Thinking and Action* (pp. 260-272). New York, NY: Routledge.

**Social Studies Day 3:**

**Then & Now: Modern Day Racism – Tim Wise’s “The Pathology of White Privilege,” Political Cartoon, Infographic**

**OBJECTIVES:**

* After brainstorming ideas about “white superiority” on a semantic map, students will write notes, through Split-Page Note-Taking or another note-taking organizer of choice, on Tim Wise’s “The Pathology of White Privilege” in order to design a Four-Square Vocabulary Card for “White privilege.”
* After watching the first fifteen minutes of Tim Wise’s lecture, “The Pathology of White Privilege,” students will interpret a political cartoon by Andy Wahl about White denial in order to differentiate its symbolism and relate its message to Wise’s lecture.
* After apply the political cartoon to Tim Wise’s lecture, students will examine an infographic on unfilled demands of the 1963 March on Washington in order to argue whether or not the statistics for two of the demands justify their classification as “unmet,” in a paragraph Exit Ticket.

**STANDARDS:**

**RH.11-12.1** Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole (ELA CCSS p. 61).

**RH.11-12.4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including analyzing how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines *faction* in *Federalist* No. 10) (ELA CCSS p. 61).

**RH.11-12.7** Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem (ELA CCSS p. 61).

**WHST.11-12.2** Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes (ELA CCSS p. 65).

**e.** Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation provided (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).

**New York State Standards**

#### NY 1.2 Important ideas, social and cultural values, beliefs, and traditions from New York State and United States history illustrate the connections and interactions of people and events across time and from a variety of perspectives.

#### NY 1.2.3 Students compare and contrast the experiences of different groups in the United States.

#### NY.1.3 Study about the major social, political, economic, cultural, and religious developments in New York State and United States history involves learning about the important roles and contributions of individuals and groups.

#### NY 1.3.1 Students compare and contrast the experiences of different ethnic, national, and religious groups, including Native American Indians, in the United States, explaining their contributions to American society and culture.

**MATERIALS:**

* YouTube Video of Tim Wise’s Lecture: “The Pathology of White Privilege”
* Infographic: “The Unfinished Business of the 1963 March on Washington”
* Andy Wahl’s Political Cartoon
* SmartBoard

**DESCRIPTION:**

 In this lesson, students will explore modern-day racism through the lens of “White privilege.” It will modernize the African-American Civil Rights movement and reveal how the desires of that movement remain desires today. To begin, students will brainstorms ideas about “White superiority” – not yet introducing the lesson’s governing term, “White privilege.” Watching the first approximately fifteen minutes of Tim Wise’s lecture (students should be prompted to take notes during the screening, reminding them of approaches – like Split-Page Note-Taking – they’ve done before), “The Pathology of White Privilege,” students will look at specific quotes that the teacher pulled out from the lecture, discussing them and the notes they took during the video. Students will then be given Andy Wahl’s political cartoon (project it on SmartBoard, too). Students will interpret it by relating its message to a specific Wise quote and deciphering its symbolism (i.e. What subgroups of the population are its three white characters symbolizing? Should any more subgroups be represented? How might you draw them?). The teacher may want to prompt students to consider how Javon Johnson stressed the same problems as Wise and Wahl at this time. Students will design a Four-Square Vocabulary Card for “White Privilege,” defining it, putting it in context via sentence creation, and visualizing it through drawing. Students should receive the chance to share their cards with the class, reading their sentence and providing their illustration rationale. Lastly, students will examine an Infographic, “The Unfinished Business of the 1963 March on Washington.” The teacher will activate students’ prior knowledge of the March on Washington through the ELA coverage of Dr. King’s “I Have a Dream” speech. Reading the infographic together as a class, students will ultimately pick two unfilled demands and argue, in a paragraph Exit Ticket, whether the statistics presented justify their inclusion and classification as “unmet” demands, and thus ongoing inequalities.

**ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING:**  Informal formative assessments will occur throughout the lesson in the form of discussion input, sharing of Four-Square Vocabulary Cards, teacher circling when students are working to examine note-taking and vocabulary cards. The more formal assessments will take the form of the Four Square Vocabulary Cards, which will assess the extent to which students can extract a definition from the Tim Wise lecture – since he never provides a formal one. Additionally, the Exit Ticket, will assess student understanding of statistics and infographic reading, providing students a means to take a stance and use textual evidence to support it appropriately and persuasively.

**RATIONALE:**

The importance of modernizing the 1955-1968 African-American Civil Rights Movement that students are studying in their history class lies in students’ need for the curriculum to be relevant for it to be engaging, motivating, and applicable to the real-world. Looking at African-American equality today will make evident the long-term effect and success of the movement (and whether the movement is really over). According to Freeman, Freeman, and Ebe (2011) notes that “students are usually more interested in reading about the present” and want “books that [are] connected to their lives today” (p. 231). Tim Wise’s lecture highlights poignant facts that are surprising engaging, and the political cartoon provides a visual for Wise’s discussion of survey results that asked individuals whether they believed racism to be a “significant national problem” today. Therefore, the appeal to auditory learners initially transforms to an appeal to visual learners. Such continues with the infographic – which provides data and statistics in a visually pleasing format. Having students manipulate the key term, “White privilege,” in four ways on the vocabulary card makes them “pay attention to [the word] for longer periods, thus improving their memory of the [word]” (Fisher, Brozo, & Frey, 2011, p. 135). The infographic, political cartoon, and Tim Wise lecture all hit on modern-day racism in terms of how the ELA section of the unit looked at it. The infographic pairs with Dr. Martin Luther King’s speech and the lecture and political cartoon provides a more factual presentation of what Javon Johnson cited in his own personal experiences.

**PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES:**

Fisher, D., Brozo, W. G., Frey, N., & Ivey, G. (2011). 45: Vocabulary Cards. In *50 Instructional Routines to Develop Content Literacy* (2nd ed.) (pp. 135-137). Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc.

Freeman, Y., Freeman, D., & Ebe, A. (2011). 13: Bilingual books: bridges to literacy for emergent bilinguals. In Richard J. Meyer & Kathryn F. Whitmore (eds.), *Reclaiming Reading: Teachers, Students, and Researchers Regaining Spaces for Thinking and Action* (pp. 224-235). New York, NY: Routledge.