

In Their Shoes

Lori Fisher

Rationale/Background Information

Growing up in the south there were three things I learned not to discuss at the dinner table: money, politics, and race. Stereotypes of racial identity have been around before our nation was founded and played an important role in the development of who we are as a nation, and how we perceive one another. For me personally, race never became a factor until I dated and then married someone outside my race. I then saw first-hand how my family and friends perceived other cultures, and was appalled and saddened to learn that my family would not support my interracial relationship. As I began to dig deeper with them, I discovered that most of their reservations manifested from negative stereotypes and fears of social retribution. My family was very concerned with how other people were going to view our family if I dated an African American, and were worried about the stares and whispers that accompany interracial relationships. In truth, my parents were more concerned with how people would see and treat them, rather than my own feelings and happiness.

This struggle with my family made me look at our world differently and want to know why there is still this divide between the races. I wondered if my parents were able to step into an African American's shoes, would they see things differently. Unfortunately, my parents refused to meet my husband when we first began dating, so it was impossible for them to get to know him. It wasn't until we were engaged that they agreed to meet him, and right away, their perceptions, beliefs and stereotypes of African Americans changed. The first meeting was followed by many more, and ultimately led to our parents meeting. It was there that my mom realized there were very few differences between our families. It was a long journey, but it wasn't until our two paths and cultures collided, that we gained a true understanding of one another. I am happy to say that today we are one big happy family who truly loves one another unconditionally.

With this history in my background, I especially know how important it is not to judge someone. I also understand how essential it is to take time to walk in someone else's shoes to fully understand the whole person. This is why this unit was created. I want to prevent my students from making judgments based on assumptions and instead take an interest in getting to know others to find out their true identity.

I teach seventh grade Language Arts in a predominantly white, upper middle class 6th-8th grade middle school. The school is part of a large urban school district in the Piedmont region of North Carolina; however, my school is located in the outskirts of the

county in a more affluent, suburban area. Nevertheless, twenty-five percent of the school is composed of Asians, Hispanics, and African Americans. My schedule is comprised of three, eighty minute blocks. My Exceptional Children's (EC) inclusion class is co-taught with an EC certified teacher, and has twenty four students with needs ranging from Attention Deficit Disorder to various learning disabilities. My two Honors classes are primarily composed of students who scored above the 95th percentile on the North Carolina End-of-Grade tests, and have 32 and 31 students respectively.

This unit is intended for middle school adolescents, and I feel it is a critical unit because of its relevance to today. All of my classes will participate in this unit and modifications will be made to the necessary lessons for my EC class. An article from the Great Schools organization says, "The Census Bureau projects that by the year 2100, the U.S. minority population will become the majority with non-Hispanic whites making up only 40% of the U.S. population. No doubt students will need to learn how to interact in a diverse environment."¹ This article also states, "Students who attend schools with a diverse population can develop an understanding of the perspectives of children from different backgrounds and learn to function in a multicultural, multiethnic environment."¹ Since my school is not as multicultural as I would like, this unit is needed more than ever. Isn't that what all teachers strive for; to not only teach the academics, but to prepare students to be well-rounded citizens who appreciate and collaborate with others who are different? This unit may focus on our historical past, but the outcomes of acceptance and identity are very relevant today.

For example, in 2006 there was an incident in Jena, Louisiana where white students congregated around a tree in a racially mixed school. This tree became known as the "white tree" of the school. A black student asked the principal if he could sit under the tree and the principal's reply was he could sit wherever he wanted. When he chose to sit under the "white tree", the next day three white students hung nooses under the tree.² It is significant that the white students chose a noose. The threat of lynching - symbolized by the noose or the burning cross - was used to uproot black communities, suppress voting, and to intimidate blacks from acquiring land, aspiring to an education, or attaining success in business. The practice poisoned American society for generations, and left a powerful emotional legacy that many African-American families carry to this day.³

