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2009 Volume IV: The Sound of Words: An Introduction to Poetry

Poetic Sounds: Symphonic Synchronization of the Word

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Overview

This unit will use devices to strengthen spoken word poetry for students using poems that have been in the literary canon for years as well as some poems that are new to students and the school district. Students will be given the opportunity to create new works as they become engaged in the message, the sounds, and the meanings of words in the context of lines of verse. More importantly, students will gain a deeper understanding of word choice for rhythmical interpretations, purposes of rhyme, theme, tone, and literary devices. Using my students' passion with rap lyrics, we will study the depth of lyrical poetry of rap masters who have been given acclaim for their writing skills, sense of sound, and attention to current and past cultural dilemmas, social issues and world or community events.

Students will become engaged in applying the use of the literary terms as found in poetry analysis in order for them to have a framework for the writing they will read, hear, produce and review. Lyric form and patterns in poetry will be included as a large segment of the analysis of poetry students will delve into while interacting with this unit. This will open students' awareness of syncopation in lexis regarding meter and tone. In this way, students will use a sufficient amount of the procedural canon from the School District of Philadelphia's *Planning and Scheduling Timeline*.

As I myself am a lover of the art of creating/writing, performing and crafting poems as a creative art, I will expose students to varied types, styles, and authors of poems. I will offer my students opportunity to widen their knowledge of the expressive art as it relates to them in their own community. This unit serves students in a high school setting on all academic levels. It will be used more specifically in ninth and twelfth grade English Language Arts classes but can be altered to suit a framework for an after school poets' club, too.

I will use this unit to congregate the class into a communication community through poetry in order to achieve symphonic synchronization as an aspect of speech in whole and in part, similar to an orchestra. Using the varied collective voices of the classroom, as a choice, I will explore with students the art of choral poetics using aspects of sound sense, multiple vocal and expressive sounds, and most importantly the individual message as it relates to the community - my students' community. This will give students opportunity to connect to others who might sometimes seem as if they are alone in our large high school society. Students will use poems that have been created by famous and not-so famous authors to begin to become comfortable with speaking in front of others and in gaining a sense of sound as words have been printed on the page -

bringing life into their printed space.

This unit is also created to provide support for struggling readers and self-conscious speakers in the classroom. This will be done in an effort to provide more opportunity that will build confidence through fluency. It is another goal of this unit that the applied strategies will transfer learning of reading and writing to students' understanding of other advanced text. The symphony of voices used in a whole class or in groups will increase students' vocabulary knowledge, increase their enjoyment and engagement of printed literature, and will motivate students to reread text.

As a part of the unit's goals, students will be guided in writing symphonic selections of poetry citing specific voices for particular verse and stanzas, this strategy will be explored to give way for students to express their feelings, make known their opinions, and tell their points of view in a more effective mode of communication in a public forum. The unit will activate a foreground for choral reading of poetry and other literary text. This unit's goal is to invite students to become a community that harbors less conflict and more bonding through sound and writing. This will lend itself to teaching tone in which every poet speaks¹ — representing the inner, mental and emotional experience.

Rationale

Approaching this unit in the classroom will allow students to participate in reading aloud published poetry as well as creating poetic literature that expresses personal affirmations of triumph, encouragement, rage, hope, and most undoubtedly love in every aspect of student life. Students are not always given the opportunity to say what they like or even allowed creative expression in this realm of education. Students are asked only to satisfy state assessments and other exams. This unit is being developed to allow students creative choice for writing in between the pressures of testing for proficiency. This unit will enhance students' levels of interaction with language, words, and comprehension in an analytical way because it will force them to become more precise in usage of specific terms to convey written and verbal messages.

Students do not always say what they really mean. For the most part, their response to a wide range of emotions on a continuum exists at opposite ends of the emotional spectrum either fierce anger or loving kindness. I want my students to be able to write, to use their voice, both their inner voice as well as their oral sounds, to tell their story poetically — truthfully. My students need to know that their voices serve them as an individual and as a participant in a community. Each one is linked to another no matter where their lives began. In thinking this way, I have considered the cultural diversity that exists in my classroom. Students are from the neighborhood, and from African countries like Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria and Botswana; still other students are from various Caribbean Islands like Jamaica, the Bahamas, Trinidad, St. Lucia, Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico. My students bring various levels of life's ever-changing experiences with them when they sit in the classroom each day, from personal triumphs and tragedy to trauma and tenacious strength.

Poetry: the art of rhythmical composition, written or spoken, for exciting pleasure by beautiful, imaginative or elevated thoughts.² Students will be taught to appreciate the sense of sound as found in poetry both modern and archaic, both the European variety and the African styles of poetry which show an intermingling of language and dialect. Students must be able to decipher meaning within sound, dialectic use, and metrical

patterns that have lasted throughout the generations.

Various characteristics of poetry will be examined: listening and experiencing the meaning of words expressed; language in speaking the words with precision and purpose —orality; poetry terms that will enhance the development of student poets and enable literary criticism; assemblage of voice for choral poetic class exercise and school assembly performances. With the advent of slam poetry, the words are quickly rolling from the mouths of poets; students have to listen for main ideas and themes without having an opportunity to read any of the words on paper. Students will have to rise to the sophistication of listening to the recitation of poetry for metric patterns, themes, ideas, rhyme and word choice. Students will also develop their own skills of performance and public self-expression..

Objectives

Students will begin to study the rhetorical devices used in most African-American poetic sermons to choose parts as a base for exploration of trumpeting noise in an audience - call and response or simply silence. For this study, students will delve into all aspects of poetry while focusing our attention on African-American and Caribbean poets. To hear the sound of words, students will use audio and video technology to listen to works as they demonstrate techniques for the speaking voice and all that surrounds that voice. In our school of diverse voices and dialects, students will investigate voice and language beyond the words from sound to expression to meaning and feeling.

