



Portraits of Pride: Young Adults Question Their Roles Using Visual Arts

Curriculum Unit 12.01.03
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Introduction

Every teacher wants to reach all of her students. I noticed very clearly this year that my male students were trailing behind their female counterparts. Not unaware of current data, I knew that this problem was much bigger than my own classroom. Still, I know that I have a role in improving education for young males. Working with African American males, the need to succeed with them was greater as underprivileged black males are one of the highest risk groups in our nation. To be an effective teacher, I would have to learn more about my male students.

I began my research online, searching for how males learn differently from females. Then, I looked into how black males in the inner city learn differently from other groups. In my research, I found one fact that turned up over and over: males learn well with images. I began to incorporate more graphic organizers and visuals in my lessons, making sure there were images on every handout. What I really want to move to, though, is a meaningful integration of images into my lessons, an explicit purpose for each image.

Theory Into Practice: Unit Contents

My unit could be titled any number of things, including "Be a Man." Ultimately, students will produce a work of art that addresses what it means to be a man or woman in America today. To begin to think about this, students will learn what "being a man" meant 150 years ago. Images to study will include those of young children through adults, from all walks of life. They will ask what was expected of men and women, and how each gender lived up to those expectations. Students will use what they learn from these images to create their own visuals. Students will be asked to describe their image orally and in writing. This way, we will be able to discuss current issues around masculinity and femininity. The images presented will serve as a springboard, too, for discussions.

Currently, I use images to illustrate a point or to grab attention. With my unit, I want to read images, to

understand a concept or topic through an image. To appeal and relate to young black males, I will bring them in on a relevance side, starting by asking them "What makes a man?" From here we can discuss images in the current media, which is important to teaching any reluctant learner. They need information to be tied to something they already know and/or enjoy. Once they are in on this ground level of analyzing recent images, we will travel back in time to the second half of the nineteenth century.

There is another part of "Being a Man." Students will have to work together, to unite, to understand a concept. Structured discussions around a historically significant image will give them the opportunity to practice speaking and discussing with others in an orderly environment. It can be difficult to talk without anything in front of you. The images will allow students something to focus on beside themselves. That is to say that they will feel more open to discussion because all students will be looking at an image, not at the speaker. I think that this type of discussion-building will prove a useful scaffold for even the most introverted students.

We will ask about the realities of life in the late nineteenth century and compare these with the images. Then comes the critical question: *Why is there a difference between reality and art?* We will study how fiction impacts non-fiction. Interestingly, we will include these phenomena in the final project portraits. Students will be invited to include fiction in their image if they can include why it is there. I hope that some students use this as an opportunity to imagine something wonderful for themselves. As they explore reality versus fiction in the Victorian Era, they will question their own perceptions of truth.

Students will also think about the origin of male and female ideals and mores. Where did these expectations for men and women originate? Who designed them? Who bought into them? Have they bought into them? The images will be presented such that a timeline is understood. Though images do not need to be given in a progression, they will be related to each other chronologically so that students can see the evolution of male and female tropes during this time period. Teens are notorious for thinking that they discovered everything. I wonder if this explicit direction of looking at the origins of male and female roles will open their eyes and help them to trust the authority and knowledge of others.

Another key aspect of their portraits will be the use of symbols, both present and historical. For example, my own portrait at age fourteen would have included a woman, not a teen, at the center carrying books and perhaps a ruler. This would symbolize my future as a teacher. Behind me, thus symbolizing a part of the past, would be fuzzy groups of girls leaving me out. To the side of me and not nearly as far behind would be my parents, grandparents, and sister, probably looking at me. They might be holding car keys, a world map, and bicycles. These would symbolize the car that I would drive, thus giving me freedom and the ability to take myself places. The world map seems obvious, but it represents two things: both our ancestors and the journeys they made as well as our future travels, the evidence of the wealth those ancestors began. The bicycles would symbolize my father's store, the work and ambition that paid for everything. In this way, the portrait is rich in symbols, both obvious ones and some for which the viewer would have to know the background. All of these pieces would help answer the question: What makes a woman? Based on my portrait, the viewer could assume that a woman draws from her support, had some pain, is proud of where she came from, and has direction in her life. It is important to note that these ideals are clearly drawn from my own values. It is important not to put your own values on the students, but to allow them to see that different values exist through the images you use and questions you ask.

Teaching the idea of values is important and can be found in the Strategies section.

