



Our Communities and Its Impact on Our Learning

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Wilson STEM Academy

This curriculum unit is recommended for 8th Grade English Language Arts

Keywords: perspective, community, prejudice, social bias, identity, culture, choice, consequence, conflict, narrative, communication

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

Synopsis: This unit hopes to help students to think critically about how their various communities (home, neighborhood, school, etc.) impact them personally, impact their learning and impact their future. Students will read various novels, short stories and current events that will help guide discussions about issues impacting their communities. They will be able to express their thoughts by using Quick Writes, journal prompts, and Socratic Seminars that will allow students to share their voice. After completing any novel, short story or current event analysis, students should be able to show their knowledge of the content through formative assessments and projects. Through the lessons, students will be able to see how the events that impact their communities in the past helped develop the communities they are in right now and how the present events are shaping their communities for the future.

This plan will be taught during the 2019-2020 school year to 80 8th grade English Language Arts students.

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Introduction

Every morning, my students either watch CNN Student News or answer a Do Now that deals with the lesson of the day. By watching the news, my students are exposed to both positive and concerning issues that are influencing the world. They enjoy talking about what interested them and explaining why. The Do Nows relate to them by asking questions that make them think about their communities (home, neighborhood, city and school), their stereotypes, their bias and their identity. Students get to discover other perspectives on the issues that affect their various communities. They get to discover new aspects of themselves while going through the analysis such as how they really feel and what they think can help make their communities better. I made sure that each Do Now relates to the student by using the pronoun you or ours. This way each student is connected to the Do Now question or statement.

Rationale

In this curriculum, students must understand that current issues such as racism, bullying, police brutality (against others or police) does affect our lives whether we think it does or not. They must also understand that the home environment does affect how our lives will unfold. For example, if a student is told by his parents that they have to move out by 4:00pm, that student's mind will not be on his learning, but on where he will sleep for that night. Too often, students of low-income families enter the school building dealing with issues that make teaching hard. It is like a tug of war because these issues exist and it is important to acknowledge those issues in a way that it will lead to learning.

Demographics

Wilson STEM Academy is one of Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools' newest technology schools and is located on the west side of Charlotte in the Northwest Learning Community. The 2019-2020 academic year begins its tenure as a fully inclusive computer science/engineering "partial magnet" immersion middle school. Wilson STEM Academy services 509 students. There are 380 (74.7%) African American students, 87 (17.1%) Hispanic students, 21 (4.1%) Asian students, 10 (2.0%) white students, 9 (1.8%) two or more students, and 2 (.4%) Native American students. Computer Sciences courses offered include Design and Modeling, Flight and Space, Innovators and Makers, and App Creator. Magnet seats for 6th grade are 100 and 7th grade are 50. All eighth graders are non-magnet and attend their feeder home school. There are 173 6th graders, 169 7th graders, and 173 8th graders. Gender representation is comprised of 52% boys and 48% girls. 100% of our students receive free breakfast and lunch.

I teach eighth grade English Language Arts (ELA). My classes are divided as follows: an Honors class that consists of 33 students, a semi-honors class that consists of 13 students, a standard ELA class of 19 students, and an Inclusion ELA class of 19 students. This is a core class, and students must pass it to fulfill their eighth grade requirements. This course runs the entire academic year and ends with state End of Grade assessment.

Objective

The main goal of this ELA unit is to have students think critically about how their neighborhood, home and school communities affects their learning, whether it is negative or positive. Students must think about the issues that plague their communities, what elements caused those community issues, and whether those elements can be eradicated so their education is not affected. Issues such as racism (between different races and within races) and police brutality (violence against people of color and violence against the police) and home environment will be the focus. Students will also have to come up with various solutions they think will help decrease or eradicate these issues.

Students will analyze various novels and short stories for how the main character's communities (home, neighborhood, school, and city/town) issues are affecting his or her life and education. At the completion of this unit, students need to show mastery of North Carolina's eighth grade English Language Arts Standards leading to a successful outcome on the North Carolina End-of-Grade (EOG) assessment. Eighth grade students must be able to analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision. They must be able to analyze how differences in the perspectives of the characters and the audience or reader create such effects as suspense or humor in any novel and short story.

Possible Novels:

***Ghost Boys* by Jewell Parker Rhodes** - Jerome, a middle school student, is killed by the police while playing with a toy gun that he acquired from his first real friend, Carlos. He has three communities he is a part of in this novel: Home, Neighborhood and School.

Home Community

His home life consist of his mother, father, grandmother, and his little sister. His parents work and his grandmother makes sure Jerome and his sister are fed (breakfast, lunch, and dinner), ready for school and homework is complete after school. Overall, he has a loving home community.

Neighborhood Community (Chicago)

Jerome's neighborhood is not a safe place for him and his sister. His mother and grandmother always make it a big deal for Jerome and his sister to come straight home after school. It is comprised of meth labs, makeshift basketball courts and abandoned houses. His neighborhood community is not a good place for him to be but it is all his family have and know.

