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The Underground Railroad and the Geography of Freedom: Using Slave Narratives and Negro Spirituals as Maps

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Introduction

As a teacher of language and literature I find it quite alarming that the story of slavery has been taught only in bits and pieces in American History classes of the Pittsburgh Public Schools. I would even go so far as to say that the story of slavery is taught in this shard and splintered way in most American History classes and in most public schools across America. What I have never understood are the evasions, restrictions, and omissions of the African experience in America as a full body rather than as a shadow in America's history. This lack of including the whole story of slavery in our history, even up to today, continues to influence the ways in which European Americans have been privileged and the ways in which African Americans have been relegated, by conscious and unconscious efforts, to an approximate subject position in the same American history. This may be in part due to the fact that Africans were considered "approximately" human. The U. S. Constitution determined that Africans measured only three-fifths of a human being compared to the European Americans' whole five-fifths human status.

This three-fifths treatment of the history of enslaved Africans has been this way for as long as I can remember, and this includes my parents' memories and my grandparents' memories. It also includes the actual reality of living such a "shadow" or "less than" life as my great grandparents did as enslaved people. My great grandparents lived the unrecorded life of slavery. Their story is not to be found in school history books which clarify their positive but harsh role as co-constructors of the social, economic and political development of America and their role in the shaping of the American identity. There has been little praise and recognition for their contributions and hard work; little appreciation and little reward.

The need to include the omitted story of Africans in America, this other half of the American body, will always be an issue until it is addressed and dealt with in order that the whole five-fifths of American history come to be about what we really say it means when we shout and praise our form of democracy; when we say that all are entitled to inalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. The fact is that African people were transported from their homelands involuntarily and in chains to live and serve as chattel in a less than human existence in America. This is the story that must be told in detail without a single omission. And, after all the clearing away of bramble and briar from within this tangled understanding of democracy with its "freedom of," we may indeed find one blade of human decency called truth. And, truth is the only decency

left to the story of Africans who were transported as human cargo and enslaved in America.

Overview

In thinking about creating a curriculum unit which has to do with the history of enslaved Africans in the America, I considered what would be the best way to approach it based on the academic and social development of my students. I have decided that I will focus specifically on the Underground Railroad and the use of African slave narratives and Negro spirituals as purveyors of meaning which have both explicit and implicit maps that pointed the way to the physical and psychological freedom of some African slaves. I also want to illustrate the meaning and influence of these concrete physical images and the abstract images created with words, and then use them to develop learning activities which incorporate their use. These learning activities will be based on four of the Eight Principles of Montessori Education.

I teach sixth, seventh, and eighth grade Communications in a public K-8 Montessori magnet school. The student population at the middle-upper-level numbers about sixty-five students of which only four are Caucasian and they are all male. Interestingly enough, the white flight occurred due to the lack of Montessori trained and certified teachers at that level and not because of the comparatively high number of African American students. So, the white flight was not racially motivated, but in fact, the absence of Montessori trained and certified teachers precipitated the white flight which caused the racial imbalance.

However, even before these kinds of noticeable racial imbalances, I had long ago noticed an unjust imbalance and one sidedness in educational institutions. I had even participated in the imbalances in one way or another because most of the time I was a passive learner. Not until the late 1960's and early 70's did I develop the voice to question or contest the ways in which information about Africans, Africa and the institution of slavery was being transmitted as knowledge in school history books and in history classes. The view of history offered always showed enslaved Africans, through words or illustrations prostrate in a slave ship or on the ground; in chains and shackles; on an auction block being examined like an animal; working the fields; serving the master; or being hunted.

There is a certain way that information about each of the above descriptions has been justified and the justifications have been put forth and perpetuated as truth. As I said in my introduction, some of my memories have been born of my own experience and others have been transplanted from my parents, grandparents and even by people in the small town in which I grew up. So, I carry memories which interlock like warp and weft and then push and pull against my psyche. The memories intersect to create a netlike system of coordinates that chart the dynamics of my present conceptual understandings concerning Africans, Africa, African Americans and the institution of slavery.

For example, there is one of many particular memories that always comes to mind when in the classroom the dialogue turns to race and black history. I clearly remember sliding down in my seat and feeling the hot sensation of embarrassment wash over me as Mr. H. talked about slavery in my seventh grade history class. Even then I didn't really hear what he said about slavery. I had only heard the word slaves or slavery and that was enough to wish my African American self invisible in this class of all Caucasian kids and the Caucasian teacher on whom I had a secret crush. The teacher's talk was hard to handle because it twisted me into seeing my blackness through white eyes and this did not result in a good image of or feeling about myself. Yet, this

was the early 1960's, not the early 1860's, and I did not feel free. I was bound by the perspective from which the story was told.

Rationale

I always remind myself of the above incident and many others like it when I teach literature. So, I always add the historical context, which for me, has naturally come to include African experiences in America. I consider these experiences a valuable and necessary part of the American landscape on which the development of wholesome early adolescents will take shape. For example, when I engage the students with particular stories written by African American authors, I always sift out the pertinent historical moments and cultural elements which will not only enhance and broaden the students' understanding but also strengthen their sense of identity, connectivity and rootedness in a positive way. It is the same when I engage the students in reading Caucasian authors whose stories may or may not have Africanisms or African American characters. I try to give additional information that enables students to hear unvoiced narratives that will allow them to see a broader landscape even if it is vicarious and imaginatively constructed.

By approaching the teaching of certain aspects of African American history in this story way, it seems to make more sense to students and to have a more positive impact on their learning. I have found that students not only remember more but also almost always find some personal connection to the material. For example, when we read *Raymond's Run* by Toni Cade Bambara which contains particular features of African American English, I highlight signifying, a specialized concept of language use within the African American community. In this way, some students can put a name to a way of talking with which they are already familiar and for others it might be a totally new understanding and experience of language use. Or, when we read *Song of the Trees* by Mildred D. Taylor, we discuss the unwritten part of American history which includes a broader range of African Americans' experiences in the Great Depression. We also discuss the particular treatment of African American males at that time; what it was and why.

Some students never thought that I was teaching them history. They considered it background information or context for story, but not history. How do I know? I know this because T-girl, a seventh grader, came into class near the end of Black History Month shaking her head in disbelief. With little prodding, she admitted that she was disappointed that she had not been taught any black history (since I was the literature teacher), and she was particularly disturbed that the social studies teacher had not tried to teach any black history at all! Soon I found that T-girl was not the only student disturbed by this; so were J., R., S., C. L., B., A., T., K., and so on.

