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Building Blocks for Poetry: Vertical Team Sequencing for Effective Poetic Analysis

Curriculum Unit 05.01.14, published September 2005
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Introduction

For the past fourteen years, I have taught English at the high school level. Within those years, I have taught not only ninth, tenth and twelfth grade literature based courses, but also courses in creative writing, broadcast/journalism, and speech to name a few—whatever the schedule read upon my return at the start of the school year. I have noticed at each level and in each course that though we, the students and I, work collaboratively to meet expected outcomes, often students simply lack the foundational skills to *exceed* expectations. Though many with a critical eye fixed on education adopt reaching set expectations/standards as meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)1, for me it seems that the terminology celebrates mediocrity. Is "adequate" really enough for our students?

One of the most challenging—and dare I report frustrating—tasks for me as a teacher is finding accurate ways of gauging students' background skill and knowledge when planning for a course. Certainly students *should* have made significant, documented progress relative to their grade level. As an Advanced Placement instructor, I enter the classroom each year with vim and vigor for sharpening my students' skills in literary analysis, Socratic thinking and dialogue, precision in writing and responsible work ethics that students *should* have already assimilated in previous English courses...*should*, the operative word and most frustrating deception. Realistically, students have not done so—or perhaps have poor retention; therefore, I begin each course rambling through what it means to have agreement between subjects and verbs or pronouns and their antecedents. I must introduce such common literary elements as irony and allusion. Realistically, many of the students entering twelfth grade classrooms have had neither *adequate* exposure to nor academic dialogue surrounding such concepts; hence, the vim and vigor of delving deeper into the aforementioned skills becomes exhausting.

I am certain that I echo the sentiments of every English teacher who maintains a reasonable expectation of his or her students' level of proficiency at any grade level. Within conversations in of my first National Initiative Seminar, I realized that my colleagues and I wrestle with the quandary of how to help students to retain and transfer information. We are keenly aware that even as early as kindergarten, students are introduced to poetic language and devices. Yet, somehow we subsist in a tedious cycle of remediation. As educators, nonetheless, we must meet each student where he or she is and ultimately journey to—and hopefully

beyond—expectations by the end of the course. No matter the challenges, this remains our task; nonetheless it prompts an essential question: How does any educator impart years of background material and still meet current performance standards2? A practical answer: The implementation of an effective vertical teaming model.

Rationale

Vertical alignment of skills within disciplines is one of the most noteworthy recent reforms in education.

A Vertical Team consists of a group of teachers from different grade levels in a given discipline who work cooperatively to develop and implement a vertically aligned program aimed at helping students acquire the academic skills necessary for success in the Advanced Placement Program—or any program of study for that matter. An AP Vertical Team necessarily includes middle school participation. The primary goals of a vertical team are: (1) to improve academic performance for all students in earlier grades by introducing skills and concepts needed for success in AP and other challenging courses, and (2) to improve performance and participation in the Advanced Placement Program.3

In the English classroom, a clear understanding of the expected outcomes at each grade level ensures a disciplined transition between grade levels. The communal responsibility implied by this pedagological structure is an essential building block for student development. For example, students must be able to define key literary terms/elements in order to identify and analyze them within varied works. Yet, often students have difficulty at the twelfth grade with such tasks because they lack necessary foundational skills, especially those relating to poetry as a unique genre.

Sadly, the students who end up being challenged by poetry are those enrolled in the class of the "smart students" who commonly "get it". They get *everything* anyway, don't they? But what of other students who could demonstrate that they would mature into "smart students" if provided the opportunity and specific models for *how* to critically study poetry at various grade levels. It is a demanding challenge which ultimately requires that teachers focus fundamentally on working collaboratively and continuously across grade levels. But for many students, this does not occur until they find themselves at the mercy of their twelfth grade English teacher who just cannot understand why his or her students "got this far" and do not know—or remember—how to participate in oral and written discourse about poetic texts.

According to current Georgia Department of Education Performance Standards Curriculum Revision Process documentation, in 2005 all Georgia schools will begin to implement new content-based curricula based on new performance standards. In English, the new standards included for grades 9-12 follow a delineated progression in the strands of writing and conventions.4 At the ninth grade level, an expected focus in reading and literature prompts study of literary genres, as students develop initial understanding of both structure and meaning in a work of literature. Students further develop initial understanding of how form affects the meaning and the process of interpretation.

Ninth grade students will engage differences in style and subject matter in poems by a variety of contemporary and canonical poets. They will identify and respond to the aesthetic effects of subject matter (e.g. topic, theme), sound devices (e.g., alliteration, onomatopoeia, rhyme scheme), figurative language (e.g.,

personification, metaphor, simile, hyperbole), and structure (e.g., fixed and free forms, rhymed and unrhymed, narrative and lyric) in a variety of poems.

At the tenth grade level, expected outcomes require students to identify and analyze elements of poetry and provide evidence from the text to support a sound interpretation. Students will analyze elements of poetry and provide evidence from the text to support understanding. They will analyze the effects of diction, syntax, sound (alliteration, end rhyme, internal rhyme, consonance, assonance), form (lyric poem, narrative poem, fixed form poems to include for example the ballad and sonnet), figurative language (personification, imagery, metaphor, simile, synecdoche, hyperbole, symbolism) and structure of poems as these elements relate to meaning. They will also analyze and evaluate the appropriateness of diction and imagery (controlling images, figurative language, understatement, irony, paradox).

