Fall 12-20-2016

Contemporary Strategies for the 21st Century Curriculum and Modern Student in English Language Arts

Shannon Ekas
sekas1@u.brockport.edu

Repository Citation

Contemporary Strategies for the 21st Century Curriculum and Modern Student in English

Language Arts

by

Shannon Ekas

A thesis submitted to the Department of Education and Human Development of The College at

Brockport, State University of New York, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

of Masters of Science in Education

December 16, 2016

Contemporary Strategies for the 21st Century Curriculum and Modern Student in English Language Arts

Contemporary Strategies for the 21st Century Curriculum and Modern Student in English

Language Arts

by Shannon Ekas

APPROVED BY:

_____ _____

    Advisor   Date

_____ _____

    Reader   Date

_____ _____

    Reader   Date

_____ _____

    Chair, Thesis Committee   Date

Contemporary Strategies for the 21st Century Curriculum and Modern Student in English Language Arts

Abstract

The 21st century has significantly changed socially, economically, and naturally from previous centuries. This affects every aspect of life, especially major aspects of life such as education. Today, the modern student needs different forms of support and instruction from their teachers in order to thrive academically in school. This thesis explores the strategies and mindsets that teachers must implement in the 21st century English Language Arts (ELA) classroom, influenced by the modern student's world. Specifically, this research focuses on using research-based, contemporary strategies and educational technology to enhance a learning environment that fosters culturally-responsive and student-centered teaching instruction in hopes of effectively supporting the academic success of modern-day students.

Contemporary Strategies for the 21st Century Curriculum and Modern Student in English Language Arts

Table of Contents

Contemporary Strategies for the 21st Century Curriculum and Modern Student in English Language Arts

Chapter 1: Introduction

Problem Statement – *A Call for Change in the Modern Classroom*

In recent years, there has been an evident change in the nature of schooling in the 21st century. General expectations of education have shifted from the idea of the "one size fits all" approach to a more tailored approach to reach as many individual students as possible. Modern teachers are expected to make accommodations and modifications daily based on student needs, look for new approaches to lessons in order to spark student interest and engagement, and make themselves aware of current events to create a learning environment that fosters cultural diversity and awareness; however, this is not happening in many modern classrooms. Today, most of the United States has adopted the Common Core State Standards to guide their schools' education. The goal of Common Core is to provide baseline standards for all schools to maintain and exceed that teach all students crucial thinking skills in order to prepare them for their future college and career experiences. For schools to achieve this, they must consider the change in society in general. It is expected of students to at least aim to go to college in our current society, and it is the responsibility of modern-day teachers to encourage and prepare students to do so. The reason for this is because most jobs in today's society require at least an Associate's or Bachelor's degree, and many jobs have moved onto requiring a Master's or Doctorate degree; in any case, a college education is crucial for most careers in today's society, whereas in the past, this was not the case. Secondary-level education must reflect this reality in order to generate students who are willing and prepared for a college education. Our society defines a "good job" as one that offers a sizeable salary and/or benefits, so modern schools must adapt to prepare students for the path that leads them to a "good job", regardless of whether or not each student pursues it. In addition, social, family, and cultural norms and patterns in 2016 have significantly shifted, which influences each students' readiness and academic achievement. The "modern student" has been

raised in a society that is surrounded with growing technology, where social media dictates social expectations, and traditional norms are challenged. Embracing a 21st century learning model requires consideration of the characteristics of modern society that has caused this societal shift; in general, educators need to focus more on creating learners who take intellectual risks, fostering learning temperaments, and cultivating school communities where everyone is a unique learner. Educators need to consider the "modern student" and current social norms when instructing and creating an environment to engage students and prepare them for success in our modern-day world.

Significance of the Problem – *The Importance of 21st Century Learning in English Class*

While there are many factors of modern society that affect every classroom, at every grade level, English teachers face challenges to ensure they teach students necessary life skills through reading and writing. As a crucial core subject across the board in all schools, English is a class where students learn and develop skills that carry across all academic disciplines and support their development for a successful future. In order to become successful in many post-secondary schooling and professions, students must be able to read, write, and speak at least proficiently; since the goal of modern education (specifically with the Common Core State Standards) is to ensure "college-and-career readiness", it is crucial that students are pushed beyond regurgitating and simply recalling information in English class. English teachers must push their students beyond traditional practices, such as summarizing a text or answering basic comprehension questions about a piece of literature. Instead, students need to be exercising critical thinking skills such as application, analysis, synthesis, creativity, and evaluation through the use of literature, poems, short stories, historical documents, and research and creative writing. While this all may sound simple and brainless, many English teachers do not consider

using contemporary strategies that align with the 21st century student; the modern student does

not engage with material or instruction, resulting in less effective teaching and disadvantaging

the student. When English teachers do not choose texts that are relevant or interesting to the

modern student, and/or do not use teaching practices and strategies that encourage engagement,

students are at a disadvantage that affects their personal and academic growth.

Rationale – *Why I Chose to Pursue This Problem*

The disconnection among teachers and their students is something that I have seen

present in English classrooms throughout my observation hours, student teaching, and job

environments over the last seven years. Due to the shift in societal norms, modern classrooms are

filled with very diverse students; "diverse" refers to different ethnicities, SESs, family situations,

learning abilities/deficiencies, disabilities, etc. According to current statistics, 84% of teachers in

2011 were white females, meaning only 16% of teachers were men; additionally, teachers who

were black, Hispanic, or "other" had a combined percentage of 17% overall (Feistritzer, 2011, p.

11). With such diverse populations of students, in some cases this creates a gap in relativity

between teacher and student. Many students are missing important "role models who represent

their background within the school setting" which only widens this gap (Cushner, et al., 2006,

12). These factors limit teachers' abilities to make content relatable and students' abilities to find

content interesting, which results in ineffective learning. This shows that there is an instant

hurdle to overcome when it comes to the teacher/student relationship in most classrooms, based

on factors that are completely out of anyone's control. Unfortunately, many of these teachers

also refuse to change their teaching approaches. In my experience, I observed several ineffective

teacher/student relationships that could have been solved if the teacher had gained a different

perspective on how to effectively teach the "modern" student. It is very troubling to me that all

teachers today are not seeking out how to reach students in the 21st century, so I decided to

investigate this problem to show how and why the modern student needs a different type of

instruction for maximum learning, and how and why modern teachers need to cater their

teaching to their students, specifically in a contemporary English class.

Definition of Terms – *Education Jargon*

1. **Common Core State Standards (CCSS)** – a set of high-quality academic standards in mathematics and English language arts/literacy (ELA) that outline what a student should know and be able to do at the end of each grade

2. **Application** – select, transfer, and use data and principles to complete a problem or task with a minimum of direction

3. **Analysis** – distinguish, classify, and relate the assumptions, hypotheses, evidence, or structure of a statement or question

4. **Synthesis** – originate, integrate, and combine ideas into a product, plan or proposal that is new to him or her

5. **Evaluation** – appraise, assess, or critiques on a basis of specific standards and criteria

6. **Student Engagement** – the degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion that students show when they are learning or being taught, which extends to the level of motivation they have to learn and progress in their education

7. **Literacy –** the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts

8. **Culturally Responsive Teaching –** a pedagogy that recognizes the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of learning

9. **Student-Centered Teaching –** methods of teaching that shift the focus of instruction from the teacher to student

10. **Inference –** using observation (reading text, seeing a picture, etc.) and background knowledge to reach a logical conclusion

Summary Statement – *How to Solve This Problem*

The solution to this problem is glaring – teachers must use contemporary teaching strategies in the classroom in order to heighten student learning. In order to effectively teach students in the 21st century, teachers must take into consideration the world of their students. I am going to provide a Text-Set Lesson Plan that incorporates higher-level, critical thinking skills crucial to modern-day English classes using contemporary strategies that work towards engaging the modern student. The specific ways to engage the modern student in which I will present in my research and lessons are to incorporate technology, practice culturally responsive teaching, and making classroom materials relevant, current, and interesting while offering student choice. This solution is appropriate because they are effective, research-backed strategies for the modern student, considering current societal norms and patterns.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

21st Century Society: *Effect on Modern Students and Classrooms*

In the 21st century, American society has significantly strayed away from traditional norms, beliefs, and practices. In the world of education, today's students have been born into this changed, modern society; classrooms are filled with students who accept these new norms, beliefs, and practices naturally as their own because it has been their environment while growing up. One of the most prominent changes in modern-day society is the fact that it is much more diverse in population than ever before. Current statistics show that in recent years there has been a growing number of immigrants from countries other than Europe living and working in the United States. According to the Migration Policy Institute, "India was the leading country of origin for new immigrants, with 147,500 arriving in 2014, followed by China with 131,800, Mexico with 130,000, Canada with 41,200, and the Philippines with 40,500". These statistics

also indicate that in general, the size of the immigrant population has more than doubled since the year 1990, and the immigrant share of total U.S. population as of 2014 is 13.3% (Zong & Batalova, 2016). With these statistics in mind, immigrants make up a significant amount of our population – this leads to diverse classrooms, workplaces, and social circles. Educators also have to be mindful of the growing number of English Language Learners in our schools as a result of this. With a larger number of ELL students, educators need to change the way they teach and adapt their lessons for their students' individual needs. Schools may also have a need to implement more teachers and/or specialists to help these students achieve in US schools. Cushner, McClelland, and Safford (2006) state that it is not acceptable to "eliminate certain children from the ranks of the educable", accept that some students "do not measure up to standards, or that you cannot teach everyone" (13). Along with this, there is the growing necessity for our students to be bi-lingual to heighten their chances of gaining desired employment. This should also be reflected in education so that there is an emphasis on students taking secondary languages in schools with the goal of becoming fluent in two or more languages by the time they complete college.

In the 21st century, much of our society is considered a part of a minority. This refers to any group of people who are collectively smaller than a larger, majority group of people. Immigrants are frequently deemed as a minority in the US; statistics show that there is a higher chance for these people to live in poverty. For example, research shows that "one in five is born poor, one in three will be poor at some point in their childhood, and one in six is born to a mother who did not receive prenatal care in the first three months of pregnancy" (Cushner, et al., 9). Since many immigrant families struggle to adapt to a completely new environment and language, some are forced to take low-paying jobs. There is a high number of minority students

who are underachieving in school, which is something that teachers need to take into

consideration in regards to their academic needs. Wolf, Aber, & Morris (2015) conclude that

low-income minority youth experience "higher rates of poverty and living in unsafe

neighborhoods, inadequate housing, attendance in less resourced schools, and single-parent

households" (p. 1209). Some students will fall behind in school because of their home lives;

teachers must consider these facts while figuring out how to help these students at school. Wolf,

Aber, & Morris (2015) also share that "minority adolescents have lower rates of school

engagements and academic achievement over a number of indicators" (p. 1209).