This unit is written to address a key question for boys: What makes a man? Boys have many answers, but few models. They have so few models that they few they see must be held to impossible standards. Boys have

several worlds crashing around them in 2012: Their "hoods," the media, and their friends. The models of men in their neighborhoods are their grandfathers, fathers, stepfathers, mother's boyfriends, older brothers and cousins, and close family friends. As one student pointed out to me, "The ghetto isn't all bad. It's our home. It's our place. It's peaceful." In essence: Don't look at us and feel bad, and certainly don't think you know what you're talking about. Since then, I've been trying to listen more.

To teach content knowledge and to understand what is happening in the images and why they support the What makes a man? idea, it is important to know about the background of the images you are presenting. Here, I offer my interpretations of images with ideas learned through various sources offered in the Bibliography.

Historical Images

1. Hicks, George Elgar, *The Sinews of Old England*, 1857, Watercolor and bodycolor on paper, 30 x 21 1/8 inches, Friends of British Art Fund.

In this painting, three figures present themselves in ideal of the industrial age. The man is defined by his pick-axe and shovel, tied up pants, and determined and proud expression. The woman, his wife, is defined by her loving gaze, simple shoes, clean dress, and gorgeous blue willow china, neatly displayed behind her in the kitchen. Their child, a boy, is the picture of youth and innocence with his blonde hair and wooden shovel, already preparing to join his proud father. The internal framing of this family portrait contains a solidly built brick home with healthy, lively greens running up the walls. There are curious details, though. For example, why is the wife's petticoat exposed? This could be to show the many times she has added to this garment, rather than buy an entirely new one. This could show the importance of frugality and resourcefulness.

This image serves to reinforce new values during the Industrial Revolution. In 1857, the Industrial Revolution was old news, having started over 60 years prior. Also, the reign of Queen Victoria was well underway, having started twenty years earlier. Industrial workers, like the man portrayed here, were part of an international machine that bound a recently scattered class. Indeed, it created a new class of worker, the working class or blue collared workers. They valued camaraderie, hard work, and legacy, as evidenced by working so closely in factories and mines with many other men, working long hours and for most of their lives, the invention of unions, and the ethos that boys would grow up to do what their fathers did. All these values are borne out in this image. The father is looking forward to being with his co-workers as well as a bright future, the dishes would be used to impress visitors, and the young son plays with the same tools as his father. The woman supports all these values with her loving gaze and dependence on the man.

In these ways, a man, according to this image, is social, hardworking, and cares for his family by providing for them. He might even be seen as loving through the way that he holds his wife and allows his son to hang on to him. His face is young, but lined with determination, further defining manhood for this class. What will the future hold for the young son? Prosperity and grace, just like his father.

2. Millais, Sir John Edward, *L'Enfant du Regiment*, 1854-1855, Oil on prepared paper, laid on canvas, mounted on board. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Fund.

On the surface, this painting focuses on the experience of a child during this time of great change in Western Europe. Painted at almost the same time as *The Sins of Old England*, Millais paints a very different portrait of childhood and what it means to be a man. Clearly, the focus of this painting is not on the man in effigy but on the girl. From this, we can ask What contributes to the making of a man or a woman?

There are subtleties to this image, but together they point to a clear interpretation. When first exhibited, some believed the to be a boy (Rosenfeld 61), which points to Millais' ability to manipulate subjects for broad interpretation and appeal. Whatever the gender, this child has a broken arm and bare feet. In the context of resting on the effigy of a soldier and being shrouded in a military uniform, it can be speculated that this child was injured during fighting. This is further revealed when examining the background of the painting. Here, several soldiers are carrying muskets over a wall while they begin to join the fighting. They are looking away from the girl as if she is cased inside tenuous walls, possibly about to be overtaken. She is further seeking protection, though, from the soldier on whom she rests and the jacket that is covering her like a blanket. With all the advances in the world at this time and with some citizens buying into and possibly experiencing the prosperity and pride of the Industrial Age, how can citizens grapple with the image of an injured child?

Millais often painted images that speak to the theme of the plight of the individual in historical circumstances (Rosenfeld 61). Maybe he was pointing out that there is always a price to pay for change. The French military uniform may not have been popular in the day due to feelings between England and France, but who can argue with the welfare of a child? It is an image that no one can dispute and with which no one can disagree: Children were paying the price of military and industrial success. Of course, most viewers of the painting would have been, and still are, between the ages of the small girl and the ancient soldier, begging the question, where am I in this scene of inevitable conflict? We were once children and ultimately will all be as ancient as the tomb.

