



**Children in City Spaces:
Exploring Charlotte through the Eyes of Creative Writers**

by Gia Wright, 2019 CTI Fellow
Rocky River High School

This curriculum unit is recommended for Grades 9-12

Keywords: Realistic Fiction, Characterization, Author’s Perspective, Central Idea

Teaching Standards: See [Appendix 1](#) for teaching standards addressed in this unit.

Synopsis: Since getting to know the creative writing students at Rocky River High School, it is evident that they see little opportunity for their future in the city of Charlotte. There is a resounding belief that success and opportunity exist only outside of the city. Since moving to Charlotte five years ago, I have learned about monumental people in Charlotte who are building prosperous lives within the same realm students believe may be a dead end. In addition, my creative writers have also shared a desire to express their passions and their perspectives of the world, but many of them have never had the opportunity to do so without being reprimanded or judged for their how they perceive their environment. This curriculum is designed to help students express their city life experiences while also exploring the lives of others that have impacted the Charlotte community. Since working at Rocky River, I have come to realize that my students are not only restricted regarding what they say to share their experiences, but they are also limited in their experiences as a result. Students will get the chance to study the history of education in Charlotte and learn how systems of power have either contributed or have been a detriment to their quality of life. The final product will be a realistic fictional story that takes place in the historical sites of Brookhill or West Charlotte communities.

I plan to teach this unit to 50 students in the (9-12) grade Creative Writing class.

I give Charlotte Teachers Institute permission to publish my curriculum unit in print and online. I understand that I will be credited as the author of my work.

Children in City Spaces: Exploring Charlotte through the Eyes of Creative Writers

by Gia Wright

Demographics

Rocky River High School

Standing at just nine years old, Rocky River High School is comparatively one of the newer public schools within Charlotte-Mecklenburg . Traditions, school pride, participation in sports and activities, and parent involvement are elements that are still developing and being cultivated by our diverse population of students.

Rocky River High School has approximately 1,600 students and class sizes range between 25-38 students. Out of the 1,600 students, approximately 60% are Black, approximately 30% are Hispanic/Latino, and approximately 10% are white. The racial dynamic of Rocky River is not reflective of the Mint Hill Community where it resides. Mint Hill is approximately 77% white and the household median income is \$70,000, but Rocky River reflects a population where 64% of our students come from low income households. The dynamic difference has impacted how students, teachers, and administrators see themselves in the surrounding environment. Based on conversations among the staff, as well as news coverage, a majority of the Mint Hill community neglects to highlight the positive achievements of students, and instead focuses on fears of criminal behavior. Nonetheless, teachers have formed relationships with some of the local churches and the nursing home located directly across the street from our school. Despite the generational and ethnic differences, Rocky River has found it beneficial to form those relationships to exchange a supportive and positive relationship.

The demographics, as well as the CMS 2020 Strategic Plan, has influenced the focus of the school to promote rigor, cultural responsiveness, and a growth mindset. To focus on rigor, Rocky River has recently enrolled in a program called EOS, Equal Opportunity Schools. Partnering with EOS will help to achieve equitable enrollment in AP classes and identify and advocate for students who are not in an AP classes. The hope is for students to find success by enrolling in those courses. Currently, 11% of our student population takes AP courses compared the 16% of the state average. A majority of those students are white, but with a population that serves a minority based population, Rocky River is taking steps to increase the enrollment for Black and Hispanic students.

Being culturally responsive is another focal points. Cultural responsiveness is not just limited to racial and ethnic background knowledge, but it is also an effort to understand our students' social norms as well as cultural practices within their homes. Rocky River High School serves a population of students that mostly come from low income households at 64 percent. Daily lessons, school activities, and parent communication is organized based on the needs of our families. Rocky River also has clubs and organizations that create mentoring opportunities and we promote opportunities to help our students explore options for college that caters to their financial needs. For example, "Lunch and Learn" programs offer students the opportunity to

meet professionals and entrepreneurs from Charlotte during their lunch time. This activity is quite beneficial, as we noticed a need for our students to be able to explore the community within the walls of the school because they may lack access to transportation resources.