Another associated change in modern-day society is how family norms have adapted. The

word "family" in today's society is much less traditional for many people. Divorces are very

common, same-sex marriage and parenting is legally and generally socially acceptable, children

are adopted from other countries or bi-racial, and many families are made up of a mix of step

brothers and sisters from one or more previous marriages of their parents. Associated with many

of these untraditional family structures is anxiety and confusion, especially as young people. Xia,

Fosco, & Feinberg state that "a family climate, characterized by cohesion, organization, and low

levels of conflict may serve as a robust indicator of family functioning that is associated with

adolescent success"; however, many 21st century families are not cohesive, organized, and non-

confrontational (p. 443). A student's family life plays a major role in their overall life, and can

greatly impact their academic efforts in school. Pattie Yuk Yee Luk-Fong (2011), while

conducting a study on family life of students, found that "schools often neglect the emotional

factors which affect children's capacity for learning as they mainly focus on the cognitive

development and academic performance of the children" (418). In today's society, it is safe to

assume that most children come from an untraditional family structure; with this as a reality,

schools must find a way to be considerate of these possibilities while adapting lessons to the

needs of the individual student.

Incorporating Technology: *Why it is Effective in the 21st Century Classroom*

One of the most prominent features that characterizes the "modern" student is the

prevalence of technology and social media. Adolescents' social structure is heavily influenced by

social media, accessed through multiple means of technology, deeming it a huge part of their

lives. Lu, Hao, & Jing (2016) found that "in a recent U.S. census based on a large national

sample, more than 45% of the teens said that they frequently use social media; the average time

the teens spent on screen media was around 4 hours per day, and for 39% of them, it is up to 6

hours per day on a given day" (p. 56). For many students, this is more time spent online than

doing homework. Incorporating technology into the classroom is an effective contemporary

strategy to use in all classes since it is already such a large part of the modern student's life.

Those who were not born in this generation of technology are constantly faced with new

challenges to learn and adapt to these emerging technologies so that they do not fall behind in

this modern society; however, those who were born in this generation of technology are the ones

who are using it, advancing it, and creating it. The latter describes the modern day students in

secondary classrooms today. Since these students are dependent on technology, Sheelah Sweeny

(2010) argues that they "anticipate and expect to use the Internet and technology at home, in

school, and at work" (p. 129). Since the Common Core State Standards aim to prepare students

for college and a career, it is crucial to consider that most 21st century jobs "involve

collaborative content-creation"; "they call for workers who are equipped with such highly valued

21st century skills, as critical thinking and communication" (Lu, et. al., 2016, p. 56). In

classrooms, "emerging social media networks, such as email, wikis, and blogs, are ways for

young people to collaboratively design, create, and post their own material", which provides teachers with a clear opportunity to heighten student learning and meet standards (Lu, et. al., 2016, p. 56).

In the secondary English classroom, technology can improve students' literacy achievement for several reasons. Recent American studies show that 25% of students are "disengaged and about one-third of students reported a decrease in engagement over the teen years" (Hines & Kersulov, 2015, p. 229). Finding new ways to engage and reach secondary students is one of the most necessary aspects of a teacher's job in order to keep the interest and attention of their students. Robinson (2016) argues that "as a result the integration of technologies used outside the classroom such as word processors, e-mail, digital video, and the Internet must be part of the 21st century secondary English classroom" (p. 4). Modern-day students use these technologies daily outside of the classroom, meaning that when they are entered into the classroom, they will immediately be able to relate and feel that they are better equipped to succeed at the task at hand. One of the major aspects of ELA is the ability to write; writing is arguably one of the most challenging academic tasks in education today. Although writing is a primary aspect of students' lives in today's society (through the use of texting and social media), most students see this type of writing as different from the writing they do in school. Sweeny (2010) notes that many students "recognize that writing is an important skill and wish that technology was included in more of their writing instruction" (p. 124-5). When teachers take into consideration all of the writing students are already doing daily, they can begin to construct lessons to teach writing through formats that take on the idea of acts such as texting or Tweeting. Wendt (2013) shares that, "although writing is certainly not a new literacy, it has changed in the face of technology" since the Internet has prefaced an era of instant

communication and solutions. If teachers reformat their writing lessons to incorporate

technology that students are already using, students may not see it as "typical schoolwork, and

therefore, learning can take place while motivation and enjoyment are increased" (p. 45).

Another way that incorporating purposeful technology into the secondary English

classroom improves literacy achievement is because it promotes critical thinking and problem-

solving skills in students. Students need to have these skills in order to succeed both in school

and in the workforce; according to Common Core State Standards, students need to "engage in

critical thinking about new material…and use technology effectively and efficiently" (Wendt,

2013, p. 40). When students use technology in the classroom, they earn a sense of accountability

because they understand that their work will be documented and shared with others. They have

access to endless information in order to conduct research and programs that help them to

identify errors, such as spell check. In a study using the application "'Pages', students discussed

how it helped with their writing by underlining words or grammar uses that were wrong or

helping them access vocabulary definitions quickly and reliably without sending them to online

resources that often appeared confusing to them" (Mozua & Barrett-Greenly, 2015, p. 10). This

is only one great example of how this one application influences students to identify mistakes

and use critical thinking and problem-solving skills to fix it on their own. Technology used in

English classrooms for writing also encourages collaboration with peers and teachers, which

"allows users to collaborate and broaden their experience and lets students take responsibility for

finding answers to their own learning needs", something that is crucial for the academic and

personal growth into adulthood (Sweeny, 2010, p. 125). Technology integration allows students

to problem-solve on their own, and learn effective writing skills with practice in their own ways.

Contemporary Strategies for the 21st Century Curriculum and Modern Student in English Language Arts

In addition to increasing literacy achievement in the English classroom, incorporating purposeful technology at the secondary level is also beneficial in improving students' self-efficacy. Mozua & Barrett-Greenly (2015) conducted a case study where they provided iPads to an urban school that did not have funding for modern technology, and they found that "the use of content apps to personalize instruction, for example, facilitated academic growth and self-efficacy among students" (p. 12). If the teacher provides a safe environment among students, there is an opportunity to foster a positive community among students through the use of technology. The result is a higher self-efficacy because students become more confident in their abilities, are proud of their finished product, and discover new ways of thinking that make them feel confident in pursuing difficult tasks across disciplines. The use of technology can greatly help mitigate students' stresses that are associated with writing by allowing them to problem solve on their own, improve their work, and build confidence in their abilities based on their work. Sweeny (2010) suggests that students can begin to be intrinsically motivated to learn to write well because,

> When students post their writing online, the audience transforms from one person (i.e., the teacher) to a larger social community. This changes the dynamic of writing from something that is done to receive a grade to place it in a social context where form, style, and understanding of audience take on increased importance (p. 127).

Sweeny (2010) also suggests that by providing an environment of sharing and giving feedback to one another regarding writing, that students become self-motivated to use academic language while blogging or work-shopping: "Because students recognize that there is a social context for their work online, they often conform to certain roles or expectations without teacher prompting, because they want to impress their peers" (p. 128). Through the use of collaborative technologies

for writing, students learn to provide and receive constructive feedback, work together to develop new ideas, build intrinsic motivation to reach academic success, and build confidence in their own writing abilities.

Culturally Responsive Teaching: *Embracing and Supporting All Modern Students*

In the world of education, the dynamics must change in the classroom in order to show students how to embrace diversity; how to work with people they cannot personally relate to, learn from those who are 'different' than them, and educate themselves on the world around us. Many changes in 21st century society, such as immigration, family norms, and learning disabilities, all feed into one overall change: diversity. Ethnicity, race, SES, academic ability, family structure, etc. work together to create this very diverse society in which we currently live. With such a diverse population, schools are filled with very diverse learners with unique needs. Angus & DeOliveira (2012) recognize that "in the latter decades of the 20th century, as U.S. populations became more racially, ethnically, and economically diverse, researchers also recognized that diversity encompassed factors such as learning styles", which makes it crucial for 21st century teachers to be culturally aware and incorporate it into instruction (p. 9). In order to effectively teach, educators must understand the influence of a culturally and linguistically diverse family environment on a child's learning. The classroom becomes a place of isolation for students if educators do not acknowledge cultural differences. Teachers must understand each culture and that the various beliefs, traditions and values associated with that culture are unique. J.L. Worrell, an author who has done significant research in the area of incorporating diversity into the classroom, indicates that culturally responsive, standards-based instruction is the best teaching method; he states, "Educators themselves must become culturally receptive by making connections with their students as individuals while also understanding the cultural contexts that

16

influence their interactions" (Worrell, n.d.).

In order to be culturally responsive, educators need to have cultural competence. Cultural competence is, "the ability to learn from and respectfully relate to other cultural backgrounds, heritages, and traditions. It comes from acknowledging and understanding one's own culture and values while respecting those of others" ("The IRIS Center," 2009). In order to have cultural competence, teachers need to understand that culture influences education, learn about different cultures, and learn how to include different cultures in their lessons. Researcher Ladson-Billings describes culturally responsive, standards-based instruction as, "a way of thinking that empowers students' academically, socially, emotionally, and politically by implementing cultural and historical references to communicate knowledge, teach skills, and change attitudes" (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Additionally, Angus & DeOliveira (2012) point out that

> Culturally responsive teaching is more than a set of techniques or a tailored curriculum. It requires that teachers have a high degree of socio-cultural consciousness, hold affirming views of students of diverse backgrounds, see themselves of agents of change, understand and embrace constructivist views of learning and teaching, and know the students in their classes (p. 9).

Research shows that when teachers enter into a multicultural classroom, they must be very "cautious about the language, the type of interaction, the material used, and the way of assessing students" because ignoring or underestimating the "linguistic and cultural differences is likely to lead to miscommunication/misinterpretation in the classroom"; this may lead to serious conflicts between teachers and students, and insufficient assessment of the student's true academic levels (Chouari, 2016, p. 14).

Culturally responsive teaching can be achieved in the English classroom by engaging in cultural scaffolding, or "utilizing students' cultures and cultural experiences to facilitate and

improve academic and intellectual achievement" (Chenowith, 2014, p. 35). Ladson-Billings

(1992) states that "literacy instruction for the twenty-first century should reflect the diversity of

learners found in the classroom; [it should] validate students' cultures, deal explicitly with issues

of race and ethnicity, and include Standard English, but should also invite other forms and

dialects such as African American Vernacular English and Spanglish to be spoken in the

classroom", which can all be done inside the ELA classroom (n.p.). By doing so, the teachers

influence connections to be made between learning and the world of the student. Culturally

relevant literacy instruction "reflects the values of the student's own culture and is aimed at

providing opportunities for academic learning, while encouraging the teacher to adapt their

practices to meet the learning needs of all students" (Chenowith, 2014, p. 37).

