



Speak Up and Sound Off! Vocal and Rhythmic Patterns in Public Speaking

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by Nicole Q. Dobbs

Introduction and Rationale

"The only thing we have to fear is fear itself."¹ This is a famous quote by Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Sure wish I'd had knowledge of this quote several years ago. There I was sitting around a very long table in a conference room, with board members, directors, supervisors, all the higher-ups. My heart began to pound, stomach began to turn, palms began to sweat, body began to tremble and my mouth became dry because I knew the time was quickly approaching. Presentation time! I had been asked to give an oral report on the progress of my department. "Why me?" I thought. As I began to speak, my voice began to quiver and became weak. The words would just not flow. How embarrassing! "Why did this happen to me?" I thought.

Have you ever experienced such a situation? Most of us have. According to statistics, 75% of Americans report having a fear of public speaking.² Why is this? Where is this fear coming from? A fear of public speaking, also known as Glossophobia, can be caused by a variety of factors. For example, an overprotective parent could be the cause. The child isn't given the opportunity to think for him or herself and doesn't build up the confidence in his or her own ability. Low self-esteem can be a contributing factor. The person is convinced that his or her opinion isn't valuable. Criticism could be the cause. A person might have been ridiculed and laughed at in the past. Childhood trauma, traumatic experience as an adult, lack of preparation and practice, and the list goes on. Now what do we do about it? How can this phobia be treated?

My curriculum unit addresses the fear of public speaking and provides ways of overcoming this fear and improving oratory skills. It teaches students how to be fearless and confident speakers. I focus on voice and sound, two elements of poetry. If used correctly, these elements can bring an oral presentation to life. Good poetry compels one, through its internal rhythms and exacting arrangement of words, to articulate, to modulate, and to inflect. If well presented it captures the soul.³ Reciting poetry aloud and studying its elements teaches students how to charge and animate their voices. It helps students master public speaking skills and it builds self-confidence and self-esteem. Reciting a poem is a good way for a public speaker to develop his or her artistic skills. According to Dana Gioia, former Chairman of the National Endowment of the Arts, "Poetry offers mastery of language, and stocks the mind with images and ideas in unforgettable words and phrases, it trains and develops emotional intelligence, it reminds us that language is holistic—that how something is said is part of what is being said, with the literal meaning of words only part of their whole

meaning, which is also carried by tone of voice, inflection, rhythm, and it lets us see the world through other eyes, and equips us imaginatively and spiritually to face the joys and challenges of our lives."⁴

An exciting speaker incorporates vocal variety to add vitality to his or her delivery. In public speaking, how you say something can be more important than what you say. Varying the pace, pitch, volume, and demeanor of your voice to fit the words you are speaking can improve your delivery. President Barack Obama's use of pace, pitch, and pause is extraordinary. He adjusts his pace to suit the mood of his crowd, gathering speed and slowing down with effortless ease. In addition, he uses repetition and extends long vowel sounds to help his audience connect with what he is saying. President Barack Obama's vocal variety is inspirational and his vocal energy is magnetic.⁵ His style of delivery incorporates a variety of poetic techniques which commands and keeps the attention of his audience. The strategies that I will use in my curriculum unit teach students how to be just as effective when delivering a speech. Students are taught how to draw on vocal delivery skills and sounds such as volume, tone, rate of delivery, projection, articulation, diction, pronunciation, pausing, rhythm, rhyme and repetition. All of which can contribute to a successful public speaking presentation. The voice is such an important aspect in public speaking. It is the passport to the understanding of your audience.⁶

First and foremost, before I begin teaching students how to be creative with their public speaking I show them how to relax and become comfortable with it. In my unit students learn coping strategies to treat Glossophobia. I stress the importance of preparation, practice, memorization, and recitation. It is imperative that students research their topic thoroughly and know it from inside-and-out, backwards and forwards. Preparation goes a long way toward being the top performance anxiety cure.⁷ If students know their topic well and feel confident with what it is they are saying, then the delivery of it can prove to be very successful. An activity that I have included in my unit involves memorizing and reciting poems of famous poets. Learning and memorizing a poem is a confidence booster. It is an accomplishment. One of the best aspects of learning a poem by heart is that you get to take a poem inside of yourself. It becomes a part of you. When you memorize a poem it is no longer just a poem, but it is your poem. It is in your head, and you can call it up from memory as you would any other experience. Memorizing a poem is a great way to truly understand the poem, and consider every phrase, line and word. You can practice varying sounds, adding pauses and emphasis in different spots to try to find the most accurate voice for the poem. You never really know a poem until you have memorized it. Once you know it inside-and-out, you'll be able to recite it to others or yourself, improvise inside the poem's boundaries-adding your own words, re-wording a section of the poem, to make it your own.⁸

