

Anthems of Expression

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This curriculum unit is recommended for 2nd Grade

Keywords: South Central, Community, Watts Riot, Rap Music, KDAY, MTV, McCrorey Heights, Brookshire Freeway, LAPD

Teaching Standards: See Appendix 1 for the teaching standards addressed in this unit.

Synopsis: This unit is in line with the new 2nd Grade ELA Curriculum. Unit one discusses working to become ethical people through compassion and respectful dialogue. Students learn to inquire, problem solve, and respectfully disagree in order to gain the prospective of others in different circumstances.

I plan to teach this unit during the coming year to 18 students in 2nd Grade.

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Introduction

Student Background/ Demographics

My school is one of 164 that make up the Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools district. My school has approximately 697 students with 70 teachers and support staff. The school population is 68% African American, 4.6% White, 19% Hispanic, 4% Asian, and .01 Native American. We also have an EL (English Language Learner) population of 6.5% and an AG (Academically Gifted) population of .7%. We are a Title One school which means we receive Federal Funding to supplement existing programs.

Unit Goal

This unit begins with the origin of a community that brought a controversial style of Rap music to the fore front of American Social activism. The Unit begins with a historical look at South Central Los Angeles and how it became a community for middle class African Americans in the 1920s and 1940. The Great Migration and Federal contracts with businesses like Hughes Aircraft brought many African American families to the region. The large influx of families also brought restrictions to where African American citizens could live, own businesses and socialize.

Highway construction and an overzealous Police department made life difficult and sometimes deadly for African American's in specific areas of South Central LA. Similar to the highway construction in LA, communities here in Charlotte suffered. In the 1960's middle class neighborhoods like McCrorey Heights were drastically reduced for reasons that include infrastructure progress to segregation. The community was the home of University Presidents, community leaders and upper middle class African American families.

Aggressive policing was not unique to Los Angles. Countless cases of racial profiling throughout the country have been and are well documented. What made Los Angles stand out was this style of aggressive policing gave birth to a style of music that became an anthem for frustration that mainstream America was not aware of and did not understand.

Rap music became an underground movement of expression to bring awareness of injustice to others outside the community. One local radio station, KDAY, became an outlet where local artist could be discovered and plays their music.

I want to use the example of South Central Los Angles and McCrorey Heights to remind students great communities exist despite past and present efforts to diminish their value. Both of these communities housed intellectual and artistic creativity.

Although my students are young, they listen to Rap music and hear about neighborhoods off of Beatties Ford Road and the negative connotation associated with both.

I want my students to understand the rich history of communities in their own backyard, and some of the history of a genre of music they enjoy.

Since my students are young my intension is not to play or explain explicit rap lyrics, but to explain that music can be a tool of expression that can bring about change. I would like them to know words/ lyrics have power and that power can be used to tell a story or to voice their feelings.

Content Research

The Birth of South Central Los Angles

The area regarded as South Central Los Angles consist of about 40 square miles. This area includes the Harbor Freeway on the West, Central Ave on the east, Washington Blvd. on the north, and Vernon Ave on the south. Understand when most people speak of South Central Los Angles today they are referring to an area that encompasses well beyond the 40 square mile boarders that includes Watts, Compton, Inglewood and the Crenshaw District. South Central has long been a coded word for "Black" Los Angeles.

The history of this African American district begins between the 1920s and the late 1940s. After World War II the African American population doubled. Two factors helped with the population growth. The first was the lack of housing restrictions or "covenants" place on housing deeds, the other was the growth of the aerospace industry. Covenant were a set of housing restrictions that made it illegal for African American to rent or purchase homes in certain neighborhoods. Since this 40 square mile area was not part of these housing covenants, African Americans quickly moved in. Companies like Hughes Aircraft were conducting state of the art research in the field of aeronautics. The company had a contract with the United States governments which according to Executive Order 8802 made it illegal to discriminate in hiring in the defense industry. These two factors made South Central an attractive place for African Americans to establish a thriving community.

Historian Lonnie G. Bunch comments:

"Between 1942-1945, some 340,000 Blacks settled in California, 200,000 of whom migrated to Los Angeles." Nonetheless, because of the restrictive covenants, there were very few places where they could live." ¹

The abundant of jobs in such a small radius made the housing crisis worse as more and more African American families moved into the area during the 1940s.