In Texas, in 2007, a black man was convicted to life in prison for essentially smoking marijuana. Tyrone Brown had robbed a convenient store netting only \$2.00. The judge tested him positive for marijuana use and sentenced him to life in prison. When the story was aired on 20/20, Charlie Douglas, a lawyer, saw the complete injustice and took his case on. In the same state, a fourteen year old freshman, Shaquanda Cotton, was sent to jail and may stay there until she is 21 for shoving a hall monitor who had received no injuries from the incident. The same judge that sentenced Shaquanda had just sentenced a white girl to probation for three months after she was convicted of arson, burning down her family's house.⁴

Unfortunately, it is clear from the previous examples that the need to understand and accept others differences is still prevalent. Although, I want to be clear that I am not trying to make the African American community look as if they are simply a victimized community. Because of their heritage, the African American community has a great sense of pride and closeness that other communities lack. The Caucasian community and all Americans in general miss out on their own personal heritage by not engaging themselves in the history of the African American community. We also miss out on getting to know and understand a culture that is different from ours if we constantly make judgments. I need for my students to understand that we may have our physical differences but we are all human beings. I need them to see that this history is their history because we are all Americans.⁵ The African American history allows us all to understand and have compassion for perspectives different from our own. If we know where people came from, then we are able to understand them better and possible even change our own perspective. It allows us to be open and accepting of others and have a deep understanding of how we all have a role in our history. I do want to emphasize that part of this unit is about celebrating differences. We can't help what the color of our skin tone is so why not celebrate those differences we can't change.

Content Objectives

The hope of these objectives is for students to take an interest into our past and to remember what we have learned so that mistakes are not repeated. Beyond the obvious mastery of the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, I want students to understand the harm in making judgments. At this age in middle school it is hard to show students the importance of our past. Their lives revolve around family, friends and themselves. When I ask my students to tell me what they know about race or racial issues some will throw out Martin Luther King's name or even Rosa Parks, but I don't get much explanation of what these iconic people did for our country. Or if I ask them to tell me about an important event in our history that helped shaped our country, I usually get answers like the Holocaust or 9-11 but then a limited amount of information of what actually happened during these events. I assume they know particular these two events because of the devastating outcomes of both-thousands of lives lost. It is shocking to me that they are not exposed to more significant events from our past so they can have the knowledge to learn and grow. At this stage in their development, my students are unaware of the privileges that come with being part of the white majority, and they certainly don't understand the struggles or wars that were fought to keep it that way. Therefore, I want them to take a look beyond themselves, learn about our past, and then protect our future by being mindful of what has happened when judgments about a person or community are wrong. Students will take a look at different cultures and learn how culture factors in to our identity. My main focus of literature will be poetry and art. Poetry and art are both beautiful forms of cultural expression and will give my students a personal look into the poets and artists lives, giving them a good insight into his or her

identity. Both poetry and art allow students to see ideas, images or concepts differently and to think outside of the box. It gives them a pass to not have the conventional answer and that is what excites me most about this unit. I can't wait to hear their discussions and thoughts on the different art works and poetry knowing the students have the freedom to think and create for themselves. Students are more likely to express themselves more authentically when the pressure of having to have the "right" answer is eliminated.

I begin my poetry unit towards the end of March and it lasts well into April. I like to teach poetry during this time of year because it is close to End of Grade testing and the vocabulary terms are ones that will be seen on the test. I want to specifically teach this unit towards the end of the school year because students evolve so much from the beginning of school and I feel I will get more insights about their personal identity with it being later in the year. The final project for the students will be to research a cultural background from a list we will brainstorm together. (Here are some cultures I hope will surface from our brainstorming session: African American, Mexican American, Jewish, Muslim, Japanese American, and Italian American) Once they have picked a culture, the students will research a specific event and find art that is associated with that culture. Therefore, students will be using research skills to analyze nonfiction texts. Also, students will be reading, analyzing, connecting and evaluating poetry. While reading poetry, students will be able to identify figurative language techniques (simile, metaphors, personification, etc.) and explain the effect of those techniques. This unit will cover the following goals from the NCSCS:

Competency Goal 1: The learner will use language to express individual perspectives in response to personal, social, cultural, and historical issues. **1.02** Respond to expressive materials that are read, heard, and/or viewed by:

- monitoring comprehension for understanding of what is read, heard, and/or viewed.
- summarizing the characteristics of expressive works.
- determining the importance of literary effects on the reader/viewer/listener.
- making connections between works, self and related topics.
- comparing and/or contrasting information.
- drawing inferences and/or conclusions.
- determining the main idea and/or significance of events.
- creating an artistic interpretation that connects self and/or society to the selection.

