

# ***That Was Then, This Is Now* – Exploring the Moral Development of Characters and Ourselves**

***Amy Hillis***

## **Introduction**

Human beings are naturally curious and this includes our students. As a teacher of Language Arts, I am used to asking tough questions in order to get my students think about the conflicts and issues in a novel and how these struggles may connect to the experiences they have had in their lives. I have always had an interest in moral and existential issues, as these usually deal with complex situations that have no one correct answer. The way that we think of these issues can inform us about ourselves and our core beliefs. While we may typically think of these types of questions as too big for middle schoolers to understand or too outside of the realm to which they can relate, students like to tackle these topics as much as adults. Additionally, because novels are lengthier than short stories, they generally bring in several themes and motifs for the reader to explore, along with issues that are pertinent to their lives outside of school. Teaching while exploring big questions – questions that engage philosophical inquiry – deepens students' critical thinking abilities and enables them to engage more with a text.

This unit is designed for use in a seventh grade Language Arts classroom but could be used with older students as well. I would not recommend using this unit with students younger than sixth grade, because of the subject matter in the book. There is some mention of drug use that would not be appropriate for elementary students. This unit is designed to take approximately three weeks. By the end of this unit, students will have evaluated the moral judgment of the main character of *That Was Then, This Is Now* by S.E. Hinton to determine how much he has really changed by the end of the novel. In the process of doing this, students will consistently engage in high levels of critical thinking, challenging both themselves and each other on their beliefs about people and the world around them.

The main objective of this unit is using big questions to explore a character's moral development and how that reflects the ways we live our own lives. Specific objectives can be found in the activities section of the unit. I chose the novel *That Was Then, This Is Now* by S.E. Hinton as the basis for this unit, because of the realistic nature of the characters and issues dealt within the novel. Adolescents are at a critical point in their

development where they are learning to differentiate between right and wrong, figuring out who they are, and realizing that issues are not always black and white. At this stage, they begin to realize that not every question has one right answer and that what is right and wrong is not always easy to determine. (Crain 1985) I have noticed that students are always more engaged when they see the relevance to what they are learning outside of school, especially when they can form a personal connection to the subject matter. When reading fiction, whether it be short stories or novels, I like to pull in nonfiction articles about a topic relating to the content, and this especially piques their interest. In teaching this novel, I will place a heavy emphasis on exploring moral and existential questions as they relate to the characters in the book and will pull in case studies and articles which connect to the events of the plot. My students' curiosity and interest in these issues will be advantageous for this unit and will help make it interesting and engaging as we move through it.

### **Demographics**

I teach at a large, suburban middle school in Charlotte, North Carolina in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District. There are approximately 1100 students at my school, 77% of whom are white. Of the remaining students, 12% are African-American, 7% are Asian, and 4% are Hispanic. There are 9% of students on free-reduced lunch and 2% of the population are English Language Learners. The students at my school generally come from middle class to upper-middle class families, where the parents are college-educated and very involved in their child's education. Generally, the students are high-achieving and strive to meet and exceed the expectations placed on them. I also have two inclusion classes, one ESL and one EC. In my ESL class, five students are receiving language services and they come from a variety of countries. There is a set of twins, one boy and one girl, from Russia and there are two girls, who are cousins, from China. There is also a boy from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Each of these students speaks English relatively fluently but do struggle with reading comprehension and writing. In my EC class, I have 27 students, eight of which have a variety of disabilities, including mild autism, intellectually disabled, ADHD, social anxiety, and learning disabilities. Because of this, the activities in this unit will be suitable for students at all levels of achievement.

At the time this unit was being developed, the state was transitioning from the North Carolina Standard Course of Study to the Common Core State Standards. Because the expectation in my school district is for teachers to also make this transition, this unit will follow the seventh grade standards in the Common Core.

## **Rationale**

Oftentimes when students read a novel in class, it seems the focus is placed on “testable” material – identifying the theme, explaining the connection between the setting and mood of a scene, analyzing how the author’s opinion of a subject affects the point of view of the narrator. Of course, this is for good reason. At the end of the school year, our students must all pass the Reading EOG where they will see questions of this nature. It would be foolish not to devote some class time to exploring these skills. However, this is not where it needs to end. Students want more out of the novels they are reading. If you were to ask a Kindergarten teacher how her students feel during their reading time, he or she will most likely describe the excitement her students feel. Ask a fifth grade teacher the same question, and you will probably get a more mixed response. Ask a twelfth grade teacher this question and you will most likely get a sense of exasperation. As students move through school, their passion for reading is squashed because of the way literature is approached in the classroom: too much test preparation and not enough exploration into the issues that students care about and connect to most. (Gallagher 2009, 3) When adults sit down to read a novel, they are not rushing through it so they can complete a worksheet or construct a diorama afterwards. They are analyzing the complex decisions a character must face when dealing with a sometimes unthinkable situation. They are making personal connections to the subject matter and considering how they would handle something like that if it happened to them. Adults engage in discussions with one another about what they are reading, share these connections that were made with the characters and events, and relate them to bigger issues in our world. Why don’t we encourage students to do more of this? Reading literature is not just about marking a text for the climax or writing down the different types of conflicts faced by a character. What makes it interesting is the issues the author chooses to explore within the pages. Most novels deal with a set of enduring questions about subjects such as honesty, freedom, and relationships. This makes it even more important to look into these issues as they appear.