Finally, based on our demographics, Rocky River has a tremendous opportunity to establish a growth mindset. English and Science EOC scores increased, moving us out of the red zone as a low performing school. English III and English IV scores increased at 14% and scores in Civics and Economics rose by 7%. In addition, teachers have focused on developing goals for the 2018-2019 school year which include increasing all of our subjects by 5% by establishing common planning for Professional Learning Communities, and focusing on implementing 21st century skills as they apply academically and vocationally. The entire staff has focused on incorporating literacy across subject areas as well as developing relationships with students. This may be part of the progress among students, resulting in greater performance on standardized tests.

Content Research

While exploring Charlotte and this city's space through the eyes of the children and families that reside here, focusing on the demographics of the educational system and its structure is vital in understanding the current state of affairs. Over the course of decades, Charlotte's school system has fallen in and out of segregation with separation of races being the modern result, but through research, it appears that was not always the case. Factors such as segregation, zoning, media influences, and access to resources are all contributing factors to how and what children in this area are exposed to, and the results have created an impactful outcome.

Segregation has been the plight of American education, and it certainly has strong roots in Charlotte. The article titled, "The Desegregation and Resegregation of Charlotte's Schools" discusses Charlotte's history with segregation. In the Charlotte observer in 1984, a statement made regarding Charlotte's progressiveness since segregation explains, "Its (Charlotte) proudest achievement is its fully integrated schools." However, in 1999 a white family complained that their daughter was not admitted into a magnet program due to her race, and as a band of families rallied the cause, the "Family Choice Plan" was established. This ensured that students would attend schools in their neighborhood, rather than abide by the bussing systems. The effect of this created a grand separation among diverse populations because, in Charlotte, most neighborhoods were segregated. Families with strong economic backgrounds moved into neighborhoods with families of similar means, resulting in economic capital in predominantly white neighborhoods. Furthermore, modern statistics have shown the impact of segregation in Charlotte. In 2018, The Charlotte Observer explained, "...more than 20 percent of Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools are ninety to one hundred percent minority," compared to 0.1 percent in 1989. Based on these statistics, Charlotte is the most segregated city in the state of North Carolina.

Media outlets have also contributed to the segregation in Charlotte. Instead of highlighting the attributes of schools in a positive manner, schools are rated on a scale of 1-10 and terms like "very concerning" or "disadvantaged students" may be used to identify the environment at a particular school. As it stands, schools with populations that serve predominantly white students receive less negative media attention than the ones that are predominantly black and Hispanic. For example, sites like "Schooldigger.com" and "Greatschools.org" rate schools' production and

success using an overall scale of 1-10 for each individual category: Academics, Equity, and Environment. According to GreatSchools.org, West Charlotte High School scored a 1 out of 10 for college readiness and test scores. Additionally, West Charlotte also received a 1 out of 10 for low income students sitting at 98% low-income population serving 85% Black, 6% Hispanic, and 5% Asian students. They received 8 out of 10 percent for student progress and a 3/10 over all school.

The same site can be used to evaluate schools in wealthier neighborhoods. Ardrey Kell High School is new compared to the historical West Charlotte High School, as Ardrey Kell was established in 2006. It is the first high school to have artificial turf on their athletic fields and sits in the Ballantyne community of Charlotte where the average home income is approximately \$135,000 per household compared to West Charlotte's, \$28,000. Ardrey Kell received ten out of ten on GreatSchools.org with its lowest score being an eight out of ten for low-income students. Public schools are found on sites that evaluate the demographics and performance levels of the students and while the information should not be hidden from families, the presentation style can be influential in the way students view themselves based on the schools they are attending. For example, on Great Schools, based on test scores, Ardrey Kell's students, "are making far more academic progress given where they were last year, compared to similar students in the state." However, looking at West Charlotte's performance, Great Schools states, "Very concerning: Test scores at this school fall far below the state average. This suggests that students at this school are likely not performing at grade level." How might this language impact a student upon seeing how they are portrayed on this media outlet? Students may be proud or negatively view their environment. Over time, this language has an impact on students' self-perception, believing either they may or may not have the ability to progress towards higher learning or positive career opportunities.

Another outward form of expression is in the district's vision statement. The statement has been revised to disrupt the idea of being racially focused. Originally it read, "The Vision is to ensure that the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System becomes the premier, urban integrated system in the nation in which all students acquire the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to live rich and full lives as productive and enlightened members of society," in 1991. Since the incident regarding the magnet school's decision to not admit a white student, in 1999, media outlets produced the vision statement as, "Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools provides all students the best education available anywhere, preparing every child to lead a rich and productive life," removing the word "integration" which is evidence that integration is no longer a top priority for the district. Charlotte was once proud of facing racism head on, but sadly, racial and economic segregation are now being ignored.

