



Community Word Project - Teaching Path

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Grade: High School

Type: In school

Time: 45 minutes per lesson

Length: 12 sessions

Art Forms: Theatre & Poetry (specifically Performing Poetry)

Inquiry Question (s)

- How can we define / shape our identities through theater and writing?
- How can our minds, bodies, souls, create positive change in the world through writing and performing?

Residency Goals

- Students will learn connection between theatre and poetry and how the writer is also a performer.
- Students will develop positive perspectives on who they are inside and out, along with other people who are inside & out.
- Students will learn a wide body of diverse poetry along with works of well-known poets.

Culminating Products and Events

- We will create a printed anthology of written work that showcases each students' work. Writing Anthology and Final Performance

Creative Terms / Devices & Artist/ Author Pairings

- Ekphrastic / Pecha Kucha / sensory details in photography and poetry (Terrance Hayes)
- Perspective (John Donne)
- Persona (Adrian Matejka)
- Simile / Metaphor / Ode (Pablo Neruda)
- Epistle (Nastasha Trethewey and Langston Hughes)
- Elegy (Natasha Trethewey)



Teaching **A**rtist **T**raining & **I**nternship **P**rogram since 2000

- Body Movement Awareness and Gesture (Lucille Clifton)
- Repetition and pattern (Marilyn Hacker)
- Stanza and line break
- Tableau
- Characterization
- Expressing Poetry's Emotions
- Performance
- Collaboration

Curriculum Integration

The Common Core curriculum (or whatever they choose to call it beginning in Spring 2016) in these lessons will include vocabulary and writing skills in various lessons throughout the term, grasping point of view, reading and comprehending literature primarily poetry, citing strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, and determining two or more themes.

With Multiple Intelligence, with lesson includes things that appeal to the Verbal, Logical, Spatial, Musical, Kinesthetic, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal & Naturalist learning types through reading, writing, performance, physical movement, finding themes in written work, a singing bowl for focus, time for walking with others and working alone, and reflection.

Critical Thinking Skills

- An expanded knowledge of their own personal voices as a whole.
- The ability to set goals and have a final outcome and to see how this can be planned and achieved individually and through collaboration with peers.
- A deeper self-awareness and awareness of others.
- An expanded vocabulary

Rituals and Routines

Opening:

Singing bowl (makes a gong sound when hit), Graffiti Walls, Physical Warm ups (Neck rolls, Shoulder rolls, Spine Rolls, Hip circles, body



shakeouts), & Vocal Warm ups (tongue exercises, big face/little face, TA makes a pitch & students repeats).

Main:

New poem/poet to focus on each class (until we focus on solely student's work)

Closing:

Chant, "I Have a Voice."

Timeline

Session # / Date / Theme / Artists /Authors Presented / Activities

Unit #1: The Artist and the Mind

Session 1: January 14th (Written by Sandra, co-written by Catherine & Sarah)

- Opening Ritual: Introduction of the singing bowl in the center of the circle ring with focus exercise (3 minutes)
 - Graffiti Walls with photographs and images representing the poets and poetry that will be covered during the semester under each of the themes: the Artist and the Mind, the Artist and the Body, and The Artist and the Soul (include some images created by Terrance Hayes who is both artist and poet)
 - Have students walk around in silence examining the graffiti walls and with sticky notes and markers have them write words, questions, or gestures in response to leave on each of the walls. (10 minutes)
- Personal introductions and brief introductions of the themes that will be considered during the term: the Artist and the Mind, the Artist and the Body, and The Artist and the Soul. What is an artist? Why create art? Why write poetry? (7 minutes)
- Main Activity:
 - Introduce Terrance Hayes bio (5 minutes)
 - Read portions of "Twenty Measures of Chitchat" out loud such as "Landscape with Riot" from *Lighthouse* (national book award 2010) - go around the room to have each student read one stanza
 - Introduce terms ekphrastic describes a work of art
 - Ars poetica, a poem about poetry



- Pecha Kucha (pe-CHAK-cha) inspired by a Japanese business presentation format combines storytelling with images 20 images in 20 seconds each; Hayes transposed this to literature composing long poems of 20 brief stanzas)
- Create a group Pecha Kucha. Have students choose one image from the graffiti wall that attracted or intrigued them and have them write for 5 minutes to describe the image and why they chose it. These can be words, phrases, or descriptions. (5 minutes)
- Have students share in pairs and time each other with the goal of the descriptions being 20 seconds long (5 minutes)
- Have students get back into the larger circle and have them hold up the image and read their descriptions (7 minutes)
- Closing Activity: I have a voice chant (3 minutes)

Session 2: January 21st (Written by Sarah, co-written by Sandra & Catherine)