The eleventh grade standards require adeptness in composition that states, explains, and justifies students' interpretation of literary works, using only evidence from the primary text as support. A sample task at the eleventh grade which ultimately builds on the skills from ninth and tenth grades will include a timed, in-class essay that states, explains, and justifies the student writer's interpretation of a literary work, using only evidence from the primary text as support (e.g. characterization, setting, diction, point of view, structure, figurative language, imagery, tone, etc.).

Writing that demonstrates proficient literary analysis by raising the level of critical thinking skills and rhetorical techniques demonstrates adequate performance at the twelfth grade level. A sample task at the twelfth grade includes the student composing an essay that explains and supports or refutes the strategies an author uses to make meaning in a literary text (e.g. diction, point of view, structure, figurative language, imagery, tone).

Hence using the vertical team approach in the implementation of this curriculum unit aligns with the current evolutionary process mandated by the Georgia Department of Education.

Unit Outline

In structuring *Building Blocks for Poetry: Vertical Team Sequencing for Effective Poetic Analysis,* I contend that knowledge required for adept poetic analysis at the twelfth grade level *must* be acquired over significant and consistent periods of exposure to varied engagements5 with poetic texts at sequential levels of Bloom's Taxonomy (knowledge, understanding, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation). Hence this curriculum proposes the use of a single work, presented in a progressing structure of poetic analysis from the ninth to the twelfth grades—not as a packaged plan, but as a purposeful process. This process involves six layered readings of a single work of poetry, poet's works or period. Through a concentrated adaptation of skills relating to poetry analysis from ninth to twelfth grades, this curriculum supports a strategic/backward design model,6 and offers a snapshot of how English teachers might smoothly collaborate to align vertically curricular goals using a single work at each grade level, so that students ultimately gain necessary analytical skills for notable advancement. Many poems might be used to illustrate this unit (See Suggested Poetry); however, I will focus examples for the purpose of this curriculum unit on two works, Edgar Allen Poe's "To Helen" (1831) and Hilda Doolittle's (hereafter referred to as H. D.) "Helen" (1924).

In support of this approach, I would point out two factors that are stumbling blocks rather than building blocks. First, in many settings, teachers serve highly transient populations, as is the case with staff as well, which often makes vertical teaming difficult. Second, as teachers, we do not assign students to classes, nor do we have the final say concerning what course we teach from year to year, or in some cases, at what school we teach. Help us all! Yet, if vertical teaming collaboration stabilizes for any given time between the high school and its feeder school(s), I suggest that engagement with the focus texts begin at the middle school level.

Middle Grades

Commonly at each middle school level (and beyond), English teachers prepare units through which the class might become engrossed in the background of specific cultures or periods of history, such as Greek or Roman mythology to include events surrounding The Trojan War. According to Homeric tradition, the War began as a result of a *beauty contest* among the goddesses, Hera, Aphrodite and Athena. Eris, who was the Goddess of Discord, offered a golden apple for the fairest goddess. Of course, as the Goddess of Discord, she presented this offering knowing that a great conflict would arise among the goddesses as to who was actually the "fairest in revenge for being the only goddess not invited to the wedding of Peleus and the sea nymph Thetis." The competition raged among (Goddess of Love), (Goddess of Wisdom) and (Wife of Zeus). Paris, prince of Troy, whose father was told by an oracle that Paris would one day cause the downfall of Troy, was chosen by the goddesses as judge. Each goddess offered Paris a bribe to make her the winner. Hera offers him sovereignty over the entire Earth, Athena invincibility in battle, and Aphrodite the most beautiful mortal woman. Paris awarded Aphrodite the golden apple. However, his bribe, Helen the most beautiful woman, was married to Menelaus, king of Sparta. Paris, with some favorable help from Aphrodite, abducts Helen and takes her back to Troy. Hence, Menelaus declares war on Troy and allies himself with many countries in the fight to win back his wife, Helen. It is said that a thousand ships rallied at Menelaus' request. A ten-year conflict ensues ending in the destruction of Troy, as foretold.

Students learn through such units about the significance of characters and events associated with epics such as Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, which recount specific events of the War and follow the homeward journey of Odysseus, king of Ithaca, following the War, respectively. Hence, engagements with the focus works suggested in this unit overview are decidedly fitting. As students learn of the War and Helen's role as the "face that launched a thousand ships" (an epithet from Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*), it is appropriate at this level that students engage "To Helen" through memorization. Memorization remains significant to foundational knowledge, the first cognitive level of Bloom's Taxonomy. More importantly, however, memorization is an aspect of learning that has been allowed to succumb to a fast-paced race with technological advancement. Why commit anything to memory when one click of a computer mouse can produce infinite amounts of knowledge? Billy Collins, in his commencement address, "On Slowing Down," at Choate Rosemary Hall, asserts that the "sudden accessibility of information deadens memory and may even make its functions seem obsolete. But to memorize is to possess something, whether it be a sonnet or a succession of kings, by making it an almost physical part of you, a kind of invisible companion." It is not essential that every nuance of the text is understood at this level, just that the text becomes a "physical part of [students]."