Relevant and Interesting Material: *Student-Centered Teaching and Literacy Strategies*

One of the biggest challenges in today's teachers is making lessons interesting and

relevant to the modern-day, diverse body of students. Much of the reasoning behind this is

because a significant age gap between many students and their teachers. In general, people are

choosing to have fewer children and having them later in life. Fewer people are having a rapid

abundance of children at once like the baby boomers, who are now approximately 65 years old

(many of which are still teachers in schools today). The U.S. census report projects that the

"number of American youth compared with citizens ages 65 and older will continue to shrink"

through the year 2025 (Cushner, et al., 2006, 9). This makes it harder for students to relate to

those in the school and workplace, who are in general much older than them and of different

ideals than them. There also is the issue of the population of current teachers and how they have

trouble relating to the "modern" student. Traditionally many teachers were white females, which

stand as a statistic that is still present today; however, with such diverse populations of students,

in some cases this creates a gap in relativity between teacher and student. Many teachers have "little knowledge or experience of people from other cultures" which only widens this gap (Cushner, et al., 2006, 12). These factors limit teachers' abilities to make content relatable and students' abilities to find content interesting, which results in ineffective learning. Teachers must recognize and respond to these factors when deciding how and what to teach.

This and other factors are a prerequisite for teachers who do not make an effort to understand the lives of their students in order to teach interesting/relevant material to heighten engagement and learning. Alongside these factors, students in English class "often find it challenging to think critically about text when their primary experience with it has consisted of retrieving information…The students could retrieve information, but demonstrated that they experienced difficulty in making inferences, analyzing text, and thinking beyond the literal" (Matson, 2014, p. 24). The Common Core State Standards requires students to retain and exercise these critical thinking skills in ELA classrooms. Hall and Piazza (2010) suggest that the reason for the lack of ability for many students to access these critical thinking skills is because "too few students are likely to have had experiences with critical literacy in school", which has become a crucial part of teaching in the 21st century (p. 91). Students tend to dismiss challenging, unfamiliar tasks if they are not taught in an effective manner; a way for teachers to combat this is to provide relevant and interesting lessons to teach these unfamiliar, unpracticed, yet crucial, critical thinking skills. Hall & Piazza (2010) recommend that "students must find topics relevant in order to invest the effort required to learn to look more deeply at text and ideas" (p. 91). When students cannot find meaning, interest, or relevance in materials that teachers use in lessons, they do not engage with the material and the opportunity for high-level learning is lost.

Contemporary Strategies for the 21st Century Curriculum and Modern Student in English
Language Arts

The U.S. Department of Education (2016) explains that "teachers should make literacy experiences more relevant to students' interests, everyday life, or important current events…to help students build confidence in their ability to comprehend content-area texts" (n.p.). They suggest doing so by looking for opportunities to connect the classroom to the real, modern world, and making an effort to get to know what is relevant in their lives (and why) to design instruction and learning opportunities for the modern student. In addition, teachers should include student choice when developing reading and writing activities because "empowering students to make decisions about topics, forms of communication, and selections of materials encourages them to assume greater ownership and responsibility for their engagement in learning" (U.S. Department of Education, 2016, n.p.). By providing student choice in the classroom, teachers adopt a "student-centered teaching that is intended to increase the student's level of learning and sense of ownership in the classroom by increasing his or her involvement in class administrative processes" (Turner, 2010, p. 1). When students have a strong voice in class, teachers find it easier to determine their true level of comprehension because students will be providing more accurate and meaningful feedback. Student-centered teaching also gives teachers the opportunity to increase student involvement in each class, and students will be more willing to participate if they can personally connect to the material (Turner, 2010, p. 2).

Teachers can encourage student engagement through the use of literacy strategies in order to "provide a supportive environment and offering information on how these can be modified to fit various tasks" (U.S. Department of Education, 2016, n.p.). Literacy strategies can be used in the classroom to help students interpret and retain content, and most of them can be applied across disciplines. Literacy strategies are most effective when they include "teaching students to construct meaning, think critically, and build content knowledge, while stimulating their interest,

using multiple texts and technology, and providing collaborative opportunities and high

engagement during instructional activities," all of which support previous points in this research

(Gatson, et.al., 2016, p. 73). During a study in 2016 that gauged the effectiveness of embedding

literacy strategies into a social studies curriculum, the results indicated "higher student

achievement and engagement when literacy strategies were a part of the instruction" (Gatson,

et.al., p. 73). The study also found that literacy strategies proved to help teachers pique students'

interest and helped them to be successful in learning tasks; "the incorporation of literacy

strategies into instruction can be a tool for teachers to address achievement for the diverse

learning modalities and learner preferences in their classroom" (Gatson, et.al., 2016, p. 74).

*<u>Note</u>: Refer to Chapter 4 for more information about specific literacy strategies and how they
can be used in the classroom

Chapter 3: Curriculum

Text-Set Lesson Plan Overview – "Identity"

Provided in chapter three is a Text-Set Lesson Plan. A Text-Set Lesson Plan is based on a

series of texts and medias that all relate to a chosen theme, issue, or topic. These texts are

explored, analyzed, and synthesized using multiple lessons and contemporary strategies are used

as a way for students to engage with and respond to each text, reaching high-levels of

comprehension and exercising high-level thinking skills. The following Text-Set Lesson Plan is

based around the theme of "Identity" in hopes of supporting the 21st century learner by

exploring texts that focus on fostering diversity, are relevant and interesting to the modern

student, and will allow them to use skills that will prepare them for college and a career. For

schools that have access to technologies, there are "technology modifications" throughout the

lessons, which will heighten engagement and comprehension for the 21st century student;

however, it can still be effectively taught if schools do not have access to the corresponding

technologies. The following lessons do not have a specific time frame, which is appropriate to a Text-Set Lesson Plan; teachers and students can work at their own pace, and follow the texts and strategies in order according to their specific class needs. This Text-Set Lesson Plan is geared towards a lower, secondary grade level, such as grades 7-9, based on the complexity of the texts and strategies chosen. Overall, the purpose of this Text-Set Lesson Plan is to show teachers research-backed, contemporary strategies to engage students with text in English class that uses relevant and interesting material to the modern student, exhibits culturally responsive and student-centered teaching methods, and incorporates modern technology, if available.

Common Core State Standards for Entire Text-Set Lesson:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1: Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.3: Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.1.A: Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.2.B: Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.6: Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas efficiently as well as to interact and collaborate with others.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1.A: Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.5: Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest.

Text-Set Lesson Plan: "Identity"

PURPOSE

The idea of identity is very complex; there are several factors play a role in how a person identifies themselves as an individual such as culture, family, appearance, social status, relationships, personality, and many more. Middle-school aged adolescents go through physical, emotional, and social changes during this age, making the road to finding their identity a complex journey. Because of the changes associated with this critical development period, many students have trouble making personal connections to much of what is taught in their classes. In addition, many students find it difficult to view life through different perspectives, especially those of different cultures than their own. This lesson allows students to make text-to-self connections with fiction and non-fiction text, generate questions about their own lives, see through alternate perspectives, and become more culturally aware. Students will be analyzing texts to determine meaning and gain comprehension of both the text and how it applies to the overall theme, a major aspect of an ELA classroom. They will also dissect many formats of text found in an ELA classroom (poems, short stories, song lyrics, etc.). The material used is contemporary and engaging for students, which should attest to students' interests. In addition to the text-set lessons provided, there is a section after each lesson that has an optional technology-integration component presented. The reason that this is optional is because their implementation depends on the resources available to the school; while these will help to make the lessons more engaging and relevant to students, they are still useable for schools with less technological resources available. The goal is that students connect personally with the material and gain more insight into what it means to find individual identity, so that they can develop a clearer meaning in finding their own.

Contemporary Strategies for the 21st Century Curriculum and Modern Student in English
Language Arts

<u>TEXTS IN ORDER OF USE</u>

1) Excerpt from *The Absolutely True Story of a Part-Time Indian*, by Sherman Alexie
(http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=16420671)
- This text allows students to make connections to how one's culture can shape their identity as an individual. This is a contemporary and relevant text that uses modern-day slang, and is the story of a boy around the secondary-level age.

2) "When I was Growing Up" by Nellie Wong
- This text allows students to make connections to how one's culture can shape their identity as an individual. This is a piece that supports culturally responsive teaching.

3) Excerpt from *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros titled "My Name"
- (https://d3jc3ahdjad7x7.cloudfront.net/w4Uh4xckKtHMoyQxoR82OuvpAuDRwloWk3 Wsafm2BmG3M0XH.pdf)
- This text allows students to make connections to the deep roots of how family shapes their identity as an individual. This is a piece that supports culturally responsive teaching.

4) Excerpt from *Uglies* by Scott Westerfeld.
- This text allows students to make connections to how appearance and social expectations of appearance shapes their identity as an individual. This is a contemporary novel that explores 21st century issues with body image and social impressions.

5) Diary entry from *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank.
- This text allows students to make connections to how relationships shape their identity as an individual. Students will find this relevant because Anne Frank was around their age when she wrote her diary entries.

6) "The Bear that Wasn't" by Frank Tashlin.
- This text allows students to make connections to how society shapes their identity as an individual. This could spark conversation and allow students to make connections to the current presidential election since this is a political piece.

7) Song lyrics of Andy Grammer's "Back Home" (with audio).
- This text allows students to make connections to how 'home' (where they come from) shapes their identity as an individual. Students will recognize this song.

8) Song lyrics of Miranda Lambert's "The House that Built Me" (with audio).
- This text allows students to make connections to how 'home' (where they come from) shapes their identity as an individual. Students will recognize this song.

<u>CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS</u>

Social Studies: Current events. Historical documents from Holocaust victim. Information regarding other cultures other than American.

Literature: Analyze multiple forms of fiction and nonfiction text and connect them to an overall theme.

English Language Arts: Evaluate and question information from fiction and nonfiction sources. "Evaluate details of a text in order to build defensible interpretations. Use appropriate note-taking strategies to enhance comprehension. "Work with partners to build knowledge" (Daniels and Steineke, 2011, p. 157).

<u>STRATEGIES USED</u>

Quotation Mingle, Turn and Talk, Text Annotation, Read with a Question in Mind, Conversation Questions

<u>MATERIALS NEEDED</u>

Quote cards for Quotation Mingle (see step 1); Copy of all articles for all students (see "Texts in order of use"); Writing utensils; audio versions of two songs; copy of 'fat questions' for Part 3; For technology modifications – computers/laptops, iPads, and/or smartphones, projector, Smart Board (or similar technology), internet access, and/or video cameras

PART 1: QUOTATION MINGLE AND CONVERSATION

Step 1 – **Prepare the materials**

- The lesson begins without any direct instruction regarding the overall topic. The opening activity is a strategy called Quotation Mingle (Daniels and Steineke, 2011, p. 131-134). To prepare for this activity, print out copies of the specific excerpt chosen from the autobiography, *The Absolutely True Story of a Part-Time Indian*, by Sherman Alexie for each student found on pages 37-41 of this document, and also http://www.npr.org/templates/ story/story.php?storyId=16420671. To prepare for the strategy, choose eight sentences from the excerpt and write them on eight small sheets of paper. The point of this is so that there are eight sentences from the excerpt to pass around to the class.

Step 2 – **Give instructions for "quotation mingle"**

- Tell the students, "'in a few minutes we are going to read an important selection from a book. To help you better understand it, I've prepared a preview by cutting out just eight sentences from the longer piece. I am distributing these randomly.'"

- After each student chooses one sentence out of the eight possible sentences randomly from a hat or box, explain to them that they will be taking a look at the sentences as though they are part of a "puzzle". Share with them that they are to work together to look at each other's sentences in order to piece together the puzzle and make predictions about what they text may be about (Daniels and Steineke, 2011, p. 157).

