



Community and Identity: An Unending Dilemma

Curriculum Unit 14.02.10
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Introduction

Who are we? Who shapes our identity? What makes us? Our interests, our personality and our values are part of our identity but how we have found them, or discovered them, or defined them depends on the community surrounding us and with whom we live and share. Myriad factors affect our identity: race, cultural background, gender, political and/or economic circumstances. They all contribute to create our identity and are the reflections of what we usually define as society or community. My goal in this unit is to offer students an opportunity to study what a community is, what its values and rules are, and who or what really holds power in relationship to how the members of the community react, think, or feel.

In this unit, we will read *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad, *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding, and other texts. The unit will culminate with a research project of a community close to my students. My goal is also to teach my students to become active thinkers and members of the community, to analyze causes and effects, to be aware of what happens in their surroundings, to understand who they are, and to learn how to contribute to problem solutions

My Students' Background: Analysis

I currently teach two English 10 classes and three AP English Literature classes. All my lessons aim to enhance the understanding, interpretation, analysis, and evaluation of a written text, but our new curriculum requires applying these skills to a variety of texts which include written texts – fictional and informative visual texts, films, paintings, and commercials without excluding oral texts. My students' approach to the interpretation of the text is quite superficial because they are not used to spending time either reading and reflecting or looking at the many different details the text presents. The same applies when they are asked to listen to someone's story. They accept and believe anything the internet and media say without reflecting and deciding independently, or they dismiss whatever they read or hear as meaningless. I believe my students need to understand what the written, oral, or visual message really conveys. I want them to understand that any text has a purpose and addresses a specific audience.

My school is an art school and our mission is to cultivate different artistic talents while maintaining a high level of rigor in the academics. On one side, this aspect is an excellent tool I can use to encourage the interest of the strugglers or to introduce difficult topics or concepts each class is rich of individuals with a vivid creativity in many different fields and a great variety of learning styles. At the same time, my students often miss regular instructions in the academics because they are involved in numerous rehearsals throughout the school year.

This particular context opens up a variety of possibilities in the selection of teaching strategies and learning styles. To begin with, the AP students do not reflect the "traditional" population of students who enter the class with adequate skills and knowledge. These students have good writing skills but they have never been exposed to a rigorous curriculum covering a variety of texts from all literary genres like drama, fiction, poetry from the sixteenth century on. Their first hardship is reading and understanding canonical texts, not to mention poetry since our curriculum does not include it. The College students struggle because they lack motivation and because of reading difficulties they proudly hide with the commonest excuse: this text is slow and boring. My students learn through continuous and differentiated modeling and scaffolding – a useful combination of I do (I show them how to write or what strategy they need to follow for reading and understanding), we do (we repeat the same writing or reading together so it becomes more familiar), and they do (they have learned and can write or read proficiently) in combination with continuous references to the visual arts.

Unit Overview

In this very particular environment, the unit will be introduced with the following essential questions: "What is the world around me like? What do I need and want? What does my community want and need?" This can be taught at different levels and I start with the reading and analysis of two fictional texts: the novel, *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding with the sophomore classes, and *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad with the Advanced Placement students. I will also introduce other texts on the same topic or with related themes like poems, excerpts from non-fictional texts, or videos (these texts are listed in the Lesson Plan Section) to teach my students literary analysis of a variety of texts according to the new Common Core requirements. The unit will be divided in three parts and will conclude with a final assessment assignment.

Part One

Advanced Placement Students

The students in the Advanced Placement class will focus on the characters, the narrator, internal and external conflicts, setting, symbols, and themes. I will also prepare a series of different activities to teach my students how the author uses different literary techniques and literary devices to characterize and convey the characters' vision of their own community (Marlow's cultural background juxtaposed to the Congolese one in *Heart of Darkness*). In the meantime, they will be engaged in class-discussion and various writings: brief responses that will help shape our discussions and formal analytical and argumentative essays. Before

concluding this section, my students will also determine, discuss, and write about the themes that the novella presents like authority, power, evilness, isolation, and/or greed. While we will be reading and discussing the novella, I will assign them some poems (the specific title will be in the Lesson Plans Section) and/or visual texts that focus on the concept of community (cluster of values, organization, institutions, everyday routine, and/or cultural myths) These texts will help them understand the concepts of community and identity, and how they interact.

Sophomore Students

This group of students will read *Lord of the Flies* as main text. I will also assign them to research lyrics and/or poems that reflect similar themes like savagery, innocence, power, and/or greed. Since this group of students needs more support, I will implement different strategies for reading in class and at home. While we will be reading the novel, we will analyze the setting, characters, symbols, conflicts, and theme(s). We will also learn how to close-read shorter passages focusing on how the literary devices used by the narrator characterize or convey meaning. We will have numerous in-class discussions on the concepts of community, conflicts, and identity. I will frequently ask them to write about concerns and/or questions that either the novel or the class discussions arise.