3. Brown, Ford Maddox, *Work*, 1852-1863, Oil on canvas, 53.9 x 77.6 inches. City Art Gallery, Manchester, UK.

This is a complex image of work from the nineteenth century. From its subject to its execution, this painting is entirely about the positive, commanding nature of work and how it creates an identity for men. This image is particularly useful for students because the workers are contrasted with everyone else in their surroundings. While many images from this period paint a similar story of the worker, this one places it in the context of a city scene where this new class of worker is viewed favorably against those who are assumed to be powerful and enviable. A closer examination of the image flips that idea on its head, as well, pointing out the still tenuous nature of labor for the working class.

In this picture, the men in the foreground are building a new street in the middle of the city. In the background the viewer can see various types of businesses as well as their patrons. This city scene and its upgrading are the context for the laborers. Surrounding the workers are people of all classes and situations. The woman in the left foreground carries flowers for sale. Not an industrial job and not part of the camaraderie of work, she is depicted in tattered clothes from her hat to her bare feet. The men do not notice her.

What does it mean to be a man in this image? Values inherent in this picture include industriousness and sacrifice. For example, industry is depicted in the various types of work the men are doing: shoveling, grading dirt, working in the ground, and transporting heavy tools. The dog in the foreground could be interpreted a

symbol of fidelity, though not in the typical sense. In this image, the men are faithful to their work. As to sacrifice, the men are dirty and hot from the sun. Small children are being watched by a woman in the foreground as they look on to the laboring men. One child tries to help by pushing a wheelbarrow. He is already practicing to be like one of these men.

4. Wright, Joseph, *A Blacksmith's Shop* , 1771, Oil on canvas 50.5 x 41 inches. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection.

In Joseph Wright's *A Blacksmith's Shop* , men and boys gather together around a glowing ingot of iron in the ruins of a church in the dead of night. The men create or react to the yellow-hot metal, some in control of it, some turning in pain from the heat and sparks. Despite the intensity of color at the heart of the painting and the fiery subject matter, it is a scene of control. It is a celebration of labor and work.

Wright has filled the image with symbols that elevates the men out of a shop and into the realm of hero. First, there is a carved angel flying above the arched, stone doorway, showing us that this is a church. Without the angel, though, it is clear that we are in a church. The angel shows God's attention to these men and their labors. Also, there are three sources of light: Two glowing iron rods and a full moon breaking from behind clouds. The moon hints to a heavenly purpose for this work, a morality assigned to hard, physical labor. Further, this late night sojourn adds a mysticism to the work to show that it is not menial, it is not something easily learned or carried out. This is skilled work that only a few can do. Next, the presence of multiple generations is common in eighteenth century European art, especially children. This is a connection to another painting discussed, *L'Enfant du Regiment* . In each, the theme of legacy and the regeneration of life is present. Here, One boy stares proudly and boldly into the fire, though noticeably wincing at the heat. The brave face, though, speaks to the pride he feels in what might be his father, the one wielding the hammer. The children also create meaning for the workers and a reference to their virility, a typical trope of English folklore (Daniels 52). The old man sitting in the foreground is further proof of the hero-status of the working men. This old man is a traveler whose horse needs a mended horseshoe. Horseshoes are also visible on the wall. Interestingly, Wright studied and created many images of mythology, often incorporating the poses of these figures into genre paintings like this one. The postures and poses of blacksmiths in this image are clearly reminiscent of classical statues of Greece and Rome.

Unit Objectives

Content

- Students will be able to (SWBAT) describe in writing and in discussion the social roles of women and men during the Victorian Era and now.
- SWBAT use symbolism to describe and create original images of masculinity and femininity.

Analysis

- SWBAT values of a society through context and symbolism.
- SWBAT describe how art both imitates and informs day-to-day life.
- SWBAT use symbols to tell a story in art and to describe how these symbols are manipulated for different groups.

Writing

- SWBAT compose argumentative written pieces that answer: What is this image *explicitly* saying? What is this image *implicitly* saying? (Reading the art) Who is it speaking to? (Audience) Why is it saying this to this audience? (Purpose) How do you know? (Evidence)
- SWBAT use evidence from an image to support arguments.

Speaking

- SWBAT describe their work to peers and community members through a Gallery Opening Event that they plan, arrange, and lead.

Strategies

Structured Journals

Journaling has earned a bad reputation in the education world recently. In order to make journaling successful, you must first determine what it is your students will be able to do as a result of journaling for a definite number of minutes each week or month. As the goal of this unit to for students to be able to make clear arguments in writing, it is important that journaling is mostly supportive of argumentative, formerly "persuasive," writing.

