



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2011 Volume III: The Sound of Words: An Introduction to Poetry

More than Rhythm and Rhyme: An Acoustic Trek through the African American Experience

Curriculum Unit 11.03.10

by Waltrina D. Kirkland-Mullins

Introduction

Over the years, I have taught within inner-city public schools where African American children comprise the dominant make-up of the student population. For many of these students, reading and reading comprehension prove challenging. Reading test scores for black students are often disproportionately low as compared to their white counterparts. Reading and reading comprehension challenges include but are not limited to difficulties in the areas of phonemic awareness, decoding skills, minimal or non-exposure to literature outside of the school environment, reading fluently using intonation and expression, and relating to and understanding covered text.

In the New Haven, Connecticut, school district in which I teach, educators rigorously work to empower all students in these areas. In grades K through 2, major emphasis is placed on students learning phonics, word structure, graphemic sound patterns, basic syntax, and semantics. Picture books across genre and poetry selections are used to introduce children to the substance, sound, and meaning of words. By Grade 3, children are expected to put that scaffolded knowledge into action; statistics reveal that a number of students—again predominantly African American—continue to fall short of reaching that goal.

To help students forge ahead in these areas, state and district-mandated language arts frameworks and remedial support are provided and implemented by instructors. On a daily basis in regular education classrooms, teachers strategically zero in on small group instruction, guided reading, and interactive storytelling using picture book and/or reading- leveled chapter books resources primarily written in narrative form. Prosody practice—that incorporates the sound and meaning of words through the use of poetic works by popular American poets—is interspersed into classroom instruction. Via these teaching methods, young learners are immersed in the *sound* of words and the use of language to promote fluency in reading and reading comprehension. Although significant gains are made, many students continue to struggle in these areas. Could it be that we need to enhance and/or modify our approach in the way we introduce literature to children in the elementary grades, particularly in view of the reality that many children *still* require additional support in these areas at Grade 3? Would teaching language arts and select subjects from a *culturally responsive* perspective make a significant impact? I have developed **More Than Rhythm & Rhyme: An Acoustic Trek through the African American Experience** to serve as an affirmative response to these

questions.

Why Poetry & Social Studies from a Culturally-Specific Perspective?

Literature studies reveal that poetry draws on the senses, helping readers to see familiar things or facets of life often in engagingly new perspectives. Children enjoy hearing cadence, repetition, rhymed verses, and words that tickle the tongue like alliteration and onomatopoeia. They are eager to join in the rhythmic experience. Thus, poetry serves as an appealing tool to foster learning. ¹

Close examination of the oral tradition of black people reveals that rhythmic patterns and sound are an integral part of African American expression: it is experienced when we hear children jump rope to the cadence, rhythm, and sound of the words in syncopation with the twirling cord. It is heard when the pastor zealously preaches a church sermon, and the congregation chimes in with call and response. It is heard when blackfolk "play the dozens," a game where two individuals good humouredly compete against one another to determine who comes up with the better insult. It is experienced in traditional lullabies and myths-turned-into-song (like the 1950s rock-and-roll remake of "Stagger Lee"), and in jazz, hip hop and rap music. The poetic voice is steeped in the oral tradition of black people.

Education trends reveal that African American children (and other students of color) do not consistently or often substantively see themselves represented in children's literature and/or in the routine classroom curriculum. (Outside of introducing a few great blacks in history during the month of February, African American heritage is rarely well represented in elementary grade level Social Studies curriculum.) Poetry, thus, can lend itself as a powerful teaching tool to draw children into the classroom learning experience. The evidence is both visible and audible: it is heard when we listen to young learners enthusiastically respond to African American children's book author Eloise Greenfield's poetic work, "Rope Rhyme:"

Get set, ready now jump right in
Bounce and kick and giggle and spin
Listen to the rope when it hits the ground
Listen to the clappedly-slappedy sound... ²

The lyricism, rhythmic tone, cadence, and overall energetic sound of each word draws students into the jump-rope experience, helping them make text-to-world-to-self connections, ultimately increasing their reading and reading comprehension skills. African American poetry can too serve as an engaging, culturally-specific tool used to draw children into the classroom learning experience. What better way to enhance and strengthen fluency, intonation, oral expression, reading, and reading comprehension skills than by immersing young learners in the sound and significance of poetry with which they can identify! Keeping these realities in mind, I have elected to target the sound of the poetic voice— integrating Language Arts and Social Studies with emphasis on aspects of African American heritage—as a major focus in helping young learners strengthen language development and reading comprehension skills, ultimately helping them connect with the written and spoken word.

An Additional Thought

Many educators at the primary grade level are familiar with and often use vintage and/or contemporary poetic works created by wonderful children's book author's ranging from Mary Ann Hoberman ("A House Is A House for Me" and "Yellow Butter") and Margaret Wise Brown ("Good Night Moon") to iconic Mother Goose nursery rhymes, and more. Few instructors, however, can cite the names of poets (or children's book authors in general) from diverse cultures whose literary works prove equally engaging for young learners. This particularly holds true for works created by vintage and contemporary African American poets.

Best teaching practices reveal that teachers must be mindful of the cultural background and differentiated learning styles of all students within the classroom setting. ³ Teachers who truly embrace these practices will make use of children's literature across genre and cultures to academically empower their students. Although well intended, not all teachers are adept in embracing this practice, often relying on children's book resources with which they are most familiar—resources that are not always culturally sensitive or inclusive. Using this curriculum unit will serve as a springboard in countering this trend, allowing students to embrace one another across cultures.

More Than Rhythm & Rhyme can be implemented any time during the course of the year. I, however, suggest implementing it during mid-January, around Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday, into February during African American heritage month, through the first week of in April to kick off National Poetry month.

Laying the Foundation - Setting the Tone

Establishing rules and creating a welcoming, culturally-inclusive classroom environment is paramount at the start of the year. In the New Haven School District, we have an approximate four-week window to set the tone. Taking advantage of that aperture, strategically prepare daily lesson plans that target our course of study and ways to promote positive social interaction: I select children's book narrative and poetic resources that address specific behavioral concerns and/or positive concepts that young learners are expected to embrace. (I additionally immerse my students in the "Pledge of Allegiance," "This Land Is Your Land," "The National Anthem," and other patriotic works that have a poetic flair. Complementary picture books showing images of our nation and the diversity therein are shared. We evaluate the meaning of each patriotic verse so that the words are not just recited, but understood. On a day-to-day basis, we delve into our narrative selections. We begin with Patricia Polacco's "Mr. Lincoln's Way" and Helen Lester's "Hooway for Wodney Wat," stories that accentuate embracing diversity. [Note: I wrote a grant that allowed me to provide a hard copy of each book noted herein to all of my students. With copyright permission granted and for teaching purposes only, these works can be alternatively presented in acetate format and projected onto a screen or Smart Board for reading instructional use.]) Through shared reading and interactive read aloud, the children are introduced to the narrative voice. My young learners follow the storyline, zeroing in on the plot and overarching significance of the story theme. We subsequently map out and summarize the story. The children become active listeners, engrossed in the storytelling experience.

