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## Teaching Tolerance Through English Language Arts

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TEACHING TOLERANCE THROUGH ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

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A Final Portfolio

Submitted to the English Department of  
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### Analytical Narrative

The evolution of the pedagogy of English Language Arts (ELA) has played a significant role in my learning experience at Bowling Green State University (BGSU). Specifically, the transformation of the subject area as a vehicle for the instruction of complex content and social consciousness extending beyond surface level use of language for communication sparked my interest. This unique potential of the subject area inspired my substantive research and unit plans, which emphasize the importance of English Language Arts education in the context of tolerance. The projects that have been carefully selected for this portfolio are individually representational of the power of ELA in modern education. They address and encourage the development of approaches to socially relevant issues and methodology. Each work chosen positions ELA within the endeavor of teaching tolerance by embedding its instruction into ideology and instructional strategies that simultaneously focus on the augmentation of critical reading, writing, speaking, listening and thinking skills. Teaching English Language Arts presents the unique opportunity to introduce these essential competencies in the context of social awareness. The research project and unit plans included in this portfolio strive to reveal the potential impact of ELA on students' understanding of empathy, race, gender, educational opportunities and financial access among other social issues. Beyond simply complementing one another, these works magnify the positive social change that ELA education can have in the lives of individual students and in the world they occupy.

The first project introduces a concept best expressed in its title, "Teaching Literature with a Constructive Social Purpose." In many ways this project is representative of the full circle experience of my time at BGSU. Originally written as an 8-page critical essay in my first course of the Master's in English with a Specialization in English Teaching program, it has become a

substantive research project which expresses a perspective of teaching ELA that is grounded in extensive research and analysis. I chose to revise and extend upon this work because I believe its message to be of paramount importance in the context of today's society. The essay started by introducing the idea that ELA serves a social purpose and has been expanded into a substantive research project that effectively communicates and confirms the role of ELA instruction in students' development of tolerance through incorporation of diverse themes and ideas. The concepts detailed in this work are also reflected throughout the other projects in the portfolio. The paper is positioned at the start of the portfolio as a means of introducing the common thread that is evident in each teaching unit. The research referenced in the paper is supported and complemented by the methods of practical application detailed in the three individual projects.

The second project chosen for the portfolio is a teaching unit titled, "Appositives and Action Verb Brushstrokes in the Context of Prejudice and Tolerance." The focus of this piece was to embed grammatical instruction while also providing critical opportunities for investigation and discussion of prejudice and tolerance. In many ways it echoes the ideas presented in my substantive research project and provides insight into the real-life application of education that aligns with the acquisition of tolerance and understanding of societal problems and perspectives. In order to revise this piece, I improved the discussion of the relevance of individual state standards. I also enhanced the rationale by incorporating additional scholarship. The methodology and strategies suggested by both Harry Noden and Constance Weaver had a distinct impact on this project by affirming the need to move away from teaching grammar in isolation and toward teaching grammar in meaningful and authentic contexts. The construction of this unit was also influenced by my own background in World Language education. Throughout my Spanish and Secondary Education undergraduate course work at The College of

New Jersey, I learned about the way in which grammar is acquired by the brain and the necessity of teaching grammar through embedding it into purposeful instruction rather than making it the focus of a lesson. Choosing this unit for the portfolio is especially important as it captures my philosophy of grammar instruction and illustrates how language can be used and taught while highlighting socially relevant themes and information.

My third project, while also a teaching unit, seeks to delve into the specific theme of rhetoric related to gender reform and is titled, “Persuasive Speaking and Writing: The Rhetoric of Gender Reform.” This project brings the voices of historically significant women to the forefront of instruction. The works chosen as readings for this unit have been intentionally narrowed down to exclusively speeches. This is a genre that has perhaps at times been underrepresented in education as ELA courses typically select novels, short-stories and plays for primary texts. This project allows students to explore the power of spoken word in a way that also acknowledges the battle against injustice that women and other marginalized genders have faced. The revision of the unit was largely concentrated on broadening its scope to move away from a binary definition of gender. Originally the unit had focused exclusively on women, whereas now a lesson has been added to increase the representation of other genders that are often subjected to prejudice and criticism. Of paramount importance are the changes made to this project to redefine how gender is approached in the classroom and presented to students. The value of teaching students to understand gender as a social construct cannot be understated as it can be the catalyst for positive change in a society that has traditionally stigmatized those who do not identify their gender according to their sex at birth.

The final project of the portfolio is a teaching unit designed to emphasize a work of Young Adult (YA) literature, *With the Fire on High* by Elizabeth Acevedo. The instruction is

driven by the primary text and concentrates on the author's references to social inequities. Activities were planned to compliment the text and reinforce understanding not only of the novel, but of the issues that are presented through the characters and their experiences. The revision of this unit predominantly pertained to enhancing the rationale by citing and analyzing the ways in which the text is suited to the unit and how it is applied as a piece of literature in order to help students better understand injustices that may or may not affect them. In this way, the unit shows that adding more recent and relevant YA novels into curriculum helps students by allowing them to feel more represented and/or broadening their perspective of the world. Though the book is the driving force of the unit, it also serves as an example of the positive impact and possibilities that emerge through incorporating modern YA literature.

Writing and creating each of the aforementioned works has substantially increased my understanding of English Language Arts as a content area. The Master's in English with a Specialization in English Teaching program has provided me with an exceptionally broadened perspective of education as a whole as well as the necessary preparation to effectively teach English. Most importantly, the coursework and the assembly of this portfolio has instilled in me a passion for teaching English progressively by maximizing the potential of my own instruction to teach students in a way that enhances their skills while also preparing them to be socially aware global citizens. Though the portfolio represents an end to my time at BGSU, it also represents a beginning to my career in English Language Arts instruction as I seek to obtain a teaching endorsement in the subject area. While I continue to pursue my role as an educator, I will always strive toward the goal of empowering students by teaching tolerance through ELA.

### Teaching Literature with a Constructive Social Purpose

The objectives of teaching literature can be defined and prioritized in many different ways. Teachers must promote student interest and engagement in texts while simultaneously stimulating deeper understanding of literary concepts and structures. In the pursuit of these goals, teachers of literature have the potential to exact a strong degree of influence over the way students read. The power of this influence to have a positive, negative or simply neutral impact on society makes it a function of the profession that is perhaps too often overlooked. How students learn to approach and experience literature not only determines how they interact with literary works and other forms of media, but also how they understand and examine important issues presented through texts that they may encounter throughout their own lives. In this way, the role of the teacher to create good readers aligns with the significant potential to prepare responsible citizens. This unique relationship between teaching and progress establishes a demand for methods and strategies that encourage higher level thinking and critical consciousness. The act of teaching students to read with a constructive social purpose prepares them to be better readers, better thinkers and better citizens.

Many argue that the primary focus of teaching literature should be to help students learn to enjoy reading. Some theories suggest that critical skills presented to young readers can corrupt the process of reading, detracting from the experience and subsequently deterring students from the practice altogether. This sentiment is explained and countered by Gerald Graff in his essay, "Disliking Books at an Early Age." He says, "The assumption was that leaving me alone with literary texts themselves, uncontaminated by the interpretations and theories of professional critics, would enable me to get on the closest possible terms with those texts. But being alone with the texts only left me feeling bored and helpless, since I had no language with which to



make them mine” (Graff 45). The development of literary skills allows students to interact with texts in a more meaningful way, encourages higher level thinking, and prevents them from encountering the frustration described by Graff. Furthermore, not providing students with the instruction necessary to fully understand the texts that they are presented with leaves them unprepared for the future.

Many of the tools that teachers give students to read serve a larger purpose, specifically a constructive social one. The ability to think critically, to identify problems and discern prejudices are amongst many valuable skills whose applicability extends far beyond the classroom. This is especially true in certain social circumstances and contexts. Just as Graff felt helpless without an understanding of interpretive conventions, many are left vulnerable to the impact of literature that is presented with malicious intent. Throughout history, works of literature, along with other forms of media and propaganda have been employed as a tool for forced assimilation and indoctrination. In his essay, “The Rise of English,” Terry Eagleton suggests that literature poses a threat to society as it is frequently abused by governments and sources of power to exact influence. He asserts, “Literature would rehearse the masses in the habits of pluralistic thought and feeling, persuading them that more than one viewpoint than theirs existed- namely, that of their masters” (51). This statement is supported by countless historical events, but one of the most explicit examples is the Cuban Literacy Campaign of 1961.

Fidel Castro and Che Guevara sought to eradicate illiteracy in Cuba. Though the goal of education of the public may imply a virtuous endeavor, their intentions were not entirely pure. As stated by Arlo Kempf in “The Cuban Literacy Campaign at 50: Formal and Tacit Learning in Revolutionary Education,” “In addition to introducing the rural and disenfranchised populations to universal public education, people were simultaneously inculcated in revolutionary ideals of

equality, collectivism and uncompromising support for the new government” (4). As young adults and teenagers were sent in groups to rural locations to teach Cuban citizens to read and write, the objective of literacy was secondary to that of the interests of the government. The texts and learning materials that the educators were instructed to use were explicitly designed to emphasize the benefits and achievements of the Revolution. In this way, the campaign itself, though extremely successful in its goal of increasing literacy, was also a guise for disseminating positive feelings towards the Revolution and Socialist government. Its success can be attributed to the strategy of taking advantage of groups who inherently lacked critical thinking skills due to their socio-economic status and minimal access to education.

Today, there are still many problematic perspectives conveyed through literature and often presented as fact even when they are opinion based. Whether it be fantasy novels or non-fiction, students benefit greatly from the ability to discern what constitutes bias in their reading. This is particularly true in the context of the textbooks that are used in high schools in the United States to guide the instruction of American History. These texts are often relatively skewed to reflect a favorable viewpoint of the United States’ actions. At times, the perspective taken by the author(s) even borders on nationalistic. This hinders students’ development as global citizens and detracts from their ability to achieve open-minded attitudes. Additionally, texts that are slanted may lead to confusion and a gross misunderstanding of topics and actions that should be addressed and analyzed. Even in its sixteenth addition, the popular United States history textbook, *The American Pageant*, uses vague language to avoid approaching uncomfortable parts of history. In a discussion of plantation slavery, the textbook states, “White masters all too frequently would force their attentions on female slaves, fathering a sizable mulatto population, most of which remained enchained” (347). Here, students are shielded from the full depiction

and revelation of the country's horrific oppression of people of color. In the slew of human rights violations committed during the extensive period of slavery, the rape of many innocent black women is glossed over and alluded to superficially rather than called out and condemned for its unfathomable inhumanity. Students will not only encounter this variety of misrepresentation of events in history class, but in other books, media and propaganda. When the instruction of reading is rooted in a constructive social purpose, emphasis is placed on investigation and analysis allowing students to reveal the underlying meaning of ambiguous materials.

Though the practice of capturing American History in a wholly favorable and patriotic light is hardly comparable to the actions of the Cuban Literacy Campaign, both instances are reflective of the way literature can be used as a weapon of manipulation. The protection and preparation of students to identify and evaluate bias is paramount to both their individual education and the future of society as a whole. The necessity of teaching students to assess and uncover the meaning of what they read through careful critical tactics is acknowledged by subject areas beyond just English Language Arts. An effort and instructional strategy known as "The American History Textbook Project" encourages students to approach the information presented in textbooks with interest tamed by skepticism. Its methodical treatment of this type of literature is representative of the ways in which education is evolving to promote and praise independent thought. In the article, "Re-Reading the American History Textbook in the Global Age," Jordan M. Reed and Christina Connor state, "The textbook is a troubled element of history's past pedagogical practice. These problems continue today. However, using the lessons of the AHTP [American History Textbook Project] will make a largely outmoded pedagogical tool more useful" (210). Teaching students to explore multiple perspectives of a work of literature improves their education instead of undermining it. With literature being a cornerstone

of English Language Arts education, it is pivotal that teachers of English adopt a stance that facilitates the critical analysis of all texts in the way that the American History Textbook Project does for history textbooks.

Literature will inevitably continue to be abused for selfish and political purposes. In an effort to withstand these forces, students must be taught to read through an analytical lens. Teachers should present students with literary criticism and critical strategies in order to encourage them to question the intent of literature along with the ways it has been and could be interpreted. There have been various suggestions for strategies to approaching literature with caution and skepticism depending on the author's perceived motives. David Richter describes Judith Fetterley's approach to reading in the face of works that potentially serve to proliferate patriarchal ideology: "She suggests that one possible response is to become a 'resisting reader'- to read against the grain of the text when it asks one to reject one's own femininity" (Richter 243). While students should not be explicitly encouraged to adhere to such a strategy, they should certainly be guided to understand it. Students should be provided with the means to not only interpret works, but to challenge them. It is the responsibility of educators to teach students to distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable influences of written works. Presenting criticisms of literature alongside the works themselves offers students a starting point from which they may begin to comprehend the different ways individual pieces can be understood. Lessons and discussions that acknowledge the various ways of approaching literature foster an increased comprehension of interpretive conventions. Students benefit from this type of instruction because it leads to the development of literary competency and a deeper understanding of the possible meanings and most accepted meanings of a work. It also serves to

drive students to interpret the work in unique ways that stem from informed analysis rather than baseless hypothesis. Jonathan D. Culler stresses this idea:

None would deny that literary works, like most other objects of human attention, can be enjoyed for reasons that have little to do with understanding and mastery — that texts can be quite blatantly misunderstood and still be appreciated for a variety of personal reasons. But to reject the notion of misunderstanding as a legislative imposition is to leave unexplained the common experience of being shown where one went wrong, of grasping a mistake and seeing why it was a mistake. (120-121)

Developing literary competence does not narrow down the ways in which a student might interpret a work. Instead, it exposes them to and grounds them in strategies that can be applied to understand the work in a greater number of meaningful ways, thus encouraging critical thinking and responsible reading.

Teaching students to read responsibly means instilling in them the motivation to approach literature with a constructive social purpose. Educators have an obligation to do so regardless of the context of a work, but the urgency of this practice is especially apparent in some of the most commonly taught works of literature. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* provides an example of a work that requires young readers to consider historical context as well as dialogue function. The n-word is used frequently throughout the text and its inclusion stands to be dangerously misunderstood by students if the appropriate information is not provided to them ahead of time. Teachers must prevent students from becoming desensitized to the word, while also effectively communicating its significance in the text and in history. This stimulates social awareness and allows students to apply critical reading skills in order to interpret the text in a meaningful and mature way. The same principle applies to works that address or allude to gender, religion,

sexuality and other topics associated with oppression and prejudice. This kind of literature has the potential to create a context for and facilitate discussions that contribute to students' worldviews. In the case of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, attention to the use of the n-word in its literary context and throughout history may evolve into a larger conversation about race and racism.

Likewise, many modern texts written for young adults not only provide opportunities for conversations of controversial topics, but actively facilitate significant discussions and activities related to diversity, prejudice and tolerance. The incorporation of such texts, either through class or independent reading, provides students with a more inclusive understanding of others. Modern YA literature is unique in that it generally moves away from the sterilization of multi-cultural stories and histories. It presents diverse young readers with opportunities to see themselves represented and to begin to understand the experiences of others that differ greatly from their own. This is acknowledged and encouraged by the National Council of Teachers of English. In their "Position Statement on Indigenous Peoples and People of Color (IPOC) in English and Language Arts Materials," the NCTE declares:

...to the extent that school does exert influence, it is essential that its materials foster positive student self-images deeply rooted in a sense of personal dignity. Additionally, school materials should also foster the development of attitudes grounded in respect for and understanding of the diverse cultures of American society. Classroom teachers are immediately responsible for continuing action to accomplish these ends. (2)

Through this statement, it is clear that teachers have a responsibility to utilize and present materials that are diverse by nature. This is necessitated by the importance of social progress and should not be abandoned due to attempted censorship by school boards or parents. Choosing and

introducing books that expand students' perspectives accounts for a significant part of what English teachers must do to meet the obligations of teaching with a constructive social purpose and helping students to become better global citizens.

Examples of books that aide in and instigate discussions of important topics are nearly endless given the variety of young adult literature that has been produced in recent years. While it is largely accepted that students benefit from choice reading, teachers have the ability to guide students' selections of texts and in some cases provide class novels to be required reading. In both of these instances, the English teacher wields the power to open students' minds, to encourage engagement with topics and stories that are otherwise deemed too sensitive or controversial for discussion. A single book or chapter or sentence might change a student's entire worldview. When students are permitted to interact with content that they have been denied access to for whatever reason, their ability to interpret both literature and life experiences is naturally expanded.