The Great Migration was a period of time between 1920s and 1970s when millions of African Americans relocated from Southern to Northern States for better job opportunities. The time period brought a spot light on the music and club scene emerging in South Central. Places like the Dunbar Hotel at 43rd and Central Ave hosted stars like Billie Holiday, Duke Ellington, and Ella Fitzgerald. Even Hollywood stars like Marilyn Monroe and Orson Wells frequented South Central's clubs. Despite the popularity of the night life, the overcrowding made for poor living conditions for its residence.²

In 1948 the court case "Shelley v. Kraemer" ruled these restrictive neighborhoods covenants illegal which led to the increase of some South Central communities. Area such as West Adams and Baldwin Hills became an area where upper middle class African Americans were now living.

The prosperity of South Central started to unravel as African Americans were realizing that no matter their economic status racial inequality was shared by upper middle and lower class African Americans throughout the city.³

Construction of various highways in the 1950s played a hand in dividing and sometimes destroying middle-class African American communities. The California State Highway Commission wanted to construct a highway system that would run directly through one of the most beautiful, well-kept African American neighborhoods "Sugar Hill". California was not alone many African American communities in places like Minnesota, Maryland, Washington, New York and Massachusetts saw highways being built to either divide or destroy the strong community residence worked hard to establish. Many in the African Americans saw these police and infrastructure assaults on their communities as a rally cry for activism.

McCrorey Heights

Much like the plight of South Central Los Angeles and other African American communities around the United States, highway construction played a role in diminishing strong communities. During the late 1900's historical Charlotte communities like McCrorey Heights, Brooklyn, 1st and 2nd Ward were places middle-class African Americans lived and established businesses that economically empower their community. Unfortunately most of these communities have disappeared. McCrorey Heights still remains as one of Charlotte's historical neighborhoods founded in the early 1900's by then Johnson C. Smith president Rev. H.L. McCrorey. Before serving as President for the University, McCrory worked in an Investment firm where he used his income to build the community known as McCrorey Heights. The idea was to have an affluent community where Johnson C. Smith professors and other Black professionals could reside. McCrorey had the community plans laid out as early as 1912, but it would take nearly 40 years until the community was a dream realized. The community began to flourish after World War II. The community named it's streets after presidents Washington, Madison, Van Buren, and even the General George S. Patton.⁵

Many of the residents of the community were movers and shakers of the Civil Rights movement and religious faiths. McCrorey, a Presbyterian minister, wanted a community that gave a safe haven to other Presbyterians. Many of the faith went on to become headmasters and directors of private religious schools in the Southeast. The motivation was to give Black students that were denied access to a good education due to underfunded institutions a change to flourish. Even though Presbyterians was the faith of most residence, there was a large AME Zion presence as well.

Many principals and teachers of segregated school were McCrorey Heights residence. Even though they did not hold management jobs in the corporate community, principals were given the task of staffing and managing predominantly Black schools. This also gave female residents an opportunity to work outside the home as teachers and caregivers long before it became a societal norm.

The construction of the Brookshire Freeway in 1960 demolished some of the McCrorey homes. The houses on one side of Van Buren Ave and the hillside of Fairfield were removed as the residents moved to another one of Charlotte's upcoming affluent areas of Charlotte Hyde Park.

McCrorey Heights can boast design influence of designer Harvey Gantt who later became Charlotte's first Black Mayor in 1983.⁶

Many Charlotte community members are starting to look at these communities and realizing the value they bring to the diverse history of Charlotte. According to Emiene Wright, the assistant director of Communications at Johnson Smith University, who co-hosted walking tours through McCrorey Heights:

"McCrorey Heights has been a strangely preserved little enclave. It almost feels like you're in a time machine," says Wright of the original '40s and '50s-built ranch homes that still line the streets. "Not only is it aesthetically beautiful, it's also historical. The majority of important progress moments in Charlotte's racial history had roots in this neighborhood."

Policing African American Community in Los Angeles

The African American community had very few runs with the police department until Chief Parker's rein. From 1950 to 1965 Chief William Parker intensified racial profiling and harassing business and patrons along the Central Ave. area. Chief Parker was an anticommunist white supremacist who wanted to clean up a corrupt Police department. ⁸ His tactics included aggressive policing which meant not waiting for a crime to happen, but to seek it out before it happens. If that policy violated civil rights it was a small price to pay to keep things orderly. The Civil Rights Movement was seen by Parker and some of his fellow officers as a Communist plot, and any law to comply with its efforts was met with resistance and non-compliance by his department.

