



**The Backwards Mirror Called Academic Literature:
African American Children Need to
See Their Reflection**

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This curriculum unit is recommended for:
English Language Arts/Reading Grade 8

Keywords: African American, students, literature, reading, diversity

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

Synopsis: African American students within the U.S. public school system have carried the weight of lower achievers for a significant time. The disheartening gaps between high and low test takers has too often left African American students on the lower end of the seesaw that reflects formal intelligence. While an individual's background and level of exposure can have extreme impacts on academic performance, it is no genuine argument that race determines capability. Getting to the core of the real barrier presents factual evidence that reveals truth. A thoughtful educator must ask oneself, "how can I hold twenty children of all different backgrounds to the exact same standard?" This does not mean that as an educator, I should rearrange grade level standards for every individual student. Instead, this means that as a thoughtful educator, I take time to address the diverse needs of my students in order to give them a fair chance at content mastery. It's time to present materials and resources that reflect the students in our classrooms.

I plan to teach this unit during the coming year to 40-60 students in ELA, grade 8.

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The Backwards Mirror Called Academic Literature: African American Children Need to See Their Reflection

by Nichole R. McLeod

Introduction

Research has proven that African American children are rarely represented in literature. Meanwhile, many successful African Americans such as Oprah Winfrey claim that they attribute much of their success to seeing people of their race achieve great accomplishments in literature. This is a wake up call to educators. The curriculum that is introduced in classrooms has to mirror the well-rounded outcome that is being set out to acquire. A distinct close up reveals an in depth look at the needs and lack of African American students when it comes to popular fiction and nonfiction academic literature presented in classrooms.

Demographics

As an eighth-grade English Language Arts teacher at Mountain Island Lake Academy, I interact with a diverse group of students. More than 75% of my students are either black or Hispanic but predominantly African American. The majority of my students come from middle class families and they present the ability to grow and comprehend eighth-grade ELA content. Daily, I introduce various genres, styles, and themes of literature within the classroom. I must consider the needs of every student, their past learning experiences and what will best prepare them to be successful going forward.

Rationale

The goal is to capture the minds of all my students while growing them academically and equipping them to reach their highest potential as readers. Reading comprehension, analytical thinking, and the ability to participate effectively in academic discussions are at the center of the eighth-grade ELA curriculum. That being said, it is only realistic to accomplish these goals by thoughtful strategy and meaningful literature. I have taken a 2019 survey of my eighth grade students' interests and needs. Using that knowledge to find age appropriate texts, allowed me to formulate a plan to target areas to provoke in depth reading and strengthen reading comprehension skills. The goals of this unit plan include the following:

Objectives

- Increase student engagement in ELA through academic conversations.
I will present texts and activities that students find to be most engaging.
- Produce testing data that reflects significant growth in African American students
I will create assessment techniques that challenge students to present in depth knowledge and understanding.
- Lessen the divide between the growth in white students and students of color
I will work to perfect this unit plan until I see the proven results in students' progress that I am seeking to achieve.

“My mother, who had less than two years of formal education, once asked me what I do for a living. I told her I try to incorporate a rich diversity of experiences for kids into educational settings. She said, “Why that’s just common sense! They pay you for that?” Common sense, and still it’s an uncommon practice among many.”

—James P. Comer

Content Research

African American students need to see their reflection in academic literature in order to know that they can achieve what is considered to be the most acceptable “standard” for living in America. With only 14 percent of children’s books reflecting minorities, society can stop calling it a wonder that African American male children consistently perform lower than other students in the public-school system (Hannahehrlich, 2015). Data shows that every year, there is a pattern of lesser than performance from African American students when compared to white children (Bowman, Comer & Johns, 2018). Perhaps that system needs to adapt to its students more so than the students need to adapt to the literature that is being presented to them.

What message is being sent to a student when everything that is said to be right and socially acceptable does not resemble their reflections, culture, or background? Their way of speaking, living, and interacting with others is always opposed to the plots of the story books in their local libraries and school media centers. Students of the public school system are coming from an array of homes each day. Some are leaving their world and entering into one that is foreign, just between home and school. Who is to say that their world isn’t worthy of being modeled in the classroom? As educators, we must consider that many of them cling to their headphones and relish the sound of hip-hop music because it for one, actually does tell “their story?” We must consider that their choices of artistic expression is the profound literature that they are never tested on in school. Once students make it into the classroom, are they grasping the knowledge that is shared, or are they being talked at rather than spoken to? These questions are necessary to consider when educators are so called arming themselves to go into the classroom to teach literacy.