Step 3 – **Begin "quotation mingle"**

- Allow students to find a partner. The partners will go around the room to find as many other sentences as they can. While at this point, the four students will discuss their sentences, generate questions and make text-to-text connections in order to determine the context of the whole text. Instruct students to collaborate with at least ten other students to compare their sentences and generate predictions about the text.

- Be sure to monitor students and ensure they are participating.

Step 4 – **Discussion groups and instructions**

- Have students form discussion groups of four. Provide question prompts for students to think about the overall text:
  - "What do you think this passage is about?"
  - "What do you think the setting of the passage is?"
  - "What can you tell me about the possible characterization of the passage?"
  - "What type of text do you think this is (ex. a piece of fiction)?"

- o "What themes can you determine about the passage?"

- Remind them that they likely have seen all eight sentences and to collaborate to make predictions and make inferences to answer these questions based on the sentences. Give the students about five minutes to have meaningful discussions based around these prompted questions.

  - **Technology Modification:** Students who have access to laptops, iPads, or smartphones may be instructed to post their responses onto a class blog. The blog could be displayed on a projection screen in the front of the room so that when students post, the whole class can see their thinking. This can be referred to during class discussion. This will also serve as a reference for all students to be able to return to, since the blog can be ongoing for the class and document important information gone over in class.

Step 5 – **Monitor and support**

- "Circulate and coach groups as they work, being alert for good examples or quotes you can bring up in the later discussion" (Daniels and Steineke, 2011, p. 158).

Step 6 – **Invite volunteers to share**

- Since the sentences chosen are explicit, the students will likely have little trouble drawing conclusions about the content. Ask students to use text-based evidence (the sentences) to support their claims (answers to prompted questions). End this class discussion with guesses; ask students, "Does anyone have any thoughts on the title of this text, or have any knowledge about who the author might be?" If students do not, accept guesses, and

then share with them that it is an excerpt from *The Absolutely True Story of a Part-Time Indian*, by Sherman Alexie.

Step 7 – **Read the full excerpt**

- Allow students to remain in groups of four and distribute a copy of the excerpt to each student. Explain that it is a passage from an autobiography.

- *STRATEGY: READ WITH A QUESTION IN MIND*
  - Ask students to read through the entire passage. Instruct them to annotate the text with an "A" when one of their predictions/inferences are confirmed, and an "N" when they come across something new or need further clarification on.

- Allow students to finish reading and annotating the excerpt individually, and then come together as a group for an overall discussion on their findings and annotations.

- Introduce the theme and purpose that they should be focused on: tell them, *"Alexie shares some personal physical and cultural information about himself throughout this text. By analyzing his writing, how do you think he identifies himself? What characteristics of his life might he find to be an important factor of his identity? Think about all of the literary elements of the excerpt to determine specifics about how he might identify himself (ex. setting: where does he live? How might that become crucial to his identity?)? To help guide your thinking, consider Merriam-Webster's definition of "identity":*
  - "Who someone is: the name of a person"
  - "The qualities, beliefs, etc., that make a particular person or group different from others"
  - Source: http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/identity

- **Technology Modification:** The teacher may have students use their smartphones to register their number on a specific class page on the website www.polleverywhere.com. On this website, the teacher previously creates a class page that allows students to send a text that pops up on the page. The teacher can project the interactive webpage on the board for all students to see as their peers text on their smartphones. While reading, and answering the prompted questions, students will create Tweets that can be posted through their smartphones as they go. This task will require students to pretend they are a specific character, and create Tweets as that character; they may use appropriate hashtags or slang terms that get their point across. For example, when students read about a character going through being bullied in school, they could Tweet, "Where is the love?" or "I really wish I could go to school without being picked on for my clothes". This adds another element of conversation, makes the material relevant, engaging, and interesting, and encourages students to analyze life through the perspective of another person based on textual evidence.

- *STRATEGY: TURN AND TALK*
  - Allow students to "turn and talk" to their peers about their responses to the previous questions regarding the text and identity. Provide students with the title of the autobiography so that they may read the entire text if they find personal connections to or interest in the excerpt.

- **Technology Modification:** After partners physically "Turn and Talk" to each other, the teacher could provide students with video cameras or allow them to use their smartphones to record each other's responses, questions, ideas, inferences, and whatever else comes up during their session. They can submit these videos to "SchoolTube", a video sharing site that is more controlled by the teacher than YouTube. Once uploaded, the teacher can show other classes throughout the day, and into the next class day, the conversations of peers outside of their own classroom. This expands collaboration, even if it is not directly face to face.

PART 2: ANALYZING IDENTITY THROUGH MORE TEXTS

Step 1 – **Introduce the texts**

- Have copies of each text available for all students so that even if they are not focusing on it, they have each one to reference while a group shares. Explain to the students that there are five texts of varying formats to choose from. Share with them that, *"all of the texts have to do with a person and their identity. Some explore cultural identity, while others explore social or personal identity. There are many ways in which a person can identify themselves, and these texts will explore a few different 'categories' in which you may identify yourself."* This part of the lesson supports student-centered teaching by allowing students to make their own choices based on their own preferences.

- Texts:
    - "When I was Growing Up" by Nellie Wong**:**

        - This poem allows students to make connections to how one's culture can shape their identity as an individual. The author is a Chinese female who writes about her culture and the struggles associated with being 'different'.

        - Found on pages 42-43 of this document.

    - Excerpt from *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros titled "My Name":

        - This excerpt allows students to make connections to the deep roots of how family shapes their identity as an individual. Cisneros is of Mexican descent and explores how her last name represents her family history as well as her individual self.

        - Found on page 44 of this document

        - **Note: this text would be used for students who were at a low reading level as scaffolding and modification for students who needed specific learning supports. If there were no students who needed this modification, it would be removed from the list.

    - Excerpt from *Uglies* by Scott Westerfeld:

        - This excerpt allows students to make connections to how appearance and social expectations of appearance shapes their identity as an individual. The excerpt highlights dialogue between an artificially modified 'beautiful boy' and a dirty and scarred 'ugly girl'. It brings to light issues of appearance playing a role in social acceptance.

        - Found on pages 45-46 of this document.

31

- o Diary entry from *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank:

  - ▪ This diary entry allows students to make connections to how relationships shape their identity as an individual. In this letter, Anne Frank recounts her relationship with her mother. She explores the internal battle of being herself and being the daughter her mother expects her to be. (*NOTE: The text itself leaves room for students to use background knowledge to make text-to-text and text-to-world connections based on the historical content of this text. Encourage students who are familiar with the text to dig deeper about other factors that may play into Anne's identity).

  - ▪ Found on page 47 of this document.

- o "The Bear that Wasn't" by Frank Tashlin:

  - ▪ This text allows students to make connections to how society shapes their identity as an individual. This short story delves into the concept that people believe an untrue idea when they are told about it by another person. It delves into the identity of a bear that is being told by everyone that he is not based on common social beliefs.

  - ▪ Found on pages 48-49 of this document.

- Step 2: **Give reading instruction**

  - o After all students choose one text, group them together based on similar texts; in total there will be five groups. If it turns out that only one student chose one of the texts, join them yourself or ask someone from a large group to switch. If some groups have more than 5 students, split up the group to form smaller groups of 3-5 students.

- *STRATEGY: TEXT ANNOTATION*
  - Instruct students to use the strategy "text annotation" while reading through their text. While they annotate in the margins, they will be marking important information, questions they have, connections they make, and reactions to certain parts. Remind them to keep the theme of identity in mind while reading. This will lead to a deeper comprehension of the text.
  - Allow students to read and annotate the text individually for 7-8 minutes.

Step 3 – **Facilitate discussion**

- Instruct students to discuss with their group members about their chosen text. Ask them to compare and contrast their annotations, and to use them as conversation starters. Monitor the group discussions for about 3 minutes and then prompt them to think about three targeted questions:
  - *"All of your texts have to do with characters and their identity. There are many categories, or ways in which you identify yourself. What 'category' of identity does your text focus on? (ex. Culture). There may be more than one in each text, so discuss all possibilities."*
  - *"What is the main character's conflict? How does the setting, theme, and/or tone affect this conflict?"*
  - *"After exploring these in-depth, how do you think the main characters identifies themselves? Please share why you think this, and use details from the text to support your claim."*

Step 4 – **Whole group discussion**

- Bring the entire class back together to discuss each of the articles. Ask volunteers from each group to first give a brief overview of the type of text they read and an overview of the text. Then, ask them to recount their conversations using the targeted questions as discussion topics from step 3.

- As a closure, ask students the following question:

    o *"Can you relate to any of these characters? If so, how?"* (This allows students to make text-to-self connections).

        ▪ **Technology Modification**: While students discuss their article, the teacher could project it onto the board and allow students from the group to come up and show the class how they annotated the text. They could use different colored markers to show each student's thinking and work. This serves as a visual representation of the students' thought processes and allows for them to break down how they reached conclusions. For Smart Board or similar technologies are available, students will be able to zoom in on specific paragraphs and use the digital pen to highlight/use different colors to demonstrate their thinking even more clearly.

PART 3: IDENTITY IN SONGS

Step 1 – **Introduce the text**

- Provide a copy of the song lyrics from the currently popular hits "Back Home" by Andy Grammer and "The House that Built Me" by Miranda Lambert. Tell students, *"We have explored several different 'categories' of how a person can find their individual identity,*

such as their culture, family, relationships, and etc. Today we are going to analyze two

songs that explore the category of one's home being a factor in their identity."

- Texts:
    - "Back Home", a song by Andy Grammer

        - This text allows students to make connections to how 'home' (where they come from) shapes their identity as an individual. Grammer sings about how a living in a new city will not change him.

        - Found on pages 50-51 of this document.

    - "The House that Built Me", a song by Miranda Lambert

        - This text allows students to make connections to how 'home' (where they come from) shapes their identity as an individual. Lambert sings about revisiting the home where she grew up, recounting memories such as where childhood pets are buried in the yard. She regards this as a way to find piece back together her identity.

        - Found on 52-53 of this document.

Step 2 – **Play audio and give reading directions**

- After all students have a copy of both song lyrics, play the audio of each of the songs. Ask the students to just listen to the audio first without reading. After the students have heard each song, ask them to begin reading the text of the lyrics individually.

- *STRATEGY: CONVERSATION QUESTIONS*

    - Ask students to do two things before they begin reading: "*First, underline important, shocking, surprising, or interesting parts of the text. Pay particular attention to sections of the lyrics that connect to the idea of identity. Second, after you underline a section of the text you'd like to address, stop reading and write in*

the margin a question you would like to ask a classmate about to generate a

discussion about it. When you are finished, make sure that you have at least four

questions to discuss."

- On the board, display a list of "fat questions" that students can use as prompts to develop their own questions.

    - How do you feel about…

    - How does ____ relate to your own experiences?