Whatever I do, I supply students with models and rubrics. We judge the models using the rubrics together. Students invariably enjoy playing the teacher and are rather critical of these models. Therefore, in this unit, students will have two different journal types: The first is a reflection journal in which they express initial reactions to images, what they notice, what they have questions about, and any other initial thoughts. The second type of journal will be the Argumentative Journal. In this journal, students will formulate arguments (hence the title) about the meanings of the images. They will use their notes from the Reflection Journals to write these ones. A rubric for these journals could look like this:

Argumentative Journal

	5	3	1
Content	Argues at least two points about the piece that relate to the historical and masculine/feminine contexts	Argues 1 point. Misses many opportunities to expand on the original ideas	Describes the image but does not make any conclusions its meaning in the historical or masculine/feminine contexts
Evidence	Contains specific references to images in the piece to support each idea. Often, the evidence is used to illustrate more than one point or to relate different parts of the piece to one another	Contains evidence, though it may be unconnected to the arguments or irrelevant. Is not properly included in a sentence.	Contains little if no evidence or references to the piece.
Analysis	Uses evidence and context knowledge to tell the story of the piece.	Uses either evidence or content knowledge to tell the story of the piece. <u>The various information presented and learned is not necessarily used in the writing, making it weaker, even if it is correct.</u>	Summarizes the piece of art. It does not answer the prompt.

Using Images to Teach Content and Skills

There are several overall strategies that are useful when working with images. One, students should have photocopies of all images on which they can write. Further organization would include a student's portfolio of images to which they can continue to refer. Second, ideally there should be poster-sized versions of the images posted in the room. These could be surrounded with the responses that students gave. Part of improving education for black boys is recognition for a job well done. Another strategies for working with images is to allow students to choose their own images to study.

Allowing students to choose their own images to study is important. This, in education, is called "meaningful choice." Therefore, after you have analyzed several contemporary images with students, bring them to a computer lab to have them find contemporary images of their own to analyze. Set parameters such as

"Appropriate for School."

Next, use what is known as guided practice, then independent practice. This is also known as "I do, We do, You do." Ask for students to volunteer their image to be analyzed as a class. Afterward, set students free to analyze their own. Ask volunteers to share their analysis with the class. The emphasis on having students share their work comes from the need for underperforming students to improve their discussion skills. They need something productive to say in class.

Teaching Values

Every group has different values. Teenagers have likely not thought of values explicitly and this unit gives students a great place to see what they value and whether or not they like that. To begin to teach values, start with the historical images. I cannot stress enough the importance of not putting your own values on your students. This will make students reluctant to share or criticize their own, which are possibly very different from yours. Teacherly values, like "hard work" and "determination" are acceptable, and students will likely see these in you.

To begin, give students a list of values. A starter list of values include: Accomplishment, Beauty, Being the Best, Camaraderie, Celebrity, Community, Confidence, Control, Faith, Family, Freedom, Honesty, Independence, Respect, Responsibility, Strength, and Trust. (Be sure to choose words that your students can understand, as this is a lesson in values, not vocabulary.) If possible, list the values on the left of a page, then create four columns of checkboxes to the right. Title headers to these columns, *Important to Me*, *Important to my family*, *Important to my school*, *Important to my friends* . Always start with the students. At the bottom of your page, ask students to write a paragraph explaining one of their choices. Ask volunteers to read their responses.

To apply their knowledge of what a value is, choose a historical image that students have responded to strongly. Give each student a photocopy of the image. Then, explicitly define "value" for students. Then, give students the one page list of values from the initial exercise without the columns of checkboxes. There should be a full page of values for them to look at. Students know many words that will help them to describe values, but I find it immensely helpful to give students a list and allow them to argue which ones apply to a text or image. Now, have students circle which values are obvious in the image and how they know. Have students label the image.

Scope and Sequence

Ultimately, students will create a piece of original art. It will meet the following requirements: 1.) Three images 2.) Two symbols 3.) A clear relationship between the various images that is can be ascertained with a basic knowledge of the context in which it was created. To achieve this level of creation, students will learn how to analyze images dealing with what it meant to be a man or woman in the nineteenth century. Please see Lesson 3 for a Project Planning layout.

The portraits will answer key questions, including:

1. Who helped form you?
2. What are you proud of?
3. What do you want someone to think of you when they get to be your age?
4. Who do you look up to?
5. What role do you play in your community?
6. What role do you *want* to play? How can you achieve that?
7. Where do you fit in the history of men and women in the last 150 years?
8. What will you bring to history?