After having been immersed in the stories, I introduce our complementary poetry selections. Before beginning, I ask, "What makes a poem a poem?" The children respond providing their own interpretation. Using a K-W-L chart, I record their initial responses and subsequently share that I will introduce two poetic works: "I Am America and America Is Me" by African American author/photographer Charles R. Smith, Jr. and Russian-American poet/editor Arnold Adoff's "Black Is Brown Is Tan."

"I am America..." the poem—written in vivid letters and strategically differentiated-sized fonts—boldly begins. I read Smith's poem aloud using much intonation and expression as defined by the typeface and page layout. The lines assertively herald what it is to be American including everything from "being **proud** , diverse, soft-spoken, and **loud** " to wearing "big baggy jeans, **bandana raps** , blue denim jackets, and **backwards baseball caps** . ⁴ Rich in alliteration, short phrases, simile, and rhyme, the rhythmic work is metaphorically descriptive and energetic. Soft vowel sounds layered in rhythmic patterns within key and bolded words bring power to the text. "I am" accompanied by phrases that epitomize American style are repeated throughout, somewhat like the repetitive lines in a blues song or rap lyrics, placing emphasis on being a citizen of the U.S.A. Complemented by vivid photos of children across cultures, the work engages young readers to embrace one another as a diverse, American family—united. Young learners pick up on how some words are written in bolded letters and others in different font-sizes. They observe punctuation and phrasing, noting that the way the words are depicted impacts their sound. These attributes also help them put the accent on differences and "how cool yet common" our differences are. The words force readers see and hear that we have more in common with one another than not.

Autobiographic in content, I subsequently share Adoff's melodic work, which goes on to lyrically describe an interracial family relationship:

black is brown is tan
is girl is boy
is nose is face
is all the colors of the race... ⁵

Adoff's story-poem too melodically conveys a powerful message that loving, caring relationships know no color-boundaries—that we as a human family should come to embrace and value one another from the inside out. "Black Is Brown Is Tan" too is brimming with short phrases interspersed with lengthier lines, rhyme, consonance, assonance, simile, and onomatopoeia which give a feel of love dancing all around you. It also uses unconventional punctuation, i.e., the use of the lower case "i" throughout the piece that accentuates the insignificance of color and individuality as it pertains to human interaction.

Prosody Emphasized

After reading the two works, I ask the children to highlight what they notice about the sound of each poem. Again, I record their responses on our K-W-L chart. I highlight that poems contain literary elements that help to convey thoughts, feelings, and ideas in a literal or figurative form. Those elements include but are not limited to the use of simile, metaphor, alliteration, rhythm, rhyme, onomatopoeia, and cadence (i.e., beats in measured patterns). I note that poems also contain choice vocabulary, structured sentences and phrases (diction and syntax) specially selected by the author to help the reader experience that key message or image. Together, these elements create sound, and those sounds help to awaken the senses, causing the reader to experience time, place, action, emotion, and/or idea as it pertains to the poetic work.

As I read each poem, I encourage my young learners to listen closely and observe how the words are spoken based on the way they are situated on each page. Listening intently, my students are able to identify the narrator of the poem and the narrator's voice. I marvel at how they immediately connect with the *sound* of each poem. They indicate that the flowing words in both "I Am America and America Is Me" and "Black Is Brown Is Tan" spark a sense of *harmony* and *unity* : Words and sound collectively help them connect to internal feelings, personal experiences, and snippets of life as each verse progresses. I extend an invitation for my children to read along; they delight in the experience, giggling their way through the onomatopoeia, the similes, and metaphors that fill the air. We have fun revisiting each line and evaluating the meaning behind the words. I have whetted their whistle, letting my young learners know that through poetry, they can learn about themselves, others, and the commonalities between us. I too have laid the foundation for a teaching approach that will be revisited during the second and third quarter of the school year.

And So We Begin

Throughout the implementation of my curriculum unit, the overarching objectives will be to (1) introduce young learners to poetry and narrative works written by and/or about African Americans during 20th and 21st centuries; (2) help children grasp that the sound of poetry can be used to convey emotions, illustrate images and facets of life, and/or tell a story; (3) help young learners recognize that poetry consists of tones, rhythm, descriptive images and sound that collectively help to experience emotion and meaning; (4) help young learners make text-to-self-to-world connections using the sounds of poetry; (5) strengthen reading and reading comprehension skills via poetic voice; (6) develop prosody and fluency skills; and (7) create a classroom learning community built on experiencing, respecting, and celebrating one another across cultures.

Several poetry selections noted herein are accessible on-line and made reference to throughout this unit. Lessons will be implemented for an 8-to-10 week duration, three days per week for 50 minutes per session adhering to the following format:

Day 1. Using children's book narrative resources, conduct an interactive read-aloud session to provide background information regarding the time period and/or historic moment in American history. Where necessary, refer to maps, artwork, and photographic images to help students get a sense of place as it pertains to covered info. Encourage students to place themselves in the shoes of the characters, to use inference strategies to deduce what life might have been like during the noted time period. Have students engage in small group dialogue and call upon them to respond to key questions, strengthening their use of logical thinking, reading comprehension, and verbal skills.

Day 2. Introduce students to corresponding poems that complement the Day 1 activity. Introduce key vocabulary words prior to sharing the poem. Zero in on the sound of the poetic work. Assemble students in groups of 3 to 4 and provide them opportunities to collaboratively brainstorm on the main idea of the poem, using key words and/or phrases from the text to support their response. Have students further substantiate their understanding by connecting the sound and word structure of the piece with noted events and/or feelings and images they evoke.

Day 3. During small group instruction, have students revisit and identify the significance of each poem, with emphasis on the main idea and author's craft. Include copies of the poems in the Prosody Station for ongoing review and practice in enhancing fluency, intonation, and oral expression skills. Extension activities can be included.

Meet the Author: This extension activity can be implemented during centers or given as an alternative

classwork or homework assignment. After exploring the poem and the significance behind it, have students examine the life of the poet. (Refer to on-line biographic resources or create your own differentiated instructional handouts.) Have small student groups collaboratively discuss/argue/infer how the author's life may have influenced the poetic creation. This activity will help reinforce the use of logical thinking, oracy, reading, and reading comprehension skills while familiarizing students with new authors.

Week 1 - The Sound of African Beginnings

Day 1 - Read Aloud Selection: James Haskins' "African Beginnings"

This non-fiction resource presents background info regarding great empires that once existed in Africa pre-Columbus. Students will generally learn that Africa was once a thriving continent with flourishing nations—from Egypt and Mali to Timbuktu and Zimbabwe—whose reign proved both impressive and extensive. They too will learn that before the implementation of European chattel slavery, African people were involved in transcontinental commerce. Map studies, with emphasis on the use of directionality skills to locate geographic landmarks cited in the readings, will be incorporated into the lesson.

