Urban Mirrors, City Windows: Exploring Identity and Standards through Culturally Responsive Literature and Instruction

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This curriculum unit is recommended for:
(English Language Arts /Middle Grades 6-9)

Keywords: racially, culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse (RCELD) students, cultural representation, power standards, culturally responsive teaching/CRT, intersectionality

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

Synopsis: Culture is often difficult to define, but it influences everything from who you are as an individual to how you relate to other people at home and around the world. Just what is culture, and how does it contribute to the way you see the world, how does it impact how the world views you? In this unit, students will explore these questions by investigating factors that affect personal and cultural identities, including race, poverty, love, family, community, and socioeconomic factors. This curriculum's aim is to provide students with a broad and diverse picture of who writes, specifically multicultural short stories, and what they write about. By engaging with and constructing different types of print and nonprint texts, students will discover how writers and speakers use voice to express cultural ideas and personal identities. My hope is that this unit will expose students to many ways of seeing themselves, challenge the way they perceive others and reward them with reading experiences that help students understand and check both their own implicit and explicit cultural biases.

I plan to teach this unit during the coming year to (121) students in (7th grade English Language Arts or curriculum areas/grade levels).

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Introduction

 "Some texts are mirrors, others are windows…", says Rudine Sims Bishop who wisely wrote in her literary essay advocating for diverse literature, ineptly titled "Windows, Mirrors, and Sliding Doors." Bishop argues that:

"Books are sometimes windows, offering views of worlds that may be real or imagined, familiar or strange. These windows are also sliding glass doors, and readers have only to walk through in imagination to become part of whatever world has been created and recreated by the author. When lighting conditions are just right, however, a window can also be a mirror. Literature transforms human experience and reflects it back to us, and in that reflection, we can see our own lives and experiences as part of the larger human experience. Reading, then, becomes a means of self-affirmation, and readers often seek their mirrors in books." (9)

Viewing literature through a metaphorical lens of windows and mirrors aids us, (educators specifically) in understanding that, in addition to texts being stories to be enjoyed, they are powerful tools of social justice. As students, cognitive abilities develop and become more analytical in middle grades and as we are dedicating ample amounts of time to helping students become skilled readers, it is imperative that we remember that students are discerning their place in school and in the world, and the texts we provide access to inform this discovery. With access to mirror texts, students are able to see that their narrative matters, and with access to window texts, students are able to not just understand but also appreciate the narratives of others.

 The power of literacy to transform lives does not exist in skill and strategy instruction alone; it also resides within the story's students read. What message are we conveying to students when they do not see themselves reflected in the texts we use in our classrooms? What message do we send to students from non-marginalized groups when we only use texts that reflect their culture and experiences? "The diversity provided through "window and mirror" texts extend beyond ethnicity" (Woodley, et al. 2017). Culturally responsive reading instruction includes how a piece of literature addresses family structures, dialects; cultural traditions and values. Presenting diverse, empowering texts is especially important for groups that are underrepresented from the instructional "coming of age" literary canon, including Native American, African American, Latin American and Asian American representation.

 As I write this I am continuously bombarded with Bishop's words from the essay "when children cannot find themselves reflected in the books they read, or when the images they see are distorted, negative, or laughable, they learn a powerful lesson about how they are devalued in the society of which they are a part." (Woodley, et al. 2017) Thus, it is my desire with this curriculum to not only provide students access to mirror texts but to also invite students to experience the power of a window text, where readers may meet people who are not like themselves but who offer alternative worldviews. It is my sincere hope that the selection of these short stories will not only "acknowledges the legitimacy of the cultural heritage of different ethnic groups, both as legacies that affect students' dispositions attitudes, and approaches to learning", but also "build bridges of meaningfulness between home and school experiences as well as between academic abstractions and lived socio-cultural realities" that are worthy content to be taught in the formal curriculum and can be used as tools to dismantle any explicit or implicit bias students may have. (Griner and Stewart 2012)