These questions are built around research that supports the following findings: Black males learn well with relatable content; Black males need to be challenged to excel and in order to excel a student needs concrete steps toward accomplishing a goal; Black males need role models and these questions are written so that students can see role models in their lives that they may not have recognized as such; Black males may not see the positive opportunities that are available to them nor how they fit into these; Students, in general, need more modes of expressing comprehension and analysis; A teacher's role is to guide students toward realizing their potential as citizens.

Lesson 1: Questioning Art - How to Read and Discuss a Work of Art

The students for whom this is written will need concrete ways in which to access an image. The following questions have been adapted from a list by Monika Brown of UNC Penbrooke. It is meant to be used as a worksheet that can be taken to any image, Victorian or contemporary.

How to Talk About Art

1. Title:

Artist:

Year:

Medium:

2. Who is in the picture? What are they doing?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

3. What is the setting of the picture? (pastoral, city, countryside, inside, outside, day time, dusk, middle of the night, etc.)

4. What are the major objects in the image?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

5. Choose one person in the image and describe him/her in the following ways:

What you think (Inferences)	How you know (Evidence)
a. looks (attractive, elderly, injured, handsome, young, etc.):	→
b. characteristics (cheerful, greedy, sneaky, etc.):	→
c. social class (wealthy, middle class, poor):	→
d. upbringing (what social class are they <i>from</i>):	→
e. role in picture (protagonist, antagonist, foil, hero, tragic hero, villain, damsel in distress):	→

6. List all the colors in the image. Which colors are used the most? What mood does the artist create by using these hues?

7. Based on the people, setting, and objects, what do you think is happening in this scene? Why do you say this?

8. Describe a surprising aspect of this image. It could be an unusual medium, genre, angle, lighting, content, or anything else that seems unique to you. Then, explain why this is unique.

9. Think about the culture surrounding this image. What are three or four major historical trends from the time

this was created?

9b. What are the dominant values of the culture? These values will vary depending on other factors such as race, class, and gender.

9c. Does this picture approve of, contradict, or disapprove of these values? How do you know?

10. What does the work reveals about the creator's life and experiences? What makes you say this?

Contemporary Images

The first image should be pulled from a contemporary source, specifically Twitter, Facebook, or Billboard.com. It is crucial to access an image that is broadcast to your students and that is readily accessible to them. For this reason, a magazine cover or Twitter profile picture are ideal because these images are specifically chosen by that outlet to reach your students. Secondary sources include album covers, but most students no longer buy entire albums so they may not have as much exposure to this art. Also, paparazzi photos are not as good for this project because they are not "art," although it could be argued that the celebrities chose those outfits and stylings because they knew they would be photographed and published in a very specific format, much the way a paying commissioner of a painting would dress him or herself. One other feature the image should have is controversy. It is recommended that you use images that will get a strong emotional response from students but that you do not convey your own moral values while using the image.

Lesson 2: Teaching Symbolism

In order to understand the clues in art and ultimately to use them, students will be taught the language of symbolism. Begin with stock symbols of love, hate, fidelity, strength, trust, and anything else found in the paintings you will use. This is a crucial base for learners. For example, dogs symbolize faithfulness, a powerful gaze symbolizes strength, hands clasped together symbolize trust, a tool symbolizes work, and so on. Allow students to identify these in the images.

Next, move to subtleties of symbols. For example, the color red can symbolize both romantic passion and intense hate. In the Millais image, *L'Enfant du Regiment*, the color light stone effigy of the soldier is important because it is juxtaposed against the darker jacket and the rosiness of the child's cheeks. It is meant to contrast the tenderness of the living with the finality of death. On the other hand, the light hair of the child in *The Sinews of Old England* draws attention to the youth and innocence of that child. The lightness of the stone effigy does not call attention to the soldier's innocence. In these ways, the same symbolic color, white, serves to tell two different stories. Students must know the difference context makes. For instance, if a flower symbolizes wealth and prosperity, what does a withering flower symbolize? If a happy, jumping dog symbolizes fidelity, what does a sad dog with its tail between its legs symbolize? Use historical and contemporary images to teach these subtleties.

