



Self-Esteem: Uplifting Young Black Females Using African American Poetry

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This curriculum unit is recommended for:
English Language Arts/Reading/Social Emotional Learning Grade 6

Keywords: African American, discrimination, culture, race, gender, self-esteem

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

Synopsis: As educators, can we raise our Black female's self-esteem in the classroom? Black females face many forms of discrimination such as gender and self-esteem whether it is through social interactions or from the media. Teaching black poetry in a diverse classroom can help Black girls understand their emotions regarding their gender and race. These poems will allow students to express themselves freely in a safe environment while learning about themselves. Great African American poets use poetry to tell about achievements by black leaders, inventors, athletes, and other known artists who are inspirations. The focus of these poems, have changed the misconceptions that African Americans have about their history. Using these poems often address the discrimination that Black females face preventing them from achieving academically and exhibiting positive behaviors in the classroom. By implementing black poems into the curriculum that focuses on their heritage, it takes them on a journey where they will develop self-love and discover who they are as a Black female. We are not changing the curriculum, just modifying it to change the way Black females think in order to raise their self-esteem.

I plan to teach this unit during the coming year to 30 sixth grade students in sixth grade science.

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Introduction

Rationale

This unit will be taught during my Social Emotional Learning class. SEL is the process of developing the self-awareness, self-control, and interpersonal skills that are vital for school, work, and life success. During this block, we discuss how to deal with issues that could negatively affect my students during remote learning. The ultimate goal is to teach kids to understand and respect themselves and others. Hopefully, this will lead to more positive behavior that promotes social acceptance and friendship. This topic is perfect for this block because a lot of my students are shy and do not talk in class. I am hoping that this will boost their self-confidence and lead to many interesting discussions.

I am creating this unit because I have always been a mentor to young girls whether it is a teen program in my Sorority or a program in the school that I am assigned. Most of these girls do not have anyone in the home that takes the time to talk to them and/or expose them to events in the community that would help shape their young minds so they can be comfortable and confident in their skin color. During my 20 years of teaching, I have noticed that although many of my black female students are confident regarding their academics, they have low self-esteem issues. Some are shy, seldom participate in classroom discussions, avoid eye contact and ashamed of their overall image. Others are argumentative, loud, rude and bossy. Over the years, I have taken some of these girls and exposed them to etiquette classes, planned field trips to exciting places, given out rewards for class participation and formed clubs in school that had them channel their talents and allow them to feel free and comfortable to express themselves. I enjoyed raising my own three girls and taught them to be confident in their skin and I want my black female students to feel the same.

My topic connects with my student's lives because I have observed black female students being discriminated against by other students, teachers and the larger community. In today's world, there are a lot of negative perceptions of African Americans and the message is that it is not a good thing to be black. Every year bullying becomes an issue among some of my students -- especially black girls. If they do not have the right type of clothing or her hair is not up to their standards-then they are made fun of and it has a negative effect on them. I have had students cry in my class because mean things have been said to them regarding their appearance and their academic ability. Some just take the criticism silently and the others lash back the only way they can, with loud inappropriate outbursts that interrupt the learning process. It is not uncommon to see Hispanic females criticizing Black females and vice versa. As a result, it not only damages self-esteem, it also contributes to the following: disciplinary action, counseling sessions, fighting, parental conferences, switching classes, feeling uncomfortable in school, thoughts of suicide, cyber-bullying and bullying. By using Black poems in this unit, I will expose Black females to remarkable achievements made by Black female poets who overcame discrimination and negative images to promote self-esteem through their poetry. These poems have lessons for other female students as well. As Oprah showed us all, Black women writers can teach all women about self-empowerment and positive self-image.

Demographics

I am a 6th Grade Science Teacher at Northridge Middle School. I have taught ELA for 20 years and this year I was placed in Science. I have 24 students in my class. There are 13 girls of which 7 are Black and the remainder are Hispanic and White. It is a neighborhood school that opened in 1996. We have one principal and two assistant principals. My school serves 713 students in grades 6-8. The school is made up of 57.5 % of African Americans, 32.9% Hispanics, 4.1% white students, 2.9% Asian, and Pacific Islander 0.3%. 99.7% of students come from low-income households. It is organized into interdisciplinary teams of teachers. We cluster our special needs students at each grade level. ESL students are also clustered for the same reason. Support staff, specialists, counselors and administrators are assigned to each team. In 2017, Northridge became a Coding Magnet School. Scholars are offered programs like AVID and foreign languages that target high academic performers. Great emphasis has been placed on teacher training at Northridge Middle School. Many of the staff are enrolled in classes, attend district and state conferences and are members of the curriculum development teams.