Mathematical equations have rules that don’t change, no matter what part of the world they are being solved in. Science is a conglomerate of laws that are universal. History is already written and meant to be remembered, but reading and writing is language, expression, and a reflection that justifies who we are as individuals. It entails rules that only the creator can write, sometimes making it unfair for writers to choose what is most relevant to the reader and making it totally unfair for anyone other than the reader to determine one’s “correct” perspective.

Standardized testing can be general, yet very biased says public school veteran teacher, Tiffany Washington. Children are products of a plethora of different environments, yet they come together within the public school system for an education that can be very one-sided as it relates to life experiences and affiliations (Washington, 2019). All children need to see themselves in literature. While it is sensible to acknowledge that students can highly benefit from learning about worlds outside of their world, it is essential to do this without discrediting and dehumanizing their truths.

For centuries, the most widely taught fairytales only reflected white characters. From the protagonist, to the hero, and even the villains, people of color were not illustrated. *Cinderella*, *Goldie Locks and the Three Bears*, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, and *Sleeping Beauty* did not reflect an African American child; yet these stories have been taught in public school classrooms to express literary elements and teach the art of writing fairytales for many years. Other popular children's book series like *Curious George*, *The Cat and the Hat*, and *Amelia Bedelia* have always displayed white characters and even animals, but no African Americans. The ultimate significance these are that they are all very classic stories in American children's literature (Hannaehrich, 2015).

Considering these facts, by the time students reach middle grades, this non-diversified view has already been planted into their minds and tainted their self-image and value of academic literature. A recent survey shows that by now, more than fifty percent of African American students at a local public school who function on or above grade level admit that they struggle to focus on academic reading due to disinterest. What if they were interested?

Each year, the public school system sets a standard of general reading standards to be taught in each grade level in order to build reading comprehension. Along with these standards, specific literary texts are recommended in order to practice these standards. The breakdown is that too often the district coordinators do not take time to investigate the demographics of their assigned schools in order to find texts that can be most effective or partially relatable to the population of students at that school (Bowman, Comer & Johns, 2018).

None of this is to argue that only predominantly black schools should be recommended to read black literature. The point is that students need to see more than one culture reflected in academic literature and more often than not, much of that culture should reflect them. In retrospect, an urban raised child who is not presented with the same privileges as a suburban child cannot be expected to take the exact same academic path and meet the exact same level of achievement. There is a great divide to be considered as we discuss race and academic literature (Bowman, Comer & Johns, 2018). Socio-economic status, resources, family dynamics and even history all have to be taken into account.

As stories are read in the classroom, they lead to discussion, then to art and comprehension. These discussions need to be relatable to all students at some point in order for the child to fully engage. As students are assigned to create their own art that reflects the story, their ideas should have some personal influence, and when it comes to comprehension, how can one be tested on knowledge about a tea party, when he/she has never attended one?

As a middle grades language arts educator in the public school system, it is a daily practice to assess the interests and skills of young readers. Reading, being the basics of formal education must be magnetic if readers are going to be inclined to stretch their potential. It is apparent that the creators of the stories recommended by the district, do not fully consider school demographics as they offer the exact same texts to students everywhere. Relatability is essential to effective teaching. As often said by education experts, "teachers must build relationships with their students before they can fully impact them." With that being said, in order to fully grasp the interest and understanding of young readers, relatability absolutely matters.

"I never believed in Santa Claus because I knew no white dude would come into my neighborhood after dark (Dick Gregory)." Whose to count how many public-school children can attest to this reality? Dick Gregory grew up in poverty with a single mother of six children. In his autobiography, *Not Poor, Just Broke*, Gregory tells of his experience in the public-school system and how important it was to him to fit into the reality of his white teacher, whose reality was not a reality to him. At the climax of the story, his teacher shames him for "not having a father." Gregory testifies that he hardly ever attended class after she said this to him in front of all his peers. He goes on to say that the teacher thought he was stupid and could not read.

"The teacher thought I was stupid. Couldn't spell, couldn't read, couldn't do arithmetic. Just stupid. Teachers were never interested in finding out that you couldn't concentrate because you were so hungry, because you hadn't had any breakfast. All you could think about was noontime, would it ever come?"

The teacher thought I was a troublemaker. All she saw from the front of the room was a little black boy who squirmed in his idiot's seat and made noises and poked the kids around him. I guess she couldn't see a kid who made noises because he wanted someone to know he was there." (Dick Gregory).

