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Using the Sonnet and Other Poems to Unlock the Speaker's Voice

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Overview

Who would think that the dull-colored green and off-white encyclopedia set that was shelved across from my bed when I was growing up would influence the person I have become today? When I was younger, I would take those books down and read until I fell asleep. From an early age, I developed a deep love for reading and writing that still exists today. It has always excited me to know that I could be influenced by another person's words to the point that I could laugh, cry, share, and sing. I was an only child, and those books were my friends. What I read in them excited me, and sometimes I would write those exciting thoughts down on paper. In essence, the prose and poetry I read gave me a voice in my own writing.

The Speaker's Voice

Voice will be an integral part of this unit. The speaker's voice in poetry must be understood if the poem is to be understood. For example, when the student reads a poem, he or she should not assume that the writer of the poetry is also the speaker. In many poems, the speaker is someone else. The teacher can assist students with this task by providing rich poetry to students and allowing the students to unravel the poems to identify the speaker. Students in my classroom will study and analyze the chosen pieces to determine the speaker's voice in the poetry. After practicing this skill, it is my hope that students will inadvertently come to learn that they have a voice in their own in their writing. Why is this so important? When students develop a voice in writing, that speaker's voice transcends their writing and also demonstrates their unique understanding of the topic. How many times have you given your students a paper to write and what they have written is bland or faceless? All of the elements you ask for are there in terms of content, but you don't want to read the paper because the student's voice is missing? This is not uncommon with middle school writers. In many instances, the student concentrates so hard on the assigned task, believing that writing can be done to formula, that they lose their voice. Writing and interpreting poetry will give students the opportunity to put a voice back to their writing.

Middle school students often read a poem and believe that the person writing the poem is also the speaker;

however the author often invents a voice to speak through. One method we will use to dispel the myth that the writer is always the speaker is to look at the historical context in which the poem is written. One goal of this project therefore, is to provide an avenue for students to analyze poetry by determining who the speaker of the poem is, what vocabulary is used and why, and what the speaker is like. We will look at the background of the writer to determine whether the author is indeed the speaker and the time frame and context with which the poem was written.

Using poetry will offer an excellent opportunity for the teacher and the students to break down cultural barriers and allow students to have a voice in the classroom at Redan Middle School. We will examine how students can relate to modern and not so modern poetry in terms of who they are as [readers] and interpreters of the poem. What is the background and history of the author of the poetry? Are there similarities or differences in how the student reader views himself or herself to the self-conception of the speaker in the poem? Can the student increase his or her literary and informational text comprehension skills by analyzing a variety of genres of poetry? Additionally, how can the student use his or her own culture and diversity to create poetry for others to read and interpret?

Rationale

When I speak of middle school students, I am speaking of students in grades 6-8 which are the grades that constitute the true middle school concept. So, how will this unit relate to middle school students? Middle school students are unique in every way. These students typically experience a variety of intellectual and developmental changes. Students in this age group enjoy music and rhythm, are inquisitive consist of but are not limited to becoming musical and rhythmic, lyrical, curious, and easily inclined to follow peers, have their own way of ordering things, and prefer active learning to passive classroom experiences. In many ways, they are all different. [1] Why should this diversity be addressed? The National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems reminds us that teachers must be prepared to meet the needs of students who vary in culture, language, [and] ability as well as other characteristics. "To meet this challenge, teachers must employ not only theoretically sound but also culturally responsive pedagogy." [2]

Making a Connection to my School

I teach English Language Arts to 8th grade students, and serve as the English Department Chair at Redan Middle School. 95% of my school population is African-American while only 5% is comprised of other races. From the outside, it appears that my students who are African-American are all the same, but take a closer look and you will discover that culturally, and in range of aptitude for learning instilled by caregivers, these students differ greatly. These cultural differences may seem trivial to many, but in reality, there are tiny voices in all of us that want to be heard as well as that need to escape from our own diffidence and inhibition. One goal of this project is to examine how the student can relate to different forms of poetry in terms of who they are as readers and interpreters of the poem. What is the culture and background of the student and what is the culture and background of the writer? Are there similarities or differences in how the reader views

himself or herself to the self-conception of the speaker in the poem? Additionally, how can the student use his or her own culture and diversity to create poetry for others to read and interpret and have their voices clearly heard in poetry?

