



I Like What I Like, Because I Like It! An Epistemological Approach to Literary Analysis and Interpretation

Curriculum Unit 10.02.10

by Tina M. Manus

Introduction

The following is an eight week unit focused on building students' abilities in applying various styles of literary criticism successfully when examining a text for literary merit. Through engaging in the tasks in this unit, students will build a working definition of their own personal aesthetics, through an epistemological approach to understanding self. In addition, students will build a working academic vocabulary and skill base for successfully analyzing both fiction and non-fiction texts.

The term "personal aesthetics" is used to describe students' own likes and dislikes with regard to literature they encounter. The term "aesthetics" is used broadly to encapsulate all the stylistic choices an author makes consciously or subconsciously when creating a literary piece of work. In this unit, students will be asked to examine their initial reaction to an author's aesthetic choices and reflect on how that reaction to the author's choices gives information to the student about his or her own "personal aesthetic."

The term "personal epistemology" is used to describe students' journey to understanding, discovering, and creating self. The term is applied to this unit during student writing tasks. The responses and culminating project reflect each student's unique understanding of his or her personal epistemology and how it resides in relationship to other classmates. While epistemology is essentially the study of knowledge and justified belief, this unit seeks to give students the academic language to support, evaluate, and defend their aesthetic disposition on a literary work. My hope is that students might find a kinship with other authors' opinions and critiques, including their fellow classmates' opinions and critiques.

Students will engage in classroom activities that require them to reflect on their own personal biases, as well as those of their classmates, when examining a shared class text. Students will investigate how an individual's personal bias can influence perceptions regarding the overall quality of a text. Students will have opportunities to reflect on their own preferences and also on the preferences of classmates through a "Writer's Workshop" approach to editing and revising written responses. Through engaging in this kind of peer assessment activity, students will build a collective consciousness regarding the aesthetic preferences of the classroom as a whole. In their culminating essay, students will reflect on trends, similarities, and differences that arise.

It is understood that every student follows an individual learning journey. This unit seeks to help students to understand that learning journey and to walk along it with a reflective and developmentally appropriate level of awareness. While Special Education students might require task modifications and additional supports, it is important that students engage in all the tasks outlined in the unit in order to benefit fully from the unit's intent.

Rationale

I currently teach grade 9 at The Cooperative Arts Magnet High School. All grade 9 teachers in the English Department teach The Odyssey each spring. Students are already familiar with Ancient Greece after studying it during Quarter 2 in World History. Study-ing The Odyssey allows for collaboration among departments and transference of learning across various subjects for students.

While students are familiar with the content and cultural context of the story, the language is still challenging. In order to engage students at various reading levels, I have devised a unit that will serve as a pre-cursor to Homer's epic poem, The Odyssey. The unit includes a short story, "Circe's Palace" from The Tanglewood Tales written for children by a well-known author, Nathaniel Hawthorne.

Hawthorne wrote this book with the intent to make mythological stories accessible and available for children. He broke down Homer's epic poem, The Odyssey into small short stories told to children by a narrator. Hawthorne and I both share a similar purpose: accessibility of great literature.

In order to increase student engagement and address multiple learning styles, I have included supplemental materials in the form of video clips, online critiques from bloggers, poetry, and visual charts. These resources are used to help students to gain multiple perspectives on a given analytical lens, as well as on the text, "Circe's Palace" itself. It is my hope that students will remain engaged and will not lose interest studying the same main text. I have found in previous units that if students know the content of the plot it makes teaching the strategies they need to learn much easier to practice. Through using a multi-sensory approach to the unit's design, I hope to capitalize on student's content knowledge of the story and work specifically on discrete skills which they may or may not have mastered.

What I have observed in my classes is that students are most interested in learning and writing about themselves and their lived experiences. They enjoy sharing stories about their weekend adventures and find almost any reason to write about themselves. I have chosen "Circe's Palace" because it deals with a relationships and sexuality. Students seem most engaged when learning is sensationalized; hence the title of the feminist lens section is "Circe: Witch, Bitch or Feminist?" Students also enjoy delving into the relationships and the inevitable conflicts that ensue in works of fiction. Students find many parallels to their own lived experiences in these episodes.