The first poem that I plan to have students study and memorize is "**Dreams**" by Langston Hughes. In this poem Langston Hughes uses rhyme, repetition and imagery to express his poetic voice. I have included below an excerpt from the poem:

Dreams

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.⁹

I chose this poem because it relates to all people and everyone has dreams. My students will be able to make personal connections to this poem for this reason. Hughes expresses the importance of dreams, not giving up on them and how life would be without them. This poem is meaningful and will energize and motivate my students in their desires to pursue their dreams as they begin to study and commit it to memory.

In addition, students will study and memorize "**Ambition Over Adversity**".

A poem created by the late Tupac Shakur, former rap artist/poet. Many of my students are familiar with Tupac's music but not his poetry. Below are lines taken from the poem:

Ambition Over Adversity

Take one's adversity Learn from their misfortune Believe in yourself Turn
adversity into ambition Now blossom into wealth¹⁰ .

The entire poem is very short but extremely powerful. It includes repetition, rhythm and rhyme and it moves you. It is a poem that my students can learn from. It talks about how one could look at the life of another and learn from his or her mistakes and avoid making those same types of mistakes. The poem expresses how one should believe in him or herself and use hardship as a motivating factor to accomplish goals. This is relevant to my students and their lives. Most of them come from families that experience hardships such as poverty, familial issues, and prejudices, among others. Many find it difficult to believe in themselves and what they can accomplish. I believe that any opportunity to enhance self-confidence is vital to their success.

As you can see by the poems I have chosen I want to inspire my students to believe in themselves and do great things with their lives. Not only will I choose poems for students to study and memorize but they also will be given the opportunity to choose poems on their own to learn.

In my unit I will also teach students about rap music and its relationship to poetry. Tupac can serve as a bridge for this idea. The connections between rap music and poetry create an engaging and meaningful platform for the exploration of poetic devices and important themes. The structural similarities of rhythm, simile and metaphor allow students to conceptualize some of the power of poetry through rap music. Good rap and poetry employ metaphor and simile to create imagery for different effects. Comparing the usage of metaphor and simile in poems and raps demonstrates how artists use these literary devices to breathe new life into staid words. ¹¹

As previously stated, memorization is key for presentation skills. Memorizing poetry that is relevant to my students' lives will be easier for them. Additionally, students will be taught to make mental notes. They will present orally without the assistance of note cards. Note cards place a barrier between the speaker and the audience. Referring to notes throughout the speech breaks the speaking contact with the audience. According to Dale Carnegie, "Fully fifty percent of the effect of a speech is lost by continual reference to notes."¹² This may be the first time many of my students have to present without assistance. For this reason, I believe memorizing poetry will facilitate this process since it is easier to do so and will help to reduce their anxiety levels.

After reviewing in detail the importance of preparation, practice, and memorization with my students, I then begin working on recitation with them. Like poetry, public speaking requires much more than simply memorizing it. It's important to also acquire meaning and to deliver it in a way that's understandable and interesting to the listener. Students will practice standing up straight and speaking from their diaphragm so their voices will project. Students will learn to speak at a steady pace, not too slow and not too fast. The more you rush through your recitation, the less enjoyable it will be for your audience. I will stress to my students to take their time and speak clearly so their listeners will be able to absorb the information given to them. My students will begin reciting their speeches first in class with their peers, a group they are familiar and comfortable with. Then, I will begin to invite other teachers to the classroom to hear them speak. Eventually, I will ask the administrators to sit in on the students' presentations and evaluate their performance.

Overview

I am a teacher in a vocational-technical school district located in Wilmington, Delaware. The high school in which I work is the largest school out of four in the district. Students select a major to study from the 22 career programs offered. I teach in the Business Technology program for grade levels ten and twelve. The fall enrollment for the 2008-2009 school year consisted of 1,495 students. One percent of the student body was American Indian, 34.2% were African American, 0.7% was Asian American, 16.1% were Hispanic and 48.9% were Caucasian.