School Community

Jerome's school community is not safe for him as well. He has no friends and he is bullied by three other male students at his school. He has classes with his bullies, which makes focusing on his learning difficult. He even grabs his lunch and head up to the second floor of his school and eat in the bathroom to get away from his bullies. Therefore, his school community is not a safe place for him and he is not learning the way he should learn. All of his communities play a part in his premature death.ⁱⁱⁱ

***All American Boys* by Jason Reynolds** - In this novel, a high school student named Rashad is beaten by a cop who believes he tried to steal from a corner store in his neighborhood. Rashad is a member of his home, neighborhood and school communities.

Home Community

His home community consist of his mother, father (ex-military and policeman), and older brother (Spoony) who lives with his girlfriend. His father believes that young black men should either go to the military or hold an occupation that is respectable such as a Policeman. His father is always preaching this to Rashad and always bad mouthing the older brother, Spoony because he works for United Postal Service (UPS). Rashad joins JROTC to satisfy his father and get him off of his back. He is miserable in JROTC and ditches it every chance he gets. His mother tries to keep the peace between Rashad and his father. Throughout the novel, his home community is rough, so he relies on his school community (friends) for support, but it is not until the end of the novel that his home community changes for the better.

Neighborhood Community

This story is set in Springfield, Illinois. It is quiet until Rashad has his encounter with a policeman that brings the ugly face of racism to the forefront. This single encounter turns Rashad's life upside down by putting more pressure on his home community by affecting his relationship with his father; a retired policeman. It put pressure on his school community by making the different races of students segregated and are against each other. His neighborhood is segregated into groups such as the police department, the blacks, and the whites (supporting the police department) who are warring against each other. Until the real facts about Rashad and the policeman's encounter comes out there will be no unity like before.

School Community

Rashad feels safe and relaxed in this community because of his friends. He has a close-knit family of friends that he can talk to about his home issues; if anything happens to any of the friends they can depend on each other for support. His friends consist of Carlos (graffiti artist), English (basketball captain and liked by everyone in school), and Shannon (basketball player). His grades are decent and he has no issues with anyone until his encounter with one of the neighborhood's policeman in a neighborhood store. Rashad's communities all become intertwined because of an incident that has rocked a small town.ⁱⁱⁱ

Poet x by Elizabeth Acevedo

This novel is about a teenager named Xiomara Batista, known in the world of slam poetry as X, who uses her poetry to help her understand herself and her family.

Neighborhood Community

Xiomara's environment, Harlem - present day), is one of crime and violence and of her mother's devotion to the Catholic Church, which she opposes.

Home Community

Xiomara's home life consists of her mother's love for the church and nothing else. Her mother wants her to denounce dating and commit herself to the church only but Xiomara (X) wants to be her own person with her own voice, but growing up in her mother's religious home has kept her silent. However, now that she is developing into a woman mentally and physically she wants her voice to be heard. The only way she can achieve this is through her love of poetry. This is a secret X is determined to keep from her mother, because her mother only wants her to commit to the church and nothing else^{iv}

School Community

Xiomara's school community is all right until she starts developing a crush on one of her classmates named Aman. She cannot tell her mother because her mother only wants her to deal with the church and nothing else. Her English teacher sees how much Xiomara likes writing poetry so she is invited to join the school's poetry slam club. This is an opportunity for Xiomara to share her feelings and thoughts aloud without feeling ashamed or judged. In this community, Xiomara can be herself and she has support from others, unlike in her home community where she hides her feelings and thoughts in silence. ^v

I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter by Erika L. Sanchez - In this novel, readers are exposed to both Mexican and Mexican American culture; especially how the cultures deal with women. Women never abandon their families; not even to go to college or move out of the house after high school graduation. ^{vi} However, the novel's main character, Julia, wants to change this part of her culture.

Home Community - Julia's home life was okay until her perfect older sister, Olga, was killed on the busiest street in Chicago. This tragedy moves Julia into her older sister's position of being perfect in the eyes of her parents. However, her mother only sees the errors Julia is making and it is driving Julia insane (figuratively). Therefore, she has to do something, because she has discovered that maybe her perfect sister wasn't perfect after all.

School Community - Julia's school community okay for a typical fifteen year old. She used to love school and even skipped third grade due to her academics. However since she has become a teenager, her feelings towards school has changed. She gets into a lot of trouble and the front office staff knows her and her mother very well. She is not doing well in her classes since her sister passed away. ^{vii} This novel spends most of its setting in the home and at school until Julia starts discovering clues that shows Olga as a different person from what she portrayed at home. Therefore, Julia's home life is affecting her school life and the only way it will improve for her is to find out the truth about her deceased perfect sister, Olga.

Dear Martin by Nic Stone - Justyce McAllester, a seventeen-year-old teenager, who lives in Atlanta is unjustly handcuffed for trying to help someone, his ex-girlfriend from driving drunk. The police officer did not get all the facts and went on what he saw instead of asking questions to find out what is going on. This is where Justyce starts writing to Dr. Martin Luther King about his problems. Then Justyce and one of his friends become tangled in an incident involving another police officer and it makes the news.

