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2024 Volume II: A History of Black People as Readers: A Genealogy of Critical Literacy

Through the Labor of Literacy

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School Background:

Overbrook High School is a public four-year high school in West Philadelphia. Based on the 2023-2024 Student Enrollment and Demographics, there are 394 students that attend Overbrook High with 76% of students residing within the catchment area¹. It is reported that 23% of students have an IEP, and 3% of students are English language learners². The ELA data for Keystone standardized testing reflects that 25% of students scored proficient³. As per the most recent school survey, 100% of the students are categorized as economically disadvantaged⁴. The school schedule operates on a 90-minute block schedule for the upcoming school year. Overbrook High offers Honors classes to all of the students and has many athletic opportunities for students. This unit is made with 9th grade students in mind.

Introduction and Teaching Situation

What happens outside, often stays outside, that is, until you find out that it could've been learned inside your classroom. Listen, I will need you to follow the end of the school day with me. Watch me feed the wide mouth of my bookbag with my laptop, cram the schoolwork from the color-coordinated workbins into four manilla folders, and help me find my ID to sign out for the school day. We may need to run to catch the next scheduled bus; however, the ride back home will take about 45 minutes, give or take. Here's the roadmap. We will catch the "G" bus up to 56th Street, from the 56th Street Station, take the Market-Frankford Line (MFL) to City Hall, and then transfer from the MFL to the Broad Street Line to find our way back home. The goal is to make it back home with our business unbothered. The terms of engagement are as follows: we will engage with students who approach us and respect the personal space of students who don't. If someone is smoking on the train, don't make eye contact, move to another car. Don't bring classroom drama onto public transit, the school bell is the great equalizer, let us respect its authority. That is, until we cannot believe what we see at the 56th Street station. There are a group of Black middle schoolers who are flocking in front of a subway map, completely angry at each other. *I thought that you said that this was taking us North to South? What are we doing up here?* We can hear a few of them laughing in the background, we can see a couple more of them

swearing under a low growl. Keep in mind, that we need to make it back home with our business unbothered. Today, we know that they aren't our students and it ain't our business. However, it will be our business tomorrow and the future feels threatening.

One of the cruelest ironies as an educator is that in a classroom of more than thirty human beings it seems that there are no witnesses inside the classroom (beyond the occasional watchful, pedantic administrator). Teachers may earn a sympathetic ear from our friends, families, and loved ones; however, in the ears of governmental officials and administrators, it is far too often that our perspectives and directives are completely ignored. The proverbial "teaching island" that educators inhabit is expected to be a haven for our students mediated by castaways. As expected, some educators decide to abandon the impossible standards of our fabricated islands, and some even plan a complicated mutiny. However, many educators decide to survive the conditions with the deep understanding of the world beyond. Students who are illiterate, who do not possess the skills to survey the terra and the mar, are destined to succumb to both.

While it is not appropriate to call students who cannot read "illiterates" in our current day and time, Jonathan Kozol highlights how people who cannot read live an uninsured existence⁵. If our students are our next bulwark of our society, by simple syllogism, society's future is threatened when our students cannot read. Educators and parents alike have known this for a long time. However, like railways and roads, the infrastructure of illiteracy seems to surround us. This includes state administrators exploiting obscenity laws to justify banning books about LGBTQ issues and discussions about race⁶. In Fall 2023 (defined as from July 1st to December 31st), PEN America reported that 4,349 books were banned nationwide⁷. This includes Republican legislation HR5894 that aims to cut education funding by 28 percent and reduce Title I funding by 80 percent as a punishment for schools not meeting educational goals during a once-in-a-lifetime public health crisis⁸. The infrastructure of illiteracy exists beyond the generations of students who couldn't read and/or write, it includes agents of power who deliberately ban books, defunds public schools and undermine democratic education initiatives.