Day 2 - Poetry Selections: Eloise Greenfield's "Africa Dream" and Langston Hughes' "The Negro Speaks of Rivers"

Before beginning the reading of Greenfield's poem, introduce key vocabulary (i.e., *African descent*, *knelt*, *mangoes*, *village*, *hut* [to avoid stereotypical connotation, provide an alternate descriptor, i.e., *thatched-roof houses*]). Invite children to imagine long-ago Africa, to think about what life must have been like back then. Then, introduce Greenfield's poem, reading the opening lines slowly, methodically, rhythmically. Ask the children to close their eyes and listen intently as you read each line. The first stanza speaks of one traveling to long-ago Africa. The wording sparks images of an African elder or grandfather outstretching his arms to embrace an inquisitive child. On bended knee amid tall mango trees, knowledge and cultural wisdom are passed down, and spirit-filled family connections are rhythmically made.

Subsequently ask, "What sounds did you hear in the poem, and what did those sounds remind you of?" Responses will vary. Many of my students noted the words within each stanza made them feel cozy and welcomed. Cierrah—a child who rarely speaks up in class—shared that the words sounded soothing, like a lullaby. Avery commented that the words did not always rhyme like the poems he was used to hearing, but instead had a rhythm like that of a beautiful song. "What did you picture as you heard the words?" Responses again will vary: some students envision a person playing a *djembe* (a type of African drum) while others feel as if they were sailing across the ocean, drifting back to the past. Craigrianna noted the words made her feel connected to African people, as if African family members were reaching out to give her hugs, sharing how happy they were to meet one another.

Viewpoints shared, follow up with Langston Hughes' poetic creation. Before beginning, highlight that the term "Negro" was often used to describe black people during the Harlem Renaissance, a time period during which Hughes lived and became well known. Also introduce key words like *ancient*, *bosom*, *veins*, *dawns*, *dusky*, *lulled*, *pyramids* and the names of each river (the *Congo*, the *Euphrates*, the *Nile*, and the *Mississippi*) noted in the piece. (Note: Before and after introducing this poetic selection, have children locate the noted rivers on an overhead map. Through this interactive approach, children will experience the trek of black people from

African throughout key regions in the world.) Then, begin:

I've known rivers:

I've known rivers ancient as the world and older than
the flow of human blood in human veins... ⁶

I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.

I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.

I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it... ⁷

This poem, with its repetitive lines, has a jazz-like quality that melodically connects the reader to the African past. Once again, invite students to close their eyes and envision a scene based on the tone and cadence of words within Hughes' poem as you read aloud. Reading completed, ask, "What images come to mind as you heard to each line?" Several of my students explained they were drawn to the descriptive wording and cadence of the work, comparing it to the ebb and flow of a tide reaching the shoreline. Others zeroed in on the rhythm of the poem, stating it felt like waves splashing and crashing against the side of a boat, fast and slow, fast and slow. This point of view held true for several of my students who connected with this feeling in the first three lines. Kenya connected with the melodic flow of the wording, sharing that the words "the flow of human blood in human veins" made her feel like her life was floating into the past. As a culminating exercise, read the poem once more, this time having students clap out the melodic words to feel the rhythm.

Day 3. Include these poems in the Prosody Station for ongoing review and practice to enhance fluency, intonation, and oral expression. Introduce other children's book resources (see Bibliographic Resource listing) to familiarize students with additional background information on African culture past and present. Using acquired info and Greenfield's poem as a model, have students create a short prose piece highlighting what they experienced during their imaginary, long ago or present-day excursion.

Week 2 - The Sound of Slavery

Day 1 - Read Aloud Selection: Julius Lester's "From Slave Ship to Freedom Road" and Tom Feeling's wordless book, "Middle Passage—White Ships/Black Cargo."

Children will generally learn that as held true for many world cultures, slavery was an integral part of African society, but it was not as devastatingly dehumanizing as chattel slavery imposed by European nations, particularly the Portuguese, the Dutch, and the British. They will learn that between 10 to 15 million Africans

were stripped from their homeland, taken across the Atlantic to the Americas and Caribbean shores where they labored as slaves.

Day 2 - Poetry Selections: Carole Boston Weatherford's "The Capture"

Introduce students to Weatherford's prose and new vocabulary words contained therein like *Ayo* (which in the Yoruba language of Nigeria means "joy"), *treads*, *tangled*, *trod*, *warthog*, *elders*, *rustle*, *rifle barrels*, and *pondering*. Ask students to contemplate who the main characters are in this story poem and what images are evoked as they listen to its words and cadence. Provide the definition of "Ayo" and ask how its use impacts the meaning of the poem.

"The Capture," written in rhythmic prose, begins with a character, Ayo, being situated in what seems to be a dense equatorial forest area in his homeland on African shores. It appears he is on a hunt, part of a traditional rite of passage into manhood. Read the first 13 lines of the poem at a leisurely, even pace. However, change that speed as you near the end of the 13th line, where we find that Ayo is so immersed in the chase that he "does not hear the footsteps/of slavers behind him, the rustle/of ropes that will bind wrists and ankles/or the clink, clink of trade beads against rifle barrels...." ⁸When reaching the words "rustle/of ropes...", pick up the speed once more. Accentuate the "clink, clink" wording; then slow down the pace as you approach the final lines of the poem. Students who listen attentively will grasp that the poem does not rhyme in the traditional sense, but is rich in intonation, succinct phrasing, onomatopoeia, cadence, and descriptive vocabulary. They too will determine that the writing style is intentional, as highlighted below.

Upon listening to this work, my students noted that the beginning lines gave them a sense of comfort and well-being. D'Hati, a child who rarely participates in classroom dialogue, eagerly volunteered that he pictured a little boy proudly returning to his village showing off his catch to prove he had grown up and could take on manly responsibilities. Students also revealed that the sense of comfort and happiness changed as they came to the 14th and 15th line containing the words "rustle of rope..." For them, the sound and cadence of the subsequent wording sparked a sense of apprehension, as if something bad were about to happen. They noted that the phrasing and "choppiness" of certain words (like "Ayo does not hear the footsteps" in the 13th line and "the rustle" in the 14th line) made them recognize more than one person is being depicted. My students reemphasize that the characters seem to be walking in a clandestine manner through what could have been a savannah or dense equatorial forest locale. A few students also noted irregular rhyming patterns in some of the wording (i.e., "of slavers **behind**" and "ropes that will **bind**," "**Ayo**" does not "**know**")." Students made a connection with the fast and slow cadence, contrasting it with the sounds of someone being pursued. Avery noted he could feel Ayo panting, trying to escape the slave traders' clutches, and another youngster, Priscilla, noted it was too late, for she could feel the clank-clattering of the chains as if Ayo were being shackled. The poem has a cacophonous, John Coltrane-type jazz quality, letting the reader know the journey will be far from joyful.

Day 3. Include copies of the poem in the Prosody Station to enhance prosody skills and to review the main idea of Weatherford's work. Have the children incorporate hand gestures and body movement into the prosody practice experience. To extend the activity, have children role play traveling on board a slave ship, stolen from African shores headed to an unknown land. Make reference to the use of the name "Ayo" in Weatherford's work. Provide an alternative listing of African names with which students can identify for storywriting purposes. Subsequently have students write a narrative prose piece concerning their role-played slave ship journey, introducing themselves with an African name that in some way coincides with story poem events. (Refer to my 2002 curriculum unit, "Middle Passage: A Journey of Endurance" for background details.)