An event on a warn August 11 night in 1965 led to the riots Watts riots. A motorcycle patrol officer pulled over Marquette Frye for speeding. A crowd emerged as the officers arrested Mr. Frye and what result was six days of rioting, property damage and civil unrest that left thirty people dead, over one-thousand wounded and nearly four thousand arrested.

The riots sparked off a social movement that enhanced artistic expression of the community. The famous Watts Towers was erected and the Black Arts Movement was created during this period. Even though the artistic scene was thriving the economic outlook was getting worse.

Manufacturing plants were closing employment and poverty rates were on the rise which led to the rise of the Crack Cocaine epidemic.

The LAPD

Police Chief ruled the city and the streets with an iron fist. He fear race mixing within various communities, and frequently conducted raids of nightclubs, R&B record stores. He and his officers would block white patrons from minority stores saying it was dangerous for them to be in these neighborhoods. ⁹ After the Watts riot Chief Parker's militaristic style of policing went into hyper drive. LAPD routinely maintained a 19 hour day air patrol and in high crime areas. Home addresses were often painted on roof tops turning entire neighborhoods into areal grids on a map. ¹⁰

Chief Parker held his position for 39 years and is remembered by some as the Chief that restored law and order to a corrupt and lawless Los Angeles. However, others remember him as a long reining chief who used a campaign of terror and intimidation to keep neighborhoods of color confined and in check. If the police did not tightly control minority communities crime and unlawful activities would plague the entire region. This notion was documented by testimony he gave before the US Commission on Civil Rights:

A belligerent Parker characterized the LAPD as the real 'embattled minority' and argued that the tensions between L.A.'s minority communities and the cops had simply to do with the fact that Blacks and Latinos were statistically many times more likely than Whites to commit crimes. Indeed Parker assured the Commission that the 'established [read White] community thinks cops aren't hard enough on Black vice'. Parker sparked a 500-strong protest rally in East Los Angeles when he went on to offer his insight into the high crime rate in the barrios, explaining that the people who lived there were only one step removed from 'the wild tribes of Mexico, .66 ¹¹

Several years after Chief Parker's rein one of his protégés Daryl Gates was sworn in as Police Chief. The year was 1978, under his commend the LAPD were accused in many incidence of harassing and killing members in the Black community. In one case an unarmed teenager was shot for allegedly reaching for something in his pocket on the suspicions of being a Gang member, no weapon was found. Excessive force was often used and justified. The "chokehold", a method used for restraining individuals, was responsible for killing many young Black men in police custody. Chief Gates argued that this method was not the cause of death, but it was the physical anatomy of these men that lead to their deaths. ¹²

"We may be finding that in some Blacks when [the carotid chokehold] is applied the veins or arteries do not open up as fast as they do on normal [sic] people.' ¹³

The community was angry, but with the advent of drugs and Gangs infesting the neighborhoods, aggressive policing was seen as a necessary evil. There were even some African American leaders that thought that more policing was needed to secure some of the more violent areas of the city. It was about this time an underground form of expression was taking shape.

MTV/KDAY and Hip Hop Music

In the mid to late 1980s MTV was dominating the music scene. MTV was the first cable based non-commercial platform that played music videos from 8 PM to midnight. In the beginning videos were cheaply produced by Record Companies and freely given to MTV for promotional purposes. As Record Companies began to see the tremendous influence music videos had, money was invested into quality visual masterpieces. This platform allowed artist to put a visual message or story behind their lyrics. Most of the videos were light-hearted and free from political or controversial messages. Artist of color complained that the station neglected to play their music simply because of their color. This notion was vehemently denied by MTV executives. As quoted by former Music Director Buzz Brindle in a Jett magazine interview in 2006:

"MTV was originally designed to be a rock music channel. It was difficult for MTV to find African American artists whose music fit the channel's format that leaned toward rock at the outset." ¹⁴

While African American Artist like Michael Jackson, Prince and Whitney Houston were dominated mainstream and R&B charts, Hip Hop was gaining popularity in urban areas. Although Hip Hop music was first only seen as loud annoying music for and by Black people, MTV could not deny its growing popularity and launched Yo! MTV Raps on August 6, 1988. 15

Before MTV saw the Hip Hop music as a growing underground urban phenomena, KDAY an AM station in the heart of LA was providing a platform for up and coming artist and DJ's. KDAY, located near Dodger Stadium, was one of two places to hear Hip Hop music in Los Angles. Hip Hop music was not profitable and music executives did not like it, which made it difficult to get air play. Its format first blended R&B with a bit of Rap, but Radio personalities like Greg Mack and Russ Parr help usher in an all Rap format. Greg Mack invited DJ's to showcase their talents through their mixtapes. One of the most popular DJ's showcased was Dr. Dre and his partner DJ Yella. Their tapes became so popular at local Swap Meets it forced station management to let Dre and Yella go and look for other artist who could devote their time to the mixtape slot. KDAY not only put world famous DJs and artist on the map they also gave local record shops an advantage over larger shops who were not playing or selling Hip Hop music. Hip Hop music provided a creative outlet for young people voice their dreams, aspirations and frustrations in a positive way.