I have chosen Circe's story because she represents an iconic, powerful female which most students can find a parallel to in the media or in their personal lives. Many of my students are in homes without fathers and are being raised by mothers, grandmothers, and aunts who share Circe's independence. In addition, The Cooperative Arts Magnet High School is made up of 75% female students. Studying the strong female character of Circe will offer an appropriate counter balance for the study of the "ultra-masculine" Odysseus who is the main focus of Homer's epic poem, The Odyssey.

Essential Questions

Throughout their freshman year, grade 9 students are asked to examine the Essential Question, "Who Am I?" for the entire year. Each marking period is then sub-divided and students are asked to examine even more specific questions as they move through learning activities.

In Marking Period 1 students examine the question, "How Do I Define Myself?" This Essential Question is clearly addressed by the unit because the unit itself is intended to help students to build a more coherent, comprehensive view of themselves, one which includes a sense of their own intellectual and academic identities as individuals. The unit focuses specifically on students' personal likes and dislikes as they relate to a piece of literature.

In Marking Period 2, students are asked to consider the question, "What Can I Learn About Myself by Examining the Lives and Experiences of Others?" Student will explore this question as they participate in "Writers' Workshop" and peer review classroom activities. Students will have opportunities to read and respond to the writing of others and then to revise their own work. Through this exercise, students will explore other students' aesthetics and compare and contrast those perspectives to their own. Additionally, students will examine and analyze critiques by other writers. Students will utilize the four main lenses that will comprise the strategies used during classroom activities. These critiques will offer students a structure for understanding the stylistic choices writers adopt when using various analytical strategies.

In Marking Period 3, students are asked to consider the question, "With People Continually Trying to Define Me, How Do I Learn to Make Decisions for Myself?" This Essential Question requires students to reflect on how other people seek to define and label them as people and learners. It asks students to become more aware of themselves and the pressures around them. This unit allows students to reflect on the cultural underpinnings of their personal aesthetics. It asks them to become meta-aware of how external influences help to influence their personal choices.

In Marking Period 4, students are asked to consider the question, "What Does It Mean to Grow Up? How Can I Find My Own Path to Being the Person I Want to Be?" Through this unit's culminating activity, student will build an understanding of their own current aesthetic preferences. While the unit gives students the language and structures to begin to understand themselves in the present, it also allows for students to reflect and adjust their perspectives in light of other students' perspectives and their own uncovered biases. This unit allows students the opportunity to plan a meta-aware learning journey they can reflectively participate in. The unit empowers students to create their own futures and the ability to "grow-into" or "grow-out-of" who they are presently.

CAPT Connection

The Cooperative Arts and Humanities High School is currently a "school in need of improvement" according to the State of Connecticut. Throughout this unit, students will be practicing the skills necessary to reach successful completion of the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT). Students will specifically gain language and vocabulary needed to respond coherently to "Question Four" on the CAPT, which deals specifically with the analysis of literature.

According to the data provided at our grade level data team meetings, students are weakest in their ability to take a critical stance. I have designed a unit that specifically addresses this issue, by allowing student the opportunity to discover and define their own personal aesthetic, which will, in-turn, help student to articulate a supported critical stance.

Delivery of Instruction, "Epic Odyssey-Style"

At The Cooperative Arts Magnet High School, we teach in a 90-minute block schedule. On Fridays, students visit every period for a traditional 45-minute class period. During this time, I allow students to participate in independent reading for enjoyment or to work in a "Free-Write Friday" in which they can write about whatever they choose. This approach was very successful and students looked forward to Fridays each week.

I plan to use Fridays more constructively by implementing this unit during that time. Students will be on a year-long "Odyssey," journeying to revisit this unit of study each Friday. I plan to use the 45-minute class period to engage students in an on-going unit of study which will supplement their weekly classroom lessons from the grade 9 district curriculum. Because this unit asks students to reflect on themselves and their choices, I'm hoping that it will be successful with my students who, due to their developmental level, tend to be self-absorbed.

Content Objectives

Throughout the course of this unit, students will be engaging with specific subject matter in the form of broad content objectives. As literacy and language themselves are complicated and multi-faceted, each content objective has been carefully woven into the design of the unit's structure and many lessons meet multiple content objectives in a single task.