In teaching with a constructive social purpose, teachers become the facilitator of a powerful experience, but all the while allow students to develop critical thinking without a definitive directive of the conclusions they must draw. This is addressed by Angela S. Raines in her article entitled, "Louise Rosenblatt: An Advocate for Nurturing Democratic Participation through Literary Transactions."

If educators wish to foster students' critical reading and thinking abilities, then certainly students need to be able to develop, trust, and give voice to their own aesthetic experiences with literature. However, if students are taught that the goal of reading, even for literary texts, is to extract a correct, public meaning (usually one established by the teacher's guide), they will adopt efferent stances for reading that promote factual rather

than thoughtful comprehension, inhibit critical-thinking skills, and limit preparation for enfranchisement in a democracy. (30)

The balance between instructing students on how to interpret literature while not exacting excessive influence is an important one to strike. It rests at the very heart of teaching with a constructive social purpose in an effort to claim and carry out the responsibility of preparing students for active engagement in society. Teachers of English have a direct impact on the way in which students see themselves and the world around them. Their guidance is crucial, but only when tempered by caution to not detract from students' independent analysis and growth of perspectives.

An example of a text that presents the opportunity to help students to develop or even transform their existing points of view on a topic that could be considered divisive by current standards is *All American Boys*. Without naming the Black Lives Matter movement, the work nearly directly comments on the emotions, struggles and tensions associated with it in a way that is made accessible to young readers. The story follows that of a black male high school student who is brutally assaulted by police in their attempt to arrest him for a crime he did not commit, while simultaneously following the perspective of a white male high school student who witnessed the attack. The author juxtaposes the social tensions and high emotions of both characters as they struggle to understand and confront injustice from their respective contexts. The text allows students ample opportunities to connect with different characters in different ways. Specifically, the content lends itself to exposing the complexity of situations that involve social justice in a way that helps students to reveal, on their own and through the guidance of a teacher, the notion that opposing views are often unfairly oversimplified and polarized. The humanization of multiple perspectives can aid students in their development of appreciation for



differing opinions. Perhaps one of the best illustrations of this occurs as Quinn, the white male who witnessed the attack, grapples with his growing realization that white privilege exists. He narrates:

Now I was thinking about how, if I wanted to, I could walk away and not think about Rashad, in a way that English or Shannon or Tooms or any of the guys at school who were not white could not. Even if they didn't know Rashad, they couldn't just ignore what happened to him; they couldn't walk away...But I didn't have to be [afraid] because my shield was that I was white. (180)

Showing the reality and rawness of Quinn's revelation positions students so that they can see that beliefs and values are not static. They can and should evolve to take into account new knowledge, new experiences and new emersions of empathy.

Though *All American Boys* focuses predominantly on race, young adult literature can help to explore many major social issues. Embracing opportunities to incorporate these valuable texts constitutes and promotes teaching literature with a constructive social purpose. Some novels for young adults go so far as to tackle or at least provide the context for discussion of multiple critical themes. *With the Fire on High* by Elizabeth Acevedo is one such text. The novel beautifully incorporates commentary and experiences related to gender, sexuality, race, healthcare, higher education and gentrification amongst other topics. While some are only briefly touched upon, the author does so in a manner that is both accessible and thought provoking.

Through the experiences of the main character and narrator, Emoni, readers explore these themes as they are embedded within a deeply personal storyline that does not explicitly champion social justice, but rather exposes it as a reality. Emoni is a high schooler and a mom living in Philadelphia. She is fiercely self-aware that from an outsider's perspective, her life is stigmatized

as taboo. Yet, her self-awareness and overall social consciousness gives way to bigger conversations that should be raised in the classroom. In a description of where she lives, Emoni explains:

Maybe it's more than just a tale of two cities; it's a tale of two neighborhoods. On the one hand, people are scared to come over here because they say this part of town is dangerous, "undeveloped," and part of me thinks, good, keep out, then. But everyone knows that the good things like farmers' markets, and updated grocery stores, and consistent trash pickup only happen when outsiders move in. (86)

The depiction of the faults associated with gentrification is something students often have very little understanding of unless they have experienced it themselves. In this way, the book explores serious topics in a digestible manner as it lends itself to the candid and relatable words of its narrator whose experiences may draw out newfound understanding of society. Avoiding the presentation of events and ideas that may be stereotyped as difficult or divisive does no good in the preparation of students to build and lead the world into a brighter future. It is through the deliberate and meaningful teaching of literature with a constructive social purpose that real change can be prompted.

The discussion of potentially sensitive or divisive issues that results from the critical reading of texts necessitates careful monitoring on behalf of the teacher but should be encouraged and embraced instead of suppressed. In the article, "From Awareness to Action: Young Adult Literature as a Road to Reflection and Catalyst for Change," the authors assert that, "By asking young people to consider (and question) their assumptions about others and themselves as they read, we might guide them in gaining both a critical perspective of the society in which they live as well as a commitment to action in the attempt to improve it" (1). In many

instances, the teacher has a responsibility to address the hot-button issues that present in texts in order to preserve a positive learning environment and communicate acceptable views and behaviors. The toxicity of discrimination and corruption for example, must be asserted instead of overlooked. There is an ethical obligation to distinguish between right and wrong; between acceptable bias and oppression. The way students understand injustice in literature undoubtedly affects the way they come to understand it in society.

Yet, great care must be taken to not insert a political agenda or over-emphasize one's own opinion. Gertrude Himmelfarb harshly warns against doing so in her essay, "The New Advocacy and the Old." She describes the personal and the political as one, suggesting advocacy is a way of, "...imposing the professor's agenda upon the student, who is once again made hostage to the professor's preoccupations" (Himmelfarb 88). While there is definitely a balance to be achieved in stimulating social awareness and filtering out one's own politics, teachers should not completely refrain from sharing their own opinions for a number of reasons. Teachers that share their views, in an appropriate and respectful way, can develop a stronger rapport with students, creating an environment that inspires honest discussion and genuine interactions. More importantly, the skill of communicating one's views in a meaningful way with respect for those who disagree is something that should be consistently modelled, especially in today's society. All too often students see how teachers refrain from discussing contentious topics and subsequently disengage themselves from any interaction involving such topics. This common occurrence follows students into an adulthood as they proceed with the misunderstanding that conversations about these topics are off-limit, heated and defined by defensiveness on both sides. By depriving students of the chance to learn *how* to talk about social issues, educators do them a great disservice. Instead, teachers should explore divisive issues with students as they relate to

content, regardless of its convenience or perceived comfortability. Students cannot be expected to generate purposeful conversation about important topics without first being immersed in it. The authentic demonstration of these skills is crucial to students' development of them. In a literature classroom that encourages expression of analysis and opinions, students learn to articulate their thoughts, feelings and perspectives.

Students also improve their ability to recognize the influence their own experiences and developed opinions have on the way they interpret what they read. This sense of self-awareness enhances the way students interact with literature and with others. The process of reflection reinforces the practice of evaluating and questioning opinions and values which may in turn be influenced by the texts themselves. Some students, depending on their level, may operate under the assumption that there is not a huge degree of variation in how others interpret a text. As they grow to understand the diversity of perspectives that exist through critical reading and other literary strategies, they form an appreciation for them, particularly when provided with the framework for consistent open-mindedness and respectful examination of issues in an academic context. Like Martha Nussbaum says in her essay, "The Literary Imagination," "We are seeking, overall, the best fit between our considered moral and political judgements and the insights offered by our reading" (363). This practice models the behavior of informed and responsible citizens.

Furthermore, the practice of critical reading, particularly of literature that raises social justice concerns, offers the necessary conditions to help students distinguish between human rights and politics. In recent years and events, American politics have begun to more deeply associate political parties and platforms with the belief in or against human rights. This poses a significant dilemma in public schools where teachers are typically warned to avoid political

discussions at all costs. Yet, at what cost to society do teachers avoid discussions about injustice, civil rights and what should be considered common decency? The toll is insurmountable. In an introduction to her article, "Teaching Social Justice through Young Adult Literature," Jacqueline N. Glasgow theorizes:

If we expect students to take social responsibility, they must explore ideas, topics, and viewpoints that not only reinforce but challenge their own. In an increasingly abrasive and polarized American society, social justice education has the potential to prepare citizens who are sophisticated in their understanding of diversity and group interaction, able to critically evaluate social institutions, and committed to working democratically with diverse others. (54)

It cannot and should not be expected that students develop the inherent ability to differentiate between right and wrong without substantial instruction on how to analyze complex topics that affect their lives and the lives of others. By infusing these topics into literature and amplifying their importance in the classroom, teachers are equipping young citizens for active social engagement. At a time when students often are only exposed to politics and civil rights in the context of memes and social media platforms, Language Arts educators must claim their role in leading youth towards responsible and sensible evaluations of current events and what constitutes social justice. A future where human rights are respected and acknowledged as the norm begins with the ability of students to think critically and independently, to explore information in search of facts instead of opinions aligned with their beliefs and to distinguish oppressive actions from social reform. This all begins with the instruction of literature and critical reading.

Students benefit most from the act of reading when they are given the tools to consider and analyze the perspectives and issues that are presented in a way that helps them to balance standing judgments with proposed influences and criticisms. The facilitation and encouragement of this type of analysis serves to generate social consciousness by cultivating self-awareness and global awareness. Teaching literature provides a dynamic and optimal context for the application of these practices. When a pedagogical approach like the one suggested in this essay is accompanied by deliberate literature choices such as YA literature and reinforcement of responsible reading, students become immersed in the experience of learning about literature in a way that prepares them for participation in society rather than simply the acts of reading or writing. As students build these skills within a purposeful context, they can begin to harness their own potential to create positive change. While ELA education has traditionally focused on preparation for the workforce, this shift in pedagogy can become a catalyst for consciousness and civil action. By affirming the importance of reading with a constructive social purpose, teachers prepare students for success while promoting and contributing to social progress.

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## Appositives and Action Verb Brushstrokes in the Context of Prejudice and Tolerance

### RATIONALE

The topic for this project was selected based on efforts to embed acceptance and tolerance into English Language Arts instruction. Teaching tolerance has become of particular importance in order to promote and sustain an accepting society where individuals respect one another as equals. Embedding tolerance education throughout primary and secondary education helps to prepare students to be conscious and informed citizens. As society faces the challenges of building a better future and suppressing fear and animosity generated by misunderstanding or misconceptions of differences, the need for tolerance initiatives in education has become readily apparent. Specifically, in the content area of English Language Arts, tolerance can be both approached within topics relevant to the course and enacted by the instructor in an effort to help to explain, acknowledge and address the ways in which language has been used as a tool for oppression. In the article, “This Ain’t Another Statement! This is a Demand for Black Linguistic Justice!” the questions are posed, “How has Black Lives Mattered in the context of language education? How has Black Lives Mattered in our research, scholarship, teaching, disciplinary discourses, graduate programs, professional organizations, and publications? How have our commitments and activism as a discipline contributed to the political freedom of Black peoples?” (Baker-Bell, et. al.). Through careful selection of resources and application of pedagogical strategies, this unit will incorporate and examine these questions by positioning race and racial inequality as the focal point of activities and instruction.

English Language Arts classrooms provide the perfect context for students to interact with topics and materials that help them to better understand and appreciate differences in race, class, gender, sexual orientation and religion amongst other aspects of identity. By reading,

writing and discussing materials that allow students to examine bias and prejudice, this unit, which is intended for High School Juniors, offers a platform for shifts in thinking and the development of awareness. These lessons are designed to draw attention to stereotypes and more specifically, prejudice against black people and the significant contributions of individuals who participated in the Civil Rights Movement. With the timing of Black History Month in mind, this unit brings light to an important social issue while fostering acceptance and helping students to develop valuable writing skills.

By incorporating the instruction of appositives and action verbs in this unit using Harry R. Noden's strategies from *Image Grammar: Teaching Grammar as Part of the Writing Process*, the grammatical structures are presented in an authentic and highly contextualized manner. This facilitates the use of language and grammar in especially meaningful ways that do not isolate or over-emphasize structure. Instead, students are encouraged to focus on the practical application of grammar through activities that engage and appeal to the imagination. Noden describes how imagery is central to improving student writing. He says:

Words that shroud specific images give a reader's imagination very little to visualize. If a student describes Maxine as 'nervous,' he is firing an image blank, shooting with a fogged camera lens. The reader's imagination travels through a mental desert, barren, devoid of colorful details. However, if instead the writer describes Maxine 'glancing at the midnight moon shadows from one side of the dark alleyway to the other, biting her nails as rivulets of perspiration soak her eyebrows,' then the reader's mind turns on an internal video projector and participates in the experience (29).

This notion presented by Noden was crucial to the inspiration for and development of the following unit. His pedagogical approach influenced the activities and procedures planned for

each lesson. Adaptations have been made to facilitate the teaching of tolerance by using appositives to realize and examine stereotypes and bias. Action verbs are also used to help students recognize the importance of notable contributions towards the Civil Rights Movement and efforts toward equality. These two grammatical components were carefully selected to be integrated into this unit based on their ability to help present and model prejudiced versus non-prejudiced attitudes and actions. In Noden's original brush stroke assignment, additional elements of grammar including absolutes, participles and adjectives out of order are also incorporated (18). However, the number of grammatical components addressed in this unit is reduced in order to accommodate an in-depth overview in which both appositives and action verbs are deeply embedded within curricular content.

The justification for moving away from teaching grammar in isolation and moving toward a more creative approach is not only encouraged by Noden. Constance Weaver makes similar suggestions in her book, *Grammar to Enrich and Enhance Writing*. She offers significant input and evidence as to how and why teaching grammar outside of meaningful contexts should be frowned upon. She states, "Teaching grammar is isolation from writing- that is, teaching the grammar book instead of helping writers write- has been found again and again to have little if any positive effect on most students' writing" (14). This supports Noden's efforts to approach grammar as a tool for improving writing rather than a set of rules that must be memorized and adhered to. Grammar should be taught as a natural part of writing instead of as a separate entity entirely.

The language used throughout the lesson plans also reflects the principles and ideas presented by Harry Noden in *Image Grammar: Teaching Grammar as Part of the Writing Process*. Noden describes appositives and action verbs as "brushstrokes" to help students see

writing as more of an artistic and visual process. He says, “For student writers, learning to *show* is central in their journey toward powerful prose. Showing engages the reader’s mind as a catalyst for visualization” (Noden 3). With this in mind, the unit makes use of picture prompts, which allows students to explore the sensory overlap between writing and seeing. The lessons also implement some specific activities and assignments recommended by Noden, which are adapted to the context and objectives of the unit. Strategies such as asking students to close their eyes and picture a scene based on a description that is provided verbally by the teacher give students the opportunity to interact with grammatical components in new and interesting ways (Noden 6). While building the ability to distinguish grammatical structures, these exercises also help students to see the impact and function of language rather than simply learn a rule. Another assignment that is suggested by Noden and modified for the unit is “The Brushstroke Assignment” (Noden 18). The assignment has been reduced to reflect the incorporation of concepts that have been covered and to allow students to build both research and writing skills. The implementation of these assignments and strategies serves to engage the students and prompt more reflective thinking and meaningful writing.

The choice to pursue Noden’s approach in the unit is reflective of the need to embed grammar instruction in a way that is more equitable to all students, particularly racial minorities. While traditional approaches to grammar almost always emphasize the use of standard edited American English, Noden’s teaching strategies and suggestions guide students toward grammatical structures in a way that does not diminish linguistic differences. In this way, his methodologies can help to fight against the colorblindness that is too often deeply intertwined with the instruction of English Language Arts. In Bethany Davila’s article, “Standard English and Colorblindness in Composition Studies: Rhetorical Constructions of Racial and Linguistic

Neutrality,” she says, “In addition to denying the importance of race through colorblindness, whiteness works to protect constructs associated with the white race (though often presented as unaffiliated) including standard edited American English (SEAE)...” (155). By acknowledging the toxic relationship between colorblindness and SEAE, this unit aspires to push back against racial prejudice through both pedagogy and content. Several of the reflection questions following individual lesson plans have been crafted to “...challenge the perceived neutrality of SEAE...” (Davila 169). These questions are to be considered by the instructor both before and after the instruction of the lesson in order to establish accountability and maintain the most positive learning environment for students.