Zoning has also heavily contributed to the separation of race and class. For most families moving across the country, part of the process includes choosing a house or an apartment based on the performance of the schools in the area. With that being said, each year, Charlotte Mecklenburg produces a zoning map as a guide for the community to know where students can enroll for school based on the area they live and parents have found these guides helpful until rezoning occurs. For example, in 2017, Superintendent Ann Clark created a zoning plan that created a rift for approximately 75 schools and their communities in order to develop more diversity within those communities. Some schools were converted into combination middle/elementary schools

and magnet programs were implemented to diversify some of the low-income schools. The Charlotte Observer explains, “It has been hailed by some as an opportunity to reverse the racial and economic isolation that has come to characterize dozens of Charlotte schools. At the same time, it sparked widespread anxiety that it would disrupt schools and communities, possibly creating an exodus to charter, private and neighboring county’s schools.” This statement holds true because in 2018 there was on-going discussion concerning the Matthews, Huntersville, Cornelius, and Mint-Hill communities to withdraw from Charlotte Mecklenburg and develop their own charter schools. An article titled, “A Reckless School Board Tries to Bully the Suburbs” explains the decision stating, “The “Municipal Concerns Act of 2018” also directed former CMS Superintendent Clayton Wilcox to explore reassigning students in those four towns to schools located within town boundaries and, in some instances, out of better performing schools.” Parents were outraged as they felt this plan was a “secret.”

The idea of zoning has been a constant battle for CMS schools. As the board appears to be making efforts towards diversity, communities with high incomes push back and threaten to develop their own charter and private schools.

Instructional Implementation

Children in City Spaces: How Do Rocky River Students See Themselves Within Their School and Community?

Due to the “newness” of Rocky River High School, some students may not take pride in the environment because they lack a sense of belonging, contribution, and the possibility of leaving a positive legacy for the future. With this unit, I hope to inspire students to engage with their school environment, develop community and tradition within the school, appeal to school goals that focus on rigor, cultural responsiveness and growth mindset, and also, make connections between their communities and Rocky River High School.

This year I have the opportunity to teach a Creative Writing course. I will implement my unit to study, research, and evaluate children in city spaces and environments in Charlotte, NC. The goals that I will focus on will align with the Common Core Curriculum which includes citing textual evidence, determining central idea of researched texts while also provide summaries, determining author’s point of view, and collaborating in varied discussions while also sharing their own perspectives clearly.

I will begin my unit with a project that will require students to reflect on themselves and their surroundings. The instructions are as follows:

Using colorful and descriptive language, in five to seven sentences, describe two out of the four locations within Rocky River: The hallways, the gymnasium, the bus lot, and the cafeteria. Be sure to appeal to reader’s five natural senses in your descriptions by asking yourself the following questions: What do these environments sound like? Are the sounds similar in every location or are they different? Is there a smell? If so, is the smell appealing? What are some of the colors you see? Is the atmosphere dull, bright, colorful, or plain? How does the air feel or what does it feel like to brush against students while walking from one destination to another?

By giving students these guiding questions, I hope to get specific details about their experience in the school. This will also give us the opportunity to discuss, share, and compare their perspectives of the surrounding experience as I expect to observe some differences depending on each student's grade level, their course load, and locations in the school where they may spend the most time.

The next task that we will explore will allow students to write poetry about the surroundings of the school. We will complete this task by walking outside, and students will get 25 minutes to compose a 5-6 line poem about what they see on the exterior of the school building. Similarly as the previous activity, students will be asked to use descriptive language by appealing to the five natural senses.

Also in this unit, I will introduce point of view and perspective through an interview and works of poetry. We will start by sharing the poetry that students have written about their surroundings at Rocky River and discuss how each person may see the school from a different perspective. Students will be asked to observe the environment, the sidewalks, the surrounding fields, the lots, and the exterior of the building. Next, we will talk about perspective strictly from the idea of sight. First, students will be asked to look into their classmates' eyes and write a descriptive poem about their observations. Students will choose one male and one female student in the class to describe their classmates' eyes in the form of a poem or in a paragraph. Next students will have the opportunity to observe to famous black artists in a conversation, Maya Angelou and Dave Chappelle. In this conversation, Dr. Angelou will share her experience while working with 2Pac Shakur on the scene of *Poetic Justice* starring Janet Jackson. I will ask my students to observe the eyes of Maya Angelou and Dave Chappelle, and we will share what they witness in the conversation. During the conversation, I will ask students to focus on the similarities and differences between the eyes of both people during their conversation.