At the expense of indulgence, I believe that it is important that educators continue to manage their perceptions and theories of illiteracy as they respond to it. Especially when it is hard to look away—when we witness that the subway signs that our children cannot interpret used to serve as an instructive piece of the literacy quilt for free and enslaved Blacks who was learning to read⁹. I contend that illiteracy is not only a condition to be remedied by centering and involving the "perfect victims" of American history (those who are marginalized by race, class, nation status, etc). Without a doubt, illiteracy is not accidental nor passive, it is a political project that is volitionally constructed in order to undermine the revolutionary potential of a nation. While this unit will focus on the immediate and tangible ways that we as educators can support our students, it is critical to keep the political nature of illiteracy at the front of our minds and as a theoretical underpinning of this unit. Furthermore, this unit will also embrace the idea that there are many literacies and illiteracies that need to be understood and embraced in order to actualize the potentialities and limitations of our students.

Rationale and Content Objectives

There's something important about the bird that was in the old woman's hand in Toni Morrison's famed Nobel Prize lecture. The bird (read as language) has never died, it never needed to be reincarnated, however, it has become transmogrified as digitality has progressed. In the parable of Morrison, we may try as children to broach the hands of the old woman, to find the wings of a flip phone, completely lost at the disconnection of what we expected and how we interact with literacy today. We may assume that, like flip phones, that literacy and language has become outdated and we may find ourselves completely trying to compete with the rotating lines of new technology that has arrived.

Like itinerant birds arriving upon their destined season, language can embody different moods upon the emotional constitution of the reader and upon the context of the work. This can almost be considered a truism, however, having our students engage with literature in a meaningful way when our students have a host of personal issues and may be limited by the "hard skills of literacy" is something that teachers take for granted. For many Black educators, there is a political reason why many of us became teachers, whether we want to admit it or not. Although the narrative that teaching is a "calling" oftentimes leave us susceptible to mistreatment, whenever Black teachers talk among ourselves, there are a lot of common stories that we tell. In our case, we may have had a Black educator who saw our and nurtured our genius despite our personal tragedy. We might have been wronged by a Black educator who modeled what "not" to be instead of being a lodestar for good behavior and standards. Or, in our undergrad, we had a "lightning in a bottle" moment when we understood that anti-blackness is global and that colonialism has caused a variety of Black social problems. Learning the lessons of our past, we voluntarily join a teaching program, study hard, and then inherit a class of our own in an underserved, Black school. Excited to pass on the lessons we have held for years, our students stare back with empty eyes and then those empty eyes stare down at their phones. Somehow, we find our way back to adults, thankful of teachers that had helped them to connect to their Blackness, to Africa, and our shared political destiny that we have as descendants of Africa. From the full hearts of thankful adults to the empty eyes of young children and adults, we start to become curious, if not incensed, at the disconnect.

Unresolved racist histories have helped create narratives that add to the sense of disconnection and alienation that we must always be on guard not to internalize. When examining the narratives that are impinged on Black students as being "unteachable" and "defective", it is important to remember our ancestors and their role in liberating each other through the power of literacy. Cornelius reminds us that "literacy was a skill and a power which was shared with the slave community by those who learned. Enslaved African Americans often used the knowledge they had gained to teach fellow slaves"¹⁰. During the Antebellum Era, Black children attending schools increased in Northern states and decreased in southern States from 1850-1860, and Philadelphia was one of the leading cities in Black education during the time period.¹¹ Philadelphia had 56 private black schools in 1860 with only 12 of them conducted by white people and there were also opportunities for public education during the time period¹². It is important that we understand our history in order to have hope in each other to move forward.

In the interaction between the aspirations and the realities of teaching *in media res* can be sobering and frustrating. An apt device to help mediate the disconnection that happens between teacher's intentions and student learning is how author Andre Aciman employs the grammatical structure of the irrealis mood. Aciman explains:

Most of our time is spent not in the present tense, as we so often claim, but in the unrealistic mood—the mood of our fantasy life, the mood where we can shamelessly envision what might be, should be, could have been who we ourselves really were if we knew the open sesame to what might otherwise have been our true lives...We flit through wisps of tenses and moods because in these drifts that seem to take us away from what is around us, we glimpse life, not as its being lived or was lived but as it was meant to be and should be lived.