Group poetry writing will also be explored in this unit. We will create a symphony of lexical sound to be used like an orchestral performance - all presented with words only. Historical context will accompany the writings of the African-American poet to bring a piece of the reality of the times to student learners. Students are required as participants in the unit to bring words to life, to make the printed page resound from the classroom walls; they will use audio tapings/recordings, and also bring sound to the stage and public event. This unit will include the viewing of several performance poetry videos (e.g. *Amiri Baraka, Furious Flower*) and look at the process of sampling expressions for layering of tone, rhythm, timing, and meaning. Using this type of technique will allow students to consider analyzing poetry as literature that is layered with symbolic inferences. For purpose of this unit, no consideration will be given to using instrumental accompaniment. Students will be acknowledged if they choose to embark on their poetic works in a musical direction.

Another goal of the unit is for students to employ poetry writing and performance poetry to express their critique of the world. They will use the elements of the poem to shape their language and discourse, question their world, construct and/or reconstruct their identities in an effort to develop their own voice.

Symphonic Synchronizing Sounds

Slam poetry often takes a poet's words at face value, and the identity a poet expresses in a performance is taken as the performer's identity in life. At these events, many audience members are evaluating not only the writing and performance of a poem, but also the scripting and performance of identity through presentation

and sound. In creating a group poem for performance, students will first have a basis in poetry; then they will be given the opportunity to practice using literary tools such as tone, rhythm, repetition, alliteration, narrative, and performance vocalization. Students will learn that poetry is an art written for the individual as well as the audience. In this way however, poetry is brought to life off the printed page and onto the stage — vocalized for performing..

Slam poetry has much in common with its theatrical cousins, performance art and dramatic/comedic monologue, because it engages the very same politics of identity that can govern and arise from those expressions.³ Poets who maximize authenticity and sincerity at slam poetry performances highlight the first-person voice, through the poem's sense of personality. The poet's conveying of identity comes across from the stage and not the page. Poets can also maximize on performance pieces discussing gender, race, and social commentary. These performance selections are often celebrated and honored by the audience, especially those at the high school level. Audience, as a part of their presentation, will be considered by students when creating poems for choral performance to bring the poets' experiences to life. The inner self is opened to the elements, and a mixture of figurative language is unleashed.

The slam poem's composition is quite original in lexicon and performance, yet its nature can be extremely lyrical, no matter the theme or sometimes radical nature of the poet's delivery. Even though a poet might express a sense of his or her own personal experiences, the poet usually illustrates a sense of shared collectiveness and historical reference. The language of the slam poem is emphatic metaphors made clear with forceful and direct diction, imagery, repetition and often rhymes.

The arrangement of words on paper will enable an orchestral tone of varied voices to be chosen for specific groups in performance modes of address for variation (see *Classroom Activity III*). These works will be used expressively to showcase student work on the stage in the form of a "Slam." Students will find the spoken word poet is not merely spoken; it is delivered with a direct cadence, rhythm, or chant-like pulse. Poets do not simply deliver their poems; they vocalize their poems, dramatizing them with movement, and at points placing emphasis on parts of their message. Poets sometimes flow from the word to a definite singing of the words in a pitch-like chant. However tone can affect the manner of the constructed writer's relationship with speakers as it is "entangled in the words and fastened to the page." Audiences can become spiritually intoxicated with the sounds and begin to participate in the performance in a call and response manner.

Prior to getting to this intensity of performance, I begin by helping students to practice with other voices by using poems such as "Junk" by Richard Wilbur, "Come in Go Out" by May Swenson, and "Poetry" by Marianne Moore. I will break classes up into groups that will be assigned to decide among themselves how their entire group will create the poem through their own voices. I will circle the room to create an open space for questions and answers; in each poem we will discuss word distinction, pronunciation, rhyming, and silent spaces written in the poem.

Rhythmic Renditions

Beats, conceived by students as the tapping, banging, or other cadence of some percussion instrument will in turn be used to place stresses and learn how to read and listen for accented syllables. For the interest of this unit, rhythm will only be considered in relation to tempo of voice, tone, meter, and the poets' use of pause.

Metrical patterns will be toyed with in regard to line length, stressed and unstressed syllables, and uses of alliteration for rhythm and accent.

In today's poetry performances, poets use intonation, gestures, and sometimes background music to accentuate their poetry, making this pedagogy culturally relevant to my students' world and interests. Therefore, students will deconstruct various lyrical poems written by rappers Tupac, Talib Kweli, Queen Latifah and Common. In this way, students will hear historical and cultural references to social concerns of a specific time period.

For ease in teaching students how to scan lines of verse - scansion, students will go around the room and state their names while others write them down on paper. Next, I will show them the mark of a stressed and unstressed syllable. Beginning with my name they will be able to comprehend accents and measurement of lines. Their names will be said aloud by them, then by the class for accents. Following this round robin of accentual experimentation, I will speak to students about the specific terms of accentual syllabic meter until the end of the exercise, when everyone's name has been scanned. Students will have to practice this skill to become more precise at determining stresses in words - in and out of context of a line of verse. This short and quick exercise will give them tools for more effective inquiry and deeper context when analyzing meaning through rhythmical writings and performance. This short exercise will translate for students a "call for learning." By using each student's name, they will feel connected to the lesson. This is designed to assist in demonstrating for students a level of trust of each other toward a setting for creative freedom of expression. Again, this is in an effort in creating social connection for symphonic unity.