Additionally, having memorized the text to become a part of them (recall my previous concessions), students stand better prepared to discuss the connotative meaning of specific vocabulary within historical context allusions. Familiarity with the following terms/phrases will offer a greater connotative and later figurative understanding of the text: *Nicéan barks* were vessels sent from the island Nysa, to which in infancy Dionysos was conveyed to screen him from Rhea. The *perfumed sea* was the sea surrounding Nysa, an island paradise.

The *way-worn wanderer* was Dionysos or Bacchus, after his renowned conquests. His *native shore* was the Western Horn, called the Amalthean Horn. *Naiads* in Greek mythology are water nymphs that live in lakes, rivers, springs and fountains. *Psyche* is a young woman who loved and was loved by Eros (Cupid), god of love, and they married after Aphrodite's jealousy was overcome. She subsequently became the personification of the soul. Articulating these references and their significance to the actual historical events upon which the poem touches will provide a valuable depth of knowledge at this level of engagement.

Though I offer a broad scope of how the vertical team might include grades 6-7, for the purposes of this curricular unit, I will elaborate on four lesson plans offering this same literary work that is effective for vertical teaming. The lessons are designed for use at the ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth grades respectively.

High school

Ninth Grade

Having a more in depth understanding of a text, students at the ninth grade level will write a précis of the previously memorized poem, "To Helen". (If vertical teaming does not include middle school colleagues, memorization can certainly begin at the ninth grade and continue as a practice with other works each year following.) Writing a précis requires more than just summarizing and providing personal opinion. In order to write an accurate précis of a text, students must engage in a critical understanding of meaning, Bloom's second level of cognitive understanding. Hence, they must accurately infer theme to write about the poem with concision.

"To Helen" exalts Helen's beauty. Through his use of celebratory diction and bold imagery, Poe provides a clear tone of veneration thereby, presenting a somewhat pro-Greek view of those who fought willingly for the beautiful Helen to be returned to Sparta.

Advocating the strategic/backward design model, I plan at this juncture with the understanding that students at the twelfth grade level will write a comparative analysis of works with similar theme. But I begin with Poe's "To Helen" for the purpose of the ninth grade lesson.

Tenth Grade

At the tenth grade level, students will analyze how the poet employs imagery to project tone. An analysis of sensory imagery in "To Helen" results in the identification of the following elements:

Allusion: *…wanderer bore/To his own native shore* (perhaps here suggesting the

resolve of Odysseus finally reaching the shores of Ithaca to see his beloved Penelope and the determination that he maintained to get home to her throughout his difficult journey, *Dionysus* (Bacchus); *Naiad* (nymphs gifted in music and dance suggesting a particular gaiety); *glory that was Greece,/And the grandeur that was Rome* (refers to a return to a time in which Greece and Rome were the dominating cultural centers, fostering beauty and excelling in warfare. Poe wishes to return to the time of the Trojan War to glimpse Helen's beauty); *Psyche, from the regions which/Are Holy-Land* (Psyche is the personification of the human soul which, presented here, suggests Poe's desire for Helen's beauty and its rarity).

Simile/Metaphor: Comparing Helen's beauty to *Nicéan barks of yore, /That gently, o'er a perfumed sea*, barks that serve ultimately as a source of hope for the *weary, way-worn wanderer*.

Sensory imagery:

Smell: *perfumed sea* (contradictory to the actual smell of the sea), *hyacinth*

(fragrant flower).

Visual: *hyacinth* (vibrant red/cinnamon color); Helen presented as a lighthouse...a

source of comfort to a sailor as she stands statue-like holding an *agate* (ornate

chalcedony or quartz) *lamp*; classic face (infers that she has a timeless, refined or

highly valued beauty).

It is also fitting at the tenth grade level to introduce ecphrastic poetry—poetry about pictures—that ultimately supports students' application/analysis. Artist Evelyn de Morgan has an excellent view of Helen which will be helpful in the discussion of imagery in "To Helen". The painting is available in color at http://www.stanford.edu/~plomio/helen.html>. Such engagement will not only afford students an opportunity to reference not only the text itself in discussion, but will also bridge the visual and written arts.

Eleventh Grade

In an effort to further develop analytical and now evaluative skills (Sixth level of Bloom's Taxonomy); students will examine rhetorical devices and theme in works with similar subject matter such as "To Helen" and "Helen".

With the introduction of H. D.'s "Helen", students will have the opportunity to examine a text similar in subject to Poe's "To Helen", yet a poem with a very different view of Helen's *beauty*. H. D. presents Helen with disdain. While Poe praises Helen, H.D. asserts that her *luster* and *smile* are hated by *All Greece*.