Gregory is the epitome of many urban youths who walk into a classroom that has no reflection of their personal experiences and is not totally conducive to their need, nor inclusive of their cultures. These students are still expected to fully comprehend the same literature as those who feel most accepted and reflected in their classrooms each day.

When reading stories written by authors with vague experiences, limited acceptance, and more pleasant realities, one can only imagine so much of the necessary imagery that is needed in order to reach students who don't share in that same fortune. Again, this isn't to say that students don't need exposure outside of "their world," but more so to say all learners need exposure outside of their world; therefore, in order for teachers to gain a connection with their students, they must venture into the student's world as well as introduce the student into worlds outside of their own.

Storybooks that reflect the child's neighborhood, family dynamics, values, and beliefs should be used to draw child readers. Thousands of students are bused to schools well outside of their local neighborhoods every day. This is said to sometimes offer students better learning environments and resources. One can assume that after those students return to their own neighborhoods, there is a sense of disconnect between the two environments. This can leave students who live outside their school's community to possibly experience separation anxiety between home and school.

Talk show host, media executive, actress and billionaire philanthropist, Oprah Winfrey said as quoted, "I am where I am because of the bridges that I crossed. Sojourner Truth was a bridge. Harriet Tubman was a bridge. Ida B. Wells was a bridge. Madame C. J. Walker was a bridge. Fannie Lou Hamer was a bridge" (Winfrey, 2018). In 65- years of living, this American model of success attributes her ability to achieve such dynamic goals to women who look like her and share her struggles as an African American woman. In essence, she is proof of the power in exposing students to literature that reflects them.

“African Americans score lower than European Americans on vocabulary, reading, and math tests, as well as on tests that claim to measure scholastic aptitude and intelligence. The gap appears before children enter kindergarten and it persists into adulthood. It has narrowed since 1970, but the typical American black still scores below 75 percent of American whites on almost every standardized test. This statistic does not imply, of course, that all blacks score below all whites. There is a lot of overlap between the two groups. Nonetheless, the test score gap is large enough to have significant social and economic consequences” (Jencks & Phillips, 2016).

Each year, there are more children’s books published about animals than Black people. Black people have historically been, and continue to be, underrepresented, misrepresented, or invisible in children’s literature. Characters of color are not visible enough in youth targeted literature, and when they are even fewer still, are books reflecting positive and empowered depictions of African American characters specifically (). This being the case, how can African American students be expected to move beyond the bottom if the method in which is used to grow them academically is still held only to the standard of those who barely or do not relate to them at all?

Austin Channing Brown is an African American author and one of the most influential voices for racial justice in America today. During her visit as a guest speaker on a panel about racial issues in America at Spark Church in Palo Alto, California, Brown expressed that in her experience; an African American child growing up in a predominantly white neighborhood, attending a predominantly white school, and being exposed to very African American culture, she grew up to be astonished by the truths that she learned about her own race. After leaving a job as a result of racial offense, Brown concludes that in America, much of what is considered appropriate and acceptable is based on white perspective. She argues that this is the false reality that is being taught to children. The literature must reflect the reader to some extent because not every black child is going to have an Austin Channing Brown experience. Many of them will and are growing up in black neighborhoods and acquiring employment in places that are also predominantly black or heavily integrated. These up and coming citizens deserved to be prepared even if they never leave their neighborhoods.

Google, one of the most accessible and popular internet search engines of today, offers several definitions for the noun, culture. Two of those definitions include: the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively and the customs, arts, social institutions, and achievements of a particular nation, people, or other social group. These elements of culture explain the importance of relatability to advancement. If students are not getting educational relatability through literature in their classrooms, then it is justifiable to say that the public school system is cheating young learners of allowance to meet their full potential and impeding on their growth. It is comparable to testing someone in a foreign language with the expectancy of them to perform as well as native speakers. It isn’t fair. Are African American students being educated and tested on black vernacular; the language that many of them speak daily? Are African American students being taught that writing the way that they speak is wrong? Although there is an acceptable standard for writing in American academic literature, students should not automatically be required to adapt, then graded by the exact same criteria as students who are more familiar with the language and lifestyle that they are reading about.

“Despite the overall economic gains in the 1990s, many young black men continue to have the poorest life chances of anyone in our society. Joblessness and low earnings among these less-educated young adults are contributing to reductions in marriage, increases in nonmarital childbearing, and a host of other social problems” (Mincy, 2006).