1.03 Interact in group settings by:

- responding appropriately to comments and questions.
- offering personal opinions confidently without dominating.
- giving appropriate reasons that support opinions.
- soliciting and respecting another person's opinion.

1.04 Reflect on learning experiences by:

- analyzing personal learning growth and changes in perspective.
- examining changes in self throughout the learning process.
- determining how personal circumstances and background shape interaction with text.

Competency Goal 2: The learner will synthesize information and use information from a variety of sources.

2.01 Respond to informational materials that are read, heard, and/or viewed by:

- monitoring comprehension for understanding of what is read, heard and/or viewed.
- analyzing the characteristics of informational works.
- summarizing information.
- determining the importance of information.
- making connections to related topics/information.
- drawing inferences and/or conclusions.
- generating questions.

Competency Goal 5: The learner will respond to various literary genres using interpretative and evaluative processes.

5.02 Study the characteristics of literary genres (fiction, nonfiction, drama, and poetry) through:

- reading a variety of literature and other text (e.g., mysteries, novels, science fiction, historical documents, newspapers, skits, lyric poems).
- analyzing how the author's choice and use of a genre shapes the meaning of the literary work.
- analyzing what impact literary elements have on the meaning of the text such as the influence of setting on the problem and its resolution.

Strategies, Activities and Lessons

In the following section, I will provide a combination of strategies, activities and lessons that are a guide through this unit such as PowerPoint slides, Think, Pair, Share, Literature Circles, Socratic Seminars and a Research Project. These activities may be used at different points of the unit. It is my vision that this unit will last about three to four weeks. The first week I plan to open up with the Power Point on the poetry terms, the introduction to the Civil Rights Movement, with the artwork of Romare Bearden and

Charlotta Janssen, and the introduction to identity with the Poe poems. The second week, we will look at Romare Bearden's artwork *Mysteries* and tackle Literature Circles. The Literature circles should take two days. Finally the last two weeks students will have a seminar and begin their research on the culture of his/her choice. I feel the research, writing and presentation will take a week and a half.

This unit will open up with an overview of poetry and identity. I will brainstorm with students what they know about poetry and their ideas about identity. Here are some of the questions I will ask to open up the discussion: What makes up your identity? What comes to mind when you hear the word Identity? Who or what influences your identity? Using a bubble organizer, we will post our ideas about both poetry and identity on the wall so students will always remember what was discussed about those concepts. I hope to pull out of the discussion certain ideas about identity such as: how our choices define our identity, how the environment influences our identity, and how our identity evolves. A PowerPoint of the terms and figurative language used in the unit will be taught next and students will have notes to fill in. The following terms will be covered on the PowerPoint: alliteration, imagery, form, metaphor, simile, personification, repetition, theme, symbol, onomatopoeia, rhythm, rhyme scheme, narrative poetry, and free verse. These terms are essential in analyzing poetry. Many poets use these devices as a way to enhance his or her theme of the poem and to show their style or purpose of the poem. Students need to understand the terms, so we can have good discussions using the appropriate language with the poems.

Once students have a good understanding of the terms, we will start working our way through the theme of identity. As an easy opening to identity, I will use Edgar Allen Poe's poems, "Annabel Lee" and "The Raven". Students already have some background knowledge of Poe because of his eerie writings and family history. We will look at his identity closely by pulling out lines that might show his obsession with Annabel Lee or how the reader finds the speaker of "The Raven" to have lost touch with reality by talking to the bird and the bird responding. One aspect of his identity that might surface in discussion is one of disability. I think students will point out his delusional personality and his struggle with depression due to his tragic family history. Some questions that I will pose to the students as well are: What about his identity is still unknown to us? What do we not know about identity due to these poems? Once we have practiced evaluating identity with these poems we will move in to looking at a specific culture through poetry and art.