It is because of the students' self cultivated desire to learn, that I respond by taking up the writing of this curriculum unit. My students wanted to know the history of Africans in America and how their own lives fit into the canopy of intricately patterned stars that created such things as drinking gourds. The maturity of both their experience and reason was leading them beyond the usual figures of Harriet Tubman, Rosa Parks, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and sometimes Frederick Douglass. These heroes in the over 100 year old Civil Rights Movement are the people most often noted in history books and these are the people that students hear about over and over again. But, the list of heroes of the Civil Rights Movement is a much longer one. It consists of hundreds of courageous people who played a role in making freedom a concept forced to grow and mature in meaning albeit often times deformed and misshapen at particular junctures in history. On another level, the way I understood my students' disappointment emerged from the metaphorical need for

psychological and spiritual nourishment. They needed it to create a balanced condition of intellect and reason that would function as a compass to enable them to direct their lives True North and hold the course.

Four Principles of Montessori Education

Dr. Montessori pioneered several ideas which are referred to as the Eight Principles of Montessori Education. These principles continue to be validated by research in psychology and education being carried out today. Of the Eight Principles, I employ four in this curriculum unit. One caveat is that though these principles may be implemented in traditional classrooms as an insert, it is quite different from the principle which is already embedded in its system as part of its design.

The first is: Movement and cognition are closely entwined, and movement can enhance thinking and learning. Dr. Montessori noted that thinking seems to be expressed by the hands before it can be put into words. As a result of this insight she developed a system of learning which includes a great deal of object manipulation. In this curriculum, I have adapted this manipulation of objects as manipulation of the body, particularly for creative dramatics exercises. Recent research is uncovering connections between movement and cognition which validate Dr. Montessori's ideas and suggest that, perhaps more movement should be included as a regular part of instructional strategies. In the traditional model, most classrooms are arranged with individual desks where students sit without the freedom to move and do. They sit and consider abstractions whereas the Montessori Method offers a variety of ways of thinking based on movement. "When one moves with a purpose, there is a sense in which one's body is aligned with one's thought" (Lillard 38-79).

Research confirms Dr. Montessori's insights on movement and thought. It has been shown that when people move themselves through space they are better able to represent and negotiate that space. Studies show that movement improves judgment, memory, and social cognition when movements are aligned with what people are thinking or learning about. Traditional classrooms are not ordinarily set up to accommodate movement to enhance cognition. With the highly energetic middle school children whom I teach, this principle appears to be a method that can capture and direct the students' energy and redirect it to meaningful activity not only to enhance their learning opportunity but also to help them focus, calm down and merge mentally and physically with a learning task.

The second principle that is employed here is: Learning and well-being are improved when people have a sense of control over their lives. Dr. Montessori considered part of the child's development as being increasingly able to make choices and decisions within a prepared environment. Studies show that having choice creates a sense of control over one's environment and consequently a sense of well being. When students have a sense of voice in what happens in the classroom, research says that they develop a greater sense of responsibility and tend to be more self motivated. Also, when students have some degree -perceive themselves as having some degree- of control, they see themselves as more competent learners (Lillard 80-113).

In this curriculum students are able to participate in some of the decision making in the classroom. Most of the activities in which students exercise choice have to do with selecting a particular assignment to work on (or developing one's own assignment in collaboration with the teacher), setting a goal of how long to work on something and to work individually or with a partner or small group. This is unlike the traditional model of school learning in that in most cases students have no voice in what they want to work on. In addition, in traditional settings there is little consideration given to whether or not the students are ready to learn a particular concept. And, on most occasions, there is a strict time frame in which subject matter must be taught.

It is becoming more frequent that students are arranged according to what is termed "flexible grouping." This is the placement of students in ability groups based on their test scores. The layout of the furniture to facilitate movement in the classroom is another feature that supports the child's sense of choice and control. But simply because desks and chairs and tables can be moved does not automatically mean that a Montessori environment is functioning. It does not at all mean that the student had some choice or control over the configuration of furniture. It may well be the traditional method in which the teacher has decided what will be taught and the best configuration for interaction is one that reflects convenience for the teacher.

The third principle being used here is: Collaborative arrangements can be very conducive to learning. This principle is particularly suitable at this point in the children's lives because of their plane of development, which indicates that middle school students are very socially inclined.

Social learning arrangements are being used more and more in traditional schools because they can be easily integrated into the traditional system. However, learning from peers is important because different ideas are presented, creating an off balance effect that leads the child to incorporate new ideas. The Montessori Method has this feature embedded in its structure. In the traditional system, cooperative learning groups are a close surface look alike; but here again the teacher forms the groups based on criteria that have been developed for a particular class of students.

In the Montessori classrooms, students learn through observation and imitation. Here Dr. Montessori claimed that people learn by observing and doing. So, in the Montessori classroom the teacher or older student shows students how to engage the work with as few words as needed. This is quite different from the giving of information in a traditional classroom in which the teacher transmits through talking rather than showing.

The fourth principle that I use in this unit is: Learning situated in meaningful contexts is often deeper and richer than learning in abstract contexts. Dr. Montessori developed a system of learning in which the application and meaning of what one was learning could come across to every child. An environment was created in which learning was situated in the context of objects and actions. This is often referred to as situated cognition. Rather than sitting and listening to the teacher or simply listening and writing, the student learns through participation. If a group of children become interested in graphic arts, they may set up to travel to a graphic arts company and meet with someone who can explain the art and craft of graphics. In this sense the student can better understand how their learning applies to something other than school tests.

Maps and Mapmaking

Symbolic Psychic Geography

Symbolic

Ptolemy defined geography as "a representation in pictures of the whole known world together with the phenomena which are contained therein" (qtd. in Wilford 31). We can now understand that the whole known world of America includes the phenomena of slavery which can be represented in pictures such as symbols and other representations. We can now scale this picture down to the whole known world of Africans who were enslaved in America. For enslaved Africans, this known world would have been the plantation and the world of slavery where each lived and was worked. Here I can't help but say that the connotations of the words lived and worked in this regard are hardly positive or humane, as even animals lived and worked on the plantations.

The word symbolic, you and I are familiar with, of course, through everyday occurrences. We know that dark clouds are symbolic of rain or some bad happening; the robin is a symbol of the arrival of spring; and there are other objects which accord with emotions, qualities, and natural human tendencies. Symbols stand for something and that something is usually agreed upon by a number of people. It is true, however, that one symbol may have different conceptual meanings and understandings based on the various points at which the longitude and latitude of one's life experiences intersect at any given time. This means that conceptual understandings are based on the position from which one reads or experiences the world.

