

THEMATIC THINKING AND MULTIMODAL TEXTS IN ELA CLASSROOMS:
Structuring Curriculum Around Theme to Encourage Student Choice and Voice

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Problem Statement: Most curriculums are structured around specific texts that are deemed worthy of promoting intellectual behavior. Students are interacting with multimodal forms of writing and literature outside of school but have no outlet to critically engage with them in a way that validates their scholarship.

A misconception of English Language Arts as a subject suggests that the purpose of the content taught is to provide students with exposure to prescribed texts from the English literature canon, and that this prescription will somehow remedy an anemic cultural knowledge assumed for each student (Beach, Thein, & Webb, 2016). In reality, ELA is so much more complex and inclusive when it comes to the content that can be part of teaching literacy and communication skills. ELA is a subject where students learn how to critically evaluate texts, reflect on the information provided, and formulate their own contributions to critical conversations (Burke, 1999). Being able to recognize power dynamics, influence of identity, evidence, and context are behaviors that are often isolated to the classroom. This removes student input and autonomy in what qualifies as academic behavior (Levine 2019). The skills of evaluating a text and constructing responses are habits that readers can apply to any form of text that they encounter (Beach, Thein, & Webb, 2016; Miller, 2009). When curriculums are structured around the specific texts, then these behaviors are only applied when deemed appropriate by the teacher (Levine, 2019).

Significance of the Problem

Building a curriculum around specific texts is not ideal because it does not promote fully realized engagement or inquiry from students for two reasons. Firstly, it is more

difficult for students to integrate the information they consume outside of school into their educational experiences (Levine, 2019). Young people are engaging with literature in incredibly diverse formats such as young adult literature, graphic novels, video games, and social media content. Knowing that ELA is meant to teach students the skills of inquiry, it is essential that those skills be applied to the texts that students are choosing to engage with. Critical analysis then becomes an intellectual reflex that students can apply to every interaction they have in settings like college, the workplace, engagement with their community, and effecting change in our society.

The second reason is that when teachers are in control of which texts deserve space in an academic setting, that leaves no room for students to provide contributions as scholars in their shared space of learning. Just like the population of our country, the population of our schools is incredibly diverse. Student identity and perspective add a layer of reflection and response to the work they do (Beach, Johnston, & Thein, 2015). This is best encouraged in our students by developing opportunities to interact with meaningful themes. This starts with demonstrating how those themes can be applied to multimodal writing styles, asking students to evaluate their own chosen texts through the lens of those themes, and creating assessments that center student opinion and input.

Structuring curriculum and units around thematic thinking creates more freedom for students to share their own experiences and texts that they personally connect with (Freeman & Sokoloff, 1995; Levine, 2019). Beach, Johnston, and Thein (2015) discuss what happens when student choice is validated and shared in an academic setting as an extension of their identity when they wrote,

Giving students opportunities to collaboratively design their own learning experiences (selecting texts they want to read, designing a final exam that they want to take, choosing themes from books they care about, having freedom to select from a variety of modes of acquiring skills or online content) is important – it allows students to perceive school less as something that is being done to them and more as something that they feel ownership of and therefore care about enough to fully engage. Through such co-planning with students, students acquire a sense of ownership of their learning that builds on and allows them to display their unique identity competencies.

Fostering a learning environment that values students sharing their interests and knowledge has the added benefits of strengthening student confidence, self-determination, and celebration of diverse identities (Miller, 2015; Minor, 2019; Ahmed, 2018).

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to discuss how student choice reading and writing promotes more academic engagement, identity work, community building, and culturally responsive pedagogy. In addition to all of these benefits, encouraging student choice reading and writing teaches encourages students to hone skills that will build their confidence and agency long after they have left the classroom. Thematic thinking is used to construct curriculums in a way that makes student selected texts and writing styles more accepted within the classroom, encourages students to be able to define what they want their learning experience to consist of and what the product of that experience will be, and what their personal identities can contribute to the communities that they belong to. The

focus of the discussion will be what it means to construct curricula around thematic thinking, provide examples of multimodal mentor texts for students, provide examples of multimodal assessments, and discuss the benefits of these practices. The overall goal of the work outlined in this paper is to help students understand themselves, what they deserve, and what they are capable of.

Rationale

Asking students to analyze theme across texts and genres is not a new concept for ELA classrooms. When students graduate from their high school education, they are expected to have mastered the following standards,

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.2

Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of a text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.3

Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed)

(corestandards.org).

As stated in standard RL.11-12.2, there can be multiple themes in a text, negating the idea that there can be only one right or wrong answer applied to the concept. RL.11-12.3 specifically uses the word impact when discussing an author's writing. This implies a

priority for the reader's reaction to the writing above the author's intention. Students should understand this language when they are being asked to meet these standards.

Determining the theme of a text should be a transactional event that takes place between the author and the reader (Levine, 2019; Beach, Thein, & Webb, 2016). Theme is often vaguely defined as a lesson, falsely equated with a summary, or is taught in a way that emphasizes a right and wrong answer (Levine, 2019). The consequence of theme being a multiple-choice answer to a question on a state exam is that the complexity of it is lost for both students and teachers. Beach, Thein, & Webb (2016) outline these shortcomings by stating,

While it is important that students have a metacognitive sense of the processes or strategies that are important, the problem is that, as with a formalist approach, conforming to use of a certain procedure or strategy can become an end in itself rather than use of a process or strategy as tools to achieve certain goals.