H.D. employs the following rhetorical devices:

Repetition: *All Greece...* (Repeated at the start of stanzas one and two; emphasizes a communal loathing for Helen; it should be noted as well that there is debate about whether or not Helen went with Paris willingly and did not want to return to Menelaus, and that thus The Trojan War persisted for ten years, if this is the case, in vain);

Diction: *hates*, *reviles* (curses), *wan* (lacking in intensity or brightness; note contrast to Poe's *classic face* description), *white* (used here to imply bland, stoic and callous); deeper (comparative form suggests intensified hatred for Helen's disingenuous smile)

Allusion: *past enchantments/and past ills* (refers to the love she professed for Sparta as her queen and for Menelaus as well as the glorification of fighting to reclaim the pride of Sparta and ills, the deaths that ultimately ensued); *God's daughter, born of love* (Helen is the child of Zeus and Leda, queen of Sparta); *funereal cypresses* (Visual reference might be made to van Gogh's *Starry Night*. According to Jacquelyn Etling in *Vincent van Gogh, The Weaver of Images: The Starry Night, His Tapestry of Heavenly Consolation*, the cypress in the foreground for Van Gogh, had a deeper spiritual meaning. He referred to these trees as "funeral

cypresses" in his writings. Around the Mediterranean, cypresses were planted in cemeteries. She further contends that the trees are considered symbols of immortality because of their long life. The blackish green color of these trees also holds a similar meaning of immortality. In the text, the contrasting *white ash* thus symbolizes the converse image of immortality.6)

Refer to the tenth grade unit overview for a detailed description of literary elements of "To Helen".

I will certainly prepare as well to discuss other elements that students present with the conviction of how the element affirms the obviously spiteful tone of the work.

Twelfth Grade

At the twelfth grade level, having now engaged "To Helen" at all levels of Bloom's Taxonomy as well as critically juxtaposed two works with similar theme, students stand better prepared to complete a comparative analysis of not only the aforementioned texts but also other texts of merit. Students will analyze social and cultural experiences of each text, as well as employ their understanding of the literary elements present and how each expresses the poet's tone.

Thus, engagement at the twelfth grade will conclude a series of vertically aligned lessons, one spanning the ninth through eleventh grades, which concentrate on a specific text, foe example "To Helen".

Students will have forty minutes in which to complete Question 2 from the 1994 Advanced Placement Examination in English Literature and Composition. The examination booklet provides the texts "To Helen" and "Helen" and requires students, while considering various rhetorical devices, to write an essay "contrasting the speakers' views of Helen." (A testing booklet is available for order through The College Board.)

Students will peer-evaluate essays using the Advanced Placement grading rubric for this specific test, also available through The College Board.

Several poems might be used for such correlation. I include a listing of Suggested Poetry for Comparative Analysis below which indicates, parenthetically, poems of similar theme. Additional poems of significant merit are included as a part of the resources for use at grade levels indicated.

Suggested Poetry for Comparative Analysis

Several poems included are excellent for comparative analysis at the twelfth grade and have been included in the overview having cross-references with this specific purpose in mind. I do not profess to have made a complete compilation of works; hence, listing will evolve as necessary.

(table 05.01.14.01 available in print form)

It is my contention that through the vertical team approach, when students reach the twelfth grade level, they will be better equipped to explicate poetry orally and in written form. Students must transfer skills from one level to the next and yet, some method of engraining such skills must also come from a focused collaboration among teaching professionals. This is a great challenge at all levels of education. It becomes quite

comfortable for students to retain information for the moment. But what happens when students must recall foundational information/skills—building blocks—in order to demonstrate understanding at a greater depth? Building blocks are not available and students and teachers end up in a dauntingly harmful cycle of remediation.

This curriculum unit suggests that a better way exists. Vertical teaming is a viable pedagogy. We cannot afford to function in isolation from one another within the discipline of secondary English, especially if students are to gain and retain very critical foundational skills that they need.

Lesson Plans

Lesson 1: Ninth Grade

Ultimately, students will write a précis of a given text at the ninth grade level. Additionally, at the forefront of planning, I keep in mind that at the broader goal is for students at the twelfth grade level to use the skills learned from an engagement with a specific text at the ninth grade level to enhance their engagement of the text through comparative analysis of a work with similar meaning at the twelfth grade. We will use Edgar Allen Poe's "To Helen" for the purpose of this ninth grade lesson.

I have titled this ninth grade lesson *Extra! Extra! Read All About It!* The objective of this lesson is for students to write a headline for the poem "To Helen". To do so effectively, students must have a firm grasp of vocabulary and tone. Students will identify significant vocabulary and determine the tone that should be reflected in a headline developed. This lesson will take approximately ninety minutes.

To begin, pose the question, "Why do journalists use headlines?" Possible responses might include, "to tell us what the article is about", "to make us want to read it", "to give a summary of the article" to name a few. Each student should have a sheet of paper for this next step. Project the image of 3-4 ambiguous headlines via the overhead or though some other technological/visual medium. (If technology is not available, it is perfectly conducive to write the phrasing on the board one at a time or to pass out strips of paper with the headlines indicated for various students to read aloud.) As each headline is projected, ask students to read the projected headline, study its wording for 10 seconds and then write a two to three sentence summary of what they think the actual newspaper article was about. Then students, who will be given an opportunity to share, may share individual responses.

I suggest using headlines from tabloids in which you are able to pull the actual articles to share with the class after summaries have been shared. Headlines below include some so ambiguous that students are certain to have fun creating stories to fit them. This step will be repeated with each headline presented. Suggested headlines might include (with example responses) those below. I must keep in mind that children have active imaginations and thus, I prepare myself for a wealth of emotional responses.