Redan Middle School is one of the newest middle schools in DeKalb County, Georgia. The school is located in a suburban community in which many lower income to upper middle income families reside. As of March 2011, the student population was approximately 941 students. This figure reflects 483 male students and 458 female students. 466 males are African-American, while 2 are white, and 18 are multi-racial. 436 females are African-American. 2 are white, and 8 are multi-racial. There are 760 economically disadvantaged students attending Redan Middle School which qualifies the school as a Title One School. Since we are a Title I school, we receive the benefits of having additional instructional coaches to assist with instruction in English, math, science, and social studies. While many of these students appear the same in racial make-up, their learning styles and cultures are quite different. This is what makes this project so unique. My students need an avenue and a voice to tell their story. They need to know it is okay to be different in culture, values, and upbringing. They need a voice.

Connection to the Georgia Performance Standards

Another challenge we face as we move toward the beginning of Common Core Standards in almost all states is how can we address the student's needs, increase the rigor in the classroom for our students, and make them college ready. Knowing the regulations and rigidity of the curriculum that is to come, how can the teacher create an environment in which students can feel comfortable with poetry, the poets and the messages in the poem? The key is to use analyzation of the speaker's voice as a method to get students involved in rich reading and comprehension activities which will cause them to think critically and to increase their depth of knowledge. This will be extremely beneficial to students as we move from state standards to National set of standards or Common Core Standards.

The Sonnet

The Sonnet, a fourteen line poem which most often expresses feelings of love and sometimes political themes, is not always a literal reflection of the topic emphasized overtly by the author. The sonnet is a lyrical poem that contains a rhyme scheme and is sometimes found in a series. The English or Shakespearean sonnet consists of three quatrains and a couplet, while the Petrarchan sonnet breaks into an octave and a sestet. It can be very difficult to tell the two sonnets apart. Lyrical poetry usually expresses personal and emotional feelings. Although Shakespearean and Italian are the two most common sonnets, there are other variants of this form. In many instances, the author uses clues or hints that challenge the reader to understand the subject, time frame, and dilemma presented. In short, the Sonnet is a densely structured form of writing which requires one to think before making an assumption regarding its content and topic. In order to fully understand the Sonnet, one must consider the writer, the time frame, and the historical perspective in which the poem is written. Why is the speaker so indirect? Is it a game of intellect to see if this reader is wise enough to disseminate the work, or is it just a puzzle waiting to be solved? The Speaker's voice, attitude, mood, and background are prerequisite **to** the scaffolding of the sonnet for students. Once we have some sense of who the speaker is, we can ask how his or her words humor or challenge us.

Love or Politics?

In the book, *Poetry for Young People*-William Shakespeare's sonnet number 29, a love sonnet, explores a man's disgust and anguish regarding the success of others. There are several probing questions to ask. Is it a love sonnet, or is it about politics? Is the author the speaker, or is this written about someone else? Upon reading an excerpt of this sonnet, you will discover how Shakespeare begins with a problem, but by the end of this poem his problem is solved. Let's also take note of the rhyme scheme used in this portion the poem. The rhyme scheme a-b-a-b, c-d-c-d, e-f-e-f, g-g is used in this selection.

Sonnet 29

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 When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes, (a) I all alone beweep my outcast
state (b) And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries, (a) And look upon myself
and curse my fate, (b) Wishing me like to one more rich in hope, (c) Featured like
him, like him with friends possessed (d) Desiring this man's art and that man's
scope, (c) With what I most enjoy contented least; (d) 3
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The poem ends in a couplet, and by the end of the poem the poet determines that his love for someone is greater than the hopelessness he feels for himself. The background information becomes significant in this selection because of events that actually occurred in Shakespeare's life at the time. One disastrous event occurring during the year 1592 was the close of the London theaters due to plague which caused poverty for Shakespeare and other actors. Additionally he was attacked by fellow playwrights such as Robert Greene who referred to Shakespeare in with such terms as "an upstart crow, beautified in feathers" and a "Johannes fac totum" or Jack of all trades. It is obvious that his fellows were insulted by his work and felt he used their work to create his pieces. 4

Love Sonnets by Louis Untermeyer, explores several sonnets of the same theme that can easily be used in the classroom by teachers for a variety of higher order thinking skills and depth of knowledge activities. Elizabeth Barrett Browning's sonnet number XLIII is an all-time favorite that will surely break down some barriers and in the classroom and incite some discussion as well. The rhyme scheme for this poem is a-b-b-a, a-b-b-a which is the octave. The next six lines are the sestet, and end in c-d-c-d-c-d indicating an Italian sonnet.