By encouraging our students to explore these issues with each other, we are likewise encouraging the critical thinking process. Students will still be analyzing a text, but for ideas that are relevant and interesting to them. Students’ interest in reading tends to drop dramatically in the middle school years, because the text complexity increases and we ask students to mark up their books to make sure they understand the testable material. Instead of killing their love of reading, taking the approach of exploring big questions as they impact the novel will hopefully revitalize their love of reading and help them see that it can be an enjoyable activity. (Gallagher 2009, 101) The Common Core State

Standards require that students analyze how a character changes throughout the course of the story, responding as the plot moves towards a resolution. It necessitates they can take a piece of informational text (nonfiction) and determine and support whether the reasoning in an argument is sound. There is also a standard in the Common Core in which students must compare the approach of two different authors writing about the same topic and how their interpretations and viewpoints differ. This unit will easily encompass those, along with many other standards in the Common Core, so that students will learn the skills necessary to be successful on assessments they may be required to complete. Because students will be forced to consistently consider and debate multiple viewpoints on a variety of topics, the level of rigor and critical thinking will be high, allowing for great levels of student achievement by all learners in the classroom.

While there are certain skills in our content areas that need to be taught, these can be supplemented with existential and moral questions. These are fascinating to most people, especially adolescents and, if utilized correctly, will encourage them to dive deeper into their subject matter of study. Out of this, our students will acquire and strengthen their critical thinking skills, analyze conflict, seek out and examine various points of view on a subject, collaborate with peers and adults to feed this hunger for inquiry, and develop a deeper understanding into moral, existential, and other complex issues. A good story will have many interpretations. It doesn't matter which one is right—it matters what you do with what you have read. The story must connect persuasively to the human experience. This must be the case for our students.

S.E. Hinton accomplishes exactly this in her novel *That Was Then, This Is Now*. In this book, two “brothers,” Mark and Bryon, have enjoyed a close relationship since childhood. However, Bryon is at the point in his life where he is growing and changing, thinking about who he wants to be. Mark still makes poor choices, but somehow always manages to come out unharmed from the difficult situations in which he finds himself. When Bryon discovers something extremely unsettling about Mark, he is forced to make a difficult decision that changes their relationship forever. This book deals with the issues of friendship, love, justice, violence, gender and change, among others, and is ideal for lending itself to philosophical inquiry, because these are issues to which young adolescents can easily relate.

It is necessary to define two key terms before moving further: moral and existential. As used here, moral refers to how humans should act towards themselves, others, and the Earth. Likewise, existential refers to a reflection about human nature; the mysteries of the universe, such as life and death and issues around quality of existence, such as health

and well-being. These issues can be integrated successfully into a content area, since any material that is taught should be intellectually honest and encourage thinking processes used in non-classroom situations and by adults. As students grow and graduate from school, they will constantly be in situations where they must seek to understand opposing viewpoints, understanding that there is not always a simple solution to a problem. To help prepare for this, teachers at all levels should encourage students to revise preconceptions and seek common ground in initially differing opinions and balance the moral, intellectual, and existential in a lesson (Simon 2001, 3).

Moral and existential issues arise in classrooms but are often shut down immediately, as teachers sometimes are uncomfortable dealing with them. If they are pursued, they may be assigned to just one student to explore outside of class so as not to devote time to a discussion around a supposedly moot point. If, by chance, the issue is explored by the class, it is often lacking research and evidence. This does not mean that the teacher is incompetent. This is usually the teacher acting in regards to time constraints, the teacher evaluation system put in place by the district, or potential parental disapproval, among other things.

Assigning tasks such as lengthy study guides are helpful in that they hold students accountable to the reading and develop comprehension, but they do not leave room or energy for deeper moral and existential analysis. Students are often left to believe that memorizing details *is* the analysis. Teachers should ask themselves more often, what do I want students to get out of this unit? It does not have to be a choice of learning facts OR exploring moral issues; these things can be done simultaneously. Students can learn facts in their study of big questions through reading and research. Critical thinking is fostered by tackling critical issues and so a time when a discussion of a moral question is skipped or skimmed over, an intellectual opportunity is missed. However, too many moral questions in a discussion are as bad as not enough. Discussions need focus so that depth in the discussion can be achieved. Moral and existential concerns transcend the power differential between students and teachers, because these are things about which we are all concerned (Simon 2001, 153). Big questions do not automatically engage students as they must make sense and be put into a context that is relatable for the students (Simon 2001, 63).

Pedagogical neutrality is important when conducting classroom discussions around morally heavy issues. Without expressing his or her own opinion, a teacher can send the message that it is okay to differ on an issue and struggle with one's own position on the issue. It is important to reason and find thoughtful evidence to support one's own view

and provide course for future action. Students should regularly be asked two basic questions about what they are studying: what are the implications of what I am learning for my own behavior and beliefs AND how does this help me understand my place in the world. In other words, who cares?

These questions can lead school to matter more to students. Students in schools should be learning about the things that matter most to them. Teachers may need to reexamine their curriculum and reflect on their practice about how they can integrate these big questions into their subject matter (Simon 2001, 233). For everything that we teach, we must continually search for and make students aware of how it matters to them. We must find those questions that students love to engage in and design our curriculum around them. When designing units, teachers should design one overarching question or proposition that carries throughout the unit. Individual lessons may center on questions or propositions relating to the big questions with corresponding activities.