The first content objective met by this unit is Standard 1: Reading and Responding. Through engaging with the main text for the unit, "Circe's Palace" and a number of other supplementary texts, students will be practicing skills in interpreting, analyzing, and evaluating a text. Students will be exposed to a number of sources to engage and broaden their content base. It is expected that this exposure will then make students' communication with one another easier through the use of a shared academic vocabulary.

The second content objective met by this unit is Standard 2: Exploring and Responding to Literature. Students will explore a number of critical responses to literature including critiques from their classmates and published authors. Students will be required to consider the author's audience and purpose in writing, as well as possible influences that might exert some kind of bias on the author.

The third content objective met by this unit is Standard 3: Communicating with Others. Students will use narrative, expository and persuasive writing modes throughout the unit. Students work will be edited, revised and published according to specific guidelines established prior to formal tasks being initiated.

The fourth content objective met by this unit is Standard 4: Applying English Language Conventions. Students will apply MLA format and various style techniques for each analytical lens. Students will be required to use academic language and refrain from using slang. Students will be required to write in the "active" voice for all formal writing responses.

Teaching Strategies

The unit will use a variety of Best practices to deliver instruction. The unit is designed with the understanding that effective Language Arts instruction plans for instruction in reading, listening, vocabulary and grammar. The unit plans for each of these four major areas in varying degrees throughout each lesson. For example, the teacher may read to students or students may read aloud, depending on the learning task and the reading level of the students.

In planning effective instruction, all classroom routines will be consistent. The daily agenda of activities will be posted, along with daily learning objectives. Students will be expected to maintain a daily journal and working portfolio. The Essential Questions for both the year and the marking period will also be posted in the classroom.

Lessons will begin with a "Do-Now" activity to focus and transition students. Students will then transition into a "Modeled/Guided Practice" session. From that point, students will then engage in "Independent Practice" and/or "Group/Partner Work." Finally, classes will be brought to a closure using exit slips, "whip-around" checks for understanding, and wrap-up "share-out" discussions.

During "Modeled/Guided Practice" students will briefly practice skills in editing and revising, annotation, close reading, and response writing. Students will have opportunities to ask questions and receive specific feedback on discrete skills practiced. Students may sometimes work alone or with a partner to complete given tasks.

The "Independent Practice" section of the class is intended to be the longest section of the lesson plan. During this time, students have the opportunity to work independently of the instructor's direct assistance. Sometimes students work with peers to complete group tasks; at other times students work independently to complete an assignment.

Including "Group Work" and "Partner Work" is essential for grade 9 students. The developmental level of adolescents at this age is such that students need and crave opportunities to interact with one another. Not planning for these kinds of interactions in the classroom regularly will lead to behavior and management problems. Additionally, these activities allow students to refine their skills through seeing the work of intermediate peer models.

Writers' Workshop

Students will have opportunities to engage fully in the writing process. Students will work with peers to review and critiques each other's writing. Students will give critical feedback, offering suggestions to fellow classmates to help to improve responses. The purpose of the "Writers' Workshop" is to allow students to work interactively to build a classroom learning community and to allow students to see additional examples of student work based on the task guidelines.

Style

The elements of style used by individual students when writing responses will reflect the various styles of analysis used by the students to develop their interpretations. The language and stylistic choices necessary to develop this section of each essay will be provided in short mini-lessons at the introduction of each new style of analysis. This should provide students with the language and skills to successfully develop a well supported

critical stance and interpretation of their own writing. Students will engage with the writing style in a revision of an already completed response. Students will utilize both self-assessment and peer assessment data to reflect on the mastery of a given style of analysis.

Differentiation for Advanced and Struggling Readers

While the material should be appropriate for all levels of readers, there is an opportunity to use additional reading resources, extension activities, and strategies to support both advanced and struggling readers. These resources will be discussed as an addendum to each lesson plan. These resources are not intended to replace the material chosen for the unit or alter the Essential Questions or tasks described. The conceptual and theoretical framework of the unit is both developmentally appropriate and academically challenging for all students.