I am using a specific culture to model so that when it is the student's turn to research a culture they can look back at notes and handouts to see what I did to explain and share the culture. Since I will be modeling the African American culture, I am going to show a PowerPoint of a timeline of the civil rights movement to discuss with the students. In the PowerPoint I will pick some of the main events to share such as the Bus Boycott, Little Rock Nine, Greensboro Sit-Ins, Black Panthers and the KKK. I also have a great

documentary of Rosa Parks and the Bus Boycott. To help showcase this culture, students will read poems about most of the events. Here are some of the titles we will read, “Ode to Jimmy Lee” by Strider (Jim) Benston. This poem was set during one of the civil rights protests in 1965 when a man named Jimmy Lee was shot by Alabama State Troopers. “For Justice and for Love” written by Chude Pam Allen, this is a white perspective on the civil rights movement. Lastly, “Jim Crow-The Sequel” written by June Jordan. All of the poets are veterans of the Civil Rights Movement.⁶ This will give my students a great sense of the community and time period.

Art will also be used to help students look deeper in to African-American culture. Romare Bearden, a local Charlotte artist, exhibits some great African-American artwork such as “The Lamp”, “Southern Recall”, and “After Church”. Also, we will study Charlotta Janssen, who painted mug shot portraits of the Freedom Riders. I will show a clip of her telling the rationale behind the portraits and have the students take a look into how the artist depicted each Freedom Rider.⁷ With the PowerPoint, poems, and art pieces, I plan on having class and group discussions to pull out how the students view the poems and art pieces. The students will do most of the presenting so that it is more student-led then teacher-led. Each group will have a set of questions to help in guiding them in analyzing and interpreting the art. This activity will take two to three days to complete.

Before students complete this on their own I want to model an example for them. I will use two pieces of artwork from an exhibit called “30 Americans”. One piece of artwork I will use is Barkley L. Hendricks, *Noir*, 1978. This is a portrait of a young African American adult dressed in a suit with bell bottoms and big sunglasses and a small afro. The next piece of art I will use is by Xaviera Simmons, *One Day and Back Then (Standing)*, 2007. This is a photograph of a woman standing in a field of tall stalks of wheat. She is dressed all in black, with a black face and big afro. The only color is her red lips⁸. With these two pieces of art I will walk through with the students the guided questions and together as a class we will discuss the identity and cultural background we discover. I picked these two particular pieces of art because they are very different portraits and I want to see the differences the students find and the similarities. I find both to have very rich stories to discover and I can’t wait to see what the students uncover about each identity.

Guided Questions for “Looking at Art”

Describe it

What kinds of things do you see in this painting? What else do you see?

How would you describe the lines in this picture? The shapes? The colors? What does this painting show?

Look at this painting for a moment. What observations can you make about it?

How would you describe this painting to a person who could not see it?

How would you describe the people in this picture? Are they like you or different?

Relate it.

What does this painting remind you of?

How is this picture different from real life?

What interests you most about this work of art?

Analyze it.

Which objects seem closer to you? Further away?

What can you tell me about the colors in this painting?

What color is used the most in this painting?

What can you tell me about the person in this painting?

What can you tell me about how this person lived? How did you arrive at that idea?

What do you think is the most important part of this picture?

What questions would you ask the artist about this work, if s/he were here?

Interpret it.

What title would you give to this painting? What made you decide on that title?

What other titles could we give it?

What do you think is happening in this painting? What else could be happening?

What do you think is going on in this picture? How did you arrive at that idea?

What do you think this painting is about? How did you come up that idea?

Pretend you are inside this painting. What does it feel like?

Why do you suppose the artist made this painting? What makes you think that?