Part Two

Advanced Placement Students and Sophomore Students

When we have finished reading the two novels, I will ask my students to independently choose one community and start researching how today's community deals with similar thematic ideas, or one of their choice. Once the students have decided what community they want to study, they will have to start interviewing the people of that community. I will bring to class very specific models of interview questions, and we will write and practice in class. As source materials, my student can also use photographs, videos they can shoot, as well as any other documents they can find. They will conclude this research with an in-class presentation in which they will explain how their selected community copes with the themes (power, authority, evilness, or greed) that have emerged from the two novels.

Final Assessment

Advanced Placement Students

My students and I have identified, analyzed, discussed and written how Joseph Conrad has depicted a clear image of the community his characters encounter in *Congo* and how this same community has impacted Marlow, the narrator and main character, through various literary devices. My students have also completed their own research on a contemporary community of their choice. As final assessment, I expect them to prepare a creative project portraying the community they have studied. They can choose the genre: a short story, a sonnet, a satirical piece, a one-act play or comedy, or a novella based on one of the unit themes. The

specific prompt is in the Lesson Plans Section.

Sophomore Students

This group of students, too, will complete the unit with a creative project. They will focus their work on the community they researched and they can choose to write: a speech (this will satisfy our present curriculum but it will also respond to the new standards) or a creative piece – a poem, a lyric, or a brief short story, and/or short film for the struggling students (those students who have any kind of special need as indicated by Strassman in the article, "Differentiated Instruction in the English Classroom"). ¹The specific prompt is in the Lesson Plans Section.

Unit Objectives

The objective of my unit is to enhance my students' skills to infer, close-read, analyze, discuss, synthesize, evaluate, and connect the text to their life. Every lesson plan will have specific objectives to so that I can measure the students' learning, reflect on the outcome of the lesson, and plan the follow up accordingly – differentiated instruction. I will also include many plans where I will model how to analyze/close read, determine the theme, and synthesize. These daily objective will be stated according to Bloom's taxonomy so I can easily equilibrate the activity from the lowest to the highest intellectual skills. The Bloom taxonomy includes six levels of intellectual behavior connected to learning: knowledge (recall data or information), comprehension (understand the meaning), application (use a concept in a new area), analyze (break down concepts into components), evaluate (make judgments), and create (create a new product or point of view).

Taking into account the long term goals, I will specifically implement the following objectives in daily lesson plans:

1. read and understand, interpret, analyze and discuss excerpts from Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad and Lord of the Flies by William Golding and poetry
2. read, understand, interpret, analyze, and discuss non-fictional texts and videos
3. understand the concepts of specific rhetorical and literary devices like point of view or narrative perspective, diction, allusions, figurative language, tone, syntax, and structure
4. analyze, discuss, and write how setting, point of view or narrative perspective, diction, allusions, figurative language, tone, syntax, and structure reveal meaning
5. analyze, discuss, and write about the theme(s) of the two novels
6. learn to prepare appropriate questions for interviews
7. research information for the targeted community
8. compare and contrast the various oral, written, and/or visual documents, and draw the appropriate conclusions
9. compare and contrast the communities emerging from each novel and present-day community
10. write analytical essays and the final creative project.

Teaching Plan

Advanced Placement Students

The novella, *Heart of Darkness*, is a very challenging task for my AP students because as I mentioned in the Student Background section they do not arrive in my class with excellent reading comprehension skills. They have potential skills but they need a lot of instruction in the form of supporting strategies to overcome the difficulty that this text presents. My students are, in fact, at what Jean Piaget calls the concrete-operational stage. They cannot think abstractly and do not understand what can be inferred from a written or visual text. My goal is to move them from this initial stage to the formal-operational one in which they are able to solve abstract problems. ² To achieve this goal, my students' first need is to build some prior-knowledge about the time when it has been written, and the main historical facts about Congo, the place where most of the action takes place in Conrad's work through a very brief lecture immediately followed by a research activity.

What to Tell Students

Heart of Darkness was written between the end of 1898 and the beginning of 1899 and was first published in the *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*. As Robert Kimbrough states in his analysis, the novella appeared in three installments in consecutive monthly issues of *Blackwood's* from February through April 1899, and was later on collected (1902) in the volume *Youth: A Narrative and Two Other Stories*. ³ This time period is completely unknown to my students as well the culture of colonialism in Europe. Our first activity, even before we begin to read the text, will be to gather some biographical information about the author and then to extend the study to Congo, the setting of this novella. I will expect them to find information about the exploration and civilization of Congo, how explorations were conducted, and the results of colonization from the perspective of the Belgian Government. (Our library might not have all the resources we need, so I plan to bring my students to the New Haven Public Library first and then to plan two other field trips to the Sterling Library that is within walking distance of our school).