    - Why is this…

    - How did you react when…

    - Why do you think…

Step 3 – **Discuss in pairs**

- When all students have finished reading and generating conversation questions, ask them to pair up with a peer and discuss their questions from step 2. Monitor the students as they discuss and pay attention to meaningful conversations.

    - **Technology Modification:** After students discuss elements listed regarding the songs, the teacher may choose to show the students the music videos of each song: Miranda Lambert - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DQYNM6SjD_o, Andy Grammer https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=REHfRCYvie8. This will give students a visual representation of the characters and the tone/themes of the songs. Students could then take the information already discussed and add to the analysis of the songs. This represents multiple modalities which will increase engagement and comprehension.

Step 4 – **Class discussion**

- Bring everyone back together to discuss their responses with the whole class. Ask students to discuss their 'fat questions' and to bring specifics from the lyrics to support their analyses based on the conversation questions they generated. Ask all students to think about the following questions:

  - *"What 'category' of identity do both of these songs explore?"*

  - *"What do these lyrics say about the idea of home, or where you 'come from', as being a part of how you individually identify yourself?"*

  - *"Using all that you learned about identity, how do you identify yourself?"*

Note: This is a great subject matter to explore while trying to enter cultural awareness into your classroom. It allows students to relate to people of other cultures and/or circumstance so that they can be more open to the 'unknown'. It is particularly useful when you have foreign exchange students or ESL students to help connect content with them. In this case, choose texts that represent their culture to make them feel represented and valued. It will also allow their peers to get a glimpse into how they are 'different'.

It is also important to note that while exploring an overall theme of multiple texts, students are engaging in ELA content skills by reading complex texts such as poems. They are using strategies to ensure a deeper comprehension of the text, as well as dissecting it appropriately based on its format.

Resources for Text-Set Lesson Plan

Quotation Mingle: Sentences from, *The Absolutely True Story of a Part-Time Indian*

1) With my big feet and pencil body, I looked like a capital L walking down the road.

2) My thinking and breathing and living engine slowed down and flooded.

3) I was only six months old and I was supposed to croak during the surgery.

4) First of all, I ended up having forty-two teeth.

5) And what's more, our white dentist believed that Indians felt only half as much pain as white

people did, so he gave us only half the Novocain.

6) And I started wearing glasses when I was three, so I ran around the reservation (the rez!)

looking like a three-year-old Indian grandpa.

7) Yep, I belong to the Black-Eye-of-the-Month Club.

8) So I draw because I feel like it might be my only real chance to escape the reservation.

1) Excerpt from *The Absolutely True Story of a Part-Time Indian,* by Sherman Alexie

The following is an excerpt from the winner of the 2007 National Book Award for young people's literature.

The Black-Eye-of-the-Month Club

I was born with water on the brain.
Okay, so that's not exactly true. I was actually born with too much cerebral spinal fluid inside my skull. But cerebral spinal fluid is just the doctors' fancy way of saying brain grease. And brain grease works inside the lobes like car grease works inside an engine. It keeps things running smooth and fast. But weirdo me, I was born with too much grease inside my skull, and it got all thick and muddy and disgusting, and it only mucked up the works. My thinking and breathing and living engine slowed down and flooded.

My brain was drowning in grease.

But that makes the whole thing sound weirdo and funny, like my brain was a giant French fry, so it seems more serious and poetic and accurate to say, "I was born with water on the brain."

Okay, so maybe that's not a very serious way to say it, either. Maybe the whole thing is weird and funny.

But, jeez, did my mother and father and big sister and grandma and cousins and aunts and uncles think it was funny when the doctors cut open my little skull and sucked out all that extra water with some tiny vacuum?

I was only six months old and I was supposed to croak during the surgery. And even if I somehow survived the mini-Hoover, I was supposed to suffer serious brain damage during the procedure and live the rest of my life as a vegetable.

Well, I obviously survived the surgery. I wouldn't be writing this if I didn't, but I have all sorts of physical problems that are directly the result of my brain damage.

First of all, I ended up having forty-two teeth. The typical human has thirty-two, right? But I had forty-two.

Ten more than usual.

Ten more than normal.

Ten teeth past human.

My teeth got so crowded that I could barely close my mouth. I went to Indian Health Service to get some teeth pulled so I could eat normally, not like some slobbering vulture. But the Indian

Health Service funded major dental work only once a year, so I had to have all ten extra teeth pulled in one day.

And what's more, our white dentist believed that Indians felt only half as much pain as white people did, so he gave us only half the Novocain.

What a bastard, huh?

Indian Health Service also funded eyeglass purchases only once a year and offered one style: those ugly, thick, black plastic ones.

My brain damage left me nearsighted in one eye and farsighted in the other, so my ugly glasses were all lopsided because my eyes were so lopsided.

I got headaches because my eyes were, like, enemies, you know, like they used to be married to each other but then hated each other's guts.

And I started wearing glasses when I was three, so I ran around the reservation (the rez!) looking like a three-year-old Indian grandpa.

And, oh, I was skinny. I'd turn sideways and disappear.

But my hands and feet were huge. My feet were a size eleven when I was in third grade!

With my big feet and pencil body, I looked like a capital L walking down the road.

And my skull was enormous.

Epic.

My head was so big that little Indian skulls orbited around it. Some of the kids called me Orbit. And other kids just called me Globe. The bullies would pick me up, spin me in circles, put their fingers down on my skull, and say, "I want to go there."

So obviously, I looked goofy on the outside, but it was the inside stuff that was the worst.

First of all, I had seizures. The doctors gave me medicine for them. It was this pill called Phenobarbital, which is, like, this major sedative, so I was a junkie before I could even walk. I had to crawl across the floor in my diapers to get my fix.

Those seizures can damage your brain.

But the thing is, I was having those seizures because I already had brain damage, so I was reopening wounds each time I seized.

Yep, whenever I had a seizure, I was damaging my damage.

I haven't had a seizure in seven years, but the doctors tell me that I am "susceptible to seizure activity."

Isn't that one of the worst phrases you've ever heard?

Susceptible to seizure activity.

Doesn't that just roll off the tongue like poetry?

I also had a stutter and a lisp. Or maybe I should say I had a st-st-st-st-stutter and a lisssssssssththththp.

You wouldn't think there is anything life threatening about speech impediments, but let me tell you, there is nothing more dangerous than being a kid with a stutter and a lisp.

A five-year-old is cute when he lisps and stutters. Heck, most of the big-time kid actors stuttered and lisped their way to stardom.

And, jeez, you're still fairly cute when you're a stuttering and lisping six-, seven-, and eight-year-old, but it's all over when you turn nine and ten.

After that, your stutter and lisp turn you into a retard.

And if you're fourteen years old, like me, and you're still stuttering and lisping, then you become the biggest retard in the world.

Everybody on the rez calls me a retard about twice a day. They call me retard when they are pantsing me or stuffing my head in the toilet or just smacking me upside the head.

I'm not even writing down this story the way I actually talk, because I'd have to fill it with stutters and lisps, and then you'd be wondering why you're reading a story written by such a retard.

Do you know what happens to retards on the rez?

We get beat up.

At least once a month.

Yep, I belong to the Black-Eye-of-the-Month Club.

Sure I want to go outside. Every kid wants to go outside. But it is safer to stay at home. So I mostly hang out alone in my bedroom and read books and draw cartoons.

Here's one of me:

I draw all the time.

I draw cartoons of my mother and father; my sister and grand-mother; my best friend, Rowdy; and everybody else on the rez.

I draw because words are too unpredictable.

I draw because words are too limited.

If you speak and write in English, or Spanish, or Chinese, or any other language, then only a certain percentage of human beings will get your meaning.

But when you draw a picture, everybody can understand it.

If I draw a cartoon of a flower, then every man, woman, and child in the world can look at it and say, "That's a flower."

So I draw because I want to talk to the world. And I want the world to pay attention to me. I feel important with a pen in my hand. I feel like I might grow up to be somebody important. An artist. Maybe a famous artist. Maybe a rich artist.

That's the only way I can become rich and famous.

Just take a look at the world. Almost all of the rich and famous brown people are artists. They're singers and actors and writers and dancers and directors and poets.

So I draw because I feel like it might be my only real chance to escape the reservation.

I think the world is a series of broken dams and floods, and my cartoons are tiny little lifeboats.

2) "When I was Growing Up" by Nellie Wong

WHEN I WAS GROWING UP

Nellie Wong

I know now that once I longed to be white.
How? you ask.
Let me tell you the ways.

when I was growing up, people told me
I was dark and I believed my own darkness
in the mirror, in my soul, my own narrow vision.

when I was growing up, my sisters
with fair skin got praised
for their beauty and I fell
further, crushed between high walls.

when I was growing up, I read magazines
and saw movies, blonde movie stars, white skin,
sensuous lips and to be elevated, to become
a woman, a desirable woman, I began to wear
imaginary pale skin.

when I was growing up, I was proud
of my English, my grammar, my spelling,
fitting into the group of smart children,
smart Chinese children, fitting in,
belonging, getting in line.

when I was growing up and went to high school,
I discovered the rich white girls, a few yellow girls,
their imported cotton dresses, their cashmere sweaters,
their curly hair and I thought that I too should have
what these lucky girls had.

when I was growing up, I hungered
for American food, American styles
coded: white and even to me, a child
born of Chinese parents, being Chinese
was feeling foreign, was limiting,
was unAmerican.

when I was growing up and a white man wanted

to take me out, I thought I was special,
an exotic gardenia, anxious to fit
the stereotype of an oriental chick

> when I was growing up, I felt ashamed
> of some yellow men, their small bones,
> their frail bodies, their spitting
> on the streets, their coughing,
> their lying in sunless rooms
> shooting themselves in the arms.

when I was growing up, people would ask
If I were Filipino, Polynesian, Portuguese.
They named all colors except white, the shell
of my soul but not my rough dark skin.

> when I was growing up, I felt
> dirty. I thought that god
> made white people clean
> and no matter how much I bathed,
> I could not change, I could not shed
> my skin in the gray water.

when I was growing up, I swore
I would run away to purple mountains,
houses by the sea with nothing over
my head, with space to breathe,
uncongested with yellow people in an area
called Chinatown, in an area I later
learned was a ghetto, one of many hearts
of Asian America.

I know now that once I longed to be white.
How many more ways? you ask.
Haven't I told you enough?

3) Excerpt from *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros titled "My Name"

"My Name" by Sandra Cisneros

Excerpted from, The House on Mango Street

In English my name means hope. In Spanish it means too many letters. It means sadness, it means waiting. It is like the number nine. A muddy color. It is the Mexican records my father plays on Sunday mornings when he is shaving, songs like sobbing. It was my great-grandmother's name and now it is mine. She was a horse woman too, born like me in the Chinese year of the horse--which is supposed to be bad luck if you're born female-but I think this is a Chinese lie because the Chinese, like the Mexicans, don't like their women strong. My great-grandmother. I would've liked to have known her, a wild, horse of a woman, so wild she wouldn't marry. Until my great-grandfather threw a sack over her head and carried her off. Just like that, as if she were a fancy chandelier. That's the way he did it. And the story goes she never forgave him. She looked out the window her whole life, the way so many women sit their sadness on an elbow. I wonder if she made the best with what she got or was she sorry because she couldn't be all the things she wanted to be. Esperanza. I have inherited her name, but I don't want to inherit her place by the window. At school they say my name funny as if the syllables were made out of tin and hurt the roof of your mouth. But in Spanish my name is made out of a softer something, like silver, not quite as thick as sister's name Magdalena--which is uglier than mine. Magdalena who at least- -can come home and become Nenny. But I am always Esperanza. would like to baptize myself under a new name, a name more like the real me, the one nobody sees. Esperanza as Lisandra or Maritza or Zeze the X. Yes. Something like Zeze the X will do.

