



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2019 Volume I: Reading for Writing: Modeling the Modern Essay

You Ain't Gotta Write Like You Speak: Talking White, While Livin' Brown

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This unit stems from the seminar with Jessica Brantley, “Reading for Writing: Modeling the Modern Essay” which directly addresses the third grade reading and writing standards for Texas (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills). This unit will incorporate essays from the seminar, articles I researched, and children’s picture books I vetted, with intentional focus on the spoken language, to parallel that of the students I teach. The focus is to have students read (or have read to them) narrative essays, books, and stories. Students will then produce a narrative essay of their own. It is my hope that by pairing children’s literature, known essays, and articles from online journals, it will enhance their writing.

I teach a population of students who are mostly considered to be at risk. This dialect is often looked at as a social dilemma, resulting in being rated as students who are less than credible because of how they speak. (Andrew C. Billings) My students sometimes do not recognize their audience or are too familiar with their audience, which affects their writing. If I aspire for them to reach middle-class status then this unit suits them perfectly. It will provide them with the tools they need in order to discern between social distance and social proximity to the audience in which they are both speaking and writing to.

(Developed and recommended for Reading/Writing ELAR, grades 3 and 4)

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