Research Plan

Their research will cover the following topics: the physical features along the Congo river, the climate of this region and possibly data of the climate around the time when Conrad wrote the novella; an in-depth study of the population, its tribe, rituals, rules, social and/or political organization in comparison to the social and/or political, and military organization introduced by the Belgian who were the real colonizer of the area. I expect them to find information about the stations or those centers with a comparatively large population where European and native people shared common interests; the political organization, judicial system, and the religion of the native populations. It is also important to find information about the economic, commercial, and financial conditions; the relevance of animal and vegetable products; how agriculture was practiced before the colonization and immediately after; the internal communications and waterways.

While my students are researching, I will instruct them to prepare an Annotated Bibliography of all the sources they find, read, and use to collect information. Our annotated Bibliography will focus on the MLA citation of the source followed by notes that can be quoted paragraph(s), paraphrased paragraph(s), and/or a summary of the essential point of the source. I will not ask my students to write any evaluation of the sources because at this point they do not have the skills to accomplish this task. The pedagogy behind this choice is to teach them the skills of conciseness in summarizing content.

When their research is concluded, I will divide the class in groups of four. Each group will work on specific topics:

1. Group one will present the physical features of Congo and its climate
2. Group two will illustrate the information about the population and what the stations were or represented
3. Group three will work on political, judicial system, and the religion of the area
4. Group four will discuss the economy of Congo including agriculture and the importance of animal products
5. Group five will give us an overview of the communication and waterways.

Presentation

When my students have finished their research, they need to present the results of their work. I plan this activity because my students need to learn how to talk to audience about specific content as requested by the new Common Core Standards. This will also improve their skills to synthesize various documents organically. During our presentation, I will guide them to analyze and discuss how the European viewed the so-called process of "civilizing" the Congo. Our discussions will focus on the methods they adopted and the effects they may have had on the native populations. I plan to ask specific questions to scaffold their learning as suggested by Kyleen Beers ⁴ and guide them according to Vygotsky's theory ⁵ :

1. What does this information about Congo and how it has been colonized tell you? What major thematic ideas do you see?
2. What morals or ethical principles does this colonization reveal?
3. What about the Congolese society? How would you define it? What qualities does it portray?

Before passing to the reading of Conrad's novella, I want my students to reflect on the information they have just found about Congo as a community. This writing activity has the purpose to strengthen my students' writing fluency and abilities to discuss thematic ideas as required by College Board for AP students. Specifically, I will expect them to respond to the following prompts:

- From the study you have just concluded, what did you learn about the Congolese community?
1. What kind of relationships did you notice? Did you notice any form of collective support? What about the relationships between the natives and the colonizers?
 2. Which group was socially isolated? Both groups, the colonizers and colonized? One of the two? Explain.
 3. How were the colonizers responding to the needs of the natives? Why?
 4. How the natives were responding to the needs of the colonizers?

Our discussions together with the information they have collected from their research will give my students

the adequate prior knowledge to understand Conrad's novella as suggested by Piaget and Vygotsky. ⁶

Heart of Darkness: Reading

When we have finished presenting, analyzing, and discussing the results of our research of Congo under the Belgian rule, my students will have built the prior-knowledge they need to understand and appreciate this difficult text. When I assign the reading, I will expect them to read only a few pages because of the text difficulty but also because my students have never been exposed to any nineteenth century literature before. More pages or even higher expectations will discourage them when I actually want to continue building knowledge. ⁷ My experience has also taught me that reading a few pages at a time takes away the burden students perceive with reading and allow a real rereading in class for close analysis. I will then assign six to ten pages to read as homework. In class, I will also spend some time close reading specific excerpts to study the narrator and how he characterizes Marlow or how he views Congo. I will then divide the class in groups of four and each group (grouping improves students' self-confidence, peer learning, and analysis ⁸) will analyze the characterization of Marlow and Kurtz through:

1. Setting
2. Diction
3. Imagery and figurative language
4. Syntax

For each literary technique, the students will have to explain how the literary device reveals the character and how it helps the reader understand who the character is. The group analyzing the importance of setting will have to determine how the environment affects or does not affect Marlow or any other character. They can also determine whether setting contributes to tone, or whether it foreshadows the character's inner feelings. (The specific instructions on how to analyze each literary technique are in the Lesson Plans sections). Each group, then, will share and discuss for the same pedagogical reasons I have already mentioned.

At this point, I will plan to analyze the thematic ideas presented by the novel. To begin with, I will start class by writing this prompt on the board:

1. After reading and analyzing Conrad's novella, discuss how Marlow's first experience with the natives he encounters illuminates the work as a whole.