There is a solution to this downward spiral for African American students. Before society allows the trend to continue, educators all over the country must understand that building relationships with students requires educators to be educated, and if we are teachable, we can better reach the seemingly unreachable. If we investigate the demographic population of our students, and then consider that demographic population, we can put true thought into what types of academic conversations we want to have in our classrooms; this being provoked by the literature that we select. All this creates the recipe for learning that we as educators serve to our students. Rhetorically speaking, how can a suburban, white female teacher truly reach the mind of a poor, urban boy like Dick Gregory, if she has no real knowledge about his world? Should she expect him to grasp stories by Shakespeare and Roald Dahl, without first showing him that his own experience is worth putting onto her bookshelf?

According to Kelly Hinchcliffe, WRAL education reporter, and Lena Tillett, WRAL anchor/reporter, researchers say that a certain kind of connection between educators and students is crucial, especially between students and teachers of color, and can help minority students perform better in reading and math, score higher on standardized tests and be more likely to attend college. Known as the “role-model effect,” researchers say students of color benefit both academically and emotionally from seeing teachers who look like them.

It goes beyond knowledge and literary understanding, this level of compromise will promote trust; breaking down the barriers of “you can’t teach me anything because you don’t know anything about my life”, and “they can’t learn because they have limited exposure.” The destruction of these walls will allow a free flow of understanding, causing the teacher and the student to reciprocate knowledge and share roles with one another. If and when it is fully considered that African American students need to see more of themselves reflected in academic literature, society will change for the better. A revolution of learners will rise, and data trends will shift.

Appendix 1: Implementing Teaching Standards

Each of the following standards are practiced throughout the three lesson plans that will be presented. Each I Can statement and comprehension is a target goal by the end of each lesson plan.

RI 8.6 Content Standard: Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.

“I Can Statements”:

- determine authors’ points of view and purposes in texts.
- explain how authors convey their own purpose in texts and those of others.
- analyze how authors distinguish their positions from those of others.
- determine how authors acknowledge and respond to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.

Essential Questions:

- What is the subject of this text?
- What is the author’s point of view/perspective regarding this text?
- How does the author convey their own purpose in this text?
- How does the author convey the perspective of others in this text?
- How does the author distinguish their positions from those of others?
- How does the author acknowledge and respond to conflicting evidence/viewpoints?

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

“I Can Statements”:

- Explain how the perspectives of the characters contrast that of the audience or reader
- Explain how the contrast in perspectives between characters and audiences or readers create suspense or humor

Essential Questions:

- How does the perspective/point of view of this text impact the meaning of the text?
- How do the different perspectives of the characters contrast the perspective of the reader or audience?
- How does the contrast in perspectives between characters impact the way the author creates suspense/humor in the text?
- What techniques does the author use to create effects such as suspense, mystery, or humor?

RI 8.7 Content Standard: Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums to present a particular topic or idea.

“I Can Statements”:

- compare and contrast what I read to what I hear or view.
- analyze each medium’s portrayal of a subject.
- evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums to present topics or ideas.

Essential Questions:

- What are the available media formats to choose from for this task?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of each medium for this particular task?
- Which medium is most effective at portraying the topic/subject?
- What makes this medium most or least effective?

RL8.4 Content Standard:

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.

“I Can Statements”

- determine the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases as they are used in texts
- use connotation and denotation of words to interpret meaning
- analyze the impact of word choice, analogies, and allusions on meaning and tone

Essential Questions:

- How do I use context to understand meaning of words or phrases in a text?
- How do I use general context to determine what analogies mean?
- How do I use the context and meaning to determine the impact of an analogy?
- How do I use general context to determine the usage of an allusion in a text?
- How do I use context and meaning to determine the impact of an allusion?
- How does word choice impact meaning?
- How does word choice impact tone?
- Which words have different figurative or connotative meanings?

I. Unit Vocabulary

Diversity	Paradigm
Perspective	Socio-economic Status
Culture	Gentrification
Stereotypes	Generational Wealth
Dialogue	Contrast
Paradigm	Dialect
Evaluate	Relatability
Urban	Misinterpretation
Investigate	Misconception
Suburban	Convey
Analyze	Ebonics
Norms	Desensitize
Consider	

- Students will be charged with learning the connotative and denotative meaning of each unit term. Learning activities will include creating double-sided index cards. Side-A representing connotation and side-B representing denotation. Students will have to find their connotative meaning in a standard dictionary in order to provide a general definition of each term's meaning. The connotative meaning will be influenced by peer discussion, which will take place during class.
- Strong academic dialogue will require students to use the unit terms as they ask and answer questions during class time. Students will also be required to use the unit terms in written responses.