For all levels of learners, a running list of symbols and where they were found is helpful. Additionally, constantly referring to new knowledge reinforces this learning. If many of your students are visual learners, as most boys are, lists of symbols and accompanying images can be hung around the room with a corresponding list in student notebooks or binders. For example, create a sheet just for colors. Create a Red Web with the

color in the middle and its various meanings radiating out from it. Be sure to include the sources of each meaning. If you find red to symbolize "Blood, Pain" in *L'Enfant du Regiment*, include this on the poster.

Symbols can be a difficult concept for many students, but they reach many male students at a crucial strength: visual learning. Ultimately, students will be able to manipulate symbols in their Portraits of Pride.

Lesson 3: Creating their Portraits of Pride

The final project is a Portrait of Pride: An image in which they depict their future. Follow this plan to complete the project. Remember, skills to build into the lives of your young black males are those of rigor and structure.

1. Plan: Give students a worksheet, a Planning Page, that mimics the final project. This could be broken into three columns on a landscape-oriented page. Label the middle "My Future," the left "Past Friends" and the right "Past Family." Under each heading, it is helpful to include several ideas. If possible, include a model of your own on the back side. For a model already described, read the Unit Contents of this curriculum. At the bottom of the worksheet, include space that describes symbols that the student might use.

2. Create Image: Check each student's work on their Planning Page to see that it meets your set criteria. When a student has a part, point it out and give specific praise. If a student is missing a part, ask him or her how they plan to include this. More often than not, they will leave out anything they do not understand. Use your own model on the back, or if you continue this from a previous year, use an older model from a former student, to illustrate what you want the student to do.

3. Draft of Gallery Description: They must be able to answer the following questions, also adapted from Monika Brown of UNC Penbroke. Include a model of your own for each student to reference.

1. Aesthetic Merit: How well is the media used, the content integrated with the form, and the overall goal of the portrait achieved?

2. Truth to Life: How truthful is the image? Will it make sense in any context? Is it morally responsible?

3. Cultural Significance: What makes it original? How does it contribute to the culture and art already in existence?

4. According to your image, what makes a man/woman? Reference specific images within your portrait. Be sure to describe both symbols you have included.

Since students are expected to be able to prepare, publish, and present work appropriate to audience,

purpose and task, be sure to reread these pieces and return them to students with any content and grammatical corrections. (Trying to teach grammar along with this or any unit is preferable but will not be included here.)

4. Final Draft of Gallery Description: One key feature of teaching low-income black males is to convince them that school work matters. This requires us to give students ways in which to meaningfully publish their work. First, give students time in school to type their final drafts of the Gallery Descriptions. To make sure students do address all changes and suggestions you made, include this as part of the grade.

5. Publishing Gallery Descriptions and Portraits of Pride: A school library, hallway, or your classroom are ideal for the display of student work. In order to take it a step further, you might consider a "Gallery Opening" during class or after school so that parents and community members can see what their students have accomplished. However you choose to publish their work, it is crucial to include this step. In all research I have conducted it is pivotal to have this closure and final step. Have students set up the display by showing them what a good display looks like. At the event, whether it is on a Friday during class or a weeknight in the library, have students speak about their work. Choose one or two students to introduce the event to the guests. Ask students to dress up and stand by their work so that they can describe what they have done. If possible, have the historical images as well so that there is a precedent visible. Content knowledge is part of what is missing for students, so having this available for the students to teach their parents and community members enforces the idea that this knowledge is meaningful. Also, whatever you put together the first year will be easier to accomplish the next year and so on.

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Appendix: Implementing District Standards

This unit correlates with the Connecticut Common Core Standards for English/Language Arts. It strives to reach the following standards:

Overarching Idea: Students read, comprehend and respond in individual, literal, critical and evaluative ways to literary, informational and persuasive texts in multimedia formats.

1.2.Students interpret, analyze and evaluate text in order to extend under-standing and appreciation. identify and discuss the underlying theme or main idea in texts.

1.3.Students select and apply strategies to facilitate word recognition and develop vocabulary in order to comprehend text. use content vocabulary appropriately and accurately (math, music, science, social studies, etc.).

2.1.Students recognize how literary devices and conventions engage the reader. Identify the various conventions within a genre and apply this understanding to the evaluation of the text.

2.3.Students recognize and appreciate that contemporary and classical literature has shaped human thought. Create responses to texts and examine each work's contributions to an understanding of human experience across cultures.

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

historical contexts. interpret, analyze and evaluate the influence of culture, history and ethnicity on themes and issues in literature.

3.2.Students prepare, publish and/or present work appropriate to audience, purpose and task. publish and/or present final products in a myriad of ways, including the use of the arts and technology

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