Free Verse

In addition to the sonnet, I want my students to understand what might be called its antithesis, free verse. Free verse involves no particular rules or restrictions, but must still have a form. It is a popular form that many students enjoy writing because [its freedom from rules allows spontaneity. The pattern for each new] poem is created by the author. There is no rhyme and no specific number of lines. The writer of a free verse poem makes his own rules. An important writer of this form of poetry was Walt Whitman.

Epitaphs, Elegies, and Odes

We shall touch on other poetic forms as well. Epitaphs are usually found on tombs, and are written to pay tribute to or reflect upon the life of a deceased person. Elegies are short poems written to mourn the dead and were at one time written in couplets. Odes are lyrical poems usually written to give praise or glory to a person or idea. These three types of poetry will be studied together.

"My Captain, Oh, Captain" is an elegy that mourns the death of President Abraham Lincoln, but also uses an extended metaphor to throughout the entire poem. An illustration of how this poem is used will be discussed in the classroom activities section of this paper.

The Bop

A new poetic form created by Michael Weaver is known as the Bop. The Bop contains three stanzas and uses form to organize an argument. Each line is followed by a repeated line and serves a different purpose in the argument. The first stanza is six lines long and states a problem. The second stanza is eight lines long and expands the problem. The resolution, if there is one, is made in the third stanza. The final stanza documents the attempt to solve the problem or the failure to do so. You can see from this description that the form is an expanded or inflated sonnet.

Strategies

Figures of Speech in Poetry

My students will be able to read and critically analyze poetry because they will recognize key figures of speech, such as simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole. In addition to understanding sounds of language in poetry, middle school students should also be able to identify and write figures of speech. Similes are easy to locate in poetry because they compare two unlike objects by using the words "as" or "like". An example of simile is: Her hair was as long as a horse's tail.

A metaphor also compares two unlike objects, but the words "as" "like", or "than" will not appear in the comparison. Here is an example of metaphor:

Her eyes were diamonds glistening when she spoke.

Personification gives human qualities to objects or animals and adds flavor to the writer's style. Here is an example of personification:

The dust choked me as I entered the smoky room.

Forms of Repetition in Poetry

Understanding repetition is a huge part of understanding most poetic forms. Repetition can be seen within or at the end of a line of poetry or it can be a line that is repeated at intervals in the poem. I use various forms of repetition to teach voice in my classroom. Repetition is also rhyme. The repeated line strategy works well with my students , whether we are using it for poetry or prose. In *Come Sunday*, Nikki Grimes *includes* a poem entitled "*Jubilation,*" which uses the repeated line strategy:

 "Jubilation" Rock-a-my-soul I gently sway and *Rock-a-my-soul* I close my eyes and *Rock-a-my-soul* [5]

Alliteration, another form of repetition, repeats consonant sounds at the beginning of words. You will find that alliteration adds to the rhythm of poetry or prose, and catches the reader's attention visually and auditorily.

To assist students grasp the understanding of alliteration, I begin with the use of pieces I heard in school which are cliché now, but still get the point across quickly and enjoyably for students.

She sells sea shells by the sea shore.

How much wood would a woodchuck chuck, if a woodchuck could chuck wood?

Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.

Onomatopoeia is another auditory trick of language that flavors the writer's work and grabs the reader's attention. When we write words that sound like the thing or sound of the thing they represent, we are using onomatopoeia. When I want my students to grasp the meaning of onomatopoeia, I simply tell them to recall the old cartoon shows with Batman and Robin. In each episode of the cartoon, the characters would maybe hit someone or slam something down and words like "Slam" or "Wham" would come across the television screen in huge brightly outlined letters. This would give both a visual effect and a sound effect and were a highlight of the show. After I give the Batman and Robin example, I provide some additional examples for students to figure out. Here are some of their examples which students should grasp rather easily:

The bacon in the skillet sizzled a sweet song.

"Achoo." I have an awful cold.

I am convinced not only that my students will be able to unlock their inner speaker's voice after progressing through this unit, but also that [their] speaker's voice will take hold in their other forms of writing. This study will impact the way my students write and respond to narration, exposition, and persuasion. This curriculum unit is also designed to increase the rigor in my classroom as well as in my school. My students will read and comprehend texts which increase in complexity as we prepare to graduate from Georgia Performance Standards and Performance Based Assessments to Common Core Standards and quarterly assessments. As we make this transition, how can I assist my students with reading and responding to more complex texts?