Africans who were enslaved always held the position of looking up with heads bowed and eyes cast down symbolizing servitude. Not surprisingly, the kneeling, supplicant slave became a central symbol of the antislavery movement in colonial America. Experiencing the world from the subject position was the way African slaves almost always experienced the dominant European Americans. They had to identify and portray themselves as subordinate in order to maintain some semblance of a free from punishment life. Although the system of slavery was designed to instill fear, humility, awe, and dependence, in every single day of the life of enslaved Africans, it still did not nullify black humanity. The fact that enslaved Africans survived at all and could build a life around and in spite of repressive white power is testimony to the indomitable spirit at the heart of black humanity.

Together with humility went cheerfulness. It has been noted that if slaves were anything but in a laughing or singing mood and showing that they are perfectly content, they were said to have the devil in them. In response, another way of behaving to protect oneself from savage punishments was to wear the mask. Here I am borrowing the concept and language of Paul Laurence Dunbar to illustrate a life stance. This means that enslaved Africans would detach or mask their real selves by showing broad grins, performing minstrel antics, and replying verbally with yes'ums. William Bartram, the botanist, came upon a scene which he took at face value and noted, "Contented and joyful, the sooty sons of Afric forgetting their bondage, in chorus sung the virtues and beneficence of their master in songs of their own composition" (qtd. in Bordewich 22). Images such as these became symbols for the pro-slavery movement. But who in their right mind would enjoy being humiliated? cheerful? Who could forget for a moment that they were in bondage?

Psychic

The world of the enslaved African consisted mainly of some kind of work. Though most of it was agricultural work some African slaves were trained as carpenters, coopers, blacksmiths, teamsters, grooms, and even as overseers. Others worked as valets, maidservants, cooks or laundresses. Slaves were used in virtually every economic and social sector of society and were looked on as a form of real estate or human furniture "whose personal life had no more intimate meaning than that of a cow, or a settee" (Bordewich 23).

We can also apply Ptolemy's definition to flesh out the concept of freedom as a phenomenon contained within America which can be represented in the images of Africans moving in time from one land location to another until they are neither bound by physical restraints nor fettered by psychological angst. What I mean by psychological angst is the fear, terror and shame embedded in the psyche and forces one to behave in a certain way in order to remain unharmed physically or to stay alive. Africans were coerced into demonstrating patterns of behaviors which kept them subjugated. Yet these patterns were roles of survival.

For example, Bordewich recounts the case of five or six year old Josiah Henson who in 1795 experienced his father's final breaking not just as a man but as a human being. It happened that Josiah's mother had been hired out to the plantation where his father was owned. The overseer of the plantation brutally assaulted her and Josiah's father attacked and nearly killed the overseer. Josiah's father quickly fled because punishment for

a slave lifting his hand against the body of a white man was considered an act of rebellion. Though he fled, he didn't get very far because like most runaways, he didn't know where or in which direction to go. He ended up surrendering back at the plantation where he was enslaved (Bordewich 11-12).

For this act of protecting his wife, Josiah's father was given 100 lashes, fifty at a time. After that he was held up to a whipping post and his right ear was fastened to it with a tack. Then his ear was slice off. Josiah witnessed his father's return home after this kind of treatment. He later recalled that his father's body was covered in blood, his head was bloody and his back was lacerated. Experiencing the savage torture of his father made a deep impression on Josiah's psyche. Consequently as he grew, Josiah crafted a psychological landscape on which he played the part of the ideal slave: loyal, trusted, beyond reproach and he hoped beyond punishment. By acting in this ideal slave way, Josiah was mapping a way of behaving that would never cause a master to treat him with the sheer brutality that his father suffered.

After his father's beating and cutting off of one of his ears, Josiah described his father as moping about and sullen. "Intractable" is how "slave owners typically described human property that no longer responded compliantly to command" (Bordewich 12). But, I have always heard through the oral tradition the word "broken" used to describe such a condition. Suffice it to say that this is one of the ways freedom has grown twisted and deformed. Also, it is one way to understand the meaning of freedom to be constricted such that it describes a small space with barely room enough to breathe the air because nothing else matters; and even giving up to death a tired body that houses a broken spirit would itself be freedom.

There are numerous accounts of this kind of psychological brutality and debilitation. These accounts include stories of women raped and brutalized in front of their husband and children. Former slave Elizabeth Sparks recalls "Beat women! Why sure he beat women. Beat women jes' lak men." Slaves were stripped of their clothing, faced against a tree or wall, tied down or made to hang from a beam, their legs roped together with a rail or board between them, and severely beaten" (qtd. in Stevenson 38). Other brutalities included the stripping of clothes off men before their wives and children; men and women being stripped and flogged often times with an audience of slaves from theirs and neighboring plantations. This was to ensure the slaves' moral improvement according to white slave owners but it was more an act of terrorism. It wasn't just a beating; it was a vehicle to chastise as well as a way to symbolically strip slaves of their personal pride and integrity. It was a way to invoke terrifying images of the master's power in the enslaved African's imagination.

Enslaved men and women alike and sometimes children were burned, scalded, muzzled, beaten; had limbs cut off before being hanged, were tarred and burned, caged and left to expire by being pecked to death by birds and insects eager to feed on human flesh. This treatment of slaves by whites was rendered necessary by the laws of self-preservation. How hypocritical is this? This treatment of slaves by whites was also rendered in the conscience of African Americans as resistance to dehumanization; "a psychic state that informs and shapes the way black folks 'see' whiteness as associated with the terrible, the terrifying, the terrorizing" (Hooks 341). Imagine the terror evoked by the sound of barking bloodhounds let loose to track and literally tear the flesh from the bones of a runaway slave. The barking also communicated to other slaves that a runaway was about to be dragged back dead or half alive, which usually ended in death. These dogs were referred to by slave owners as Negro dogs and by slaves as hell hounds.

Geography: Narrative Journey as Memory Map

I want to use slave narratives to point out how the various routes and the lived experiences on those routes created mind maps or cognitive tendencies and schemata which emerged and influenced the lives of all the people involved. I want to introduce to students the terrors and horrors experienced not just for enslaved

Africans but also for free Africans and European Americans who supported this early civil rights movement. And, I want students to know that as this movement gained momentum through strength of spirit, it influenced the making of particular policies and practices which in turn mapped a new layer onto a society already thick with inhumane acts.