Students will individually dissect the following prose piece then reconstruct the prose selection into a poem, marking where the lines begin and end, changing punctuation, but not changing any of the words. They will be asked to note any repetition of specific words or phrases. They must also create a lexicon for use later.

These two works, published a decade apart—1951 and 1961—exemplify characteristics typical of Hughes' jazz inflected poetry, such as abrupt tonal variation between individual poems and the use of varied vernacular expressions. They also provide fresh conceptual approaches to what constitutes a text that embodies a jazz ethos. The multivocal, dialogic sequencing of varied verse forms in *Montage* are intended to represent the idiomatic, idiosyncratic and interlocutory aspects of jazz communication. This uniquely synthesized poem, as *Montage's* author's note announces: "like be-bop, is marked by conflicting changes, sudden nuances, sharp and impudent interjections, broken rhythms and passages sometimes in the manner of the jam session, sometimes the popular song, punctuated by the riffs, runs, breaks, and disc-tortions of the music of a community in transition."⁴

We will then attempt this short opening activity lesson for a few days. Students will also be asked to incorporate pauses (spaces between words and a play on line breaks) in their modified prose poems. These will convey a new rhythm in the writing highlighting strength and poetic choice. This exercise will assist students in understanding rhythm and its prominence in the written and spoken word. Furthermore, using this particular passage will engage students in advanced literary vocabulary and thinking.

This passage lends itself to rhythmic nuances and syllabic metrical patterns that will allow students to recognize new meanings in the writing when recreating its sentences and phrases into verse for poetry.

Students will notice the intense variation of the kinds of sentence represented that will then transform into lines of verse on their page. Several students will be chosen to read their version of poetry; a typed version of

the completed activity will be placed on the wall for display.

Rhythmic lexicon play makes a sort of texture in our listening lives; new rhythms offer new perspectives on tone. In the era of my students' poetic perspective, free stylin' poetry is an art form based on the work of rhythm. It is a word symphony that is constructed on a basic patterned rhythm that the poet (lyricist) determines before uttering the first word. The rhyme creates a repetition of particular sounds; together with incantations, metaphors, and similes these overwhelmingly draw listeners in. Rhythmic repetition initiates a sense of order but freedom from rigidity in a poetic order gives the poet a field of identity, room to move in the language and the rhythm.⁵ Also found in poetic rhythms of African-Americans, there is a sense of immediacy, personal involvement, and dramatic appeal. Students will be guided in viewing clips of young people free-stylin' (their own friends from YouTube) and also on stage at a poetry slam.

Linguistics & Lexicon

Students will use several concepts of "voice" as a foreground for them to play on words in their written and vocal expressions, clearly stating explicit notions of connotation and identity. We will study voice, in several forms: as the faculty or power of uttering sounds through the mouth by the controlled expulsion of air as in speech; as the right to present and receive consideration of one's desires or opinions; as an expressed opinion or choice; as the conscience;⁶ as capturing universal qualities of human nature. The aforementioned definitions will be a basis for discussion of voice in the classroom. Students will also learn the power of silence and the pause when crafted into poems that they will read or create in the poem themselves.

In discussing diction, there are accepted levels of diction. There are three distinctions: formal (literate), informal (standard) or slang. Diction is defined: as a style of speaking or writing as dependent upon choice of words; as the accents and inflections on words. It is also defined as intonation and speech sound quality which is manifested by an individual speaker; enunciation.⁷ Diction is important to spoken language because it includes all different types of words and is not particular about meter or rhyme. Language in and of itself has rhyme, and poetry makes the listener and reader aware of rhythm. Rhythm is more highly organized in poetry than in other uses of language.

Lexicon: lists of vocabulary terms to use when tackling word choice and construction to have readers understand character traits, themes and emotions the writer intends to convey to their audience. Being audacious in word and ambitious in ideas will lead my student poets to discover additional synonyms and antonyms to reference themes, emotions and character traits. Enunciation and word choice has a dramatic effect on tone which lends itself to the theme of the poem. I will ask students to choose from the following three poems: "The Revolution Will Not be Televised" by Gil Scott Heron; "Beat! Beat! Drums!" by Walt Whitman; and "The Road Not Taken" by Robert Frost. Students will have to decide which words illustrate tone, emotions, and character traits, as applicable. We will begin to develop a standardized list of words that can be used to describe tone, emotions, and character traits in the poetic literature and post it in a word bank or word wall style on the classroom wall for students' future use.

Next, I will have students choose a short poem from a collection I will have previewed with them and change the tone of the poem by adding and/or deleting words, as well as extending or shortening lines for accentual modification. Their poems will have to be specific in the change. They will have to discuss the poems' first

meaning, which we will have previously approached and discussed in class; then they will have to explain their new meaning and why they made the choices they did.

African- and Caribbean- Americans idiomatic speakers always improvise with intent; they compose on the spot, and the success of the improvisations depends on their mastery of nuances and the elements of the craft called for by the idiom. Improvisatory in practice, by force of circumstances, these speakers are adept at code-switching both in verbal and body language as the need arises.⁸ As a part of teaching the unit, pitch must be considered since it can alter lexical meaning indicating a writer's attitude.⁹

Dialect Designs of Distinction

When considering the diverse community of student learners served, I must keep in mind the varied dialects that are heard in the classroom that can be highlighted on the stage or in a written piece. Students will view several African- Caribbean & British poets whose spoken word delivery, accents, and rhythm differ from African American poets. We will use audio recordings on CD or the Internet to listen to different performances or readings.