Week 3 - The Sound of Escape

Day 1 - Read Aloud Selections: Ellen Levine's "If You Traveled on the Underground Railroad" and Jeannette Winter's "Follow the Drinking Gourd."

These interactive children's book narratives give young readers a glimpse at what it was like to be an enslaved black. Levine uses a Q&A format to help children make text-to-self-to-world connections. Winter's work takes children on a narrative journey with Peg Leg Joe, a white abolitionist who helped fugitive slaves reach freedom at the Canadian border. Included at the end of this historical fiction work is a poem/song, based on 19th century amateur Texan folklorist H. B. Park's alleged song discovery, "Foller the Drinking Gou'd." Although not written by African American authors, these literary works are steeped in the African American experience and generally serve as a good source of background info.

Day 2 - Poetry Selections: Eloise Greenfield's "Harriet Tubman" and Jeannette Winter's "Follow the Drinking Gourd."

Ask the children to imagine what it must have felt like to be a black fugitive, making one's escape along the Underground Railroad—what does escaping to freedom sound like? Invite children to close their eyes as you read the opening lines of Greenfield's poem. Read with fervor, maintaining an even, medium speed and rhythmic pace as you proceed. The use of monosyllabic words helps build momentum as the poem progresses. Take advantage of the wording; dramatically read the second verse and intensify the speed. Maintain this pace through the second and fourth stanzas. The final stanza is repetitive of the first. Return to the fervent, medium speed, and rhythmic pace to bring the poem to a climatic end:

"Harriet Tubman didn't take no stuff
Wasn't scared of nothing neither
Didn't come in this world to be no slave
And wasn't going to stay one either..."⁹

The rhythmic cadence of Greenfield's poem helps students make metaphoric connections. My third graders noted that within the first four lines they heard boldness and bravery. As the poem progressed, the sound of the words evoked a sense of fear, perseverance, and urgency in Harriet's making her escape. I asked my children to listen to the poem once more, having them target a key aspect of the poem that helped to evoke this feeling. The children listened intently and began to identify how the use of monosyllabic words helped to create a fast-paced rhythm. "I can see and hear Harriet ducking and dodging through thick woods along the paths of the Underground Railroad," Trayonna shared. Craig noted, "I can hear Harriet Tubman rushing to get back down south to help others escape." Breyona commented, "Escape sounds strong like Miss Tubman and MY Gramma—they don't take no stuff!" The children's feedback revealed the use of key vocabulary coupled with the movement, rhyme, cadence and overall sound of the poem helped them connect with the storyline and spirit of the reading selection.

The folkloric poem/song included in Winter's book reveals that not all whites embraced the dehumanizing institution of slavery, but often took a stance against it. Each line is rich in enigmatically descriptive—and in some instances dialectic--language, cadence, rhythm, and rhyme, with repetitive lines strategically interspersed in between stanzas. (Refer to Page 32 in Jeannette Winter's book or download the wording to the song at http://www.followthedrinkinggourd.org/Appendix_Teachers_Guide.htm.) Before introducing the song, invite students to once again close their eyes and listen closely to the read words. Begin slowly, in a chant-like manner, maintaining this pace at each subsequent "Follow the drinking gourd" refrain. Quicken the tempo at "For the old man is waiting for to carry you to freedom" and slightly relax the speed for the remaining stanzas.

Children are attentive to the sporadic, fast-to-slow movement with which the piece is read. My students compared it with the sound of someone running, and then walking briskly from one place to another. They too note that the experienced cadence made them feel the journey was not easy, that there were obstacles in the way. When we got to the line "Left foot, peg foot traveling on, follow the drinking gourd ¹⁰," the children began to rhythmically stomp their feet as if they were trudging along. It was amazing to see the movement of the work internalized!

At this point, introduce the actual song. Young learners will quickly catch on to the melody. My students began using soft, slow voices, almost as if singing a lullaby to an infant. Their voices are intensified at the chorus, increasing in speed and intensity as they neared the line, "Left foot, peg foot..." We sang the song several times at the students' request. As soon as we finished, Achintya noted that he heard "fear and bravery" in the rhythm. Tiazeé shared she could hear hearts pounding, slaves whispering, and the quail calling—especially at the verse where the runaways neared the river. The children too noted that they heard excitement and anxiety in the verses, indicating that because of the cadence of the piece, they could hear and see the fugitive slaves making their way through the dark woods, hiding from those slavecatchers.

Day 3. Include copies of each poem in the Prosody Station for ongoing review and practice. Have students revisit the poems to enhance prosody skills and to reexamine the overall theme and main idea of each poetic work. To extend this activity, have children sing the lyrics to "Follow the Drinking Gourd," with select students role-playing the action and spirit of the song. (African American folksingers Kim and Reggie Harris' version on CD serves as an engaging complement; purchase or download a copy, and include it in your listening center along with printouts of the wording.) Additionally, include copies of Julius' Lester's "From Slave Ship to Freedom Road" in an independent reading center to provide additional background info for leisurely reading and informational purposes.

Week 4 - The Sound of Migration

Day 1 - Read Aloud: Jacob Lawrence's "The Great Migration: An American Story" and Walter Dean Myers' "Migration" poem contained therein.

Jacob Lawrence records African American history using tempera paint and canvas. His children's book (which includes Myers' poetic work on its final page) takes young readers on a visual journey from the American south to northern industrialized communities as experienced through the lives of blackfolk. On Day 1, introduce students to the pictorial images and accompanying text. Invite students step into the shoes of those

portrayed in each picture and envision what it must have felt like to leave one's community in search of a better life. Record student responses on chart paper.

Day 2 - Poetry Selections: Walter Dean Myer's "Migration" from Jacob Lawrences' "The Great Migration: An American Story"

This poem begins with someone sitting in a train depot waiting area. "With bible in calloused hands, the person nervously awaits a northbound train, leaving from Georgia, Carolina, or Alabama soil." ¹¹ Myer's work is steeped in imagery, idiomatic expression, and rich vocabulary. Before reading the poem aloud, introduce students to words contained therein: *ancient, calloused, humbled, unclasp*, to "*stare daggers* ." Then begin reading, initially at a slow pace and increasing in speed as you reach the second and third lines, particularly after the word "calloused" in Line 2 through "journey" in Line 6, slowing down again at the seventh line. Modify the cadence of each line as you continue, reading lengthier, polysyllabic sentences at a more increased speed, slackening the pace slightly at verses containing monosyllabic words. Also pause at strategic phrases. Students will immediately tune in to the rhythm. "It sounds like someone waiting in a huge train station--like in New Haven's Metro North train station, only long ago, and the person does not feel very comfortable," noted Craigianna. Many students hear a sense of nervousness and anxiety, particularly where reference is made to hands that "clasp and unclasp silently." "I can picture someone nervously rubbing his or her hands together like the person doesn't know where he/she is going or what to expect when he/she gets there," notes Tristan. Other students perceptively associate the rhythm and cadence of this work with the clattering, drum-like sound of a train pulling out of a station. Once again, sound and words help to create images and evoke comprehension using text-to-world connections.