This may sound entirely too theoretical for an educator to find useful, especially when new educational initiatives are pushed upon us at any waking hour with little regard to the immediate needs of our students. However, it is critical for educators to examine how to close the gap about the lives that our students should live and our role for how we get them there. It seems unfair to theorize and suggest yet another gap for teachers and students to jump over with little direction. However, the gap can be closed with the simple question: If the subject of the dream is the dreamer, how can our Black students write themselves into the framework of their lives? Morrison acknowledges that “writers are among the most sensitive, the most intellectually anarchic, most representative, most probing of artists. The ability of writers to imagine what is not the self, to familiarize the strange and mystify the familiar is the test of their power”¹³. Reading society from the position of an active reader to the power of an active writer is one of the main goals of this unit.

I’d argue that it is important in our self-reflective practice to examine the imagination(s) between what is a worthwhile education for both the student and the teacher. I contend in this unit that there is a direct relationship between literacy and history, and that if history is not made aware to our students, moments of racialized violence can easily be (mis)read to be moments of situational instances, therefore upholding white supremacy and removing personal agency. Written plainly, one goal of this unit is a direct confrontation of our student’s learning attitudes of past historical events through journaling and surveying in service for educators to learn how to make our history of reading more relevant.

In service of meeting the goals of students taking charge of their personal lives and students taking ownership of history, students will engage with the essential questions of the unit, which are: how do you define intelligence? What role does learning have with regards to one’s intelligence? Who in your life taught you how to teach others? These questions will be explored with “The Secret to Raising Smart Kids” by Carol Dweck, “Sparrow” by Paul Laurence Dunbar as a supplementary text to *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou (Chapter 15, excerpted, and “The Lost Love Letters of Frederick Douglass (from June 5th, 1892)” by Evie Shockley as a supplementary text to *The Life and Narrative of Frederick Douglass* (Chapter 10, excerpted). Most of these texts were chosen by the provided curriculum of the School District of Philadelphia by means of StudySync, but some of these texts were chosen by personal directive and through support of my seminar leader. It is worth noting that StudySync readings are online.

It is important that to note that this unit will employ Penn’s Literacy Network’s “Four Lenses of Literacy” in order to supplement and dynamize a digital curriculum. The four lenses of literacy include the meaning-center lens, the social lens, the language lens and the human lens. The meaning-centered lens takes the perspective that learning takes place when the reader takes ownership of learning through transacting with the text by means of their thought processes and their method of knowledge organization¹⁴. The social lens takes the perspective that curating a supportive community of learning that enables students’ use of prior experiences is the best way to actualize students’ literacy and language goals¹⁵. The language lens takes the perspective that language is best learned in application to skill-specific contexts¹⁶. The human lens takes the perspective of capturing the unique character of our students and respects the truth that students make meaning in

personal ways¹⁷. The four senses of literacy are interdependent and integrated, however, in this unit, there may be more intentional focus on a particular lens than others in order to support the anticipated needs of students navigating a digital curriculum.

Texts

“The Secret to Raising Smart Kids” by Carol Dweck

Essential Question (s): How do you define intelligence? What role does intelligence have in your learning?

Carol Dweck has been on the personal docket of teachers due to her famed “Growth Mindset” dictum that had been pushed in our professional development, and it was only a matter of time that she reached students’ desks too. Before students read this text, they will be assigned to answer a BLAST question provided by StudySync that asks: “What special skills or talents do you have? Describe what you like to do and why you like doing it.”. Afterwards, they will be expected to engage with a short text by Howard Gardner and his theory of multiple intelligences in order to prepare them for the article. Given the digital and occasionally alienating nature of digital “canned” curriculum, it is critical to have students to interact socially with each other.