First, the teacher must expose students to rich sonnets and other poems in which students can determine voice and speakers in poetry. The teacher must choose avenues for students to analyze work that is challenging, and provide opportunities for students to unravel the difficulties which most often frighten them from attempting the level of reading and interpretation that is required for advancement to high school work. It is therefore imperative that students be given challenging reading material to read and interpret for understanding the speaker and implied speaker in poetry. This will pave the way for students to further research the culture and background of the authors which will lead to better understanding of the poetry.

Reading Strategies

TP-CASTT

I will use a variety of strategies to check for comprehension as students move through each of the [poetry assignments. One strategy is a graphic organizer for poetry called a TP-CASTT. This type of graphic organizer allows my students to transfer information from one format to another format to assist with comprehension of the text. The TP-CASTT is a tool I use to measure a student's ability to analyze poetry. First, I provide a title (T). Next I ask my students to make a prediction as to what the poem is about based on the title. After that, I will read the poem or a student will read it before the class. Next, we will move to the P, which represents paraphrase. My students will take a stab at the literal meaning of the poem in their own words. The number of

sentences in the paraphrase should match the number of sentences in the poems. This strategy is highly recommended for poems written in the 17th and 19th centuries. This is also the time when I will ask the student to summarize the poem. I will ask them to make a distinction between paraphrase and summary. The next step is looking at the vocabulary [and literary devices] used in the poem. The C in TP-CASTT indicates connotation. Although the requirement is to look at connotation, it is especially helpful to have students identify the denotation of the words first Not only will my students look at the emotional overtones in the vocabulary words used in the poems, but [at this time they will also look for any literary devices used that help contribute to the meaning or denotation of the vocabulary used in a poem. These include but are not limited to imagery, metaphor, simile, personification, and symbolism. At this point sound devices can also be analyzed, such as alliteration, onomatopoeia, rhythm, and rhyme. Next, we look at the A in the TP-CASTT, which indicates the speaker's attitude as it elucidates the meaning. This is where you want the student to consider tone. Now the teacher moves to S in TP-CASTT, which represents any shifts of thought in the poem. This is where I instruct my students to look for key words, key changes in number of stanzas, irony, changes in diction or punctuation. Now we return to the title again, as indicated by the first T in the acronym. This time the title should provide retrospective insight concerning the meaning. Finally, we look at the second final T and examine the poem for theme. This is where I ask my students what the poem's overall meaning is and what the poet wants the reader to take away with him or her from the poem. In other words, what is the overall idea the poem is trying to convey to all readers?

Marking the text

Marking the text is an excellent tool that I use to assist my students with reading comprehension of any text. This is an active reading strategy that gets them used to identifying key passages. The three major components of this strategy are numbering paragraphs, underlining passages, and circling. In addition to marking, the reader also annotates the text for specific components such as main idea, literary devices, vocabulary, etc.

Marking the text is used as a strategy any time the student reads printed or photocopied text that can be written on. It is not for use when reading from the textbook; hence I make sure there are throwaway copies available for the students when this strategy is being employed.

After my students have numbered the paragraphs, I want them to begin the circle stage of the process. I instruct the students to circle key words or phrases. Sometimes they ask "What are the key phrases"? I would instruct them to look for any repeated words, things defined by the author, anything used to explain an idea, a central idea or concept or anything that I deem relevant to the task.

Many times I ask my students to look for key signal words. If I am using the activity for Grammar, I have [them] look for parts of speech. In other instances, students use marking the text to remind them to look for definitions, explanations, and specific dates.

Anticipation Guides (Before Reading)

Kylene Beers, in When Kids Can't Read What Teachers Can Do, suggests many strategies for assisting struggling readers with comprehension. One of her suggestions is the use of an Anticipation Guide as a pre-reading strategy. When you really want your students to get interested in poetry, use an anticipation guide. This is a comprehension strategy used to build curiosity and activate a student's prior knowledge about a topic before reading the text. When my students use an[anticipation guide, it stimulates their interest in the topic, and sets a purpose for reading. To create an anticipation guide, I begin by writing down four or five

controversial statements about the theme of the poem. My students declare the statements true or false. I provide the anticipation guide before the students read the poem, and I allow free discussion and agreement or disagreement on the topic. The anticipation guide should be given before the actual reading takes place.