(table 05.01.14.02 available in print form)

Other headlines might include those below:

QUEEN MARY HAVING BOTTOM SCRAPED, DEALERS WILL HEAR CAR TALK AT NOON, MINERS REFUSE TO WORK

AFTER DEATH, MILK DRINKERS ARE TURNING TO POWDER, DRUNK GETS NINE MONTHS IN VIOLIN CASE, JUVENILE COURT TO TRY SHOOTING DEFENDANT, COMPLAINTS ABOUT NBA REFEREES GROWING UGLY, MAN EATING PIRANHA MISTAKENLY SOLD AS PET FISH, ASTRONAUT TAKES BLAME FOR GAS IN SPACECRAFT, GRANDMOTHER OF EIGHT MAKES HOLE IN ONE, HOSPITALS ARE SUED BY 7 FOOT DOCTORS, LACK OF BRAINS HINDERS RESEARCH, IRAQI HEAD SEEKS ARMS8

Guiding student conversation, point out that stories—obviously conflicting and funny to boot—derived from certain headlines are possible because the headlines do not provide a description accurate enough for us to determine the content of the article. Present also headlines that are not ambiguous and would thus provide quality models for those students are to produce. Hence, the class should come to consensus about the importance of having a headline that fully captures or accurately represents the overall scope of the text for which it is crafted.

I would then share Bruce Lansky's *Not Exactly the News* or *Caught in the Act*9. Each of these poems is made up entirely of headlines and provides a vivid link, for a ninth grade class, to introduce the poetry to come. Then using the *What Do We Know About.../What's Missing* chart below, a student recorder will fill in the information based on random responses from the class. I would then fill in any missing details in the *What's Missing?* column key to historical/literary background that did not come out in the pre-knowledge discussion.

(table 05.01.14.03 available in print form)

Students will then be arranged in groups of three or four. (See Suggested Teacher Resources for grouping strategies) A dictionary/mythological resource will be available for this next stage for each group. Each student will receive a copy of Poe's "To Helen" and will be asked to listen as I read the poem. They will then read it silently to themselves and then write their immediate reaction on their own sheet of paper. We will then share students' reactions. They will read it a second time, highlighting any words/phrases that are unclear to them. After the class has identified any unknown words/phrases, I will ask each group to read the poem again and to respond to the following:

(table 05.01.14.04 available in print form)

Then I will facilitate a discussion of the text, including the vocabulary that articulates the veneration/admiration with which Poe memorializes Helen of Troy through this poem.

Following the facilitated discussion, student groups will collaborate to write a headline for the poem. Note that they are moving now from the summary to the headline. When we began the lesson, they started with the headline and backtracked to the summary. (To make it even more challenging, I might assign each group a letter of the alphabet and have them design a headline using alliteration based on their group's respective letter.)

Groups will share their headlines and the class will discuss how each group's headline reflects the tone—or should be adjusted to do so—and theme of the text. They will then celebrate, transpose and post their final drafts of the headline onto a sentence strip or prepared newsprint/bulletin board.

Lesson 2: Tenth Grade

For this lesson, *The Beautiful Woman*, students will examine societal/personal opinions of beauty and evaluate Poe's word choice and its relevance to tone. The lesson is designed to span the last thirty minutes of a class

period and conclude at the end of a ninety-minute period on the following day.

On the first day, I will begin by playing Boyz II Men's *Beautiful Woman* or some other song that celebrates womanhood.

After the song begins, I will ask students to fold a piece of notebook paper into four sections and label individual sections *look*, *smell*, *sound*, *action*, respectively. I will then ask them to take five minutes and write in each section what they think a beautiful woman looks like, smells like, sounds like and acts like. They may not use vacuous words such as *nice*, *alright*, *ok*, or *good*. To increase the challenge I may ask them to respond creating a simile or metaphor or hyperbole. They will then share their responses with a partner.

For homework, I will ask students to search magazines, newspapers, the Internet, and books and find a medium that presents a visual of the beautiful woman, making certain to emphasize that students should not bring images that are obviously sexual in nature. (Pictures of the students themselves or of family members may need to be avoided depending on the maturity level of the class.) They should bring an image for day two for the continuation of the lesson.

As the students enter on day two, I will have posted prominently around the room various images of women. I will have these images of women posted just in case some students do not bring in a significant number of images of women as requested. It always pays to be overly prepared. I will ask them to post their images around the room to create a gallery. My posted images will be diverse and may include prints such as a print of Rosie the Riveter, *The Mona Lisa*, Maxfield Parrish's *Cinderella*, Nina Gonzales' *El Mercado de Flores*, B. J. Zhang's *Wise* and the like. We will post all images that the students bring unless they are inappropriate for our setting. Often ancillary materials are available in my teacher textbook, which includes appropriate visuals. A variety of postcard images are also readily available at local card shops.

Students will then be given five Post-itÂ® notes on which they are to write their names. Students will do a Gallery Walk, for ten to fifteen minutes, going freely from image to image discussing why the image is or is not an image of a beautiful woman. (If more structure is required, students can be placed in groups at each image and move clockwise after a set time. Playing music during the walk and turning it off as you do in Musical Chairs can be a great indication of when students should move to the next area.) Students will have to personally choose five of the images that are representative of the beautiful woman. After choosing, they are to briefly describe characteristics of beauty for each of their chosen beautiful images and post it around the corresponding images chosen. After returning to their seats, students will then discuss what makes the images receiving the greatest number of Post-itsÂ® beautiful.