During our discussion, I will lead them to consider the relationship Marlow starts or does not start with the natives, the language he uses, and the details he conveys. I will also ask them to consider how the narrator presents these natives to the readers. In other words, I want my students to analyze whether the natives try any kind of interactions with Marlow or whether they display a completely passive attitude. I will also direct them to consider Marlow's observations and description of the natives he has hired for his expedition along the Congo River to Kurtz's stations or immediately after he is attacked by the natives defending Kurtz's station. I will also ask them:

1. What do these interactions, lack of interactions, prejudice, and/or attitudes tell you about this community (Marlow and the natives)?

2. What moral values do you identify? Why?
3. What ethical values does this community display? Or does it not have any ethical values. If so, why?
4. Who would you say is isolated in this community? Marlow and/or the company or the natives?
5. What about Kurtz? Is his suffering isolated or is it a reflection of a social isolation? How? Why?

Since we are in an arts school and we always try to combine the arts with the academics, I will ask my students to conclude this part of the unit with a creative project in which they express their final conclusion about the culture that Conrad's novella presents. They also have to determine Marlow's identity by responding to this question:

1. What shapes his identity? Who is he at the end of the novella?
2. How much Marlow is an active member of his community during the expedition?
3. Is he completely isolated or is he not? Why?

Their creation can be a video, a painting, or any other form they choose according to Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligence. ⁹

Sophomore Students

This group of students will read *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding, but before we start reading, I plan to implement various pre-reading strategies to help them build the necessary prior-knowledge ¹⁰. The initial lesson will focus on understanding the meaning of "community". My class is a community but my students do not necessarily understand what it means and, of course, they cannot determine whether we have any values or what our dynamics are.

On the first day, I will write on the board the following prompt:

- Scenario: you are the survivors of a catastrophic hurricane that has swept away our entire city. Destruction is everywhere. There is no electricity, no telephone or internet; stores are destroyed as well as streets, cars, trains, or planes. You are forced to experience the unimaginable. You have no shelter, no
- a. food you can buy, no doctors or nurses, no standing homes, and no adults. You know each other because you were attending the same school and you were in class when the hurricane hit New England. What are you going to do? I will walk around and record your conversations.

While they are talking in groups, I will record their thoughts on the board to compare and contrast with the opening scene of the novel. As homework, I will ask them to write one page reflections with particular attention to the thoughts they did not share. I will also ask them to explain how they were feeling: were they scared? Were they feeling safe because they were not alone or were they feeling alone?

For my second class, I will present them a more complex scenario:

This is
your
second
day after
the
hurricane.

You are
hungry
but you
do not
have your
usual
food. You
would like
to take a
shower,
but you
have no
running
water.

b. You slept
on the
bare
ground
and you
feel cold.
What are
you going
to do to
have
food,
water,
and
shelter?
How are
you going
to ask for
help?
Who is
going to
be your
leader?
Why? If
not, why?

They will discuss as a whole class and then they will share their decisions. I will record what they say on the board and then I will ask them to write one-page reflections on their decisions for homework.

Lord of the Flies: Reading

This group of students needs more specific intervention for reading because they either have a reading level lower than grade ten or they display other special emotional or learning needs. ¹¹ At this point, they have enough prior-knowledge to understand and get really engaged in the reading of the novel. I plan to assign the first chapter as homework, but we will be rereading in class too because I know that a good number students

will not read at home. Modeling is the best method to teach them how expert readers do make knowledge of the text. Therefore, during the in-class reading, I will model how to understand meaning through the context when they encounter difficult and unknown words. I will interrupt the reading to say aloud what I think and how I use specific details to analyze the characters and their attitudes. In the same way, I will teach them how I notice tone and how I identify the connotations of some words, figurative language, and imagery. I will model reading and analysis for chapter two and then my students and I will be thinking aloud for chapter three, four, and if necessary five too. After that, my students should have learned how to read and analyze proficiently on their own. I will intervene only with those students who continue struggling.

Analysis and Discussion

After reading each chapter, I will divide the class in groups of three or four (the composition of the groups will change every time according to how the students reach or do not reach the lesson objectives). Each group will be assigned a different task so I differentiate according to the learning strengths of the group. Specifically, I plan to assign the following questions:

1. After reading the first chapter (I will propose the same question for every chapter so that my students know in advance after the first two chapters what to annotate during their reading), what character stands out to you? Why? How? Write one or two pages analysis supporting your statement with appropriate text references.
2. What conflict do you notice? How? Explain and support with text references.
3. What differences or similarities do you notice between how the characters react and/or do in this chapter compared to your reactions and actions in scenario one (hurricane aftermath)?
4. What stands out to you? Why? How?
5. Describe the setting and discuss whether it affects or does not affect the character or the conflict.
6. Consider how the character(s) act, what they say, or do, and discuss what aspect of human nature the character(s) reflect(s).
7. What values do these characters display? How do you know? Explain
8. How would you describe the community described in the chapter we have just read?
9. What differences do you notice in the community described in the chapter we just read and the previous one?
10. How would you describe the relationship among these characters? Why?
11. Who do you think Ralph is at the end of the novel? What experiences, conflicts, or values have shaped his present identity?
12. What identity can you infer for the other students at the end of the novel? Explain how this new identity has been shaped.