Close Reading (During Reading)

A close reading is another excellent strategy I use when I want to give my students a better opportunity for comprehension. I read the passage word for word to the students and sentence by sentence, or line by line. This strategy helps [them] gain a better understanding of a text by going back and forth in it re-reading it carefully. Each time the student re-reads the text him or her gains additional knowledge and comprehends more.

Classroom Activities

Week 1

Essential Question: Who is the speaker in the poem? Why do we have speakers in poetry?

Day 1-2

Opening Activities: After the essential questions, the teacher will ask who has heard of Robert Hayden? The teacher will provide background information on the author and tell students that one way to determine the speaker in a poem is to learn about the author's background.

Work Session: The teacher will read *Those Winter Sundays* by Robert Hayden. Provide a copy for students. Students will re-read the poem and try to determine the speaker. Use a close activity to analyze the poem. Explain the significance of knowing the author's background to determine more information about who the speaker is in the poem.

Closing: Create a constructed response. Have students begin to write a brief analysis of Those Winter Sunday's in their own words. Explain in the response whether or not they believe the poem is about the author based on classroom conversation and author's background.

Day 3-4

Essential Question: Does the author of the poem know something that the speaker does not know? What views or feelings are presented in the poem?

Opening: Explain to students that the reader should connect the poem's plot and conflicts with the structural features. Teacher will instruct the students to re-read the poem from the previous day. This time we will use who, what, when, where, and why to analyze the poem.

Work Session: Conduct a classroom discussion using the following questions?

What is being dramatized? Who is the speaker? What happens in the poem? When does the action occur? Where is the speaker? Why does the speaker feel compelled to speak at this time?

Closing: What can you add to your constructed response from the previous day?

Day 5

Essential Question: How do the poem's parts help dramatize conflicts or ideas in the language?

Opening: After reviewing the essential question, the teacher will explain how the structure and support evidence in the poem reinforces the interpretation of the poetry.

Work Session: The teacher will introduce the words Form, Rhetoric, Syntax, and Vocabulary. Ask the students if they know what each word means. Explain how each of these play a major role in explicating the poem Re-read the poem and look for form, rhetoric, syntax, and vocabulary.

Closing: Which vocabulary words have multiple meanings?

Week 2

Essential Question:

What are literary devices? Why is the understanding of literary devices essential in interpreting poetry as a literary form?

What role does the author's background play in understanding the speaker in poetry?

Day 1-2

Essential Question: Who is the speaker in the poem? How do the literary devices used in the poem assist in the meaning?

Opening: Use a K-W-L Chart to determine the student's familiarity with literary devices. Once students have provided their responses, Provide additional information to students about each literary device you will introduce in the lesson.

Work Session: Provide students with a copy of the poem *Still I Rise* by Maya Angelou. A Inform the students that today they will use the reading skill Marking the Text to analyze the poem and locate literary devices used in the poem. Explain the procedures for marking the text by modeling the task. Allow students to review the chart with the steps for marking the text and ask any quest ions for clarification.

When students mark the text, advise them to divide the poem every four line to look for information in the poem. In lines 1-4 discuss who the speaker is addressing? Allow students the opportunity to jot down answers in their writer's notebook or any notebook. What are the key words in lines 1-8 that indicate the speaker's attitude? Underline these words. What is the metaphor used in lines 33-34?

Closing: Who is the speaker in this poem? How do you know? How did marking the text help you understand the speaker in this poem?

Day 3

Essential Question: What is a sonnet? What is the difference between an Italian sonnet and an English sonnet? What is an octave? What is a sestet?

Opening: Allow students the opportunity to answer the essential questions. After students have provided responses, provide background on the sonnet.

Work Session: Discuss the difference between the Italian sonnet and the English or Shakespearean sonnet. Students should take notes and be able to refer to this information later. Use the overhead projector to provide a model of both sonnets. For the Italian sonnet, we will use On the Grasshopper and the Cricket by John Keats. For the English or Shakespearean we will use Sonnet 18 *Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day?*

Allow students the opportunity to examine both for similarities and differences. Explain in detail the differences in the two sonnets.

Closing: What are some characteristics of the English Sonnet? The Italian Sonnet?

Day 4

Essential Question:

What is the rhyme scheme? What role does it play in the form of a sonnet?

Opening: Review the essential questions with students.