For detecting design of accents in poetry, which highlights dialect often times, students will again use their own names to explore accentual syllabic meter (see *Rhythmic Renditions*). Students will be guided in knowing that a sentence serves as notation for suggesting significant tones of voice. Their native tongue will give flavor to the sound of spoken words. Poetry lifts from the page in student voices.

An oral art form first and foremost, poetry is meant to be spoken. Vernacular expression will be the motivation in this section of the unit. All students will be required to use in their poetic creations at least three dialectic words or phrases of their neighborhood, native country, or homeland, thus giving emphasis to the tone, timber and sometimes torment of their daily lives.

I will share with students Robert Frost's discussion of the word "no" and its varied use in his "The Last Refinement of Subject Matter: Vocal Imagination." Various students will be asked to read the short poem aloud so that we can hear the sound and make meaning of the sound compacted in the word. In this way, the utterance of the word will instill words packed with feelings. Students will explore hearing how others use words and word sounds rather than the word in context. We will practice in making an inference about what is heard - visualizing meaning through use of sound. Students will be trained to attend more to the characteristics of sound of other tongues and dialect, as well as their won native tongue because of careful listening to recordings of poets and poetry readers.

Vocal Vibrations

In the poetry of Langston Hughes, you can hear the voices of the community he so eloquently represents. There are several voices Hughes creates as noted by Jones in "Listening Ear...", the speaking voice - orality of the community; literary voice - performance on the page; instrumental voice - speaking/reading sounds giving

both senses of word meaning, all enriching the understanding of the poetic language and expressions trickled throughout the writing.

Using the prose to poetry exercise as seen in the *Rhythmic Renditions* of this unit students will have the opportunity to pay attention to acoustical properties and effects that are pronounced when hearing poetry and the written word, either internally or externally. Students will play with sound and meaning throughout their study in this unit; making meaning in partnership with the author. Reading aloud, vocalizing to understand the message, will be of the utmost importance in this unit. Students must learn to understand the basis of their own understanding to be effectively included in a group or choral poetry performance.

In using language there is no one recipe for the sounds created. It is a bringing together of all the elements that makes the symphonic transformation from the inner self. I am attempting to prepare my students for that transformation of self to word to meaning, shared with their community of peers at-large. Acoustical imagery and word structure, which embodies speech and language, can be found in lines of verse through the organization of speech employed by timbre, duration, pitch or intonation, intensity or volume.¹⁰ Timbre is used within this organizational framing, as well as the repetitive literary elements of alliteration, assonance and rhyme, duration, and references to accentual syllabic meter.

It is important to mention nonsensical sounds in this unit, for the African- and Caribbean poet places nonsensical syllables in crucial junctures where the text seems to collapse.¹¹ Students will decipher the sounds in Amiri Baraka or Kamau Braithwaite's poems. We will work with Dinesh R. Makwana's poem "Senorita" as a group exercise. An excerpt from the poem:

Where my lipstick would be banned from every ocean buthis,

And that pride would stand and for his to please.

Then oh then, then oh then, I...

Ta Ta , Ha Ha , Ka Ka , Ma Ma,

La La, La La, Ta Ta, Ha Ha, Ma Ma,

Tat Tut, Tat Tut, Pat Pat, Tut Tut, Tat Tat,

Tat Tut, Tat Tut, Pat Pat, Tut Tut, Tat Tat,

Rasa Pasa, Fasa Masa, Hasa Kasa,

The song and step of the Senorita.

The only kudos was I'd breathed when others had died,

Gawking, the folk learned the immanent sari virtue anddivide,

Timid and destitute, I resembled the schlemiel andschlenter rogue,

This excerpt shows the use of phonetic sounds to represent rhythm of the dance of the Senorita. Students can use their bodies and voice to interpret the sounds of the words and the rhythm the sounds naturally create.

After hearing and reading these poems, students will be asked to create very short versions of their own poetic nonsense in representation of an idea or an emotion. This will aid in understanding of sound and meaning in a universal sense of the terms.

Classroom Activity I

A Poet, I Am

Goals: Students will expand their thinking on poetry and what poetry means. Students will engage in discussion with peers in order for them to understand the multiple interpretations of poetry. Students will understand poetry as a social tool for change in their community. Students will gain new perspective of poetry by interpreting and analyzing poems written by African- and Caribbean-American poets. Students will reinforce their understanding of the connections between hip-hop and poetry through close analysis of the works of male artists and poets Talib Kweli - "Get By," Buju Banton - "Untold Stories," Common - "The People," Linton Kwesi Johnson - "If I was a Top-notch Poet," Claude McKay - "America," and Langston Hughes - "Theme for English B" and through the creation of their own poetry. Student will participate in class discussions. Students will recognize recurring themes and metrical strategies used in social change poems and lyrics. Students will practice oral speaking and reading skills in a group setting. Students will define poetry through brainstorming to form a consensus working definition.

Objectives: This lesson is designed for students in high school and can be adapted to serve students in learning support environments. PA State Academic Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening 1.1.11.C; 1.1.11.H; 1.2.11.B; 1.3.11.A; 1.3.11.C; 1.3.11.D; 1.6.11.A; 1.6.11.C; 1.6.11.F; 1.7.11.B; 1.7.11.C. PA Academic Standards for the Arts and Humanities 9.1.12.F; 9.1.12.J; 9.1.12.K; 9.2.12.C; 9.2.12.E; 9.4.12.C; 9.4.12.D.

Materials: Lined paper, printed poems/lyrics, glossary of poetry terms, LCD Projector, Interactive Whiteboard; audio speakers, Internet access, computer, microphone, iPod, or other recording and/or video devices. A blog can be created for the class.