Included within this idea of freedom as geography is the notion that there is a terrain, albeit conceptual, and it can therefore be mapped. This terrain may even be mapped in such a way as to have boundaries which show how the understandings of the concept of freedom constrict or expand with conditions and time. Take the case of a barber in Indiana who was conducted to freedom. His name has been forgotten, but his story is remembered. He was a young, strong, obviously skilled man who lived in Madison and made his own money which was promptly turned over to his master in Kentucky. Bordewich recounts the story and gives us details.

This young man was encouraged by George DeBaptiste. DeBaptiste asked him if he wasn't ashamed being able to make money and take care of himself. . .and a man all over to be calling another man master, like a dog. . . These words moved the young man to action. . .to make the decision to steal himself. The story goes like this: The barber had done what he was told and was waiting alone on the street corner. At ten o'clock steps approach and a black man slips from the shadows. He tells the barber to walk to the roadbed where the new railway is to be laid north from Madison. When he gets to the roadbed he is to walk north until he reaches the post that marks the second mile and then whistle twice. At the two mile marker he whistles. Another black man slips from the woods, with a gun at the ready. He tells the barber to walk another two miles and falls in walking behind him. This drill is repeated four times until there are eight armed men guarding and protecting the barber on route to freedom. At the last stop sixteen miles from Madison, a wagon is waiting and he climbs on board. Ahead are welcoming free blacks and white Presbyterian and Quaker farmers. The barber had just been conducted to freedom by George DeBaptiste who personally assisted 108 fugitives to freedom, and several times that many indirectly (Bordewich 1-3).

Riding the Rail

There are two geographies operating in the above story of the barber stealing himself and George DeBaptiste, the conductor of the Underground Railroad. The geographies manifest as the physical and the psychological influences of slavery on the life of the enslaved African. The Underground Railroad functioned as a physical train of bodies on route to freedom. It was also a psychological manifestation of freedom in that it was a powerful symbol of self empowerment for enslaved Africans.

In a sense, it was a self empowerment for me too. I don't remember ever being taught anything about the Underground Railroad in any of my schooling from first grade through high school and even college. I found these truths in the Oral Tradition and in my own research. I can still recall the awakening like a light bulb turned on. I experienced a sense of feeling alright and settled knowing that enslaved Africans, my ancestors, had fought against slavery and were at the center of the Underground Railroad movement. They didn't just take the dehumanizing treatment with a smile, like I was led to believe in history books and from lies my teachers told me. In a similar way, I imagine that the not knowing must be causing an unsettling in T-girl and the rest of my seventh grade students who were disturbed that they were not being taught any black history at all in their social studies class.

The Underground Railroad is said to be a model of democracy in action. It was an illegal network for the movement of enslaved Africans primarily from the South to free states in the North and Canada. This railroad was one of the most important reform movements in American history that struck at the core of oppression. It is one of the most well known symbols of the struggle for human rights. Having experienced slave life which

meant hard work, poor rations, brutal beatings, lost families and illness,

who would not want to risk their life and declare their humanity by running away to freedom?

The main goal of the Underground Railroad was to forward any fugitive slave to freedom who wanted it. It functioned as a grassroots movement with many common people playing a role. There were preachers, teamsters, and peddlers who carried messages for the underground into the South. Slaves who never ran away themselves gave information about escape routes to those who did. Sailors and ships' stewards concealed runaways on their ships, lawyers defended runaways and those who harbored them, businessmen provided needed funds, and a great many family members and friends who made up the infrastructure provided the steam that helped make the movement of the train possible.

The Underground Railroad involved individuals and entire communities. It operated beyond race, class, and gender. It was not just Harriet Tubman and the white abolitionists with whom she worked as many have been led to believe. Although it may not have been taught in history books, bold methods of escape were devised by the fugitives themselves. For example in the case of Henry "Box" Brown who devised his own clever plan for escaping. After his wife and children were sold from Richmond, Henry determined to escape. He is said to have hit upon this plan through prayer. Henry reported that one day while he was praying, "There darted into my mind these words, 'Go get a box and put yourself in it'" (qtd. in Horton 179). Henry had himself nailed into a hickory box and shipped by rail car to Philadelphia where he was met by William Still, an African American abolitionist, and other white abolitionists. After being nursed back to health, Henry resumed his journey north riding the train in a passenger seat to New York City. There he would be met by contacts made by William Still and would then go on to Boston where arrangements had been made for Henry to find work.

Henry "Box" Brown's escape was clever indeed, but the fact is that fugitive slaves used whatever necessary means of travel which appeared most promising. Some walked full stride, some got tickets for a night train, some by canoe or aboard a series of ships and boats, some swam and some escaped by horse and carriage. Whatever the mode of travel, the fugitives navigated water and land, read the landscapes, terrains and the places and spaces through which they traveled.

Spirituals as Encoded Directions

In Negro spirituals, song had not only an uplifting quality but also served the function of passing on information. During the enslavement of Africans, the spirituals often contained messages and instructions on how to navigate the land to freedom. I want to develop activities that invite students to examine the words and phraseology of particular spirituals, discover the message or instructions and use poetic devices to create their own songs and poems. Here also is opportunity to develop other activities that relate to literary elements such as rhythm, repetition, chorus, and other features. Activities like this will also help students learn American history and help them develop their ability to use text cues to interpret and analyze written material.

The Negro spiritual is closely related to the way Christianity was digested by African slaves. Their view was that they were all, blacks and whites, equal in the eyes of God. Seeing God as the all powerful master, then all of God's children without regard to rank or station were equal. So, in the eyes of the African slave, the slaveholder was the sinner, not the slave. Jesus was seen as a humble sufferer, a servant much with which the slave identified and informed his belief in his salvation in the next world. This being said then, this inner strength gave the enslaved enough psychic freedom to resist becoming completely subservient to white people (Gray White 46-47).