Home/Neighborhood Communities - Justyce comes from a single parent home that is in the projects. His mother made sure he went to a Preparatory school, where he lived on campus. This way he will not be a part of his neighborhood negative effects. His mother wants him to make something of his life. When he comes home to visit his mother, she always asks him, "Why are you here?" He tells her to "check-in on you" and she tells him that she is fine, but he needs to get back to school. He still tries to keep in contact with individuals from the neighborhood. A way of keeping his identity in check.

School Community - Justyce has plenty of friends that are white and come from money that he hangs out with at his school. He has a full scholarship to his current preparatory school. He has good grades and sees his future career in law. He is not allowing his bad neighborhood to impact his learning. This entire novel is about Justyce writing to Dr. Martin Luther King to help him try to understand why issues in this world are the way they are. For example, racism and police brutality.^{viii}

“Not Poor, Just Broke” by Richard Gregory

Richard Gregory writes about how his home life was not the greatest in Chicago. He lived with his mother, who worked as a house cleaner, and his five other siblings. He witnessed his mother enduring disrespect all because of her skin color and the fact that they were poor.

Neighborhood Community

Richard lived on the poor side of Chicago. However, he could walk two blocks away and be in the middle class area. Therefore, he knew what the other side looked like and wanted that for himself. When any of the children got sick, they would head over to the black hospital where they were looked down upon, because of their poverty. He endured black doctors disrespecting him and his mother all because they felt they were better.

Home Community

Richard and his family lived in a bug infested, two bedroom apartment. Mom worked as a house cleaner when work was available. She also suffered from high blood pressure and diabetes. She always made everything seem positive even when she knew the situation was terrible. Mom made sure Richard and his siblings had clothes, even if he had to wear them to school wet and they were loved. The food they had come from being on Welfare or Relief as it is called in the text. Mom made sure to keep a smile on her face to reassure the children stayed happy as well. However, as Richard became older, he noticed that his mother was always getting disrespect by the landlord, the social worker, doctors at the black hospital, and even her boss (by going on vacation without telling her). This in turn upset Richard, because he was the man of the house, but he could not do anything about it.

School Community

Richard enjoyed going to school until the teacher embarrassed him in front of his school crush, Helen Tucker. He did get in trouble a lot because he was hungry and wanted some attention. His teacher did not understand, he was always sitting in the corner for misbehaved children. The teacher made it known that Richard did not have a daddy at home and said it aloud in front of his classmates. Helen sat looking at him with this sad look and he started to cry. He did not go back to school for a while. He would pretend to go to school so his mother would not know that he was skipping. Instead, he would shine shoes for money.

Richard's neighborhood, home, and school life affected his learning in a negative way. It was not until he got married and became a writer that he found success.

Research

When educators think about their students, they should think about their neighborhood, home, and school communities. Why? These areas have an impact on how the students learn in the classroom; especially students of color who live in low-income neighborhoods and students who live in a single parent home. Other areas play a part as well such as crime, parents' education, school environment, and the value of education in the home.

This study, *Neighborhood Crime and School Climate*, provides information on how students living in crime filled neighborhoods does affect the learning within the classroom. Even if the schools have an environment that promotes safety and support, learning for those students will be compromised due to the crime they see within their neighborhood. Neighborhoods that are disorganized cause students in nearby schools to have negative behaviors that affect their learning. According to Dana Charles McCoy, Amanda L. Roy, Gabriel M. Sirkman, the results are that “high levels of crime and particularly violent crime—within school neighborhoods are directly predictive of decreases in school-level academic achievement across time, net of the socioeconomic conditions faced by students in the schools.”^{ix}

Another factor that plays a very important role in a child's education is the family's economic status. Students who come from disadvantaged homes and neighborhoods are impacted by what the family and neighborhood value.^x A child's academic achievement can be impacted by how much education is valued in the home. If the mother has limited education then it will not be important. However, if the mother values education then it will play a major role in the household.^{xi} If education is not valued then the child comes to school unprepared, they do not understand what the teacher is trying to teach him or her. To make matters worse, the teacher may not understand the child's way of speaking.^{xii} However, it is the teacher's duty to make sure all students in the classroom feels welcomed and that they can learn no matter their economic background.^{xiii} The school administration team and teachers must communicate with the families and provide resources that will help the child become academically successful.^{xiv}

In another study, students provide their perspectives on school environment, engagement and their academic success. The study focuses on the Self-Determination theory^{xv} that relies heavily on engagement as an outcome. According to Ming-Te Wang and Rebecca Holcombe the authors of *Adolescents' Perceptions of School Environment, Engagement, and Academic Achievement in Middle School*, “optimal learning outcomes occur in relation to how well the learning environment provides opportunities for the student to develop a sense of personal competence and autonomy and positive relationships with others.” Teachers who allow their students opportunities to discuss important issues within the classroom provides their students with different perspectives and gives them a voice. This shows the students that their teacher value what they think and this may lead to better academic learning only if the students stay on task. In addition, when students feel that their teachers support them, they exhibit positive behavior and are willing to complete their assigned work. Therefore, students start to see their school environment in a positive light and this leads to academic success.^{xvi}