Lawrence Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development outlines the psychological development of human beings. In this unit, I use his theory to trace the main character's development in *That Was Then, This Is Now*. His theory is divided into three levels – preconventional, conventional, and postconventional – which are further subdivided into six stages.

#### Level 1 – Preconventional Morality

Stage 1 – Obedience and Punishment – A child has a strict sense of right and wrong, which is based on the consequences involved with the action. In other words, a certain action is wrong because there will be a punishment associated with it (Colby & Kohlberg 1987, 27).

Stage 2 – Individualism and Exchange – Children recognize that there is not just one right view, and that different people may have different opinions. What is right is what is best for one's self (Colby & Kohlberg 1987, 39).

#### Level 2 – Conventional Morality

Stage 3 – Good Interpersonal Relationships – People tend to enter this stage around adolescence and believe that people should live up to their family and community's expectations. They should begin feeling empathy and have a genuine concern for others (Colby & Kohlberg 1987, 43).

Stage 4 – Maintaining the Social Order – The main difference between stages 3 and

4 is that now, the person is more concerned about society as a whole, and understands the need to obey laws and be a good citizen so that social order is maintained. There is an understanding that someone can't break a law just because he may feel like it. In stage 1, a person might say that it is wrong to break a law because there is a consequence; in stage 4, a person might say it is wrong to break a law because the result would be chaos, and chaos is not what is best for society (Colby & Kohlberg 1987, 73).

### Level 3 – Post Conventional Morality

Stage 5 – Social Contract and Individual Rights – In this stage, a person recognizes that society has to not only function smoothly, but be one in which all people want the same basic rights protected, Democratic procedures are used for changing a law that would improve society. In other words, it may be okay to break a law if a moral right (such as a right to life) is protected (Colby & Kohlberg 1987, 100).

Stage 6 – Universal Principles – This stage was originally used by Kohlberg as an extension of Stage 5, but no longer exists. Kohlberg determined that it was no longer useful because of its similarity to Stage 5. For the purposes of this unit, this stage will not be utilized while exploring the development of the main character (Colby & Kohlberg 1987, 111).

In addition to Kohlberg's theory, there are several strategies and activities that will be used throughout the unit in order to foster high levels of student engagement.

### **Strategies and Activities**

#### Technology

In order to make the unit more interesting and engaging, I will be using several different types of technology. As part of our teacher evaluation instrument, teachers are expected to meet 21<sup>st</sup> century learners with 21<sup>st</sup> century technology, but also, it is just more fun for the students and teacher if there are more engaging strategies used. In Language Arts, it is easy to accomplish this by allowing students the freedom to be creative with the final products of their assignments. While adults may not be as familiar with all of the available options when it comes to technology as their students, students will appreciate the fact that they are able to produce something in an outlet that makes sense to them. These children have used technology all their lives and this is the way our world is going. Our world thrives on the use of technology and oftentimes school acts as a bubble where students are asked to leave all of their gadgets at the door and enter a paper and pencil world, which is truly no longer reality. As a teacher, even if you are only familiar with

the basic features of a web application, students will take it and run, creating high-level products that exceed your expectations. Here are a few options that can be used:

- 1 Glogster (<http://edu.glogster.com>) - A glog is an online poster that students can create about a person or topic to show what they have learned. Images, songs, and videos can be uploaded and embedded, along with text, to make the poster more engaging. There is also a gallery of text bubbles, frames, stickers, and sounds to add to the overall look and feel of the poster.
- 2 Wikis (<http://wikisineducation.wetpaint.com/>) – My classroom webpage also functions as a wiki, which is a collaborative tool for students to engage in online discussions. This is great for anticipation guides and philosophical inquiry as students begin and engage with a text or topic. Students can post comments and questions to which other students can respond and challenge. Students live in the age of Facebook and like to write on each other’s “walls” and this functions as a similar tool. Any CMS webpage can be turned into a wiki or the website listed above works just as well.
- 3 Storyjumper (<http://www.storyjumper.com>) – This website allows students to create a children’s book. The program has scenery, character, and props already preloaded for easy creating, and students can also add images from their own personal collections and from the Internet.
- 4 Animoto (<http://animoto.com/education>) – Animoto takes photos or images you upload and turns it into a video. Students can also add text to provide further explanation on topics when necessary.

This is just a small sampling of programs. Browsing the internet or collaborating with your colleagues will introduce you to even more options to use in your classroom.

### Socratic Seminar/Fishbowl

A Socratic Seminar is structured so that the teacher merely functions as a facilitator, keeping track of time, posing additional questions, and making sure students are respectful at all times towards one another. The questions for this seminar were developed with this idea, so that students could engage in a constructive dialogue with each other with little to no teacher interaction. While it may be tempting, teachers should not share their ideas and opinions, as this may cause some students to feel intimidated about having an opinion that opposes the teacher’s. This is one of my favorite activities to do with students throughout the year. As students become more



comfortable with each, the dialogue really begins to open up and students begin exploring existential issues that connect to both the text and their lives in general.