To teach about equality demands an understanding and continuous investigation of the ways in which inequality continues to exist. Racial inequality is not simply confined to overtly prejudice acts, harassment or even microaggressions. Racial inequality is historically, and in many cases presently deeply rooted in education. April Baker-Bell explores the ways in which Black Language has been marginalized in academia and the effects it has on Black students. In her article, “Dismantling anti-black linguistic racism in English language arts classrooms: Toward an anti-racist black language pedagogy,” she states, “When Black students’ language practices are suppressed in classrooms or they begin to absorb messages that imply that BL [Black Language] is deficient, wrong, and unintelligent, this could cause them to internalize anti-blackness and develop negative attitudes about their linguistic, racial, cultural, and intellectual identities and about themselves” (3). This unit strives to destigmatize BL by approaching grammar instruction and content from a standpoint that removes SEAE from the pedestal it has long occupied. Students will explore simultaneously the many contributions of Black Civil

Rights leaders while being instructed to use language creatively and effectively without the burden of traditional and oppressive expectations.

## CONTEXT

Some key elements of my teaching context that influenced the structure and style of lessons are access to technology, the need for differentiation and the New Jersey State Learning Standards. My district is part of a one-to-one technology initiative, so each student is equipped with an iPad. Teachers are encouraged to use technology as much as possible. As such, each of my assignments and lessons would be posted and accessible to students online. The Learning Management System, Schoology allows for the collection of student work and is also used to facilitate online discussion forums from time to time. Technology and access to wifi allowed me to plan activities where students use the internet to find their own picture prompts. It also is a key facilitator of an in-class research and writing project at the end of this lesson series which requires students to conduct online investigation into an important figure from the Civil Rights Movement and describe his or her achievements by applying brushstrokes.

Though technology plays an integral role in my lesson planning, it is also important to provide substantial differentiation. Many classified and/ or unclassified students in the classroom typically require hard copies of materials that are provided electronically to discourage distraction and help them to focus on each individual task. Therefore, paper and digital versions of materials are always made available. Furthermore, graphic organizers help students to record and organize information in meaningful ways. Students are also assigned some activities in pairs to be able to use their peers as resources. Opportunities to get up and move around the classroom are provided when possible in order to maintain a flexible learning environment for students who have difficulty staying still for long period of time, especially given the A/B schedule 84-minute

block structure of the school. Many students rely on these modifications and accommodations to have a successful and equal education experience. While implementing differentiation and optimal use of technology, it is also essential that I align lessons with New Jersey State Standards. Standards that will be incorporated into the unit are listed in the following section. The standards that are incorporated into the first lesson are NJSLSA.R1, NJSLSA.R4, NJSLSA.L4, NJSLSA.L5. Students will be introduced to appositives through reading exercises which embed them. Students may need to infer the meaning of some new words where it is not explicitly stated. Most importantly, the lesson will guide students toward the identification of key word relationships in multiple activities. The second lesson addresses the standards, NJSLSA.R7, NJSLSA.W3, NJSLSA.W4, NJSLSA.L1, NJSLSA.L2. Content will be presented in multiple formats, particularly aesthetically as students work to describe images using their newfound understanding of appositive structures. To do this, students will write narratives in a way that is informative to readers and provides substantial detail. In their writing, students will be encouraged to demonstrate command of English language conventions. The third lesson aims to meeting many standards, including NJSLSA.R1, NJSLSA.R4, NJSLSA.W5, NJSLSA.SL2, NJSLSA.L3 and NJSLSA.L4. Through highly contextualized learning activities, students will distinguish between the active and passive voice. This will entail the close reading of text and interpretation of how specific words are used within the text. Students will strengthen their writing skills by seeking to revise the text in order to produce more active descriptions. They will evaluate the information presented and apply their knowledge of language to make considerations for different language functions. The standards for the fourth lesson are NJSLSA.W2, NJSLSA.W6, NJSLSA.W10. These standards focus on the use of technology in the context of producing an informative text that incorporates grammatical components that have

been introduced, discussed and reinforced in prior lessons. Students will also take part in a peer editing exercise to allow for emphasis on writing as a process. The final two lesson plans allow students to explore a more research-oriented approach to ELA. The standards addressed are NJSLSA.W7, NJSLSA.W8, NJSLSA.W9. Students will focus on gathering information through research and compiling information and ideas while continuing to draw on their knowledge of appositives and action verbs. The standards have been carefully selected to compliment content and instruction as the plans encourage students to build their English Language skills in a number of ways.

#### NEW JERSEY STUDENT LEARNING STANDARDS: ELA

NJSLSA.R1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences and relevant connections from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

NJSLSA.R4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

NJSLSA.R7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

NJSLSA.W2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

NJSLSA.W3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.



NJSLSA.W4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

NJSLSA.W5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

NJSLSA.W6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

NJSLSA.W7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects, utilizing an inquiry-based research process, based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

NJSLSA.W8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

NJSLSA.W9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

NJSLSA.W10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

NJSLSA.SL2. Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

NJSLSA.L1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

NJSLSA.L2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

NJSLSA.L3. Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

NJSLSA. L4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.

NJSLSA.L5. Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

#### LESSON PLAN #1: INTRODUCTION TO APPOSITIVES & PREJUDICE

**Objective:** Students will identify and apply appositive brushstrokes. Students will distinguish between prejudice and non-prejudice applications of appositive brushstrokes (Noden 8).

**New Jersey Student Learning Standards:** NJSLSA.R1, NJSLSA.R4, NJSLSA.L4,

NJSLSA.L5

**Materials:** Projector, Schoology (learning management system), Opening sentences, T-chart handout, Non-Prejudice Brushstroke practice, Textual Example with Comprehension Questions

**Assessments:** Formative Assessments- Application Activities 1, 2 & 3

**Opening:** Students will read a series of simple sentences on the board that do not reference or allude to an element of prejudice nor do they include brushstrokes. I will ask students to close their eyes and I will read each sentence, adding an appositive brushstroke that changes the meaning of the sentence and alludes to a stereotype, making the statement bias (Noden 6).

Students will be asked to identify what change occurred in the sentence by adding the brushstroke. We will discuss as a class.

**Activity #1:** Students will form pairs and consider what other words could be used to add a brushstroke to the sentences from the opening activity. They will work collaboratively to make

T-charts to show which words would be used to add a brushstroke that is non-prejudice and which words we have discussed/ additional words they think of that are prejudiced. Students will share their responses in a master T-chart on the board and I will debrief by describing the power of the brushstroke in context.

**Activity #2:** Students will receive a brushstroke practice sheet. They will complete new statements by adding brushstrokes that are non-prejudice, drawing on the opening and first activity for ideas.

**Activity #3:** Students will read a textual example that employs appositives. Students will answer brief comprehension questions and identify where they noticed that author used the brushstrokes we have discussed. We will discuss and debrief as a class.

**Closure:** Students will reflect on the lesson by responding to the following questions as an exit activity. How can adding a brushstroke to writing be helpful? How can it be harmful?

**Homework:** None

**Differentiation:** A graphic organizer will be provided to students for the T-chart activity to encourage organization of information and representation of knowledge. Use of technology will be encouraged, but hard copies of digital documents will be available to students who require them. Students will have the opportunity to work in pairs and use their peers as resources.

**Teacher Reflection Questions:** Were students engaged in the opening exercise? Did students work collaboratively during the pair activity? Based on student responses, did students acquire an understanding of the function of appositives? In what ways, if any, was standard edited American English (SEAE) referenced or requested in this lesson? Was the lesson linguistically inclusive for all students?

**LESSON PLAN #2: APPLICATION OF APPOSITIVES & UNDERSTANDING PREJUDICE**

**Objective:** Students will create detailed descriptions of individuals and images using appositive brushstrokes (Noden 8).

**New Jersey Student Learning Standards:** NJSLSA.R7, NJSLSA.W3, NJSLSA.W4, NJSLSA.L1, NJSLSA.L2

**Materials:** Projector, Schoology (learning management system), Opening picture prompt, Stations Picture Prompts, Stations Handout, Extended Description Writing Sample

**Assessments:** Formative Assessments- Stations Mini-Writing Assignment

**Opening:** I will project an image of an individual and students will think, write, pair, and share a brief description of the image, making an effort to incorporate appositive brushstrokes. We will discuss and debrief as a class. I will write sentences that are shared and include appositives on the board to model use of brushstrokes.

**Activity #1:** I will post 5 picture prompts around the room as “stations.” Students will receive a handout to record a brief description of each station in 2-5 sentences. Students will be encouraged to incorporate brushstrokes.

**Activity #2:** I will provide students with my own (slightly longer) description of the image from the opening. They will work individually to identify the brushstrokes. We will debrief and discuss as a class.

**Activity #3:** Using my example form Activity #2 as a model, I will instruct students to choose one image from the stations activity and expand upon their description.

**Closure:** Students will continue to work on the final activity as I monitor and check in with students to provide positive feedback and guidance.

**Homework:** Complete mini-writing assignment

**Differentiation:** A handout will be provided to students for the stations activity to encourage organization of information and representation of knowledge. Use of technology will be encouraged, but hard copies of digital documents will be available to students who require them. Students will have the opportunity to work in pairs and use their peers as resources. Students will have the opportunity to move around the room, facilitating a flexible learning environment.

**Teacher Reflection Questions:** How did the organization of the classroom facilitate student learning during Activity 1? Was the example for Activity 2 effective in modelling expectations for students? Did the example overemphasize the use of SEAE? How might a student example that includes linguistic patterns not aligned with SEAE improve students' understanding of English dialects without inadvertently identifying SEAE as superior?

### LESSON PLAN #3: INTRODUCTION TO ACTION VERBS IN THE CONTEXT OF PREJUDICE

**Objective:** Students will identify action verb brushstrokes and apply them in contexts related to prejudice and progress (Noden 11).

**New Jersey Student Learning Standards:** NJSLSA.R1, NJSLSA.R4, NJSLSA.W5, NJSLSA.SL2, NJSLSA.L3, NJSLSA.L4

**Materials:** Projector, Schoology (learning management system), Opening sentences, Independent sentences, Themed Reading

**Assessments:** Formative Assessments- Application Activities 1, 2 & 3

**Opening:** Students will read a series of simple sentences on the board that are related to civil rights achievements and are written in the passive voice. I will explain to students that we are going to learn about a new kind of brushstroke and ask them to close their eyes. I will read each sentence, applying a brushstroke by changing the sentence so that it is in the active voice (Noden

6). Students will be asked to identify what change occurred in the sentence by adding the brushstroke. We will discuss as a class.

**Activity #1:** Students will form pairs and receive a new series of sentences related to civil rights achievements and written in the passive voice. Students will work collaboratively to apply the new brushstroke to the sentences to make them more powerful and positive. We will discuss and debrief as a class.

**Activity #2:** Students will receive a short, themed reading about prejudice and progress. Students read individually and identify areas where they think brushstrokes could be applied by underlining the text. We will discuss and debrief as a class.

**Activity #3:** Students will apply brushstrokes to the reading from the previous activity by incorporating their own changes and expanding on the author's original work.

**Closure:** Students will reflect on the lesson by responding to the following questions as an exit activity. What differences do you notice in the sentences and reading from today's lesson before adding the brushstrokes and after adding the brushstrokes?

**Homework:** None

**Differentiation:** Use of technology will be encouraged, but hard copies of digital documents will be available to students who require them. Students will have the opportunity to work in pairs and use their peers as resources.

**Teacher Reflection Questions:** Did students demonstrate understanding of the passive voice versus the active voice? Was the debrief of Activity 2 effective? What do student responses to the closing activity suggest about the pace of instruction? When students applied brushstrokes to the reading, were they praised equally for writing using SEAE and writing that did not?

**LESSON PLAN #4: APPLICATION OF ACTION VERBS**

**Objective:** Students will apply action verb and appositive brushstrokes to create detailed descriptions of images and events.

**New Jersey Student Learning Standards:** NJSLSA.W2, NJSLSA.W6, NJSLSA.W10

**Materials:** Projector, Schoology (learning management system), Opening Themed Picture Prompt, Picture Prompt Mini-Writing Assignment Guidelines

**Assessments:** Formative Assessment- Picture Prompt Mini-Writing Assignment (Noden 18)

**Opening:** I will project a short video of a civil rights protest and students will work in pairs to produce their own descriptions of what happened in the video. Students will be encouraged to apply brushstrokes. Students will share their sentences on the board. We will discuss and debrief as a class. I will draw attention to use of action verb brushstrokes.

**Activity #1:** Students will be prompted to locate their own image to use as inspiration for a writing assignment. Students will use the available technology (iPads) to find an appropriate picture and get teacher approval before moving onto the next activity.

**Activity #2:** Students will work individually to write approximately 1 page (MLA format) to describe the image and apply the brushstrokes we have discussed.

**Activity #3:** Students will form pairs and share their writing assignments. Each student will identify their partner's use of brushstrokes and make suggestions for where they could include additional brushstrokes.

**Closure:** Students will begin to implement the changes suggested by their partner to submit a final draft of the writing assignment in the upcoming class.

**Homework:** Complete mini-writing assignment/ integrate peer suggestions

**Differentiation:** Picture prompts will be used to engage students and the mini-writing assignment will provide an element of student choice. Use of technology will be encouraged, but hard copies of digital documents will be available to students who require them. Students will have the opportunity to work in pairs and use their peers as resources.

**Teacher Reflection Questions:** Was the use of technology effective? Was the peer review exercise successful or should it be modified? Are there any time management issues with this lesson considering that students work at different paces? Was sufficient attention given to use of brushstrokes outside of SEAE? Was SEAE explained as an *option* rather than a *requirement* for the writing assignment?

#### LESSON PLANS #5-6: INTEGRATION OF APPOSITIVES & ACTION VERBS IN RESEARCH AND WRITING

**Objective:** Students will investigate and synthesize information related to important individuals in Black History by integrating appositive and action verb brushstrokes into detailed and factual descriptions.

**New Jersey Student Learning Standards:** NJSLSA.W7, NJSLSA.W8, NJSLSA.W9

**Materials:** Projector, Schoology (learning management system), Information Gathering Graphic Organizer, Research & Writing Project Guidelines

**Assessments:** Summative Assessment- Research & Writing Project

**Opening:** Students will recall the names of important figures from Black History and the Civil Rights Movement. They will post a list of the names they think of as a comment to an online discussion forum in Schoology and we discuss/ debrief as a class.

**Activity #1:** Students will form pairs and each pair will be assigned a figure from the Civil Rights Movement. Pairs will work collaboratively to gather information about the figure they



were assigned and complete a graphic organizer with pertinent details related to the individual's background and achievements.

**Activity #2:** Pairs will use the information gathered in their graphic organizer to write a brief (approximately 1½ - 2 pages) synopsis of the individual's contributions to society. Students will be encouraged to apply appositive and action verb brushstrokes to create impactful descriptions.

**Activity #3:** Pairs will continue to work collaboratively to write a detailed description of one of the individual's most important actions and achievements. Students will again be instructed to integrate brushstrokes into their writing.

**Closure:** Students will reflect on how brushstrokes affected their writing in the Project Assignment by responding to the following question. How did the brushstrokes help to create positive and powerful descriptions of important historical figures?

**Differentiation:** An information gathering graphic organizer will be provided to students for the research aspect of the project to encourage organization of information and representation of knowledge. Use of technology will be encouraged, but hard copies of digital documents will be available to students who require them. Students will have the opportunity to work in pairs and use their peers as resources.

**Teacher Reflection Questions:** Should the project component of this lesson be done individually or in pairs moving forward? Is additional guidance needed to support students' research techniques? Were students encouraged to investigate sources did not exclusively use SEAE?

## Appendix A

### MATERIALS FOR LESSON PLAN #1: INSTRUCTION TO APPOSITIVES & PREJUDICE

Opening sentences (with & without appositives/ prejudice)

- The thief robbed the mini market.
  - The thief, a black man, robbed the mini market.
- The customer demanded to speak with the manager.
  - The customer, a hostile white woman, demanded to speak with the manager.
- The boys were known for causing mischief.
  - The boys, a gang of black teenagers, were known for causing mischief.
- The driver nearly hit the children crossing the street.
  - The driver, an Asian woman, nearly hit the children crossing the street.
- The drug-dealer was apprehended by the police.
  - The drug-dealer, an illegal immigrant, was apprehended by the police.