Fifty-seven students between the ages of 15 and 18 were enrolled in the Business Technology program during the 2008-2009 school year. Eighty-one percent of them were minority students. Obviously, I teach a diverse group of students: African-American, Caucasian and Hispanic. The majority of my students come from low-to-middle-class environments where both parents are working full-time jobs or where there is only one parent in the home working a full-time job. Due to the working demands and constraints on the parents, most of the students I teach are left at home alone to take care of themselves and their siblings. As a result, important skills such as communications are not a top priority in the home and unfortunately are not developed appropriately. My goal is to assist in this area.

My students are very vocal and are great conversationalists when it comes to communicating with peers. They enjoy engaging in class discussions on various entertainment and current event topics from time to time. Their music of choice is Rhythm and Blues and Rap. Quite often I hear students incorporate beats, rhymes, lyrics or phrases to a song into their conversations with friends. They also use texting language

as well when conversing with friends. For example, a student may use the acronym "OMG" in their conversation, which stands for "Oh My God."

Students appear to be very comfortable when talking with friends or in small groups when in an informal setting, but become extremely uncomfortable when they have to speak publicly in a formal setting. This is because students are engaging in conversation on topics that are familiar and interesting to them. They feel they have something to contribute. It is stress-free and they are able to speak openly. Oral presentations are more formal, structured and are situations of evaluation which is not what most students like and want; so they have a tendency to shy away from it.

Public Speaking is not only an integral part of the Business Technology Curriculum but it is an invaluable personal skill. Students will be using this skill to interview for jobs and communicate with co-workers and clients. This unit is extremely important because it sets a foundation for the future courses my students will be taking over the next three years, all of which require them to give oral presentations. Public Speaking also plays a major role in the Business Professionals of America Organization, an organization geared towards developing leadership abilities and preparation for careers in the business industry. Some of my students are peer leaders and will be asked to make public speeches. Others will compete in events that require them to present orally. This unit is extremely vital to my students' future because without these essential skills they will not be successful in their high school career, the Business Professionals of America Organization and future professional endeavors.

Objectives

My unit will be taught to my tenth grade students during the first quarter. I chose to teach it at that time because it's important that they learn early in the school year the correct way of speaking and presenting to others.

Overall, my focus for this unit is to highlight voice and sound in my students' oratory skills. My goal for this unit is to teach students how to be confident speakers through preparation, practice, memorization, and recitation. In addition, I want to teach students to be creative, interesting, and engaging speakers through the use of poetry elements as well as sensitize them to language in general—its elements and its expressive potential.

Background/Content Knowledge

Poetry is a literary form characterized by a strong sense of rhythm and meter and emphasis on the interaction between sound and sense. The study of poetic technique is called prosody.¹³ Elements in poetry easily transferred into public speaking are rhythm, rhyme, and repetition. Rhythm, a musical quality produced by the repetition of stressed and unstressed syllables, is one of the building blocks of poetry. Writers also create rhythm by repeating words and phrases or even by repeating whole lines and sentences, as Walt Whitman does in the excerpt below of "Song of Myself":¹⁴

I hear the sound I love, the sound of the human voice, I hear all sounds running together,
combined, fused or following, Sounds of the city and sounds out of the city, sounds of the day and
night.¹⁵

Walt Whitman builds his idea of rhyme and repetition, moving it from the sound he loves, to the human voice, to the sounds of the city. He goes from specific to general. The use of rhyme, rhythm and repetition helps audiences enter into a speech by anticipating its structure and sometimes surprising them through variation. Applying rhythm to public speaking does not always come naturally to everyone. Some have to study and rehearse this technique to be successful, but it can be done. Applying rhythm to speech generates emotion. It's a rhetorical device that when used makes the speaker sound eloquent. Presenters use rhythm to gain the trust of their audience. The audience is so mesmerized with the movement of the speech until they are not really focusing on what is being said, or they take it in along with that movement. This type of speaking is popular among pastors when delivering a sermon to their congregation. Effective speaking involves accenting what is said through how it is said, and inviting the audience into the speech by building in expectation and surprise; with the idea being that a more effective speech is a clear, expressive, and dynamic speech.