When I hold a seminar, I have the students sit in two circles – the inner circle and the outer circle. The inner circle has their discussion first while the outer circle listens and takes notes on any points they might want to address in their own discussion. When students are discussing, they do not raise their hands, they simply jump in when there is a space to talk. Prior to having the first seminar, we discuss the importance of communicating respectfully with each other, and that while everyone wants their opinions heard it must be done in a way that encourages people to listen. We discuss communication aspects such as tone and volume of voice, and how to encourage participants who may be shyer when it comes to sharing their opinions. We also discuss the importance of not simply sharing answers, but actually talking to each other and challenging peers if a conflicting viewpoint arises. It is interesting to see how one or two natural leaders emerge in each circle to facilitate the discussion, ask quiet members for their opinions, and decide when it is time to move to another question. Students often find Socratic Seminars to be one of the more rewarding and engaging activities in class, because they are treated more like adults holding a sophisticated conversation than children in a classroom at school. Seminars foster a setting where there is no right answer to a question, so students are more at ease when participating (Ohio Department of Education 2011).

### Body Biography

This functions as a great culminating activity, in that students are able to choose a character from a text and examine him holistically – his strengths, weakness, values, etc. For this activity, students are in small groups and use a large piece of chart paper on which they trace a member of the group. Students then follow the directions on the handout to use both words and symbols to represent the qualities of that character.

### *Activity One – Anticipation/Reaction Guide*

Objective: Students will preview the novel by beginning to develop their opinions on the big ideas present in the book.

Students will complete the handout twice, first before reading the novel (anticipation) and second after reading the novel (reaction). This activity allows students to preview some of the motifs that arise in the novel and develop their opinion while they are reading. Students write either ‘true’ or ‘false’ next to each statement, depending on their opinion.

## Anticipation/Reaction Guide

1. Stealing would be acceptable if it wasn't against the law and there was no consequence.
2. A family is defined only by the people to whom you are related.
3. It is acceptable to break the law if it is necessary for survival.
4. If everyone believes a lie, the true becomes obsolete (unnecessary).
5. It is right to tell on a family member who breaks the law, even if it means destroying the relationship.

After the initial completion of the anticipation guide, students will participate in a four corners activity. In this activity, each corner of the room is labeled with a sign that says agree, strongly agree, disagree, or strongly disagree. The teacher's role is to facilitate the class discussion. Students move to the corner of the room that represents their opinion and dialogue about why they feel the way they do. These questions could also be posted on the wiki for students to continue the discussion online, discussing their opinions as they change or remain steadfast while reading the novel. Students who may not be as vocal in class will especially benefit from being able to participate online. In addition to this, the online discussion board is a format becoming increasingly common in colleges, and this exposes students to this format. Throughout the duration of the novel, the teacher can have these statements posted around the classroom, as these statements will most certainly arise in class discussions. The teacher can use these statements in discussions to analyze whether or not students have changed their initial opinion or if the novel has helped solidified their previously formed opinions.

Another option for students who may like to remain more anonymous in their opinions is to have a class set of journals (composition notebooks, for example). Students are each assigned a journal. One journal will be shared by a student in each class taught by the teacher. For example, I teach three different classes, so one student from each class will be assigned a journal, meaning that three students share one journal. Throughout the novel, students can respond to the other two students reading that journal about the statements on this anticipation guide. They can also respond directly to the other two students writing in that journal. Students could even read journals that do not belong to them to be exposed to an even wider variety of opinions.

*Activity Two – An Introduction to Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development*

Objective: Students will view a video explaining Kohlberg's stages in order to apply them to the main character of *That Was Then, This Is Now*.

This will likely be the majority of students' first time exploring developmental theory of morals and how they apply to real-life situations, so background knowledge must be built before proceeding with the novel. Students will view a video from vimeo.com and complete a viewing guide to help them gain this information and refer back to it throughout the novel. The video is one that was completed by a sixth grade student for a project, but is done very well and clearly explains the information so that a fellow student could understand it. The web address for this video is <http://vimeo.com/25643713>. The narrator explains what happens at each stage and then reviews a popular case study known as the Heinz Dilemma that Kohlberg used to determine where people fall developmentally. As the narrator explains each stage, he explains how a person would react at each stage to the situation presented in the Heinz Dilemma. Prior to viewing the video, students will be presented with a copy of the Heinz Dilemma and form an opinion about what they would do in that situation. After viewing the video, they will determine at which stage of moral development they are, according to Kohlberg.

Viewing Guide (all underlined words should be left blank on the document, so that students can fill in the blank as they watch the video)

\*The teacher should pause the video as necessary to ensure that all students are completing the guide with accuracy. Also, the teacher should anticipate questions or comments from students, about words such as moral, interpersonal, and any other word or concept that may be unfamiliar.