## T-chart handout

<b>Prejudiced &amp; Non-prejudiced Statements with <i>Appositive Brushstrokes</i></b>	
<b>Instructions:</b> Consider the sentences from the opening activity. What are some other examples of brushstrokes that could be added to make the statement prejudiced or non-prejudiced? Write your ideas directly into each sentence below in the appropriate column.	
<b>Prejudiced Appositive Brushstrokes</b>	<b>Non-prejudiced Appositive Brushstrokes</b>
The thief, _____, robbed the mini-market.	The thief, _____, robbed the mini-market.
The customer, _____, demanded to speak with the manager.	The customer, _____, demanded to speak with the manager.
The boys, _____, were known for causing mischief.	The boys, _____, were known for causing mischief.
The driver, _____, nearly hit the children crossing the street.	The driver, _____, nearly hit the children crossing the street.
The drug-dealer, _____, was apprehended by the police.	The drug-dealer, _____, was apprehended by the police.
Additional examples:	Additional examples:

## Non-Prejudice Brushstroke practice

**Non-prejudiced Statements with  
*Appositive Brushstrokes***

**Instructions:** Complete the following sentences by adding an appositive brushstroke that is non-prejudiced. Then, complete the sentence.

1. The students, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

2. The construction workers, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

3. The old lady, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

4. The teacher, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

5. The group of boys, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

6. The police officer, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

7. The babysitter, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

8. The fast food worker, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

## Appendix B

### MATERIALS FOR LESSON PLAN #2: APPLICATION OF APPOSITIVES & UNDERSTANDING PREJUDICE

Opening picture prompt: Black Lives Matter has Chapters in Toronto and London.



#### Stations Picture Prompts

#1: Yusef Salaam



#2: 60 Years Ago: Rosa Parks Refused to Give Up Her Seat



### #3: Civil Rights Movement



### #4: Islamophobic Bullying



### #5: San Francisco 49ers v San Diego Chargers



Stations Handout

**Prejudice in Action Stations Activity with  
*Appositive Brushstrokes***

**Instructions:** Describe each image in a few sentences. Include at least one appositive brushstroke in each description.

**Station #1**

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**Station #2**

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**Station #3**

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**Station #4**

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**Station #5**

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## Extended Description Writing Sample

The woman holds the sign, a piece of cardboard, with the phrase “Black Lives Matter.” Another woman nearby raises a similar sign reading, “Stop Killing.” Her jacket, a warm and fashionable leather garment, protects her from the cool air. The weather is beautiful, but the protest would’ve taken place even if it had been downpouring. The protest participants, a large group of all ages, is immersed in a crowd of like-minded individuals seeking a more peaceful society. The chanting, a chorus of confident voices, is heard through the streets for miles. The facial expressions of each shows a mixture of frustration and determination. They hope to spark changes, real legislative reforms, that could change the world for the better.



## Appendix C

### MATERIALS FOR LESSON PLAN #3: INTRODUCTION TO ACTION VERBS IN THE CONTEXT OF PREJUDICE

Opening sentences (passive and active)

- African Americans were given the right to vote.
  - African Americans fought for the right to vote.
- Rosa Parks was arrested for refusing to sit in the back of a public bus.
  - Rosa Parks stood up for her right to sit anywhere on a public bus.
- In 1957 the Little Rock Nine were escorted into the school by federal troops.
  - In 1957 the Little Rock Nine walked bravely alongside federal troops into the school.

Independent sentences

**Civil Rights Sentences with  
*Action Verb Brushstrokes***

**Instructions:** Read the sentences and consider the opening activity. Apply an action verb brushstroke to each sentence and rewrite the sentence on the line below. You may use your iPad to explore additional information related to each statement in order to add the brushstroke.

1. As a result of Rosa Parks arrest, Montgomery public transportation was boycotted by many.

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2. The Central Park Five were interrogated without parental consent.

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3. The Central Park Five were exonerated years after being held prisoners for crimes they did not commit.

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4. Peaceful protestors were beaten by State Troopers on "Bloody Sunday" when they attempted to march from Selma, AL to Montgomery, AL.

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5. The speech, "I Have a Dream" was delivered by Martin Luther King Jr. in 1963.

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## Themed Reading

## *Adding Appositive and Action Verb Brushstrokes* **“Martin Luther King Jr. Biographical”**

**Instructions:** Read the text below. Notice where brushstrokes have already been applied. Underline places where you think a brushstroke could be added.

Martin Luther King, Jr., (January 15, 1929-April 4, 1968) was born Michael Luther King, Jr., but later had his name changed to Martin. His grandfather began the family’s long tenure as pastors of the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, serving from 1914 to 1931; his father has served from then until the present, and from 1960 until his death Martin Luther acted as co-pastor. Martin Luther attended segregated public schools in Georgia, graduating from high school at the age of fifteen; he received the B. A. degree in 1948 from Morehouse College, a distinguished Negro institution of Atlanta from which both his father and grandfather had graduated. After three years of theological study at Crozer Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania where he was elected president of a predominantly white senior class, he was awarded the B.D. in 1951. With a fellowship won at Crozer, he enrolled in graduate studies at Boston University, completing his residence for the doctorate in 1953 and receiving the degree in 1955. In Boston he met and married Coretta Scott, a young woman of uncommon intellectual and artistic attainments. Two sons and two daughters were born into the family.

In 1954, Martin Luther King became pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama. Always a strong worker for civil rights for members of his race, King was, by this time, a member of the executive committee of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the leading organization of its kind in the nation. He was ready, then, early in December 1955, to accept the leadership of the first great Negro nonviolent demonstration of contemporary times in the United States, the bus boycott described by Gunnar Jahn in his presentation speech in honor of the laureate. The boycott lasted 382 days. On December 21, 1956, after the Supreme Court of the United States had declared unconstitutional the laws requiring segregation on buses, Negroes and whites rode the buses as equals. During these days of boycott, King was arrested, his home was bombed, he was subjected to personal abuse, but at the same time he emerged as a Negro leader of the first rank.

In 1957 he was elected president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, an organization formed to provide new leadership for the now burgeoning civil rights movement. The ideals for this organization he took from Christianity; its operational techniques from Gandhi. In the eleven-year period between 1957 and 1968, King traveled over six million miles and spoke over twenty-five hundred times, appearing wherever there was injustice, protest,

and action; and meanwhile he wrote five books as well as numerous articles. In these years, he led a massive protest in Birmingham, Alabama, that caught the attention of the entire world, providing what he called a coalition of conscience. and inspiring his "Letter from a Birmingham Jail", a manifesto of the Negro revolution; he planned the drives in Alabama for the registration of Negroes as voters; he directed the peaceful march on Washington, D.C., of 250,000 people to whom he delivered his address, "I Have a Dream", he conferred with President John F. Kennedy and campaigned for President Lyndon B. Johnson; he was arrested upwards of twenty times and assaulted at least four times; he was awarded five honorary degrees; was named Man of the Year by *Time* magazine in 1963; and became not only the symbolic leader of American blacks but also a world figure.

At the age of thirty-five, Martin Luther King, Jr., was the youngest man to have received the Nobel Peace Prize. When notified of his selection, he announced that he would turn over the prize money of \$54,123 to the furtherance of the civil rights movement.

On the evening of April 4, 1968, while standing on the balcony of his motel room in Memphis, Tennessee, where he was to lead a protest march in sympathy with striking garbage workers of that city, he was assassinated.

Article sourced from <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/1964/king/biographical/>

## Appendix D

### MATERIALS FOR LESSON PLAN #4: APPLICATION OF ACTION VERBS

Opening Themed video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q5HISnAjz7U>

Picture Prompt Mini Writing Assignment Guidelines

#### **Mini Writing Assignment: Picture Prompt with** *Appositive and Action Verb Brushstrokes*

##### **TASK:**

Use the internet to search for an image related to the Civil Rights Movement. Select an appropriate image and obtain teacher approval. Then, write a description of what you observe happening in the picture.

##### **INCLUDE:**

- A detailed description of what happened in the image you chose.
- At least 2 appositive brushstrokes
- At least 2 action verb brushstrokes.
- The photo you chose on a separate/ second page of the document

##### **FORMAT**

- MLA format- Please reference [Purdue MLA Formatting and Style Guide](#)
- Approximately 1 page (200-300 words)

##### **SUBMISSIONS**

- Submit your rough draft to Schoology before the peer editing process.
- Submit your final draft to Schoology after the peer editing process.

## Assessment rubric for Picture Prompt Mini-Writing Assignment

## Mini Writing Assignment: Picture Prompt with *Appositive and Action Verb Brushstrokes*

**ASSESSMENT RUBRIC:**

Category	Exceed expectations	Meets expectations	Approaches expectations	Does not meet expectations
<i>Requirements</i>	I included all required elements.	I included nearly all required elements.	I included most required elements, but some are missing.	I did not complete or include all the required elements.
<i>Appositive Brushstrokes</i>	I included and accurately used at least 2 appositive brushstrokes.	I included at least 2 appositive brushstrokes, but they may not both be in an appropriate context.	I included at least 1 appositive brushstroke.	I did not include any appositive brushstrokes.
<i>Action verb brushstrokes</i>	I included and accurately used at least 2 action verb brushstrokes.	I included at least 2 action verb brushstrokes, but they may not both be in an appropriate context.	I included at least 1 appositive brushstroke.	I did not include any action verb brushstrokes
<i>Organization of Content</i>	I organize my writing in a logical manner. There is a logical progression of ideas that are organized and well connected.	I organize my writing in a relatively logical manner. Organization is evident and ideas are generally connected.	My writing is somewhat organized. The ideas may not progress in a logical manner.	My writing is relatively disorganized. The ideas are loosely tied together and lack cohesiveness.
<i>Format</i>	The format of my writing assignment adheres to MLA guidelines	The format of my writing assignment mostly adheres to MLA guidelines with minimal errors	The format of my writing assignment somewhat adheres to MLA guidelines with several errors.	The format of my writing assignment does not adhere to MLA guidelines.

**COMMENTS:**

**Appendix E**

**MATERIALS FOR LESSON PLAN #5: INTEGRATION OF APPOSITIVES & ACTION**

**VERBS IN RESEARCH AND WRITING**

**Information Gathering Graphic Organizer**

<b>Civil Rights Research &amp; Writing Graphic Organizer</b>	
<p><b>Instructions:</b> Investigate sources using the internet to compile information about the Civil Rights Leader assigned to your pair. Complete the organizer and submit to Schoology PRIOR to beginning the writing portion of the assignment. Be sure to keep track of/ cite ALL sources.</p>	
<b>Full name of Civil Rights Leader</b>	
<b>Date of Birth/ Date of Death</b>	
<b>Background (location, family, education, employment)</b>	
<b>Notable Achievements</b>	
<b>Involvement in Civil Rights Movement</b>	
<b>Significance of Contributions to Society</b>	

## Civil Rights Research and Writing Project Guidelines

## Civil Rights Research and Writing with *Appositive and Action Verb Brushstrokes*

**TASK:**

Investigate the background and achievements of the Civil Rights Movement Leader/ Activist assigned to you and your partner. Compile information and details about the person's life and notable contributions to the Civil Rights Movement using the graphic organizer provided in Schoology.

**INCLUDE:**

- A description of the individual's background
- A detailed description of the individual's most notable achievements
- An explanation of the individual's role in the Civil Rights Movement
- At least 3 appositive brushstrokes
- At least 3 action verb brushstrokes.
- A Works Cited page

**FORMAT**

- MLA format- Please reference [Purdue MLA Formatting and Style Guide](#)
- Approximately 1½-2 pages

**SUBMISSIONS**

- Submit your graphic organizer to Schoology and gain permission from the teacher before moving onto the writing stage of the project.
- Submit your final draft of the paper to Schoology by ##/##/## [tbd].



## Civil Rights Research and Writing Assessment Tool

## Civil Rights Research and Writing with *Appositive and Action Verb Brushstrokes*

**ASSESSMENT RUBRIC:**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Exceed expectations</b>	<b>Meets expectations</b>	<b>Approaches expectations</b>	<b>Does not meet expectations</b>
<i>Requirements</i>	I included all required elements.	I included nearly all required elements.	I included most required elements, but some are missing.	I did not complete or include all the required elements.
<i>Appositive Brushstrokes</i>	I included and accurately used at least 3 appositive brushstrokes.	I included at least 3 appositive brushstrokes, but they may not both be in an appropriate context.	I included at least 1 or 2 appositive brushstrokes.	I did not include any appositive brushstrokes.
<i>Action verb brushstrokes</i>	I included and accurately used at least 3 action verb brushstrokes.	I included at least 3 action verb brushstrokes, but they may not both be in an appropriate context.	I included at least 1 or 2 appositive brushstrokes.	I did not include any action verb brushstrokes
<i>Organization of Content</i>	I organize my writing in a logical manner. There is a logical progression of ideas that are organized and well connected.	I organize my writing in a relatively logical manner. Organization is evident and ideas are generally connected.	My writing is somewhat organized. The ideas may not progress in a logical manner.	My writing is relatively disorganized. The ideas are loosely tied together and lack cohesiveness.
<i>Format</i>	The format of my writing assignment adheres to MLA guidelines	The format of my writing assignment mostly adheres to MLA guidelines with minimal errors	The format of my writing assignment somewhat adheres to MLA guidelines with several errors.	The format of my writing assignment does not adhere to MLA guidelines.
<i>Integration of research</i>	The paper shows evidence of especially thorough research and all sources are cited properly.	The paper shows evidence of adequate research and all sources are cited properly.	The paper shows some evidence of research, but it may be somewhat lacking or missing proper citations.	The paper does not show sufficient evidence of research or source citations.

**COMMENTS:**

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## Persuasive Speaking and Writing: The Rhetoric of Gender Reform

### RATIONALE

Though the theme of prejudice is already one of the unit topics for the honors junior ELA curriculum at Monroe Township High School in New Jersey, I believe it could be enhanced in many ways. In order to embed the following plans into a larger and more comprehensive unit, I have reimaged that part of the curriculum to specifically cover race, class and gender. The plans focused on gender will offer historical background and insight into the evolution of perspectives on and fight for gender equality. This is of particular significance in a district where nearly all of the figures of authority are white males and where students' perception of the meaning and implications of topics like gender equality and diversity is often limited to their surroundings. Through highly contextualized and meaningful instruction, the objectives of this unit serve a social purpose in addition to the development of students' reading and writing skills in English.

Throughout my graduate coursework I have explored the role of English Language Arts studies as a vehicle for teaching tolerance at the secondary education level. This teaching unit is an extension of that exploration with a focus on gender prejudice and gender reform. As students develop an understanding of injustice and inequality, it is critical that they have the opportunity to interpret and analyze the efforts and influential works of those who were and/ or are marginalized by society. Building an appreciation for the struggles and feats of these individuals at a young age can contribute to the development of a better society by promoting increased consciousness and empathy. The works selected for this unit were chosen with this goal in mind, but also to allow and encourage the analysis of different rhetorical strategies used by female speakers and authors from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century onward.

Pairing the readings of significant speeches by women with persuasive writing approaches seemed like a natural fit. As students uncover the powerful and cunning tactics employed by women over the course of roughly a century, they will also have the opportunity to consider and apply similar skills. The readings are intended to be assigned as homework so that in class activities can facilitate in depth exploration of the themes, ideas and strategies. Students will participate in exercises that stimulate higher level thinking as they interpret the readings in individual, pair, group and full class settings. They will also work towards the application of writing skills through meaningful tasks that encourage them to employ persuasive rhetoric in an effective manner. In this way, writing will be presented to and experienced by students as tools for activism and stimulant of change.

The organization of the unit is deliberately historically chronological to facilitate students' understanding of the context of the works. The readings were selected to offer unique and transformative perspectives from women throughout different time periods. The texts represent values, ideas and arguments of women before, during and after women's suffrage in the United States. The selection has been largely inspired by the readings of this graduate level course. However, they are broken down into a manageable timeline for the intended audience and paired with activities to help facilitate understanding. The voices of Ernestine Potowski Rose, Sojourner Truth, Susan B. Anthony, Crystal Eastman and Gloria Steinem drive the readings and assignments. Critical analysis of these significant speakers and authors will stimulate students to discover the potential impact of their own ideas through written and spoken word.