After our discussion on the video, we will evaluate three different poems that share author's perspective using sight as a reference. The poetry includes, "Justice" by Langston Hughes, "My Lady's Eyes are Nothing Like the Sun" by William Shakespeare, and "When, in Disgrace With Fortune in Men's Eyes," also by Shakespeare. Each poem covers a different topic, but they are all centered around perspective based on sight. In Hughes's poem, he discusses what "justice" looks like for Black people in America, so he shares the image of swollen eyes with bandages. In "My Lady's Eyes..." we learn that the speaker does not view his lover as the most beautiful woman, but he loves her despite her imperfections. Finally, in the last poem, "When in Disgrace..." we learn how a person feels about who they are through the eyes of their lover. Once we have finished reading the poems, we will discuss their meanings and themes for clarity. Finally, students will share their thoughts, and then complete the following questions:

1. *How are "eyes" portrayed in each of these poems?*
2. *Describe the other senses in these poems that may appeal to readers.*
3. *What connections can you make between your partner's eyes and the eyes described in each of these poems?*
4. *Describe a theme for each of the three poems.*

After reviewing the questions, students will get into groups of three or four. Students will be asked to complete the following task for a formal grade:

On a poster, create a shaped poem using the shape of a human eye. In your groups, develop a theme and ask yourselves what you want readers learn from this poem. What is the life lesson/theme? Next, consider the age, shape, and color of your eye/eyes. Will these factors be significant to the message of your poem? Students will be graded on legible writing, poem must be in the shape of a human eye, the poem must fill the page and have color, and there should be a notable theme. Finally, be sure to allow each person to contribute to the project.

After this project, students will have a deeper understanding of perspective and point of view, and as we explore their point of views of their community and school, my hope that they will be able to capture their ideas descriptively and creatively.

Charlotte as a “City Space”

Once shaped poetry projects are completed, I want to give students an opportunity to study the city in which they live, Charlotte. This will include reading articles, studying other city schools, and capturing videos/photos. “The Desegregation and Resegregation of Charlotte’s Schools” by Clint Smith is the first article we will evaluate. The article reviews the protests that took place in Charlotte after Keith Scott was shot by officers that were looking for another man with a warrant in September of 2016. Based on the article, racial tension in Charlotte has been rising, and he blames the resegregation of schools as he explains, “The chances of black males coming into contact with the criminal-justice system increased with the resegregation of their high schools.” Based on our demographic and the community that surrounds us, I want to challenge my students to make connections with our city. Students will be asked to come up with a creative way to use writing, visual art, and music to bring more positive exposure to Rocky River High School. They will be encouraged to develop surveys, fliers, videos, and take photos of themselves and their peers within the school and within the community to bridge the gap.

Next, we will look at learning about one of Charlotte’s most historical schools and communities, West Charlotte High School and Brookhill. I will provide each student with pictures and history about each of these areas or they may research four sources on their own, and they will write a story about being a student or a resident in one of these locations. The instructions are as follows:

Read the excerpts about the life and times for students that attended West Charlotte High School and the residents of the community of Brooksville. Compose a story from the perspective of a student that attends the school, or a child in the Brooksville neighborhood. Your story should be two-three pages in length. It should include one original poem, and found poem, and at least two pictures. The story should also have a notable theme and should have an accurate representation of events that actually took place during the time of the story. Consider these questions when writing your story: Who is the main character? Describe the character’s direct and indirect traits. What are their minor and major conflicts? When does the story take place? How does the environment look, smell, or feel? Who are some of the other characters in other stories and what are their roles in the life of the main character? How is your character affected by their environment and the people in his/her life?

In order to help students develop this realistic fiction, we will implement various learning strategies including STEAL, Found Poetry, and Video Recording/photos.

To begin, STEAL is a method for students to identify the indirect traits of a character. STEAL is an acronym that represents a character's speech, thoughts, effect on others, actions and looks. I will introduce this method by using characters and people the students are familiar with including Aladdin, Elsa from the movie *Frozen*, LeBron James, and Beyonce. Students will choose one of the characters or people as their example to use in a STEAL chart in order to discover the possibilities for developing indirect character traits. Students will receive a photo of each person/character and quotes from each individual in order to aid them in the process.