1. Lawrence Kohlberg was a famous psychologist.
2. Developmental Psychology is the study of how the brain develops.
3. Moral development is a type of development in the brain that has to do with how you think about moral issues and what you think is right or wrong.
4. According to Piaget, there are two stages of moral development:
  - 1) Younger Children (11 and under) – rules must always be followed
  - 2) Older Children (12 and over) – rules help people get along but can be changed
5. Kohlberg came up with six stages of moral development

6. The Heinz Dilemma helped him determine at which stage a person could be classified.
7. The basic question in the Heinz Dilemma: Should Heinz have broken into the pharmacy to steal a drug that he could not afford to buy for his dying wife?
8. Kohlberg's Six Stages of Moral Development
  - 3) Stage One – Obedience and Punishment
    - i. Children believe they must follow, without question, a set of rules laid down by authority figures (teachers, parents, etc.)
    - ii. They must follow these rules to avoid punishment.
    - iii. Children at this stage say Heinz was wrong and stealing is bad, because you could go to jail.
  - 4) Stage Two – Individualism and Exchange
    - i. Children realize that authority's rules aren't the only right point of view.
    - ii. Everyone wants to live life their own way.
    - iii. Punishment is just a risk everyone wants to avoid.
    - iv. Children at this stage realize what was right for Heinz was stealing the drug and what was right for the druggist was making money (not selling the drug for less than it was worth) Also, they might say the druggist was being unfair by charging too much money.
  - 5) Stage Three – Good Interpersonal Relationships
    - i. People (not just children) believe you should live up to the values of family and community and that you should have trust, empathy, and compassion for one another.
    - ii. People would say that Heinz should have stolen the drug, because his wife means a lot to him.
  - 6) Stage Four – Maintaining the Social Order

- i. People are concerned with society as a whole.
- ii. The world functions correctly when everyone abides by rules and laws.
- iii. People at this stage often take the same side as the children of stage one, but for a different reason.
  1. The difference: At stage one, children think stealing is wrong because you could go to jail. At stage four, people think stealing is wrong because if everyone stole, the result would be chaos.

7) Stage Five – Social Contract and Individual Rights

- i. People define what a good society means to *them*.
- ii. They compare human rights to the law.
- iii. People at this stage support breaking the law – It was okay for Heinz to steal the drug because life is more important than property. They compare the way society is to the way society should be.

8) Stage Six – Universal Principles

- i. Kohlberg decided this stage was not useful to him, so he discarded it (got rid of it).

Upon the completion of this video, the teacher should ask students to go back and see where they are developmentally, according to Kohlberg. The teacher can then facilitate a discussion with students surrounding their reactions – were they surprised by their standing? Do they agree or disagree with where they are and why? Everyone in the class is approximately the same age – what may cause different students to be at different stages (Crain 1985)?

*Activity Three* – Building Background: Setting

Objective: Students will build background knowledge about the setting of the novel in order to better analyze characters by watching a video.

Because the setting of this novel takes place in the late 1960s, it is important for

students to gain an understanding of the social and political issues framing the time period. Students will watch a video ([http://cnettv.cnet.com/look-back-1960s/9742-1\\_53-50061499.html](http://cnettv.cnet.com/look-back-1960s/9742-1_53-50061499.html)) that provides a brief overview of the decade. This video is about 5 minutes in length and provides details about civil rights, music, politics, and various other subjects that relate to this time period. After students watch this video they will answer questions in order to aid in a discussion about what they saw. If students do not build this background knowledge, they may not have a full understanding of basic terms and ideas (hippies, drafting for the Vietnam War) or completely understand the characters' motivations for certain things they do (M&M going to live in a hippy house because he wanted freedom from the control of his father).

#### Handout – Understanding the 1960s

1. What are some of the highlights from this decade that stood out to you?
2. What are some of the subjects you expect this novel to explore?
3. How might the details of the setting influence the characters' personalities and decisions?
4. If the novel were set in 2012 instead, how might the details of the setting influence the characters' personalities and decisions?

#### *Activity Four* – Analyzing the Moral Development of Bryon and Mark

Objective: Students will analyze the characters' moral development by symbolically representing their thoughts, actions, and motivations.

In this activity, students will begin tracing the moral developments of the two central characters in the novel, Bryon and Mark. Students will have options regarding the format of this assignment, which will be ongoing through the duration of the novel. Options could include creating a glog (<http://glogster.edu>), digital scrapbook (<http://www.storyjumper.com>) or video (<http://animoto.com>). If the use of technology is not a reasonable option, this project can be completed using paper. Because the students may be utilizing technology with which they have had no prior experience, the teacher should take them to the computer lab, if possible, to monitor how they begin working on this project. Once students have a handle on the technology, this assignment can be completed as homework per teacher discretion.

## Handout – The Moral Development of Mark and Bryon

In the beginning of the novel *That Was Then, This Is Now*, Mark and Bryon have a very close relationship. Throughout this novel though, their relationship changes as each forms his perspective about right and wrong. Your assignment is to work with a partner and trace the moral development of each character, according to Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development. Refer to the viewing guide for the video we watched for information about the stages and how they apply to each character. You partner have the choice of using the following programs to create the scrapbook: Glogster, Animoto, or Storyjumper. You may also choose to use paper or an actual scrapbook to complete the assignment. Your scrapbook must have at least 5 pages and must trace the development of the characters through Kohlberg's stages. You must have pictures and text explaining the moral stage of each character, along with textual evidence justifying each answer. You should also explore why you believe each character ended at the stage they did. What caused Mark and Bryon to develop differently? What do you think of the idea that we are all a product of our childhood, a childhood that, to some extent, is something over which we have no control? What do you think that means for you in your own life?

### *Activity Five* – Body Biography

Objective: I will analyze a character by creating a symbolic portrait with visuals and text.

For this activity, students will work in small groups to create a character analysis. Each group will get one sheet of large chart paper and will trace the outline of one student's body onto the page. Groups will then follow the instructions below to create a symbolic portrait of that character. Please reference Appendix A.