Students will explore the difference between fixed mindset (innate intelligence) and mastery-oriented mindset (malleable intelligence). Students who inhabit a fixed mindset are more apt to give up on educational challenges quicker while mastery-oriented students are more open to approach problems as a welcome challenge. Dweck props the mastery-oriented student as ideal when she writes, “The mastery-oriented children on the other hand think intelligence is malleable and can be developed through hard work. They want to learn above all else. After all, if you believe that you can expand your intellectual skills, you want to do just that”¹⁸ Students will also confront how these mindsets contrast with how one’s self-perceptions can affect their personal and educational outcomes. I would want my students to reflect and track on their personal genealogies of learning, collaboratively, through conversation with their peers. I would want them to record when their fixed mindset got in the way of their learning or when mastery-oriented mindset supported their learning experience. I also want to invite criticism about thinking about learning in a binary and recognize that there are periods in which we can inhabit a fixed mindset at a particular moment in our learning; however, it does not always have a general character. In the spirit of the social lens, it would be necessary to facilitate a space where students can teach each other how they redirect their mental energies back to a mastery-oriented mindset when facing academic challenges. An instructor may provide a challenging math problem or a dense poem that needs to be translated and have students work in pairs to record mental strategies that they encounter while “solving” the problem presented. Students should share their strategies to the class, and then reflect on their initial opinions on the role that intelligence has on their personal learning after the group activity.

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings by Maya Angelou (supplemented by “Sparrow” by Paul L. Dunbar) (250)

Essential Question (s): Who in your life taught you how to teach others?

In order to preface the reading, students will be engaging with the poem “Sparrow” by Paul L. Dunbar in order to analyze the metaphor of the bird in the poem in the context of the poem as well as its context in the Bible (vis a vis Matthew 10:29-31). The metaphor is the perfect device to bridge the themes present in both the Lawrence and Angelou reading and is in line with the meaning-making literacy lens. Zora Neal Hurston highlights the role that metaphor has in African American literature. In her essay, “The Characteristics of Negro Expression”, Hurston says about metaphor:

The metaphor is of course very primitive. It is easier to illustrate than it is to explain because action came before speech. Let us make a parallel. Language is like money. In primitive communities actual goods, however bulky, are bartered for what one wants. This finally evolves into coin, the coin being not real wealth but a symbol of wealth. Still later even coin is abandoned for legal tender, and still later for cheques in certain usages. Every phase of Negro life is highly dramatised. No matter how joyful or how sad the case there is sufficient poise for drama. Everything is acted out. Unconsciously for the most part of course. There is an impromptu ceremony always ready for every hour of life. No little moment passes unadorned¹⁹ .

The goal of this engagement with the poem is two-fold. First, through analyzing the metaphor of the bird in the poem, students can reflect on the many “birds” that they neglect in their lives, improving their sense of existential literacy. I believe if my students are aware of the importance of love, peace, and hope and how they are often undervalued due to our preoccupations on materialistic living or other unworthy distractions, students can also leverage that personal, existential insight to the plight of Marguerite in *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. This will help students to examine what potential “birds” the narrator could have missed if there wasn’t an intervention by the gentlewoman in the text. Second, the introduction of Matthew 10:29-31, will provide the opportunity to introduce the role of the Bible within the Black American Literary Tradition and create the groundwork necessary to complicate the role of the sparrow in the poem. In Matthew 10:29-31, it reads: “Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father’s care. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.”²⁰ In the poem, it is well established that the birds represent the important things in life that are neglected by the toils and distractions of living. In the context of the Bible verse, the sparrow (or specifically, two) are also neglected and devalued by Man, however, they are still protected and deeply valued by God. It is through the confirmation of God’s attention of two “insignificant” sparrows that God’s love for humanity and His right for divine rulership, is deeply affirmed. Talking about God’s loving-kindness may seem more appropriate in a church than in a school, but if asked tactfully, the philosophical angle of how we approach our values as “things-in-itself” or “things-for-itself” may further enrich students’ existential literacy. With the parable of the sparrow, the value of God’s love is sublime, and by acknowledging it as such, can lead students to investigate if there are values that they hold sublimely (or if there is any possibility for humans to have sublime values). At the very least, students can understand that despite the terrible drama that ensues in the text, the presence of a loving God is at the foreground of *I Know How the Caged Bird Sings* and other Christian-inspired Black literature that provides a hopeful milieu in many of their works.