Unit Goals

This unit is designed to be taught to my students in sixth grade to educate them on how Black females are discriminated against and the negative effects it can have on their self-esteem. I want my students to learn more about themselves by speaking up about how they feel about being black and how this affects them regarding being discriminated against in school, their community and by our society. Through poetry, I want to expose all my students to several poems that are written by poets that address the issue of self-esteem and being Black and to set personal goals for themselves as they read poems about Black achievement. I want my students to assess their own self-esteem and read poems to identify if the narrator is confident about what he or she is writing about as well as how the character(s) feel in their own skin. It will be interesting to find out through a survey and our Socratic Seminar, if my black females feel differently about themselves in a positive way then when we first began the unit. Another reason I am interested in this topic is because my students will be reading Hidden Figures in ELA and I want them to know how these four women, even though they faced many challenges, succeeded and fulfilled their dreams. I will focus on how they did not let gender and color discrimination lower their self-esteem. It is because of their high self-esteem that they were able to make a positive mark in history.

Content Research

From Goodreads
Stephanie Lahart

“Black Girls....Don’t be afraid to use your voice. Your thoughts, opinions, and ideas are just as important as anybody else’s. When you speak, speak with boldness and purpose. Have courage, be confident, and always be true to yourself! Live your life fearlessly! Your voice has great power; don’t be afraid to utilize it when needed. You’re NOT an angry Black woman; you’re a woman who has something important to say. Your voice matters and so do YOU.”

Self-esteem is a noun that is defined as confidence in one's own worth or abilities, self-respect. Synonyms include self-regard, pride, dignity, morale, self-confidence, confidence, self-assurance and assurance. According to Wikipedia, it is an individual's subject evaluation their own worth. Self-esteem encompasses beliefs about oneself, (for example, "I am unloved", "I am worthy ") as well as emotional states, such as triumph, despair, pride and shame. (Black Girls and Self-Esteem 2015).

It is necessary to create a safe space where Black female students in our classroom can openly express themselves and not be uncomfortable with who they are. We are often guided by a curriculum, but that should not limit the opportunities we can offer as teachers, to learn how not to mask themselves. Self-esteem is very important when it comes to our Black adolescent females. Exposing them to poetry written by Black female writers would introduce them to women who have felt some of the same emotions and negative experiences they encountered, but are able to put it into words to inspire others. There are numerous poems that address low self-esteem especially in Black girls. Black females have been discriminated against since biblical times. After careful analysis of the poem, "Vashti" by Francis Ellen Watkins Harper, we can conclude that Queen Vashti refused to heed to the King's demand that she should flaunt her beauty in front of his men. He wanted to show off her beauty. Queen Vashti felt humiliated because she was only seen as a prize and not for her beliefs to her people. She gave up her crown and status because she did not want to be known only by her beauty and wanted this to be a lesson to other women. She did not give in to the King's demands to showcase herself in front of men. Exposing Black females to poems such as the this one by Watkins, would help instill in these young girls that they should not have the mindset that you have to be beautiful beyond measure in order for society to accept you. To break it down even further, the message is don't be discouraged if your peers do not appreciate or accept you for the way you look. Hold your head up high and be yourself. You should not let other people try to lower your self-worth.

When teachers meet their students for the first time at the beginning of the school year, their backgrounds are unknown unless it is pertinent that some important information is shared. Not knowing the backgrounds of his or her students makes us unaware about how our students feel about themselves, especially our Black females. Students with low self-esteem rely on coping strategies such as bullying, cheating, avoiding or tend to be withdrawn or shy and find it difficult to have fun. It is because of these factors that teachers pay more attention to the social behaviors of Black girls than their academics. Teachers not knowing the background of their Black females pertaining to low self-esteem, have a tendency to focus on their classroom decorum and less attention on their academic process. Black females are usually perceived as challenging to authority, loud and not ladylike. That is why it is imperative for teachers Black or White to derive poetry lessons into the curriculum that addresses Black girls' inner needs. Multicultural education can help dispel stereotypes by teaching the truth and by incorporating black poetry into the curriculum, it will address this area of concern. The education system has a role to play in building self-esteem in Black girls. It should portray positive images of Black men and women. It should also offer Black girls access to Black history programming and allow for critical thinking and expression. (Black Girls and Self-Esteem 2015).

What is the impact of using Black poetry in the classroom to raise the self-esteem of our Black females? Black poetry helps to identify different identities related to sisterhood. It

promotes kinship with other Black girls. They can understand and appreciate where they come from. It gives history of their past as well as uplift them. It becomes a part of their culture and communicated across generations.