### *Activity Six* – Snitching

Objective: Students will evaluate Bryon's decision by watching a video, reading an article, and participating in a debate.

The concept of snitching is a controversial one in certain cultures and communities. The term snitching means that one does not go to the police to report a crime, and that neighborhood basically self-police to avoid contact with law enforcement. The following article and video explore this concept more in depth:

Article:

[http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2007/04/19/60minutes/main2704565\\_page3.shtml?tag=contentMain;contentBody](http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2007/04/19/60minutes/main2704565_page3.shtml?tag=contentMain;contentBody)

Video:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wTwipn-Fp\\_U&noredirect=1](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wTwipn-Fp_U&noredirect=1)

After reading the article and watching the video, students will engage in a teacher-led discussion around the following questions:

1. Do you agree with Cam'ron's perspective on snitching?
2. What may be the pros and cons of adopting this attitude?
3. What are the future implications if the belief in not snitching continues to spread, as described in the article?
4. Why did Bryon snitch when he called the police on Mark, or was he just doing the right thing? Why do you think so?
5. At what stage of moral development is Cam'ron? At what stage of moral development is Bryon? Explain.

Students will then be divided into two groups – one group that agrees with snitching and one group that opposes snitching. The true opinions of students do not matter, as they must argue the position they have been assigned. This activity has worked extremely well in the past, and students immediately adopt the opinion they have been assigned, even if it differs from their true opinion, because they get caught up in wanting to win the debate. The teacher may want to assign groups and positions the previous day in class so that students can have time to pull in more research and resources to help support their opinions. Please reference Appendix B for a set of directions that can be used to structure the debate.

*Activity Seven* –Socratic Seminar/Fishbowl Activity

Objective: I will analyze and evaluate concepts related to *That Was Then, This Is Now* by participating in a Socratic Seminar.

Questions:

Socratic Seminar – *That Was Then, This Is Now*

1. After Mark was beaten up in Chapter 3, the other kids at school start gossiping about what happened. Bryon observes that there are many different versions of the truth and that people “were going to believe what they wanted to believe and hearing the truth wasn't going to change their minds” (p. 70). Consider how this



- applies to your own life. What makes something true? If everyone believes a lie, does it then become a truth?
2. Charlie's death has a strong impact on Bryon. As the trial happens, he says that "he hadn't much cared if they even caught those guys" since "Charlie was dead, nothing was going to change that" (p. 89). In the case of a violent crime, especially a murder, does it really matter if the criminal is brought to justice? Why might it matter? Why might it not matter?
  3. On page 69, Bryon says that there comes a point when you don't really need a gang anymore, because "when you know your own personality... you don't need the one the gang makes for you." How is your personality defined – by others or by yourself? How does this change as you get older?
  4. Throughout the novel, Mark and Bryon hustle people for money, steal, and in the end we find out that Mark has been selling drugs, all to bring in more money for the family. Is it ever right acquire money illegally or dishonestly if it is necessary for survival?
  5. On pages 123, Bryon thinks that he has never considered himself free, nor has he considered the hippies at the house free. What does he mean by that? What does it mean to have freedom? Are any of us really free?
  6. In Chapter 10, Bryon finds out that Mark has been selling drugs. Because he is so upset about M&M, he calls the police on Mark and has him arrested. Explore the effects that this has on the family. Did you think Bryon did the right thing? Was it worth destroying his relationship with Mark and hurting his mother? Does Bryon think he did the right thing?
  7. How would you describe the protagonist's moral judgment? What details support your description?
  8. How would you describe the protagonist's moral behavior?
  9. How do you explain any differences between the protagonist's judgment and behavior?

In the Socratic Seminar/Fishbowl activity, all students will first be given a handout with these questions, and will write their thoughts about each question. When they are writing their responses, their answers do not need to be in complete sentences. It

is more important for them to get their thoughts on paper than to be following correct grammar usage and conventions. Then, the class will be divided in half so that students can more easily converse with each other than if they were having a whole class debate. Students will form their desks into an inner and outer circle, with students in the inner circle first discussing their responses. After about 20-30 minutes (teacher can use discretion regarding the amount of time students will talk), the students will switch seats. When the second group of students discusses the questions, they may want to comment on what they first heard in the inner circle. Please reference Appendix C for peer and self-evaluation forms, as well as a rubric that can be used to grade this activity.

The Socratic Seminar is the final activity planned for this unit. Teachers also have the option of having students present their ongoing work of tracing the moral development of the characters.

### **Bibliography**

"Animoto - Education Video Slideshows." Animoto - Video Slideshow Maker with Music. <http://animoto.com/education> (accessed October 8, 2011).

Web application for creating videos.

CBS. "Eye To Eye: Cam'ron (CBS News) - YouTube ." YouTube - Broadcast Yourself. . [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wTwipn-Fp\\_U&noredirect=1](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wTwipn-Fp_U&noredirect=1) (accessed October 8, 2011).

In this interview, rapper Cam'ron explains the concept of snitching and why he would never tell the police who shot him, even if he knew who did it. This video relates to the end of the novel and can help spark a debate about whether or not Bryon should have called the police on Mark.

Colby, Anne, and Lawrence Kohlberg. *The Measurement of Moral Judgement*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987. Print.