It is no secret that during slavery one reason owners kept enslaved Africans illiterate was for the specific purpose of keeping them on the plantation. It was a way to keep them ignorant of geography so they would not be able to tell directions. However, slaves knew which way was North and they knew that freedom was there. Some slaves just used the direction to just "walk towards the North Star." The North Star not only became a guide star but also became a symbol of freedom. Since enslaved Africans could not plan a route, many risked running into such dangerous terrain as mentioned above. The Underground Railroad sent travelers with messages and information on specific routes to travel by using the North Star. For example, "Follow the Drinking Gourd" is a coded song for an escape route out of Mississippi and Alabama. The route was given by an itinerant carpenter, Peg Leg Joe, who spent his winters in the South and traveled from plantation to plantation. Nothing else is known of Peg Leg Joe. His name, though, jaunts some knowing in me but it is unclear. It seems that I have a vague memory of my mother's voice saying his name, but in reference to whom or what, I do not remember.

Through the African cultural tradition of creating songs to transmit information and to uplift, some spirituals functioned as instructions that inspired some of the enslaved Africans to action and that meant running away. The African concept of music is rhythm and the spirituals have the fundamental characteristics of African music. James Weldon Johnson notes that the music came to contain melody and harmony "at the precise and psychic moment there was blown through or fused into the vestiges of his African music the spirit of Christianity as he knew Christianity" (Johnson 20). Christianity was the precise religion for the condition in which the enslaved African was thrust. It implied hope for a reversal of conditions and compensation in the next world. Out of this came songs that embodied the patience, forbearance, love, faith, and hope that exemplified Christianity's virtues (J.W. Johnson 19-20). And, contained within these virtues was the seed of inner freedom which for some became manifest in reality.

These spirituals of which I write are the very ones that I remember ringing to the top of the ceiling of the old Baptist church where I went to Sunday school. The women and men's mouths were so wide open that I could nearly see each of their spirits leaping from the throat skipping tongue, teeth and lip to dance on the breath of freedom. These are the same spirituals that were birthed during slavery; songs that lifted the labored spirit and encouraged a way out of no way. In the spiritual *Swing Low Sweet Chariot*, the chariot is the train, the Underground Railroad. Home has been interpreted as heaven on one level but a haven on another. Home is a safe place, perhaps safe house, where everyone can live freely. Ripley, a station of the Underground Railroad was a town on a hill overlooking the Ohio River—Jordan. And the band of angels refers to help rowing to pick up runaway slaves. There are many songs that have this dual meaning like the dual conscious W.E.B. DuBois identified as an African American condition of mind trained for survival. Other songs are *Wade in the Water*; *Go Down Moses*; *Steal Away to Jesus*; *Nobody knows the Trouble I've Had*; *Down by the Riverside*; and *Bound for Canaan Land*. These are all word maps that must be read with the rhythms of the body. First is the inner journey of traversing the psychic geography of what has been experienced with one's entire being over so much time that the knowing is embedded and passed on from one generation to another in blood rhythms. This is the essence of the Negro Spiritual and the reason it calls to every human soul that puts an ear to the earth of human life.

Objectives

The objectives for this unit focus on reinforcing literary elements of symbolism, metaphor and personification. Skills for analysis, interpretation and evaluation of literature, writing skills, and reading and making maps are also given some space for practice and refinement in this unit. I make use of these objectives though in a supportive role because the main objective of this unit is the development of a knowledge base in African American history which enhances identity awareness that can lead students to locate themselves in a broader lens of American history. They will come to realize that they are not artifacts of American history. Further, the knowledge that students gain will be based on diverse understandings of how people see and understand the human condition. Students will learn through vicarious experience from real people in history. Another objective is a call to action through which the students practice and refine their knowledge through hands on activities for experiential learning. The last objective is to help students grow as readers of the written text and the text of the real world through integrated historical literature and language arts, literary analysis which includes the reading and making of maps, and a critical-creative thinking approach.

Strategies

I have developed learning goals and activities which through lesson design lay open the educational field as a wide space with room enough for each student to be encouraged to develop a creative mind. These activities and lesson are adapted from the many that I have been implementing in my classroom. The curriculum created here incorporates strategies which make use of creative dramatics, various discussion models, critical thinking (problem solving), analytical skills and writing activities with engaging topics. These lay open the path for creating meaningful and purposeful encounters with African American history as part of the American history that has been rarely told or not told at all. In this way a child can, through reading, vicarious experience, and hands-on activities come to know and understand how to locate themselves on a landscape that has systematically excluded African Americans from the scene.

Strategy 1 - Creative Dramatics

Creative dramatics is an art form which involves the whole self in experiential learning. It is a strategy that requires creative thinking and creative expression. Through movement, pantomime, sensory awareness, verbalization, characterization and aesthetic development students can explore the meaning of courage, respect, justice and freedom and what each looks like in daily interactions with other living things (Cottrell 1). Since children have been exploring and discovering most of their lives, creative dramatics can function as an extension of a process that is already familiar to the students. Experiences in creative dramatics offer opportunities for students to grow as whole human beings able to think, feel, and express in certain ways. Participating in this art form requires that students interact socially and cooperate in order to succeed. Creative dramatics emphasizes originality and inventiveness, flexibility and spontaneity of movement and speech, as well as emotional and intellectual risk-taking. These ideas are congruent with the Montessori philosophy of education.

Experiences in classroom drama activities can help children deal with body awareness and expression as well

as provide a structure for exploring self perceptions and attitudes about others. Drama is also a healthy way for students at the middle school age to direct some of their energy and physical expression as well as act as a way to discipline the body. This is also the age at which students developmentally begin to function as adult thinkers. They begin to think in terms of cause and effect, to hypothesize, and predict outcomes based on evidence at hand. Drama can provide opportunities to practice this kind of thinking as well as new modes of thought. Creative dramatics is a strategy which can draw on a breadth of functions and can be applied across a range of subject matter. Whether the activities are based in reality or fantasy, drama allows students to assimilate and accommodate knowledge in a different way than other methods do. It also allows for more possibilities for teaching in ways that reinforce learning that sticks (Cottrell 1-9).