The book Slave Moth by Thylias Moss is a narrative in verse that introduces us to Varl, a fourteen-year-old slave girl on her journey to freedom. It teaches its reader and well as gives us a message through all her experiences. She remains strong and confident during her path to obtain freedom. Knowing how to read, she shows the pride and dignity she has for herself and her growing need of self-determination. Her Master tries to extinguish her spirit due to his odd actions as a moth collector. She also has to bear the humility of Master Perry's white wife who is angry at her because she knows how to read. Another example of the pride that she has for herself is that she writes down her experiences on cloth panels that she will use one day when she is finally free. Using this poem and others like it, can be used to encourage our Black females to do their best even though they are facing obstacles in the classroom and in the community. The message is to never let anyone hold you back or diminish your dreams. Keep your eye on the prize that you set for yourself. This also could introduce them to how men should show respect to Black females by uplifting them and not tearing them down with negative words.

The effect of poetry on the African American community is reflective of the remarkable achievements of black leaders, inventors, scholars, athletes, musicians and other performing artists who have been inspired by the works of great African American poets. Clark, Lisa, and Horace Clark. "Effect of Poetry on the African American Community." Watoto Whiz, April 29, 2016. <https://watotowhiz.com/effect-of-poetry-on-the-african-american-community/>. Many writers such as Langston Hughes, W.E.B. DuBois, Claude McKay, Countee Cullen, James Weldon-Johnson are among others that have changed the misconceptions that African Americans had about their history,

Many writers such as Langston Hughes, W.E.B. DuBois, Claude McKay, Countee Cullen, James Weldon-Johnson are among others that have changed the misconceptions that African Americans had about their history.

This is where poetry helps. Black poetry contains the message needed for our Black females to hear. Black poetry is meant to dig deep into their souls. Exposing them would give them a sense of knowing where they came from and where they are headed in today's society. These poems tell stories, focusing on the Black experience, they educate and warn, enlighten and set a purpose. They inspire and express so many emotions and feelings that our Black females can open up and express themselves freely when working on lessons in the classroom. This is the time to expose them to all types of Black poetry. According to Caylee Kreller (2020), poetry is therefore a suitable pedagogical tool for the development of such qualities in relation to professional identities; poetry makes use of metaphor, which helps an individual make meanings, and it explicitly makes room for exploration of emotion in a positive and meaningful way. It is an artistic medium that enable individuals to explore faces of the self that they might not otherwise be interested in sharing or that they are not aware of (p. 80).

For some Black girls, body image can also be a source of unhealthy or low self-esteem. The media has a lot of negative influence on being Black in America and it does affect our young

Black females. They are hearing, it is bad to be Black, it is bad to be dark-skinned, it is bad to be short, it is bad to be pudgy, it is bad to have curves, it is bad to have large bosoms, big feet, and skin imperfections just to name a few. Often in the classroom, you hear the young men making cruel statements to Black females because that is how they perceive them, as it is embedded already in their minds. They are never used to seeing their own complexions shown in the media as being beautiful. Black females have been judged on their physical appearances since slavery. As educators, we must take a more active role in attempting to reform those behaviors. We are not just teaching, we are assisting with instilling social skills.

Many poets have taken the stand to educate our Black females about “Black is Beautiful”, by taking to the web via YouTube videos. I have seen numerous videos that have been made by females using poetry to get the message across to Black females about gender and race discrimination. History will verify that Black was never associated with beauty. There is a struggle to find beauty in darker skin. Since there is a lack of diverse representation within the media, black females can suffer with depression, anxiety and have low self-esteem. Advertisement plays a huge role in the media of contributing to a negative body image in Black females. The media shines the light on one group of beautiful women while leaving those they consider unattractive to feel unworthy. We have to work toward teaching them self-love in the classroom and reading African-American poetry during class can help in many positive ways.

Reading poems and identifying what obstacles and tribulations the character has overcome would reach out to our Black females to prepare them to be well equipped to handle many of the topics that affect them today. Teaching awareness and acceptance would send positive messages to them to know that beauty comes in many forms and not to let the media convince them otherwise.

“What I will say is that what I have learned for myself is that I don’t have to be anybody else; and that myself is good enough; and that when I am being true to that self, the I can avail myself to extraordinary things... You have to allow for the impossible to be possible.”

- Lupita Nyong’o

We as educators must have Black females engage in activities that how they want to see themselves. A lot of how they perceive themselves come from internal or external forces and how much they derive from them. In examining body image, we need to encourage and discuss where their ideas and perceptions come from as well as what they think about existing negative images. Teachers may use African American poetry to teach critical thinking by analyzing messages from social media and advertisements that would open up discussions in the classroom and get immediate feedback on those targets. It would not be unusual for most if not all the Black females in the class to express their feelings about how the medias discriminate against them because of stereotyping. Reading poetry that addresses this topic, would encourage them to ask questions and participate in classroom discussions.