4) Excerpt from *Uglies* by Scott Westerfeld (pages 16-18)

There was a certain kind of beauty, a prettiness that everyone could see. Big eyes and full lips like a kid's; smooth, clear skin; symmetrical features; and a thousand other little clues. Somewhere in the backs of their minds, people were always looking for these markers. No one could help seeing them, no matter how they were brought up. A million years of evolution had made it part of the human brain. The big eyes and lips said: I'm young and vulnerable, I can't hurt you, and you want to protect me. And the rest said: I'm healthy, I won't make you sick. And no matter how you felt about a pretty, there was a part of you that thought: If we had kids, they'd be healthy too. I want this pretty person. . . . It was biology, they said at school. Like your heart beating, you couldn't help believing all these things, not when you saw a face like this. A pretty face.

A face like Peris's. "It's me," Tally said. Peris took a step back, his eyebrows rising. He looked down at her clothes. Tally realized she was wearing her baggy black expedition outfit, muddy from crawling up ropes and through gardens, from falling among the vines. Peris's suit was deep black velvet, his shirt, vest, and tie all glowing white. She pulled away.

"Oh, sorry. I won't get you muddy."

"What are you doing here, Tally?" "I just—," she sputtered.

Now that she was facing him, she didn't know what to say. All the imagined conversations had melted away into his big, sweet eyes.

"I had to know if we were still . . ." Tally held out her right hand, the scarred palm facing up, sweaty dirt tracing the lines on it. Peris sighed. He wasn't looking at her hand, or into her eyes. Not into her squinty, narrow-set, indifferently brown eyes. Nobody eyes.

"Yeah," he said. "But, I mean—couldn't you have waited, Squint?"

Her ugly nickname sounded strange coming from a pretty. Of course, it would be even weirder to call him Nose, as she used to about a hundred times a day. She swallowed.

"Why didn't you write me?"

"I tried. But it just felt bogus. I'm so different now." "But we're . . ." She pointed at her scar. "Take a look, Tally." He held out his own hand. The skin of his palm was smooth and unblemished. It was a hand that said: I don't have to work very hard, and I'm too clever to have accidents. The scar that they had made together was gone.

"They took it away."

"Of course they did, Squint. All my skin's new."

Tally blinked. She hadn't thought of that. He shook his head.

"You're such a kid still."

"Elevator requested," said the elevator.

"Up or down?" Tally jumped at the machine voice.

"Hold, please," Peris said calmly. Tally swallowed and closed her hand into a fist.

"But they didn't change your blood. We shared that, no matter what." Peris finally looked directly at her face, not flinching as she had feared he would. He smiled beautifully.

"No, they didn't. New skin, big deal. And in three months we can laugh about this. Unless . . ."

"Unless what?" She looked up into his big brown eyes, so full of concern.

"Just promise me that you won't do any more stupid tricks," Peris said.

"Like coming here. Something that'll get you into trouble. I want to see you pretty."

"Of course."

<u>5) Diary entry from *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank.</u>

SATURDAY, 30 JANUARY 1943

Dearest Kitty,

I'm seething with rage, yet I can't show it. I'd like to scream, stamp my foot, give Mother a good shaking, cry and I don't know what else because of the nasty words, mocking looks and accusations that she hurls at me day after day, piercing me like arrows from a tightly strung bow, which are nearly impossible to pull from my body. I'd like to scream at Mother, Margot, the van Daans, Dussel and Father too: 'Leave me alone, let me have at least one night when I don't cry myself to sleep with my eyes burning and my head pounding. Let me get away, away from everything, away from this world!' But I can't do that. I can't let them see my doubts, or the wounds they've inflicted on me. I couldn't bear their sympathy or their good-humored derision. It would only make me want to scream even more.

Everyone thinks I'm showing off when I talk, ridiculous when I'm silent, insolent when I answer, cunning when I have a good idea, lazy when I'm tired, selfish when I eat one bite more than I should, stupid, cowardly, calculating, etc., etc. All day long I hear nothing but what an exasperating child I am, and although I laugh it off and pretend not to mind, I do mind. I wish I could ask God to give me another personality, one that doesn't antagonize everyone. But that's impossible. I'm stuck with the character I was born with, and yet I'm sure I'm not a bad person. I do my best to please everyone, more than they'd ever suspect in a million years. When I'm upstairs, I try to laugh it off because I don't want them to see my troubles.

More than once, after a series of absurd reproaches, I've snapped at Mother: 'I don't care what you say. Why don't you just wash your hands of me - I'm a hopeless case.' Of course, she'd tell me not to talk back and virtually ignore me for two days. Then suddenly all would be forgotten and she'd treat me like everyone else.

It's impossible for me to be all smiles one day and venomous the next. I'd rather choose the golden mean, which isn't so golden, and keep my thoughts to myself. Perhaps sometime I'll treat the others with the same contempt as they treat me. Oh, if only I could.

Yours, Anne

6) "The Bear that Wasn't" by Frank Tashlin

Introduction

In 1946, a year after the end of World War II, Frank Tashlin published the children's book *The Bear that Wasn't*, an illustrative and poignant parable of the times. In it we read of a big brown bear's struggle with maintaining his identity despite his unfamiliar surroundings. Through the innocent eyes of "the bear" readers consider the challenges all of us face understanding our own identities while navigating others perception of who we are. The voice of "the bear" thus becomes an accessible way to discuss issues of identity with students as well as the role of conformity, authority and leadership may play in their everyday lives.

Once upon a time, in fact it was on a Tuesday, the Bear saw that it was time to go into a cave and hibernate. And that was just what he did. Not long afterward, in fact it was on a Wednesday, lots of workers arrived near that cave. While the Bear slept, they built a great, huge factory.
As winter turned to spring, the Bear awoke and stepped out of his cave. His eyes popped. Where was the forest?
Where was the grass?
Where were the trees?
Where were the flowers?
WHAT HAD HAPPENED?
"I must be dreaming," he said. "Of course, I'm dreaming." But it wasn't a dream. It was real.
Just then the Foreman came out of the factory. "Hey, you get back to work," he said.
The Bear replied, "I don't work here. I'm a Bear."
The Foreman laughed, "That's a fine excuse for a man to keep from doing any work. Saying he's a Bear."
The Bear said, "But, I am a Bear."
The Foreman stopped laughing. He was very mad.
"Don't try to fool me," he said. "You're not a Bear. You're a silly man who needs a shave and wears a fur coat. I'm going to take you to the General Manager."
The General Manager also insisted the Bear was a silly man who needs a shave and wears a fur coat
The Bear said, "No, you're mistaken. I am a Bear."
The General Manager was very mad, too.
The Bear said, "I'm sorry to hear you say that. You see, I am a Bear."
The Third Vice President was even madder.
The Second Vice President was more than mad or madder. He was furious.
The First Vice President yelled in rage.
He said, "You're not a Bear. You're a silly man who needs a shave and wears a fur coat. I'm going to take you to the President."
The Bear pleaded, "This is a dreadful error, you know, because ever since I can remember, I've always been a Bear."
 And that is exactly what the Bear told the President.

"Thank you for telling me," the President said. "You can't be a Bear. Bears are only in a zoo or a circus. They're never inside a factory and that's where you are; inside a factory. So how can you be a Bear?"

The Bear said, "But I am a Bear."

The President said, "Not only are you a silly man who needs a shave and wears a fur coat, but you are also very stubborn. So I'm going to prove it to you, once and for all, that you are not a Bear."

The Bear said, "But I am a Bear."

The President packed his vice presidents and the Bear into a car and drove to the zoo. The Bears in the zoo said the Bear was not a Bear, because if he were a Bear, he would be inside a cage.

The Bear said, "But I am a Bear."

So they all left the zoo and drove to the nearest circus.

"Is he a Bear?" the President asked the circus Bears.

The Bears said no. If he were a Bear he would be wearing a little hat with a striped ribbon holding onto a balloon and riding a bicycle.

The Bear said, "But I am a Bear."

When the President and his vice presidents returned to the factory, they put the Bear to work on a big machine with a lot of other men. The Bear worked on the big machine for many, many months.

After a long, long time, the factory closed and all the workers went away. The Bear was the last one left. As he left the shut-down factory, he saw geese flying south and the leaves falling from the trees. Winter was coming, he thought. It was time to hibernate.

He found a cave and was about to enter when he stopped. "I can't go in a cave. I'm NOT a Bear. I'm a silly man who needs a shave and wears a fur coat."

As the days grew colder and the snow fell, the Bear sat shivering with cold. "I wish I were a Bear," he thought.

Then suddenly he got up and walked through the deep snow toward the cave. Inside it was cozy and snug. The icy wind and cold, cold snow couldn't reach him here. He felt warm all over.

He sank down on a bed of pine boughs and soon he was happily asleep and dreaming sweet dreams, just like all bears do, when they hibernate. So even though the FOREMAN and the GENERAL MANAGER and the THIRD VICE PRESIDENT and the SECOND VICE PRESIDENT and the FIRST VICE PRESIDENT and the PRESIDENT and the ZOO BEARS and the CIRCUS BEARS had said, he was a silly man who needed a shave and wore a fur coat, I don't think he really believed it. Do you? No indeed, he knew he wasn't a silly man, and he wasn't a silly Bear either.

7) Song lyrics of Andy Grammer's "Back Home" (with audio).

I'm gonna need you to raise your glass

I don't care what you put in it

Here's to nights that you can't take back

We live hard but we love to laugh

We all thought that we'd get rich fast

Hop the plane out for greener grass

Found out the green is cash

Don't compare to the friends that last

See, we won't forget where we came from

The city won't change us

We beat to the same drum

No, we won't forget where we came from

The city can't change us

We beat to the same drum, the same drum

La-dah-dah-dah-dah-dah-dah-dah

La-dah-dah-dah-dah-dah-dah-doe

(Hey!)

And no matter where we go

We always find our way back home

[x2]

So here's to the cheap sunglasses

Redbull and minivans and

People who had your back when

The world didn't understand

See, we won't forget where we came from

The city won't change us

We beat to the same drum

No, we won't forget where we came from

The city can't change us

We beat to the same drum, the same drum

La-dah-dah-dah-dah-dah-dah-dah

La-dah-dah-dah-dah-dah-dah-doe

(Hey!)

And no matter where we go

We always find our way back home

[x2]

When ties loosen

We're losin' touch

And fading away

We'll still be raising our cups

To the same damn things

Oh no, the city won't change us [x4]

Won't change us (Hey!)