Creative Dramatic Categories

Imaginative Thinking/Creative Problem Solving

Activity 1

Situation role-playing - This activity is sometimes referred to as socio-drama because it utilizes concepts and skills that deal with real life, particularly those that have to do with interpersonal conflict and making appropriate personal choices. It allows students to try on various perspectives, to engage in empathetic listening, to practice cause and effect thinking, hypothesizing, predicting and problem solving and to practice oral language skills. The role playing may be done in a pair format in which one person acts as a person with a problem and the other acts as a willing listener or an advice giver. Or, the two could be involved with the same problem but from different perspectives. Role playing can also be done in small groups. Some safeguards to employ are carefully verbalized guidelines and sensitivity. The kinds of topics chosen should be general and not specific to anyone in the class and no one student should play the part of the same kind of character. Since this activity deals with some "unpopular" roles that students may not readily want, make sure to acknowledge it and allow the roles to rotate among students. Or, the teacher could take the part. Also topics should clearly have to do with the narrative text. A caveat is to remember that socio-drama is not psycho-drama or play therapy. Then, as the environment becomes more respectful, trusting and less threatening, guidelines can be created by the students under the guidance of the teacher. As well, students should be encouraged to give ideas for topics. Of course, student suggestions should meet guidelines for appropriateness, good taste and be of a general concern (Cottrell 117-118). Students being able to select is an aspect of the Montessori philosophy of education. Allowing students to have a voice in the decision making process gives them some sense of control and consequently a sense of well-being. The acting out of scenarios provides opportunities for students to learn from each other. Both Piaget and Vygotsky claim that peers play an important role in development. Piaget claimed that peers present different ideas and in so doing create a state of unbalance in the child. As a result of the imbalance, mental development occurs when the child has to resolve the imbalance by changing her/his mind or accommodating to incorporate the new idea(s) (Lillard 193). Vygotsky purported that learning occurs in a zone of proximal development (ZPD), meaning that the task(s) the student is to carry out cannot be accomplished alone but rather, through working in concert with a more advanced other (84-89).. This reflects the Montessori principle that collaborative arrangements can be very conducive to learning.

Movement and Pantomime

Activity 2

Communicating nonverbally helps students recognize and increase their ability to communicate employing

facial expression and body movement. It also helps them become better speakers by providing opportunity to develop congruency between words and nonverbal messages. In addition, pantomime and movement can help students become more astute readers of the nonverbal expressions of others. This is in alignment with Dr. Montessori's theory that movement can enhance thinking and learning. Here again, topics should be general and not necessarily reflect any one student's situation, and in time the students should be encouraged to suggest appropriate topics. When participating in movement and pantomime activities, students should be encouraged to use precise movements and only those that are needed. They should understand that economy of movement helps clarify meaning just as concise use of words clarifies speech. This is particularly useful at the middle school level because generally, students are experiencing a physical developmental state which can cause cumbersome movement of body parts. The students are also at the stage where in which their senses are at a peak and are difficult to control. Pantomime activities in which body parts and parts of the face are used to convey actions, ideas, and feelings help the student concentrate and call on necessary internal resources that help guide the student in translating ideas and feelings into action through disciplined movement. As well, students should also be aware of a previously agreed upon "pause" or "freeze" signal in place and used by the teacher to quickly and efficiently gain everyone's attention. When used properly and judiciously, this stopping of verbal and physical movement strategy can be used to encourage creativity through taking time to clarify and to highlight important ideas. "Pause" or "freeze" is used in the same ways as punctuation to separate ideas, changes of motivation or mood, as well as for emphasis (Cottrell 95).

Strategy 2 - Writing to Learn

By early adolescence, students have begun to question and challenge beliefs and values that they have held. They are extremely interested in what others think and do and how they can "fit in" with others. They also are able to understand that each person is made up of a number of facets and that this is true of themselves, too. This strategy entails students writing about a character as "the aggregate of mental, emotional, and social qualities that distinguish a person"(Cottrell 138).This strategy focuses on both the development and use of writing as a process of learning to write and as a strategy useful in making personal connections to ways of thinking and ways of behaving. In writing, as in creative dramatics, the human condition can be explored through the motivations, thoughts, dialogue, revelations and feelings of the character(s). When students are privy to these elements through first person narrative or omniscient narrator they can more easily understand the cause and effect of actions. The writing assignments are designed to promote the development of voice in strengthening self identity and sense of value in American history.

Activity 3

The writing assignment is designed to help students judge characters by considering their own positive or negative reactions and if their judgments are based on standards used to judge their friends and people they meet or based on past experience. Some other underlying questions to consider in developing writing assignments of this nature are: Will the student identify, sympathize, or empathize with the characters? Are the characters believable, stereotyped, or both? What do we know about the characters and, how do we know it? Is one character speaking for the author or visa versa? Treating characters out of the context of the story as an initial encounter may give greater insights and enable students to understand the character better in the world of the narrative. For example Harriet Tubman, one of the most famous conductors of the Underground Railroad, becomes a representative voice of slaves and functions as a change agent. Looking at Harriet out of context as youth and a new generation of free people then, what are considered some ways of talking and behaving that exemplify the quality courage? respect? freedom? And, what are the reasons for

characterizing these words and acts as courageous? respectful? freeing?

Activity 4

In conjunction with or on its own, Activity 3 involves the use of symbolism, metaphor and personification. It requires that the students use sensory awareness and sensory recall. Students will be encouraged to imagine and create properties, environments and events. This activity provides an opportunity for the student to generate in writing, spontaneous speech and emotions to show ideas, feelings and images. For example, what symbols are used to stand for freedom during slavery? How do they work and what do they do to someone's mind-set? What are some symbols of freedom used today? What is the Mason Dixon Line? Locate it on a map and describe its function? How is it both real and imaginary and symbolic? What objects were used to cause fear and what images come to mind? For personification, some of the questions to engage the students in personifying a concept like freedom and a quality like courage (respect, freedom) are: When is freedom born? What does freedom look like? What does freedom dress like? How would you describe the voice of freedom? Who does freedom hang around with as a best friend and why? When does freedom speak loudest and why? What would freedom do with only one year to live? Having responded to all the given questions have the students respond to the questions -How has the voice of freedom changed from Africa to the present? In what ways do you act out your understanding of freedom? When and how? The same activity can be done with metaphor and with the qualities.

Lessons

Lesson 1: Situation Role Playing: Slave Narratives and Map Talk

Topic: Resolving Conflict

Objectives: The objective is to expose the students to different ways of solving a problem and to have them compare and contrast the approaches. Students will also demonstrate through creative drama the application of these problem-solving strategies. After participating in and observing others, students will evaluate how well different strategies work for different tasks.

Introduction: Discover how much students already know about problem-solving. Use an overhead projector, a smart board or the chalkboard to draw a brainstorming web with problem-solving in the center. As strands have students focus on giving ideas which have to do with language, actions, sensory recall that they associate with problem-solving. Talk about when individuals come together to solve a problem or carry out a task each person contributes his or her own special way of looking at things, experiences, and interests. Make a T-chart on the board with the two headings Positive and Negative. Next, have the students begin to categorize the ideas as positive (adding value) or negative (taking away value) and to give explanations for their choices. Let this stand until the end of the lesson then go back and rethink the categorizing.