I will then provide students with a copy of "To Helen". We will read the poem as a group, identifying any unknown words/phrases. As students have already had an experience with the text as ninth graders, the poem is familiar. (Remember my contentions.) Students will then be asked to highlight words/phrases/figurative elements that Poe uses which indicate Helens's beauty—such as *Like those Nicéan barks of yore./That gently, o'er a perfumed sea, hyacinth hair, classic face*, and *statue-like*. We will follow with a discussion of what image each of these terms suggests about Helen's beauty.

From our discussion, students will be asked to complete a three hundred word quick-write in which they discuss Poe's tone as it is expressed through his representation of Helen. Students are now equipped to use wording from the text to qualify their responses.

Lesson 3: Eleventh Grade

For this lesson, *Is She Really Beautiful?,* I will introduce H. D.'s "Helen". Students will use a graphic organizer to compare "Helen" with "To Helen". Though it will not be my students' first engagement with "To Helen", I will facilitate a brief five to ten minute reading and discussion of the text.

First, I will share with my students a pre-school book on opposites. Gary Rosen's song, "Opposites" is another wonderful method of introducing opposites. It is available with audio at http://www.songsforteaching.com/garyrosen/opposites.htm. Yes, the older children may grumble, but they love returning to their elementary school roots. Another text, *Animated Picture Book Big/Small* is available online at http://www.liveandlearn.com

/bigsml.html.

I will then provide the texts "To Helen" and "Helen", for silent reading. After they have read both silently, I will poll students, asking them to show with a thumbs up or thumbs down as I call out the title of the poem, if the tone is positive (thumbs up) or negative (thumbs down). Because students have already engaged "To Helen" in both the ninth and tenth grades, the primary focus will be on "Helen".

The students will complete the T-chart below with a partner indicating rhetorical devices used to project the positive/negative tone in each of the texts. Students will then explain the results of the aforementioned poll using the rhetorical devices they have listed.

(table 05.01.14.05 available in print form)

Annotated Bibliography

Suggested Resources for Students

Baskwill, Amanda-Lynn. (2003) *English 11*. http://www.bridgetown.ednet.ns.ca/

Amanda-Lynn%20Baskwell/WEB/poetry.htm

Developed by an eleventh grade student with the primary focus of helping herself to understand scansion and a method of poetic analysis, this site offers a student-friendly walk through not only poetry, but experiences with Shakespeare, novels and essay development.

Lansky, Bruce. 2004. PoetryTeachers.com. 7 July 2005 http://www.poetryteachers.

com/index.html>.

Exceptional site for students and teachers alike, this site provides fun interactive poetry activities as well as great poems that students will remember for year to come.

Lass, Abraham H., David Kiremidjian, Ruth M. Goldstein. 1987. *Dictionary of*

Classical, Biblical, and Literary Allusions. New York: Facts on File.

Valuable resource for an academic library.

Murfin, Ross C. and Supryia M. Ray. 2003. *The Bedford Glossary of Critical and*

Literary Terms. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's. Valuable resource for students to have in their literary library.

Suggested Resources for Teachers

Anthology of Poetry. 2005. WebBook Publications. 9 July 2005. http://www.web-

books.com/Classics/Poetry/Anthology/contents.htm>.

Site provides links to over fifty classic poets and their works as well as free downloads to plays, novels and historical documentation and other works.

Arp, Thomas R. 2005. Perrine's literature: structure, sound, and sense. Boston, MA:

Thomson Wadsworth.

Authentic Education. 7 July 2005 http://www.grantwiggins.org/resources.lasso>.

Site provides a framework for Understanding by Design model articulated by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe. Several links provide access to bibliographic resources and professional development opportunities.

Bliss, Kappie. 2004. Project Alert. *Creative Ways to Organize Students for Small*

Group Activities. http://www.projectalert.com/ResourceFiles/_sdcreativeways

09232002.pdf>.

The site offers sixteen energizing and imaginative methods for grouping students. Some require materials.

The College Board. http://CollegeBoard.com>

Considered the leading organization for development in Advanced Placement (AP), CollegeBoard.com provides resource information in all offered AP disciplines as well as archived tests that are very useful for classroom skill development. Sample Advanced Placement Literature test questions provided are useful in the strategic/backward design of lessons within vertical teams. The site caters effectively to students, educators and parents equally.

—. *College Board: AP Central: English Literature and Composition*. 6 July 2005. http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/members/article/1,3046,152-171-0-2002,00.html>.

Erven, Bernard and Carl Zulauf. 1998. *Key Points Concerning Group Assignments*.

Ohio State University. http://ftad.osu.edu/Publications/keypoints.html>.

The site proposes key steps to forming, facilitating and evaluating the small group process.

Glossary of Poetic Terms from Bob's Byway. 19 March 2005.http://www.poeticbyway.

com/glossary.html>.

Site provides an extensive listing of terminology related to the poetic genre which provides phonetic pronunciation, hyperlinked cross-references, examples and examples from works of merit.

Johnson, James Weldon. 1983. *Book of American Negro poetry, chosen and edited,*

with an essay on the Negro's creative genius, by James Weldon Johnson. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Jokinen, Anniina. 2004. *Luminarium*. 6 July 2005 http://www.luminarium.org/

lumina.htm.