When it comes to the peer community, it plays an important role when the child enters middle school. Wanting to be liked and accepted by other middle school students is vital for academic success. The Peer community has as much influence as the family community. With friends, the student can be him or herself and avoid trouble. However, if the student does not have the peer community to support him or her there is a possibility of developing negative behavior in the school community.^{xvii}

In the end, the family, environment, peer, and school communities all play a part in a child or adolescent's development (physically and mentally). In order for there to be academic success, these communities must be in place or the child or adolescent may suffer in the end.^{xviii} According to Anne J. Egalite, the author of the article titled *How Family Background Influences Student Achievement: Can Schools Narrow the Gap?* Examined three components to see if there were any correlations to a child's learning. The components are family education, family income, and parents' criminal activity. Parents who are educated value education more. They will make sure their child is receiving the best education with the best educators, are more likely to participate in parent-teacher conferences, and volunteer at their child's school. They are also more likely to read to their children than less educated parents.^{xix} Family income may or may not play a part in how a student achieves in school. Parents who have high income can provide their child with extra resources to help them succeed in their learning. They can get tutors, they can select better schools for their child to attend, and get their child to participate in extracurricular activities in school and in the community.^{xx} Parents who have less income are more likely to miss parent-teacher conferences, cannot help with homework or put their child in extracurricular activities because they have to work more than one job to pay their bills.^{xxi}

According to Egalite's research on parental incarceration, "The Bureau of Justice Statistics reports that 2.3 percent of U.S. children have a parent in federal or state prison. Black children are 7.5 times more likely and Hispanic children 2.5 times more likely than white children to have an incarcerated parent. Incarceration removes a wage earner from the home, lowering household income" (How Families..., 2016).^{xxii} If a parent is incarcerated, then there is a chance that the family could become homeless and this will influence the learning for the child. "While correlational research finds that the odds of finishing high school are 50 percent lower for children with an incarcerated parent, parents who are in prison may have less education, lower income, more limited access to quality schools, and other attributes that adversely affect their children's success in school" (Egalite, 2016).

There is a correlation between student's school environment and their learning. According to the article "Does Teaching Diversity Matter in Student Learning" by Claire Cain Miller, research shows that one of the factors that contribute to the achievement gap in education is the race of the teacher. Students who have a teacher of the same race perform better than students whose teacher is not their race.^{xxiv} Research also shows that 77% of the teaching population identifies as female and 80% are white. This is good for female-identified students because they can relate with female-identified teachers, however, black boys suffer. Having just one black teacher can help students of color stay in school; especially high school and encourage them to go to college.^{xxv}

School environment plays a huge part in how students learn. In order for learning to take place, there are many elements that must be in place such as: having a safe and orderly atmosphere, having a positive relationship with the teachers, students must know the academic expectations for all classes, and there must be a strong leadership and professional development in place for the teachers for the school to function correctly.^{xxvi} When students have these elements in place their knowledge grows more than students who live in poverty areas where these elements are not available. In some research, if students are going to be academically successful then all their needs should be met. This includes feeling apart of the school environment. When students know the teachers and leaders value them as a person, they are more likely to follow the norms and academic procedures that will lead to their academic and mental success. However, if students do not feel they are a high priority then the opposite will occur. In other words, learning will not be a top priority for the students and learning will not occur.

Teaching Strategies:

Students will participate in various activities and use various apps to help them comprehend, analyze, and evaluate any assigned novel or short story.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary is important because it helps students understand and visualize what they are reading. Charlotte Mecklenburg School system provides Interactive workbooks that provide students with vocabulary and activities to help them learn. Students who are learning the English language also has an Interactive workbook that will help them along their language journey reading. Students will also utilize creating their own vocabulary cards using the app Popplet, online resource Quizlet, and Freckle.com, a reading program that differentiates the students reading articles and vocabulary.

Reading

In the 8th grade English Language Arts (ELA) classes, students are exposed to various reading programs that are differentiated to their reading levels. The reading programs are Achieve3000, Commonlit.org, and Freckle.com.

* Achieve3000 uses Informational text that can be tailored to learning standards for the week or month. Students take a pre-test to discover their reading Lexile. Each article that the teacher assigned will be on that student's reading level. Students get to annotate the article, learn new vocabulary, respond to a Thought Question, and take a quiz that is aligned to the learning standards associated with the article. Students and the teacher can evaluate the data collected to see if the student's reading level is increasing or decreasing.

*Commonlit.org is another reading source that also pre-test the students to see their reading levels. It provides various Fiction and Non-fiction text for students to read along with discussion questions and assessments.

*Freckle.com is an online reading program that can be used for direct instruction and independent practice on any reading skills. It helps motivate the students by showing them how they compare to other students in their class. They must score 75% or higher in order to get on the leaderboard.

* Cornell Notes (AVID) - students will use Cornell Notes to help them organize their content learning skills - ex. irony, theme, central idea, objective summary, inferences, perspective, citing textual evidence

*Socratic Seminars - is a formal discussion that is based on the text that allows participants to address open-ended questions asked by the facilitator. Participants get to think critically about a topic, they get to listen to different perspectives; they get to ask questions and respond to the different statements. This activity allows them to work together in order to understand the text better.^{xxix}

*Fish Bowl (AVID strategy) - students seated inside the bowl actively participate in a discussion on an assigned topic. They must use textual evidence to support what they are saying within the discussion. The group of students standing on the outside is actively listening and writing down any statements or questions that caught their attention. Then the facilitator will provide an opportunity for some of the students on the outside to move to the inside of the bowl and the inside students to move to the outside taking on the opposite roles.