Procedure: Day One: Using the works of the artist sampled above or using America themed poems by Whitman, Hughes, McKay, Angelou, and Heron. Write on the board, "What is Poetry?" Students can define it in a word, sentence, phrase, or poem. Their answer must be completed in 3 minutes. Have a timer available in the room on that day. Have two students come up to the board to write down answers given to the class. Then, call on various students to shout out their written response, only reading from their papers — no free style answers from the brain, only their paper. After all students respond, the teacher will show on the Interactive whiteboard definitions from Dictionary.com, Urbandictionary.com; and Wikipedia.com. Next students will be lead in a discussion comparing the multiple definitions. This discussion should bring in the comparison of prose, too..

Next post on whiteboard the lyrics/poem Heron's, "Winter in America," Whitman's, "I Sing America," and Angelou's, "America." Have students choose two of the poems for text rendering¹². Share their picks around the room and then give writing assignment.

Day Two: Show Gil Scott Heron's "Winter in America" video clip

(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fGIRsjHTkbs>). Have written on the board- What is the difference between poetry and prose? As they listen to the performance, they can write their brainstormed answers to the question in their notebook. Using a two columned note-taking style, one column should reflect thoughts and the other column should show sentences formed from their thoughts. The second column can be completed later for homework. Students should conclude that it is difficult to separate the two styles of writing. After this, student should reflect on their writing from the text rendering exercise to determine whether their writing is prose or poetry.

Day Three: All poetry pieces are to be presented in class. Have classroom set-up like a staged venue or coffeehouse. Prepare to video students for future use. Later in the week, ask to use the auditorium or library, those spaces will reflect the seriousness of the completed written projects.

Day Four: Blog post their prose writing, the posts should be written or in video or completed in a slide show format. This lesson can only be completed if a computer lab is available for the class' use.

Assignment(s): Day 1 - Write a poetic piece about America in your own words, using at least two terms (sentence/phrase/word) from your text rendering. Note which selection you are reflecting.

Day 2 - Review your piece and make it the opposite of what you intended (prose to poetic or poetry to prose).

Day 3 - Answer the following questions, how did the meaning of the piece change as it was re-written in a different genre? Did re-writing it change the interpretation of your piece? How did it feel to vocalize your words? Are there any changes you would make? Why or why not?

Follow-up activity: Students can prepare a show for the school or be entered into Poetry Slam venues across the city. Also, students can be scheduled to perform for parent group meeting at the school or any other special event. The teacher will determine if their performance piece is appropriate for the specific audience that will be addressed.

Assessments: Students will show an understanding of different writing genres, they will be able to express critically and analytically their interpretation of America through the poems/lyrics or their own writing.

Classroom Activity II

Lexicon Collage of Voices

Goals: Students will be exposed to poetry from various genres and media. Students will practice oral speaking and performance in a group setting. Students will read, listen to, view and respond to classic, nonsense and contemporary poetry. Students will examine and develop words for use in performance poems.

Objectives: This lesson is designed for students in high school and can be adapted to serve students in learning support environments. PA Academic Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening 1.1.11.A; 1.1.11.B; 1.1.11.D; 1.2.11.C; 1.3.11.C; 1.3.11.D; 1.3.11.F; 1.4.11.A; 1.4.11.C; 1.5.11.D; 1.5.11.E; 1.5.11.F; 1.6.11.A; 1.6.11.B; 1.6.11.C; 1.6.11.F. PA Academic Standards for the Arts and Humanities 9.1.12.B; 9.1.12.C; 9.1.12.I; 9.2.12.C; 9.3.12.D; 9.3.12.E; 9.4.12.B.

Materials: Digital Voice Recorders (DVR), microphones, lined paper, audio recordings, iPods, any other recording devices, and printed copies of most of the poems that will be read, decoded, analyzed.

Procedure: Day One: Students will learn to identify rhyme scheme similarities in hip-hop, reggae/dub, and poetry; they must identify the rhyme scheme in selected work from *Classroom Activity I*. Next, explore with students a discussion about several poetic terms, including rhyme, rhythm, alliteration, meter, and form. If using *YouTube* or other visual media lyrics must be provided to students in printed form. Students will record terms and working definitions for future reference and use. In class, break them into small groups, they will have to analyze meaning, and craft of hip hop lyrics and poetry comparing two writings from different authors for similarities in meaning and structure. Collect each groups work at the end of the class period.

Day Two: Students will for pre-class pull names to decide who will recite their written homework. There will only be 6 readers for the day. Next, ask students to name different forms of poetry and write them on the board (i.e., free verse, sonnets, ballads, epics, etc.). Ask students if they think hip hop is a form of poetry. Discuss with students what hip hop and poetry have in common. Characteristics to refer to students are: rhythm in lyrics, end rhyme, internal rhyme, alliteration, and assonance; the use of repetition for emphasis; manipulation of language to express commanding emotions and messages, and choice of diction based on audience. Play a sample of hip hop, also play a sample of reggae and decide if it follows a typical poetic format (rhyme, line structure, repetition, etc.), we might discuss how some artists become break the established norms.

Day Three: Using the same printed poems/lyrics student will render phrases and single words from it (at least 8 terms/phrases). Allow students time to share their choices with their group. Students should be able to tell others why they made decision based on poetry terms - rhyme, rhythm, sound, accents, etc. Next, they will use those 8 terms to create a message. They can add only 8 other words of their choice, using "I" only once within their message. The theme for this writing can be determined by you or the student groups (i.e. politics, music, love, literature, school, family). You might try giving each group two theme choices; they can mix them to create an even more complex piece using their terms. They will read their completed writing to others in the group. Each group will be video recorded for revisiting the day's efforts.