Demographics [1]
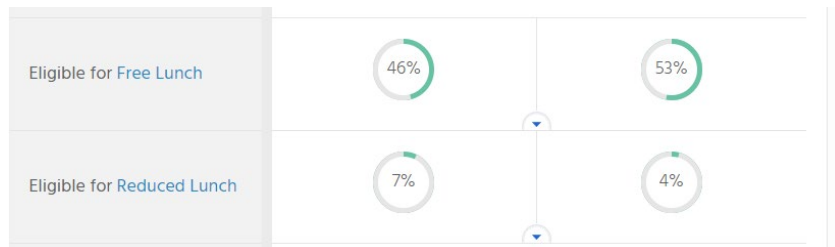
Ridge Road Middle School Enrollment by Race-
The student body of Ridge Road Middle School in Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina is made up of 6 ethnicities. The largest ethnic group of the 1,245 students at Ridge Road Middle School is Black (65%). This is followed by Hispanic (14%), White (13 %), Asian (4%), Mixed Students of two or more ethnicities (3%) and America Indian (1%) Pacific Islander (1%).
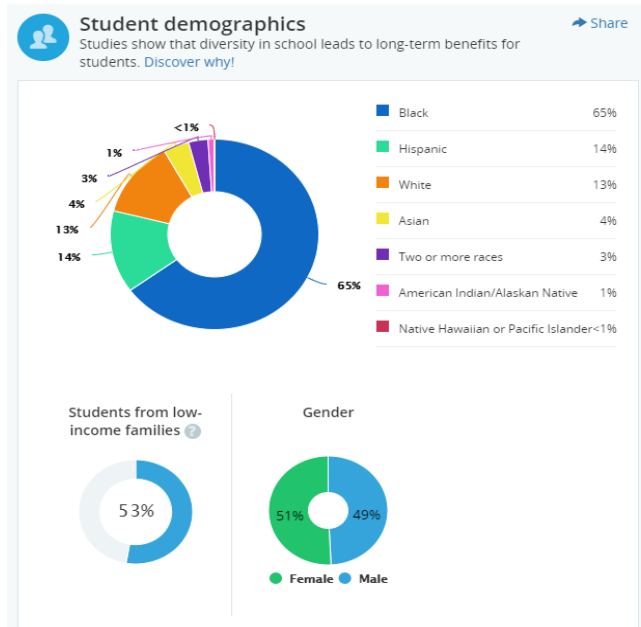

Ridge Road Middle School Enrollment by Income

46% of students who attend Ridge Road Middle School qualify for free or reduced lunch, which is less than the state average of 53%.

Eligible for Free Lunch	46%	53%
Eligible for Reduced Lunch	7%	4%

Ridge Road Middle School Enrollment by ELA test proficiency

Ridge Road is below the state average for test proficiency for language arts

Reading / Language Arts Test Scores (% Proficient)	43%	46%
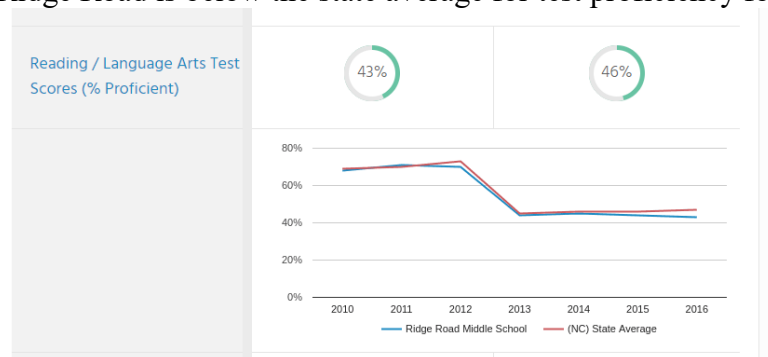


[Demographic information*](#)

Definitions

- When this curriculum references RCLED students this terminology is referred to the extensive studies done by Dr. Angela Christine Griner and Martha Lue Stewart and their 2012 article, "Addressing the Achievement Gap and Disproportionality Through the Use of Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices," the article states that this acronym stands for "racially, culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse (RCELD)students and is used to refer also to historically underserved groups (Artiles, Kozleski, Trent, Osher, & Ortiz, 2010). Artiles et al. (2010) use this term to describe RCELD students, but also includes students who come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, who have "experienced sustained school failure over time" (p. 280).
- Cultural Representation or the lack thereof, represents the lack of diversity among America's teaching population; "One of every three students enrolled in either elementary or secondary school is of racial or ethnic minority backgrounds, while nearly 87% of the teachers are White and female (Cross, 2003; Sleeter, 2001a; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). The lack of diversity impedes teacher-student connections is often reflected in the reading materials students are exposed to. (Griner and Stewart 2012)

- This curriculum borrows the definition for culturally responsive teaching from ____ which defines CRT as "using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them." (Griner and Stewart 2012)
- This curriculum refers to the term 'power standards', "power standards refer to a subset of learning standards that educators have determined to be the highest priority or most important for students to learn." In the case of Charlotte Mecklenburg School, the power standard is the first four in both the informational and literature capacity: RL/RI 1-4. (The Great Schools Partnerships 2013)
- Intersectionality is Intersectionality refers to the social, economic and political ways in which identity-based systems of oppression and privilege connect, overlap and influence one another. (Bell 2016)

Rationale[2]

There have been many attempts to articulate an accurate descriptive term for the severe academic gap between black and white counterparts in education, specifically literacy and while the term is not really important, it is important for educators to understand the underlying reasons why there is such a gap and more importantly how to address it. According to a recent study, "Breaking the Link," a 70-page tally of school demographics, teacher qualifications, test results, advanced classes and attendance data specifically for CMS, all grade spans, low-poverty schools were composed of mostly white students, whereas in high-poverty schools, the majority of students were black and Hispanic. Of these schools, ones considered high poverty have the lowest Reading EOG rates. It also states that "In reading and math in grades 6-8, the gap in College and Career Readiness between low- and high-poverty schools is nearly 50 percentage points."