Lesson Plan 1

I. Text to Investigate

The Hate You Give
“I Too, Sing America”
Darius and Twig

Films

The Hate You Give

II. Instructional Implementation – (about 4-10 pages)

- a. Teaching Strategies
 - Students will investigate the text through reading and discussion, then annotate the most significant events of each chapter.
 - During the textual investigation, students will also highlight unfamiliar words and phrases
- b. Classroom Lessons/Activities - 3 or more original lesson plans

Lesson Title: What Does Literature Say About You?

Standards: RL8.4 RI8.5 RL8.6

Warm-up

- Reflect on your life and all of your experience. Think about the good, the bad, the beautiful, and the ugly. Students have to create a 10-15 line poem that reflects their own thoughts. It is optional for the poem to rhyme but not required. Students may use any words that best express their feelings. Sharing is encouraged while peers will be required to listen and critique their classmates. Listeners must record their thoughts on paper.

Purpose: This will provoke discussion that opens students’ eyes to see the diversity between themselves and others as well as practice writing in an expressive way by using descriptive words to communicate not necessarily their exact experience but more so how those experiences have impacted them as individuals.

Opening Discussion

- We frequently express our opinions, ideas, and feelings through verbal expression. Consider that written expression only makes verbal messages into visual messages; therefore, lets brainstorm and list all the ways an individual can express feelings and identity through literature.

Examples: poems, narratives, songs, novels etc.

Purpose: I’ve assured that students better understand the power of communicating and learning through any kind of text; therefore, they don’t feel completely intimidated when their comprehension is tested through any form of a text.

Text A.

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/28112/we-real-cool>

“We Real Cool” by Gwendolyn Brooks

- I will implement the teaching of this poem by providing each child a copy of this poem. The students will first be asked to read the poem independently. After the first read, briefly summarize the poem in your own words.
- Secondly, students will be instructed to read the poem with a classmate. Together, the students and their partner will compare their summaries and then re-read the poem to form a final conclusion together.

Purpose: This exercise allows students to gain an understanding of a text that may be considered a bit complex due to the language and style but is highly age appropriate in theme.

Visual

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0USvSvhue70>

Teacher Led Analysis

- Teacher will lead students in a line by line analysis. Annotations will be recorded on the board, allowing students to see a model for each line’s description.

Test Students Knowledge of the Concept

- Students will now respond to the following prompt in 2-3 well written paragraphs. Having investigated “We Real Cool,” and learning what prompted this poem, how has Brooks expressed the boy’s experience? What is the theme of the poem and specifically, what lines and words in the poem support the theme? Explain the text structure at the very end of the poem. Be sure to provide explicit examples from the text to support your conclusions.

Purpose: Students are able to prove that they can draw conclusions based on textual evidence.

Text B.

Darius and Twig by Walter Dean Myers

As students have begun reading *Darius and Twig* by Walter Dean Myers, they will be challenged to take an in depth look at characters, the meaning of words and phrases, and identifying theme.

- Students will be instructed to analyze the following quote from Darius on page 12. "Twig rarely reads but he told me that when the demons bother him, he puts them on the track. He watches them run ahead of him and then slowly and surely runs them down, catches up with them, and then speeds past, imagining how they feel knowing that they are losers."
- 1. Explain in your own words why this quote is metaphoric.
2. What metaphoric meaning does Darius express by "the demons?"

Purpose: This assignment will require students to take an in depth look at word choice to express an understanding of metaphors and messages that are not delivered explicitly.

Compare and Contrast Texts

Students will collaborate with group members to answer the following questions about the two texts, the novel *Darius & Twig* and the poem “We Real Cool.”