Analytical Strategies

In order to help students to gain an understanding of their own aesthetic dispositions, I have chosen four main analytical strategies for students to experiment with as they examine "Circe's Palace." Students will "try-on" these different structures and experience viewing the story through a given lens. Students will also be required to write a response from that given perspective. At the conclusion of the activity, students will reflect on the experience of viewing the story through the given lens's structure. Students will note what if anything within that approach might parallel or contradict their own personal aesthetic. In this exercise students build a meta-awareness of their own epistemologies, as well as a working vocabulary and skill set to defend their assertions.

While a number of established analytical strategies were examined, the following four analytical strategies were chosen to include as strategies in this unit.

Reader Response

Reader Response is an essential form of critical analysis used in the district's curriculum. This approach allows students to build interpretations and make connections to a text based on their own lived experiences. Not only is this approach developmentally appropriate for ego-centric grade 9 students, it is also a necessary skill for success on the CAPT. Students have lots of practice in Reader Response throughout the curriculum and I am anticipating that this section of the unit will be the easiest for students to master. Students will continue to practice this strategy in daily "Do-Now" activities and when responding in exit slips.

Moral/Philosophical

This approach was adopted to help students to understand and examine the cultural underpinnings of the context and audience for whom the text was originally intended. By embracing this approach to examining a text, students will be able to uncover the cultural attitudes regarding sex, seduction, and gender roles inherent in the text. This approach will also activate prior knowledge students will have learned in World History regarding Greek culture. This analytical literary strategy will allow students the opportunity to use what they already know to understand themes and cultural values presented in The Odyssey. My hope is that through the cognitive exercise of compare and contrast students will learn more about their own cultural view

point by juxtaposing it to those viewpoints shared in the text.

Mimetic

Students will compare and contrast their own emerging sense of personal aesthetic with those of their peers. In doing so, they may or may not find similarities between them-selves and their peers. By taking this approach to analysis of a text, students are also making text-to-world connections. Successfully making these connections is essential to reaching mastery on the CAPT. Because students are so focused on themselves and their world, they should be able to easily draw connections between the lives of the characters and their own lives. My students are consumed by both romantic and platonic relationships with their peers. This is not atypical for students developmentally. This analytical strategy will add a dimension to students' understandings regarding what constitutes a healthy and balanced relationship or friendship. Through applying this strategy, students may find friends among their peers they did not expect who share common points of view and life experiences. My hope is that this strategy will challenge students to go beyond superficial appearances and interests to make high quality connections with their peers. Therefore, this analytical strategy will be especially helpful in building class community and empathy among students.

Feminist

The class text deals specifically with issues of male/female attraction and seduction. Dissecting the sexuality of the character of Circe, a "famous enchantress who turned men into beasts" ¹ is of central importance in the story. With regard to grade 9 students, who are currently discovering their own sexuality, this approach to analysis seems particularly relevant. This approach to analysis will challenge both male and female students to examine the role of gender in our classroom, school and even within their individual families. Looking at Circe through a feminist lens will allow students to focus on and examine her role in the story. By applying this analytical strategy, Circe will be the central focus. In following the criteria for feminist analysis, understanding Circe's role in the story and her character will be the only appropriate viewpoint for students to take. This will not only help to focus students, but it will present a clear and focused set of style guidelines to follow when writing.

Assessment

Student assessment will be both formative and summative. Students will have multiple opportunities to show mastery of the skills and each lesson allows opportunities for educators to "cycle back" or further scaffold learning when necessary. In addition to brief journal responses, students will be formally assessed on four different 250-word response essays which will be written from each of the four identified analytical strategies we apply in classroom activities. Students will then write a 500-word essay that defines and reflects upon their personal aesthetic and epistemology. In this culminating activity, students will be asked to synthesize the four different perspectives and cite which combinations of approaches they tend to be most inclined to when examining a text.

Rubrics

Students will be assessed holistically using teacher developed rubrics. The rubrics will serve as a guide to

students as they write and peer-review other classmates' work. Rubrics also serve a way to grade classroom participation and performance during group activities and class discussions. The rubrics are written in student-friendly language and include clear performance expectations for specific skills in each learning task. Rubrics are most often provided to students before formal tasks are initiated; however, sometimes the rubric is used as a catalyst to adjust a completed response and help it fit into the established criteria of a given analytical lens.