Evaluate it.

What do you think is good about this painting? What is not so good?

Do you think the person who painted this did a good or bad job? What makes you think so?

Why do you think other people should see this work of art?

What do you think other people would say about this work? Why do you think that?

Another opening activity will be modeled after Bearden's collage *Prevalence of Ritual: Mysteries* (1964)⁹. In this artwork, Bearden uses multiple media sources to create

a collage of African American faces and scenes, not all of which can be clearly distinguished. This obscurity, coupled with the lack of context presented with each image, will challenge my students to discover the mystery behind each African American face. I hope by using this particular piece some of the stereotypes of the culture might be discussed and absolved. Since this was created during the civil rights era, students will be able to make some inferences on what these faces might represent during this time period. We are going to take a good look at the collage to discuss themes, images and the community life of African Americans. I want to use something where students will be inspired to think and write critically. To start discussion, I will have the students participate in a Think-Pair-Share strategy. First, students will look at the painting and think about it. Then they will pair up with someone beside them and share ideas about it. Lastly, they will share with the whole class the ideas discussed in their pairs. This is another way to help facilitate discussion with middle school students. After the class discussion, students will pair up again to brainstorm with each other their own “life themes” that their personal poem will take on. Once they have brainstormed, each student should begin writing. Once the students have their poem they will create their own collage based on the themes and ideas from their poem modeling Bearden’s *Mysteries*. This will be one aspect of identifying their own identity.

To teach the poems and concepts as stated in the NC Standard Course of Study, one strategy I will use are literature circles. In literature circles, small groups of students gather together to discuss a piece of literature in depth. The discussion is guided by students' response to what they have read. You may hear talk about events and characters in the book, the author's craft, or personal experiences related to the story. Literature circles provide a way for students to engage in critical thinking and reflection as they read, discuss, and respond to books. Collaboration is at the heart of this approach. Students reshape and add onto their understanding as they construct meaning with other readers. Finally, literature circles guide students to deeper understanding of what they read through structured discussion and extended written and artistic response.¹⁰ Instead of using novels or short stories, I will be using poetry for the discussions. The roles will be as follows:

Illustrator: the job is to draw a picture that illustrates the poem basing the picture on the imagery of the poem or the theme.

Line Puller: the job is to choose three favorite lines from the poem and explain what makes them your favorite.

Performance Artist: the job is to turn this poem into a drama-perform it! How would you recite this poem, and why would you do it this way?

Voice Hearer: the job is to consider the voice of the speaker and identify him or her. Describe the speaker. What is the tone? Does the speaker have a particular conflict? Does this inner debate cause the speaker to grow, change or transform?

Interpreter: the job is to explain/interpret the poem. Write the literal meaning of the poem. Then explain the figurative meaning of the poem-what is it saying beneath the surface?

For my literature circles, students will all have different poems about a prominent African American with an art piece to accompany it. They will read a poem and complete the role sheet for homework. The next day the literature circle will take place and during the literature circle I will have a computer at each group. Students will listen to a video about the art mural that is associated with his or her poem and see the actual mural on the video.¹¹ I will give the students a class period (80 minutes) to discuss the poem, role sheets and painting. The final activity for my literature circle will be to complete an Open Mind. The Open Mind technique allows students to visually and textually represent the traits of a character. Open Mind “allow students to get into the minds of the characters they are studying and to depict their thoughts and feelings both graphically and verbally”¹². I will explain to the students they will be drawing how a character thinks, acts, and feels, dividing the character’s “mind” into different sections. Some text will be used, but this strategy focuses on illustrations. I will reassure students that their drawings do not have to be perfect. However, their pictures should be able to be understood and correctly interpreted by others. So after discussing both the poem and art this will be their final presentation of their discussion. Each group will share their Open Mind so that all the students get a chance to hear the different people that were presented in the poems. The following are the people in which the poems will be about: Malcolm X¹³, W.E.B. Dubois¹⁴, Tuskegee Airman¹⁵, Harriet Tubman¹⁶ and Jackie Robinson.¹⁷