Rhyme is another effective strategy that can be easily applied to prose. My students are very familiar with rhyme because it is used quite often among songwriters of the music they listen to. Rhyme is the similarity of sound in the last syllable. Reverend Jesse Jackson uses this method regularly when he is speaking publicly. Langston Hughes illustrates rhyme in the excerpt I have provided below of the poem "Words Like Freedom":

Words Like Freedom

There are words like *Freedom Sweet* and wonderful to say. On my heartstrings freedom sings All day everyday.¹⁶

In the complete poem Langston Hughes is expressing his feelings about freedom and liberty. He is using rhyme throughout the poem. The rhymes used in this poem add movement and expression which can be effective when giving a speech to capture the attention of your audience. Rhymes appeal to people of all ages; they are fun and playful. The melodies and tempos of them are energetic and joyous. Poems that rhyme relay a message through the music of the spoken word. Poets use rhyme as a tool to show the humor in the message they are trying to convey. Traditional poems are written in rhyme to help add a musical element to a reading. A rhyming poem brings out the joy that can be had in appreciating the music in words.¹⁷

Repetition is another poetic element that should be utilized effectively in public speaking. Words, sounds, phrases, lines, are elements of syntax and may repeat within a poem. Alliteration is a form of repetition. Alliteration is when sounds are repeated in initial stressed syllables. If used effectively it creates a connection or contrast between ideas. Richard Wilbur provides a good illustration of how alliteration is used in his poem, "Junk":

Junk:

An axe angles from my neighbor's ashcan; It is hell's handiwork, the wood not hickory, The flow of the grain not faithfully followed. The shivered shaft rises from a shellheap Of plastic playthings, paper plates,¹⁸

Alliteration is being used in lines 1-10. He is repeating sounds. For example in lines 1 and 2 the short a sound is being stressed in the words an, axe, angles and ashcan, and in lines 9 and 10 the p and pl sounds are being stressed. Richard Wilbur is having fun with sound in this poem. It adds a sense of humor to it by using tongue twister-like techniques. Alliteration is used quite often in poetry and is becoming very popular in public speaking. It tends to catch your eye and ear. It can add a mild sense of humor to your speech which can capture the attention of your audience. Alliteration is an ancient practice in Anglo-Saxon poetry, but is now being used as part of the African-American expressive culture as well.

Sound is so important in public speaking because it adds creativity to your presentation and brings it to life. Speakers use a variety of poetic techniques to get our attention. For example, they may use onomatopoeia which is very popular in poetry. Onomatopoeia is a word that imitates the sound it represents. Such devices bring out the full flavor of words. Comparison and association are sometimes strengthened by syllables which imitate or reproduce the sounds they describe. When this occurs, it is called onomatopoeia (a Greek word meaning "name-making"), for the sounds literally make the meaning in such words as "buzz," "crash," "whirr," "clang" "hiss," "purr," "squeak," "mumble," "hush," "boom." Edgar Allan Poe lets us hear the different kinds of sounds made by different types of bells in his famous poem, "The Bells." His choice of the right word gives us the right sound when he speaks of "jingling" and "tingling" bells.¹⁹

"The Bells"

Hear the sledges with the bells - Silver bells! What a world of merriment their melody foretells! How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle, In the icy air of night! While the stars that oversprinkle All the heavens seem to twinkle With a crystalline delight; Keeping time, time, time, In a sort of Runic rhyme, To the

tintinnabulation that so musically wells From the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells - From the jingling and the tinkling of the bells.²⁰

Sound devices, also known as "musical devices" make poetry a special art form. The use of these devices enrich poetry and makes language sound beautiful. In addition to sound, I also focus on vocal delivery with my students by teaching them about the use of volume, tone, rate, variety and articulation. Volume refers to how loud or soft your voice is as you deliver a speech. Some speakers are not loud enough, while others are too loud. A guiding rule of volume: be loud enough so everyone in your audience can hear you, but not so loud as to drive away the listener positioned closest to you.²¹ A level that is too soft may give the impression that the speaker is hesitant, fearful, or unprepared. The intensity of a vocal sound reveals something about a speaker's feelings. In ordinary conversation, in an interview situation, or in public, it is important to adjust your volume level to your listeners.²² In addition students will learn about tone. They will learn how to add warmth, color, intensity and enthusiasm to their voices by adjusting their pitch levels. This is important because a monotone voice would cause the audience to lose interest in what is being said. Students will be taught how to drop their pitch in some places and raise it in others. Rate refers to the speed in which one speaks. Students will master a steady pace in their presentation skills. They will practice inflection which helps with variety of speech—raising or lowering their pitch to emphasize certain words or expressions. In addition, students will learn how to project their voices; to speak in a manner where they can be heard throughout the entire room. This unit also focuses on articulation, which refers to the crispness or clarity of one's spoken words. It is important that my students articulate their vowels and consonants sounds clearly and distinctly, so their audience is able to distinguish what is being said. Articulation problems are most common when nervousness increases a speaker's rate of delivery. This unit will address pronunciation which refers to the correctness in the way you say words. Articulation and pronunciation are both highly stressed in poetry. Poets clearly enunciate their words and they place emphasis on words they want to stand out. This is another transferable technique that can be used in Public Speaking. In my unit I teach students about common errors to avoid when presenting. They are:

- Adding vowel sounds—"ath-a-lete" for "athlete"
- Omitting vowel sounds—"natcherly" for "naturally" and "pome" for "poem"
- Substituting vowel sounds—"git" for "get" and "crick" for "creek"
- Adding consonant sounds—"sta-stis-tics" for "statistics"
- Omitting consonants—"gover-ment" for "government"
- Reversing consonants—"liberry" for "library," "hundered" for "hundred" andd
"chilren" for "children"
- Nasaling nonnasal sounds—"kaow" for "cow" and "toun" for "town"
- Substituting consonants—"Babtist" for "Baptist," "wide" for "white," "assessory"
for "accessory," and "congradulations" for "congratulations"
- Slurring sounds—"doncha" for "don't you," "whajado" for "what did you do?" andd
"gunna" for "going to"

Strategies

K-W-L

The strategy that I plan to use to teach my students how to prepare for a speech is K-W-L. Students will use this strategy to gather information from a variety of sources as they plan and prepare for their speeches. In this activity students will list what they already know about their poem or speech, which represents the **K** in the acronym. Then they will decide what they want to know, which represents the **W** in the acronym and what sources they would use to locate the information. Examples would be: the Internet, journals, periodicals, encyclopedias etc. Finally, when the research is complete, students will summarize what they've learned which represents the **L** and then organize it into a presentation. As young adults, this strategy provides them with some choice in their learning. This is a motivating factor in their learning. Below is an example of a K-W-L Chart:

K	W	L
What you know	What you want to know	What you learned

Overcoming Speech Anxiety

This strategy will provide students with steps to use to conquer their fear of public speaking. Students will start preparing for their speech early. They will research and study their topic thoroughly inside-out until they have it memorized. Knowing a topic thoroughly builds self-esteem and confidence and reduces anxiety. Students will read speeches silently and out loud to themselves several times. They will practice reciting in front of mirrors and while being audio and video recorded. The recordings will be played back and analyzed. Students will also learn relaxation techniques that reduce muscle tension and negative thoughts. I will be using steps from the *Bremer Image & Communication Skills for Business*²³ to teach my students how to practice and rehearse their speech.

Word Connections

Students will create a word connections chart based on what they learned and read about regarding the elements of poetry, voice and sound. Students will write each word, phrase, or concept in the first column, write all the details they recall from the reading in the second column about the word, phrase, or concept and finally in the third column they will indicate the personal connections they made. These could include connections to school, family, friends, and jobs, among others. Below is an example of the chart:

Word Connections

Word, Phrase, Concept	Facts from Text	Connections
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Poetry Recitation

I will first introduce students to the idea that poems can be useful to recite—the whole poem or just part of it—in a variety of real life situations. It serves as a sense of accomplishment and helps to reduce anxiety. Students will recite assigned poetry and poetry of choice in front of peers, teachers and administrators.

Students will be evaluated on pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, content and fluency.y.

Double-Entry Journal

Students will be given famous speeches to read and then take notes using the Double-Entry Journal Literacy Strategy. Students will be asked to interpret in their own words what the speech is about. They will also identify the different elements of poetry that are being used. This same type of exercise will be used with video. Students will watch videos on websites such as Pixsy.com, inversion.com, videosurf.com, vimeo.com and bliptv.com. They will view video clips of famous speakers delivering their speeches and jot down notes and reflections in the journal. Below is an example of the chart:

Double-Entry Journal

Page #(if applicable) Notes from the Text/Video My Interpretation and/or Reflections

"I AM" Poem

The "I AM" poem (see Appendix B) will help students to develop their skills in public speaking. Students will create a speech to express who they are using the "I AM" poem format. They will group in categories all the people, places and things they associate with that describe who they are. Upon completion of this activity, students will create a speech using their personal information. Students will have in the speech, sections for each category and begin with the words "I AM" before reciting each section. The project can be completed in two ways depending on computer availability: on the computer from the <http://ettcweb.lr.k12.nj.us/forms/iampoem.htm> website or at http://score.rims.k12.ca.us/score_lessons/symbols_freedom/pages/i_am_poem.html in which one can download the format and have students write their poems on paper.