Day Four: "One word!" - Write on the board before students enter the classroom; ask them to take out their polished piece. Tell them to switch the piece with their neighbor (who might have been in their group) they must read the selection. Then they must choose one word from the piece. Students will then stand around the room in a circle and say the word they choose. They will be asked to note the poetry tools heard while sharing (repetition, onomatopoeia, alliteration, rhyme, etc.). They will experience that poetry and naturally occurs in the activity. We will repeat the exercise only this time, it will be recorded. The third time "one word" is recited; the teacher will point to specific students for them to say their word to form a collage of lexicon generated from student work.

Day Five: Each homework sentence will be typed into one word document on a computer while other students are reviewing the filmed presentations

Day Six: Have several students read a stanza of the poem, "Summer's Bounty." Check to see how they read it and in what order - right to left or down to up to next column. Note for students the play on the breakup of the compound words. Ask if they know all of the items expressed, explain. Discuss the familiar and the unfamiliar and how Swenson takes apart the familiar, making comprehension difficult and rhythmic patterns of the words distorted. In "Nosty Fright," Swenson changes sound rules that make new senses to create a new world for the reader/speaker. These poems should be read aloud. They use auditory imagery that embody speech and

language, then deconstruct the rules to translate new senses.

Day Seven: Student will read their nonsense poems. After three or four readings, discuss similarities and/or differences about the poems' words and author choices of breaking words apart. Film these presentations for later use and review of lesson.

Assignment(s): Day 1 - students will write a six-line poem or one paragraph of at least six sentences to describe the day's classwork highlighting one of the poetry terms they like best or which one they dislike the most. In their piece they must answer, why, too.

Day 2 - Students will expand on their writing from the previous night, in this paragraph or six lines of verse they will write about what they learned in class today.

Day 3 - Polish written pieces - revisit and revise for performance.

Day 4 - Student will write a reflection of the classwork for the day. It will be written in only one sentence.

Day 5 - Read May Swenson's "Summer's Bounty" and "A Nosty Fright." Be prepared to discuss reading in class. Write down three questions that you want to ask and three things that stood out for you in the readings. Tell students they may have more to write, if so - write their ideas down to compare to classmates when sharing in class the next day.

Day 6 - Ask students to write their own poems that play on words using the theme - community. Do not give them specific instructions. However, if they choose to pattern their work from Swenson, that will work well and the student will enjoy the next day's poetic presentations.

Follow-up activity: Using the films, select students who are highly computer literate to make a movie (iMovie or MovieMaker) capturing the essence of the lesson. The completed project which will emphasize random use of words and students that form ideas, thoughts, feelings, societal consensus, etc. can be shown in a school assembly or submitted in a short film contest. For this activity make sure you have parental permission to video student participants. Also, the film can be uploaded onto a class blog or other website.

Assessments: Class participation will be noted to determine understanding. All students participating, showing an understanding of poetry terms through written exercises, responding to discussion comments and/or questions will be graded accordingly. This activity will provide students with new words to be displayed on a word wall or bulletin board. Students will further show proficiency in the lesson by their comprehension of the terms by using them in other academic writing and standardized essays.

Classroom Activity III

Poetic Expressions in Symphonic Sensations

Goals: Students will read or recite poems in unison or individually for speech improvement in pitch, tone, volume, rate, diction, enunciation, and clear interpretation of selections. Students will understand theme, alliteration, assonance, etc. Student will practice and become familiar with writing poetry in different forms. Students will improve their reading, spelling, vocabulary, and grammar skills. Students will become more

confident in group interactions and in their ability to write poetry. Student will become familiar with the origin, rules, judging, and techniques of a poetry slam. Students will learn and understand the difference between a individually performed/written poem and a group performance or writing.

Objectives: This lesson is designed for students in high school and can be adapted to serve students in learning support environments. PA State Academic Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening 1.1.11. C; 1.1.11.H; 1.3.11.C; 1.3.11.D; 1.3.11.E; 1.3.11.F; 1.6.11.A; 1.6.11.B; 1.6.11.C; 1.6.11.D; 1.6.11.E; 1.6.11.F; 1.7.11.A; 1.7.11.C. PA Academic Standards for the Arts and Humanities 9.2.12.A; 9.2.12.B; 9.2.12.C; 9.2.12.F; 9.12.K; 9.3.12.A.

Materials: 3x5 cards, LCD Projector, Interactive Whiteboard; audio speakers, Internet access, computer, microphone, iPod, or other recording and/or video devices, photocopies of all text to be memorized.

Procedure: Day One: Group students in sets of four or five from the way in which they enter the classroom on this day. Give one person in each group a 3x5 card that gives them a theme (all themes distributed will overlap) and a letter to write the poem using alliteration or assonance (i.e. a sound using the letter "S" or a memory using the letter "L" or a city using the letter "D"). Tell the class that each student in the group is required to write at least one line of verse to contribute to the poem or have the instructions posted on the board. The line must use the beginning letter and they can check with a group partner for end words to create rhyme schemes. Next students will share their lines with their group members and begin to arrange the lines to create a performance piece. Students will be instructed to consider, tone, pitch, spelling, rhythm, silent spaces, and meaning. They have to record the group's written work at the end of the class to take home.

Day Two: Groups will sit together again upon entering classroom. On the board have written the instructions for the day, review revisions made by group members discuss what works and doesn't work. Decide how to perform the piece - who will say what line, word or phrase, how pitch will be used, male/female statements, how feelings will be expressed. Explain your choices to each other. Disagree agreeably and if not call the teacher to assist the group. The poetic piece should be completed in 15 minutes. At the end of the 15 minutes, ask groups to share orally their work.