Another teaching strategy I will use is the Socratic Seminar. The Socratic method of teaching is based on Socrates' theory that it is more important to enable students to think for themselves than to merely fill their heads with "right" answers. Therefore, he regularly engaged his pupils in dialogues by responding to their questions with questions, instead of answers. This process encourages divergent thinking rather than convergent. Students are given opportunities to examine a common piece of text, whether it is in the form of a novel, poem, art print, or piece of music. After reading the common text, open-ended questions are posed. Open-ended questions allow students to think critically, analyze multiple meanings in text, and express ideas with clarity and confidence. After all, a certain degree of emotional safety is felt by participants when they understand that this format is based on dialogue and not discussion or debate.¹⁸ I always give my students the questions before the seminar so they have time to think about their responses and feel prepared to share. At the end of the seminar, students evaluate how well they participated. I give them a checklist that have statements such as “I talked a lot”, “I used the text to support my opinion”, “I talked too little”, and “I listened to others and built on what he/she said”. After they evaluate themselves, I then evaluate how well they did by keeping a chart of who spoke, how often, and what was actually said. Then I give them a grade based on the two evaluations.

Tips for conducting a successful Socratic Seminar¹⁹:

If you're like me, it will be hard for you as the teacher to remain quiet while the students talk, but it's essential.

- Allow students to use hands if they can't restrain themselves.
- Supply post-its if students can't mark in their books.
- Make sure students are aware of expectations — that each of them must contribute both as a speaker and a listener.
- Put chairs in a circle.

I am using Langston Hughes', "Mother to Son" poem for this seminar and comparing it to Edna St. Vincent Millay's poem, "The Courage that My Mother Had". The poem "Mother to Son" is a great depiction of life for African Americans in the late 20's and the "Courage that My Mother Had" looks at the role of a mother. There are great comparisons to be made with the two roles of the mother and their life experiences. Both are great for getting to the theme of identity as well. The seminar will be a great way for students to hear other students. I will only be the facilitator in providing the questions. I will use the following questions for this seminar:

Seminar

"Mother to Son"

Opening:

1. In one word, how would you describe your mother or someone who acts like your mother?
2. What adjective would you pick to describe the mother who is speaking in "Mother to Son"? Why did you pick this adjective?

Core:

3. What does the mother mean when she says, "Life for me ain't been no crystal stair? Do most people have crystal stairs in their house? Now that we know what life is not- what does the poem tell us life is?
4. What kind of advice does the mother give to her son?
5. Why did the poet pick a staircase to describe the mother's life?
6. What particular struggles might the woman have to endure because of her race, socio-economic status and gender?

Closing:

7. What do you think is at the top of the staircase?

8. How do struggles we face in life help shape who we are and how we look at the world? Do you have an example of this?
9. Thinking of identity, describe this woman's identity? How does her race influence her identity?

Seminar

"The Courage That My Mother Had"

Opening:

1. Who do you know, famous or not, that shows tremendous courage?

Core:

2. What does the speaker wish she had inherited? Why?
3. Line 3 says, "Rock from New England quarried". What is the writer saying about her mother's courage? Think about what rock that has to be carved out of the ground is like.
4. What is granite? What is the texture, strength, etc? What does this say about her mother? If the granite is in a granite hill, that must mean there is a whole lot of granite. Why would the poet use that idea?
5. In the second stanza, the poet says there is nothing she treasures more than the brooch her mother left behind, but she could spare it. If she loves it so much, why would she want to give it away? Could the brooch be a symbol for something?

Closing:

6. What is so great about having courage?
7. How can parents leave their children gifts like courage or confidence?
8. Compare the two mothers from each poem. How does race play into their identity? Knowing one mother is African-American and the other is not, what are the differences between their identities?