For example, (Nunn 2008), suggests for us to provide a history lesson on intersectionality, introducing Anna Julia Cooper and other trailblazers (such as Sojourner Truth, Mary Church Terrell and Amanda Berry) who broke the silent suffering of Black girls and

women. Teach how their efforts and strategies addressed the oppression and need for liberation relevant to race, gender, class, and various intersecting socially constructed realities.

Poetry can offer positive self-images of women to expose girls to opportunities in today's society that will ignite their passion for learning and help raise their self-esteem. They will understand how they have the power to overcome the social conditions that negatively has an impact on them, such as harsh disciplinary practices and low academic expectations. We have to address the negative images that they carry in their minds and the stereotypical perceptions that is hindering their ability to achieve in today's world. There is enough poetry by African American poets that uplift outstanding Black females that have made a major contribution in society. Whether they are light-skinned or dark-skinned, it doesn't matter. What matters is that they are telling their story through poetry. These poems are written for our Black females to instill in them that they are not alone. They matter and should be proud of their history and no man nor woman can take that away from them. History is not meant to cause a negative impact on our Black girls, it is meant to empower them. We have to teach concepts in the classroom that help them understand privilege and oppression in society. This is the only way that they will come to understand the complexities of Black girlhood. Diving deep into history and understanding where they came from and where they are going will improve negative teacher-student relationships because both will have a commonality when it comes to educating the Black female.

You may encounter many defeats, but you must not be defeated. In fact, it may be necessary to encounter the defeats, so you may know who you are, what you can rise from, how you can still come out of it.

- Maya Angelou

Dr. Maya Angelou reminds us all to be loving and kind to each other, but also to ourselves. A number of her poems reflect African American women and self-esteem. In fact, self-esteem is the motivation in most of her poems. In her life, she faced many social discriminations. In her poetry, she wanted to encourage Black females to be confident, they are beautiful the way they are.

Despite this very point in their lives when they are most in need of attention, support, and encouragement – Black girls are often trapped in environments that do not fully support their personal and academic development. For this reason, there is an urgent need for on-going empowering experiences and curriculum that fosters the resilience to combat gendered racism for Black girls (Nunn 2018). A lot of Black girls in the classroom feel that no one sees them, understand them and educators do not care about their well-being. We need to adapt a cultural enrichment curriculum. We need to help build confidence in these girls and encourage them to become more involved with their teachers and within the school. It is important that we take the first step and facilitate more teacher-student connections with our Black females. Learning about cultural diversity and heritage, as well as dispelling stereotypes can be applied in whole-class settings, not just designated for certain ethnic groups (Eckart 2017). Black females should be encouraged to explore and embrace their racial identity while in school. It would improve their student performance and confidence while cultivating a positive self-image, especially around race and ethnicity. We do not want these girls to check out mentally in school. Stereotyping our

Black females only produce a higher rate of discipline and absenteeism. Their self-esteem is lowered by important factors in the school system such as discrimination by other students, teachers and the larger community.

As educators, we must uplift our Black females in the classroom. Low self-esteem has been shown to be correlated with a number of negative outcomes (Silverstone & Salsali, 2003).

When a Black girl has a healthy self-esteem, she will feel good about herself and feel proud of her abilities and her earned achievements. Through poetry, she will learn about her history and the misconceptions that come with being Black and a female. Exposing them to African-American poems allows them to dream, have hope and develop a healthy, self-esteem. They will strive harder to focus on their academics because she now knows that the school has a vested interest in them and will feel good about themselves.

Instructional Implementation

Teaching Strategies

Introduction to Self-Esteem

The first assignment will be a discussion of what is self-esteem? Students will create their own definition and complete an interest survey created by the teacher.

Survey

Self-assessment of each student's qualities and interests which allows students to voice their own needs, issues and desires. This is also a way for teachers to receive feedback on how to implement instruction.

Entrance Ticket

The purpose of the Entrance Ticket will be for the students to use critical thinking skills as the teacher monitors student learning and introduce or review instruction. This task is to be done immediately as the students arrive in the classroom.

I Am Poem

Students will be able to disclose information about themselves in this type of poem. This poem is written by each student in an effort to share and learn about one another. The poems will be read and added to each student's folder.

Whole Group

Instruct and model concepts for all students at once. It gives every student a good introduction and foundational knowledge of skills that individualize practice.

Small Group

Address gaps in students' knowledge, allow students to discover and engage with a range of perspectives, ideas and backgrounds and assist students in clarifying their attitudes to and ideas about the subject matter, as they test their own ideas and attitudes against those of others.

Note-Taking

Helps organize class notes The main points, details, study cues, and summary are all written in one place. Notes will focus on an essential question.