Triangulating Assessment Data

Final drafts of responses and culminating essays will be assessed by the teacher, peers, and the student in order to build a collective and accurate assessment of individual student performance. The purpose of this exercise is to eliminate bias and examine students' strengths when reflecting on a piece of writing critically. By critically examining another student's work, students gain practice for "Question Four" on the CAPT which specifically asks students to examine a literary work. In this question students must decide if it has merit or not and explicate their viewpoint.

Teacher-Assessment

This form of assessment will allow the teacher to give individual feedback throughout the writing process. The culminating assignment and responses will also be formally evaluated by the instructor utilizing a performance rubric.

Peer-Assessment

This model of assessment allows students to critique and assess one another according to the provided rubric. This is different from the "peer-review" activity during "Writers' Workshop" because students are not given the opportunity to revise and edit their own work after completing a peer-assessment.

Self-Assessment

Students will have the opportunity to reflect on and assess their own performance after each task is completed. While the culminating activity is essentially a self-reflection, the self-assessment allows students to be critical and objective of their own work in relation to the provided rubric and assignment expectations. In many lessons, the self-assessment serves to engage students within the process of revision, through using a completed response and adjusting the stylistic choices to make it appropriate for a given analytical lens.

Lesson Samples

The title of this section of lessons is Circe: Witch, Bitch or Feminist? In this series of lessons, students will adopt a feminist lens in order to successfully write a critical response through a feminist lens. Students will have multiple opportunities for formative assessment and feedback before the summative assessment in Lesson 4. Lessons are approximately 45-minutes in length, with the exception of Lesson 4 which could be elongated over two class periods.

It is understood that when examining literature through a feminist lens, there are important criteria to satisfy

when writing. Students in these lessons will be required to focus completely on the character of Circe and her relationships with other characters in the story. The lessons in this section begin with a short on-line segment which explains the style of analysis in easy to understand language. The narrator in the film clearly explains the technique which writers must employ to write from a feminist perspective. These talking points could easily be made into a supplementary worksheet or classroom display as a reminder for students during this section of the unit. The questions posed by the feminist analysis include, but are not limited to:

- "What analysis in this are the feminine issues raised by this text regarding sexuality and gender roles?"
- "How does Circe see herself?"
- "How do men in the text see Circe?"
- "What are the relationships Circe has with men in the story? What are her motivations?"

Sample Lesson 1: What is Feminist Criticism?

Objectives

- Students will identify the characteristics of feminist criticism.
- Students will engage in self and peer assessments.
- Students will practice the revision process.

Prerequisites

- Students should have read and discussed the plot of the story of Circe from Homer's, The Odyssey.
- Students should have practice in formal response writing.
- Students should know to use academic language (not slang) in formal writing.
- Students should have familiarity with self and peer assessments to aid in revision process.
- Students should have familiarity with "Writers' Workshop" process.

Materials

- Video: What is Feminist Criticism?
- "Assessment Checklist for Responding through a Feminist Lens"
- "Classroom Participation Rubric"
- White board
- Dry-erase markers
- LCD projector and viewing screen

- Internet connection

Strategies

- Initiation/"Do- Now":

Students respond in their journals to the following question written on the front board: "Circe

1. was a very powerful sorceress. In your opinion, does Circe represent a negative or positive example of a woman? Why?"
2. Students share their response with an elbow partner.
3. Student share their responses in a group discussion.

- Modeled/Guided Practice (Writing):

1. Students view the video: What is Feminist Criticism?
2. Students receive a copy of "Assessment Checklist for Responding through a Feminist Lens."
3. Students will self-assess their writing in reference to their own response to the "Do-Now" prompt.
4. Students will discuss their findings in a whole class discussion.

- Independent Practice:

1. Students revise answers according to their self-assessment.

- Partner Work:

1. Students exchange revised responses with an elbow partner.
2. Students complete the peer-assessment portion of the "Assessment- Checklist for Responding through a Feminist Lens" worksheet.

- Closure:

1. Students complete an exit slip answering the following: "If Odysseus is the main character in The Odyssey, why might a feminist response focus on Circe?"