"Rap Writing"

Rap/rhyme is a style of poetry that my students can connect with because it's used quite often in the music they listen to. To teach students about metaphors, similes, and symbolism I have decided to incorporate into my curriculum a lesson I adopted from Reading a-z.com on rap. Students will create a rap utilizing the poetic elements that I have listed above.

Classroom Activities

Activity for Poetry Recitation

I found this particular lesson on poetry recitation at the website listed below:
http://www.bbchs.k12.it.us/teacher_pages/coppenbarger/publicspeaking.html

Students will present a poem to the class. In this particular activity students will choose their own poem to recite but it must be within the guidelines listed below:

Guidelines for Poem Selection

Must be entirely appropriate for school

Must be a new poem and not memorized for any other purpose previously

Must contain at least 10 lines

Must be written by a published author

Students will be instructed to find a poem they enjoy and can appreciate. Students will share the poems with others because it will show something about their personality. Students are permitted to use textbooks, poetry books, collections by a specific author, or magazines and the Internet to search for poems. Students must provide me with a typed copy of the poem to include the author's name. Students will be graded partially on the length of the poem and partially on the performance.

Activity for "Rap Writing"

This particular activity was adopted from the reading a-z.com website.²⁴ In this lesson I will begin by explaining to students what rap is and how it uses poetry in its form. I will then create a two-column flow chart on the board using the words *Poetry* and *Rap* as headings. Students will brainstorm words and phrases that describe poetry. I will write the words on the board under poetry. Then I will ask students to brainstorm words and phrases to describe rap. I will then write those words on the board under rap. Students

will engage in a discussion about how rap is the same and different from traditional poetry. Next, I will hand out a poem listed below called "**Seven Traits Plus Rap**".

Seven Traits Plus Rap

Juicy details, a pointed purpose, One main topic or theme is the intent. Show it's important your connections A portrait with **Ideas** and Content. Our writing must show **Organization**, The beginning surely must set the hook. A chronological trail a common thread Like recipes in a writer's cookbook. Through your writing and your performance Others hear, view, and sense all you feel. The *heartfelt Voice* of your reflecting Is no doubt important to reveal Precise, colorful, concise, most unique, Portray a picture in the reader's mind. *Powerhouse verbs laden with energy*. Strong **Word Choice** most craftily intertwined. Writing renders an exciting ride with Well-built, strong, varied **Sentence Fluency**- Variations flow like an ebbing tide, Pleasing to hear, a sense of congruency. The rules of grammar, punctuation, And spelling for sure we must adhere. We must use reflection more than approximation; It doesn't suffice to just be near. These challenging rules we call Conventions With **Presentation**, add many dimensions: Pleasing to the eye, your message will appeal, Pleasing to the ear, your message will reveal.²⁵

This poem will be read together in class and then I will break students into small groups to work with a select stanza or group of stanzas. Students will be given time to practice how they would best like to present their stanza(s), using creative movements and sounds (claps and stomps). Students will be given the opportunity to be creative with their sounds. Upon completion of practice students will then present their stanza(s) to the entire class.

I will also pre-select and listen to additional age-appropriate raps and allow students to hear the samples more

than once. Then I will ask them to try and identify the poet's point of view in each example. We will discuss how the words and music work together to express the poet's point of view.

Model Writing a Rap

I will explain to students that raps are generally written to express a strong feeling or emotion about a topic. Students will then brainstorm ideas or topics that they feel strongly about. I will write their ideas on the board. Subjects may include war, peace, divorce, hunger, justice, and so on.

I will then choose a topic from the student-generated list that will promote constructive discussions and emotions. I will create a topic web. The topic will be written in the center of the web and students will generate words, thoughts, and feelings that the topic evokes in the outer circles of the web.