Analyzing Poetry

Preview the poem, identify and underline any words you do not understand and look them up. Identify all figurative language and sound devices. Evaluate the poem's theme, mood and tone and paraphrase each stanza.

Poetry and Speech Comparison

The purpose of this activity is to compare and contrast a poem and a speech that addresses Black girls. Students will compare Dr. Maya Angelou's Phenomenal Woman to Lupita Nyong'o's speech Dark Beauty. Both the poem and the speech reflect a message that Black girls need to hear that addresses self-esteem.

Student Led Socratic Seminar

The Student Led Socratic Seminar is a formal discussion, based on a text, in which the leader asks open-ended questions. The students listen closely to the comments of the others, thinking critically and articulate their own thoughts and their responses to the thoughts of others. Students will be divided into two groups and sitting in two circles-an inner circle and an outer circle. The inner circle students are the speakers and the outer circle students are the recorders.

Digital Poster

Used as an assessment, students are asked to create a digital poster that displays relevant information to an audience using Google Drawings. Using the I am poem, students will use images that reflect the qualities they love about themselves.

Narrative Essay

Student reflection assessment asking which poem or speech had the most impact on them. In these essays, the students will be able to make their point to readers.

Exit Ticket

Monitor student thinking and what they have learned at the end of a lesson.

Classroom Lessons/Activities and Assessment

Lesson 1: Who I Am!

Entrance Ticket: What do you think of when you think of poetry? How is it different from reading a novel?

Objective: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone

Activity: This unit will be introduced after I have completed introductory lessons on poetry.

Each student will be given the unit vocabulary words (Appendix 3). I will begin this unit by asking the question, “What is self-esteem?” Students will brainstorm and define it in their journal. Students will have a classroom discussion by sharing responses. Next, students will complete a self-assessment on their qualities and interests. It will gather information about how the students perceive themselves. Then the students will complete the I Am poem (Appendix 3). Teacher will model how the poem should be completed. Poems will be shared and added to their folder. Unit vocabulary will be given to each student. Appendix 2

Exit Ticket: Reflect on the lesson today. What did you learn about yourself after writing your I Am poem?

Homework: Students will be given a copy of the poem “Lineage” by Margaret Walker <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/53463/lineage> with instructions to annotate each stanza and highlight evidence showing the strength of the grandparents.

Lesson 2: Self-Love

Entrance Ticket: In your own words, what is the message that the poem, “Lineage” is the author trying to convey.

Objective: Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Activity: I will implement the teaching of this unit by providing each student a copy of this poem. The students will first use their 2 column note-taker sheet to apply notes about the author’s background (Appendix 4). The students will then be asked to read the poem independently. After the first read, they will be given the essential question and using two highlighters they will use 1 to highlight unknown vocabulary words and the other color will be used to highlight the evidence for the essential question. Students will individually come up with a summary and compare it to their partner’s summary. The teacher will lead students in a line by line analysis of the 1st and 2nd stanza. Annotations will be recorded using a PowerPoint displayed on screen.

Exit Ticket: What was your mood while reading this poem? What is the author’s tone?

Homework: How do you feel about being judged only by what you look like on the outside?

Lesson 3: Diving Deep (2 Days)

Entrance Ticket: Teacher will provide a stanza of a poem of their choice for the students to annotate.

Objective: Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats and explain how it contributes to a topic, text or issue under study.

Activity: Students will be given a copy of the note taker to record background knowledge of the author. First, students will analyze the poem Phenomenal Woman by annotating it with their

table group. Each student at the table will take turns reading a stanza. Essential Questions: What does it mean to be a Phenomenal Woman? Who are some phenomenal girls and women you admire? The teacher will show the YouTube video of Lupita Nyong'o speech and students will be given a copy of the speech also. Students will underline parts of the speech that they believe is important for Black girls to hear. Using a Venn Diagram, (Appendix 5), students will compare the poem and the speech. In closing, students will be asked to discuss the message each one has for Black women.

Exit Ticket: How do the poem and the speech address today's issues regarding Black females? Give evidence for your response.

Homework: Read the poem, "Still I Rise", by Dr. Maya Angelou. Why do you think this poem is famous? What is the message?

Lesson 4: Goals

Materials: Rosa Parks by Nikki Giovanni <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/90180/rosa-parks>, Banneker by Rita Dove <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/43354/banneker>, strips of paper to create links, glue

Entrance Ticket- Which African American man or woman, do you think has made the greatest achievement? Why?

Objective: Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Activity: Students will read two poems about Black Achievers, Rosa Parks and Benjamin Banneker. They will discuss them with a partner and annotate each one. Students will make a list of their talents and traits they possess. They will create chain strips by writing their own talents and traits on each strip. They will link them together and display in the classroom. Teacher will model activity.