Figure 3b: Enrollment by Race and School Poverty Level – Grades 6-8
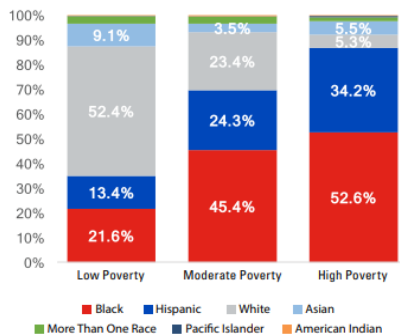
Figure 4b: Average EOG Reading Rates by School Poverty Level – Grades 6-8
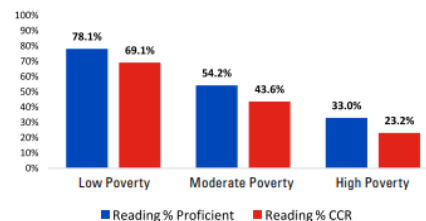
[Link to study*](#)

The primary issue remains how to address the gaps specific to reading achievement levels at the secondary level and it is the position of this curriculum that one way to "close the gaps" is for the instructional reading be as diverse as the population that it serves, in fact, studies have

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[2] https://www.cms.k12.nc.us/cmsdepartments/accountability/Documents/Breaking%20the%20Link%20English.pdf

shown that schools and teachers who have adopted a culturally responsive pedagogy have the ability to act as change agents in their schools to help bridge the divide and encourage more equitable schooling experiences for RCELD students." (Griner and Stewart 2012)

Thus, the first part of this curriculum defines what culturally relevant teaching actually is and what that would look like in population whose demographics mimic the percentages mentioned above or educators who wish to add what I have deemed purposeful diversity to their instruction. Using the CMS academic calendar to guide the pace, the curriculum is divided it into four parts, with each part centered and culminating on cultural heritage months which will determine what will be read. Each aspect of the curriculum has been formed with these questions as the basis for the curriculum development, these questions include: How will you provide all students with a representation of themselves in the lesson? (e.g. through literature, lesson examples, etc.) How will you incorporate other cultural experiences into the lesson? How will you foster/encourage critical discussion during your lesson? What culturally responsive learning tasks have you developed for this lesson? How can educators get students to consider perspectives that differ from their own? How do we get them to understand and what biases are, acknowledge that even as a minority you have biases, all while provoking them to challenge said biases and prejudices to "ultimately understand someone else's story?" (Milner 2019) As educators our natural inclination is to turn to novels show students a diverse world view, with the proper novel selection teachers would be able to address intersectionality and hegemony that students are affected by, but may or may not be privy too and even facilitate difficult conversations about privilege and oppression and resiliency.

How to Teach within the Context of Culture [3]
"The increasing diversity in our schools, the ongoing demographic changes across the nation and the movement towards globalization dictate that we develop a more in-depth understanding of culture if we want to bring about true understanding among diverse populations."

-- Maria Wilson-Portuondo (*)

WHAT
Children from homes in which the language and culture do not closely correspond to that of the school may be at a disadvantage in the learning process. These children often become alienated and feel disengaged from learning. People from different cultures learn in different ways. Their expectations for learning may be different. For example, students from some cultural groups prefer to learn in cooperation with others, while the learning style of others is to work independently. To maximize learning opportunities, teachers should gain knowledge of the cultures represented in their classrooms and adapt lessons so that they reflect ways of communicating and learning that are familiar to the students.

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[3] https://www.brown.edu/academics/education-alliance/teaching-diverse-learners/learning-within-context-culture

WHY

Children learn about themselves and the world around them within the context of culture (Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory at Brown University, 2002). Students from minority cultures may feel pressured to disavow themselves of their cultural beliefs and norms in order to assimilate into the majority culture. This, however, can interfere with their emotional and cognitive development and result in school failure (Sheets, 1999).

HOW

1. Vary teaching strategies
   - Use cooperative learning especially for material new to the students
   - Assign independent work after students are familiar with concept
   - Use role-playing strategies
   - Assign students research projects that focus on issues or concepts that apply to their own community or cultural group
   - Provide various options for completing an assignment
2. Bridge cultural differences through effective communication
   - Teach and talk to students about differences between individuals
   - Show how differences among the students make for better learning
   - Attend community events of the students and discuss the events with the students
   - Allow students ample opportunities to share their cultural knowledge
   - Question and challenge students on their beliefs and actions
   - Teach students to question and challenge their own beliefs and actions
3. Vary teaching approaches to accommodate diverse learning styles and language proficiency
   - Initiate cooperative learning groups (Padron, Waxman, & Rivera, 2002)
   - Have students participate in book clubs or literature circles (Daniels, 2002)
   - Use student-directed discussion groups (Brisk & Harrington, 2000)
   - Speak in ways that meet the comprehension and language development needs of ELLs (Yedlin, 2004)
4. Utilize various resources in the students' communities
   a. Have members of the community speak to students on various subjects

> b. Ask members of the community to teach a lesson or give a demonstration (in their field of expertise) to the students
>
> c. Invite parents to the classroom to show students alternative ways of approaching a problem (e.g., in math: various ways of dividing numbers, naming decimals, etc.)