Together as a class we will use the web as an outline to write a short-four-or-five-line rap. We will start with a sentence that clearly defines the class topic and point of view. We will then proceed with rhythmic words and phrases that further express the authors' point of view. Students will be instructed to create a web topic to develop their own rap independently. They use a topic from the list generated in the model activity or they can choose a topic of their own.

I will review with students the meaning and function of the following forms of figurative language: metaphor, simile, and symbolism. I will provide detailed definitions of each along with clear examples. Then as a class, we will discuss how a poet might use metaphor, simile, and symbolism to express an idea or an opinion. Students will be given various types of activities to work on relating to figurative language.

Group Product-Pitch Presentation

I adopted this activity from the Scholastic Teacher website²⁶. The author's name is Miriama Sesay-St. Paul. In this activity students will work in teams to create a new and unique product. They will use their speaking skills in a presentation that advertises their product. This is a 10-day activity please see below how the activities are divided up daily:

Day 1

Students will be divided into teams of no more than five people. Distribute the Product-Pitch directions sheets to the groups and explain the requirements of the project (See Appendix C). Then, distribute magazines and the Product-Pitch development sheet (See Appendix D). Students will brainstorm product ideas for the remainder of the class using the magazines to help develop ideas.

At the end of every class over the next ten days of this lesson, each group will write down what they accomplished during the period and what they intend to accomplish the next day.

Day 2

Teams will use this class period to meet and complete the Product-Pitch development sheet which will be collected at the end of the class period.

Day 3

Teams will plan the visual presentation of their product, coming up with a list of materials they will need. In

addition, teams use Day 3 to discuss and begin designing their magazine advertisement.

Day 4

On this day, teams will begin or continue building the visual representation of the product and continue designing the magazine advertisement.

Day 5

Teams will finish building the visual representation of their new product and designing the magazine advertisement.

Day 6

I will distribute the Product-Pitch Presentation rubric and discuss it with the students (See Appendix E). Students should begin developing the script for the presentation.

Days 7-9

Students will continue and complete working on the script development. They will also use this day to practice their oral presentations.

Day 10

Product-pitch presentation day!

Annotated Teacher Bibliography

Clark, Philip. *Teaching Poetry Through Rap*. July 30, 2009. <http://www2.scholastic.com> (accessed July 30, 2009).

This website offers lesson plans relating to rap and rhyme and how they can be used in public speaking.

Coping Tips For Glossophobia. July 13, 2009. <http://www.iampanicked.com/anxiety-articles/glossophobia-cure.htm> (accessed July 13, 2009).

This website provides great tips to overcome the fear of speaking in public.

Detail Comes Alive With Onomatopoeia. July 14, 2009. http://www.occcc.edu/mschneberger/observation3_files/observation4.htm (accessed July 14, 2009).

Article explaining what Onomatopoeia is and how it's used to add life to prose.

Do You Suffer From Glossophobia? July 13, 2009. <http://www.glossophobia.com> (accessed July 13, 2009).

This website explains what Glossophobia is and how it can be treated.

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Provides a detailed lesson plan on a group presentation for public speaking.

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Provides factual information on Franklin D. Roosevelt's first inaugural address.

How To Practice A Speech. July 14, 2009. http://www.bremercommunication.com/How_To_Practice_A_Speech.htm (accessed July 14, 2009).

Gives a list of steps one could use to prepare for a speech.

Poetry For Young People, by Langston Hughes. NewYork: NewYork Sterling Publishing Company, 1994 .

A book of poems for youth and a brief explanation of what each poem is about.

Lines and Rhymes. July 13, 2009. <http://www.angelfire.com/ct2/evenski/poetry/rhythm.html> (accessed July 13, 2009).

Provides information on how lines and rhymes are used in poetry.

Memory In Public Speaking. July 13, 2009. <http://www.oldandsold.com/articles06/memory-31.shtml> (accessed July 13, 2009).

This website contains information on how to memorize speeches.

Speaking For Success, by Jean Micula. Mason: Thompson-South Western, 2007.

This high school workbook gives tips on public speaking and provides excellent public speaking activities.

Poems to Memorize, Recite, and Learn By Heart. July 30, 2009. <http://articles.poetryx.com/64/> (accessed July 30, 2009).

This website provides a wide variety of poems that would be good for students to memorize and recite.

Poetry Out Loud. July 28, 2009. <http://www.poetryoutloud.org> (accessed July 28, 2009).