Work Session: Using the same two poems from the previous day, allow students to attempt to locate rhyme scheme in the English sonnet and the Italian sonnet.

Closing: Write a constructed response about the two poems similarities and differences. You may add to your work from the previous day.

Day 5-6

Essential Question: What other methods can we use to analyze a poem?

Opening: Explain to the students that today they will learn a new method for analyzing poetry. Introduce the TP-CASTT. Explain the meaning of each letter.

Work Session: Students will work with a partner to explicate the two poems from the previous day by using a TP-CASTT to analyze the poems. Each group will present their findings and create an electronic document using TP-CASTT on each poem. Students will cut the information out and paste to a sheet of construction paper for display.

Closing: Presentations from each group

Week 3

Day 1-2

Essential Question: What is theme? Can we compare poetic forms by theme to determine the reader in the poem?

Opening: Provide students with background information on both authors. The teacher will introduce the two poems *The Road Not Taken* and *Sir Walter Raleigh to his Son.*

Work Session: Using an anticipation guide, survey students to determine their feelings about warning to teenagers about the dangers of life. Determine if parents have ever given them stern warnings. Read both poems and allow students to determine what the warnings are in each poem. Is anything symbolized in the poetry? Students will work with partners for this activity.

Closing: Who was the speaker in the poem? Who is the implied reader in each poem? Are you sure? Allow the class to debate.

Day 3

Essential Question: What types of lessons have you taken in your life? How did these lessons help you with other areas of your life?

Work Session: Continue reading of the two poems from the previous day. Allow students to identify the theme by using inferences.

Day 4

Essential Question: What is free verse poetry? How can we analyze different forms of poetry including free verse?

Opening: Review essential questions with students. Discuss figurative language, imagery and symbolism. Provide students with the historical prospective on Walt Whitman and Langston Hughes.

Work Session: Read aloud *I Hear America Singing* by Walt Whitman. How does repetition help shape this poem? Who is the author addressing? Who are the people he is referring to in the poem?

Closing: What is the collective image produced by the poem. In other words, what do you imagine or visualize in each poem?

Day 5

Essential Question: How does imagery play a role in the interpretation of the poem?

Opening: Review the poem from the previous day. Now read *I, Too* by Langston Hughes.

Work Session: Continue to compare and contrast the two poems. How is rhythm used in each poem?

Closing: Write a free verse poem about sounds you hear around you. Use repetition.

Week 4

Day 1-5

Opening: How can I use what I know to create a variety of poetry?

Work session: Students will select various poems we have studied for the creation of a poetry notebook. The first section will be used to demonstrate their knowledge of shared work in the classroom. The second part of the book will be used to create poetry.

Closing: Turn in a completed collection of poetry both studied and created for your poetry notebook.

Standards

ELA8R1. The student demonstrates comprehension and shows evidence of a warranted and responsible explanation of a variety of literary and informational texts. The texts are of the quality and complexity illustrated by the suggested titles on the Grade Eight reading list.

Identifies the difference between the concepts of theme in a literary work and author's purpose in an expository text.

Analyzes and evaluates the effects of sound, form, figurative language, and graphics in order to uncover meaning in literature. i. Sound (e.g., alliteration, onomatopoeia, internal rhyme, rhyme scheme, meter). ii. Figurative language (e.g., simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, symbolism, imagery).

Analyzes and evaluates how an author's use of words creates tone and mood and provides supporting details from text.

For informational texts, the student reads and comprehends in order to develop understanding and expertise and produces evidence of reading that: Analyzes and evaluates common textual features (e.g., paragraphs, topic sentences, concluding sentences, introduction, conclusion, footnotes, index, bibliography). Applies, analyzes, and evaluates common organizational structures (e.g., graphic organizers, logical order, cause and effect relationships, comparison and contrast). Recognizes and traces the development of an author's argument, point of view, or perspective in text.

ELA8RC3. The student acquires new vocabulary in each content area and uses it correctly; the student. Demonstrates an understanding of contextual vocabulary in **various** subjects. Uses content vocabulary in writing and speaking. Explores understanding of new words found in subject area texts.

ELA8W2: CC2 *The student produces a response to literature that*:

Engages readers by establishing a context, creating a speaker's voice, or otherwise developing reader interest. Demonstrates an understanding of the literary work. Supports a judgment through references to the text and personal knowledge. Justifies interpretations through sustained use of examples and textual evidence from the literary work. Supports a judgment through references to the text, references to other works, authors, or non-print media, or references to personal knowledge. Produces a judgment that is interpretive, analytic, evaluative, or reflective (orally, graphically, in writing). Anticipates and answers a reader's questions. Provides a sense of closure to the writing.