Chart above * https://www.brown.edu/academics/education-alliance/teaching-diverse-learners/learning-within-context-culture

Short stories rather than novels/ Overview of curriculum

The overarching theme or "Big Idea" --the understanding that anchors the discourse, inquiries, discoveries, and provides the basis for my curriculum is exploring identity by dismantling stereotypes and changing the narrative by allowing people to tell their own stories. After exploring stereotypes and identity each lesson will culminate with cultural touchstone projects that aim to answer these questions: How will the teacher encourage students to connect my (teachers) lesson with real-world and community issues related to the topic of the lesson? What will I (the educator) do to overcome biases that may be present in any of the teaching materials, student ideas, etc.? How will I (the educator) do to help students understand their own cultural biases?

In my search to find such novels, I found myself confined by an innumerable number of novels, district pacing guides, and quite frankly students' short attention spans. Thus, in this unit of study, students will be introduced or reintroduced to skills that will aid in mastering power standards, habits, and routines that will be used on a regular basis in the high school classroom: vocabulary practice, close reading, annotating text, collaborative conversation, as well as creative and evidence-based writing. These skills will be developed and honed as students read three masterful works of short fiction.

The year will begin with the students learning and developing close reading and annotating skills as they examine the "Not poor, just Broke" chapter from Dick Gregory's memoir, *Nigger.* This chapter follows Gregory, through his young life and traumatic school experience in which his poverty went from a source of shame that defined him to a temporary condition that aided in refining and motivating him.

Students will then investigate the author's craft, examining the techniques Alexie uses to characterize Junior and develop the theme using the "How to Fight Monsters' chapter from Sherman Alexie's novel, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian.* This chapter follows the protagonist Junior through his first day at his new off-reservation school as he struggles to navigate and understand the social norms and expectations of this foreign environment.

Students will continue work that further develops their metacognitive vocabulary acquisition skills with powerful advanced vocabulary, and strongly developed young characters who struggle to adapt in this strange new setting in the short story, "The Lesson" by Toni Cade Bambara.

The curriculum will culminate with several vignettes from Sandra Cisneros's novel *The House on Mango Street*, including "There Was an Old Woman She Had So Many Children She Didn't Know What to Do" (pgs. 29-30), "Papa Who Wakes Up Tired in the Dark," (pgs. 56-57) "Born Bad," (pgs. 58-61) and lastly "Geraldo No Last Name"(pgs. 65-66). Cisneros' complex text and thematic treatment of identity and death make the stories particularly appropriate. As students read, discuss, and write about the text, they will again examine how the author's deliberate choices, such as text structure and diction, create character, meaning, and theme. Students will construct an argumentative paper that aims to answer: What role does death play in *The House on Mango Street?* How do the many deaths in the novel relate to one another, and how do they influence Esperanza?

Unit Goals

Unit: 1	Cycle: 1	Dates:	Content: Close Reading Skills

Unit Summary: Curriculum
In this first unit, students will begin to build their arsenal of close reading skills with a purpose. Students will practice close reading skills and text annotation by looking for elements in both literary and informational texts. This first unit will prioritize honing students' abilities to identify and recall elements within a text. Analysis and evaluation of these elements will be developed through transfer of this knowledge in Unit 2. Students will be reminded of the different text elements (characterization, plot, setting) and will consider how those elements interact to communicate a central idea and/or theme of a text. Throughout this first unit, students will also search for connections within the texts they read and between their texts and their world. Students will also learn strategies for using context clues in order to practice identifying the meanings of unknown words within each of their readings. Students will explore the impact of these words in future units.

Unit Theme: Story of My Life, Finding my voice
As this unit is an introduction into close reading skills, it will also serve as an introduction to the challenges and realities that come with being impoverished. . All resources pulled for this unit will reveal information and share experiences surrounding this topic. By leading the year with content that is highly relevant and personal, students and teachers will have multiple access points for textual connections and engaging experiences.