Another great source to use to access public speaking lessons that incorporate poetry and its elements.

Rap. July 30, 2009. http://www.readinga-Z.com/poetry/lesson_plans/rap/rap_print.html (accessed July 30, 2009).

Great website for lesson plans on teaching students how to create a rap using the elements of poetry.

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<http://www.skillstudio.co.uk/help/public-speaking/the-poetry-of-obamas-campaign.htm> (accessed July 28, 2009).

Informative website describing the poetic techniques President Barack Obama uses in his speeches.

Appendices

Appendix A

Delaware State Standard and Implementation

Delaware has state standards for Finance, Management/Administration, and Marketing Pathways. According to Performance C:30, students must be able to apply verbal skills to obtain and convey information, employ communication styles that are appropriate for the target audience, and create and give oral presentations.

This unit addresses the Finance, Management/Administration, and Marketing standard. Students will obtain information through research of various types of prose such as famous poems and speeches and convey the information through recitation. Students will be taught how to effectively and creatively prepare and deliver a presentation through research, memorization, practice and elements of poetry.

Appendix B

The I Am Poem

- I am (Two special characteristics the person or thing has)
- I wonder (something the person or thing could actually be curious about)
- I hear (an imaginary or actual sound)
- I see (an imaginary or actual sight)
- I want (a desire)
- I am (the first line of the poem is repeated)
- I pretend (something the person or thing could actually pretend to do)
- I feel (a feeling about the imaginary)
- I touch (an imaginary touch)
- I worry (something that could really bother the person or thing)
- I cry (something that could make the person or thing sad)
- I am (the first line of the poem is repeated)
- I understand (something the person or thing knows to be true)
- I say (something the person or thing believes in)
- I dream (something the person or thing could actually dream about)
- I try (something the person or thing could make an effort to do)
- I hope (something the person or thing could hope for)
- I am (the first line of the poem is repeated)

Appendix C

Name _____ Date _____

Product Pitch Presentations

Directions:

Your task is to work collaboratively to create a product pitch. For this assignment, each team will invent their own product and choose a company to present the product pitch to.

Example: Team X has developed a solar-powered air-conditioner called the "Suncool," which they will pitch to Best Buy. Team Y has invented an action figure toy that can go from slim to muscular, based on how much you move his arms. The doll is called "Body Builder Ben" and the team will pitch it to Toys R Us. The following is a list of requirements and terms for assessment:

1. ____ Target audience and age range
2. ____ Product name, function, price, description
3. ____ A visual representation (can be drawings)
4. ____ Product claims
5. ____ Target company and why the product would be an asset
6. ____ How the product is necessary/unique
7. ____ Magazine ad and In-class presentation

Each team member will participate in creating this product and delivering the pitch in class. You have two weeks to complete this project.

Due Date:

Appendix D

Product Pitch Development Sheet

What is your product? Name? Function? Price? Description?

Who is your target audience? What is its age range?

What is your target company? Why would your product be an asset to that company?

Why is your product necessary and unique?

Appendix E

Product Pitch Presentation

Team:

Date of Presentation: Product:

Criteria					Points
	5	10	15	20	
Organization	Audience could not understand presentation because there was not a sequence of information.	Audience had difficulty following presentation because students jumped around.	Students presented information in logical sequence, which the audience followed.	Students presented information in logical, interesting sequence, which the audience followed.	
Product Knowledge	Students did not exhibit an understanding of the product.	Students exhibited a basic understanding but did not provide adequate information.	Students exhibited an adequate understanding of the product and provided details.	Students demonstrated a full understanding of the product and used explanations and elaboration.	
Visuals	Students used visuals that did not support presentation.	Students occasionally used visuals that rarely supported presentation.	Visuals related to presentation.	Students used visuals to reinforce presentation.	
Eye Contact	Students did not maintain eye contact with the audience, and remain tied to a written script.	Students maintained limited eye contact with the audience, and frequently refer to a written script.	Students maintain good eye contact throughout presentation, and occasionally refer to a script.	Students maintained superior eye contact during presentation rarely referred to a script.	
Delivery	Students mumbled, and spoke too quietly for students in the back of the class to hear.	Students somewhat project their voices, but audience members had difficulty hearing presentation.	Students' voices are clear. Students enunciated and communicated ideas.	Students used a clear voice, and effectively conveyed their ideas.	
					Total

Notes

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