The next learning technique will be the development of a Found Poem. This activity will come much later in the assignment, as students will be responsible for discovering a poem of their choice to infuse in their stories. Once they locate a poem, they will recreate it by using the words from the original piece that will apply to the theme of their story. There are no guidelines concerning the length or the language of the poem.

Finally, the last method is that students will have to incorporate original photos or videos that assist them in telling the story of their character. Videos, for example, might be an interview, new report, television show that the character watches, or a performance by the character. The photo can be "footage" of the character in action or the character's favorite place. The media must be referenced within the text and must be accessible to the teacher upon submission. Videos can not exceed 3 minutes, and no more than two photographs are allowed, but students must choose one of the other to incorporate.

Once the stories are completed, students will be asked to review their rough drafts with a parent or a teacher at the school. Their adviser will have a rubric with a list of questions that address the required elements including characterization, plot, setting, historical accuracy, creativity, originality, and fulfillment of poetry and media outlets. Once the project is completed, students will be placed in groups of 3 and exchange stories with their classmates.

Classroom Lessons and Activities

Activity Title: Developing a Realistic Fictional Story (Exploring Brookhill Village/Historical West Charlotte High School)

Necessary Materials: Chrome books, camera/cell phone, color pencils, printing access

Objectives: Students will explore two historical Charlotte communities and develop a realistic fiction by using elements of creative writing. Students will understand character development, use of credible resources, and author's perspective/point of view.

Background Knowledge: Students will use online resources to study and learn about West Charlotte High School and the Brookhill community. They will use the following guiding questions:

1. What surrounds that area?
2. How long has this place existed?
3. How are these places seen in the media?
4. What does the area look like?
5. Are there any notable people from these areas?
6. What are some of the hardships that these communities have faced?
7. What are some of the celebrations or exciting events that have taken place?

Direct Instruction

Day 1:

Warm Up:

I will introduce the concept of Characterization by using examples from pop culture. I will share the acronym “STEAL” and then show students movie and film of familiar people and characters including Elsa, Lebron James, Beyonce, and Aladdin.

Classwork:

I will model an example of a STEAL Chart and explain each of the elements and give examples (Speech, Thoughts, Effects of Others, Actions, and Looks). Students will be graded based on including all five elements of STEAL. They should have an example of each characteristic and a direct quote.

Day 2:

Warm Up:

I will introduce the elements of descriptive language which include appealing to the natural 5 senses (Sight, Feel, Touch, Smell, Hear, and Taste).

Classwork:

I will model an example of descriptive language by using the five senses. I will model describing the the classroom in a written form. This will be pre-written and each student will have a copy.

Day 3:

Warm Up:

After reviewing the previous day, I will instruct students to research information about the Historical, West Charlotte High School and Brookhill Community. I will display examples of credible sources including videos, news and internet articles.

Classwork:

I will instruct students on their realistic fictional stories. Students will have three class periods to complete the task, including working at home.

Independent Practice

Day 1:

Warm Up:

In their journals, students will share information about a character or person that they favor. They will have seven minutes to describe their chosen individuals, and then share. Once they have completed the journal task, they will copy the STEAL acronym in their notebooks for class notes and then explain the elements of STEAL were detectable in their original descriptions.

Classwork:

Students will watch clips of each person/character presented (Elsa, Aladdin, Lebron James, Beyonce) After watching the clips, each student will receive a poster and develop a STEAL chart of one person or character of their choice with a partner. Posters must be designed according to the traits of their chosen individual. Students should also include drawings and quotes by the character/person for each element on the poster. They may use internet resources to get information. After completing the STEAL Chart, students will share their discoveries.

Day 2:

Warm Up:

Students will take notes on the elements of descriptive language.

Classwork:

Students will use descriptive language to describe their school environment. As a class, we will take a walk around the building for 7-10 minutes and students will jot down notes on what they observe. Once we return to the classroom, students will compose a poem that describes the school environment using all five senses. Students will share their poetry within the last 15 minutes of class.

Day 3:

Warm Up:

Students will take notes on credible resources in their notebooks and discuss their findings. Students will locate four sources they plan to utilize in their research of either West Charlotte High School or the Brookville Community.