## CONTEXT

This series of lessons focusing on the rhetoric of gender reform was designed to be embedded into an Honors Junior level English course. Earlier in the unit, which addresses prejudice alongside persuasive speaking and writing strategies, students will have studied rhetoric specific to race and class prejudices in a similar historical time frame (19<sup>th</sup> century onward). The academic level of students in the course will allow for tasks that require higher level thinking and readings intended for a mature audience. Students will complete most assigned readings outside of the classroom in order to allow for more in depth analysis of the text in class. In this way, the unit includes some flipped learning structures which is strongly encouraged at the school where I work.

The access to technology in the district significantly influenced the structure of the lessons. Students are part of a one-to-one technology initiative and are each equipped with an iPad, including a detachable keyboard. Because of this, I am able to post all materials and assignments to be made accessible on the district's Learning Management System (LMS), Schoology. Using the LMS, student work can be collected, and online discussions are facilitated in an electronic format. The access to WiFi in conjunction with the students' devices creates a setting in which students can investigate topics independently and use the internet as a research resource. It also is a key facilitator of an in-class research and writing project at the end of this lesson series which requires students to conduct online investigation into a modern influential female and her rhetorical choices and style.

The need for differentiation and New Jersey State Learning Standards also played a role in the pedagogical choices that were made. Specific standards to the unit are listed in the following section and are individually identified at the beginning of each lesson plan. In addition,

though differentiation is naturally embedded within the lessons, specific details as to the application of accommodations is available at the end of each lesson. Typical differentiation methods often include providing opportunities for movement, the ability to use peers as resources and availability of hard copies as requested. Simple accommodations such as these help to provide all students with ample opportunities to succeed, regardless of differing needs and challenges. This reinforces an equal education experience for all.

#### NEW JERSEY STUDENT LEARNING STANDARDS

NJSLSA.R1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences and relevant connections from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

NJSLSA.R2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

NJSLSA.R4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

NJSLSA.R6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

NJSLSA.R8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

NJSLSA.R9. Analyze and reflect on how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

NJSLSA.W1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

NJSLSA.W3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

NJSLSA.W4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

NJSLSA.W6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

NJSLSA.W7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects, utilizing an inquiry-based research process, based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

NJSLSA.W8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

NJSLSA.W9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

NJSLSA.SL1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

NJSLSA.SL3. Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

NJSLSA.SL4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

NJSLSA.L3. Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.



NJSLSA.L4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.

NJSLSA.L5. Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

#### LESSON PLAN #1: ERENSTINE POTOWSKI ROSE & RHETORICAL QUESTIONS

**Objective:** Students will analyze the rhetoric of Ernestine Potowski Rose and assess the impact of her speech.

**New Jersey Student Learning Standards:** NJSLSA.R1, NJSLSA.R2, NJSLSA.R4, NJSLSA.R8, NJSLSA.W1, NJSLSA.W6, NJSLSA.W9, NJSLSA.SL1, NJSLSA.SL3, NJSLSA.L4, NJSLSA.L5

**Materials:** Projector, Schoology (learning management system), “Speech at the National Women’s Rights Convention” by Ernestine Potowski Rose, Discussion Forum Reflection Prompt

**Assessments:** Formative assessment- Class Colloquium

**Opening:** Students will recall knowledge of influential women and what made or makes them influential. We will discuss as a class.

**Activity #1:** Students will refer to the reading assigned in the class prior, Ernestine Potowski Rose’s “Speech at the National Women’s Rights Convention.” Students will select an excerpt of the text they believe to be particularly empowering and influential. Students will form pairs and discuss their selections.

**Activity #2:** Following the previous activity, desks will be arranged into a circle for a class colloquium. Students will share thoughts, ideas and analysis of Potowski Rose’s speech by responding to the questions-What is the most empowering aspect of Potowski Rose’s speech?

What rhetorical strategies does she use? In your opinion, do you think the strategies are effective or ineffective? Explain.

**Activity #3:** Students will reflect on the discussion and consider modern female figures that resemble Potowski Rose's use of rhetoric and expression of desire for change. Students will write a paragraph comparing their selection with Potowski Rose and explain, citing specific similarities and differences.

**Closure:** Students will post their response from the previous activity in an online discussion forum on Schoology. They will read the responses of their peers and comment on at least one other student's post.

**Homework:** Read "Ain't I a Woman?" (1851) by Sojourner Truth

**Differentiation:** Use of technology will be encouraged, but hard copies of digital documents will be available to students who require them. Students will have the opportunity to work in pairs and use their peers as resources. Activity #3 may be modified as a shorter writing assignment for students who require extended time for writing tasks.

## LESSON PLAN #2: SOJOURNER TRUTH & NONSTANDARD ENGLISH

**Objective:** Students will compare and contrast standard English with nonstandard English in the context of the persuasive rhetoric of Ernestine Potowski Rose and Sojourner Truth.

**New Jersey Student Learning Standards:** NJLSA.R1, NJLSA.R2, NJLSA.R4, NJLSA.R6, NJLSA.R8, NJLSA.R9, NJLSA.W8, NJLSA.SL3, NJLSA.L3, NJLSA.L4, NJLSA.L5

**Materials:** Projector, Schoology (learning management system), Recording of Dictated Speech, Webquest, Venn Diagram, Transcriptions of "Ain't I a Woman?" and "Ar'n't I a Woman"

(1851) by Sojourner Truth, “Speech at the National Women’s Rights Convention” by Ernestine Potowski Rose

**Assessments:** Formative assessments- discussions and comparison activities.

**Opening:** Students will listen to the audio of “Ain’t I a Woman?” dictated by Kerry Washington. Students will share their thoughts on the differences in the experiences of hearing and reading the speech.

**Activity #1:** Students will complete webquest to gather background information on Ernestine Potowski Rose and Sojourner Truth. They will use their iPads to investigate the answers to various question prompts.

**Activity #2:** The class will debrief the Webquest with a discussion. Students will share responses and address differences and commonalities of the women’s backgrounds. They will also be prompted to analyze the differences in the way standard and nonstandard English are perceived by audiences and make connections to the texts.

**Activity #3:** Students will read “Ar’n’t I a Woman?”

**Activity #4:** Students will compare and contrast the two versions of Truth’s speech using a Venn Diagram.

**Closure:** We will debrief the final activity and I will describe the historical context of the transcriptions and stereotypes related to speech.

**Homework:** Read “Is it a Crime for a U.S. Citizen to Vote?” (1872-1873) by Susan B. Anthony

**Differentiation:** Use of technology will be encouraged, but hard copies of digital documents will be available to students who require them. Providing audio and text of the speech will help to appeal to different kinds of learners. The Webquest will provide a flexible learning environment by allowing students to work at their own pace to uncover information.

## LESSON PLAN #3: SUSAN B. ANTHONY &amp; FORENSIC SPEECH

**Objective:** Students will analyze the forensic speech of Susan B. Anthony.

**New Jersey Student Learning Standards:** NJSLSA.R1, NJSLSA.R2, NJSLSA.R4, NJSLSA.R6, NJSLSA.R8, NJSLSA.W9, NJSLSA.SL1, NJSLSA.SL3, NJSLSA.L4, NJSLSA.L5

**Materials:** Projector, Schoology (learning management system), Opening video, Excerpts of “Is it a Crime for a U.S. Citizen to Vote?” (1872-1873) by Susan B. Anthony for stations activity, Graphic Organizer for Stations Activity

**Assessments:** Formative assessment- Stations activity

**Opening:** Students will watch the short video, “Susan B. Anthony- An Act of Courage” to further contextualize the reading of “Is it a Crime for a U.S. Citizen to Vote?”

**Activity #1:** I will give a brief lecture on Susan B. Anthony’s use of forensic speech based on the details and explanation provided in chapter 7 of *Man Cannot Speak for Her* by Karlyn Kohrs Campbell. Students will take notes.

**Activity #2:** Numbered stations containing passages from “Is it a Crime for a U.S. Citizen to Vote?” by Susan B. Anthony will be set up around the room. Students will be placed in small groups and each group will be assigned to a station. At each station, students will work collaboratively with their group to discern which components of forensic speech (logic, culture and/or force) are illustrated in the passage. They will write a brief explanation describing the reasoning for their selection. Groups will be prompted to rotate to a new station after completing each task.

**Closure:** The stations activity will be debriefed as a class. Groups will share their explanations.

**Homework:** Read “Now We Can Begin” (1920) by Chrystal Eastman

**Differentiation:** Use of technology will be encouraged, but hard copies of digital documents will be available to students who require them. Students will work in groups and be able to use their peers as resources. Students will have the opportunity to move around the room, facilitating a flexible learning environment.

#### LESSON PLAN #4: CHRYSTAL EASTMAN & FEMINISM

**Objective:** Students will interpret, explore and produce persuasive writing in the context of feminism and women's rights.

**New Jersey Student Learning Standards:** NJSLSA.R1, NJSLSA.R6, NJSLSA.R8, NJSLSA.W3, NJSLSA.W4, NJSLSA.W9

**Materials:** Projector, Schoology (learning management system), "Now We Can Begin" (1920) by Chrystal Eastman, Persuasive writing organizer, Writing task sheet, Persuasive Writing Assignment Assessment Rubric

**Assessments:** Summative assessment- writing assignment

**Opening:** Students will brainstorm what they know about feminism. They will think, pair and share with the class.

**Activity #1:** Students will refer to the text, "Now We Can Begin" by Chrystal Eastman to help answer the following discussion questions- What did woman have left to fight for after suffrage? What is still left to fight for today? Students will share their thoughts and analysis with the class.

**Activity #2:** Students will be presented with an imaginary scenario as a writing prompt. They will imagine that the High School has decided that females are no longer allowed to attend school at the high school level, and they must instead stay at home to focus on "womanlier" tasks. Students will develop an argument in order to write a persuasive letter to the Board of

Education demanding that the new rule be reconsidered. They will use an organizer provided to them.

**Activity #3:** Students will write a brief formal letter to the Board of Education to respond to the assigned writing prompt.

**Closure:** Students will work in pairs to peer edit their letters before submitting to Schoology.

**Homework:** Read Laverne Cox's Speech at The Transgender Law Center's SPARK Gala on 10/25/2018

**Differentiation:** Use of technology will be encouraged, but hard copies of digital documents will be available to students who require them. A graphic organizer will encourage the representation of knowledge and organization of ideas. Activity #3 may be modified as a shorter writing assignment for students who require extended time for writing tasks.

#### LESSON PLAN #5: GENDER IDENTITY DIALOGUE

**Objective:** Students will evaluate and consider different gender identities and how the rhetoric of gender has and continues to evolve.

**New Jersey Student Learning Standards:** NJSLSA.R6, NJSLSA.R9, NJSLSA.W6, NJSLSA.SL1

**Materials:** Projector, Schoology (learning management system), Sticky Notes, Gender-Bread Person Visual Aid, Link to TEDx Speech, Transcript of Laverne Cox's Speech at The Transgender Law Center's SPARK Gala on 10/25/2018

**Assessments:** Formative assessment- verbal discussion and virtual discussion board responses

**Opening:** Students will consider the following question- What is gender? Each student will write on a sticky note provided to them describing what they think gender is, using complete sentences, phrases or simply by writing a list of words that come to mind. Students will walk up

and post their sticky notes to the board when they have completed the exercise. I will read different definitions aloud and describe the definition of gender as a social construct while also using the gender-bread person as a visual aid.

**Activity #1:** Students will watch the following TEDx speech given by Audrey Mason-Hyde titled, “Toilets, bowties, gender and me.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NCLoNwVJA-0>

**Activity #2:** Students will work in pairs to construct a list of take-away’s from the video. One person from each pair will share the biggest take-away with the class as we discuss the importance of understanding and respecting different gender identities.

**Activity #3:** Student’s will reflect on the reading that had been assigned for homework, Transcript of Laverne Cox’s Speech at The Transgender Law Center’s SPARK Gala on 10/25/2018. Students will choose one of the speakers that has already been discussed in the unit and complete a concept map to make comparisons between the two individuals’ speeches based on their goals, rhetorical strategies and overall messages. Concept maps will be submitted to Schoology.

**Closure:** Students will respond to the following discussion board prompt in Schoology, “What can be done to support individuals with non-conforming gender identities? How has your own understanding of gender changed?”

**Homework:** Read “Living the Revolution” (1970) by Gloria Steinem.

**Differentiation:** Use of technology will be encouraged, but hard copies of digital documents will be available to students who require them. Students will have time to work in pairs and use their peers as resources. The video activity and gender-bread person resource will provide students with visuals to support the content.

LESSON PLAN #6-7: GLORIA STEINAM & OTHER INFLUENTIAL WOMEN

**Objective:** Students will analyze and investigate the rhetoric of modern influential women.

**New Jersey Student Learning Standards:** NJSLSA.R1, NJSLSA.R2, NJSLSA.R4, NJSLSA.R8, NJSLSA.W1, NJSLSA.W7, NJSLSA.W8, NJSLSA.W9, NJSLSA.SL1, NJSLSA.SL3, NJSLSA.SL4

**Materials:** Projector, Schoology (learning management system), “Living the Revolution” (1970) by Gloria Steinem, Influential Women Project Task Sheet, Presentation Assessment Rubric

**Assessments:** Formative- Socratic Seminar, Summative- In-class Project

**Opening:** Students will refer to the text of “Living the Revolution” (1970) by Gloria Steinem and identify the “myths” about women mentioned by Steinem.

**Activity #1:** Students will arrange the desks in a circle to participate in a Socratic Seminar. Students will address the questions- What evidence does Steinem use to debunk myths related to gender? Do you find the rhetorical strategies she uses to be effective/ convincing? Why or why not? Do the rhetorical strategies used in her speech resemble any other speakers we have discussed in the unit?

**Activity #2:** Students will consider other modern influential female speakers and authors they are familiar with and make a list of names. They may use their iPads to help generate additional ideas. Students will select one modern influential woman to research further.

**Activity #3:** Students will be presented with the task of researching their selected individual and selecting a piece of their writing or transcript of speech to analyze further. Over the course of the remainder of class and the following class, students will prepare a presentation by following the guidelines on the project task sheet.



**Closure:** Students will assess their progress on the project by reflecting on what they have finished and what they plan to complete in the upcoming class. Students will share their progress in pairs.

**Homework:** Continue to investigate information needed for the in-class project

**Differentiation:** Use of technology will be encouraged, but hard copies of digital documents will be available to students who require them. Students will work on a project independently that allows them to research and write at their own pace as they use the internet and the teacher as resources. Students will check-in with peers to gauge progress on the project.

## Appendix A

### MATERIALS FOR LESSON PLAN #1: ERNSTINE POTOWSKI ROSE & RHETORICAL QUESTIONS

Text of “Speech at the National Women’s Rights Convention”

Discussion Forum Reflection Prompt

Reflect on the class colloquium. Consider modern female figures that resemble Potowski Rose’s use of rhetoric and expression of desire for change. Write a paragraph comparing the individual you selected with Potowski Rose. Cite specific similarities and differences.

## Appendix B

### MATERIALS FOR LESSON PLAN #2: SOJOURNER TRUTH & NONSTANDARD

#### ENGLISH

Transcribed texts of “Ain’t I a Woman?” and “Ar’n’t I a Woman?” by Sojourner Truth

Text of “Speech at the National Women’s Rights Convention” by Ernestine Potowski Rose

Speech Recording of “Ain’t I a Woman” by Sojourner Truth (Dictated by Kerry Washington)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ry\\_i8w2rdQY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ry_i8w2rdQY)

WebQuest: Ernestine Potowski Rose & Sojourner Truth

**WebQuest:**

**Ernestine Potowski Rose & Sojourner Truth**

**Instructions:** Use the links to explore and gather information about each woman. Then, respond to the questions below.

**ERNESTINE POTOWSKI ROSE**  
Source: <https://www.brandeis.edu/wsrc/ernestine-rose-society/about/index.html>

When was Potowski Rose born?

What was her childhood like?

How did her life change at age 17?

How did she get involved in activism for women’s rights?

What was she hailed as at the National Women’s Rights Convention and why?

What factors contributed to Potowski Rose’s lack of recognition from historians?

**SOJOURNER TRUTH**  
Source: <https://www.biography.com/activist/sojourner-truth>

When was Truth born?

What was her childhood like?

What hardships did she experience in her early years of freedom?

What happened on June 1<sup>st</sup>, 1843?