Day 3. Have students revisit the poems to enhance prosody skills and to revisit the main idea and overall theme of Myer's poetic work. Extend the lesson by having children interview parents/family members to determine whether members of their family have ever migrated from one portion of our country (or the world) to another. Have students subsequently visit Jacob Lawrence's "The Great Migration" on-line art exhibition at <http://www.columbia.edu/itc/history/odonnell/w1010/edit/migration/migration.html>; using his artistic style as a springboard, have students create art to depict their family story.

Week 5 - The Sound of Prejudice

Day 1 - Read Aloud Selections: Mississippi Morning by Ruth Van Der Zee

This stirring work shows the insanity of racism as portrayed through the eyes of a southern white child, James William. The little boy learns that his father may be hosting meetings to promote the harassment of blacks in their hometown. In disbelief, James William questions his dad; the father puts his son's fears to rest, until one day, youngster makes a disheartening discovery.

Day 2 - Poetry Selections. Countee Cullen's "Incident" and Langston Hughes "Merry-Go-Round"

Before presenting "Incident" to young learners, send notices home to inform parents that you will be introducing the children to the works of Harlem Renaissance poet Countee Cullen. Indicate that Cullen's work portrays race prejudice in a child-friendly way and makes reference to the "n....." word. Emphasize that the

use of the word in this poetic selection will teach children the importance of avoiding the use of such denigrating epithets. (Providing advanced notification resulted in parent buy-in for my class. Should you encounter pessimistic parent responses, use Langston Hughes' "Merry-Go-Round" as an alternative poetry selection [see http://www.continuinged.ku.edu/hughes/files_city/woodland_park.html]. Children will grab hold to the cyclic sound and feel of Hughes' work, emphasizing a sense of confusion is evidenced by the Black child in the poem. [My students conjectured that the little boy or girl in the poem was (1) from the visiting an amusement park in the south and was not allowed to get on the Merry-Go-Round or (2) was visiting a place up North where Jim Crow laws were not enforced and was uncertain about where to sit on the carousel.]

Given the okay, invite the children to listen closely to Cullen's work which describes an eight-year old child's journey—perhaps on a bus or train—through old Baltimore, Maryland, one that because of a racial encounter, the child will never forget (see On-Line copy at <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/171327>). Introduce key vocabulary words like *Baltimorian*, *glee*, and *whit*. Then, read the poem, encouraging students to notice the cadence, sound, and feel of the work as you read it in its entirety. Then ask, "Did you hear the sound of prejudice? What does it sound like?" In the event there is no initial response, read the poem once more, but this time having the children clap out the rhythmic pattern:

I found that when the children first listened to the poem, some caught on to the 1-2, 1-2, 1-2, 1-2 beat in the opening lines, identifying it as a happy sound. They also associated the beat with a sense of movement, as if someone were traveling from one place to another. After rereading the poem, clapping out the rhythm the second time, the children grasped that that jovial feel continued up until the middle of the seventh line: the abrupt pause at the comma after "And so I smiled..."¹² in that line caused emotion to swell in the phrase that followed where the "n" word is used; the children recognized that abruptness right away.

At this point, I reiterate: "What is the sound of prejudice?" Achintya immediately responded, "Unexpected! I say this because the way we paused made me feel like the child did not expect to be called the "N" word." Our classroom discussion continued. "I hear sadness and disappointment," Kenya noted, adding that the beginning of the poem sounds happy and lively, but that the part that comes after when the child is called the "N" word sounded sad. Kenya indicated that the way I slowed down the wording towards the end of the poem helped to create this mood. Like a rhythm and blues song, this poem portrays hope knocked down by disappointment. My students heard the unexpected hurt loud and clear.

I subsequently ask, "Who is speaking in this poem?" Hands went flying. "I think it's a black child—maybe a boy or girl visiting someone in Baltimore," Isaiah shared. "Even though it seems to be a black child, this poem can be about anyone who calls someone a bad name," Priscilla and Emma asserted. The sound and content of the poem sparked candid discussion on why we should not use derogatory, marginalizing language to describe anyone. "We're all part of the human family, and because of that, we should respect one another," we all agreed. The sound, rhythm, and movement of Cullen's work served as an invaluable reading comprehension resource and social development tool.

Day 3. Have students revisit the poems to enhance prosody skills and to review the overall theme and significance of each work. Using the first-person voice, have children create a journal insert, putting themselves in the shoes of the character depicted in Cullen's "Incident." Have children read their journal inserts to peers. Include copies of "Merry-Go-Round" in the Computer Center. Have students conjecture why Hughes' wrote the poem; follow up by having them visiting http://www.continuinged.ku.edu/hughes/filescity/woodland_park.html to learn the inspiration behind Hughes' poetic creation. Have students view a snippet of authentic film footage from the 1955 Montgomery, Alabama

Bus Boycott and impact of the implementation of Jim Crow Laws at <http://www.tolerance.org/kit/mighty-times-legacy-rosa-parks>.

Additional Extension Activity: Depending upon the maturity of your students, introduce Harlem Renaissance poet Sterling Brown's work, "Old Lem." This poem, which has a rhythm-and-blues feel (you can imagine B. B. King playing his guitar in the background), begins with the narrator describing his "six foot of a man, muscled up perfect, game to the heart" ¹³ buddy, Old Lem. Rich in imagery and colloquial language, the words reveal that Old Lem is a strong, hard-working individual who opts to boldly stand up for himself if and when the need arises, despite Jim Crow practices too often encountered by black men in the South. The words "they don't come by ones, they don't come by twos, they come by tens" are hauntingly and strategically repeated throughout key moments within the work. The words, combined with cadence and rhythm, bring to mind vivid pictorial images of a mob lynching in a rural southern town. (I introduced this sophisticated work to my students because they had already experienced a VHS film regarding the 1955 Montgomery, Alabama bus boycott and related children's literature the civil rights era.)

Before presenting Brown's work, introduce key vocabulary words like *commissary*, *whippersnapper*, *spindling boys*, *figgers* and *somersets* (southern colloquial terms for "figures" and "somersaults"), and the dialectic terms " *hangtailed hounds*, *muscled-up-game-to-the-heart*, and *thankya sah*." While reading, strategically pick up the cadence and overall rhythm of the work. Subsequently ask students what feelings and images does the wording in "Old Lem" evoke? My students zeroed in on the use of onomatopoeia, strategic use of dialect, and the overall tone of the poem. Many said they heard strength, courage, determination in the lines that described Old Lem. They added they could hear conflict, race prejudice, hatred, and gang violence because of the cadence and rhythm of the poem, particularly as the refrain "they don't come by ones..., they don't come by twos..., they come by tens..." intensified. When we reached the last line, the children knew Old Lem had met with a tragic end. Refer to Brown's poem in its entirety at <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/237922> to determine if the use of this work is suited for your young learners.

Week 6 - The Sound of Kindredness

Day 1 - Group Share: Kwame Dawes' "Didn't I See Your Face"

Preliminary Activity: (Many worldwide cities are cited in Dawes' poem. Before using this book, prepare Post-It labels reflective of each city noted therein. The labels will be used during an interactive map study activity to highlight key locations specified in the poem. The use of an oversized map or Smart Board map image will be required. In this regard, poetic content and elements will be introduced on Day 2).