Classwork:

Students will spend the class period reading and annotating their choice of four sources. Annotations will be submitted with the final product of their realistic fictional story. Students will write a story from the point of view of a character that resides in one of the two communities we have researched. Stories will be two to three pages in length and include one original poem, and a found poem. The story should also have a notable theme, two pictures, and representation of real life events that occur.

Students will have three class blocks to work on this task, and should complete portions of their story for homework. Students will be asked to include the following pieces of information:

- Descriptions of character's direct and indirect traits*
- Major and minor conflicts*
- Character's perception of the events that occur in the story*
- Explain how the setting affects the life of the characters*

Closure:

Students will have up to six days to write their stories and they will have the opportunity to present the outcomes. Presentations are completed on Google Slides, Power Point or Prezi. It should be a visual representation and synopsis of their story.

Demonstration of Learning:

Students will engage in a peer review, review by a teacher, mentor, or parent. Students may choose between the options. Students and teachers will use the same grading rubric for the rough drafts and final product.

Students will be assessed informally throughout this unit. The STEAL Activity is informal and a participation grade. Students will also be graded according to their progress with a daily check-in and this is also informal. As long as students are writing and participating, they will receive credit for participation. The final product will be their formal grade.

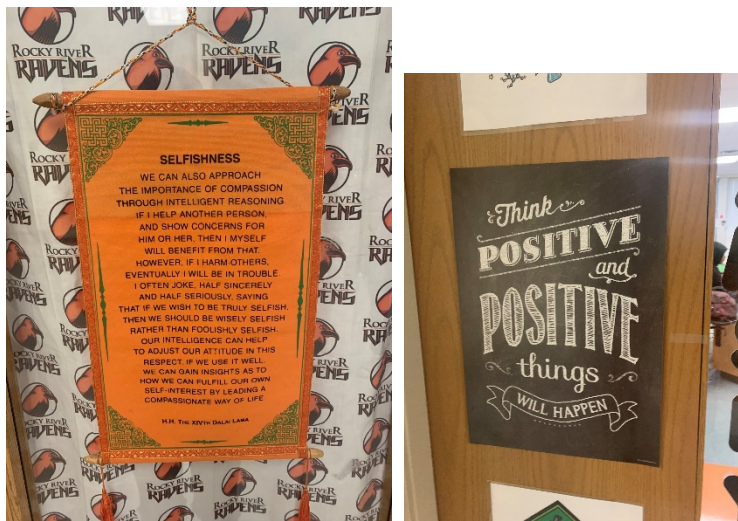
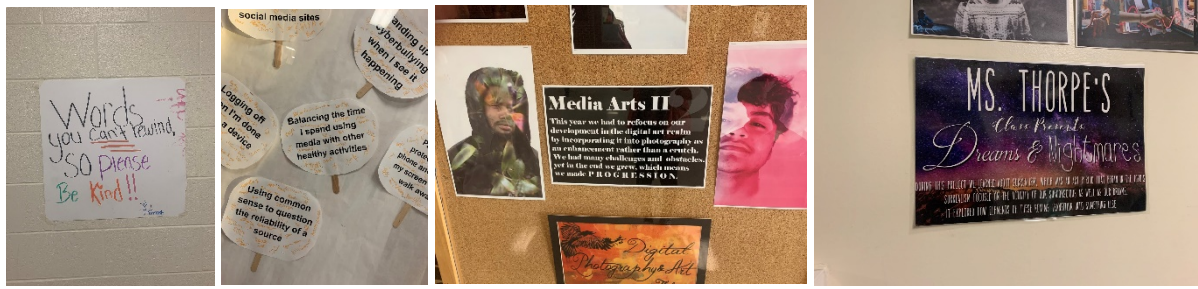
Extension Activity:

Helping students learn how to observe their surroundings may be challenging because they often ignore the details that create the spaces they are in every day. This makes it difficult for them to highlight details that are needed in order to creatively develop their own stories. So, the “Camera Scavenger Hunt” is an activity where students explore their surroundings on their school campus. Students will locate signs, labels, and posters around the school, and then they will capture these images. Students will compile pictures on a slide show and then compose a found poem based on the words in the pictures. The grading components are as follows (25 points each):

1. 5-8 Pictures must be included/captured
2. Poems should be 10-12 lines in length
3. Poems should include a title
4. Poem has a detectable theme
5. Uses figurative language

The grading components are only observed. Students will understand that this assignment is not about perfection, but more so for them to focus on how they can observe and develop unnoticed details within their scopes. Students are expected to incorporate this skill in their realistic fictional stories.