Assignment(s): Day 1 - Revisit and revise written work of the day. Considering line length, rhyme patterns, use of the letter assigned to group and meaning corresponding to the theme. Students are to check spelling again and find spaces in the writing for a performance pause.

Follow-up activity: The groups whose poetic presentations are better and best will be showcased at local Slam poetry venues, local poetry cafes, and recorded for school district podcasts archives. To determine poetry group rankings, design a rubric to assess the levels. Further use of the student work can be uploaded onto the school's website or in a blogging website for viewing. Student may also want to draw attention to their work on YouTube.

Assessments: Perfect performances completed without reading will determine proficiency in grading. Use a poetry check sheet (to mark any words said incorrectly or out of order), a judging panel made up of 3 classmates of other poetry groups. Assign each person on the judges' panel a specific detail to watch/listen for of all participants in the poems performance: voice and articulation; physical presence; ease in transition and flow; accuracy. Design a rubric to meet the needs of the class.

Annotated Bibliography

Alexander-Smith, AnJeanette C. "Feeling the Rhythm of the Critically Conscious mind." *The English Journal of the National Council of Teachers of English*. 93(2004): 58-63. A good article that brings the Black perspective of combining poetry and rhythm for scholarship and research. It is very interesting, easy to read and understand.

Anderson, III, T. J. "Body and Soul." *African American Review* 34 (2000): 329- 347. This article discusses the African-American in performance in poetry, jazz, and dance. It covers a historical perspective which brings the reader into today's venue of expressive arts in the Black community. The author is a professor of African-American literature and creative writing. A great article for teachers.

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Fussell, Paul. *Poetic Meter and Poetic Form*. New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1965. One of the best basic handbooks of prosody. The chapter on free-verse nicely enumerates the ways in which, as Eliot said, free verse is not really free.

Hartman, Charles O. Introduction to *Jazz Text: Voice and Improvisation in Poetry, Jazz and Song*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1991. The short introduction to Hartman's volume on poetry and jazz speaks suggestively about the ways in which poetry works for the ear. Later chapters go into the issue in more depth, but perhaps less usefully for the classroom.

Hammer, Langdon. "Frank Bidart and the Tone of Contemporary Poetry." *Southwest Review* 87 (2002): 7-21. This article gives teachers a base to discuss tone and gives a plethora of examples to choose for citing.

Hass, Robert. "Listening and Making." *Twentieth Century Pleasures*. New York: Ecco, 1984. Hass's sensitive, if initially off-color, remarks on the power of rhythm are a great teaching aid. Focuses the eye (or ear?) on the rhythmic and metrical aspects of poetry as inseparable from the poem's "argument," in true Emersonian fashion. Ideal for creative writing courses.

Hollander, John. *Rhyme's Reason*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1981. A solid guide to prosody that is also full of useful advice, often written in verse: "A rhyme is stronger when the final words / Seem less alike than pairs of mated birds."

Hughes, Langston. "Jazz as Communication" and "The Roots of Jazz," in *The Collected Works of Langston Hughes, Vol. 9*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2002. Hughes's rollicking short discussions of the sound and feel of jazz. He asserts that "jazz seeps into words—spelled out words"; his poetry, of course, is the evidence..

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article talks about the expressive arts in the Black community and how societal implications play a part in what is seen and heard. It briefly touches on the subject of spoken word.

Jones, Meta DuEwa. "Listening to What the Ear Demands: Langston Hughes and His Critics." *Callaloo* 25. (2002): 1145-1175. This is a good article that covers a lot of ground in regards to Langston Hughes. The author even talks about many Hughes' works that weren't highly publicized.

Longenbach, James. "The Spokenness of Poetry," in *The Resistance to Poetry*. Chicago: UCP, 2004. This thoughtful essay asks "What do we want when we want a poem to have a voice?" as it examines poems by Louise Glück and Frank Bidart. Excellent for students.

Moore, John Noell. "Practicing Poetry: Teaching to Learn and Learning to Teach." *The English Journal of the National Council of Teachers of English* 91. (January 2002): 44- 50. This was a fantastic article that details several ways to instruct your classroom in the art of creating and performing poetry. This article ends with a poetic cartoon, enjoy.

PA Department of Education's Academic

Standards. http://www.pde.state.pa.us/stateboard_ed/cwp/view.asp?a=3&Q=76716&stateboard_edNav=|5467|&pde_internetNav=| Information included on this site contains a quick link to the academic standards for each subject discipline.

Peters, Erskine. "The Poetics of the Afro-American Spiritual." *Black American Literature Forum* 23 (1989): 559 -578. An article that compares and contrast the practice of the Black preacher's sermon and poetry - its basis contains scriptural references throughout the reading. A good article to read.

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Sands, Rosita M. "Educational Implications of Interarts Inquiry as a Tool for the Analysis of the Black Expressive Arts." *Lenox Avenue: A Journal of Interarts Inquiry* 5. (1999): 95-112. This is another good reference article for teachers who want their students' work to hit the stage or on a microphone.

School District of Philadelphia. Book One. *Secondary Education Movement: Core Curriculum - Literacy*. Philadelphia: School Reform Commission, 2003. A resource book used to assist teachers in formulating lesson plans for English classes in high schools. This gives a vast number of lesson ideas and teaching strategies.

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Wallenstein, Barry. "Jazz Poetry/Jazz-Poetry/"Jazz Poetry"???" *African American Review* 27, (1993): 665-671. A research article that is fun and witty. A must read for teachers who teach poetry, specifically spoken word.