*Writing - students will be given writing prompts to express their thoughts about the text. Writing prompts will focus on the learning standards as well as the text. For ex. How does the author use **foreshadowing** to contribute to the story's overall meaning? Explain at least two examples of foreshadowing and how they develop the **theme** of the story.

*1-Pagers (AVID strategy) - This activity allows the students to be creative in showing their understanding of the text. The teacher may make the 1-Pager specific to a learning standard. For example, the focus may be on Irony. Students may have to find examples of Irony from the text and put each one in their 1-Pager making sure to explain the significance of each to the main character.

*Graphic Organizers - will be utilized to help students comprehend the text better.

*Popplet - this app allows students to create Web maps. These maps can be used to follow the events in a story. They can be used to help students learn text or academic vocabulary. For students who may not speak English, pictures can be substituted for words.

*Adobe Spark - This app can be used to create different videos or still art for any text.

See figure 1

Lesson Plans & Activities

Text - *Ghost Boys* by Jewell Parker Rhodes

In this lesson - students will complete various Do Nows & Quick writes to get them interested in the novel.

-Quick write (3-5 mins): There is more crime in African American neighborhoods than in other places. (write responses in notebooks)

Do Now (3-5 mins): What do you know about Chicago? What do you want to learn about Chicago?

Quick write (3-5 mins): The only motive of the police is to protect and serve the public. (write responses in notebooks)

Quick write (3-5 mins): What is the difference between teasing and bullying? How can you tell the difference between them?

Do Now (3-5 mins): Why do you think people have trouble accepting others who are different from them?

Quick write (3-5 mins): Do you think violence is ever necessary? When do you think violence is necessary? Have you experienced or seen violence? Have you challenged or seen a challenge to violence?

Standard Lesson (15 Mins):

Before Reading Activity-(Prediction)

Students will view multiple pictures to figure out what they will be reading for the week. They will write down either four questions or statements about the pictures using question stems:

- I wonder...
- Why...
- How come...
- What, When, Where, Will...
- What if...
- I'm confused...
- I still wonder

*Tea Party/Quotation Mingle Activity

-Students will be given quotes to read

-Students will mingle around the room while music is playing & when the music stops they are to find a partner to read his or her quote too & discuss what it means

-This process will repeat with each student discussing their quote with three different classmates

*This activity will introduce students to the readings for this week.

Start reading the novel *Ghost Boys* by Jewell Parker Rhodes

Informational Piece (connects to novel)

*Teacher and students will work together to analyze and annotate the text.

Informational text piece is titled - "We're sick of it": Student walkout protests gun violence / Opinion-Bullying is Still on the Rise [Newsela.com](https://www.newsela.com)

Activity 2- Teacher will place 8 statements around the room. Students will write down 2 to 4 reactions to each one in their notebooks. Then students will share out and discuss.

Statements - (placed around the room)

- As long as you are innocent, you have nothing to prove to the court system.
- If you are being bullied or victimized, it is okay for you to physically defend yourself.
- Everyone who has a weapon is dangerous.
- The only motive of the police is to protect and serve the public.
- All children are safe as long as they are in school.
- More money buys a better neighborhood.
- Drug dealers frequent poor neighborhoods more than wealthy neighborhoods.
- There is more crime in African American neighborhoods than in other places.

*Reading the novel Ghost Boys by Jewell Parker Rhodes

Guiding questions for Part One: Dead

- What are the narrator's impressions of his own death? Cite textual evidence to support your answer!
- "My arms are outstretched like I was trying to fly like Superman." Why do you think the author used this description to describe the narrator? What textual evidence can you use to support your answer?
- How does the description of the police officer propel the plot? "The policeman closest to me is rubbing his head. In his hand, his gun dangles."
- The Chicago Tribune reports that Jerome Rogers had a gun. Do you think there is more to the story? Explain your answer.

Part 2 - Alive

-Describe Jerome Rogers. How do you think his character traits will affect the plot? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

-Why does Grandma ask Jerome to tell her about “three good things” in his life? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

-Lately, Jerome has been having dreams that are troubling him. “I dream lightning strikes. Or earthquakes. Sometimes it is dark clouds mushrooming in the sky. How does this foreshadow Jerome’s fate?

-What does mama mean when she says, “In this neighborhood, getting a child to adulthood is perilous?” What does this tell you about the neighborhood?

Quizizz for each part of the novel (keeps students engaged)

Possible Exit Tickets - How would you compare your neighborhood to Jerome’s neighborhood? Explain answer

How does the setting influence the characters? **Provide textual evidence.**

How does the setting affect the conflict? **Provide textual evidence.**

How does the conflict affect the interaction of the characters? **Provide textual evidence.**

Do you think our neighborhoods play an important role in our lives? Why or Why Not?