- Opening Ritual: Graffiti Walls: Questions focus on what's important to students and things that are currently on their minds. Singing Bowl for time's up. (5 minutes)
- Main Activity:
 - Read John Donne's "No Man is an Island" & brief biography (5 Minutes)
 - Discuss themes in poem and what we can notice about his mind & perspective. (5 Minutes)
 - Have students write their own short poems based on what's on their mind & their unique life's perspective. (15 Minutes)
 - 2-3 Students Volunteer to read theirs out loud (5 Minutes)
 - Reflection: Focused on how we as people all have our own unique perspective on things within the world we live in.
- Closing Activity: I have a Voice Chant (3 Minutes)

Session 3: January 28th (Written by Catherine, co-written by Sarah & Sandra)

- Opening Ritual: Singing Bowl (3 Minutes)
- Main Activity:
 - Read Adrian Matejka's "A Great Maltese Cat Toying With a White Mouse" & brief biography. Note this is a persona poem in the voice of Jack Johnson, first black heavyweight boxing champion. Briefly define persona. (7 Minutes)



- Have students do private individual writing noting first impressions of the poem as well as their impressions of Jack Johnson as a character using details from the poem. (10)
- Reflection: How do characters think? What can we learn from taking on someone else's voice? (10 Minutes)
- Write a short persona poem. Try to imagine how the person you choose to imitate thinks and feels. (10 Minutes)
- Closing Activity: I have a Voice Chant (3 Minutes)

Unit #2: The Artist and the Body

Session 4 February 4th (Written by Sandra, co-written by Catherine & Sarah)

- Opening Activity: Singing Bowl (3 minutes)
- Main Activities: Introduce Odes, Pablo Neruda, Ode to My Socks, and Tableau
 - Have common objects in the middle of the circle (pairs of socks, a chair, table, a dictionary). What do you notice about these objects? Would you write a poem about them? (5 minutes)
 - Introduce Odes and Pablo Neruda. Neruda wrote 225 Odes that breathed life into common objects to see with fresh eyes beauty in everyday objects - and he wrote a poem, an ode, about each of these (5 minutes)
 - Ode is a poem that addresses and often celebrates a person, place, thing, or idea
 - Pass out copies of Pablo Neruda's "Ode to my Socks." Have students read poem out loud around the circle (5 minutes)
 - What different techniques does the poet use to describe the socks? Introduce metaphor (two fish made of wool) and simile (like as - as soft as rabbits) (10 minutes)
 - Introduce tableau. Have students number off (count out by 8 to have students act out 5 lines each or count by 4 to have each group act out 10 lines) get into small groups to create tableau - to act out different portions of the poem - to bring it to life by representing the scene with their bodies. The poem has been divided into 5 line increments and these portions are handed out to the small groups. (7 minutes)
 - Have each group present their tableau. If there is time, have members of the class see if they can guess which part of the poem is being acted out. Otherwise, have each group act out as they read the lines.(7 minutes)



- Closing Activity: I have a Voice Chant. (3 Minutes)

Session 5 February 11th (Written by Sarah, co-written by Sandra & Catherine)

- Opening Activity: Singing Bowl & Physical Warm Ups (5 Minutes)
- Main Activity
 - Read Lucille Clifton's "Homage to my Hips" & brief biography (5 minutes)
 - Discuss themes in poem about how she describes and feels about her body. (5 Minutes)
 - Body Movement Awareness: Have students clear the chairs so there's space and walk around the room. Start with them noticing the way they personally walk. What parts of the body do they lead with? How does it affect the way they walk? After time of observing how they naturally walk, TA's will call out body parts to try and lead their walk with (i.e. stomach forward, chest forward, head, etc.). How does this affect how you walk? Are you faster/slower/taller/shorter/etc.? How does walking in this way affect your emotional state? Do you feel more or less confident with this walk? Happy? Sad? Notice other people leading with the same body part. How do you perceive them (i.e. as confident or self-conscious, etc.)? After doing this with several parts of the body, slowly give them time to shake it out, return to their normal walk, and back to their seats. (10 Minutes)
 - (reverse writing & reflection before submitting)
 - Reflection: What did you notice about your own body & how you move? How did it feel to move in different ways? What do you think it says about you or someone else how you lead your body with your walk? How can we connect this to characterization? Have students take a moment to think about how they feel about their bodies based on the things they noticed and observed about themselves. (7 Minutes)
 - Writing: After reflection, students will take some time to start writing poetry ideas about either their bodies or how someone else might feel about their body. (10 Minutes- end writing a minute or two early to offer if anyone wants to share out loud)
- Closing Activity: I have a Voice Chant. (3 Minutes)

FEBRUARY VACATION

Session 6 February 25th (Written by Catherine, co-written by Sarah & Sandra)