Open the day's lesson with a discussion regarding the trek of black people throughout the world. Then ask, "Based on our classroom studies to date and, where applicable, based on personal experience, in what parts of the world might black people reside today?" Allow students to share their views. Record their input on chart paper. Responses will vary and are oftentimes remarkable. (Several of my students noted that black people can be found throughout the Caribbean and parts of South America because of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and because of migratory trends that took place long ago. A few made personal connections because they came from mixed-race families and had had opportunities to travel abroad and see for themselves; they noted that black people can be found in such countries as France, Italy, and Ireland.)

Share that the distribution of black people throughout the world is referred to as the "Africa Diaspora" and that today they will examine Dawes' work to take a closer look at that phenomena. Before reading the poem, introduce the names of key places cited within the text. Also review directionality cues (i.e., north, south, east...). Read Dawes' work aloud. Encourage students to listen out for the names of cities cited within the text. After reading the poem, conduct an interactive map session. Using directionality cues, call on students to come up and post the appropriate labels on the map. Subsequently, have them identify the country and continent in which each city is located. Record their findings on chart paper.

Day 2 - Poetry Selections: Kwame Dawes' "Didn't I See Your Face"

Reintroduce Dawes' poem, this time encouraging students to examine its poetic content, closely listening to its musical feel. Filled with rhythm, unpredictable cadence, and strategic rhyme, Dawes' words invite young readers to jump right in! Read as if you are engaged in conversation with someone with whom you are familiar. Gently introduce the opening lines and maintain an enthusiastic feel throughout, until the last four lines of the poem, where a bit more intensity should be added, ending the work in an assertive tone:

I saw your face in Benin
And in Ghana near Takoradi
Then there on the plains of Bahia
Your gentle eyes said hi
I saw that face in Kingston
Under a green cocoa tree
And when I stopped at a Castries market
Those same eyes welcomed me... ¹⁴
...Everywhere I turn I see you there
In the flat wetlands and on windswept coasts.
I see your face look back at me
Full of ancient stories and dreams
That tell me we have traveled far
And survived the journeys well. ¹⁵

Ask students to zero in on the sounds experienced in the poem. Student responses will once again vary. Most of my students were fascinated by the names of the cities cited throughout the work. Tristan noted that the sound of "Takoradi" and "Kinsasha" made him see African people because they sounded like African names. When he heard the word "Brixton," he thought of Great Britain, because Brixton and Britain begin with a similar pronunciation. Craigrianna noted that when she heard "Castries' market," she thought of Caribbean countries like St. Lucia and Jamaica, where her family comes from. Dashaun noted that the cadence of the poem sparked a sense of movement, as if someone were traveling from one place to another. For others, the repetitive use of the line "I saw that face" seemed cyclic, sparking the sound of connectedness and familiarity. The use of that repetitive line helped readers experience that despite the miles between them, black people throughout the world are very much connected. Time and resources permitting, conclude this session by showing photo images of a few cited cities and its people to help students make deeper geographic connections. Follow up with an extension activity, having students share their views regarding why Dawes concludes his poem with the four closing lines noted above.

Day 3. Have students revisit the poems to enhance prosody skills and to review the overall theme and significance of the poetic work. During computer center time, allow students in groups of 4 to take a virtual tour of many of the places cited in Dawes' work (see On-Line resources). Have computer center-team students work together to find key facts about a select city featured in the poem. Allot 1 to 2 minutes for students to share their discoveries with classmates. Subsequently have them collectively create a travel brochure about the visited site. This will help students make a deeper text-to-global community connection.

Week 7 The Sounds of Perseverance, Possibility, and Pride

Day 1 - Introduce the "Book of Black Heroes from A to Z: An Introduction to Important Black Achievers for Young Readers" and the "Book of Black Heroes, Scientists, Healers & Inventors," both compiled and created by Wade Hudson. Use these non-fictional resources as a springboard to introducing great blacks in history who have overcome obstacles to become significant contributors to American society.

Days 2 and 3 - Poetry Selections: Naomi Long Madgett's "Midway," Tupac Shakur's "The Rose That Grew from Concrete," and Nikki Giovanni's "The Drum." Before introducing these poems, highlight that each is rich in metaphoric images. Revisit the term "metaphor." Call on students to share their interpretation of its meaning. (My ELL student, Priscilla, defined it as "a creative, non-literal way to describe a thing or idea.") Metaphors defined, begin with the first poem selection.

First, introduce Detroit Poet Laureate Naomi Long Madgett's "Midway" (see <http://www.crmvet.org/poetry/amadgett.htm>). Invite the children to identify the metaphors as they listen to the work. Additionally ask them to zero in on the sounds they hear and images that the sound evokes. Then dive into "Midway's" rhythm, cadence, and rhyme. The 1-2, 1-2, 1-2-type pattern that seems to exist in the first two lines of each stanza compel one to maintain a steady, moderate speed. Strategically pause at the end of shorter verses, picking up the tempo.

Add extra "oomph" as you reach the poem's final line. When I read Madgett's work in this manner, my students said it initially sounded as if someone were struggling to climb a steep mountain, and the individual was determined to keep trudging until he or she made it to the top. We elaborated on how it must feel to

climb a steep mountain, being sore and tired yet determined to reach the top. "What other sounds did we hear in this poem?" I modeled the reading again, having my students repeat after me, line by line. They grabbed hold of the cadence, rhythm, and energy and ran with it. Craigianna and Emma shared that the poem sounded like people marching together to protest Jim Crow laws in the south during the civil rights movement. Others related it to a civil rights song we had learned entitled, "Walk Together Children." For them, the words sounded like encouragement and perseverance. The experiential use of sound sparked understanding.

Lightbulbs went off for many of my students! Dashaun added that the old dirt track seemed to be a metaphor for someone's life being long and hard. I affirm their perspectives, stating that the words in the poem were metaphoric because they describe life circumstances through the use of imagery. Markel noted that one steep mountain may have been Rosa Parks being arrested because she refused to give up her seat to a white passenger even though she was sitting in the colored section. Such discussion serves as a great segue into having students answer why the poet may have written "Midway?" In addition to making use of poetic content, urge students to make use of personal connections or personal knowledge based on non-fictional readings to substantiate their response. Many students noted that the poet may have been talking about Dr. King and how people fought for equal rights during the civil rights movement. The experiential use of sound once again helped to bring subject matter to life. Upon completing the review of Madgett's poem, have students visit to learn why she actually created the poem.