In Chapter 15 of *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, the reader is placed in an arc of healing after Marguerite’s sexual assault. In this chapter, Marguerite has met Mrs. Flowers, a socialite in the Black part of her hometown, who takes on the part of a role model for the narrator. As said by the narrator, “She was one of the few gentlewomen I have ever known and has remained throughout my life the measure of what a human being can be”²¹ . Despite her shy and reserved nature, Mrs. Flowers chose to build a relationship with Marguerite and taught her how to read and taught her what it meant to be a person with dignity. The essential question for this reading is layered as it is deep. Mrs. Flowers taught Marguerite how to teach others, and Marguerite is teaching us (as readers) through her narrative. Understanding the themes of abuse, trauma, and shame is integral to the novel, and students through personal narrative will reflect on the role models that they had in their life and how they reflect their best qualities through their own actions. This is in line with the human lens, and the instructor should take leadership for modeling self-reflection by writing a sample assignment. This writing assignment encourages self-reflexivity and metacognition so that students are able to come to terms with who they are so that they can take full appreciation of the loved ones in their life.

The Life and Narrative of Frederick Douglass (supplemented by “The Lost Love Letters of Frederick Douglass” by Evie Shockley)

Essential Question (s): Who in your life taught you how to teach others?

In this particular instance, students reading Chapter 10 of *The Life and Narrative of Frederick Douglass* will supplement the reading. This decision is based off the meaning-making literacy lens, as the poem by Evie Shockley is high context and students engaging with Douglass’ narrative before engaging with the poem may prove to have more beneficial returns than expected. In Chapter 10 (titled “Learning to Read”) of the *Narrative*, Douglass details his relationship with Mrs. Auld (introduced as Mrs. Sophia), the wife of a slaveowner, and how the institution of slavery had changed her relationship with him over time. Initially, Mrs. Auld took favor with Frederick and taught him how to read. Douglass details that he was not exposed to the worst of slave labor and that he was treated as a child first, slave second. In fact, Mrs. Auld treated him as one of her children (as much as a slaveowner could) and held Frederick accountable for Mrs. Auld’s son. The relationship between Frederick and Mrs. Auld changed once her husband challenged her for teaching Frederick how to read, and that is when Frederick became aware of the dynamic between master and slave. For this particular reading, I would want students to track the dynamic between Frederick and Mrs. Auld by using adjectives to describe their characters. Characterization will be important for understanding how the institution of slavery changes people, especially the enslaved relationship with the world that they inhabit. After reading the chapter, students will reflect on the question: What was the biggest lesson you learned from someone who hurt you? This can be accomplished as a writing assignment or as a pair and share, but what is important is that students maintain a firm command of narrative when explaining their answer.

In order for students to engage with the poem, *The Lost Love Letters of Frederick Douglass*, the language lens and meaning-making lens will have to be applied. The instructor can make the choice to build background knowledge by providing the important names provided in the poem or have students take initiative to research the names in the poem. Students will study structure and form in order to unpack the theme in the poem. In the spirit of mutual understanding, the instructor should at least identify the speaker and the audience for the class. Students should break into pairs and identify how the themes of sacrifice and loss contributed to his identity as a formerly enslaved person. Due to its’ clear prose, it is easy for readers to take the order of events in the *Narrative* for granted. Poetry complicates our engagement with the events, and forces the reader to slow down and evaluate the circumstances and consequences of the political violence that Frederick had to endure. Students will be tasked to analyze and direct other readers about how Douglass’ role as an educator changed in relationship to the medium in which his voice was presented. Students will be tasked to compare and contrast the lessons learned from each medium, and create a small primer for free and enslaved Africans during that time period.

Teaching Strategies

Text Talk

Students will take leadership in discussing the texts for the unit around the essential questions. Text talk can be difficult to facilitate if not structured (or scaffolded) appropriately. Text rendering and annotation may facilitate meaningful text talk as students will have already surveyed the text and may have done the

additional work to do the necessary “elbow grease” to fill in the gaps of understanding. As always, the teacher is the model for appropriate text talk and helps set the tone for effective discussion. If after modeling, text rendering, and pre-writing the instructor recognizes ineffective, it would be suggested that the instructor sets community guidelines for classroom engagement.