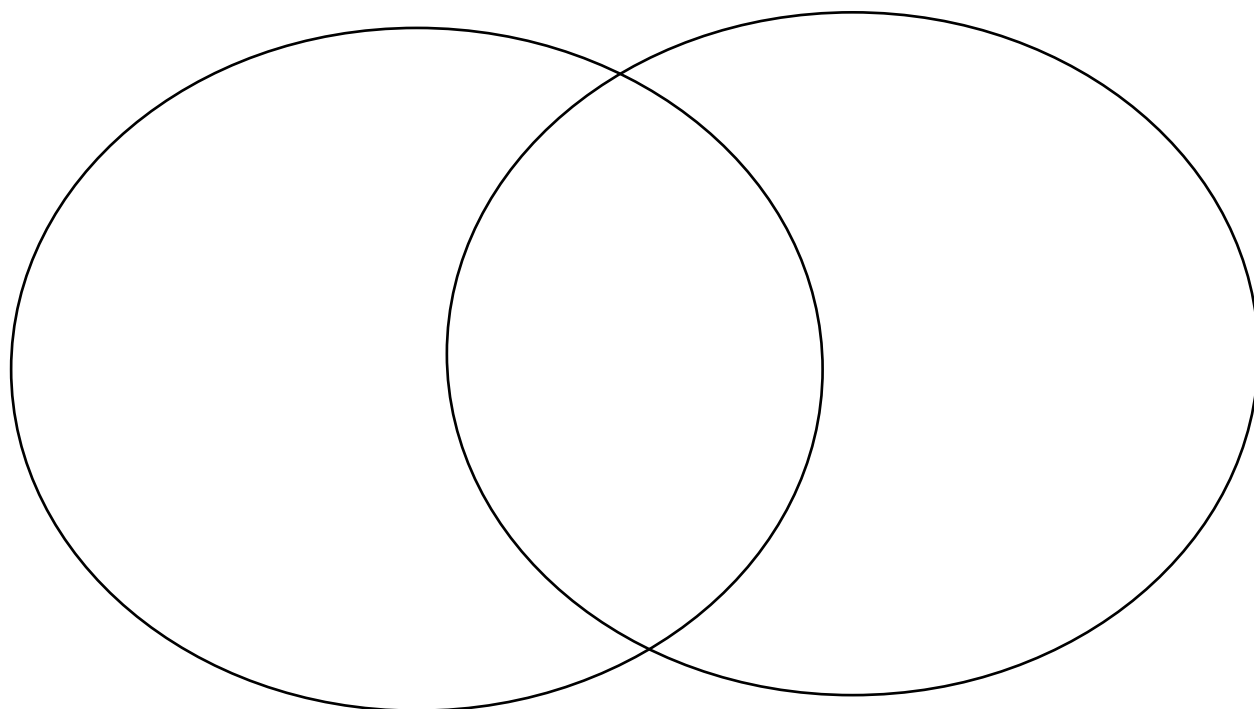
What was problematic about the original and subsequent transcriptions of “Ain’t I a woman?”?

What did Truth do during the Civil War?

Venn Diagram

“Ain’t I a Woman?”

“Ar’n’t I a Woman?”



## Appendix C

### MATERIALS FOR LESSON PLAN #3: SUSAN B. ANTHONY & FORENSIC SPEECH

Text of “Is it a Crime for a U.S. Citizen to Vote?” (1872-1873) by Susan B. Anthony

Biographical video- “Susan B. Anthony- An Act of Courage”

<https://www.biography.com/video/susan-b-anthony-an-act-of-courage-2080100943>

Excerpts of “Is it a Crime for a U.S. Citizen to Vote?” for Stations Activity

**Station #1:** “It was we the people-not we white male citizens-nor yet we male citizens-but we the whole people, who formed this Union; and we formed it, not to give the blessings of liberty, but to secure them-not to the half of ourselves and the half of our posterity, but to the whole people, women as well as men. And it is downright mockery to talk to women of their enjoyment of the blessings of liberty while they are denied the use of the only means of securing them provided by this democratic-republican government.”

**Station #2:** “But, it is urged, the use of the masculine pronouns, he, his, and him, in all the constitutions is proof that only men were meant to be included in their provisions. If you insist on this version of the letter of the law, we shall insist that you be consistent and accept the other horn of the dilemma, and exempt women from taxation for the support of the government and from the penalties for the violation of laws.”

**Station #3:** “The only question left to be settled here is, are women persons? And I hardly believe any of our opponents will have the hardihood to say they are not! Being persons, then women are citizens; and no state has a right to make any new law, or enforce any old law, that shall abridge their privileges or immunities. Hence every discrimination against women in constitutions and laws of the several states is to-day null and void-precisely as is everyone against negros.”

**Station #4:** “Then, to be a citizen of this republic is no more than to be a subject of an empire! You and I, and all true and patriotic citizens, must repudiate this base conclusion. We all know that American citizenship, without addition or qualification, means the possession of equal rights, civil and political. We all know that the crowning glory of every citizen of the United States is that he can either give or withhold his vote from every law and every legislator under the government.”

**Station #5:** “And, again, to show you that disfranchisement was precisely the slavery of which the fathers complained, allow me to cite to you Old Ben Franklin, who in those olden times was admitted to be good authority, not merely in domestic economy, but political as well. He said that every man of the commonalty, except infants, insane persons, and criminals, is, of common right and by the laws of God, a freeman, and entitled to the free enjoyment of liberty. That liberty or freedom consists in having an actual share in the appointment of those who frame the laws, and who are to be the guardians of every man’s life, property, and peace. For the all of one man is as dear to him as the all of another; and the poor man has an equal right, but more need, to have representatives in the legislature than the rich one. That they who have no voice nor vote in the electing of representatives do not enjoy liberty, but are absolutely enslaved to those who have votes and to their representatives; for to be enslaved is to have governors whom other men have set over us, and to be subject to laws made by the representatives of others, without having had representatives of our own to give consent in our behalf. Suppose I read it with the feminine gender. That “women who have no voice nor vote in the electing of representatives do not enjoy liberty, but are absolutely enslaved to men who have votes and their representatives; for the be enslaved is to have governors whom men have set over us, and to be subject to laws made by the representatives of men, without having had representatives of our own to give consent in our behalf.”

## Graphic Organizer for Stations Activity

**Stations Activity Organizer**

“Is it a Crime for a U.S. Citizen to Vote?” (1872-1873) by Susan B. Anthony

**Instructions:** Determine which component of forensic speech is utilized by Susan B. Anthony in the excerpt provided at each station by circling logic, culture or force in the second column. Then, explain your selection in the third column.

<b>Station #</b>	<b>Component of Forensic Speech</b> (Circle one)	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>1</b>	Logic Culture Force	
<b>2</b>	Logic Culture Force	
<b>3</b>	Logic Culture Force	
<b>4</b>	Logic Culture Force	
<b>5</b>	Logic Culture Force	

## Appendix D

### MATERIALS FOR LESSON PLAN #4: CHRYSTAL EASTMAN & FEMINISM

Text of “Now We Can Begin” (1920) by Chrystal Eastman

Persuasive Writing Organizer

<b>Persuasive Writing Organizer</b>	
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attention Grabbing Statement</li> <li>• Description of Issue</li> <li>• Thesis</li> </ul>	
<b>PARAGRAPH #1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reason/ Argument #1</li> <li>• Supporting evidence</li> <li>• Details/ Examples</li> </ul>	
<b>PARAGRAPH #2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reason/ Argument #1</li> <li>• Supporting evidence</li> <li>• Details/ Examples</li> </ul>	
<b>PARAGRAPH #3</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reason/ Argument #1</li> <li>• Supporting evidence</li> <li>• Details/ Examples</li> </ul>	
<b>COUNTERARGUMENT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledge opposing opinion</li> <li>• Disprove opposing opinion</li> </ul> <p style="font-size: small; margin: 0;">*You may integrate the counter argument into or between the 3 paragraphs</p>	
<b>CONCLUSION</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restate opinion</li> <li>• Summarize arguments</li> <li>• Call to action</li> </ul>	



## Writing Task Sheet

**Persuasive Writing Assignment****TASK:**

Imagine that the Board of Education in your town has decided that girls are no longer permitted to attend High School. They must instead stay at home to focus on “womanlier” duties such as housework. Write a persuasive letter/ essay to send to the board expressing your opinions about the issue and demanding that they reconsider their decision.

**INCLUDE:**

- Introduction
  - Description of issue
  - Strong thesis statement
- 2-3 body paragraphs
  - Well-articulated reasons/arguments
  - Supporting evidence
  - Counterargument(s)
- Conclusion
  - Summary of arguments
  - Call to Action

**FORMAT**

- MLA format- Please reference [Purdue MLA Formatting and Style Guide](#)
- Approximately 2½-3 pages

**SUBMISSIONS**

- Submit the completed persuasive writing organizer to Schoology.
- Submit the final draft to Schoology after the peer editing process.

## Persuasive Writing Assignment Assessment Rubric

### Persuasive Writing Assignment

#### ASSESSMENT RUBRIC:

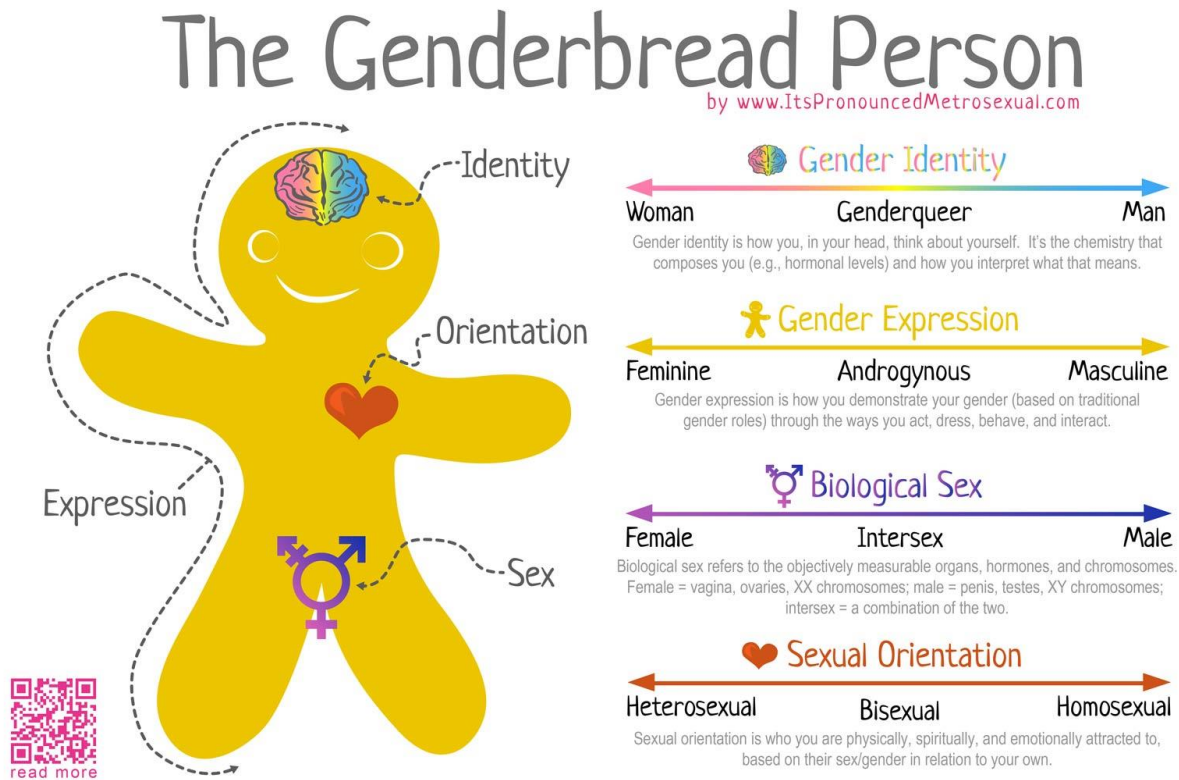
Category	Exceeds expectations	Meets expectations	Approaches expectations	Does not meet expectations
<i>Requirements</i>	I included all required elements.	I included nearly all required elements.	I included most required elements, but some are missing.	I did not complete or include all the required elements.
<i>Introduction &amp; Conclusion</i>	I include a strong introduction that grabs attention & clearly states my thesis. I include a strong conclusion that summarizes my arguments & demands action.	I include an introduction that clearly states my thesis. I include a conclusion that summarizes my arguments and calls for action.	I include an introduction, but my thesis may not be clear. I include a conclusion that attempts to summarize my arguments.	I do not include an introduction or conclusion.
<i>Reasons/ Arguments/ Counterargument(s)</i>	I include clearly stated arguments supported by factual/ convincing evidence. I acknowledge & disprove counterarguments	I include arguments that are supported by evidence. I acknowledge counterarguments.	I include arguments, but they may not be clearly stated. Evidence presented may be lacking or have little explanation.	I do not include clear arguments or reasoning. I do not present/ explain relevant evidence.
<i>Organization of Content</i>	I organize my writing in a logical manner. There is a logical progression of ideas that are organized and well connected.	I organize my writing in a relatively logical manner. Organization is evident and ideas are generally connected.	My writing is somewhat organized. The ideas may not progress in a logical manner.	My writing is relatively disorganized. The ideas are loosely tied together and lack cohesiveness.
<i>Format</i>	The format of my writing assignment adheres to MLA guidelines	The format of my writing assignment mostly adheres to MLA guidelines with minimal errors	The format of my writing assignment somewhat adheres to MLA guidelines with several errors.	The format of my writing assignment does not adhere to MLA guidelines.
<i>Spelling &amp; Grammar</i>	There are no spelling, grammar or punctuation errors.	There are minimal spelling, grammar and punctuation errors (1-3)	There are some spelling, grammar and punctuation errors (4-6)	There are many spelling, grammar and punctuation errors (7+)

#### COMMENTS:

## Appendix E

### MATERIALS FOR LESSON PLAN #5: GENDER IDENTITY DIALOGUE

The genderbread person visual aid



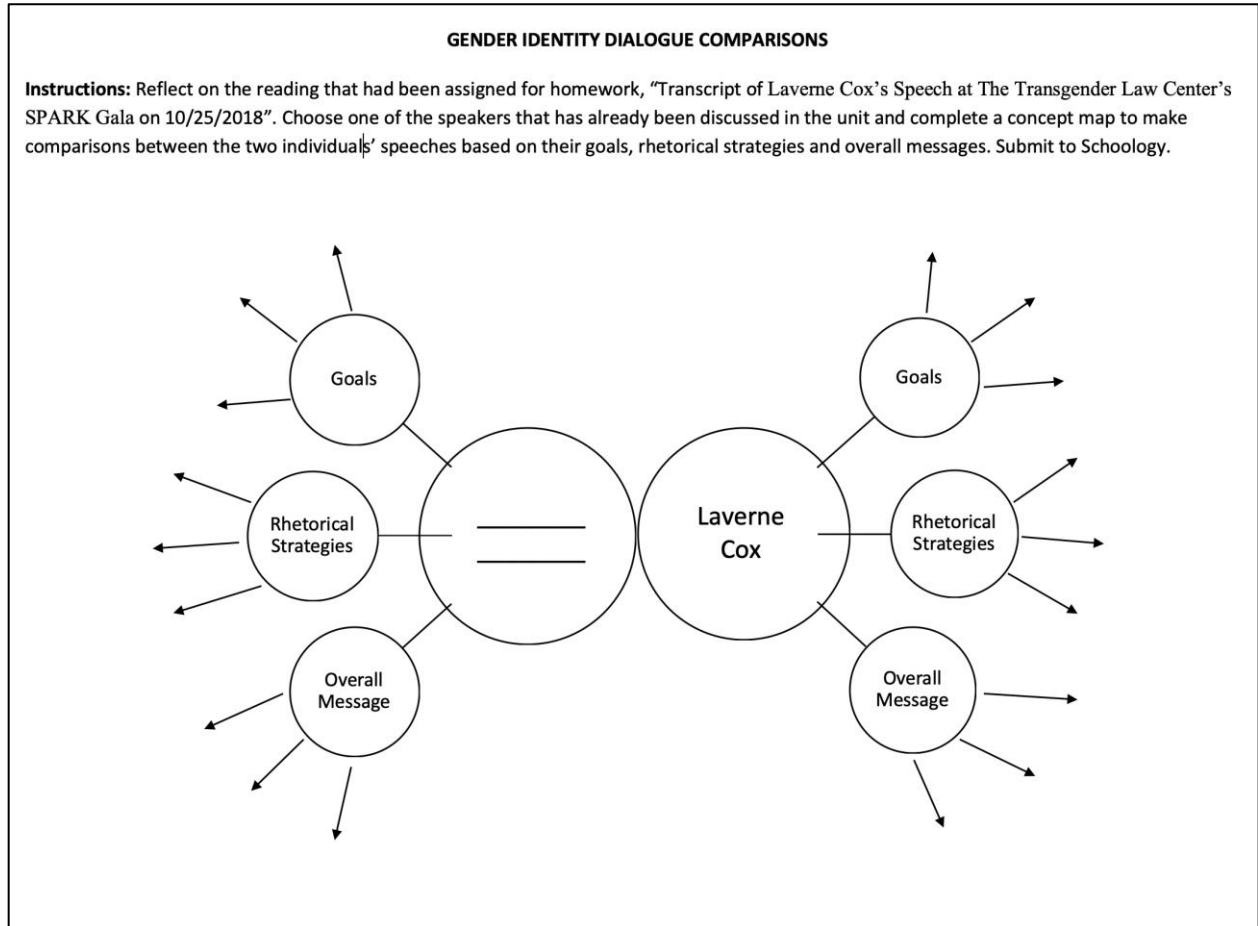
TEDx speech given by Audrey Mason-Hyde titled, “Toilets, bowties, gender and me.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NCLoNwVJA-0>

Transcript of Laverne Cox’s Speech at The Transgender Law Center’s SPARK Gala on

10/25/2018

### Gender Identity Dialogue Comparisons Concept Map



## Appendix F

### MATERIALS FOR LESSON PLAN #6-7: GLORIA STEINAM & OTHER INFLUENTIAL WOMEN

Text of “Living the Revolution” (1970) by Gloria Steinem

Project Task Sheet

#### Influential Woman Project

##### **TASK:**

Consider modern influential women who are speakers or authors. Select one individual to research further and gain teacher approval before moving on. Use the internet to gather information about the woman’s background, notable achievements/ most influential actions or materials and an explanation/ analysis of rhetorical strategies. Prepare to present to the class.