Jerome did not have any friends until Carlos came along. Why do you think he bonded so well with Carlos?

Why do you think grandma decided to stray away from the family rule of staying indoors after school? What does this say about her character?

Day 1 & Day 2 (depending on class time)

Text - “Not Poor, Just Broke” by Richard Gregory

Do Now - Prediction Strategy - Students will be asked to view a collage of pictures that relates to their next assigned reading. They will be required to write down 4 statements about the pictures. Students will use the question stem starters to help them express their thinking when they share out. (see figure 3)

- I wonder...
- Why...
- How come...
- What, When, Where, Will...
- What if...
- I’m confused...
- I still wonder

Tea Party Activity - “Not Poor, Just Broke” by Richard Gregory

***Directions** - To use this strategy, distribute index cards to each student with a phrase from the text written on it. Phrases may be repeated. Ask the students to begin the tea party-- move around the room, listen to other students' phrases, and share their own. Encourage them to have a discussion about what may be happening. Allow students to mingle for 8-10 minutes, or until the discussion dies down. Then, ask students either independently, or in a group, to write "I/We Think" statements. These statements are the students' prediction of what the text will be about.^{xxx}

Possible Statements/Quotes from Text (you may select your own)

“She taught us that man has two ways out in life - laughing or crying.”

“I never learned hate at home, or shame. I had to go to school for that. “

“The idiot's seat, the troublemaker’s seat.”

“I guess she could not see a kid who made noises because he wanted someone to know he was there.”

“Now there was shame everywhere.”

“It lasted for a while, this kind of numbness.”

"Leave him alone, Mister Williams. I'll pay the twenty-six cents."

“You don't have to pay, not now. I just finished paying for it.”

"Thanks, sonny, but it's too late now.”

“It was the only kind he had for his credit-book customers. “

“One night I threw a brick through his window and took it.”

“Then I started to sneak through alleys, to take the long way home so the people going into White's Eat Shop would not see me.”

“I walked out of school that day, and for a long time I did not go back very often.”

“We are collecting this money for you and your kind, Richard Gregory.”

“I loved her for her goodness, her cleanliness, her popularity.”

“The pipes were frozen again, there was no water in the house, but I washed my socks and shirt every night.”

“Home was a place to be only when all other places were closed.^{xxxi} “

Teacher will ask the question - What is the difference between being poor and being broke?

*Have students write down their responses, turn to a neighbor, and discuss.

(Think-Pair-Share)

Possible Answers = A poor person is someone who lives in poverty. These people are working multiple jobs to get by, struggling to put food on the table for their families, and facing financial hardship all day long, every single day.

A broke person often talks about being unable to afford specific things, or not having enough money to do fun stuff once we're done doing the important stuff – like paying our bills or our rent, putting gas in the car, or snagging school supplies. However, there is a way out like waiting to be paid.

The teacher will tell the students that the learning focus is Perspective or Point of View. Students will take Cornell Notes on Perspective/Point of View.

Exit Ticket - What is perspective? Why is it important to understand the characters perspective?

Day 2

Do Now - What is happiness and what is the degree of importance in one's life? Students will write their responses in their notebooks and share out.

Getting to Know the Author Activity - it is important for students to know whom the author is and why he or she decided to write. They must understand that there is always a reason behind anything that occurs. This activity will help students understand Richard Gregory as a person and understand how our lives do have an impact on who we will become in the future.

Each student will be assigned to a group of four. Each group will have a leader, material gather, note taker, and timekeeper. Each group will be assigned a task that requires them to get to know the author. Students will decide how they will present their findings to their classmates. (See figure 1) for more instruction.

Exit Ticket - How does getting to know the author help prepare you for our next story?

Day 3

Do Now - Students will examine quote selected by the teacher. They will write down their responses in their notebooks.

Each group will share out their getting to know the author findings.

Then students will begin reading the text. The teacher will inform students that we will be focusing on the Richard's and his mother's perspective mainly, however, we will be discussing the minor character's perspective as well. As they are reading, they will fill out the graphic organizer "Not Poor, Just Broke" Perspective Chart. (See Figure 2)

We will read for 20 minutes and transition into our next activity - Freckle.com. Students will work on perspective/point of view practice. Students who can work independently will do so. However, students who are struggling will work with the teacher in a group of four. Teacher will guide students in their understanding of the text and questions. Students need to make 75% or higher on assignments.

Exit Ticket - How does the mother's perspective propel the plot?

Day 4

Do Now - In the face of adversity, what causes some individuals to prevail while others fail? Students will write their responses in their notebooks and share out.

Students will dive back into their reading and participate in a Socratic Seminar. Make sure students write down their responses before discussing each question. The discussion questions could be:

1. Why is it important for people and cultures to construct narratives about their experience?
2. How does this relate to Dick Gregory in "Not Poor, Just Broke"?
3. What are the factors that move individuals / communities / nations to great sacrifice and what are the consequences? How does this relate to "Not Poor, Just Broke"?
4. How does perspective shape or alter truth? How does the mother's perspective shape or alter the truth in "Not Poor, Just Broke"?
5. What happens when belief systems of societies and individuals come into conflict? Think about what Mr. Gregory believes will make him better in the eyes of Helen and his classmates.