Sample Lesson 2: Examining How Literary Elements Reveal Meaning in Fiction

Objective

- Students will analyze how literary elements are used to reveal meaning in fiction.

Prerequisites

- Students should have practiced annotating a text.
- Students should know literary elements: figurative language, imagery, symbolism.
- Students should have practice using text support/concrete details.

Materials

- Poem: "Circe" by Olga Broumas
- "Circe's Palace" in The Tanglewood Tales by Nathaniel Hawthorne
- White board
- Dry-erase markers

Strategies

- Initiation/"Do- Now":

1. Students respond in their journals to the following quotation written on the front board: "They tell me a woman waits, motionless till she's wooed." 2

- Who is "they?"
- What does this quotation reveal about the role of women in this author's culture?

2. Students share their response with an elbow partner.
3. Student share their responses in a group discussion.

- Modeled/Guided Practice/Group Work (Reading):

1. Students receive Olga Broumas' "Circe."
2. The teacher will read the poem aloud and ask student to follow along silently.
3. The teacher will make three long columns on the board, headed: figurative language, imagery, symbolism.
4. The teacher will ask students to find one example for each heading.
5. Students share responses in a group discussion.

- Group Work:

1. The teacher will divide the class into three groups: figurative language, imagery, symbolism.
2. Students read and annotate the poem for characteristics of feminine Identity/characterization for Circe that are revealed through the literary elements of figurative language, imagery, and symbolism.
3. Students will write answers under the correct headings on the front board as they are discovered in their respective groups.
4. Students will continue to annotate individual papers to be collected at the conclusion of class.

- Closure:

1. Students will share findings with the group in a large class discussion.

- Independent Practice/Homework:

- Students will annotate "Circe's Palace" for characteristics of feminine identity/characterization
1. for Circe which is revealed through the literary elements of figurative language, imagery and symbolism.

Sample Lesson 3: Analyzing Literary Criticism

Objective

1. Students will analyze a non-fiction article identifying Subject, Occasion, Audience, Purpose, Speaker and Tone (SOAPSTone).

Prerequisites

- Students should have practice using SOAPSTone to examine a non-fiction article.
- Students should have practice using text support/concrete details to support a thesis.

Materials

- Critique: "Circe; bad witch, feminist or just smart?" from A Bad Witch's Blog
- "Circe's Palace" from The Tanglewood Tales by Nathaniel Hawthorne

Strategies

- Initiation/"Do- Now":

Students will respond to the following prompt written on the front board: "Think about a

1. powerful woman you see in the media today. What character qualities does that person share with Circe? Be specific."
2. Students share their response with an elbow partner.
3. Student share their responses in a group discussion.

- Modeled/Guided Practice (Writing):

1. Students receive "Circe; bad witch, feminist or just smart?"
2. Students examine the article identifying Subject, Occasion, Audience, Purpose, Speaker, Tone. (SOAPSTone)

- Independent Practice:

1. Students make a T-chart in their journals.
2. Students identify quotations from "Circe's Palace" on one side which supports the author's opinions in the critique examined on the other side.

- Closure:

Students
will
participate
in a "whip
around"
and share
one
quotation
from
"Circe's
1. Palace"
that
supports
the
author's
thinking in
"Circe;
bad witch,
feminist or
just
smart? "

Sample Lesson 4: Writing a Feminist Response

Objectives

- Students will synthesize multiple sources to formulate a critical response through a feminist lens.
- Students will understand performance expectations as defined by a rubric.
- Students will practice citations in MLA format.

Prerequisites

- Students should have practice using text support/concrete details.
- Students should know how to make text-to-text connections to support a thesis.
- Students should know how to correctly cite fiction and non-fiction sources in MLA format.
- Students should understand the difference between the "passive" and "active" voice in formal writing and know not rely on the passive voice when writing academically.

Materials

- "Feminist Response Rubric"
- "Assessment Checklist for Responding through a Feminist Lens"

- Poem: "Circe" by Olga Broumas
- "Circe's Palace" from The Tanglewood Tales by Nathaniel Hawthorne
- Critique: "Circe; bad witch, feminist or just smart?" from A Bad Witch's Blog
- Lap Top computers/ scheduled Computer Lab time to begin typing essays.
- White Board
- Dry-erase markers

Strategies

- Initiation/"Do- Now":

1. Students receive a copy of the "Feminist Response Rubric" on their desks before entering class.
2. On the front board the teacher has written, "Please examine the rubric on your desk. Underline negative words and circle positive words."