Exit Ticket: What did you learn from today's lesson? How has it impacted the way you feel about yourself and what you are able to achieve?

Lesson 5: Socratic Seminar- Who Am I?

Objective: To engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

Activity: Students will be divided into two groups and sitting in two circles-an inner circle and an outer circle. The inner circle represents the speakers. These are the students who discuss the questions. The outer circle students are the recorders. Students will use the Self-Identity Note-catcher as a guide to their discussions (Appendix 6).

Exit Ticket: What are your takeaways from today's discussion. Has any of your views changed about discrimination? How?

Assessment Plans

1. Each student will create a digital self-esteem poster using Google Drawings. Students can upload images for their posters to personalize it. The teacher will share an example or choose to make a video showing the students how to access Google slides. Students are to type qualities they love about themselves and use "I Am" statements from the first lesson. 10 points for a completed poster.
2. Students will choose one poem or speech that had the most impact on them and why in a one-page narrative essay. Students will be graded according to the rubric. Appendix 7

Appendix 1: Implementing Teaching Standards Common Core Standards for Sixth Grade

RL 6.1 Content Standard: Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

“I Can Statements”:

- Recognize explicit textual evidence
- Recognize inferences made in text
- Analyze textual evidence which is explicitly stated
- Analyze text to infer

Essential Questions:

- What did the author write this piece?
- What inferences could you make?
- What information would you need to support the inference?
- Analyze the passage, what can you conclude?
- When you analyze the text, what inference can you make?
- How does the textual evidence support your conclusion?
- What was the author’s purpose?
- What can you conclude from the text?

RL 6.2 Content Standard: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

“I Can Statements”:

- Define theme and central idea
- Identify supporting details of the main idea or theme of a text
- Summarize a text based on facts
- Analyze supporting details to determine a theme or central idea
- Distinguish between textual facts and opinions
- Formulate a summary based on facts from text

Essential Question

- How can I use details from the text related to theme to determine the author’s message

RL 6.4 Content Standard: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone

“I Can Statements”:

- Identify the meaning of words and phrases including figurative and connotative, as used in text
- Identify tone in text
- Interpret the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text
- Analyze the impact of word choice on meaning

- Analyze the impact of word choice on tone

Essential Questions

- How does the author’s use of specific types of figurative language and connotation affect the meaning of the text?
- How does word choice impact the tone and mood of the text?

RL 6.7 Content Standard: Compare and Contrast the experience of reading a story, drama, or poem to listening to or viewing an audio, video, or live version of the text, including contrasting what they “see” and “hear” when reading the text to what they perceive when they listen or watch.

“I Can Statements”:

- Compare and contrast the difference between reading a story, drama or poem to listening or watching the story in an audio or video version
- Tell the difference between what I “see” and “hear” when reading a story or drama to what I notice when I listen or watch the same story.

Essential Questions

- How does analyzing diverse media help us to build our own knowledge?
- How does the use of evidence impact the author’s claim?
- How does analyzing more than one text help us to interpret the author’s intent and build our knowledge?

SL 6.1 Content Standard: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions {one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led} with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.

“I Can Statements”:

- Effectively participate in different types of discussions and with different people about 6th grade topics, texts and issues
- Build on others’ ideas and express my own ideas clearly

Essential Questions

- How are my conversation skills dependent on the makeup of the group?
- What contributions can I make to the conversation when I’m prepared and engaged?

Appendix 2: Unit Vocabulary

Self-esteem	stanza
Multi-cultural	influence
Stereotypes	purpose
Diversity	textual evidence
Analyze	mood
Misconception	tone
Contrast	theme
Compare	summary
Socio-economic	central idea
Gender	details
Inference	

- The above vocabulary words for this unit should be typed and passed out to each student. They will use a dictionary to find the meaning of each one and reference the terms as they analyze each poem.
- Academic conversations will require students to use the unit vocabulary as they engage in classroom discussions.

Appendix 3: I Am Poem

<https://freeology.com/wp-content/files/iampoem.pdf>

I Am Poem

I am _____ (Two special characteristics)

I wonder _____ (Something you are curious about)

I hear _____ (An imaginary sound)

I see _____ (An imaginary sight)

I want _____ (A desire you have)

I am _____ (The first line of the poem repeated) I pretend _____ (Something you pretend to do) I feel _____ (A feeling about something imaginary) I touch

_____ (An imaginary touch) I worry _____ (Something that bothers you)

I cry _____ (Something that makes you sad) I am _____ (The first line of the poem repeated) I understand _____ (Something you know is true) I say

_____ (Something you believe in)

I dream _____ (Something you dream about) I try _____ (Something you make an effort on) I hope _____ (Something you hope for) I am