Developing Background Knowledge and Cultural Awareness

The presented readings are not exhaustive of the StudySync curriculum, they are just targeted readings that center around Black literacy and/or social constructions of intelligence. Students should get a timeline of African Enslavement in the Americas, with special attention to the Antebellum Era and Reconstruction. Students may benefit from primary source documents of enslaved African-Americans through means of diary entries and narratives. Students should also take responsibility of developing background knowledge through means of personal researching and web-questing.

Peer Review and Reflect

Although there are overlapping similarities between Text Talk and Peer Review, there are evident differences between whole class and small group instruction. Peer review will be necessary when students are engaging in close reading activities or when they are proof-reading each other’s work. While “pair and share” and “check for understanding” go hand in hand as summative assessment in many classrooms, in order to have a classroom culture where students are committed to each other’s literacy goals, one goal that I have for this unit is to increase students’ sense of mutual accountability. In terms of the literacy lens, peer review and reflect is aligned with the social and human lens, which understands that learning is a social event. For peer review, students are to support each other’s strengths and to help strengthen each other’s weaknesses. In order to support this culture, an instructor may choose to do a direct lesson on group work expectations or they may recognize pre-existing groups that work together well and have them reflect on how they share power within their group.

Classroom Activities

The Secret to Raising Smart Kids

Journaling

Students will start off with journaling based on the question “How do you define intelligence?”, and students will be instructed to reflect on their role models of intelligent people—whether they exist in the media or if they are people that they know directly. The instructor should model metacognitive thinking and interpersonal exploration by sharing an example of their journal entry. Students will be instructed to “pair and share” with their classmates about what exactly defines intelligence and the similarities and differences between their chosen people. For the enduring unit, students will be expected to write about how their intelligence expanded through either observation or inference. Conversations with regards to “what they learned in school” should be limited and should encourage flexibility in their thinking. Ideally, journaling should take place before the first lesson of the unit, during the investigation of the unit, and at the very end to analyze any meaningful changes.

Strengths and Weakness Assessment

While learning styles are controversial in educational spaces, students will take a VARK (Visual, Auditory, Reading/Writing, Kinesthetic) test and review their results with the classroom. The instructor will tally the scores of students for each category and students will be tasked with a “pair/share” activity to answer the following question: “How does this VARK test reinforce or challenge your concept of intelligence?” The goal for this activity is two-fold. First, students are expected to reflect on their self-perception of intelligence and reflect on how their style of learning may have played a role in how they process information. Second, the goal is for students to challenge the structure of the VARK test. Truth of the matter is, most people learn with a mixture of all the categories present and people rarely learn “one way”. I am hoping that this activity will inspire criticality by encouraging students to challenge paradigms and taxonomies that seek to categorize people.

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings (and Supplemental Text)

Read Aloud

Students will work in pairs and read aloud the chapter. One student will have the responsibility of reading half the chapter, while the other marks important language choices present in the chapter. Then, students will switch roles. After reading, students will respond to how language choice help shape the theme present in the chapter. Students, through identifying language choice, may recognize the regional dialect of characters. Students may make inferences based off the narrator and make a connection between how certain words define the narrator’s attitude. Simply put, the goal of this activity is for students to build connection with each other.

Fishbowl Activity

The instructor will first explain the process of the fishbowl activity. Afterwards, the instructor will co-create norms and guidelines for the fishbowl activity with the classroom. Students will be expected to use the notes from the read-aloud to answer the questions provided for the read-aloud.

1. How does Maya describe her feelings at the beginning of the chapter and how does her word choice describe her character?
2. If the “bird” is a metaphor in *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, what do you think that the “bird” symbolizes based from what we have read in the book so far?
3. When we read Matthew 10:29-31 in order to support Paul Dunbar’s poetry, we talked about the value of birds being meaningful to God. Based from this premise, what did you learn from Mrs. Flowers about self-worth?