Warm-Up: Invite all students to close their eyes and use their imagination to do the following short guided imagery. Think about your body: your height, your weight, your health. Now see yourself as an enslaved African. What changes do you see? What are you wearing? How are you feeling? You want to be free and imagine ways to escape. You can just follow the North Star. Can you see it way up there in the night sky? It seems so far away just like freedom. You begin to whisper some prayer to yourself. Softly now, so no one can

hear. What do you pray? Hear your words on the slight southern Kentucky breeze. Smell the air. Identify some of the smells. Imagine now that you see the overseer coming whip in hand. Feel your heart rate quicken. What is the sound of your heart like? The overseer rushes past you. Calm down now and feel a peace cool you as you have decided to run away. See yourself running. What obstacles do you encounter? Keep running. Now put your head and arms in a position that shows you have made it to freedom. Be happy!

Debrief: Go through the guided imagery exercise and ask students what changes (from what to what) they observed when they transformed themselves into an enslaved African? What was your prayer? Why? When you saw the overseer with the whip what was the sound of your heart like? What position did you choose to show that you succeeded and are now free? I usually make a categorized chart and write the running comments of student generated information to weave with later information that creates a student driven fund of knowledge.

Lesson Directions: Divide the class into three groups of eight or adapt as needed. Each group is to not only solve the problem presented on the card but also solve the problem of the group dynamics that lead to creating the dramatization. The problem, situation and solution will be dramatized, shared and discussed. For the presentation, each group member should, with as little talking as possible, show through movement who they are. Remember, the focus is on movement. Each group should include an introduction, a dramatization of the problem or conflict, when and where the action occurs, how the problem is solved and how the situation ends. Students may be reminded that school appropriate language is to be used and no actual physical contact is to be used to show conflict. All groups need not present on the same day as more time will be needed for debriefing and discussion of content.

Situation Card 1: As a group read the first five paragraphs of "Mrs. M. S. Fayman" pp.36-38 in *When I Was a Slave* by Norman Yetman. For the first five paragraphs decide what the conflict is and when and where the important story events happen. Plan the dramatization of how the conflict plays out and is solved based on these five paragraphs. How does the story end? Make sure that everyone in the group has a part even if it is inanimate. Pantomime or dialogue or both may be used. As a product, make a map of place showing the Beatrice Manor Plantation as described in paragraphs 6-8. Include all the details as given to show the layout of the land. Make a legend of created symbols and abbreviations then tell what each represents. Next, be sure to use the abbreviations to label the structures, land, and other important details that your group chooses to include. (Give students preparation time that suits their capacity).

Debriefing: After the presentation is the time to ask well chosen and well ordered questions because the kinds of questions posed will influence the quality of the learning that takes place and keep the discussion positive and engaging. Such questions could be: What was it like for you to play the part of a kidnapped slave? What was it like being a child of a slave owner? What role did your body language have in communicating your ideas? What was the function of each inanimate object as an element that influenced the action?

Content Discussion Questions: What was the problem that needed solved? How was the problem solved? At what point did you feel empathy for any one of the characters? Explain. Did the environment effect your actions? If so in what way(s)? What can you say about the life of Mrs. M.S. Fayman when she was a slave? What made her a slave? What do you think drove her to go back to the plantation the first time to show her father and then several times after that? How would you describe Mrs. Fayman's character?

Map Talk: What does your map say about how the plantation was managed? How can you tell who has power and mobility? How can you tell who is disempowered and constrained? How are borders marked? Did you highlight anything on the map to show importance or make something smaller to show that it is not so

important? Show and explain. Look at your map and imagine yourself a slave on this plantation. What other features does your map of Beatrice Manor Plantation show? Choose three senses and using one per sentence, write three things the map causes you to relive. For example, "I can hear the cold clatter of the bell shaking me awake at sunrise," and so on as needed.

Other Situation Cards for Slave Narratives and Map Talk can be created using the following narratives, and the teacher is free as well to develop questions similar to those used above for each part: Situation Card 2: As a group read "*Death of Romulus Hall-New Name George Weems*" pp.25-28 in *The Underground Railroad* by William Still. Situation Card 3: As a group read "*Wesley Harris, Alias Robert Jackson, and the Matterson Brothers*" pp.23-25 in *The Underground Railroad* by William Still. Situation Card 3: As a group read about Josiah Henson pp.11-15 in *Bound for Canaan* by Fergus M. Bordewich. Situation 4: As a group read about a nameless barber who was conducted to freedom on the Underground Railroad by George DeBaptiste pp.1-3 in *Bound for Canaan* by Fergus Bordewich. Situation Card 5: As a group read "*Henry Brown as a Package*" pp.1-4 in *The Underground Railroad: Life on the Road to Freedom* edited by Pat Perrin. Situation Card 6: As a group read "*William and Ellen Craft as Master and Slave*" pp.32-34 in *The Underground Railroad: Life on the Road to Freedom*.

In most of these narratives some mention of direction is give by way of names of cities and landmarks. Provide maps which can be found at www.nps.gov/nr/travel/underground/detailedroutes.htm or any other source(s) preferred.

Lesson 2: Movement and Pantomime: Singing or Reciting the Way

Topic: Using the Senses in Spirituals, Movement and Pantomime

Objectives: Students will use their senses to create poetry/song and add movements to enhance the message of the poem/song. The students will perform the poem/song in a choral reading.

Warm-Up: Students will listen to several Negro spirituals which can be found at www.negrospirituals.com/ and share any connections they have with the songs. Give each student a copy of each song. Each student is to choose a Negro spiritual and translate the words into movement. Next, have students practice the mirror exercise. In pairs, have the students take turns mirroring the song movements of their partner. No talking is necessary, just movement.

Debriefing: Did you find it easy or hard to show through body movement what you had on your mind? Discuss. Was it easy or hard to recall the images and show them on your face? Which body movements were easiest and in what way(s)?

Choral Reading: Divide the students into groups as suitable. Each group is to select a song to be vocalized. The main part of the song and the chorus should be divided in such a way that every student in the group has a vocal part. A student may speak singlely or join with another or others within the group. Each part can be any length from a word, to a phrase, to a sentence, to a verse. Also, each part can be vocalized in a speaking voice with hard and soft accenting. Or, parts may be sung. Then again, some students may want to translate their part into a foreign language or disguise the voice all together.