Day 3: Because Tupac Shakur's and Nikki Giovanni's poems are short pieces, introduce them on the following day. Tupac's poem (see <http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/the-rose-that-grew-from-concrete-2/>), an autobiographical work, takes on an assertive, conversational style like that of a rapper. Before reading it aloud, introduce the words "concrete," "rose," and "nature's laws" contained therein. Ask students to define the attributes of concrete and a rose, to think about why Tupac makes reference to these objects in his poem. (Markel noted that concrete was hard, like the sidewalks we walk on. Misaelyz noted that concrete is man-made and that nothing can grow through it.) General definitions provided, subsequently read Tupac's poem, using a quick cadence in the first line, adding emphasis with varied intonation between short phrases and lengthier lines. Have the children once again attentively listen:

Upon completing the last line, ask, "What or who might the rose be?" You will find that children make extraordinary connections! Dashaun immediately responded, "The rose could be a person who might live in a rough neighborhood where a lot of bad things go on—but the person is not giving up. He's gonna make it, like me!" "The poem sounds like someone trying to escape from something, hoping to be free" Craig added, noting that the cadence in third and fourth lines sounded as if the words were pushing against one another other trying to get out. Breyona shared that the "learning to walk" were written using the digit "2" instead of being written out in word form. "Maybe Tupac is writing about someone who may not be a good student in school. That person doesn't know how to spell, but even though he didn't spell out the word, he wrote it down in his own way, and that shows the person is trying!" The entire class agreed that the poem overall sounded like "hope." (Wow! My children students were using those metacognitive skills, making text-to-world-to-self connections!)

Follow up with Nikki Giovanni's "The Drum." (Refer to an enlarged copy of this poem at http://www.eggplant.org/pdf/poetry/drum_giovanni.pdf). Read the opening line using a strategic rhythm, followed by an emphatic pause before the words "tight and hard," and a bit of attitude in the last two lines. I read it twice, urging my students to close their eyes as they listened the second time. "What sound did you hear as I read this poem? What message does the sound convey?"

My students noted that the words took on a drumbeat-like quality. We reread the lyrical verse again, this time clapping out the rhythm. Kai—a child who at the beginning of the school year struggled with oral expression—noted, "I hear strength in this poem. It also tells me not to worry about other people. Be a leader, not a follower and have your own style!" As a closing exercise, have students revisit each of the three poems to enhance prosody skills and revisit the significance of each work.

Bringing It All Together - A Culminating Activity

Sponsor a special poetry presentation to show-case your students understanding and creative know-how regarding all that has been learned. Showcase the event in your classroom or in a designated performance space within your school. Whichever venue is selected, invite guests (i.e., parents, fellow grade level classmates, community members...) to attend the gala affair.

To prepare for the event, as a classwork and/or follow-up homework assignment, have students revisit the poetic selections to reconnect themselves with feelings and images evoked therein. Then designate student teams to perform select poems. Assemble students in teams of 3 to 4, having them practice getting into character. As an accompaniment to oral expression, encourage students to think about body movements and hand gestures that could be used to convey concepts reflected in each poem, like family, freedom, traveling, escape... Have them role play human emotions like anger, sadness, elation, fear, hate, love, indifference, selfishness, courage, and more. The primary goal here is to help students internalize the sound and feel of poetry, bringing words to life and conveying meaningful messages in oral and visual form.

Additionally give students creative autonomy to decide how they will introduce and present each poem; the teacher serves only as a facilitator: Allow students to create and/or select costumes and props (you will find that parents are very accommodating in helping out in this regard, particularly when advanced notification is given). Students begin to take ownership for program preparation, and the energy becomes contagious. Collectively determine a title for the program (my class came up with "We've Come A Long Way - A Celebration of Black History in Poetry and Song" followed by the wording: "We have read many books about different aspects of Black History, and we have learned many poems that highlight the black experience. We will now present a bit of what we have learned. We hope you enjoy the journey!" Give students the option of including an introductory statement before presenting each poem to accentuate the moment in time being conveyed. Concluding this unit study with a culminating activity of this nature validates our children's having made a solid connection between the sound and meaning of words. Most important, it helps children embrace aspects of American culture in a culturally-inclusive way, drawing others to join in the learning experience!

Teacher Resources

Delpit, Lisa. *Other People's Children*. New Press, 1st Edition. (August 1, 2006). A must-have resource for all instructors compelling educators to go beyond cultural comfort zones to enhance learning experiences for all students.

Franklin, John Hope. *From Slavery to Freedom*. Vintage Books, New York (1992). Provides an objective look at the Africa Diaspora,

beginning with great empires of Africa through the transatlantic slave trade and Black achievement in the 20th century.

Heard, Georgia. *Awakening the Heart: Exploring Poetry in Elementary and Middle School*. Heinemann, Portsmouth, New Hampshire (1998). Insightful re: how to teach poetry across grade levels.

Hughes, Langston. *The Langston Hughes Reader: The Select Writings of Langston Hughes*. George Braziller, NY (1981). Wide range of collected works by this Harlem Renaissance Poet Laureate.

Koch, Kenneth. *Rose, Where Did You Get That Red: Teaching Great Poetry to Children*. Vintage Books, New York (1990). For the leery-about-teaching-poetry instructor, this is a must-have resource!

Ladson-Billings, Gloria. *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children*, 2nd Edition. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA. (March 2009). Addresses cultural and societal aspects of education issues, emphasizing culturally relevant teaching practices.

Livingston, Myra Cohn. *Poem-making: Ways to Begin Writing Poetry*. Harper Collins, New York (1991). Good info on how to introduce children to the different voices and elements of poetry, from limericks to free verse and open form to haikus.

McCormick Calkins, Lucy. *The Art of Teaching Writing*. Heinemann. Portsmouth, NY. Provides creative, research-based approaches re: motivating to become engaged, blossoming writers across genre.

Norton, Donna E. *Through the Eyes of a Child: An Introduction to Children's Literature*. Seventh Edition. Pearson/Merrill-Prentice Hall. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, and Columbus, Ohio (2007). An extraordinary teacher resource that encompasses literature across genre as an empowerment tool for young readers. A must-have teacher resource.

Watson, Steven. *The Harlem Renaissance: Hub of African American Culture 1920-1930*. Pantheon Books, New York, 1995. Background resource highlighting America's history and great writers of the era.

Children's Book Resources

Adoff, Arnold. *Black Is Brown Is Tan*. Amistad/Harper-Collins Publishing Company, NY (2003). An engaging poetic creation that celebrates the family, interracial marriage, and love that knows no race boundaries.

Adoff, Arnold and Brooks, Gwendolyn. *Poetry of Black America: Anthology of the 20th Century*. Harper Collins Children's Books, NY (1973). A wonderful collection of poetic work by contemporary African American poets.

Feelings, Tom. *The Middle Passage: White Ships- Black Cargo*. Dial Books, NY (1995). A beautifully-depicted pictorial essay of the dehumanizing journey. With an introduction by Dr. John Henrik Clarke, this work stirs the imagination and takes an explicit look at the slave trade as seen through the eyes of a master artist.

Harris, V. J. (1991). *Multicultural Curriculum: African American Children's Literature*. *Young Children*, 46 (2), 37-44. [EJ 426 223]

Heard, Georgia. *Songs of Myself: An Anthology of Poems and Art*. Mondo Publishing, New York (2000). A wonderful anthology of poems with which all children can relate.

Hudson, Wade. *Pass It On: African American Poetry for Children*. Scholastic Press. (March 1993). A wonderful collection of poems

across genre written by such African American writers as Eloise Greenfield, Paul Lawrence Dunbar, Nikki Giovanni, and more.