This books presents theories on moral development. Lawrence Kohlberg coauthored this book and provides extensive information regarding his theories of moral judgement.

Coles, Robert. *The call of stories: teaching and the moral imagination*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1989.

This is a great resource for reading more about stories' appeal to our imagination

and ways to incorporate moral teaching into the classroom.

Crain, W.C.. "Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development." Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development. [faculty.plts.edu/gpence/html/kohlberg.htm](http://faculty.plts.edu/gpence/html/kohlberg.htm) (accessed September 10, 2011).

This website provides detailed information about Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development. It also explains the connection between Kohlberg, and Jean Piaget's theory of child development, which forms the basis of Kohlberg's work. While Piaget's theory deals only with childhood, Kohlberg expresses his theory of moral development as it relates to our entire lifespan.

Gallagher, Kelly, and Richard L. Allington. *Readicide: how schools are killing reading and what you can do about it*. York: Stenhouse Publishers, 2009.

This is an excellent resource for teachers of all content areas who want to learn effective strategies for incorporating reading into the classroom. Gallagher explains that certain strategies and assignments turn students off to reading, eventually killing any desire a person may have to read. He presents strategies and activities that encourage students to think deeply, but still foster their love of reading.

"Glogster EDU - 21st century multimedia tool for educators, teachers and students | Text, Images, Music and Video ." Glogster EDU - 21st century multimedia tool for educators, teachers and students | Text, Images, Music and Video . <http://edu.glogster.com> (accessed October 8, 2011).

Web application for creating online posters.

Hinton, S. E.. *That was then, this is now*. [1st ed. New York: Viking Press, 1971.

This novel is the basis for the unit. Many adolescents are a fan of Hinton's work, as her novels are very realistic and honest in their content.

Simon, Katherine G.. *Moral questions in the classroom: how to get kids to think deeply about real life and their schoolwork*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001.

This is a great resource for educators who want to bring moral and existential questions into the classroom and incorporate them into already rigorous lessons. Simon has visited classrooms to find both effective and noneffective ways of incorporating these types of discussions into lessons.

Udall, Devan. "Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development on Vimeo." Vimeo, Video Sharing For You. <http://vimeo.com/25643713> (accessed October 8, 2011).

This video was created by a sixth grade student and clearly breaks down Kohlberg's stages so that other students can easily understand them. He provides an explanation of each stage and also interviews various people to provide examples of what

attitudes look like at these stages.

"Using Effective Instructional Strategies: Socratic Seminar." ODE - Academic Content Standards Feedback Application.  
[http://ims.ode.state.oh.us/ode/ims/rrt/research/Content/socratic\\_seminar\\_what\\_we\\_know.asp](http://ims.ode.state.oh.us/ode/ims/rrt/research/Content/socratic_seminar_what_we_know.asp) (accessed October 16, 2011).

This article, put out by the Ohio Department of Education, provides research backing the use of Socratic Seminars in the classroom, explaining that seminars enhance students' levels of critical thinking and engagement in the classroom.

"Videos - Free video downloads and streaming video - CNET TV." Videos - Free video downloads and streaming video - CNET TV.  
[http://cnettv.cnet.com/look-back-1960s/9742-1\\_53-50061499.html](http://cnettv.cnet.com/look-back-1960s/9742-1_53-50061499.html) (accessed October 8, 2011).

This video provides background information about the 1960s. This is a good resource to use before the novel to help students understand more about the time period and the characters they will meet in the novel.

"Wikis in Education - Wikis in Education." Wikis in Education - Wikis in Education.  
<http://wikisineducation.wetpaint.com/> (accessed October 8, 2011).

This is a website that teachers can use to create a wiki, an online discussion forum for students to share their opinions on content covered in class. Wikis are great to use for extensions of class discussions and can be used in this unit for the anticipation/reaction guide.

richu5. "Stop Snitchin' - CBS News." Breaking News Headlines: Business, Entertainment & World News - CBS News.  
[http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2007/04/19/60minutes/main2704565\\_page3.shtml?tag=contentMain;contentBody](http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2007/04/19/60minutes/main2704565_page3.shtml?tag=contentMain;contentBody) (accessed October 8, 2011).

This article connects with the video mentioned above about snitching. This explains the concept more in detail and works well for using as the foundation of a class debate in connection with the novel.

## **Appendix A**

### Implementing District Standards

Common Core State Standards for 7<sup>th</sup> Grade that are covered in this unit

RL.7.1. Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Students will use textual evidence throughout the novel to evaluate the moral development of the main characters.

RL.7.6. Analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text.

Students will analyze the characters' various perspectives on the issues in the novel.

W.7.4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

In their final product, students will communicate through writing the moral development of the characters. They must follow the guidelines of the teacher to be successful at this task.

W.7.6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and link to and cite sources as well as to interact and collaborate with others, including linking to and citing sources.

Students will utilize web applications and programs throughout this unit.

W.7.9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Students will utilize information from a variety of sources when analyzing and reflecting on the issues in the book.

SL.7.1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

Students will participate in small-group and whole-group discussion, as well as a debate, and must communicate effectively in order for others to understand their points.

SL.7.3. Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

While debating, students must analyze arguments in order to produce effective counterarguments.