Text Analysis Questions

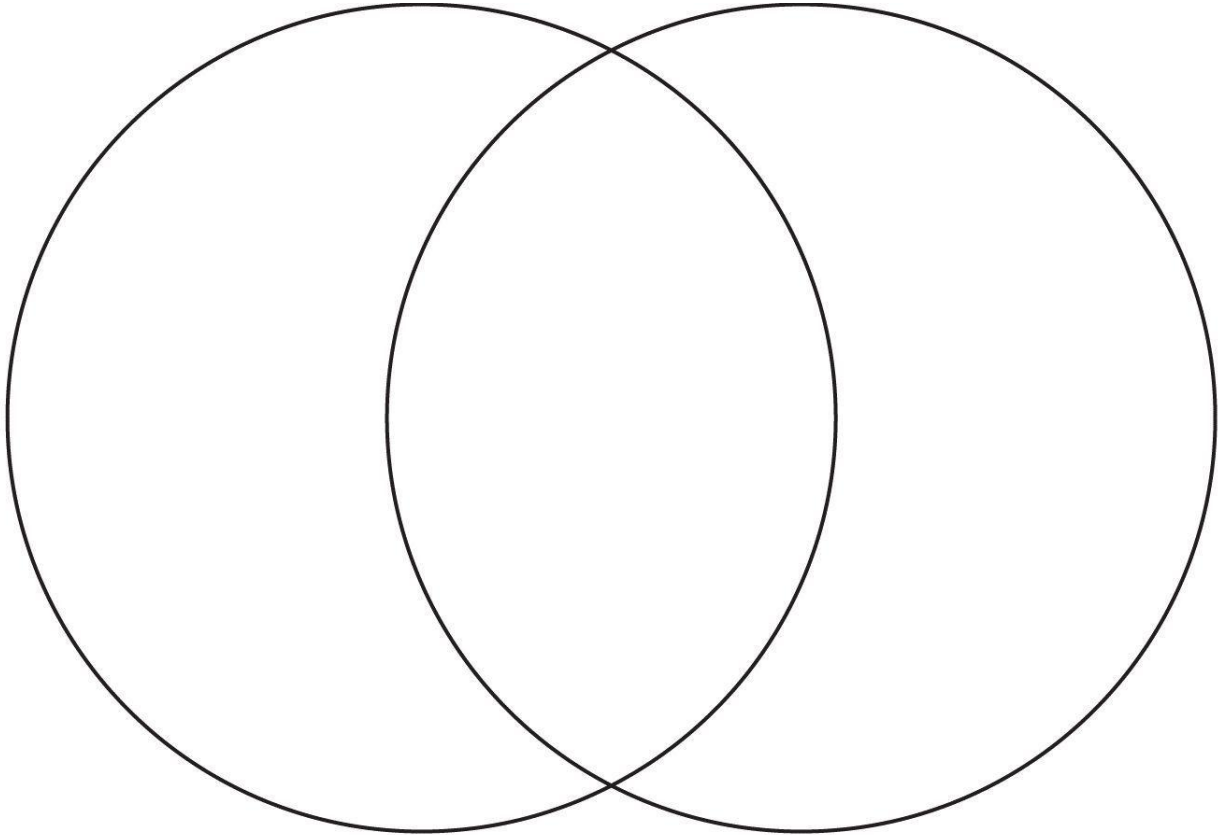
1. Explain how the perspectives of each speaker may contrast that of the audience or reader.
2. Explain how the contrast in perspectives between speakers and audiences or readers create feelings of bias or conflict.
3. How does the perspective/point of view of each speaker impact the meaning of the text?
4. How could the different perspectives of the speakers contrast the perspective of an indifferent reader or audience?
5. How could the perspectives of the speakers concur with the perspective of a reader or audience who shares similar views?
6. How does the commonality in perspectives between speakers impact the way the texts create a specific mood in readers?
7. What techniques do the speakers use to create effects such as curiosity, interest, or humor?

Visuals

- Students will view the following video link to see an example of how a writer can express his/her thoughts and or identity through poetry or song lyrics.
 - a. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t2u1NqsEmwE>
 - b. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RvVfgvHucRY>

- **Investigate and Compare**

Students will investigate Brooks and Myers, then create a Venn-diagram. The diagram must be filled with information that expresses facts about both authors.



- Purpose: This will allow students to demonstrate their ability to analyze two different authors while gaining an understanding of similar perspectives with different deliveries.

Exit Ticket

- Choose one out of the two texts that you find most intriguing.
- Using your annotations, create a five-question quiz about the text. Use at least one of the unit vocabulary terms in each question.
- Students will have to find a student in the class who did not choose the same text. The two students must answer one another's questions on paper. The students will review their partners answers and provide written feedback.

Homework (due next day)

- Create a song, poem, phrase, or quote that represents your identity.
- Answer the following questions after you have written your literary piece.
- Questions
 1. Explain one way that this text represents you. Provide an example from your text to support your explanation.
 2. What one word best describes the tone of your text. Specify a word from your text that best influences that tone.
 3. Which text do you find most relatable between the two that we explored in class today.