La-dah-dah-dah-dah-dah-dah-dah

La-dah-dah-dah-dah-dah-dah-doe

And no matter where we go

We always find our way back home

[x3]

We always find our way back home

Yeah, we always find our way back home

8) <u>Song lyrics of Miranda Lambert's "The House that Built Me" (with audio).</u>

I know they say you cant go home again.

I just had to come back one last time.

Ma'am I know you don't know me from Adam.

But these handprints on the front steps are mine.

And up those stairs, in that little back bedroom

is where I did my homework and I learned to play guitar.

And I bet you didn't know under that live oak

my favorite dog is buried in the yard.

I thought if I could touch this place or feel it

this brokenness inside me might start healing.

Out here its like I'm someone else,

I thought that maybe I could find myself

if I could just come in I swear I'll leave.

Won't take nothing but a memory

from the house that built me.

Mama cut out pictures of houses for years.

From 'Better Homes and Garden' magazines.

Plans were drawn, concrete poured,

and nail by nail and board by board

Daddy gave life to mama's dream.

I thought if I could touch this place or feel it

this brokenness inside me might start healing.

Out here its like I'm someone else,

I thought that maybe I could find myself.

If I could just come in I swear I'll leave.

Won't take nothing but a memory

from the house that built me.

You leave home, you move on and you do the best you can.

I got lost in this whole world and forgot who I am.

I thought if I could touch this place or feel it

this brokenness inside me might start healing.

Out here its like I'm someone else,

I thought that maybe I could find myself.

If I could walk around I swear I'll leave.

Won't take nothing but a memory

from the house that built me.

Chapter 4: Contemporary Strategies Library

Overview and Purpose of Contemporary Strategies

Most of the following contemporary strategies can be implemented across all disciplines, but are especially encouraged to be used in the ELA classroom to heighten engagement with a text. The purpose of incorporating contemporary strategies is to reflect a culturally responsive learning environment and to make material/tasks interesting and relevant. The effectiveness of these strategies in the modern classroom will be heightened when used with technology, either by allowing students to use these strategies via the internet (blogs, wikis, social media, etc.) or in a lesson that uses it in a different way. The strategies marked with an asterisk (*) are used in the text set lesson provided in chapter 3; the ones that are not are additional examples of effective contemporary strategies for classroom use. Provided for each strategy is an explanation of purpose and a list of steps for implementation.

*Quotation Mingle:

This strategy requires students to interact with their peers for the purpose of working together to predict what a text will be about. Students will analyze main points of a text they have not read to determine the content of it. This strategy allows students to exercise critical thinking skills such as making inferences, evaluating, questioning, and predicting.

Steps:

1. Prepare materials by choosing relevant quotes from the text and copying them onto index cards or sheets of paper.

2. Give directions; tell students they will be mingling with those who have different quotes to determine the overall topic of a text. Be sure to address behavior expectations.

3. Monitor students while they mingle.

4. Call time and students form groups of four – within their groups, they will talk about their predictions and findings.

5. Facilitate a class discussion on the groups' thoughts.

6. Students read the article and text code (see strategy 3) to identify where their predictions were confirmed or contradicted.

*<u>Read with a Question in Mind:</u>

This strategy requires students to engage with a text on a higher level because they connect it with a pre-discussed, relevant question. Students will need to generate questions and brainstorm individually and in groups about a topic before reading a text. Reading with a Question in Mind also encourages students to read closely and explore the main ideas of a text which is prompted by a pre-discussed question.

Steps:

1. Introduce the topic and allow students to brainstorm with their peers about a few vague questions regarding the topic.

2. Share ideas with the class; allow students to share what questions they have generated or hypotheses they've made.

3. Read the title and second paragraph or a very relevant section of the text that is crucial to the overall point.

4. Students respond aloud once more; encourage students to share their personal reactions.

5. Students brainstorm and discuss the possible answers to the posed question – they should be coming up with points that could potentially be in the text.

6. Read and annotate the text, writing the letter "A" next to points in the text that answer a question they had and the letter "N" next to points that are new (were not discussed).

7. Discuss/share results in small groups or with the whole class; students should compare their findings with their peers.

*<u>Turn and Talk</u>

This is a strategy based on a relatively basic concept: to encourage students to collaborate with one another. Through collaboration, students will exercise skills such as connecting, clarifying, sharing, analyzing, learning, and decision-making. The purpose of this strategy is to inspire students to shift from passive listening to active thinking and participation.

Steps:

1. Students first read a provided text individually, or with a partner/within a group.

2. Students turn to a peer in the class and discuss connections, reactions, and/or questions that they endured while reading.

3. Students/pairs/small groups share these connections, reactions, and/or questions with the whole class. Encourage students to build on other's responses.

*Text Annotation

This strategy is one that most proficient/advanced readers exercise while reading any text. Many students assume that simply highlighting multiple lines of a text is efficient, but teachers should instead teach how to annotate text without a highlighter. When students write marginal notes, mark a small number of most important text, and record their thinking/reactions during reading, the chance of students comprehending the text increase tremendously. The purpose of this strategy is to help students stay focused and engaged while reading, and comprehension becomes more conscious and intentional. Students should be encouraged to do this while reading all texts, not just for specific lessons that focus on text annotating.

> Steps:
>
> 1. Model the strategy using a paragraph that the whole class can see.
>
> 2. Give instructions for the task – reiterate what was modeled and give students explicit directions as to how they are supposed to text annotate.
>
> 3. Students read through the text one time without annotating, and then re-read to mark important points, reactions, thoughts, and/or questions right on the text.
>
> 4. Ask students to pair up with a peer to discuss their annotations.
>
> 5. Have a class discussion about their annotations to facilitate a productive and thoughtful conversation about the text.

*Conversation Questions

This strategy encourages students to use higher-level critical thinking skills that go beyond the usual summarization and recall while thinking about a text. Students are taught how to ask "fat questions", or questions that draw on specific information from the text and encourages students to activate prior knowledge to make appropriate inferences about what they read. This strategy is also used to engage students in meaningful discussions about a text.

> Steps:
>
> 1. Provide instructions for reading and teach students about "fat questions". Have a few examples of these on the board, and explain what makes them "fat". Have students come up with a few on their own
>
> > - *Examples of "fat questions"*: "How could that…", "How did you react when…", "How does ____ relate to your own experiences?", "Give me some examples of…" and etc.
>
> 2. Students first annotate the text (see strategy "Text Annotation") individually; encourage students to underline at least four or five main points of the text.

3. While reading, students write down what they feel would be a good "fat question" to ask about a specific part of the text to the class.

4. Students pair up with a peer to discuss their questions:

> 1. Student A chooses a passage they underlined and the pair reads it aloud.
>
> 2. Student A allows their partner to answer the "fat question" they wrote down next to the passage read. Student A asks a follow-up "fat question" to help Student B reach a deeper understanding of the text.
>
> 3. Student A writes down notes or additional thoughts under their fat question, inspired by Student B's response.
>
> 4. Student B goes through steps 1-3 with Student A.

5. Both students determine which "fat question(s)" initiated the best conversation, and they reflect on why that is their choice.

6. All students engage in a class discussion about their conversations, thoughts, reactions, and responses to specific "fat questions".

Point of View Annotations

This strategy requires students to read and annotate a text through a different perspective besides their own. The students "role play" and read a text through a different lens, in some cases arguing and/or persuading in favor of that role. By annotating a text while impersonating a pre-determined role, students exercise critical thinking skills such as applying, analyzing, and evaluating.

Steps:

1. Determine roles and choose groups based on those roles.

2. Give directions and remind students that they are not 'themselves'. Ensure students understand they need to annotate the text, and write marginal notes through the eyes of their given role.

3. Students read and annotate independently while you monitor.

4. Students discuss in groups their role and point of view within that role. They may have the opportunity to educationally argue with a person of a differing viewpoint.

5. Facilitate a class discussion, allowing some students or groups to share aloud.

Carousel Brainstorming

This strategy requires students to use their prior knowledge to engage with a subject matter before they read a text. It also encourages students to work in small groups, conversing with each other about their ideas so that they may all reach higher-level conclusions and brainstorms. Carousel Brainstorming provides scaffolding for each student so that they may comprehend the information that follows.

Steps:

1. Prepare the lesson by choosing a text and determining appropriate groups (number of groups, number of students per group, and decide whether or not the groups should be predetermined or chosen by the students).

2. Create questions and/or prompts that will spark the student's thinking about the subject of the text while accessing their prior knowledge.

3. Form groups and provide directions: give each group a different colored marker to differentiate between each group's works, designate a time period to spent at each chart, and remind students to work together through discussion after reading the prompt on the chart.

4. Monitor while students brainstorm and build on previous responses: walk around to each group, allowing students to spend the designated time at the first chart brainstorming and writing down their responses. When time is up, instruct the groups to rotate to another chart and build on the previous group(s)' responses. This continues until all groups have been to all four charts.

5. Review each chart in a 'gallery walk' format (see strategy 13 for reference) so that they can see all of the groups' responses to each of the four prompts.

6. Distribute article (text) to each student for independent reading and annotating: display the charts so they are visible to all students and encourage them to underline anything related to what was written on the charts, along with which question it correlates with.

7. Students compare with a partner their annotations and connections from the text.

8. Facilitate a whole class discussion, asking some students to share their findings aloud.

Follow the Characters

When completing this strategy, students create a visual outline to help them organize important information about characters in a text. Follow the Characters helps students to comprehend text through character analysis, allowing them to explore deeper meaning from the text such as overarching themes or messages. By developing interpretations of a text through the exploration of characters, students will find personal meaning in the text and will be able to draw conclusions about the author's purpose and point of view.

Steps:

1. Choose a text that features complex characters and provide a graphic organizer that is divided into five key questions:

       1) What does the character want to do?

       2) What does the character think or say?

       3) How do others feel about the character?

       4) How does the character change?

       5) What is the author's theme or point of view?

2. Model how to use the graphic organizer using a low-level, recognizable story such as a fairy tale.

3. Choose a character to analyze in the chosen text and write it on the graphic organizer.

4. Read independently through the story.

5. Form pairs to work through the first three questions about the character.

6. Form groups of 4 to use the answers for questions one through three to collaboratively answer questions four and five.

7. Repeat for any new, significant characters that arise in the text.

All information regarding the contemporary strategies above were found and paraphrased from the following source: Daniels, H. & Steineke, N. (2011). *Texts and lessons for content-area reading.* Portsmouth, NH.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Modern Times Call for Modern Measures

The current world that exists has evolved tremendously from centuries passed. People born in different decades may even find our modern world nearly unrecognizable; coincidentally, many of these people are still teachers today. The purpose for this research is driven by the fact that collectively all teachers are not adapting their instruction to suit the needs of 21st century learners, despite the fact that our modern world is very different and modern students require different supports and methods of instruction in school. As the former president of the National Council of Teachers of English Kathleen Yancey (2009) express so well, "it is time for us to join the future and support all forms of 21st century literacies inside and outside of school...For in this time and place we want our kids to grow up in a society that values knowledge and hard work and public spirit over owning stuff and looking cool" (p. 1). In order for teachers to combat the latter, they must effectively foster the former in the classroom; in order to foster the former in the classroom, teachers must make material, instruction, and interactions relevant, interesting, engaging, and relatable for the modern student. They must provide an updated learning environment that allows for students to make connections to themselves, disciplinary content, and the world around them.