Journal Writing - What advice would you give young Gregory as he discovers the disrespect his mother is going through just to take care of him and his siblings.

Exit Ticket - How does the setting affect the characters in "Not Poor, Just Broke"? Provide textual evidence to support your thinking.

Day 5

Do Now - How does the setting affect the plot? Provide textual evidence to support your thinking.

Students will finish reading the story (if they have not). Students will participate in a Quizizz for "Not Poor, Just Broke".

Then Participate in a Quizizz on Perspective. Students receive a grade at the end of the activity.

1-pager activity - students will create a 1-pager that will focus on perspective. They will need to select a character and write down at least four examples showing his or her perspective. Then the students will explain why he or she selected those text examples. There must be a main illustration that supports the perspectives.

Exit Ticket - Which events do you think moves the plot forward? Why?

Text - *All American Boys* by Jason Reynolds

For this novel, students will complete a Hyperdocs. The Hyperdoc includes exploring the author, reading the reviews of the novel, and exploring all the awards for the novel. The Hyperdoc also has the Do Nows, Quick writes, the novel's chapter questions, and project embedded in it. Students will engage in discussions about police brutality and how they can change it in their neighborhood and city. They will also discuss the rules that black males have to follow when being pulled over or just stopped by the police while walking for example. This lesson gets students thinking about how they can make a change for themselves and their society.

Figure 1

Handout for Day 1

Getting to Know the Author

Directions: Each group has been assigned a specific topic. Now, you must research your topic using the Internet. You may use any of several search engines to do so: Google, Yahoo, Ask Jeeves, and Bing etc. Use the questions as your guidelines, but try to go beyond them and find as much information as possible. Record all information as well as the website where you found it. You may create a PowerPoint, Prezi, or a poster. It is up to you!

Group 1: Biography- Where and when was Richard born? Who are his parents and/or siblings? Where did he grow up? Go to school? Etc.

Group 2: Writing Career - When did Gregory start writing? Did he have formal training, and if so, where? What else has Gregory written? What other genres of writing is he known for? Etc.

Group 3: Influences - Who or what has influenced Gregory? Why did he start writing? Does his culture influence his writing? Are there recurring themes or ideas in his work? Etc.

Group 4: Reviews and Critiques - What do others say about Gregory's work? Are there positive reviews/negative critiques? What do others say about his style of writing? Etc.

Group 5: Other Jobs and Interests- What else has Gregory done? Where has he worked? What are his interests/passions? Etc.

Figure 2 - "Not Poor, Just Broke" Perspective Chart

Characters	Perspective	Textual evidence
Mother		
Richard Gregory		
Doctor		
Teacher		
Helen		

Figure 6

https://www.alvordschools.org/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=18523&dataid=30429&FileName=One_Pager_Overview.pdf

Student Outcome – students will create a book that will have various pictures of their neighborhood, their family, and school communities. They will write about how they see their communities and how it is or is not affecting their learning. Then they will come up with ways to make each community better for themselves and their family. Each student’s information will be collected and bounded into a book. Students will come up with the title since it is about them and their communities.

**Appendix I:
Implementing Teaching Standards for North Carolina Standard Course of Study**

Students will focus on these English Language Arts Standards for 8th grade:

Reading Literature

RL 8.1 Cite textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RL 8.2 Determine a theme of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.

RL 8.3 Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.

RL 8.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

RL 8.6 Analyze how differences in the perspectives of the characters and the audience or reader create such effects as suspense or humor.

Appendix II: Teacher Resources

www.GoogleClassroom.com

Website requires an account (free). This website allows the teacher to add class assignments, communicate with parents and students.

<https://quizizz.com>

Website requires an account (free). This website is an engaging way to see if students are learning or understanding the learning skills of the lesson. Students get to compete to be in the top five winner slots.

<https://hyperdocs.co/templates>

This website is partially free. This is a great way to make lessons more engaging for students. It puts more responsibility on the student than the teacher.

<https://www.achieve3000.com/>

This website requires purchase. The school district purchased this reading online program to enhance the students' reading skills. Students may select their own articles to read or the teacher may assigned articles based on learning standards.

www.freckle.com

This website is partially (free). This is a reading resource that is used to enhance the student's reading skills. Students may select their own articles to read or the teacher may assigned articles based on learning standards.

www.quizlet.com

This website requires an account (free). This website is an engaging way to get students to work in groups and to see if they are learning or understanding the content skills of the lesson.

Appendix III – Lesson Materials

1. Ipad or chrome notebook
2. Access to Google Classroom
3. Access to Google Drive
4. Access to Google Slides
5. Access to Google Classroom
6. Literature Interactive Workbook
7. Composition Notebook – Quick Writes
8. 1Subject Notebook – Cornell Notes
9. Access to Novels and Short Stories
10. Access to Masteryconnect.com for final assessment

Annotated Bibliography

Articles

Bowen, G. L., Rose, R. A., Powers, J. D., & Glennie, E. J. (2008). The Joint Effects of Neighborhoods, Schools, Peers, and Families on Changes in the School Success of Middle School Students*. *Family Relations*, 57(4), 504–516. doi: 10.1111/j.1741-3729.2008.00518.x

This article discusses how neighborhoods, schools, peers, and family must work together in order for middle school students to succeed. When everyone have the same goal then it is to move students into the right path in education and life.