Instructional Implementation

This year second grade is one of four grade levels who have adapted a new Curriculum. This curriculum takes a three prong approach to Literacy. Students receive their core instruction through Module lessons. The Modules are broken up into four units. The first unit helps students build literacy in a collaborative classroom by learning about schools and communities. Students learn about similarities and differences between their communities and three international communities. Student will look specifically at schools in these communities and how they compare to theirs.

Students will be introduced to climate challenges some students face in order to attend school. Students' learn about weather conditions like monsoons and earthquakes that effect communities and children attending schools.

Students will research schools located in different parts of the world and how their global position effects the type of education they receive and ways their communities have to adapt. They will understand how a school in Haiti had to rely on the help of global relief and community organizations for materials to operate schools after a natural disaster.

Students will then use their researched information to write why they think school is important. Students will express their ideas about what they already know about school and what their most important reason they attend.

The concept of numbers will be addressed when students look at how many students and grade levels are assigned to a classroom of international schools compared to theirs.

The skills portion of the Unit One addresses phonemic awareness and spelling patterns. Students are given open and closed syllables words to understand vowel and consonant placement in words.

Day One Module Lesson

Students will discuss with their shoulder partner five facts about what they already know about school as a 2nd grader.

What Is School, and Why Are Schools Important?

Page 1

I can draw and write what I know about schools.				
What is one thing you already know about schools?				

Day Two Module Lesson

Students will solve this math problem:

Lawson asked the Principal for 18 math books for his students in his afterschool Math Club. Kaitlynn asked to borrow 5 of Lawson's books for her afterschool Math Club. The Principal decided to give 21 Math books for both clubs. Will both clubs have enough books for all their students? Why or why not? (Students will explain and solve the problem using the activity graphic organizer in the activity)

Activity

Use this organizer to show your steps. Use models, pictures, words and equations.

What is the problem asking you to own words.	find out? RETELL or tell it in your
First, I	Then, I

Day Three Module Lesson

Students will read the text "School in Many Cultures" and "School Days Around the World". Students will turn and talk with their partner and share some similarities they found in both books about what they know about schools.

Day Four Assessment

Students will use their notes and activities from days one, two and three lessons to create a book comparing and contrasting schools. Students will choose one of the two schools they read about in the text to compare and contrast with their school. Students will create a booklet including similarities and differences between their school and the one they choose. Students will express their ideas about what they already know about school and what their most important reason for attending. They must also include a two digit addition math problem in their story.

Day One Skills Lesson

Instructions for the Skills portion of the Literacy block teaches and assess students' spelling and letter formation. Based on those standards students are placed in one of four Word Reading Phases. The four phases are listed below:

- 1. **Pre-alphabetic phase**: students read words by memorizing their visual features or guessing words from their context.
- 2. **Partial-alphabetic phase**: students recognize some letters of the alphabet and can use them together with context to remember words by sight.
- 3. **Full-alphabetic phase**: readers possess extensive working knowledge of the graphophonemic system, and they can use this knowledge to analyze fully the connections between graphemes and phonemes in words. They can decode unfamiliar words and store fully analyzed sight words in memory.
- 4. **Consolidated-alphabetic phase**: students consolidate their knowledge of grapheme phoneme blends into larger units that recur in different words.

Students will be assigned a spelling list based on their Word Reading phase to complete the follow activities.

Activity
Students will pyramid write all their spelling words.
Example: Flying
F
Fl
Fly
Flyi
Flyin
Flying

Day Two Skills Lesson

Students will use their words to write complete sentences. Sentences must include correct punctuation and grammar.

Activity

Example: flying, sky

The bird was <u>flying</u> in the blue <u>sky</u>.

Day Three Skills Lesson

Students will use their spelling list for the following activity.

Activity

Students will use their spelling word to create a story, song or rap. All of their words must be used, and they may works in groups no more than three. Once they have created their story/song they will share it with their partner or the entire class.