The Relevance of Educational Technology

As technology grows with great prevalence in our current society, it must become a necessary asset to the modern day classroom. Nearly every student in modern schools is influenced by some type of technology daily, whether that is using a smartphone, tweeting on their Twitter or another social media site, or watching the news on their television. Even though technology is used in many cases outside of school, for purposes that are not academic, it is very relevant in the modern student's world. When teachers make an effort to use this to their

advantage, and implement technology in an academic way, students will engage in the lesson because technology is relevant to their world. In some cases, students can be learning without even realizing they are learning, which is a technique used to help engage students in the lesson. Creating a learning environment that incorporates technology goes beyond benefitting the students when teachers become adamant on receiving professional development opportunities in order to stay current with academic uses of technology. When a school decides to support the integration of technology in the classroom, it makes the most sense to provide professional development to teachers expected to do so; and when professional development becomes consistent, the climate of the school changes by becoming more communicative and team-oriented. Students benefit when teachers work together to achieve more advanced levels of teaching and supporting students.

Culturally Responsive Learning Environment and Instruction

In order to prepare students for college and careers, as required by Common Core State Standards, teachers must create learning environments that bring awareness to and support different cultures, current events, academic abilities, and personal circumstances. By doing so, teachers are able to personally connect material to the majority of students in the modern world. When students can personally connect with material, they are more engaged and find meaning in the time they put in to school. Embracing cultural diversity in the classroom allows for students to be well-rounded and aware, which means they will be less ignorant members of society. These students will find it easier to accept those who are unlike themselves, which will advance their ability to work with others, analyze through different perspectives, and make connections to our world. Teachers must provide cultural awareness of our world to their instruction so that students can succeed in it.

Engaging Students with Material Relevant to the 21st Century

Every student has different interests, hobbies, and experiences, just as each student has

unique needs in the classroom. In order to make learning relevant and interesting, material must

be appropriate to the modern student, in the 21st century. Teachers must make an effort to

become current with contemporary trends in order to cater instruction to it; this can be

challenging for teachers who have been raised and taught in a different era, but they must try.

This is crucial because this is a tool used for heightening engagement; a student engaged with the

material is more likely to develop the high-level thinking skills necessary to exercise in school. It

is also true that students who engage with material tend to struggle less; those who continue to

struggle with material find it easier to complete tasks when they are interested in the work they

are doing. When students connect with the material in school, they find value in learning, which

should carry on into their lives. Colleges and employers want students/employees who persevere,

work hard, and enjoy learning new ways to find success.

The Power of Contemporary Strategies

The use of contemporary strategies with any text helps to make the material interesting

and relevant to students. The strategies explored in this research are only a few of hundreds that

can be applied to texts across disciplines. They help students comprehend and reflect on text, as

well as develop high-level thinking skills appropriate to modern day curriculum. When students

engage and comprehend text while exercising these necessary thinking skills, they become more

literate, which will carry on throughout their post-secondary schooling and/or careers.

Contemporary strategies in the classroom encourage students to learn to think in different ways

about text. Including these in curriculum also provides teachers with new, different ways to

engage students with text so that they are less likely to be bored and more likely to find the activities interesting.

How English Language Arts Must Shape Modern Students

All of the research provided gives secondary English teachers the opportunity to create literate, culturally aware, and successful members of 21st century society. The first step to providing effective instruction for the modern student for teachers is to educate themselves on the world of their students; they must understand modern trends, social expectations, interests, family norms, academic abilities, and more about all of their students. While this is not always an easy task, it is a necessary one to provide high-quality education to influence student success. Teachers of ELA are at a particular advantage because the curriculum allows for students to develop necessary thinking skills that will bring them success during and after secondary schooling. These skills also translate into all disciplines in school, which will help students perform well overall. Teachers must adapt to the modern student's world in order to help them the most to succeed in all aspects of their life.

Bibliography

Angus, R. & DeOliveira, L. C. (2012). Diversity in secondary english classrooms: Conceptions and enactments. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique, 11*(4), 7-18. Retrieved from http://eds.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy2.drake.brockport.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=3&sid=e42040c5-530e-4441-bb49-77917c744416%40sessionmgr104&hid=120

Chenowith, N. H. (2014). Culturally responsive pedagogy and cultural scaffolding in literacy education. *The Ohio Journal of Teacher Education, 44*(1), 35-40. Retrieved from http://eds.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy2.drake.brockport.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=2&sid=4b49c1aa-8cf2-403e-bd60-223d5a654061%40sessionmgr102&hid=120

Chouari, A. (2016). Cultural diversity and the challenges of teaching multicultural classes in the twenty-first century. *Arab World English Journal, 7*(3), 3-17. Retrieved from http://eds.a.ebscohost.com.ezproxy2.drake.brockport.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=4&sid=b37d2a4e-e501-496c-9067-848068e97af5%40sessionmgr4007&hid=4111

Cushner, K.H., McClelland, A., & Safford, P. (2006). Education in a changing society. *Human Diversity in Education.* Retrieved from file:///C:/Users/substitute/Downloads/cushner 5e_ch01.pdf

Daniels, H. & Steineke, N. (2011). *Texts and lessons for content-area reading.* Portsmouth, NH.

Feistritzer, E.C. (2011). Profiles of teachers in the U.S. 2011. *National Center for Education Information.* Retrieved from http://www.edweek.org/media/pot2011final-blog.pdf

Gatson, A., Martinez, J., & Martin, E. P. (2016). Embedding literacy strategies in social studies for eighth-grade students. *Journal of Social Studies Education Research, 7*(1), 73-95. Retrieved from http://eds.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy2.drake.brockport.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=2&sid=b6051bb3-881f-4b8c-909c-f5bc81eb9157%40sessionmgr104&hid=126

Hall, L. A., & Piazza, S. V. (2010). Challenging texts. *English Journal, 99*(5), 91-94. Retrieved from http://www.academia.edu/3011917/Challenging_Texts

Hines, M.B. & Kersulov, M. (2015). Engagement and resistance at Last Chance High: a case study of twenty-first-century literacies and identities in one English classroom. *The Curriculum Journal, 26 (2).* Retrieved from http://www.tandfonline.com.ezproxy2.drake.brockport.edu/doi/pdf/10.1080/09585176.2015.1045536?needAccess=true

The IRIS Center for Training Enhancements. (2009). *Cultural and linguistic differences: What teachers should know.* Retrieved from http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt .edu/module/clde/

Ladson-Billings, G. (1994). *The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of african american children*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass Publishers. Print.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. American Educational Research Journal, 32, 465-491. Retrieved from http://lmcreadinglist.pb works.com/f/Ladson-Billings%20(1995).pdf

Lu, J., Hao, Q., & Jing, M. (2016). Consuming, sharing, and creating content: How young students use new social media in and outside school. *Computers in Human Behavior, 64*, 55-64. Retrieved from http://ac.els-cdn.com/S0747563216304472/1-s2.0-S0747563216304472-main.pdf?_tid=f63b184a-c077-11e6-8e22-00000aab0f01&acdnat=1481553395_8ca8e07bc699e4cb7b82f3a26940d30d

Luk-Fong, P.Y.Y. (2011). Teachers' stories of children coping with family situations and family changes. *Education 3-13*, *39*(4). Retrieved from http://www.tandfonline.com.ezproxy2 .drake.brockport.edu/doi/pdf/10.1080/03004271003776843

Matson, S. F. (2014). Introducing controversy in a secondary english language arts classroom to invoke critical thinking. *Critical Pedagogy*. Retrieved from http://eds.a.ebscohost.com.ez proxy2.drake.brockport.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=3&sid=9b24c264-bc9a-4683-9674-e728ae984ec8%40sessionmgr4008&hid=4111

Mozua, C. & Barrett-Greenly, T. (2015). Bridging the app gap: An examination of a professional development initiative on mobile learning in urban schools. *Computers & Education, 88*. Retrieved from http://ac.els-cdn.com/S0360131515001104/1-s2.0-S0360131515001104-main.pdf?_tid=6a2a6b00-7a98-11e6-b488-00000aab0f27&acdnat=1473870751 _22b2257d2dd98258ad7d057d8d6ea471

Robinson, K. (2016). The effect of technology integration on high school students' literacy achievement. *Teaching English with Technology, 16*(3). Retrieved from http://eds.a.ebscohost.com.ezproxy2.drake.brockport.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid =7af24e03-6560-4fb9-a88c-2b9c07b02250%40sessionmgr4010&vid=2&hid=4102

Sweeny, S.M. (2010). Writing for the instant messaging and text messaging generation: Using new literacies to support writing instruction. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy 54*(2). Retrieved from http://eds.a.ebscohost.com.ezproxy2.drake.brockport.edu/ehost/pdf viewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=8c23e637-cbf5-46d9-a870-324023ea8f92%40sessionm gr4010&hid=4102

Turner, D. (2010). Student-centered teaching: A look at student choice in the classroom. Retrieved from http://www.usma.edu/cfe/literature/turner_10.pdf

U.S. Department of Education. (2016). Student motivation and engagement in literacy learning. *All About Adolescent Literacy*. Retreieved from http://www.adlit.org/article/27759/

Wendt, J.L. (2013). Combating the crisis in adolescent literacy: Exploring literacy in the secondary classroom. *American Secondary Education, 41*(2). Retrieved from http://eds.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy2.drake.brockport.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid =1&sid=91872d5a-17dc-49ef-aa71-bce4fb02f116%40sessionmgr106&hid=104

Wolf, S., Aber, J. L., & Morris, P. A. (2015). Patters of time use among low-income urban minority adolescents and associations with academic outcomes and problem behaviors. *J Youth Adolescence, 44,* 1208-1225. doi: 10.1007/s10964-015-0294-0

Worrell, J.L. (n.d.). *Five strategies to address cultural and linguistic diversity in the inclusive classroom*. Retrieved from http://www.wtamu.edu/webres/File/Journals/ MCJ/Volume4/ worrell.pdf

Xia, M., Fosco, G. M., & Feinberg, M. E. (2015). Examining reciprocal influences among family climate, school attachment, and academic self-regulation: Implications for school success. *Journal of Family Psychology, 30*(4), 442-452. Retrieved from http://eds.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy2.drake.brockport.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid =3719a534-b09d-4614-a767-81eb5c765590%40sessionmgr102&vid=6&hid=127

Yancey, K. B. (2009). Writing in the 21st century. *A Report from the National Council of Teachers of English*. Retrieved from http://www.ncte.org/library/NCTEFiles/Press/ Yancey_final.pdf

Zong, J. & Batalova, J. (2016). Frequently requested statistics on immigrants and immigration in the united states. *Migration Information Source*. Retrieved from http://www.migration policy.org/article/frequently-requested-statistics-immigrants-and- immigration-united- states