Student Example:



The Ride
By C.N.

The way of life has many challenges and obstacles,
selfishness and negativity can be the downfall
but intelligence and positivity can be the crutch to that fall.

Take those crutches,
get on the bus and make success your destination.
Never rest, try and balance time, feel good about the options you choose,
because you can't rewind.

Believe in yourself and dream,
sometimes what we can't see is the most beautiful thing.
Think positive and enjoy the ride you only get one bus ticket for a lifetime.

Appendix 1: Implementing Teaching Standards

Creative Writing classes use the Common Core Standards from the English curriculum, grades eleven and twelve. When completing this lesson, consider modifying some of the activities to fit the needs of students in lower grade levels that may not have developed research and writing skills necessary to complete this project. Modeling is crucial and can be initiated with smaller activities to help students better understand descriptive language, plot, and characterization before they construct their own stories. Additionally, teachers should reflect on previous lessons and develop modifications based on students' progression in writing. In order to guide students, the teacher should initiate discussions concerning students' research and findings. This will encourage further research, analysis, and application while building their stories. Also, students should be able to develop meaning and connections in their stories through the combination of real life settings and the perspective of their fictional characters. The following piece of information include the areas of focus and standards to be addressed:

RI.11-12.6 Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.SL.11-12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively. W.11-12.3- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences. W.11-12.9- Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. W.11-12.8- Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation. And finally, RI.11-12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

Students will infuse various mediums in order to increase their communication skills and to develop an interest in their stories among their peers. Focusing on these standards allows students to make connections to communities within their city and they are able to identify with varying perspectives. While researching, reading, and studying different mediums, students are expected to use context to develop accuracy among events that takes in their stories and develop realistic characters.

Appendix 2:

Indirect Characterization: STEAL

Choose one of the following individuals to complete the chart: Elsa, Aladdin, Beyonce, Lebron James

<u>Type of Indirect Characterization</u>	<u>Quote</u>	<u>Explanation</u>
Speech		
Thoughts		
Effect on others		
Actions		
Looks		

Appendix 3:

Realistic Fictional Story Rubric

CATEGORY	Exceptional (10)	Good (8)	Fair (6)	Needs work (4)
Setting	Skillfully uses descriptive language. Uses videos and photos skillfully and infuses them in the text.	Some descriptive words used. Uses videos and photos.	The author does not provide much detail. Uses videos and photos	Details of setting are minimal. Does not include any videos or photos.
Characters	Elements of STEAL are observed. Most readers could describe the characters accurately.	Some elements of STEAL observed. Most readers would have some idea of what the characters looked like.	The main characters are named, but one-dimensional. The reader knows very little about the characters.	It is hard to tell who the main characters are.
Conflict	The conflict is obvious and well developed.	The conflict is obvious, may lack in development.	The conflict is introduced, but not developed.	It is not clear what problem the main characters face.
Resolution	There is a clear resolution and it is logically developed.	There is a clear resolution and is somewhat developed.	The solution to the character's problem is a little hard to understand.	No solution is attempted or it is impossible to understand.

Dialogue	Dialogue is well developed, punctuation is formatted correctly. Conversations are accurate based on research.	Dialogue is developed and mostly in correct format. Conversations are accurate and research based.	Dialogue may not be accurate at times or may lack in formatting.	Conversations are not at all accurate and do not reflect research. Punctuation is incorrect.
Organization	The story is very well organized. One idea or scene follows another in a logical sequence with clear transitions.	The story is pretty well organized. One idea or scene may seem out of place. Clear transitions are used.	The story is a little hard to follow. The transitions are sometimes not clear.	Ideas and scenes seem to be disorganized.
Creativity	The author uses a variety of language and creative details.	The story contains some creative details and/or descriptions that contribute to the reader's enjoyment.	The story contains a few or possibly distracting creative details and/or descriptions.	There is little evidence of creativity in the story.
Mechanics	The story contains no errors in grammar, usage, or mechanics.	The story contains a few minor errors in grammar, usage, or mechanics.	The story contains many and/or serious errors in grammar, usage, or mechanics.	The story contains so many errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics that errors block reading.

Student and Teacher Resources

“Explore Rocky River High in Charlotte, NC.” *GreatSchools.org*, www.greatschools.org/north-carolina/charlotte/7833-Rocky-River-High/.