Pantomime: Next have the same groups use the same song they selected for the choral reading and add movements that they believe correspond to the images created by the words. The students will have to carry the song in their heads as they perform the corresponding movements. They are creating a vicarious psychic

geography of the meaning and feeling of how freedom was conceptualized in the mind of the enslaved African.

Discuss: How did the words that pointed the way in song get transformed into a living map alive with motion? Why were particular movements chosen over others?

Lesson 3: Characterization Writing Assignment

Topic: Characterization

Objectives: The student will have to look closely at historical figures on the Underground Railroad and learn who these people were or what he or she stood for based on thoughts, words and actions carried out by the person. The students have the opportunity to decide what genre of writing to they want to use. They can choose from narrative, memoir, song, poem, dramatization, pantomime, essay, newspaper article or advertisement. Here, the students are free to develop their own topic and/or writing genre as long as it is approved for appropriateness and depth of challenge.

Introduction: For this writing assignment, the student has the opportunity to select three topics from a list of five that have to do with characterization. Each topic must be written in a different genre. The topics follow:

You meet (Josiah Henson for example), for the first time at the mall. Where is it that he would likely be hanging out? Why there? Make a map of your favorite mall. Discuss each stop you would make in the mall with Josiah, and explain what it is about Josiah's character that helps explain why you stop there and what you do there.

Imagine the sound of one of the runaway slave's voice. What does the voice show about that person? What image(s) does the voice make you see?

Of all the narratives you have read, what person do you sympathize with? Explain why by using examples from the narrative, from your own experience and from other texts you have read or observed

Were the runaway slaves courageous or crazy? Discuss and explain why you believe they were courageous or crazy. Use particular instances from the narratives to show what you mean. Are you like any of the runaway slaves in any way? Who? Explain the similarities and differences.

Discuss why you think Harriet Tubman or Frederick Douglass is a dynamic person of character. Include instances from the stories you have read or heard about her/him that show what you mean. Where in the history of her/his life can the story end and she/he would still be a complete round and dynamic character?

After choosing three of the five topics, students are to follow the writing process given below. Next, the students should develop a time frame for completion of the three writing pieces. This should be discussed and approved by the teacher. The students should then be instructed to use primary and secondary sources to broaden the information base of the topics selected.

The student discusses the topic with a self-selected partner or small group in order to talk about ideas for approach and content.

The student completes a brainstorming activity: mind map, list, groupings, drawing or just jotting down ideas extemporaneously.

The student selects a genre and begins a rough draft that includes a beginning, middle and an end.

The student works in a peer conference to discuss what the writer has done well; to question what is

going on in the paper or to clarify what is not clearly stated; and to suggest some possible ways to improve the paper.

At this stage the writer revises the paper based on peer observation and suggestion.

After completing a second draft, the writer meets with the teacher for a conference. For this conference the student must prepare three questions she has about her own paper. The student has to do a close reading of her own paper and the three questions can only have to do with content, style and structure. After the teacher conference, the student writes a third or final draft depending on her own decision to do so or not.

The next step is proofreading and editing by self and peer.

The student will self evaluate her writing piece based on a rubric provided by the school district.

The creative dramatics lessons and the writing assignments presented here can, with very little modification, be used for all grade levels. The curriculum unit is meant to be taught over a two to three week intensive. It can function to introduce or enrich students' understandings of slave narratives and Negro spirituals which show clearly the life of the enslaved African in America. It also tells the truth about the institution of slavery as a systematic effort to dehumanize a whole race and generations of people of over time. It was written into the laws of the land and the primers of education.

Annotated Bibliography

Teacher Bibliography

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source for spirituals and some explanation of their musicality as an African tradition. It also includes an alphabetical listing of the spirituals and their musical arrangements.

Lillard, Angeline Stoll. *Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2005. More than a scientific validation, this book offers studies that describe how children learn best. Lillard also presents eight insights that are the foundation of the Montessori philosophy and shows how they are used in a Montessori classroom.

____ *The Underground Railroad: Life on the road to Freedom*. Edited by Pat Perrin. Carlisle: Discovery Enterprises, Ltd., 1999. This short book contains slave narratives written in a very simple statements and big print.

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Ayres, K. *North by Night*. New York: Dell Yearling, 1998. This is the story of sixteen year old Lucy Spencer who helps a family of runaway slaves. www.randomhouse.com/kids

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Hamilton, V. *The People Could Fly*. New York: Scholastic, Inc. 1985. This is a book of American black folktales. These are short tales that are enjoyable and teach a lesson.

Wait, L. *Seaward Born*. New York: Aladdin Paperbacks, 2003. This is the story of Michael, a thirteen year old who is lucky to work on the docks and ships in Charleston Harbor. His protective mistress dies and everything changes. Michael is torn between running away to freedom and risking safety by staying a slave.

Implementing District Standards

The activities in this unit meet the following Communications Standards:

All students use effective research and information management skills including locating primary and secondary sources of information with traditional and emerging library technologies. This is evident in the students' use of printed resources to complete three self-selected writing assignments.

All students read and use a variety of techniques to make sense of various kinds of complex texts.

During this unit students read various levels of texts in order to participate in discussions, complete assignments and tap prior knowledge as they engage in creative dramatic activities.

All students respond orally to information and ideas gained by reading narrative and informational texts and use this information and ideas to make decisions and solve problems. The creative dramatics activities in this unit require the students to discuss interpretations of words, actions and movements of body parts and the face.

All students write for a variety of purposes including to narrate, to inform, and to persuade in all subject areas. Students will complete writing assignments that require them to narrate some portion of their own experience, share information or to convince someone of a perspective by presenting and solving a problem.

All students analyze and make critical judgments about all forms of communication, separating fact from opinion, recognizing propaganda, stereotypes, and bias and recognizing inconsistencies and judging the validity of evidence. Students will apply this standard as they read and make sense of the slave narratives and Negro Spirituals.

All students exchange information orally, including understanding and giving spoken instruction, asking and answering questions appropriately and promoting effective group communications. The creative dramatics and writing process pieces require discussion and group work in order to gain fully from each activity.

All students listen to and understand complex oral messages and identify the purpose, structure, and use. Students must apply this standard as they observe and listen to dialogue in the creative dramatics activities before, during and after presentations. This includes the interpreting of Negro Spirituals.

All Students compose and make oral presentations for each academic area of study that are designed to inform, persuade and describe. Students will make oral presentations in the form of situation role playing and movement and pantomime activities.

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