(More specific strategies are in the Lesson Plan Section).

When we have completed the reading and analysis of the novel, I will plan an assessment which will be divided in two parts: first I will engage them in a group discussion and then they will write a two pages paper. Specifically, for the first part of the assessment, I will divide the class in groups of four and I will give them the following instructions:

1. List the values that you noticed among the characters of the community of Lord of the Flies
2. Discuss the effect of these values on the community of Lord of the Flies
3. Create a similar scenario but set it in 2014

After amply presenting and discussing the different scenarios each group created, I will ask my students to write their reflections in response to this prompt:

- After your group discussion, the values that you have noticed among the characters of Lord of the Flies, and the scenario you have rebuilt, what is your theory for their behavior, reactions, actions, and beliefs?
1. Explain by using textual evidence from Golding's novel and from your scenario(s). Your paper has to be two pages long.

Community Research

For this assignment, we will work in class for a couple of days to first decide the community that my students want to research. To help them in this task, I will start class with a quick discussion of what their concept of "community" is. They might know it at this point of the unit but I also know that some might still not have a clear understanding and the class discussion, the peers' definition of the concept will certainly help them. While they are sharing their thoughts, I will write their definitions of community. Once this concept is clear to everyone, I will ask them to start thinking what community they want to study. It can be any community from the class community to a larger one as the neighborhood. Once this has been defined, our second step is to determine where to start from and how to research. The other important element they need to consider is the theme around which they want to start their investigation. This thematic idea can be one of the themes from Heart of Darkness (greed, power, evilness, and/or isolation) for the AP students and Lord of the Flies (authority/power, evilness, survival, respect) for the sophomore students, or race, gender, peer pressure, heritage, college (both AP students and sophomores can choose this theme because it is a very important focus in our school and in the New Haven District schools too), isolation, and/or violent crime.

Always in groups, my students will decide whether they just want to interview the members of the community or whether they want to use interviews and other means like videos, selfies, photographs, research for information published in newspapers or even research of social media. I will suggest using any possible means to record evidence about the chosen community. For the interview questions, I will teach them how to phrase the questions. Specifically, I will hand out a model with the following examples:

1. Introduce yourself to the interviewee and explain what is the topic of your study
2. Start by asking biographical information
3. If your theme is peer pressure, you might ask how the interviewee interacts with the peers in the community. Also, ask the interviewee to give you specific examples of his/her interactions
4. Let the person you are interviewing talk. If he/she does not give you too much information, ask how he/she feels, thinks, or reacts and why
5. Ask what is their vision of the community

- If the interviewee does not tell you much, intervene with a series of questions related to what he/she started telling you. Also, remember to ask how and why so you can collect more evidence.

I will assign this as homework but I will also build in few in-class discussions to understand where they are with the project and discuss the difficulty they encounter. During these in-class discussions, we will share as a whole group so the most struggling students can hear how their peers have collected information and/or conducted the interviews. After that, I will divide them in groups and they will discuss their research, problems, and/or outcome before drafting a "plan of action" for the next step of their investigation. I expect to have these in-class activities at least once a week or more according to the students' needs.

When the students have completed the collection of evidence, they will prepare a presentation (they can use power point for photographs and videos) and a written paper (informative essay according to the new Common Core standards) describing the community and how this community reacts to the theme of their research, how they interpret it, how they feel about it, and how they cope with it. I will also require them to conclude their research paper with a theory of their own explaining the reasons/rationale behind the reactions, feelings, and relationships the community members have expressed. The students will present the results of their research to the class and if we can have the main stage for one day to the entire school too.

Lesson Plans - Examples of Teaching Methods

Both the AP classes and the sophomore classes have students who need more specific pre-reading interventions. I target these groups of students with specific strategies:

Scramble

This strategy is appropriate for those students who are not motivated and are struggling readers. I would not suggest modeling it because "not knowing how to do it" triggers more thinking.