Site provides resources for Medieval, Renaissance and 17th Century literature and artwork.

Lansky, Bruce. 2004. PoetryTeachers.com. 7 July 2005 http://www.poetryteachers.

com/index.html>.

Exceptional site for students and teachers alike, this site provides fun poems for classroom use as well as specific resources for teaching numerous poetic forms.

Mortal Women of the Trojan War. Stanford University 9 July 2005

http://www.stanford.edu/~plomio/helen.html>.

The site provides both visual and written description of women involved in The Trojan War with links to other related events and persons. Provides full bibliography of online sources

Murfin, Ross C. and Supryia M. Ray. 2003. *The Bedford Glossary of Critical and*

Literary Terms. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's. Resource that not only every English teacher should have, but also every reader.

Supplemental Sources

Erickson, Lynn H. *Stirring the Head, Heart, and Soul: Redefining Curriculum and Instruction*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2000.

Hayes Jacobs, Heidi. *Mapping the Big Picture: Integrating Curriculum and Assessment K-12*, Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 1997.

Hunter, Robin. *Madeline Hunter's Mastery Teaching: Increasing Instructional Effectiveness in Elementary and Secondary Schools*, updated edition, Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2004.

Miller, Leanne. *Backward into the Future.* 2004. Professionally Speaking. 7 July 2005 http://www.oct.ca/en/CollegePublications/PS/june_2004/backward.asp>.

Article addresses the Backward Design model adopted by the Thames Valley (Ontario) school district. Though it is specific to the needs of this district, it is universal in that it provides key steps in such curriculum design/planning.

Kearsley, Greg. 2005. Explorations in Learning & Instruction: The Theory Into Practice

Database. *Social Development Theory (L. Vygotsky)*. http://tip.psychology.

org/vygotsky.html>.

It offers a basis for Vvgotsky's theory of Social Development which contends that essentially cognitive development comes through social interaction and is limited to a specific age range. Its home site links to a smorgasbord of theories of cognition relevant to the practice of teaching.

Wiggins, Grant and Jay McTighe. *Understanding by Design*, New York: Pearson Education, 2000.

The text offers a comprehensive discussion of the self-titled curriculum design paradigm.

—. 2005 http://www.grantwiggins.org/ubd.html>.

Site provides the basic history and framework for Understanding by Design. It offers a wealth of resources for professional development for those interested in furthering knowledge in this pedagogy.

Suggested Poetry

Several poems included are excellent for comparative analysis at the twelfth grade and are cross-referenced with this specific purpose in mind. I do not profess to have a complete compilation of works; hence, listing will mature as necessary.

Suggested for memorization at the middle school level

Doolittle, Hilda (H. D.)

Helen

Dunbar, Paul Lawrence

Sympathy

Frost, Robert

Stopping by the Woods On A Snowy Evening

The Road Not Taken (Crane, *The Wayfarer*)

Hughes, Langston

Dreams

Johnson, James Weldon

The Creation

Poe, Edgar Allen

To Helen

Thomas, Dylan

Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night

Moore, Marianne

Silence

Viorst, Judith

If I Were In Charge Of the World

Ninth Grade

Barbauld, Anna Laetitia

The Mouse's Petition

Cavafy, Constantine

Ithaca

Dickinson, Emily

I Never Saw A Moor

Donne, John

Negative Love

Death Be Not Proud

Byron, George Gordon, Lord

She Walks In Beauty

Frost, Robert

Something Like A Star (Keats, *Bright Star*)

Herrick, Robert

To The Virgins To Make Much Of Time

Moore, Marianne

Silence

Poe, Edgar Allen

The Raven

The Bells

Annabel Lee

Shakespeare, William

Sonnet 30

The Seven Ages Of Man

Tennyson, Alfred Lord

The Charge Of the Light Brigade (from As You Like It)

Tenth Grade

Berryman, John

Winter Landscape (De La Mare, *Brueghel's Winter*)

Brooks, Gwendolyn

The Sonnet-Ballad

De La Mare, Walter

Brueghel's Winter (Berryman, *Winter Landscape*)

Dickenson, Emily

There Is No Frigate Like A Book

Ferlinghetti, Lawrence

Constantly Risking Absurdity

Frost, Robert

The Most Of It (Wordsworth, *There Was A Boy*)

Hopkins, Gerard Manley

God's Grandeur

Keats, John

Ode On A Grecian Urn (Stevens, *Anecdote Of A Jar*)

Marlowe, Christopher

The Passionate Shepherd To His Love (Raleigh, *The Nymph's Reply To The Shepherd*)

Merriam, Eve

Metaphor

Owen, Wilfred

Dulce Et Decorum Est

Plath, Sylvia

Mad Girl's Love Song

Raleigh, Sir Walter

The Nymph's Reply To The Shepherd

Rosetti, Dante Gabriel

Our Lady Of The Rocks

Water, for Anguish Of The solstice,-yea,

Shakespeare

Sonnet 18

Sonnet 29

Stevens, Wallace

Anecdote Of A Jar (Keats, *Ode To A Grecian*)

W. H. Auden

The Unknown Citizen

Wordsworth, William

The World Is Too Much With Us

Yeats, William Butler

Leda And The Swan

Eleventh Grade

Bishop, Elizabeth

The Fish (Moore, *A Jelly Fish*)

Blake, William

The Sick Rose (Parker, *One Perfect Rose*)

The Chimney Sweeper (1789, 1794)

Dickenson, Emily

Because I Could Not Stop for Death

Dunbar, Paul Lawrence

We Wear The Mask

Eliot, T. S.