Unit Breakdown	
Week 1 (9/6-9/9)	**What Is the Text Saying? Reading Comprehension & Inferences (RL/RI 7.1, 7.2)**
Week 2 (9/12-9/16)	**Sum It Up: Main Idea & Objective Summaries (RL/RI 7.2) / Word Work: Context Clues Introduction (RL/RI 7.4)**
Week 3 (9/19-9/23)	**Text Elements: Setting, Events, Plot (RL/RI 7.3)**
Week 4 (9/23-9/30)	**Text Elements: People & Characters (RL/RI 7.3)**

Guiding Questions:
- **What do we need to know in order to understand a piece of text?** *"Talking to the text" is a necessary process in becoming a strong reader.*
- **What are the different parts of an informational/literary text? How can we find those different parts?** *Annotating a text involves looking for specific elements: setting descriptors, character development, plot components and important events, etc.*
- **How do the different parts of the text work together?** *Analyze the influence of setting, events, characterization, and text structure on the communication of ideas.*

- **Why does reading matter to our lives?** *Emphases on text-to-text, text-to-world, and text-to-self connections.*

RL/RI 7.1	Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
RL/RI 7.2	➢ Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text. ➢ Determine two or more central ideas in a text and analyze their development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.
RL/RI 7.3	➢ Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot). ➢ Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events).
RL/RI 7.4a	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings.

Performance Task/ Engaging Experience

Six Word Memoirs:
To practice the RI/RL 7.2, students will complete the Six Word Memoir project. Using the "Say It In Six" project from Smith Magazine as a reference point, students will create their own "Six Word Memoir." This assignment can be completed in class or inside of class, depending on teacher/student pacing and resources. Students will receive **options** for how to present their memoir with a **rubric** for evaluation. The task will be aligned to what is necessary as an objective summary, and students will have to supply a reflection for how this summary has developed over the course of their life so far.

Culturally Responsive/ Addressing Bias
Use of literature that is non-fiction that develops a positive African American cultural identity and that supports African American students and their parents. Literature must show less affluent African Americans as members of community and not as "other people's children" (Delpit, 1995). It is important that text show that one should not hampered by any artificial separation of socioeconomic status.

Teacher will use this story to emphasize, "The attribute most frequently mentioned by the students about what created an optimal learning environment was their teachers' willingness to care about them and their ability to bond with them," by allowing students to debate about how Richard should have handled the situation and how the teacher should have handled the situation. Additionally, the teachers will spark the conversation by asking students what race they think the teacher is and supporting their assumptions with textual evidence. (The teacher is black, but most students assume white, this conversation will facilitate why students assumed whiteness).

Questions for Transfer:
Teachers will be able to return to this experience as a memorable means of learning when focusing on theme and central idea in later units. The following questions can provide teachers with a starting point for engaging students in that transfer process:

➢ Remember our Six Word Memoir project? What kinds of things did we have to think about in order to form those summaries?
➢ Remember our Say It in Six project? What criteria did you have to use in order to keep your summary objective?
➢ Remember our Six Word Project? How did you keep it so short and to the point? What were the *most* important details that you chose to include?

My Storyboard:
Students will draw upon their understanding of textual elements by creating a personal storyboard that engages each one of the elements as applicable to their personal life. Using a **choice board** format, students will share the "story of their lives" while incorporating (a) setting (b) plot diagram (c) character development and (d) important words. For

additional engagement, teachers should be encouraged to create their own storyboard as a model for the process. Teachers can assign this project as a way of reviewing all the elements towards the end of the unit, or it can be introduced at the beginning of the unit and added to throughout.

Questions/Methods of Transfer:
Teachers will be able to return to this experience as a memorable means of learning when focusing on theme and central idea in later units. The following questions can provide teachers with a starting point for engaging students in that transfer process:

➢ Remember the Story of My Life Project? What are the four things you had to identify?
➢ Remember the Story of My Life Project? We are now going to create that same type of presentation for the story/book we just read.
➢ Remember the Story of My Life Project? Now we are going to look
➢ Remember our Say It in Six project? What criteria did you have to use in order to keep your summary objective?
➢ Remember our Six Word Project? How did you keep it so short and to the point? What were the *most* important details that you chose to include?

Central Texts: **Resources:** MetaMetrics & The Lexile Framework

Title/Author	Genre	Lexile
Not Poor Just Broke	(Short story)	560L
Sleeping Under a Roof but Homeless Nevertheless	Article - Informational NewsELA	1220L
Poverty and Brain Development	Article Informational NewsELA	
Feeling respected can transform a student's relationship to the school	Article Informational NewsELA	
"We Real Cool" by Gwendolyn Brooks	Poem- Commonlit.org	
The Rose that grew from Concrete	Poem	
At the Head of her class and Homeless	Article- Informational - commonlit.org	
Mother to Son	Poem- Commonlit.org	
Identity	Poem- Comminlit.org	

Vocabulary Acquisition (Words/Word Study)
inference, infer, comprehension, annotate, setting, plot, introduction, rising action, climax, falling action, conclusion, event, dynamic character, static character, characterization, connotation, denotation, central idea, objective summary, novel, memoir, informational text, article, biography, cite, textual evidence