##### **INCLUDE:**

- A Title Slide
  - Name of individual & Your Full name
- 2-4 Background Information Slides
  - Date of birth / death
  - Location(s) & Family history
  - Education & Employment
- Notable Achievements/ Influential Actions
  - Written works
  - Speeches
- Rhetorical strategies
  - Explanation
  - Examples
  - Analysis
- Citations

##### **FORMAT**

- MLA format- Please reference [Purdue MLA Formatting and Style Guide](#)
- Approximately 10-15 slides in PowerPoint, Keynote or Google Slides

##### **PRESENTATIONS**

- Will take place in class on [TBD]

## Presentation Assessment Rubric

<b>Influential Woman Project</b>				
<b>ASSESSMENT RUBRIC:</b>				
<b>Category</b>	<b>Exceeds expectations</b>	<b>Meets expectations</b>	<b>Approaches expectations</b>	<b>Does not meet expectations</b>
<i>Requirements</i>	I included all required elements.	I included nearly all required elements.	I included most required elements, but some are missing.	I did not complete or include all the required elements.
<i>Content/ Research</i>	My presentation shows evidence of especially thorough research and all information is accurate.	My presentation shows evidence of sufficient research and information is accurate.	My presentation shows evidence of research, but it may be insufficient or somewhat inaccurate.	My presentation shows minimal evidence of research and/ or information is inaccurate.
<i>Explanation/ Analysis of Rhetorical Strategies</i>	I provide a clear and thorough explanation & in-depth analysis of rhetorical strategies that includes many examples.	I provide an explanation and analysis of rhetorical strategies. I include at least one example.	I attempt to provide an explanation of rhetorical strategies, but my analysis may be lacking.	I do not provide an explanation or analysis of rhetorical strategies.
<i>Organization of Content</i>	I organize my presentation in a logical manner. There is a logical progression of ideas that are organized and well connected.	I organize my presentation in a relatively logical manner. Organization is evident and ideas are generally connected.	My presentation is somewhat organized. The ideas may not progress in a logical manner.	My presentation is relatively disorganized. The ideas are loosely tied together and lack cohesiveness.
<i>Citations &amp; Format</i>	I include all necessary citations. The format of my citations adheres to MLA guidelines	I include all necessary citations. The format of my citations mostly adheres to MLA guidelines with minimal errors	I include some citations. The format of my citations somewhat adheres to MLA guidelines with several errors.	TI do not include citations and/or they are not formatted according to MLA guidelines.
<i>Spelling &amp; Grammar</i>	There are no spelling, grammar or punctuation errors.	There are minimal spelling, grammar and punctuation errors (1-3)	There are some spelling, grammar and punctuation errors (4-6)	There are many spelling, grammar and punctuation errors (7+)
<i>Delivery/ Impact</i>	I speak clearly without reading off of slides. I maintain eye contact and engage the audience.	I speak clearly and attempt to use eye contact. I do not read off the slides.	I may not speak very clearly and/or I frequently read off the slides	I do not speak clearly and read directly off the slides for the duration of the presentation.
<b>COMMENTS:</b>				

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## Access &amp; Opportunity in Today's Society

## CRITICAL RATIONALE

The topic for this unit was chosen based on my own efforts to embed education about tolerance into ELA instruction. Adolescence is a critical time period for students to develop knowledge about cultural and social differences as well as their own identities. English Language Arts lends itself to exploration, discussion and analysis of topics that are incredibly important to students' social and emotional growth. Literature allows students to see the world through different lenses. In "Approaching Young Adult Literature through Multiple Literacies" Costello and Reigstad say, "We argue that literacy and literature are mutually supportive. As social beings we make meaning of the world through the sharing of stories" (84). For this reason, the primary text for the unit, *With the Fire on High*, was chosen with the intention of exposing students to a unique story that allows them to make connections to their own lives while expanding their point of view of different life experiences that people their age may face. In a review of this text it is said that, "This book is boldly and gloriously subversive. In a world of after-school specials designed to scare teenagers into abstinence, *With the Fire on High* dares to make the assertion that it's possible to be both a teen mother and a good mother" (Paxton 1). Aside from stereotypes surrounding teen motherhood, the book goes even further to call attention to and navigate topics such as racism, homophobia, socio-economic status and gentrification, amongst others. Acevedo gives young adults the opportunity to interact with these topics. Teaching and employing *With the Fire on High* as the primary text for a unit takes its impact one step further by providing an environment where students may examine these issues in depth.

The novel gives ample opportunities for students to surpass thoughts and perspectives grounded in stigmas. Emoni's character humanizes experiences that are otherwise often viewed

as taboo. She says, “Yup. I was that girl your moms warns you about being friends with. And warns you about becoming. Not even done with freshman year of high school and already a belly that extended past my toes” (21). In this statement Emoni levels with the reader and calls out the rampant stereotyping of teen motherhood. She also incorporates language that is not regarded as Standard English, providing a clear opening for educators to help students examine dialects of English in a way that does not devalue their worth. Valuing individuals based on who they are rather than their perceived achievement of arbitrary socially acceptable standards is central to the text. Race is elevated as a theme of special importance throughout Acevedo’s writing. Emoni’s reflective nature draws readers in while positioning them to confront topics that are often deemed to be too uncomfortable for discussion. Emoni describes herself:

I try not to be self-conscious about how little Spanish I know, but some days it feels like not speaking Spanish automatically makes me a Bad Boricua. One who’s forgotten her roots. But on the flip side, folks wonder if I’m Black American enough. As if my Puerto Rican side cancels out my Blackness, although if we only go according to skin, my Puerto Rican side is as Black as my Black American side (69).

In this expression of self-awareness and exploration of identity, the author allows young readers to unpack complex topics in a way that promotes respect, understanding and racial equality. Students may find themselves identifying with Emoni’s experiences and/or discovering the intricacies and challenges that face different communities of color.

As a teacher, I believe it is a civic responsibility to prepare students to be good citizens. Doing this involves the analysis of real-life problems and experiences that are often shoved to the side and deemed to be too divisive or inappropriate in the context of education. Yet, limiting students’ exposure to these topics leaves them ill-prepared to navigate many of life’s situations

and denies them the opportunity to build a broader, more diverse and inclusive perspective of society and cultures. “If we expect students to take social responsibility, they must explore ideas, topics, and viewpoints that not only reinforce, but challenge their own” (Glasgow 54). Guiding students through Emoni’s story will allow ample opportunities for students to consider and question important social issues. This unit as a whole is intended to build valuable literacy skills while also opening young minds and helping them to build acceptance.

## CONTEXT

This teaching unit is intended for an eleventh-grade honors English class. Situated in central New Jersey, Monroe Township High School runs on an A/B alternating schedule with each period/ block consisting of 84 minutes. The following lessons would take place over the course of 2 weeks and be embedded into a larger unit focused on prejudice and tolerance. The district where I work strongly encourages the use of technology as each student is provided with an iPad. The lessons are structured to maximize the effectiveness of these tools by offering lesson materials electronically. The Learning Management System, Schoology, will facilitate this process and lend itself to online discussion forums as well as the submission of assignments and teacher feedback. Students will also make use of the internet to complete activities that require outside sources and/ or images.

Though the school supplies powerful technology tools, it suffers from substantial overcrowding and class sizes often breach 30 students. For this reason, several activities will be assigned in groups or pairs to promote collaboration while allowing students to have their voices heard by peers as well as myself. Group activities also cater to learners’ needs by allowing them to use their peers as resources. Further differentiation is elaborated upon in each lesson and embedded as best practice. Other accommodations may be made on a student-by-student basis as

all activities can be modified to suit the needs of different individuals. In addition, significant efforts have been made to incorporate many of the New Jersey State Standards for the grade level and content area. These standards are listed in the following section.

#### NEW JERSEY STUDENT LEARNING STANDARDS: ELA

NJSLSA.R1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences and relevant connections from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

NJSLSA.R4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

NJSLSA.R7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

NJSLSA.W2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

NJSLSA.W3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

NJSLSA.W4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

NJSLSA.W5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

NJSLSA.W6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

NJSLSA.W7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects, utilizing an inquiry-based research process, based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

NJSLSA.W8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

NJSLSA.W9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

NJSLSA.W10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

NJSLSA.SL2. Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

NJSLSA.L1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

NJSLSA.L2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

NJSLSA.L3. Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

NJSLSA.L4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.

NJSLSA.L5. Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

## LESSON PLAN #1: RACIAL REPRESENTATION

**Objective:** Students will identify and discuss racial inequality in *With the Fire on High*, popular culture and their own experiences.

**New Jersey Student Learning Standards:** NJSLSA.R1, NJSLSA.R7, NJSLSA.SL2, NJSLSA.L1, NJSLSA.L3, NJSLSA.5

**Materials:** *With the Fire on High*, Projector, Student iPads, “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack,” Whiteboard, Markers, Discussion Questions

**Assessments:** Formative- Discussion & Group activity

**Opening:** Students (having read pp. 1-53 of *With the Fire on High*) will answer the question, “What is white privilege?” by calling on prior knowledge and experience and using the Think, Pair, Share model.

**Activity #1:** Students will read, “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack.” Then, students will respond to discussion questions based on the article. Students will also be prompted to consider how white privilege is represented in the beginning of Acevedo’s text.

**Activity #2:** Students will work in small groups to find video clips from TV series, movies or media that show racial inequality. Each group will gather 3 examples and prepare explanations of racial representation.

**Activity #3:** Each group will choose one of their examples to present to the class. Video clips will be played, and groups will share their analysis.

**Closure:** Students will share reactions to group presentations in a brief class discussion.

**Homework:** Read *With the Fire on High* pp. 54-113

**Differentiation:** Students will have the opportunity to work individually and in groups to facilitate a positive learning environment where they may use peers as resources. Paper copies of assignments will be available to students who prefer or require them.

#### LESSON PLAN #2: TEEN PREGNANCY & NON-TRADITIONAL FAMILY STRUCTURES

**Objective:** Students will investigate and synthesize information and attitudes toward non-traditional family structures.

**New Jersey Student Learning Standards:** NJSLSA.R7, NJSLSA.W7, NJSLSA.W8, NJSLSA.W9, NJSLSA.SL2

**Materials:** *With the Fire on High*, Projector, Student iPads, Whiteboard, Markers, WebQuest, Research Strategies/ Evaluating Online Sources PowerPoint

**Assessments:** Formative assessment- WebQuest

**Opening:** Students will respond to the following questions using a Schoology discussion forum via their iPads- What is family? In what ways are traditional family structures glorified by society?

**Activity #1:** I will review research strategies with students using a PowerPoint presentation

**Activity #2:** Students will work in pairs to complete a brief WebQuest research assignment regarding non-traditional family structures and statistics/ attitudes toward teen pregnancy.

**Closure:** The WebQuest will be debriefed as a class.

**Homework:** Read *With the Fire on High* pp. 114-181

**Differentiation:** Students will be provided with an organizer/ questions to guide research. Paper copies of assignments will be available to students who prefer or require them.

LESSON PLAN #3: ACCESS TO & ATTITUDES TOWARD HIGHER EDUCATION

**Objective:** Students will analyze and compare different educational experiences.

**New Jersey Student Learning Standards:** NJSLSA.W2, NJSLSA.W3, NJSLSA.W4, NJSLSA.W10, NJSLSA.L1, NJSLSA.L2

**Materials:** *With the Fire on High*, Projector, Student iPads, Whiteboard, Markers, Writing Prompt, Comparative Writing PowerPoint, Graphic organizer/ Concept maps

**Assessments:** Formative assessment- comparative writing exercise

**Opening:** Students will work in groups to discuss the following questions- How is Emoni's educational experience unique? How is it not? We will debrief as a class.

**Activity #1:** I will provide an introduction to comparative writing using a PowerPoint and students will take notes.

**Activity #2:** Students will respond in writing to the following prompt- Compare Emoni's educational experience with your own. Identify similarities and differences. Use textual evidence to support your descriptions. Students may begin by organizing their ideas using a graphic organizer or concept map.

**Activity #3:** Students will work in pairs to peer edit their writing exercises by following guidelines provided to them.

**Closure:** Students will submit their comparative writing assignments

**Homework:** Read *With the Fire on High* pp.182-254

**Differentiation:** Students will be provided with graphic organizers for the writing assignment. Paper copies of assignments will be available to students who prefer or require them. Students may work on their writing assignment using paper and pen or the iPad. An anonymous



numbering system will be used to prevent students from knowing whose work they are editing and to ease any potential apprehension or tension.

#### LESSON PLAN #4: FINANCIAL & ECONOMIC ACCESS

**Objective:** Students will distinguish between different financial situations and economic statuses.

**New Jersey Student Learning Standards:** NJSLSA.R1, NJSLSA.R4, NJSLSA.W6, NJSLSA.W9, NJSLSA.L4

**Materials:** *With the Fire on High*, Projector, Student iPads, Whiteboard, Markers, “Curriculum as Window and Mirror,” “Window or Mirror” Teaching Strategy, Mentimeter online polling site, “Mirror/ Window” Graphic organizer

**Assessments:** Formative assessment- Window/ Mirror writing exercise

**Opening:** Students will participate in a “Privilege Walk” in which they are asked to stand in a line and take steps forward, backward or stay in place based on their responses to questions concerning opportunities and financial access. We will debrief students’ reactions as a class.

**Activity #1:** Students will investigate Elizabeth Acevedos’s identity in pairs and compare her identity to their own. We will discuss as a class.

**Activity #2:** Students will read “Curriculum as Window and Mirror” and determine in what ways *With the Fire on High* is a mirror and/ or a window.

**Activity #3:** Students will participate in a poll to indicate whether the text serves primarily as a mirror or a window or both. We will discuss the results of the poll.

**Activity #4:** Students will work individually to identify textual evidence to support ways in which they view *with the Fire on High* as a mirror and ways in which they view it as a window. They will collect this information using a graphic organizer provided to them.

**Closure:** Students will share their textual evidence in pairs and submit using Schoology LMS.

**Homework:** Read *With the Fire on High* pp. 255-310

**Differentiation:** Students will have the opportunity to move around the classroom during the opening activity to promote a flexible learning environment. Paper copies of assignments will be available to students who prefer or require them. Students may work on their writing assignment using paper and pen or the iPad. Students will be provided with a graphic organizer to collect textual evidence.