SL.7.4. Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with pertinent descriptions, facts, details, and examples; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

Students must use proper communication skills while arguing their points in order to be successful in this unit.

## **Appendix B**

### **The Body Biography**

For your chosen character, your group will be creating a body biography -- a visual and written portrait illustrating several aspects of the character's life within the literary work.

Begin by drawing in the outline of the body. I have listed some possibilities for your body biography, but feel free to come up with your own creations. As always, the choices you make should be based on the text; for you will be verbally explaining (and thus, in a sense, defending) them. Above all, your choices should be creative, analytical, and accurate.

After completing this portrait, you will participate in a "showing" in which you will present your "masterpiece" to the class. This "showing" should accomplish the following objectives:

- Review on the literary work that involves your character
- Communicate to us the full essence of your character by emphasizing the traits that make the character unique
- Promote discussion of your character

### **Body Biography Requirements**

Although I expect your biography to contain additional dimensions, your portrait must contain:

- A review of the work's events
- Visual symbols
- An original text
- The five most important quotes (either exposition or dialogue) relating to your character (be sure to attribute correctly and annotate)

### **Body Biography Suggestions**

1. **Placement** - Carefully choose the placement of your text and artwork. For

example, the area where your character's heart would be might be appropriate for illustrating the important relationships within his/her life. . The hands might refer to actions or accomplishments of the character

2. **Spine** - Actors often discuss a character's "spine." This is his/her objective within the work. What is the most important goal for your character? What drives his/her thought and actions? The answers to these questions are his/her "spine." How can you illustrate it?
3. **Virtues and Vices** - What are your character's most admirable qualities? His/her worst? How can you make us visualize them?
4. **Color** - Colors are often symbolic. What color(s) do you most associate with your character? Why? How can you effectively weave these colors into your presentation?
5. **Symbols** - What objects can you associate with your character that illustrate his/her essence? Are their objectives mentioned within the work itself that you could use? If not, choose objects that especially seem to correspond with the character.

## **Appendix C**

### **Classroom Debate**

#### **Introduction**

Classroom debates are exercises designed to allow you to strengthen your skills in the areas of leadership, interpersonal influence, teambuilding, group problem solving, and oral presentation. Debate topics and groups will be assigned momentarily. All group members are expected to participate in the reading, development, and presentation of your debate position. Each member of your group should be assigned a speaking part during one of the segments below so that everyone has a chance to speak.

**Pro:** In favor of Snitching

**Con:** Against Snitching

#### **Debate Format**

6 minute Position Presentation - Pro

6 minute Position Presentation - Con

5 minute Work Period

4 minute Rebuttal - Pro  
4 minute Rebuttal - Con

3 minute Work Period

2 minute Response - Pro  
2 minute Response - Con

1 minute Work Period

2 minute Position Summary - Pro or Con  
2 minute Position Summary - Pro or Con

The teacher then has various options regarding the way a winner is chosen. In the past, I have had the participants vote on the winner and I have also chosen a winner. While it may seem counterproductive to have the participants vote, thinking that they would vote for themselves, I have always found students to vote very honestly, with students voting for who the true winner should be.

## Appendix D

### Peer Evaluation of Fishbowl Discussion

**Directions:** Place a check mark in the boxes as you observe the behavior described. Your goal is to help your partner get a check mark in all four boxes as these behaviors are directly aligned to the rubric. Use this form to coach your partner on his/her strengths and weaknesses midway through the discussion.

Refers to specific examples in the novel	Makes personal, textual, or world connections to the novel	Builds on another's point	Listens to others without interrupting and makes eye contact

### Self Evaluation & Reflection on Fishbowl Discussion



**Directions:** Answer the following questions thoughtfully and with complete sentences. What are some specific things you did well in our discussion?

1. What are some specific things you can improve on for our next discussion?
  
2. What are some specific things our class did well in the discussion?
  
3. What are some specific areas of improvement for our class?
  
4. What new understandings do you have about *That Was Then, This Is Now* and its themes as a result of our discussion?

Fishbowl Discussion Rubric

Criteria	Points Earned	Beginning	Developing	Accomplished	Exemplary
Annotates text in preparation for discussion		Highlights important people, places and ideas in text	Identifies important literary elements in the text	Draws conclusions about the literary elements noted in the text	Connects events and ideas in the text to other texts or experiences or to bigger themes
Gives evidence and makes inferences		Able to locate factual evidence in the text with page number	Locates evidence in support of an idea under discussion	Uses evidence in the text to expand on, analyze or critique an idea	Uses evidence in the text to create a new idea or draw connection among ideas
Makes text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-to-world connections		Able to connect an event or idea in the text to another	Makes connections between events and ideas in a text to other	Makes meaningful connections between events and ideas in a text	Makes text-to-text, text-to-self and text-to-world connections

		event or idea in the same text	texts or experiences	to other texts or experiences	and relates the connection to universal themes.
Acts to build a group which can collaboratively search for meaning		Listens to others and makes eye contact	Asks questions to clarify what someone has said	Builds on another person's ideas	Connects the ideas of several students
Assesses self and group and reflects on participation in seminar		Identifies personal and group strengths and weaknesses	Evaluates own performance and the group's and makes suggestions for improvement	Evaluates performance and explains new concepts learned via the discussion	Evaluates performance and synthesizes points made in order to show new understandings about the themes and ideas in the novel