Weiss, Jen. *Brave New Voices: The Youth Speaks Guide to Teaching Spoken-word Poetry*. An easy to read text, which contains strategies for teachers of poetry wishing to include spoken word into their classroom settings and their lessons.

Annotated Student Resources

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Amiri Baraka. Dir. and prod. Lewis MacAdams and John Dorr. Videocassette. Lannan

Foundation, 1991. Amiri Baraka, poet, playwright, novelist, and essayist, reads from Bop trees and unpublished work to a college coffeehouse style audience. He is interviewed by Lewis MacAdams. This is an excellent video chronicle for showing students poetic delivery.

Art Sanctuary. "Do the Knowledge: A Standards-Based Hip-Hop Learning Guide." www.artsanctuary.org. Philadelphia: 2006. Accessed March 2009. This is a great tool for both teachers and students to use in the class. Additionally, teachers can arrange for author/poet visits to the classroom and schedule trips to libraries in conjunction with the organization functions.

Borders Open Door Poetry. www.bordersmedia.com/odp/. Accessed. January 2009. I have had this link saved on my browser for two years. It is a wonderful resource for students. They can watch and listen to poets read, perform and embody their written work. Student may even be inclined to participate in the poetry contest entries.

Burt, Stephen. "Original Gangsta." www.poetryfoundation.org. Chicago: 2009. Accessed May 15, 2009. An amusing essay connecting the catastrophic put-downs of Alexander Pope with the rivalries and insults of contemporary hip-hop. Students will enjoy the correlation of the creative times.

Dictionary.com LLC. www.dictionary.com. 2009. Accessed 6/20/2009. The best reference dictionary online yet. It is easily accessible and offers a variety of definitions for almost every word I ever searched. It is a multi-source dictionary search service and it's free.

Furious Flower I: Conversations with African American Poets. Ex. Prod. Joanne Gabbin. Prod. Judith McCray. California Newsreel, VHS; 1998. A four-part video series highlighting poetry performances and interviews. This is a wonderful collection consider purchasing the items for lifetime use. This series is now available for purchase in DVD format, titled *Furious Flower II*. This is a must own item for teachers of African-American literature.

Holt, Rinehart and Winston. *African American Literature*. Austin: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1998. This is a textbook anthology of African-American writings from Africa to the present. It offers a rich array of works for student use.

Hoye, Jacob and Carolyn Ali. ed. *Tupac: Resurrection 1971-1996*. New York: Atria, 2003. A book compiled by his mother Afeni Shakur, the writing of Tupac are brought to life. Some pages are penned in his own handwriting. Lots of his poems, rhymes, photos and other creative writings are found in this wonderful book. I love this book, students will too.

Kelly Writers House, The. www.writing.upenn.edu/wh/highlights/audiences.php. 2009. Philadelphia: Accessed July 2009. This site offers itself as a great resource for podcasts of poetry readings by poets. Also, teacher can arrange for trips to participate in poetry readings and open mic venues on the campus of University of Pennsylvania. This will add to students knowing they have access to such a place.

Lancashire, Ian. ed. *Representative Poetry Online*. <http://rpo.library.utoronto.ca/display>, The Web Development Group. University of Toronto Libraries: 2009. Accessed July 13, 2009. Lots of poetry found on this site as well as biographical information and lives of verse analysis. It is a great site for both students and teachers.

Makwana, Dinesh R. Poetic -The Dream Words of the Heart.<http://www.freewebs.com/dreamwords>; 2005. Accessed 7/14/09. A wonderful site of poetry from a Caribbean Islander living in Britain who writes from the scenery of Bermuda.

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Distributors, Music Sales Limited, 2002. This text shows complete lyrics of a number of rap artists and their biographies.

Rock The Pen. Painted Bride Art Center. www.paintedbride.org; Philadelphia: 2009. An interactive poetry workshop for middle and high school students. Facilitated and hosted by 2002 Pew Fellowship poet Trapeta Mayson, This venue is designed to provide a forum for students to explore and expound upon issues they face in their daily lives using poetry.

YouTube. <http://www.youtube.com>. Accessed March 2009. A worldwide site that allows online visitors to upload, download, and/or view a plethora of videos in several formats. It is a wonderful site. However, the School District of Philadelphia has the site blocked from use in the classroom. Teachers can refer to their computer tech in their buildings to get methods to circumvent the block.

Notes

1. Langdon Hammer. 7.

2. Dictionary.com

3. Somers-Willet. 52.

4. Meta DuEwa Jones, 1148-1149.

5. Robert Haas. 116.

6. Dictionary.com

7. Ibid.

8. Jonathan David Jackson. 40.

9. Langdon Hammer. 8.

10. Charles Hartman. 14.

11. T.J. Anderson, III. 330.

12. Text rendering - students choose (underline or record) a sentence, a phrase and a word from the selection to develop into their own unique writing for later. Prior to their own writing they share their picks in a round-robin fashion, we listen to the sentence from every student, then the phrase, then the word.

Appendix A

PA Academic Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening

- 1.1 Learning to Read Independent
- 1.2 Reading Critically in All Content Areas
- 1.3 Reading, Analyzing and Interpreting Literature
- 1.4 Types of Writing
- 1.5 Quality of Writing
- 1.6 Speaking and Listening
- 1.7 Characteristics and Functions of the English Language

PA Academic Standards for the Arts and Humanities

- 9.1 Production, Performance and Exhibition of Dance, Music, Theatre and Visual Arts
- 9.2 Historical and Cultural Contexts
- 9.3. Critical Response
- 9.4. Aesthetic Response

PA Academic Standards for Science and Technology

- 3.8 Science Technology and Human Endeavors

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