Final Project

The final part of this unit is for the students to pick a culture of their choice and research the community life and to really "live in their shoes" for a moment. We will first brainstorm as a class some cultures or time periods that might be of interest before heading to the library. Here are some cultures I hope will surface from our brainstorming session: African American, Mexican American, Jewish, Muslim, Japanese American, and Italian American. I am sure other cultures will surface and I don't want to hinder them from researching a culture that they are highly interested in. With each culture I will have prepared ahead of time an event that correlates. This is especially needed for our

students who will struggle or our exceptional students with learning disabilities. My students who are high achievers will be able to research and find an interesting event on their own. Some of the events are as follows: Mexican American: Zoot Suit Riots. The Zoot Suit Riot ignited because of the murder of a young Mexican man and the ones accused were the so called “rebellious” Mexican kids who wore zoot suits. Jewish: Anti-Semitism in American shares several stories of prejudices towards the Jewish community. The website discusses the lynching of a prominent Jewish business man and the rise of the KKK. Japanese American: Internment Camps were created after Pearl Harbor was bombed and Franklin Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066 which gave the military the right to incarcerate anyone with Japanese ancestry. I found the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) website to be the best site to find the history and events of these cultures. The PBS website provides films, timelines and other resources to broaden the history of each culture. The PBS website has a plethora of information and from this website, students will be able to find the history needed to understand fully the culture. Using this website will be a great guide for my students.

Students will be taking notes on the important events that happened in that culture/time period and the prominent people that emerged. They will also find an art piece that goes along with the culture being researched and the question they should ask themselves is “What does the artwork also say about this culture?” I have some websites students can use to find art online for example for the Japanese Internment Camps, “Art by Chiz” has many paintings depicting life in the internment camps²⁰. Museums will also be a good place to find art for the different cultures. For the Jewish culture, the Museum of Jewish Heritage is a great place to look for art²¹. Once the research has been completed, which should take two to three days in the library, and students feel like they have a good grasp on the culture and time period, it will be time for them to become one of the people living in that culture. I want them to write a poem from the perspective of a person living in their researched culture and then paint a scene that would be indicative of that person’s identity. In the poem, they will be required to use three to four poetic devices that will enhance the theme and purpose of the poet. For my struggling students, I will ask only two to three poetic devices be used. As a reflection piece of this assignment, I want them to lastly look at their own identity and answer questions such as: What did they learn about themselves through the study of another culture? How does your community and culture define your identity? Students can look back to their own collage that they did in the beginning of unit to help in their reflection. Then students will write their own poem about their own identity or culture and include a painting as well. It will be exciting to see when students present the two cultures side by side what differences or similarities they found about themselves and the culture they chose to explore. What did walking in someone else’s shoes show them?

Resources

Poems used for Students

“Annabel Lee” and “The Raven” by Edgar Allen Poe

“Ode to Jimmy Lee” by Strider (Jim) Benston.

“For Justice and for Love” written by Chude Pam Allen.

“Jim Crow-The Sequel” written by June Jordan.

“At that moment” by Raymond R. Patterson

“Tuskegee Airfield” by Ms. Marilyn Nelson

“Harriet Tubman” by Eloise Greenfield

“My Country ‘Tis of Thee” by W.E.B. Dubois

“Mother to Son” by Langston Hughes

“The Courage that My Mother Had” by Edna St. Vincent Millay

Art for the Students

Romare Bearden’s artwork “The Lamp”, “Southern Recall”, and “After Church” and Prevalence of Ritual: Mysteries

Charlotta Janssen, Freedom Riders and Boycotters

<http://iconic.muralarts.org/>: Malcolm X, Mapping Courage: Honoring the Legacy of W.E.B. Dubois and Engine 11, Tribute to Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad, Tuskegee Airman: They Met the Challenge and Jackie Robinson

End Notes

¹“How important is cultural diversity at your school?” GreatSchools.