#### LESSON PLAN #5: OPPORTUNITIES & EXPERIENCES THAT SHAPE IDENTITY

**Objective:** Students will explore and analyze identity based on the text.

**New Jersey Student Learning Standards:** NJSLSA.W6, NJSLSA.W8, NJSLSA.W9, NJSLSA.SL2, NJSLSA.L5

**Materials:** *With the Fire on High*, Projector, Student iPads, Whiteboard, Markers, Collage Assignment guidelines, Reflection Question in Schoology

**Assessments:** Formative assessment- Identity collage presentations

**Opening:** Students will be asked to describe the main character of *With the Fire on High*, Emoni, using only one word. Students will come up to the board to share/ write their responses to the question and we will discuss as a class.

**Activity #1:** Students will be assigned pairs and asked to create 2 digital collages- one to represent how Emoni views herself and one to represent how others may view Emoni (based on prevalent stereotypes and assumptions). Both collages must include visuals and be supported by textual evidence/ excerpts (2 per collage).

**Activity #2:** Pairs will present their collages to the class.

**Closure:** Students will reflect on the previous activity by briefly describing how it changed, conflicted with, or supported their understanding of identity. Students will post their response in a Schoology discussion board.

**Homework:** Read *With the Fire on High* pp. 311-388, prepare for Socratic Seminar by writing 2 questions to extend the conversation of the assigned prompt: How do stereotypes shape perspectives of ourselves and others? Which stereotypes does *With the Fire on High* expose? How and why is that significant? Use evidence from the text and/ or additional resources to support your response (at least 2 quotes).

**Differentiation:** Students will have the opportunity to move around the classroom to come up to the board during the opening activity. Students will work on the main activity in pairs to promote collaboration. Students may create their collage on paper if it is preferred to the iPad.

#### LESSON PLAN #6: STEREOTYPES & PERSPECTIVES

**Objective:** Students will share analysis and synthesis of perspectives and ideas portrayed in the primary unit text, *With the Fire on High*.

**New Jersey Student Learning Standards:** NJLSA.R1, NJLSA.W9, NJLSA.SL2, NJLSA.L1

**Materials:** *With the Fire on High*, Projector, Student iPads, Whiteboard, Markers, Socratic Seminar Rubric

**Assessments:** Summative assessment- Socratic Seminar

**Opening:** Students will arrange the desks to facilitate a Socratic Seminar and I will discuss the procedures and guidelines for the activity/ assessment.

**Activity #1:** Students will respond to the following questions- How do stereotypes shape perspectives of ourselves and others? Which stereotypes does *With the Fire on High* expose?

How and why is that significant? Use evidence from the text and/ or additional resources to support your response (at least 2 quotes). Students will participate in the guided discussion and respond to the statements of others in order to extend the conversation and initiate an in-depth analysis of the text.

**Closure:** I will wrap up the seminar by commenting on students' statements and analysis in relation to the text.

**Homework:** None

## Appendix A

### MATERIALS FOR LESSON PLAN #1: RACIAL REPRESENTATION

“White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack” by Peggy McIntosh

Text Dependent Questions from Tolerance.org

Reread the paragraph that begins, “I think whites are carefully taught.” What metaphor does the author use for white privilege? Explain this metaphor in your own words. Include an explanation of the words “assets” and “provisions.”

- a. What relationship does the author see between the words “privilege” and “dominance”?
- b. How does the author draw a dichotomy between earned privilege and systemic privilege?

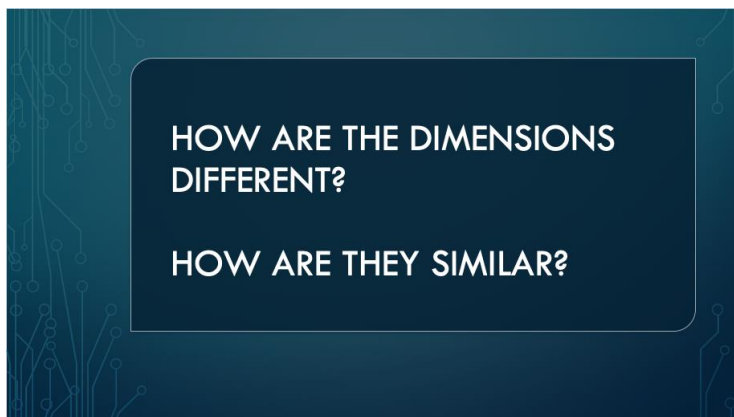
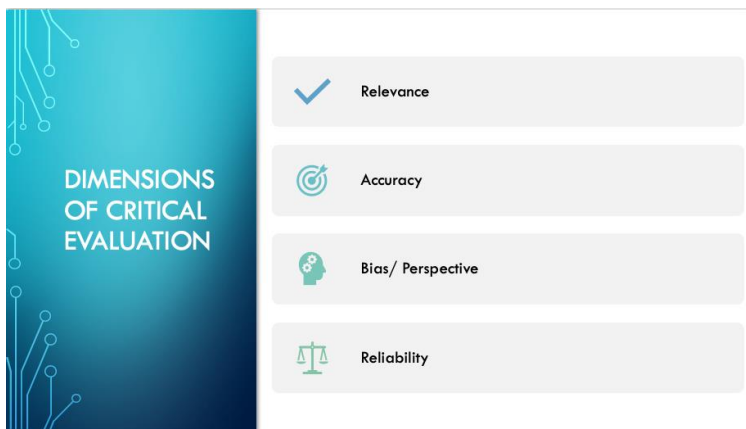
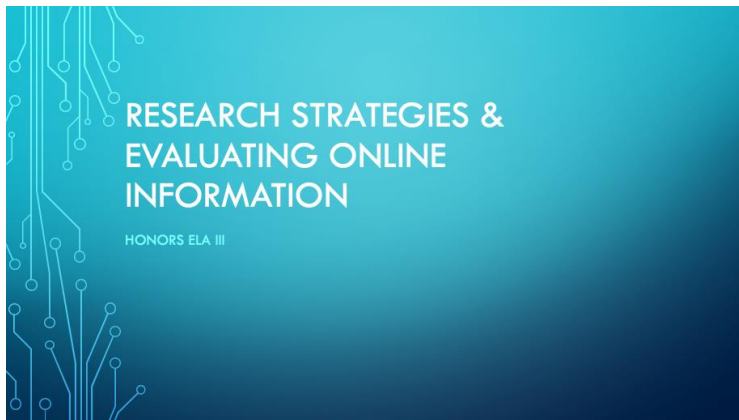
What change in rhetoric happens in this paragraph? What is the author saying?

In the second half of the essay, the author describes the way she was raised to be unaware of white privilege or the way she was taught that racism involved individual acts against others. How do these mentalities create barriers for change?

## Appendix B

### MATERIALS FOR LESSON PLAN #2: TEEN PREGNANCY & NON-TRADITIONAL FAMILY STRUCTURES

#### Research Strategies & Evaluating Online Information PowerPoint



**DEMONSTRATIONS & EXAMPLES**

- VERIFYING & REFUTING ONLINE INFORMATION
- INVESTIGATING AUTHOR CREDENTIALS
- DETECTING BIAS & STANCE
- NEGOTIATING MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES
- WEIGHING USEFULNESS/RELIABILITY OF SOURCES

**QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER**

- Is this site relevant to my needs and purpose?
- What is the purpose of this site?
- Who created the information at this site, and what is this person's level of expertise?
- When was the information at this site updated?
- Where can I go to check the accuracy of this information?
- Why did this person or group put this information on the internet?
- Does the website present only one side of the issue, or are multiple perspectives provided?
- How are information and/or images at this site shaped by the author's stance?
- Is there anyone who might be offended or hurt by the information at this site?
- How can I connect these ideas to my own questions and interpretations?

**WORK CITED**

- Coiro, Julie. "Teaching Adolescents How to Evaluate the Quality of Online Information." *Edutopia*, 29 Aug. 2017, <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/evaluating-quality-of-online-info-julie-coiro>.

## WebQuest: Non-Traditional Family Structures

Name:

Date:

*With the Fire on High*  
**WebQuest**

**TEEN PREGNANCY**

<b>QUESTION</b>	<b>ANSWER</b>	<b>SOURCE</b>
Approximately how many cases are there of pregnancy in the US every year?		
Which states have the highest rates of teen pregnancy?		
Which states require sex education to be taught in public schools?		
What percentage of teen mothers drop out of high school?		
What resources are available to teen mothers?		



## TRADITIONAL & NON-TRADITIONAL FAMILIES

Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rt4Igzv6unI>

How are **non-traditional family structures** represented in popular culture?

Find, describe and cite at least 2 examples from tv, movies, magazines, books or other mediums.

SOURCE	EXPLANATION

How are **traditional family structures** represented in popular culture?

Find, describe and cite at least 2 examples from tv, movies, magazines, books or other mediums.

SOURCE	EXPLANATION

## Appendix C

### MATERIALS FOR LESSON PLAN #3: ACCESS & ATTITUDES TOWARD HIGHER EDUCATION

#### Comparative Writing PowerPoint



#### What is comparative writing?

Compare

Contrast

Analyze

#### Getting started



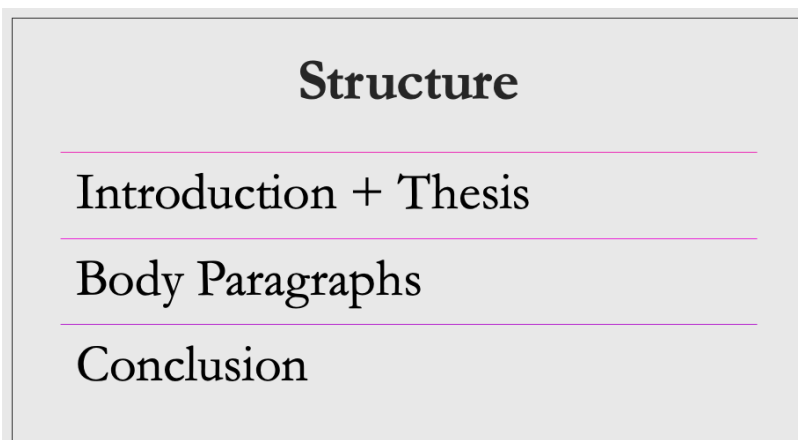
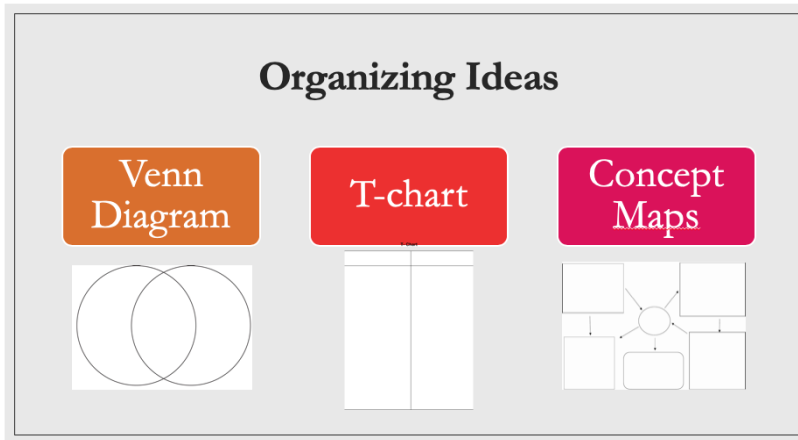
CHOOSE/ IDENTIFY THE  
SUBJECTS



IDENTIFY SIMILARITIES &  
DIFFERENCES



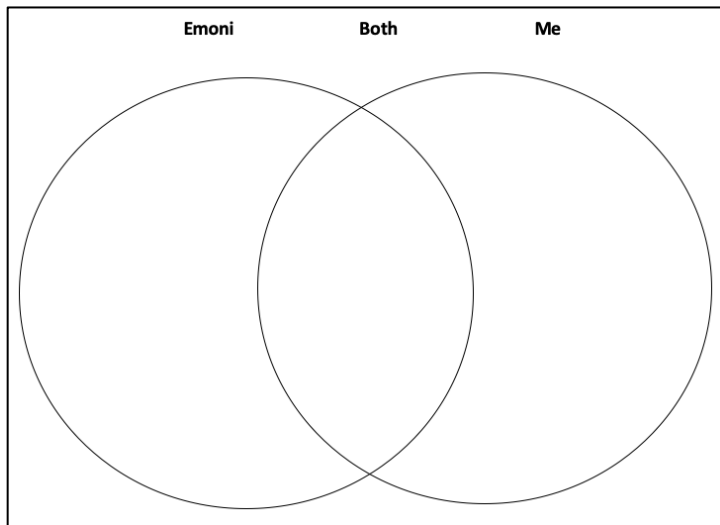
EXAMINE/ ANALYZE  
CHARACTERISTICS AND/OR  
ACTIONS



## Using Transitions/ Linking Words

- Similarly
- Likewise
- In the same way
- Also, along similar lines
- In the same fashion
- As well as
- Both
- In common with
- On the contrary
- On the other hand
- However
- Otherwise
- Whereas
- Still
- Yet
- Conversely

### Graphic Organizers



<u>Emoni</u>	<u>Both</u>	<u>Me</u>



## Appendix D

### MATERIALS FOR LESSON PLAN #4: FINANCIAL AID & ECONOMIC ACCESS

“Curriculum as Window and Mirror” by Emily Style

“Window or Mirror” Teaching Strategy (tolerance.org)

Mirror/ Window Graphic Organizer

**Window or Mirror?**

**Instructions:** Think about in what *With the Fire on High* broadens your perspective (window). Then, consider the ways *With the Fire on High* reflects who you are and/or your experiences (mirror). Record your responses in the organizer below.

Window	Mirror
●	●
●	●
●	●
●	●
●	●

**Appendix E**

**MATERIALS FOR LESSON PLAN #5: OPPROTUNITIES & EXPERIENCES THAT SHAPE  
IDENTITY**

**Collage Assignment Guidelines**

Name:	Date:
<p><i>With the Fire on High</i></p> <p><b>Identity Collages</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work in pairs to create 2 digital collages.</li> <li>• One collage should represent/ explain how Emoni views herself.</li> <li>• The second collage should represent/ explain how others may view Emoni based on prevalent stereotypes and assumptions.</li> <li>• Each collage should incorporate visuals.</li> <li>• Each collage should incorporate at least 2 quotes from the text.</li> <li>• Prepare a brief presentation to explain your collages and analysis of Emoni’s character.</li> <li>• Use the space below to brainstorm ideas of images, words and/or excerpts you may want to include in each collage.</li> </ul>	
<b>How Emoni Views Herself</b>	<b>How Others May View Emoni</b>

## Appendix F

## MATERIALS FOR LESSON PLAN #6: STEREOTYPES &amp; PERSPECTIVES

## Socratic Seminar Rubric

**SOCRATIC SEMINAR RUBRIC**

	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Preparation &amp; Conversation Extension</b>	Student prepared at least 2 thoughtful questions and helped to extend the conversation significantly.	Student prepared at least 1 thoughtful question and helped to extend the conversation.	Student may ask question(s) but they may not be well prepared and/ or extend the conversation minimally.	Student does not ask question(s) or the question(s) asked do not extend the conversation.
<b>Use of Textual Evidence</b>	Student cites at least 2 quotes from the text that are relevant and meaningful to the discussion.	Student cites 2 quotes from the text, but 1 or more may lack relevance or meaning in the context of the discussion.	Student cites only 1 quote that is only somewhat relevant to the discussion.	Student may only cite 1 quote, but it lacks relevance and meaning in the context of the discussion.
<b>Quality of Comments &amp; Connections</b>	Student provides significant analysis of the topic and draws meaningful connections.	Student provides some analysis and attempts to draw connections.	Student provides minimal analysis and does not make meaningful connections.	Student does not provide analysis and does not make connections.
<b>Listening &amp; Attentiveness</b>	Student is respectful and listens attentively to peers' responses and questions.	Student is respectful and listens to peers' responses but may be somewhat distracted.	Student is not consistently respectful throughout the seminar and does not listen to all peers' responses.	Student is disrespectful during the seminar and does not listen to peers' responses.



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“Window or Mirror?” *Teaching Tolerance*, <https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/teaching-strategies/close-and-critical-reading/window-or-mirror>. Accessed 30 March 2020.