This resource was helpful to understand the demographics of schools in various areas of Charlotte, North Carolina. It provides data for that presents racial demographics, test performance, and socio-economic backgrounds of the families that reside in the area. Additionally, Great Schools presents research based information that helps parents understand the development of students at every grade level in a particular school while also providing information for how parents can help improve schools based on credible statistics.

Great Schools is one resource used to evaluate West Charlotte High School and Ardrey Kell High School. Ardrey Kell seems to be the Pinnacle of success when it comes to test performance among students while it appears that West Charlotte still has room to grow. Segregation is evident among students as well as the drastic differences between family incomes among the families in those communities.

“Fictional Story Rubric” <http://hgms.psd202.org/documents/lthomas/1536337762.doc>, 16 November 2019.

This is the model for the fictional story rubric that is used as a resource for evaluation. Students, teachers, and/or mentors may use this rubric as a guide for improving students’ quality of work prior to their final submission.

Grundy, Pamela. *Color and Character West Charlotte High and the American Struggle over Educational Equality*. The University of North Carolina Press, 2017.

Students can gain a better understanding of civil rights, bussing, integration, and plans for West Charlotte High School. Details about the school’s struggle for equal education among people of color compared to their white counterparts is vital for understanding the history of the West Charlotte community. Many of the challenges faced involved the school staff members, students, community residents, and civil rights leaders.

Additionally, this text exceptionally explains the role of political leaders and their impact in the lives of people who are underprivileged and under-represented. Students may overlook to connection between schooling and the community, but this book exemplifies the power of bringing the two together.

Hughes, Langston. “Justice.”

This poem explains that the Justice system does not equally serve all people in America. Hughes uses the metaphor, “Justice is blind goddess” to show that Black people are overlooked and justice ignores the needs of individuals. Students are able to use this poem to discuss how people of color are portrayed in the media and in society.

Mabillard, Amanda. *Shakespeare Sonnet 130 - My Mistress' Eyes Are Nothing like the Sun*, www.shakespeare-online.com/sonnets/130.html.

The speaker shares that his lover's appearances are less than perfect. He states, "Her eyes are "nothing like the sun," to show that she is dull and unappealing. Nonetheless, there are other traits that he loves about her despite her flawed beauty. With this poem, students discuss the standards for beauty and who has developed the standards. Students may also discuss what they see as beautiful concerning outward appearances.

Mabillard, Amanda. Shakespeare, *Sonnet 29 - When, in Disgrace with Fortune and Men's Eyes*, www.shakespeare-online.com/sonnets/29.html.

In this poem, the speaker reveals that he is insecure. He is envious of those around him, and he feels that he has failed in life, not living up to expectations. The poem shifts when he engages with his lover. Seeing her, gives him hope, and restores his faith in himself. This poem can be used to evaluate how comparison impact the way people view themselves.

Poston, Keith. "When School Segregation Mattered in Charlotte." *The Charlotte Observer*, 21 Oct. 2018.

This article discusses Charlotte's history with segregation as it specifically addresses Swann vs. Charlotte Mecklenburg Board of Education. Additionally, it explains "white flight" and the process behind segregation that leaves students without a connection to students from varying backgrounds.

Smith, Clint. "The Desegregation and Resegregation of Charlotte's Schools." *The New Yorker*, The New Yorker, 19 June 2017, www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/the-desegregation-and-resegregation-of-charlottes-schools.

This article discusses the impact of segregation among Charlotte Mecklenburg public schools. He addresses the quality of teachers to resource disadvantages and how those elements create circumstances for some schools to perform better than others. Furthermore, he acknowledges the school to prison pipeline stating, "...school segregation was deeply correlated with the likelihood of a student becoming entangled in the criminal-justice system."

"Preparing America's Students for Success." *Home | Common Core State Standards Initiative*, The Council of Chief State School Officers, <http://www.corestandards.org/>.

This resource is the basis for all lessons. Each standard addresses specific areas to help students develop 21st century skills that they will use in their life and career choices. The standards in this unit focus on grades 11-12 and cater to reading informational texts, writing, and a focus on communication.

"The effort to develop the Common Core State Standards was launched in 2009 by state leaders... governors recognized the value of consistent, real-world learning goals and launched this effort to ensure all students, regardless of where they live, are graduating high school prepared for college, career, and life."