Students from outside the inner circle will write down important notes based from their classmates and respond to them in writing. Students will share their favorite remarks and their notes with classmates at the end of the lesson.

The Life and Narrative of Frederick Douglass (and Supplemental Text)

Epistolary Writing

Students will try their hand at epistolary writing after reading Chapter 10 of the *Narrative*. Students will be tasked to respond to the essential question: “Who in your life taught you how to teach others?”. Students will

be tasked to name the addressee of the letter (identify the audience), what they have learned, who taught them, and how they used their skills to teach others. Students will also provide key tips and pointers about how they navigated their relationship with learning and the best practices on how to teach others.

Oral Presentation

After the epistolary writing, students will be sharing their letter to the class. They will be tasked to identify their key points of the letter through means of a PowerPoint presentation. They will also be tasked to compare and contrast the lessons that they have learned from their inspiring mentor with Frederick's reading mentor (Mrs. Auld). Students will field responses from their classmates post-presentation.

Appendix on Implementing District Standards

The presented standards are Common Core 9th and 10th Language Arts for Reading Literature, Speaking and Writing and Informational Text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Students will be expected to cite textual evidence throughout the unit in order to answer the essential questions. This will be reached through text-rendering, annotation, and direct quotation as based on the directions and needs of the instructor.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3: Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

This standard will be approximated through students' analysis of the relationship between Ms. Auld and Fredrick. Students will reflect and analyze how the institution of slavery had corrupted interpersonal relationships and defined Southern society.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

This standard will be approximated through the Read-Aloud activity of *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. Students will be responsible for rendering the language used by the narrator in order to draw conclusions about the environment and the attitude of the narrator.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1

Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing

their own clearly and persuasively.

This standard will be approximated through the fishbowl discussion and oral presentation projects. Students will be expected to employ active listening strategies in order to participate fully in the class dialogue.

Resources (Bibliography for Teachers)

"Bible Gateway Passage: Matthew 10:29-31 - New International Version." Bible Gateway, www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+10%3A29-31&version=NIV. Accessed 2 Aug. 2024. This is a simple and easy way for students to be on the same page when it comes to having access to the Bible verse.

Brooks, Arthur C. "The Kind of Smarts You Don't Find in Young People." *The Atlantic*, Atlantic Media Company, 7 Apr. 2022, www.theatlantic.com/family/archive/2022/03/older-workers-silicon-valley-business/623880/. While this is angled as more or less as another business book chapter, I think that this can help students to help get a better understanding of the expectations and standards of intelligence set by the business world. This would be a great supplementary reading to what was presented by Carol Dweck, and students can compare and contrast the lessons based in the supplementary text to what they have read by Dweck.

Dunbar, Paul Laurence "The Sparrow." *Poets.Org*, Academy of American Poets, 24 July 2020, poets.org/poem/sparrow-0. This is the poem that is supplementary to Angelou's anchor text. The goal of this reading is to expand the metaphor of the sparrow and to help improve student's creative thinking around metaphor and symbolic images.

"The Life of Frederick Douglass." YouTube, YouTube, 1 Sept. 2020, www.youtube.com/watch?v=prf5I0_R23s. A relatively quick and accessible summary of the life of Frederick Douglass. This may prove to be useful for students to complete a KWL chart.

Muller, Derek, and Petr Lebedev. "The Biggest Myth in Education." Edited by Trenton Oliver, YouTube, Veritasium, 9 July 2021, www.youtube.com/watch?v=rhgwIhB58PA. This resource will prove useful to both students and teachers alike. This video challenges the "useful myth" of learning styles through means of face of face interviews and substantiated research.

Notes

¹ School District of Philadelphia. n.d. "OVERBROOK HIGH SCHOOL." STUDENT ENROLLMENT AND DEMOGRAPHICS. <https://schoolprofiles.philasd.org/overbrookhs/demographics>.

² Ibid.

³ School District of Philadelphia. n.d. "OVERBROOK HIGH SCHOOL." OVERVIEW.

<https://schoolprofiles.philasd.org/overbrookhs/overview>

⁴ Ibid.

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