ELA8R2. The student understands and acquires new vocabulary and uses it correctly in reading and writing; the student

Determines pronunciations, meanings, alternate word choices, part of speech, or etymologies of words. Determines the meaning of unfamiliar words in content and context specific reading and writing. Demonstrates an initial understanding of the history of the English Language.

Teacher's Resources

Beers, G. Kylene. *When Kids Can't Read, What Teachers Can Do*: A Guide for Teachers, 6-12. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003.

This book is a must have for every middle school teacher. It contains amazing reading strategies that work!

Dawson, Dick. Revival: *An Anthology of African Poetry*. Harare, Zimbabwe: College Press, 1989.

Giovanni, Nikki. The selected poems of Nikki Giovanni . New York: William Morrow and Co., 1996.

Nikki Giovanni is a complex and gifted writer. All teachers should have this book in their repertoire.

Giovanni, Nikki. *The 100 best African American Poems* . Naperville, Ill.: Sourcebooks Media Fusion, 2010.

An excellent source of old and new poetry that is sure to stir up reader interest in your classroom.Grimes, Nikki. *Bronx Masquerade*. New York: Dial Books, 2002.

This is an awesome book to draw your students in, and an excellent way to get them to address their cultural diversity.

Hollander, John, and Sally Wern Comport. *Poetry for Young People American Poetry.* New York: Scholastic, Inc., 2004.

All poetry in this book is categorized by the theme. This book contains excellent pieces by Walt Whitman, Maya Angelou, T. S. Elliot, and Langston Hughes to name a few.

Lehman, David. *The Line Forms Here*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992.

Parrott, E. O. *How to be Well-Versed in Poetry*. London: Penguin Books, 1991.

Shakur, Tupac. *The Rose That Grew From Concrete*. New York: Pocket Books, 1999.

Wow! I highly recommend this book to draw students into the poetry. I would suggest using a few pieces as a read aloud.

Untermeyer, Louis, and Ben Shahn. Love sonnets. New York: Harmony Books, 1974.

This is a great book for teaching the love poems. Be aware that the poems are written in cursive writing!

Student Resources

Adoff, Arnold. *My Black Me: A Beginning Book of Black Poetry* . Reprint ed. New York: Puffin, 1994.

Appelt, Kathi. *Poems From Homeroom*: *A Writer's Place to Start*. New York: Henry Holt, 2002.

This is an excellent resource to use as a read aloud with your students in the classroom. If you want your students to hear from peers who have written poetry, this is a great resource.

Borus, Audrey. *A Student's Guide to Emily Dickinson* . Berkeley Heights, NJ: Enslow Publishers, 2005.

Emily Dickinson sheds light on how this brilliant writer created her poetry. The book is excellent if you are teaching students about themes in poetry such as life, death, love or nature.

Ferris, Helen Josephine. *Favorite Poems, Old and New, Selected for Boys and Girls.* 1 st ed. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1957.

Grimes, Nikki. *Bronx Masquerade* . New York: Dial Books, 2002.

This is another excellent resource for students to use if they are reluctant writers.

Hillstrom, Kevin. *The Harlem Renaissance* . Detroit, MI: Omnigraphics, 2008.

Reynolds, David S.. *Walt Whitman* . Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Sword, Elizabeth Hauge, Victoria McCarthy, and Tom Pohrt. *A Child's Anthology of Poetry* . Hopewell, NJ: Ecco Press, 1995.

End Notes

1. Characteristics of Middle Grades Students, Caught in the Middle (1989). http:www.pubs.cde.ca.gov/documentary/characteristics.aspx(accessed June 29, 2011)>
2. Ayana F. brown, Timothy B. Forde, Heraldo V. Richards, Addressing Diversity in Schools: Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: Teaching Exceptional Childrenwww.cec.sped.org/
3. David S. Kastan and Maina Kastan, "Poetry for Young People William Shakespeare."Scholastic Inc.,555Broadway, New York, NY 10016
4. Analysis of Shakespeare Sonnet 29 http://www/shakespeare-online.com/sonnets/29/detail.html
5. Nikki Grimes. Come Sunday (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company)