Appendix 1: Teaching Standards

Literacy

- RI2.1 The teacher reads aloud to students and models his /him thinking when asking questions about key details comparing and contrasting schools.
- RI2.2 During shared reading of a multi-paragraph text, the teacher models how to determine the focus of each paragraph between schools here and overseas.
- RF2.4 The teacher gives the students spelling words with one to two-syllable words. Students will use these words to create a story, poem and/or a rap to share with classmates.
- RF2.5 Students read their stories comparing and contrasting schools smoothly with meaning enough accuracy so they are understood.
- W2.6 Students recall information gathered from the different schools they read to answer what they know and learned about different schools.

Science

2E.1 – Students read about the effects Earthquakes and floods have on communities and how it impacts daily life.

Social Studies

- 2C.1 Students learn the value communities place on school especially when a natural disaster destroys it and communities come together to rebuild.
- 2G.1 Students learn how Amazon communities use their natural resource, water, to build schools on boats to meet their education needs.

Math

NC2.OA.1- Students create and solve multi-step addition and subtraction problems within 100.

Appendix 2: Student Resources

Off to Class – This is a 64 page Informational text that looks at how students from all over the world attend school. The book is broken up into three chapters. The first chapter gives a description of the geographical locations of schools around the world. The second chapter highlights schools that face physical barriers to educations and how they are trying to overcome them. The third chapter looks at schools that adjust to the different needs of the community.

School Days – This is a beginning reader that introduces readers to different international schools its students and their schedule.

School in Many Cultures- This is a beginning reader that looks at what students do during the school day in various places around the world.

The Invisible Boy – This fictional book looks at a student who feels invisible in school because no one pays him attention. One day one of his classmates realizes what a talented artist he is and asks to join them in a school project.

The Dot – A fictional story about a student who was given as assignment to draw and tells her teacher she cannot. The teacher tells her to try, and she draws a dot on her paper. This gives her confidence and she helps other students who do not think they can draw to try it.

EnVision Mathematics – This is the 2nd grade math program that can be accessed via text and online.

Apendix 3: Teacher Resources

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Lean Zillion - This is the online teacher guide to all CMS district K-2 grade Literacy Lessons. This program is broken up into Modules and Skills. Modules contain the mail Literacy lessons that teach students the anchor standards. The Skills section focuses on phonics and differential spelling list based on ability.

The City of Quartz – This book gives a historical look of what shaped Los Angeles into the unique city. It breaks down how different neighborhoods were created, and how racial tensions led to the Watt and LA Riots.

The Dark Tree – This book looks at ways the LA Police Department policed and controlled African American neighborhoods.

https://www.thoughtco.com/when-mtv-first-aired-black-videos-2834657- The website reminds its readers of a time when MTV was accused of refusing to play Black Artist.

https://medium.com/@briancoleman/1580-kday-and-the-beat-goes-on-9dab5b6c55e6 - This website gives the history of the first radio station in Los Angles that played Rap music and who discovered artist like Dr. Dre, Ice-T, NWA, and World class Wrecking Crew.

https://www.kcet.org/shows/city-rising/the-history-of-south-central-los-angeles-and-its-struggle-with-gentrification - This website gives a historical look at the development of what we know as South Los Angles. It begins from the Great Migration in the 1920's to a diverse look at South Los Angeles now struggling with gentrification issues.

https://www.hugheshistoricdistrict.com/historical-development-of-the-district/ - This website documents the creation of the Hughes Aircraft in several Southern California cities. This was one major factor that led African Americans to the Southern California during the Great Migration.

https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/great-migration - This website briefly explains the Great Migration of African Americans form Southern Cities to cities in the North and West between 1919 and the 1970's

https://guides.library.uncc.edu/c.php?g=621704&p=5213242 – This site found on UNCC's library site gives the background of Charlotte's historical African American neighborhood McCrorery Heights.

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Notes

¹ (Sonksen 2017)

- ² (Sonksen 2017)
- ³ (Sonksen 2017)

- ⁴ (Isoardi 2006) ⁵ (History of McCrorery Hights 2018)
- ⁶ (Graff 2018)
- ⁷ (Hanchett 1998)
- ⁸ (Isoardi 2006)
- ⁹ (Sonksen 2017)
- ¹⁰ (Isoardi 2006)
- ¹¹ (Davis 1992)

- ¹² (Davis 1992)
 ¹³ (Davis 1992)
 ¹⁴ (Nittle 2019)
 ¹⁵ (Nittle 2019)
 ¹⁶ (Coleman 2016)