Lesson Plan 2

Standards: RI 8.6 Content Standard: Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.

RI 8.7 Content Standard: Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums to present a particular topic or idea.

Warm-up

Think about a time that you got into an argument. Strongly consider the opposing argument and put yourself into the shoes of the other person. Create a T-chart on paper. Write down bullet points under each column. List the different points of view that caused each of you to feel justified. As much as you may disagree, be very honest with yourself about you and your opponent's perspectives.

Follow-up Activity

Students will exchange their warm-ups with another student. That student must review their partners chart and serve as a neutral party. The neutral party must decide which of the two are justified in his/her perspective and why. Each student must share their thoughts with each other and consider the others decision.

Purpose: Students understand the meaning of opposing perspectives and points of view.

Text

"I, Too" by Langston Hughes

- I will implement the teaching of this poem by providing each child a copy of this poem. The students will first be asked to read the poem independently. After the first read, briefly summarize the poem in your own words.
- Secondly, students will be instructed to read the poem with a classmate. Together, the students and their partner will compare their summaries and then re-read the poem to form a final conclusion together.

Purpose: This exercise allows students to gain an understanding of a text that may be challenging but presents a powerful theme.

Visual

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6CmKf9nZ_4I

During the viewing of the visual, students must listen for tone, word choice and physical expressions in order to better analyze the speaker's personal perspective on the topic at hand. Students and teacher will work collectively to analyze "I, Too."

Teacher Led Analysis

- Teacher will lead students in a line by line analysis. Annotations will be recorded on the board, allowing students to see a model for each line's description.

Example of Modeling (Teacher writes in red)

I, Too

	Annotations
I, too, sing America.	The author begins with claiming his American identity.
I am the darker brother.	Darker represents his blackness, brother represents his Americanism
They send me to eat in the kitchen	Inferiority
When company comes,	America shames his race
But I laugh,	Resilience
And eat well,	Victory over intended bitterness
And grow strong.	Resilience
Tomorrow,	Future revolution
I'll be at the table	The up rise of African Americans will come
When company comes.	
Nobody'll dare	Racism will not be as it is now in years to come
Say to me,	
"Eat in the kitchen,"	African Americans will one day rise above the unjust treatment
Then.	
Besides,	
They'll see how beautiful I am	The worth of African Americans will one day be valued
And be ashamed—	America will be sorry for their harsh treatment of African Americans
I, too, am America.	

Reading Comprehension Questions:

- What is the theme of this text?
- What is the author's point of view/perspective regarding the topic of this text?
- How does the Hughes convey his own purpose in this text?
- How does Hughes convey the perspective of others in this text?
- How does the Hughes distinguish his position from those of others?
- How does Denzel Washington acknowledge and respond to conflicting evidence/viewpoints in the video?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of each medium for this particular message?
- Which medium is most effective at portraying the topic/subject?
- What makes this medium most or least effective? Use examples to support your answer.

Purpose: I will implement a test of knowledge by having students to answer these questions providing textual evidence to support their answers. I will evaluate their responses to ensure understanding.

Implementation of Group Learning Activity: Rotate and Collaborate

- Desks will be grouped together, forming tables. Each table will be centered with one of the following words.

Darker

Inferior

America

Shame

Beautiful

Perspective

Students must travel from table to table in two-minute intervals. At each table, students will be presented with one of the above words. They'll be prompted to discuss any connotation that comes to mind and jot down those connotations under each term.

- Students will be asked to research and find any piece of literature where the speaker shares a similar message or point of view as Hughes: newspaper/magazine article, poem, song, short story, narrative, essay, etc.
- Students will research and dissect the author and analyze how his/her background relates to the textual message. Explain how the literature reflects the speaker's culture, experiences, and background.
- Students must create another Venn-diagram to compare Hughes to their own selected author.

Critical Analysis

- Students will write a two-page essay comparing Hughes and the selected author's message. The following will need to be addressed in the essay:
 - a. What is the theme of each text?
 - b. Explain how each author's background may have provoked them to write the text at hand.
 - c. Explain one difference and one similarity you find between each author's delivery.
 - d. Use specific lines from each texts to explain the most in depth meaning of the theme.

Implementation of Learning through *The Hate You Give*

Learning Activity 1

Before delving into the text, each student will receive his/her own copy of the text.

1. Students will be commissioned to survey ten students around their school.
2. Create the survey to gather a general knowledge of the background of the students at your school; parents' marital status, parents' employment, siblings etc.
3. Create a chart to display each of the ten students future career interest.