Appendix 1: Teaching Standards

Lesson	Lesson Title/Focus	Words Vocabulary Acquisition	Standards *Resource Support: Unpacking Document*	Daily Learning Target	Evidence of Learning (Informal Assessment)	Instructional Strategies, Playlists, Comprehensive & Anchor Charts
Lesson 1 (Tues)	**What Is Close Reading?** A Guide to Annotation in Literary Texts	Comprehension, annotate, textual evidence, cite	I can cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly. (RL 7.1a)	I can reference multiple parts and events in a text to prove what the text says explicitly. (RL 7.1) *Student Friendly:* I can close read a literary text using on-purpose annotation.	Exit Ticket: Letter to A New Student	Chalk Talk Activator: Why Does Reading Matter? Aggressive Monitoring: KNOCKOUT Strategy Pick Up the Slip Up: KNOCKOUT Strategy Review
Lesson 2 (Wed)	**What's the Point?** Introducing Inferences	Infer, inference, prediction, recall, support, central idea	I can cite several pieces of textual evidence to support inferences drawn from the text. (RL 7.1b) I can determine a theme or central idea of a text. (RL 7.2a)	I can analyze texts to generate inferences based on details and/or clues from the text. (RL 7.1) *Student Friendly:* I can understand what is going on in a text while I am reading it, and I can prove it.	Exit Ticket: 3-2-1 Beach Ball Boogie: Text-Dependent Comprehension Questions	Hot & Cold Thinking Partners: How Well Do You Understand the Big Ideas of the Text?
Lesson 3 (Thurs)	**What is Close Reading?** A Guide to Annotation in Informational Texts	Informational text, comprehension, annotate, textual evidence, cite	I can cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly. (RI 7.1a)	I can reference multiple parts and events in a text to prove what the text says explicitly. (RI 7.1) *Student Friendly:* I can close read an informational text using on-purpose annotation.	Student-Created Anchor Chart Consensogram: Annotation Strategies & Purposes	Build an Anchor Chart: Students will collaborate in groups to complete an Anchor Chart to show Evidence Citation

Lesson 4 (Fri)	**What's the Point?** Introducing Text Connections	Infer, inference, prediction, recall, support	I can cite several pieces of textual evidence to support inferences drawn from the text. (RI 7.1b)	I can analyze texts to generate inferences based on details and/or clues from the text. (RI 7.1) *Student Friendly:* I can understand what is going on in a text while I am reading it, and I can make a connection with the text.	Four Corners: Text-Dependent Questions Exit Ticket: KWL Chart	Connect2Text: Text-to-Text Connection Organizer Play It - Say It: KNOCKOUT Strategy Steps
Lesson 5 (Mon)	**Sum It Up,** **Part 1:** Writing Summaries	Summarize, 5 W's, objective summary, memoir	I can determine the central idea of a text and provide an objective summary of a text. (RL/RI 7.2)	I can identify the central idea of a text and provide supporting details. (RI/RL 7.2)	JigSaw Summarizer	**Engaging Experience:** Say It in Six (Six Word Memoir Project)
Lesson 6 (Tues)	**Sum It Up,** **Part 2:** Keeping Summaries Objective	Summarize, 5 W's, objective summary	I can determine the central idea of a text and provide an objective summary of a text. (RL/RI 7.2)	I can provide an objective summary about a text. (RI/RL 7.2)	Exit Ticket: One Minute Paper (Objective Summary)	Think-Pair-Share
Lesson 7 (Wed)	**Mini Assessment:** Apply It to a Passage	Infer, annotate, predict, prove, cite, evidence, central idea, objective summary, comprehend	Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (RL/RI 7.1) Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text. (RL/RI 7.2)	I can analyze texts to generate inferences based on details and/or clues from the text. (RI 7.1)	Exit Ticket: One Minute Paper Self-Reflection	
Lesson 8 (Thurs)	**What If I Don't Know the Word?** Introducing Context Clues	Context clue, connotation, denotation, phrase, positive connotation,	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings. (RL/RI 7.4)	I can determine the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases as they are used in texts. (RI/RL 7.4)	Exit Ticket: Context Clues Practice	Slap Down Debate: Word Connotation Review

		negative connotation				
Lesson 9 (Fri)	**Word Work:** Practicing Context Clues	Context clue, connotation, denotation, phrase, positive connotation, negative connotation	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings. (RL/RI 7.4)	I can determine the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases as they are used in texts. (RI/RL 7.4) I can use connotation and denotation of words to interpret meaning. (RI/RL 7.4)	Exit Ticket: 3-2-1	Pick Up the Slip Up: Word Connotation Review
Lesson 10 (Mon)	**Text Elements:** It Starts With Setting	Connotation, mood	Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (RL/RI 7.1) Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot). (RL 7.3)	I can analyze texts to generate inferences based on details and/or clues from the text. (RI 7.1) I can identify story elements in a text. (RL 7.3)	Anchor Chart: Student-Made Hot & Cold Thinking Partners	**Student Anchor Chart: Draw the Passage** **Engaging Experience:** Teacher Will Introduce "Story of My Life" Project
Lesson 11 (Tues)	**Text Elements:** Plot Diagram	Plot, plot diagram, Introduction, exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, conclusion	Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (RL/RI 7.1) Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot). (RL 7.3)	I can analyze texts to generate inferences based on details and/or clues from the text. (RI 7.1) I can identify story elements in a text and establish a relationship between those elements. (RL 7.3)	Beach Ball Boogie: Text-Dependent Comprehension Questions	Build an Anchor Chart: Students will complete an Anchor Chart to Draw a Plot Diagram of Text Used in Class
Lesson 12 (Wed)	**Text Elements:** Conflict	Conflict, resolution, external conflict, internal conflict	Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (RL/RI 7.1)	I can analyze texts to generate inferences based on details and/or clues from the text. (RI 7.1)	Exit Ticket: Compare & Contrast	Slap Down Debate: What Causes Conflict?

			Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot). (RL 7.3)			
Lesson 13 (Thurs)	**Text Elements:** Informational Texts	Interact, influence, article, introduction, subtitle	Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (RL/RI 7.1) Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events). (RI 7.3)	I can analyze texts to generate inferences based on details and/or clues from the text. (RI 7.1) I can analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text. (RI 7.3)	Beach Ball Boogie: Text-Dependent Comprehension Questions	Hot & Cold Thinking Partners: How Well Can You Identify the Elements in the Informational Text?
Lesson 14 (Fri)	**Text Elements:** How the Elements Interact **Mini Assessment:** Gallery Walk	Interact, influence	Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (RL/RI 7.1) Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot). (RL 7.3)	I can analyze texts to generate inferences based on details and/or clues from the text. (RI 7.1) I can analyze story elements to understand how they interact in a text. (RL 7.3)	Gallery Walk: Student Reflection Quick Write: Select 1 story element and explain how it impacts 1 other story element.	Gallery Walk: Text Elements Students will begin working on a "Story of My Life" storyboard for a text taught in the class. Students will add to each station that include the text elements.
Lesson 15 (Mon)	**Who's It All About?** Introducing Characters	Character, protagonist, antagonist, major character, minor character, trait, characteristic	Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (RL/RI 7.1) Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot). (RL 7.3)	I can analyze texts to generate inferences based on details and/or clues from the text. (RI 7.1) I can analyze story elements to understand how they interact in a text. (RL 7.3)	Exit Ticket: K-W-L All About Characters	Quick Write: How Would You Describe the Main Character In {Anchor Text}? Ink-Pair-Share: Why would you describe the character in that way?

Lesson 16 (Tues)	**Characterization:** Dynamic v. Static Characters	Dynamic character, static character, internal conflict, external conflict, dialogue	Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (RL/RI 7.1) Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot). (RL 7.3)	I can analyze texts to generate inferences based on details and/or clues from the text. (RI 7.1) I can analyze story elements to understand how they interact in a text. (RL 7.3)	Exit Ticket: Letter to An Absent Student	Justified List: Character Types
Lesson 17 (Wed)	**How Does It All Connect?** Characters & Text Elements	Interact, influence, characterization, plot, setting, events	Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (RL/RI 7.1) Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot). (RL 7.3)	I can analyze texts to generate inferences based on details and/or clues from the text. (RI 7.1) I can analyze story elements to understand how they interact in a text. (RL 7.3)	Exit Ticket: One Minute Paper	Think & Throw: What Makes a Character
Lesson 18 (Thurs)	**Who's It All About:** People & Groups in Informational Texts	Population, people group, audience, affect, influence, interact	Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (RL/RI 7.1) Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot). (RL 7.3)	I can analyze texts to generate inferences based on details and/or clues from the text. (RI 7.1)	JigSaw Summarizer	Beach Ball Boogie: Text-Dependent Questions
Lesson 19 (Fri)	**Mini-Assessment** Unit 1 Assessment (Located in MasteryConnect)	*All words from Unit 1	Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (RL/RI 7.1) Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over	I can analyze texts to generate inferences based on details and/or clues from the text. (RI 7.1) I can identify the central idea of a text and provide supporting details. I		**Engaging Experience:** Students will turn in and/or present their "Story of My Life" projects.

			the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text. (RL/RI 7.2)	can write an objective summary for a text (RI/RL 7.2)		
			Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot). (RL 7.3)	I can analyze story elements to understand how they interact in a text. (RL 7.3)		

Instructional Implementation
Short Story: "Not Poor Just Broke"

Unit Close up -Finding your Voice and Identifying yourself-
Short stories
"I never learned hate at home or shame. I had to go to school for that."
Date: TBD
Focus Standards: RL.3, RL.6, RL.2 (theme)   **Spiraled Standards:** RL.1, RL.4, RL.5, W.3/W.4   **Learning Strategies:** Close Reading/ Digital Annotation /Written Annotation/ Academic conversations
Unit Overview: Culture is often difficult to define, but it influences everything from who you are as an individual to how you relate to other people at home and around the world. Just what is culture, and how does it contribute to the way you see the world? In this unit, students will explore these questions by investigating factors that affect personal and cultural identities. Students will learn about the concept of voice, or how its expressed identity in written, spoken, or artistic forms. By engaging with and constructing different types of print and nonprint texts, students will discover how writers and speakers use voice to express cultural ideas and personal identities.