- Modeled/Guided Practice (Writing):

1. The teacher draws a long horizontal line on the board with a (+) sign on the right end and a (-) on the left end.
2. The teacher invites students to come up to the board to write the words they underlined along the line, placing the words according to the quality they represent.
3. The teacher explains to students that this rubric will guide them as they write their response today.

- Independent Practice:

1. Students use information from class discussions and texts used in class to answer the following prompt: "Is Circe a witch, bitch, or feminist?"

- Closure:

- Students will complete an exit slip answering the following question: "Has looking through the
1. feminist lens at this story changed your initial impression of it? If so, how has your view changed? If not, why might this lens not appeal to you?"

Assessment Checklist for Responding Through a Feminist Lens

Name: _____

<p>Self-Assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Remains focused on the character of Circe <input type="radio"/> Gives concrete evidence to support thinking <input type="radio"/> Makes text-to-world connections <input type="radio"/> Refrains from personal connections <input type="radio"/> Remains in the active voice <input type="radio"/> Uses academic language, no slang <p>I now plan to make the following changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> _____ <input type="radio"/> _____ <input type="radio"/> _____ 	<p>Peer-Assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Remains focused on the character of Circe <input type="radio"/> Gives concrete evidence to support thinking <input type="radio"/> Makes text-to-world connections <input type="radio"/> Refrains from personal connections <input type="radio"/> Remains in the active voice <input type="radio"/> Uses academic language, no slang <p>Peer-Assessment completed by:</p> <p>_____</p>
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Classroom Participation Rubric

	0	1	2	3	4
Class Discussion	The student does not offer responses or participate in class.	The student offers responses to questions only when asked and responses do not fully explain choices and thinking. The student does not respond to additional questions.	The student offers very superficial answers which give a brief explanation of his or her choices, but there are few attempts at deepening his or her own understanding. The student cannot explain his or her choices and some choices may seem illogical.	The student's thinking shows a clear logical sequence, but the student has difficulty explaining his or her choices. The student makes attempts at practicing higher-ordered thinking skills, but requires scaffolding and guidance.	The student is able to participate fully in the classroom discussion with little to no support. The student's thinking shows a clear logical sequence which the student can easily explain.
Independent Work	The student does not participate.	The student has inconsistent participation during independent work.	The student participates consistently, but does not revise in response to critical and specific feedback.	The student participates consistently and does make attempts to revise in response to feedback; however, the student makes some errors.	The student participates consistently and does make attempts to revise in response to feedback and the assignment is completed successfully.
Exit Slip	The student makes no attempt.	The student provides a reason with no explanation or an inaccurate answer.	The student provides a correct reason with a brief explanation.	The student provides a correct reason, but his or her explanation is not reflective of understanding of the concepts learned.	The student provides an accurate reason and explanation which reflects an understanding of the concepts learned.

Feminist Response Rubric

	0	1	2	3	4
“Lens” Accuracy	The student makes no attempt.	The student focuses primarily on one or more of the male characters and the discussion of Circe in the response is limited, if present at all.	The student spends the majority of the response focused on other male characters in the plot, but does mention their connection to Circe.	The student focuses on Circe, but has a few instances where the other male characters in the plot are focused upon at length, without mention of their connection to Circe.	The student accurately remains focused on Circe throughout the response.
Text Support	The student makes no attempt.	The student uses one concrete detail.	The student uses concrete details, but many do not logically support his or her thinking.	The student uses too many or too few concrete details to support his or her thinking and/or the student does not utilize a variety of supplementary sources.	The student successfully uses concrete details from a variety of supplementary sources to support his or her thinking.
Originality of Thought	The student makes no attempt.	The student’s thinking is illogical and poorly supported. The student erroneously uses ideas brought up in class discussions.	The student accurately uses the discussions from class to complete the response with no new insights.	The student’s thinking is somewhat unique and original, but the argument posed uses few ideas beyond those brought up in classroom discussions.	The student’s thinking shows unique and original thinking beyond ideas brought up in classroom discussions.
Grammar/Usage	The student makes no attempt.	The student uses slang and non-academic language.	The student uses mostly academic language, but remains in the passive voice for most of the response.	The student uses academic language, but switches between active and passive voices often.	The student accurately uses academic language which remains in the active voice through the response.
MLA Citations	The student makes no attempt.	The student makes citations, but citations are not in proper MLA format.	The student makes many errors in citations.	The student makes few errors in citations.	The student makes no errors in citations.