Bowen, N. K., & Bowen, G. L. (1999). Effects of Crime and Violence in Neighborhoods and Schools on the School Behavior and Performance of Adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 14(3), 319–342. doi: 10.1177/0743558499143003

This article deals with how crime and violence in neighborhoods affect students behavior and performance in school.

Gorski, J. D., & Pilotto, L. (1993). Interpersonal violence among youth: A challenge for school personnel. *Educational Psychology Review*, 5(1), 35–61. doi: 10.1007/bf01332399

This article provides information on how violence in the home or neighborhood cause challenges for school members. It also provides ways for school personal to handle these issues when they surface.

How Family Background Influences Student Achievement. (2019, June 4). Retrieved from <https://www.educationnext.org/how-family-background-influences-student-achievement/>.

This article breaks down how the family background affect student learning. It examines the education of the parent, if the parents have criminal records, and if the parents value education.

Lacour, Misty & Tissington, Laura. (2011). The effects of poverty on academic achievement. *Educational Research and Reviews*.

In this article, researchers examine the relationship between poverty and its effect on learning.

Learning-Liftoff-Staff. (2018, April 9). How a School's Learning Environment Affects Student Achievement. Retrieved from <https://www.learningliftoff.com/how-a-schools-learning-environment-affects-student-achievement/>.

This article provides the reader with information on how the school's environment can lead to success or failure for students.

McCoy, D.C., Roy, A.L., & Sirkman, G.M. (2013). Neighborhood Crime and School Climate as Predictors of Elementary School Academic Quality: A Cross-Lagged Panel

Analysis. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 52, 128-140.

In this article, depending what type of neighborhood a child lives in will determine if the child will succeed in school. However, as the child gets older sometimes living in a crime infested neighborhood does not affect academic learning. The child is old enough to know that he or she can make decisions that will either lead him or her on the right or wrong path in life.

Miller, C. C. (2018, September 10). Does Teacher Diversity Matter in Student Learning? Retrieved October 2019, from <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/10/upshot/teacher-diversity-effect-students-learning.html>.

This article discusses how teacher diversity affects a student's learning. It provides a detailed explanation to why principals should always examine their cliental before hiring anybody.

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ii

https://books.google.com/books/about/Ghost_Boys.html?id=2OkvDwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=kp_read_button&ppis=c#v=onepage&q&f=false

iii

https://books.google.com/books/about/All_American_Boys.html?id=FqzBCQAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=kp_read_button&ppis=c#v=onepage&q&f=false

iv <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/33294200-the-poet-x>

v <https://www.pluggedin.com/book-reviews/poet-x/>

vi <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/29010395-i-am-not-your-perfect-mexican-daughter>

vii <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/29010395-i-am-not-your-perfect-mexican-daughter>

viii <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/24974996-dear-martin>

ix **Neighborhood Crime and School Climate as Predictors of Elementary School Academic...** by McCoy, Dana Charles; Roy, Amanda L.; Sirkman, Gabriel M. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 09/2013, Volume 52, Issue 1

x The effects of poverty on academic achievement Misty Lacour¹ and Laura D. Tissington²*
https://academicjournals.org/article/article1379765941_Lacour%20and%20Tissington.pdf

xi Ibid

xii Ibid

xiii Ibid

xiv Ibid

xv Self-Determination Theory <http://selfdeterminationtheory.org/>

xvi The joint effects of neighborhoods, schools, peers, and families on changes in the school success of middle school students* *Family Relations*, 57(4), 504-516. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3729.2008.00518.x>

xvii Ibid

xviii Ibid

xix How Family Background Influences Student Achievement: Can schools narrow the gap? (2016)
https://www.educationnext.org/files/ednext_XVI_2_egalite.pdf

xx Ibid

xxi Ibid

xxii Ibid

xxiii Ibid

xxiv Does Teaching Diversity Matter in Student Learning <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/10/upshot/teacher-diversity-effect-students-learning.html>

xxv Ibid

xxvi <https://www.learningliftoff.com/how-a-schools-learning-environment-affects-student-achievement/>

^{xxvii} Ibid

^{xxviii} The Impact of School Climate and School Identification on Academic Achievement:
Multilevel Modeling with Student and Teacher Data

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5723344/>

^{xxix} ReadWriteThink.org <http://www.readwritethink.org/professional-development/strategy-guides/socratic-seminars-30600.html>

^{xxx} Tea Party Activity

<https://www.uticaschools.org/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=273&dataid=294&FileName=Tea%20Party%20or%20Chillin%20with%20Scholars%20Activity%20Protocol-1.pdf>

^{xxxi} “Not Poor, Just Broke” by Richard Gregory <http://mleuthner.pbworks.com/f/not+poor+just+broke+story.pdf>