_____ (The first line of the poem repeated)

_____ (The first line of the poem repeated)

_____ (The first line of the poem repeated)

_____ (The first line of the poem repeated)

_____ (The first line of the poem repeated)

_____ (The first line of the poem repeated)

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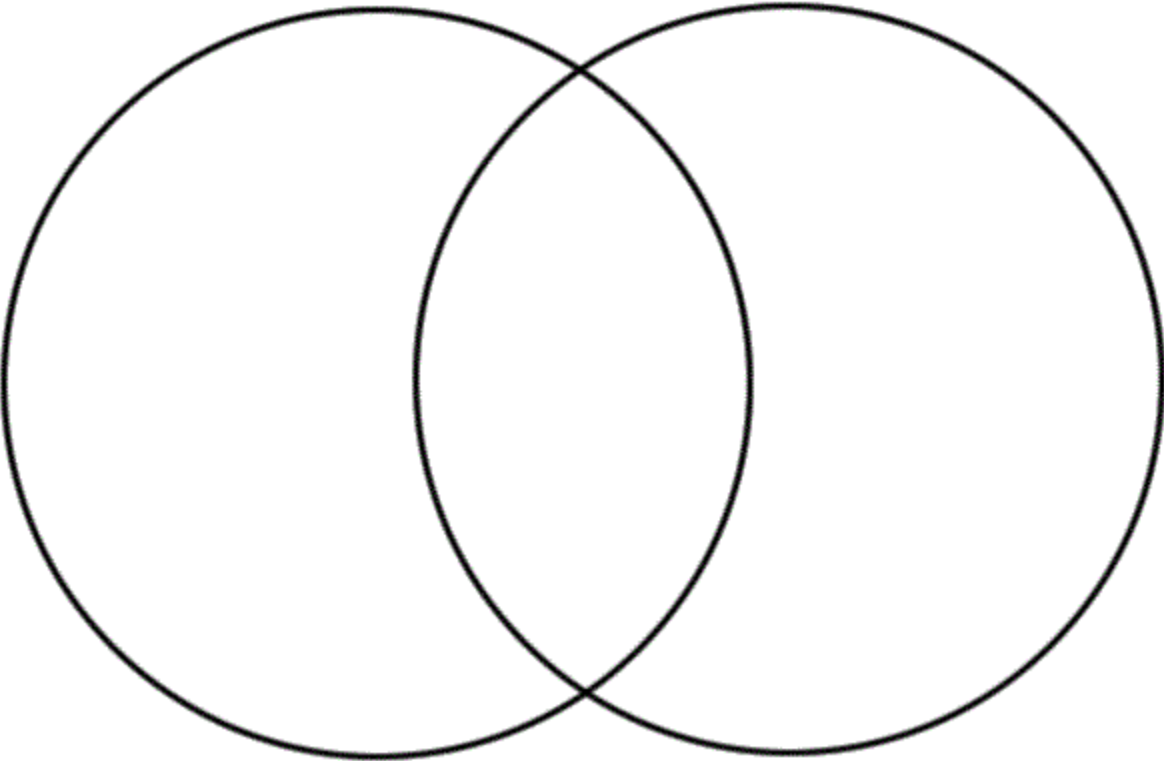
_____ (The first line of the poem repeated)

_____ (The first line of the poem repeated)

Appendix 4: Note-Taking Sheet
(Sample sheet)

ESSENTIAL QUESTION	

Appendix 5: Venn Diagram



Appendix 6: WHO AM I? SOCRATIC SEMINAR NOTECATCHER

Look back at the poems we have read over the last few class periods as you consider the following questions. Give both text evidence and your own opinions as you prepare for the seminar.

QUESTION	TEXTUAL EVIDENCE	YOUR OPINION
What matters more: how you view yourself, or how others view you? How is negative self-esteem created?		
How do one's outward appearance affect self-identity? How do stereotypes impact society, our perceptions of self and others, and our own self-identity?		

<p>How has social media impacted Black females? How do you feel about advertisements that discriminate against Black women?</p>		
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Appendix 7: Final Assessment Narrative Writing Rubric

<p>Focus/Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writing expresses the views, thoughts, or feelings of the writer. • The significance or main idea of the views, thoughts, or feelings is clear. • The writing is organized in a way appropriate to the purpose and audience. 	<p>Comment</p> <p>Score _____/35</p>
<p>Elaboration/Support/Style</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideas, opinions, and general statements are supported by specific details. • Vivid language is used to add interest to the writing. • Transition words help make the organization clear. 	<p>Comment</p> <p>Score _____/35</p>
<p>Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writing is free of misspellings, and words are capitalized correctly. • Sentences are punctuated correctly, and the piece is free of fragments and run-ons. • The paper is neat, legible, and presented in an appropriate format. 	<p>Comment</p> <p>Score _____/30</p>

List of Material for Classroom Use

Materials for Students and Teachers

Laptop/Desktop Computer

All classes will be held virtually, therefore both the teacher and the students will use their electronic device to complete all activities in the classroom or remotely. Students will navigate through all the activities as directed.