Learning Activity 2

Students will analyze the argument between Starr and Hailey. Explain what factors impact each individual's point-of-view during the argument.

The front of the classroom will be set up for a formal debate. Some students will take the role of Hailey while others take the role of Starr. Students must debate the subject that is assigned by the teacher based on the character in the novel. Later, students will switch places and take the role of the opposing character.

Purpose: This activity will challenge students to practice understanding different points of view even if they do not agree with the character.

Learning Activity 3

- Pt 1:** Allow your creative juices to begin to flow! Pretend that you are a professional graphic designer and you must create a cover for *The Hate You Give*. You are being paid to come up with a unique and powerful design that is provoked by the theme and plot of the novel. Your book cover must be original and well put together. Think about what would best grab attention and what image would best complement the title as well. Don't be afraid to use color!
- Pt 2:** Rewrite the synopsis of *The Hate You Give*. In the best objective summary possible, tell readers what they can expect from this novel in a way that advertises the story and grasps the attention of your target audience. Use words and phrases that best enable you to achieve this.

Learning Activity 4

Partnered Assessment Creation Project

- You must work with a partner to create an assessment on the novel, *The Hate You Give*. Your assessment must have fifteen multiple-choice questions and three short-response questions, along with an answer key. Your questions and answer choices have to be well written and clearly stated.
- Your questions must require textual evidence to support claims.
- Some of your questions need to require readers to analyze dialogue between characters.
- Some of your questions need to require readers to infer.
- This assignment must be typed and in size twelve, Times New Roman font.
- You are required to use at least one term from the unit vocabulary in each of your questions.

Learning Activity 5

- Students will participate in formal panel discussion led by a Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Dept. Member and various other community leaders. Students will be given the opportunity to ask prepared questions about the text and have their questions answered. This will be an unusual learning opportunity for student but after the text has been taught thoroughly, students will be empowered with confidence as they formulate questions, discuss answers and share their own perspectives with community leaders. Students will also be prepared to answer questions as well.

References

- Angelou, M. (1994). "Caged Bird" by Maya Angelou. Retrieved October 1, 2019, from <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/48989/caged-bird>.
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- Hannaehrlich. (2015, March 5). The Diversity Gap in Children's Publishing, 2015. Retrieved October 2019, from <https://blog.leeandlow.com/2015/03/05/the-diversity-gap-in-childrens-publishing-2015/>.
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- Rado, D. (2018, September 9). Different standards for different students. Retrieved November 2019, from <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-2014-05-11-ct-school-ratings-overhaul-met-20140511-story.html>.

Annotated Bibliography

Angelou, M. (1994). "Caged Bird" by Maya Angelou. Retrieved October 1, 2019, from <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/48989/caged-bird>.

This poem was used as an example of a literary text that I would use in my unit to implement the strategies and resources that I would use to present culturally reflective literature to my students.

Thomas, A. (2018). *The Hate U Give*. New York, NY: Balzer Bray, an imprint of Harper Collins Publishers.

This novel was used as an example of a literary text that I would use in my unit to implement the strategies and resources that I would use to present culturally reflective literature to my students. The novel reveals racial struggles, barriers, and divides that African American teens are faced with in daily society.

Hannaehrlich. (2015, March 5). The Diversity Gap in Children's Publishing, 2015. Retrieved October 2019, from <https://blog.leeandlow.com/2015/03/05/the-diversity-gap-in-childrens-publishing-2015/>.

This particular article reveals the lack of racial diversity in children's literature and how that lack can impact the reading development and growth of young readers; specifically how they view reading as a result of minimal representation.

(2018, May). Retrieved September 2019, from

<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/may2018/achievement-gap>.

This particular article highlights diversity issues in children's academics. It heightens awareness in the lesser mentioned areas of youth development due to poor diversity in texts.

Rado, D. (2018, September 9). Different standards for different students. Retrieved November 2019, from <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-2014-05-11-ct-school-ratings-overhaul-met-20140511-story.html>.

This article specifically brings awareness to the diverse needs of students and how public schools can often easily overlook those needs. The article supports the limited use of resources and reaching that could be done to eliminate the limited diversity to student needs.

Mincy, R. B. (2006). *Black males left behind*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute Press.

This book offers an in depth look at the specific issues that African American males face as it relates to academic literature. It explains where and how the education system has failed them and the effects of it all. Ultimately, this source allows readers to see correlation between the issues and all African American students.