- Select ten to fifteen phrases from the excerpt the students will read as homework and reread
1. in class for close analysis (if the activity takes place in class, divide the students in groups and assign different phrases from the same excerpt to each group).
Give them ten minutes to discuss what they think the phrases refer to and narrative/story the
 2. phrases relate to. For AP students, ask them to identify character(s) traits, conflict, and setting, or symbol.
 3. After ten minutes ask them to write their reflections.
 4. Sharing Time
 5. Read the text aloud.
 6. After reading the text, compare and contrast their predictions and the text.

Annotations

This activity addresses the AP students. The sophomore classes annotate but I usually assign one specific literary device at a time. I model how to annotate (the tenth graders usually need more modeling than the AP students) and then I expect each student to annotate all the various literary elements the passage contains.

1. Group 1: Highlight the passage for diction (connotation vs. denotation) and write "meaning statements" in the margins.
2. Group 2: highlight the passage for images (sound, sight, touch, taste, and scent descriptions) and write "meaning statements" in the margins.
3. Group 3: do the same for figurative language
4. Group 4: point of view
5. Group 5: syntax patterns
6. Group 6: structure of the chapter or passage
7. Group 7: tone
8. Group 8: focus on characterization (setting/structure/imagery/symbolism/tone), and other literary elements or techniques.

The Most Important Word

This strategy is particularly helpful with the students who are in the sophomore classes; I often use it to differentiate and address students who do not present serious reading problems and are motivated.

Students work independently and select the most important word from the assigned reading.

1. It can be assigned as homework or it can be the first activity in class before rereading the excerpt.
2. Once they have this word they have to connect it to the main character, the conflict, setting, theme, and symbol.
3. They also have to write one paragraph explaining how the chosen word reveal something really important about the character, conflict, theme, setting, and symbol
4. Sharing time

Narrator/character's Analysis

This strategy allows students to decode the hidden thoughts and feelings of the character. The various body-parts represent the external clues which open his/her mind to the reader. It can be used with all students to draw the final conclusions about the character before writing the closing essay.

1. Head: intellectual side of the character. What are his/her dreams? Visions? Philosophies he/she keeps inside?
2. Eyes: seeing through the character's eyes. What memorable sights affect him/her? How?
3. Ears: hearing through the character's ears. What does he/she notice and remember others saying about him/her? How is he/she affected?
4. Nose: smelling through the character's nose. What smells affect him/her? How?

5. Mouth: the character's communication. What philosophy does the character share? What arguments/debates? What images would symbolize his/her philosophy?
6. Arms: working. What is the character's relationship to work in general? To specific work?
7. Hands: the practical side of the character. What conflicts does he or she deal with? How?
8. Heart: the emotional side. What does he/she love? Who? Whom? How?
9. Torso: the instinctive side of the character. What does he/she like about himself/herself? What does he hide? What brings the character pain? What does he/she fear?
10. Legs: the playful side of the character. What does he/she do for fun?
11. Feet: the character's mobility. Where has he or she been (literally/figuratively)? How has he been affected by setting and/or travel?
12. Wings: the character's future. Where is he/she going?

Modification

The AP students have to identify four to five meaningful quotations for each body part and also to write an evaluation/analysis of each quote. The college students have to identify two important quotations for each part followed by commentaries. The weakest students have to identify one quotation for each body part followed by commentary.

Close Reading/Analysis of Narrative and /or Poetic Techniques

This strategy can be used to analyze various literary techniques like point of view, syntax, diction, figurative language, setting, or others. I usually determine what to analyze according to literary technique that is relevant in the excerpt.

1. Read the assigned excerpt or passage, and/or article
2. Annotate it (I determine the purpose of annotation, i.e. diction)
3. Write a brief summary of the excerpt (I usually tell them to synthesize the summary in no more than two sentences)
4. Sharing Time/class discussion
5. Read the excerpt a second time
6. Determine the Situation:
 - a. Speaker
 - b. To whom (audience)
 - c. Setting
 - d. Occasion
7. Determine the Structure of the text:
 - a. Transition word/phrases
 - b. contrasts/Juxtapositions/Tensions
 - c. Repetitions
 - d. Key Lines
 - e. Outline: write a title or phrase to label the main meaning of each paragraph/stanza
8. Look at the Language (diction):

- a. Type of diction (formal, informal, colloquial)
- b. Type of syntax
- c. Connotative words
- d. Imagery/figurative language
- e. Paradox
- f. Allusions
- g. Symbolism
9. Tone
 - a. Changing or consistent
 - b. Words or phrases which create the tone
10. Purpose
11. Take notes on how that specific literary technique adds meaning to the theme/main idea
12. Discuss the various interpretations as a class and take notes
13. Write two pages analysis of how the author uses the specific literary technique to convey the theme of the passage.