<http://www.greatschools.org/find-a-school/defining-your-ideal/284-cultural->

- diversity-at-school.gs) (accessed September 27, 2011).
- ²Ali, Daemon. "The White Tree - Racial Injustice in Jena, Louisiana USA." *The World Time News Report*. <http://wtntradio.com/news/story.php?story=253> (accessed September 27, 2011).
- ³Dray, Phillip. "Noose." *The Boston Globe*.
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- ⁷<http://www.charlottajanssen.com/exhibytes/freedom-riders-and-bus-boycotters/>
- ⁸<http://www2.corcoran.org/30americans/explore>
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Christopher-Gordon Publishers, Inc. p.
- ¹¹<http://iconic.muralarts.org/>
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Annotated Works Cited

- "African American Iconic Images Collection." African American Iconic Images Collection. <http://iconic.muralarts.org> (accessed November 1, 2011).

This is a great African American collection of mural arts. With each mural, there is a short video response describing the people or the event in the mural. The collection partners with the African American Museum in Philadelphia.

Ali, Daemon. "The White Tree - Racial Injustice in Jena, Louisiana USA." The World Time News Report. <http://wtnrradio.com/news/story.php?story=253> (accessed September 27, 2011).

This article described the protests being held in Jean, Louisiana for the six African American who were initially charged with murder for beating a white student. The article describes the racial tension of the noose and confederate flags that were seen on the highways and school. The principal did cut down the tree in hopes of ending the protests but they continued.

Dray, Phillip. "Noose." The Boston Globe. (<http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/ideas/articles/2007/12/02/noose/?page=full>) (accessed September 27, 2011).

This article describes the history of the noose for African Americans and shares many cases of African Americans discovering nooses at their worksite, schools, and homes since the Jena Six incident. The article then goes into great detail about the symbolic meaning for the noose and how the noose was used toward African Americans.

"How important is cultural diversity at your school?" GreatSchools. <http://www.greatschools.org/find-a-school/defining-your-ideal/284-cultural-diversity-at-school.gs> (accessed September 27, 2011).

This article shows the importance of diverse schools. It stresses that students need to be prepared for a multi-cultural world therefore they need to be exposed to diverse students. This article provides parents information with how schools approach diversity.

Janssen, Charlotta. "Freedom Riders and Bus Boycotters." Most Serious Painter Of The So Abstract, It's Concrete. <http://www.charlottajanssen.com/exhibytes/freedom-riders-and-bus-boycotters/> (accessed November 4, 2011).

This is Charlotta Janssen's personal website showcasing her art. She did a project on the Freedom Riders and Bus Boycotters and painted portraits of his/her mug shots. She gives a great video clip on her rationale for doing this project.

Noe, Katherine L. Schlick, and Nancy J. Johnson. *Getting started with literature circles*. Norwood, Mass.: Christopher-Gordon Publishers, 1999.

This book is a great teacher resource to help in beginning literature circles. This book will provide the rationale, guidelines, expectations and role sheets students need to have a successful literature circle.

TwitterButtons.com. "Socratic Seminar." huffenglish.com "Issues, ideas, and discussion in English Education and Technology."
<http://www.huffenglish.com/?p=342> (accessed November 4, 2011).

This is a teacher who gives a personal experience with Socratic Seminars and provides insights on what went well and tips for a successful seminar.

"Veterans of the Civil Rights Movement -- Poetry from and about the Civil Rights Movement." Civil Rights Movement Veterans - CORE, NAACP, SCLC, SNCC.
<http://www.crmvet.org/poetry/poemhome.htm> (accessed November 4, 2011).

This website provides poetry from the Civil Rights Movement written by veterans of the Civil Rights Movement.

Weathersbee, Tonya. "News media shine its line on racial injustice in Texas." Florida Times Union. http://jacksonville.com/tu-online/stories/040207/new_8955388.shtml (accessed November 6, 2011).

This article was written to show some cases in Texas of racial injustices. The article highlights three stories of African American men and woman who have been sent to jail unfairly.

question, asking a. "Socratic Seminars - StudyGuide.org." Home - StudyGuide.org.
http://www.studyguide.org/socratic_seminar.htm (accessed September 27, 2011).

This is an informative website that gives background information about Socratic Seminars and types of questions to ask in a seminar.

Visual Bubble Map