Google Drive/Microsoft Word

Using Google Drive or Word enables the teacher and the students to write on and share digital copies used throughout the unit. Both programs allow students to organize their work.

PDF Poetry/Speech Copies

Due to virtual classes, students will use PDF copies of each text being used. Students will be able to use the toolbar to annotate each text. A PDF copy of each text used will be shared with the students.

Zoom/Canvas Conferences Communication Platform

Zoom or Canvas Conferences are the main platforms that will be used to implement this Curriculum Unit. Both platforms allow for students to be placed in breakout groups, which works well for small group instruction. The teacher and students will communicate using the chat box or the microphone. Both platforms allow for the teacher and the students to share their screen. The recording feature can be utilized to review lessons and to aid in absenteeism.

Computer Headphones

Headphones are recommended for this unit due to a few students have to use the computer read-a-loud program. Since the lessons will be taught virtually, it will block out any noise whether inside or outside. The headphones will facilitate listening skills and help students to focus while reading each text.

Digital Calendar

Students will use a website to organize when their assignment are due. Students can track their progress by documenting when they completing each assignment leading up to the Socratic Seminar and the final assessments.

Digital Notebook

Students will be able to access their notebook using their electronic device. They will be able to brainstorm, reflect, and take notes while completing assignments and using online sources. This will help them to document information as they deep dive into each poem assigned.

Resources for Students

I Am Poem

The purpose of the I AM poem is for each student to complete a self-assessment of their qualities and interests in preparation of the unit on self-esteem. <https://bit.ly/35zphdC>

Venn Diagram

This graphic organizer will be used to compare two things, illustrating their differences and similarities. It will be used in this unit to compare and contrast poems and speeches.

<https://bit.ly/38P2494>

Cornell Note-Taker

Students will use this tool to condense and organize notes. It can be used numerous times throughout this unit to take notes while analyzing each poem or speech. <https://bit.ly/32PDT6D>

Google Slides

Students will use this website to complete their digital self-esteem poster. <https://bit.ly/31ETRrG>

Poetry Website

The purpose of this website is to access PDF's of the poems assigned in this unit.

<https://bit.ly/3f4wMfA>

Resources for Teachers

Poems/Speech

“Phenomenal Woman”

Phenomenal Woman is a poem written by Dr. May Angelou. This poem offers an empowering message for all women built on to be confident and comfortable in one’s own skin. The poem reveals barriers that Black girls are faced with in daily life in and out of the classroom.

<https://bit.ly/2IKhnVt>

“Lupita Nyong’o Speech Heard Around the World”

This video is used to demonstrate how some girls have low-esteem due to the color of their skin because they see dark complexion as being an obstacle. This is addressed in her speech and provides a very important message for Black girls. <https://bit.ly/36z2duE>

“Lineage”

“Lineage” is a poem written by Margaret Walker. This poem is used as an example of literary text that I would use in my unit to present how the author uses the poem to define real beauty. It offers an empowering message for all women built on to be confident and comfortable in one’s own skin. The poem reveals barriers that Black girls are faced with in daily life in and out of the classroom.

<https://bit.ly/2UvQAiE>

“Vashti”

“Vashti” is a poem written by Frances Ellen Watkins Harper. This poem is used to illustrate how a beautiful queen defied her King because he wanted to show off her beauty and did not respect her as an intelligent woman. This will be used to demonstrate to students that women should not be judged by what she looks like on the outside. <https://bit.ly/3pyzpLh>

“Rosa Parks”

“Rosa Parks” is a poem written by Nikki Giovanni. Students will gain a deeper understanding to the way Rosa stood up for her rights during the Civil Rights Movement which had a major impact on ending segregation in our country. <https://bit.ly/3IDL8pQ>

“Banneker”

“Banneker” is a poem written by Rita Dove. This poem illustrates that segregation dominates the poem. It tells about the gifted black man Benjamin Banneker who successfully predicted a solar eclipse and created an almanac. He crossed social and racial boundaries as a black scientist from the 18th century. <https://bit.ly/32PMqXd>

Student Interest Inventory

Used at the beginning of the unit to establish and maintain positive relationships and inform instruction in response to students’ individual needs and preferences. Students are more likely to be engaged if the instruction connects to their interests. <https://bit.ly/2UvLWkD>

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