Whispers Of Immortality

Frost, Robert

Fire And Ice

Design

Moore, Marianne

A Jelly Fish (Bishop, *The Fish*)

Parker, Dorothy

One Perfect Rose (Blake, *The Sick Rose*)

Pound, Ezra

Portrait d'Une Femme

Rich, Adrienne

Storm Warnings

Robinson, Edwin Arlington

Richard Cory

Miniver Cheevy

Stevens, Wallace

Thirteen Ways Of Looking at A Blackbird

Whitman, Walt

Hope Is The Thing

Twelfth Grade

Arnold, Matthew

Dover Beach

Auden, W. H.

Musée des Beaux Arts

Bishop, Elizabeth

One Art

Blake, William

The Tiger

The Lamb

Bridges, Robert

EROS (Stevenson, Eros)

Crane, Stephen

The Wayferer

Dickinson, Emily

We Grow Accustomed To The Dark (Frost, *Acquainted With The Night*)

Donne, John

A Valedictorian Forbidding Mourning

Evans, Mari

When in Rome

Frost, Robert

Acquainted With The Night (Dickinson, *We Grow Accustomed To The Dark*)

Birches (Thomas, *Fern Hill*)

Gray, Thomas

Elegy Written In A Country Churchyard (Masters, *Spoon River Anthology*)

Housman, A. E.

To An Athlete Dying Young

Hughes, Ted

To A Pig (Plath, *Sow*)

Keats, John

La Belle Dame Sans Merci

To Autumn (Pushkin, *Autumn*)

Bright Star (Frost, *Something Like A Star*)

Lawrence, D. H.

Snake

Piano

Masters, Edgar Lee

Spoon River Anthology (Gray, *Elegy Written In A Country Churchyard*)

Plath, Sylvia

Mirror

Sow (Hughes, *To A Pig*)

Pushkin, Alexander

Autumn (Keats, *To Autumn*)

Shakespeare

Sonnets 73

Sonnet 130

Shelley, Percy

Ozymandias

Stevenson, Anne

Eros (Bridges, *EROS*)

Thomas, Dylan

Fern Hill (Frost, *Birches*)

Wesley, Charles

Gentle Jesus, Meek And Mild

Wordsworth, William

There Was A Boy (Frost, *The Most Of It*)

Notes

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1. In defining AYP, each state sets the minimum levels of improvement, based on student performance on state standardized tests, school districts and schools must achieve within time frames specified in law in order to meet the 100% proficiency goal. These levels of improvement are known as Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO) to ensure that all student groups, schools, school districts, and the State as a whole reach this goal by 2013-2014.

2. Please note that specific standards references are to those adopted by the Atlanta Public Schools in Language Arts and should be adapted as necessary to maintain the integrity of a user's school and system standards.

3. College Board. 2005. *Pre-AP: AP Vertical Alignment*. 7 July 2005.http://apcentral. collegeboard.com/pre-ap/ap_vertical_teams/0,3060,175-188-0-0,00.html>.

4. ELA Curriculum Revision ñ Executive Summary. 2005. 6 July 2005
http://www.georgiastandards.org/_documents/langart/gps_summary_ela.pdf

5. The act of engaging requires a specific commitment at an appointed time and place; hence, this term implies that specific grade levels at which certain purposes for reading and analysis are more effective than others.

6. Developed by nationally recognized educators Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe, and published by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), Understanding by Design is based on the following key ideas:

- A primary goal of education should be the development and deepening of student understanding.

- Students reveal their understanding most effectively when they are provided with complex, authentic opportunities to explain, interpret, apply, shift perspective, empathize, and self-assess. When applied to complex tasks, these "six facets" provide a conceptual lens through which teachers can better assess student understanding.

- Effective curriculum development reflects a three-stage design process called "backward design" that delays the planning of classroom activities until goals have been clarified and assessments designed. This process helps to avoid the twin problems of "textbook coverage" and "activity-oriented" teaching, in which no clear priorities and purposes are apparent.

- Student and school performance gains are achieved through regular reviews of results (achievement data and student work) followed by targeted adjustments to curriculum and instruction. Teachers become most effective when they seek feedback from students and their peers and use that feedback to adjust approaches to design and teaching.

- Teachers, schools, and districts benefit by "working smarter" through the collaborative design, sharing, and peer review of units of study.

7. Etling, Jacquelyn. 2004. Journal of the CUNY PhD Program in Art History. Part 10

Landscapes. 11 July 2005 http://dsc.gc.cuny.edu/part/articles/etling.html>.

Vincent van Gogh, The Weaver of Images: The Starry Night, His Tapestry of Heavenly Consolation

8. Ambiguous Newspaper Headlines. 2005. http://www.fun-with-words.com

/ambiguous_headlines.html>.

9. Full texts available at http://www.poetryteachers.com/poetclass/lessons/tabloid.html