Guiding Questions and Big Ideas:
- How can cultural experiences shape, impact, or influence our perception of the world?
- How does voice function in and beyond the context of writing?

Essential Questions:
- What is a voice in literature?
- How do readers explore voice within narrative literature and poetry?
- Can one challenge systems of oppression with their "voice"?
- How can one's voice empower my community and the world?

Learning Focus Week 1:
- What does an active reader do when they read?
- What reading strategies can be used when introduced to new text?
- What are the things that you do in order to help you understand while you read?
- Why are close reading and annotation useful tools for understanding text?

Learning Focus Week 2:
- What are some things good readers can do before reading that will help us know what to look for in a given selection?
- How do good readers in just a few words or one sentence, write what a paragraph or story is about?
- How does the information within paragraphs (text) contribute to the development of the central idea?
- How do readers determine two or more central ideas in a text and analyze its development, then provide an objective summary?

Opportunities for Inquiry/Technology Integration:
- Lessons/Classwork in [Pear Deck](#)/ Digital choice board

Measures of Success/ Culminating task:
- Six-Word Memoirs- Students will select a memory that had a profound impact on their lives and then write about it. The memory must be two full pages and include the pertinent details of your life and what matters most to the student. This is the students' memoir; students will then condense that work into six words. Students will write their six-word memoir on a sentence strip. The teacher will display works on the boards. Other students will be tasked with finding the memoir that matches the six-word memoir. Make your selected memoir the final six words of the story. The students will then go to www.SMITHteens.com and submit your own six-word memoir! The teacher should also display on their boards.

Text:
Literature text
Not Poor, Just Broke- Dick Gregory / *I Can't Keep My Own* Secrets—Six-Word
Memoirs by Teens Famous & Obscure
Informational Text from News ELA
Sleeping under a roof, but homeless nonetheless

Unit 1, Snapshot (continued)

Prep for the Week	Materials for the Week
- Mentor Text *Not Poor, Just Broke Dick Gregory* - Informational Text 1- Sleeping under a roof but homeless... - Informational Text 2- Poverty and Brain development - Annotation Guide - Complete the reading checklist for day 1 and 2 - Introduce students to the short story. Read the forward as a class. - Have students share thoughts, ideas, reactions, or questions about the book. - Begin to read the story aloud, pause allow others to read. - When done model how to complete the literary analysis. - Students will end the lesson with a WOW page, - Students will complete a WOW response to the reading page.	- Google Slides/Pear Deck - Inference exit ticket - Mentor text screenshots are in Pear Deck (but feel free to print text if you prefer)

Digital Integration

RL COLOR-CODED CHOICE BOARD REVIEW

All Colors RL 7.1	Green RL 7.2	Yellow RL 7.3	Purple RL 7.4	Pink RL 7.6
START HERE. Read the text here & then go through the color scheme for review.	Copy the notes for this standard here. **Task Card #1** here.	Copy the notes for this standard here. **Task Card #1** here.	Copy notes for this standard here. **Task Card #1** here.	**Task Card #1** here.
FINISH HERE COMPLETE THE KAHOOT QUIZ CHALLENGE	**Task Card #2** here.	**Task Card #2** here.	**Task Card #2** here.	**Task Card #2** here.

ADVANCED PRACTICE

Step #1	Step #2	Step #3	Step #4	Step #5
Take a break and give yourself **7 minutes of free time.** Let Mrs. Watson know first so she doesn't go all crazy on you.	Go into your CommonLit Profile and find the poem, **"The Rose that Grew from Concrete."** Read the poem and **write a 1-sentence summary** of each stanza while you read. You may do this on paper or fill out this page here.	Answer the **Guided Reading Questions** using the **Knockout Strategy**	Complete the **After-Reading Assessment Questions** using the **Knockout Strategy.**	Answer the **Discussion Questions** using complete sentences here.

Culminating task examples: 6-word memoir

SIX WORDS

your life. one memory six words

TO IMPRESS LYING IS BEST

Panthers Team

A Little SOMETING wrong with Me

ONLY Black Girls In My Class

Dont let Dark Become Your light

Had Nothing always Kept a smile

NO Money So I got Beat

Hungry but Cant Pay For food

Turkey wasnt Cooked Didnt Take It

Notes

1. https://ncreportcards.ondemand.sas.com/src/school?school=600518&year=2019&lng=en
2. https://www.cms.k12.nc.us/cmsdepartments/accountability/Documents/Breaking%20the%20Link%20English.pdf
3. https://www.brown.edu/academics/education-alliance/teaching-diverse-learners/learningwithin-context-culture
   - All graphs and notes used with permission to be used in class only for the purpose of serving the needs of specified educational programs.

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