Modification

For the struggling students who do not know how a literary or rhetorical technique conveys meaning or adds meaning to the text, I usually follow this strategy:

1. Read the passage/excerpt/article
2. Choose five words (I always give them a specific purpose: setting, or imagery, or figurative language)
3. For each word, the students have to write first its denotative meaning, and then all the possible associations
4. Write one paragraph including the word/quotation and all the associative meanings previously identified.
5. Repeat this for each word the students have analyzed
6. Write one or two pages analysis including all the previous paragraphs.

Poems and Video

As I said in the Unit Overview, Part One, I will assign some poems for homework to help my students strengthen their skills to annotate and analyze for literary devices and theme, and to have other perspectives on what makes a community: individuals with different values, opinions, culture, and rules.

1. the Cambridge ladies who live in furnished souls by Edward Estlin Cummings
(satirical denouncement of urban and political life) ¹²
2. Heritage by Countee Cullen (exploration of the poet's African heritage in a Judeo-Christian community) ¹³

3. Fern Hill by Dylan Thomas (a vision of an agricultural community and its impact on the coming of age) ¹⁴
4. Ogun by Kamu Brathwaite (values of a simple community) ¹⁵
5. The Powwow at the End of the World by Sherman Alexie (Native Indian community) ¹⁶
6. First Muse by Julia Alvarez (cultural clash in the community) ¹⁷
7. I Sit and Look Out by Walt Whitman (American community towards the end of the XIX century) ¹⁸
8. I Hear America Singing by Walt Whitman (American community towards the end of the XIX century) ¹⁹
9. Labor Day by Rodney Koenekke (working community) ²⁰
10. Bleeker Street, Summer by Derek Walcott (glimpse of a neighborhood on a summer day) ²¹
11. A Rural Community: Holtville, Alabama (video of a community in Alabama). ²²

The students read the poems and follow the steps I listed for Close Reading/Analysis of narrative and/or Poetic Techniques.

Non-Fictional Excerpts

These excerpts can be assigned as homework immediately before the research project and/or during the research project. The selected passages focus on the concepts of community.

1. "If Could Happen to us, it Could Happen to Anyone" by Vincanne Adams from page 55 to page 73. ²³
2. "Deindustrialization" and "What Difference Does education Make?" by Kathrine Marie Dudley from page 36 to page 40. ²⁴
3. "Explosions" and "The Shooters" by Katherine S. Newman from page 3 to page 46. ²⁵

Prompt – AP Students Final Assessment

After reading Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad and after completing your research project, write a 2000/2500 words creative piece. First you need to fill out the following worksheet which has to be approved by the teacher:

Genre

Theme (choose one of the themes discussed in this unit)

Setting

Characters

Point of View

Conflict

Literary techniques

Title

Write the first draft, revise it (hand in copies of two peer revisions), write a second draft followed by two other peer revisions, and then write your final draft that will be officially published in our classroom.

Prompt – Sophomore Students Final Assessment

After reading *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding and after completing your research project, write a 1000 words creative piece. First you need to fill out the following worksheet which has to be approved by the teacher:

Genre

Theme (choose one of the themes discussed in this unit)

Setting

Characters

Point of View

Conflict

Literary techniques

Title

Write the first draft, revise it (hand in copies of two peer revisions), write a second draft followed by two other peer revisions, and then write your final draft that will be officially published in our classroom.

Appendix: Implementing State and District Standards

The teaching implemented in this unit reflects the Common Core State Standards for Reading Fictional and Informational texts, Writing, Speaking and Listening, the College Board requirements for the AP English Literature and Composition course, and the Language Arts Curriculum for the New Haven Public District – our Language Arts Curriculum adheres to the CCSS standards. Specifically, this unit will teach students to analyze complex ideas and sequences of events in fictional and informational texts (novels, poems, video, and ethnographic texts documenting various communities), explain how specific events or ideas interact and develop, and read and analyze complex thematic ideas, structures, and other literary techniques. It will also focus on the analysis of multiple interpretations of the stylistic choices made by the author and its effects on the thematic idea(s), the overall meaning of the text, as well as its aesthetic impact. The unit will also focus on argumentative writing supported by valid reasons and relevant and sufficient evidence (essay and/or speech), informative/explanatory writing (student's documentary video clips), and narrative writing (short story, poems, and lyrics). Both the argumentative and the informative/explanatory writings will be sufficiently supported

with evidence from literary and/or informative texts. The narrative writing will be the result of the student's personal research and /or the analysis of the texts presented in the unit. Throughout the entire unit students will initiate or present and discuss in groups and/or as a class. The application of differentiated instruction with flexible groups and modified strategies facilitates the achievement of the above mentioned standards.

Annotated Bibliography: Resources for Teachers

Beers, Kylene. *When Kids Can't Read What Teachers Can Do*. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2003.

An effective text with strategies for struggling readers.