- Opening Activity: Graffiti walls. Have posters with pictures of different people from a variety of backgrounds, races, and genders on them. Students will write what they notice about each person. Singing Bowl when time's up. (5 minutes)
- Main Activity:
 - Read Marilyn Hacker, "Conversation in the Park," and bio. (5 Minutes)
 - Have students underline or track any patterns of repetition in the poem. Discuss the effects of repetition and what it we think Hacker is saying about the body. (5 Minutes)
 - In small groups students will create 1-minute skits relating to making assumptions about someone based on appearances. Limitation: the skit must include a repeated gesture, or phrase. They will practice.(10 Minutes)
 - Students will perform 1-minute skits in front of the class. (10 Minutes)
 - Reflection: What did we notice about the performances? How did it feel to watch them, make them, perform them? (5 Minutes)
- Closing Activity: I have a Voice Chant (3 Minutes)

Unit #3: The Artist & The Soul

Session 7 March 3rd (Written by Sandra, co-written by Catherine & Sarah)

- Opening Activity: Singing Bowl (3 Minutes)
- Main Activity:
 - Have copies of old photographs of people from different time periods around the room
 - introduce Elegy and Natasha Trethewey
 - review ekphrastic poetry - Trethewey responds to photographs and paintings
 - Elegy - *Native Guard* won the Pulitzer in 2007. Trethewey uses elegy and persona to honor her mother and tell stories from her own childhood. The need to record moments for posterity "I tried to take it all in, record it/for an elegy I'd write - one day - / when the time came" (3 minutes)
 - Read Trethewey's poem "Elegy" (3 minutes)
 - play YouTube visual or sound of Trethewey reading the poem herself (3 minutes)



- mention epistle, or letter poem - read Trethewey's "Letter Home" written as a historical letter from 1910 (3 minutes)
- Have students choose one of the images around the room and have them write in the first person from the perspective of someone from the image using the prompt "Dinner at my house was" write a persona poem as a letter home (25 minutes)
- Closing Activity: I have a Voice Chant (3 minutes)

Session 8 March 10th (Written by Catherine, co-written by Sarah & Sandra)

- Opening Ritual: Singing Bowl (3 Minutes)
- Main Activity:
 - Have students get into small groups to read their poems from last week to each other (10 minutes)
 - Reflection: What was the experience like? Was it easy or difficult to write from another perspective? What surprised you? (5 minutes)
 - Read Langston Hughes "Mother to Son" & brief biography. Note this is an epistle. (5 Minutes)
 - Have students get into groups and create Tableaus that illustrates the mother's emotions.(5 minutes)
 - Reflection: How does the mother feel? How do we know that? (5 minutes)
 - Begin a new epistle poem in your own voice, sharing a secret or advice to someone close to you. Make it personal! Raise the stakes: write as if these were your last words. (10 Minutes)
- Closing Activity: I have a Voice Chant (3 Minutes)

Session 9: March 17th (Written by Sarah, co-written by Sandra & Catherine)

- Opening Activity: Singing Gong & Physical & Vocal Warm-ups (5 Minutes)
- Main Activity:
 - Read "The Black Art" by Anne Sexton & brief Biography (5 Minutes)
 - Discuss: based on biography provided & poem read, what do we know about Anne Sexton as a person? What in the writing reflects that? (5 Minutes)
 - Write a short poem (even just a few lines) on things that make you who you are. (5 Minutes)
 - Everyone will switch papers with someone next to them, take time to read it, and read out loud/perform that person's poem. (22 Minutes)



- Reflection: How did it feel to not only have someone else read something personal about you, but also embody it to read out loud? How was it to read and embody someone else's work? What does this tell us about writing poetry? About being Performers? (5 Minutes)
- Closing Activity: I have a Voice Chant (3 Minutes)

Unit #4: Connecting The Artist to their Mind, Body, & Soul

Session 10: March 24th (Equally co-written by all)

- Opening Activity: (5 Minutes)
- Main Activity (35 Minutes):
 - Introduce/Go Over what we'll do the remainder of the class days. (5 Minutes)
 - Final revisions of work. (Students will decide what work they would like to showcase to their peers in an anthology & for performance. Students will make any final revisions. Teachers will collect work to prepare for anthology printing.)
- Closing Activity: "I Have a Voice" Chant (3 Minutes)

Session 11: March 31st (Equally co-written by all)

- Opening Activity: (5 Minutes)
- Main Activity (35 Minutes):
 - Rehearsal of selected poems for performance (have students focus on displaying the emotions of their work as they read).
- Closing Activity: I have a voice Chant (3 Minutes)

Session 12: April 7th (Equally co-written by all)

- Opening Activity: Physical & Vocal Warm-Up (5 Minutes)
- Main Activity (35 Minutes):
 - Students perform one short poem each (25 Minutes)
 - Reflection on Theatre/Poetry connections, Unit themes, and sharing their work with one another. Pass out Anthology at the end. (10 Minutes)
- Closing Activity: I have a Voice Chant. (3 Minutes)
- (Perhaps light refreshments will be served. If possible, event can be filmed and put online to share with family and friends)