Rampersad, Arnold and Roessel, Editors. *Poetry for Young People: Langston Hughes*. Sterling Publishing Company, New York (April 2006). An introduction to the life works of Langston Hughes.

ON-LINE RESOURCES

Brain Pop, Jr. Background Information and Activities on Author Eloise Greenfield

<http://www.brainpopjr.com/readingandwriting/authors/eloisegreenfield/grownups.weml> Provides Eloise Greenfield bio (accessed June 8, 2011).

Carole Boston Weatherford. <http://www.caroleweatherford.com/> Provides background info on this poet and more (accessed May 8, 2011).

Nikki Giovanni. <http://nikki-giovanni.com/bio.shtml> Provides background info on this award-winning poet (accessed July 5, 2011).

African Success. <http://www.africansuccess.org/visuFiche.php?id=781&lang=en> Kwame Dawes bio (accessed May 3, 2011).

Walter Dean Myers. <http://www.walterdeanmyers.net/bio.html> Walter Dean Myers bio.

Langston Hughes. <http://www.kansasheritage.org/crossingboundaries/page6e1.html> Biographic sketch (accessed May 10, 2011)

Naomi Long Madgett <http://naomilongmadgett.com/Biography/Bio.htm> Biographic sketch (accessed May 22, 2011).

Library of Congress. http://www.loc.gov/today/cyberlc/feature_wdesc.php?rec=4403 Webcast presentation introducing Charles R. Smith; brief bio and select works.

Poetry Selections

Brown, Sterling. *Old Lem* <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/237922> Harlem Renaissance poetic work (accessed May 22, 2011).

Cullen, Countee. *Incident*. <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/171327> Harlem Renaissance poetic work (accessed May 22, 2011).

Giovanni, Nikki. *The Drum*. http://www.eggplant.org/pdf/poetry/drum_giovanni.pdf Poem in downloadable PDF version (accessed May 22, 2011).

Greenfield, Eloise. *Harriet Tubman*. <http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/16485> Poetic work (accessed April 3, 2011).

Hughes, Langston. *Merry-Go-Round*. http://www.continuinged.ku.edu/hughes/files_city/woodland_park.html "Poem with background details why Hughes created the poem (accessed April 2, 2011).

Long Madgett, Naomi. *Midway*. <http://www.crmvet.org/poetry/amadgett.htm> Poetic work (accessed April 3, 2011).

Shakur, Tupac. *The Rose That Grew from Concrete*. <http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/the-rose-that-grew-from-concrete-2/> Poetic work (accessed May 3, 2011).

Owen's Sounds Black History. <http://www.osblackhistory.com/drinkinggourd.php> Poetic lyrics and reasoning behind song creation, "Follow The Drinking Gourd (accessed June 8, 2011)

A Lovely World <http://www.alovelyworld.com> Visual images of select countries and cities from around the world, accessed March 20,

2011.

Time for Kids – Go Places. <http://www.timeforkids.com/TFK/kids/hh/goplaces> Child-friendly site that contains visual images of select countries and cities from around the world (accessed March 20, 2011).

National Geographic for Kids. <http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/kids/places/find/> Another geographic images resource for children (accessed March 21, 2011).

Handler, Jerome S. and Tuite, Jr., Michael L. <http://hitchcock.itc.virginia.edu/Slavery/search.html> A visual record of the Atlantic slave trade and slavery in the Americas, accessed July 1, 2011.

Teachers College Record Volume 111 Number 1, 2009, p. 214-247 <http://www.tcrecord.org/content.asp?contentid=15210> ID Number: 15210, Date Accessed: 5/22/2011 12:33:20 PM Culturally Responsive Differentiated Instruction: Narrowing Gaps Between Best Pedagogical Practices Benefiting All Learners

Guion, Lisa and Diehl, David C. *Enhancing Instruction to Connect with Diverse Audiences* <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fy752> PDF Publication CS9226 (accessed June 11, 2011)

Planning Programs to Break Down Barriers – Program: A Six-Part Curriculum.
<http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/agexed/aee521/class12/diversity.doc> A general guide re: cultural norms as they apply to learning styles (accessed June 10, 2011).

<http://www.behindthename.com/nmc/afr.php> List of West African names, some of which can be selected for use with storywriting activity.

Endnotes

1 Norton, Donna. "Rhythmic Patterns of Language" from *Through the Eyes of A Child: An Introduction to Children's Literature*," p316

2 Greenfield, Eloise. "Rope Rhyme" from "Honey, I Love," p15

3 Guion, Lisa and Diehl, David C. "Enhancing Instruction to Connect with Diverse Audiences" <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fy752>

4 Smith, Jr., Charles. "I Am America"

5 Adoff, Arnold. "Black Is Brown Is Tan," p1

6 Hughes, Langston. "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" from "I Am the Darker Brother: An Anthology of Modern Poems by Negro Americans," p24

7 Ibid., "The Negro Speaks of River," p24

8 Weatherford, Carole Boston. "The Capture," from "Remember the Bridge: Poem of A People," p12

9 Greenfield, Eloise. "Harriet Tubman" from "Pass It On: African American Poetry for Children" selected by Wade Hudson, p23

10 "Follow the Drinking Gourd" http://www.followthedrinkinggourd.org/Appendix_Teachers_Guide.htm

11 Myers, Walter Dean. "Migration"

12 Cullen, Countee. "Incident"

13 Sterling Brown. "Old Lem"

14 Dawes, Kwame. From "I Saw Your Face" written by Kwame Dawes, p1-4, Used by permission of Kwame Dawes.

15 _____ . From "I Saw Your Face," p22-25.

Appendix

This unit correlates with the Connecticut Framework K-12 Curricular Goals and Content Standards for Language Arts, Social Studies, and the Arts. Upon being immersed in select children's narratives and poetic works and scaffolded instruction noted herein:

Reading, Responding, & Producing Texts. Students will describe their thoughts, opinions, and questions that arise as they read and listen to a text and use relevant info from the text to summarize the content; use what they know to identify characters, settings, themes, events, ideas, relationships, and details found within the text; work both individually and collaboratively re: collecting and examining poetry; and will read, share, and constructively critique their creative writings with partners in this regards..

Applying English Language Conventions and Exploring & Responding to Text. Students will understand that words and expressions convey meaning and in many instances have evolved and/or changed over time; declare their opinions about each of the works read, listened to, and viewed, subsequently evaluating them according to such features as character development, narrator's voice, conflict and theme.

History, Historical Thinking, & Social Studies Literacy. Students will gather historical data from multiple non-fictional, narrative, and poetic sources; identify the main idea from within those provided sources; identify ways different cultures record their history, and compare past and present situations and events; and present findings in appropriate oral, written, and visual ways, recognize that people develop traditions that transmit their beliefs and ideas, explain different types of conflict, and different ways in which conflicts have been resolved.

Acting & Technical Production. Students will imagine and clearly describe characters and their relationship to their environment through dramatic role play and expression; collaboratively plan and prepare improvisations and demonstrate various ways of staging classroom and/or performance space dramatizations for select poetic works.

<https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu>

©2019 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University

For terms of use visit <https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu/terms>