Farstrup, Alan E., Samuels S. Jay. eds. *What Research Has to Say About Reading Instruction*. Newark: International Reading Association, 2002.

Duke, Nell K., Pearson P. David. *Effective Practices for Developing Reading Comprehension*. Farstrup and Samuels 205-236.

A compelling chapter where the authors analyze, compare and contrast the validity of various strategies teachers use for an effective reading comprehension.

George, Paul S. "A Rationale for Differentiating Instruction in the Regular Classroom," *Theory into Practice*, 44, no. 3 (2005): 185-193, www.jstor.org/stable/3496997.

Based on the theory of differentiated instruction, the article evaluates the benefits of heterogeneous classrooms and differentiated instruction.

Strassman, Barbara K, Jersey Ewing. "Differentiated Instruction in the English classroom: Content, Process, Product and Assessment," 48, no. 4 (2005): 358-359, www.jstor.org/stable/40016933.

Useful suggestions of methods and strategies to effectively teach in a differentiated classroom.

Woolfolk, Anita. *Educational Psychology*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2001.

An essential text in educational psychology based on the theories of some of the most important scholars like J. Piaget and L. Vygotsky. It prepares for teaching, counseling, speech therapy, or psychology.

Annotated Bibliography: Resources for Students

Adams, Vincanne. *Markets of Sorrow, Labors of Faith*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2013.

The text narrates the aftermath of Katrina hurricane focusing on how the recovery was actually implemented.

Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness*, Edited by Paul B. Armstrong. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006.

It is the story of a seaman, Marlow, telling his crew about his previous adventure along the Congo River to Kurtz's station inside the Congo. The text contains various documents for Context and Criticism.

Dudley, Kathryn. *The End of the Line*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994.

The text studies the shutdown of Kenosha's auto plant, the effects, and the reactions of the people of that community.

Golding, William. *Lord of the Flies*. New York: Penguin Group, 2006.

The story of a group of teenagers stranded on a deserted island and their adventurous struggle for survival.

Jago, Shea, Scanlon, Robin D. *Aufses. Literature and Composition*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin, 2011.

An anthology including literary excerpts, novellas, plays, poem from the XXVII century up to present time.

Newman, Katherine S. *The Social Roots of School Shootings*. New York: Basic Books, 2004.

Ethnographic study of school shooting in the United States from 1997 on.

Notes

1. Barbara Strassman, Ewing Jersey, "Differentiated Instruction in the English Class: Content, Process, Product and Assessment," *Theory into Practice* 48, no 4 (2005): 358-359, www.jstor.org/stable/40016033
2. Anita Woolfolk, *Educational Psychology* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2001).
3. Robert Kimbrough, "Introduction," *Norton Critical Edition of Joseph Conrad, Heart of Darkness*. ed. Robert Kimbrough (New York: W.W. Norton, 1988), X-XIII.
4. Kyleene Beers, *When Kids Can't Learn What Teachers Can Do* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2003).
5. Anita Woolfolk, *Ibid.*
6. Anita Woolfolk, *Ibid.*
7. Nell Duke, David P. Pearson, *Effective Practices for Developing Reading Comprehension* (Newark: International Reading Association, 2002).
8. Kyleene Beers, *Ibid.*
9. Anita Woolfolk, *Ibid.*
10. Kyleene Beers. *Ibid.*
11. Paul George, "A Rationale for differentiating Instruction in the Regular Classroom," *Theory Into Practice* 44, no.3 (2005): 185-193, www.jstor.org/stable/3496997.

12. Edward E. Cummings, "the Cambridge ladies who live in furnished souls," *Literature and Composition*, ed. Carol Jago et al. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin, 2011), 502.
13. Countee Cullen, "Heriatega," *Ibid.* 503.
14. Dylan Thomas, "Fern Hill," *Ibid.* 508.
15. Kamu Brathwaite, "Ogun," *Ibid.* 515.
16. Sherman Alexie, "The Powwow at the End of the World," *Ibid.* 519.
17. Julia Alvarez, "First Muse," *Ibid.* 521.
18. Walt Whitman, "I Sit and Look Out," *Leaves of Grass and Other Writings*. Ed. Michael Moon (New York: W.W. Norton, 2002), 228.
19. Walt Whitman, "I Hear America Singing," *Ibid.* 12.
20. Rodney Koenke, "Labor day," <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/247670>
21. Derek Walcott, "Bleecker Street, Summer," <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/247976>
22. You Tube, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5TVqrtk6qp>.
23. Vincanne Adams, *Markets of Sorrow, Labors of Faith* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 55-73.
24. Kathryn M. Dudley, *The End of the Line* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994) 36-40.
25. Katherine S. Newman, *Rampage. The Social Roots of school Shooting* (New York: Basic Books, 2004) 3-46.

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