Notes

1. Chaucer Name Dictionary entry for Circe.
2. Broumas, Olga, Circe.

Bibliography for Teachers

Eldritch Press. "A Wonder Book for Boys and Girls." The Complete Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne. Houghton Mifflin & Company. <http://www.eldritchpress.org/nh/wbpf.html>. (accessed July 5, 2010). A children's book of Greek mythology.

Eldritch Press. "The Tanglewood Tales." The Complete Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne. Houghton Mifflin & Company. <http://www.eldritchpress.org/nh/tt.html>. (accessed July 5, 2010). A children's book of Greek Mythology.

Garland Publishing, Inc. "Ceres/Circe." From Chaucer Name Dictionary. <http://www.columbia.edu/dlc/garland/deweever/C/ceres/htm>. (assessed July 5, 2010). An online resource where Ceres name appears and her character is discussed, as it was used in Chaucer's work.

Kansas State University. "Literary Criticism Map." Department of English. <http://www.ksu.edu.sa/colleges/art/eng/461-Eng/Literary%20Criticism%20Map.htm>. (accessed July 5, 2010). A useful map of various forms of literary criticism in relation to one another.

Reading List for Students

Broumas, Olga. "Circe." <http://itech.pjc.edu/cschuler/clt1500/Poetry/broumas.html>. (accessed July 5, 2010) A poem written about Circe by a feminist.

"Circe; bad witch, feminist or just smart?" From A Bad Witch's Blog <http://www.badwitch.co.uk/2009/07/circe-bad-witch-radical-feminist-or.html>. (accessed July 5, 2010). An online blog and feminist critique written about the character of Circe.

Eldritch Press. "Circe's Palace." In The Tanglewood Tales by Nathaniel Hawthorne, 1898. The Complete Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne. Houghton Mifflin & Company. <http://www.eldritchpress.org/nh/tt.html>. (accessed July 5, 2010). A re-telling of the story of Circe's for children.

Classroom Materials

Turner, Laura. "What is Feminist Criticism?" From eHow.

http://www.ehow.com/video_4872236_feminist-criticism_.html. (accessed July 5, 2010). A three minute film defining Feminist Criticism.

"Feminist Response Rubric"

- Teacher created rubric found in the unit

"Assessment Checklist for Responding through a Feminist Lens"

- Teacher created peer and self found in the unit

"Classroom Participation Rubric"

- Teacher created rubric found in the unit

Appendix- Implementing District Standards

While this unit addresses all four of the grade 9 Essential Questions listed in the New Haven Public Schools' Language Art Curriculum, the unit could be used at any point in the school year. This unit is intended to supplement and support the Significant Tasks in each marking period. This unit, like our curriculum, is built upon the Connecticut State English Language Arts Curriculum Framework.

Standard 1: Reading and Responding

- 1.2 Students interpret, analyze and evaluate text in order to extend understanding and appreciation.
- 1.4 Students communicate with others to create interpretations of written, oral, and visual texts.

Standard 2: Exploring and Responding to Literature

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2.2 Students explore multiple responses to literature.

2.4 Students recognize that readers and authors are influenced by individual, social, cultural and historical contexts.

Standard 3: Communicating with Others

3.1 Students use descriptive, narrative, expository, persuasive and poetic modes.

3.2 Students prepare, publish and/or present work appropriate to audience, purpose and task.

Standard 4: Applying English Language Conventions

4.1 Students use knowledge of their language and culture to improve competency in English.

4.2 Students speak and write using standard language structures and diction appropriate to audience and task.

4.3 Students use Standard English for composing and revising written text.

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