The way common core standards discuss theme and the elements that contribute to its meaning are only a starting point, not an indication of where learning should stop (Beach, Thein, & Webb, 2016).

The way educators can go beyond the minimum requirements of common core standards is by making their classrooms a space where students are free to apply their skills to any form of text they desire. By bridging the gap that has been created between texts that students interact with in the classroom and texts that students choose to interact with, we expand the context in which students can use their academic skills.

Definition of Terms

- Civic Engagement – Political and social participation for the purpose of effecting change for the betterment of society.
- Connected Learning – Academic behavior that is intentionally grounded in personal interests and passions.
- Critical Inquiry – The process of questioning a text with the goal of understanding different perspectives, questioning power dynamics represented in the text, and positioning the self as an agent of change in the discourse represented.
- ELA – English Language Arts
- Facts – Specific examples of people, events, places, or stories lifted from a text and discussed as part of a topic in conjunction with a theme.
- Identity – A sense of self cultivated by experience, personal interest, culture, health, and any other social constructs that effect the individual.
- Student Choice – Classroom tasks that are based around texts and writing that are chosen by the students rather than their teachers.
- Text – Any form of content (including but not limited to fiction, non-fiction, video, social media post, podcast, visual art) used in an academic context.
- Theme – The sociological and personal significance of a text as determined by the reader and/or the community discussing the text.
- Topic – The context through which facts are discussed as part of a discussion of a theme.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

1. THEMATIC THINKING IN ELA

Traditionally, schools have structured their ELA curriculum around specific texts they want students to engage with throughout the school year (Freeman & Sokoloff, 1995). This approach for selecting content pushes students towards conditioned behaviors and trained responses in the guise of learning (Freeman & Sokoloff, 1995). A thematic approach to constructing curriculum offers a more authentic transaction between student and text with benefits toward student identity, engagement, autonomy, and confidence. In order to structure a curriculum around theme, we must first discuss what theme is, how to use it as the structure for building a curriculum, and the benefits for learning.

What is Theme?

Most students are used to using the word theme interchangeably with concepts such as summarization, topic, main idea, or message (Freeman & Sokoloff, 1995). This nonspecific way of discussing an essential aspect of the literary experience only serves to confuse and frustrate those attempting to understand it (Freeman & Sokoloff, 1995). Theme is often defined as the reason why the author of a text created said text in the first place (Levine, 2019). These definitions neglect to acknowledge the effect that theme has on the reader themselves (Levine, 2019). Levine's (2019) study of how everyday language supports the use of theme in the classroom actually showed that the word theme, when used to ask students to respond to a text, can often be confusing and misinterpreted. Students were much more successful in responding to their assigned texts when they were asked to simply respond emotionally or discuss how they were affected (Levine, 2019).

Theme is a way to define what the reader accepts from the transaction of interacting with a text. A theme should help students understand themselves as well as the world around them through the context of the text they are learning from (Freeman & Sokoloff, 1995). Freeman & Sokoloff (1995) offer the following explanation of theme,

Themes allow learners to integrate the information and the topic within a context of the full range of human experience. Designing curriculum around themes provides the opportunity to engage students in a celebration of life, a conversation about what it means to be human, and a joint exploration of the world with their teachers. For individuals, thematic learning helps people grapple with their place in the world.

When asking students to engage with theme, the goal should be to help them with the complex questions that they are going to have to answer for themselves in their own lives. Ultimately, theme is what our students have learned from a text, whether that text was picked for them by a teacher, or one they picked for themselves.

Constructing Teaching Around Thematic Thinking

Having an idea of what themes might be important to the students in a class is a good place to start. There are plenty of ways to get to know the identities of your students and what they care about. This is a practice that should take place every year with each incoming class (Ahmed, 2018; Minor, 2019). Students should share an equal claim in contributing to the learning process in the classroom (Beach, Johnston, & Thein, 2015). In order to embrace this aspect of the student identity, as well as encourage it, teachers should shift their view of themselves from the controller of the classroom space to a

mentor or a leader in a shared partnership with students during the learning process (Beach, Johnston, Thein, 2015; Beach, Thein, Webb, 2016).

Rather than attempting to give students all the answers, approach each lesson as an opportunity to pose meaningful questions that the students themselves will want to answer (Beach, Johnston, & Thein, 2015). Students don't need as much help as we think when it comes to actually engaging in complex conversations. They need a platform to do so and a context around which to formulate their thoughts and ideas (Ahmed, 2018; Beach, Thein, Webb, 2016; Freeman & Sokoloff, 1995). This framework is constructed using three layers, facts, topics, and theme (Freeman & Sokoloff, 1995).

Freeman & Sokoloff (1995) point out that facts are typically the main focus of standardized tests. When discussed without context, the importance of the facts is somewhat lost (Freeman & Sokoloff, 1995). Instead, facts should be discussed as a way to provide context for the topics and theme's being discussed (Freeman & Sokoloff, 1995). It is important to emphasize to students the need for valid facts from trusted sources, and what that means (Mayo, 2018). Involve students in a conversation where the class agrees, as an academic community, what will qualify as a reputable source and what is accepted in the act of information gathering (Mayo, 2018; Minor, 2019). This is a way to help students understand the power dynamics that exist in dialogue and texts students are regularly exposed to (Mayo, 2018).

The next layer, topics, adds context and significance to the way facts interact with the human experience (Freeman & Sokoloff, 1995). The topics chosen for a class should demonstrate conscientious engagement with the immediate community, as well as help students build participatory skills for their democratic existence (Mayo, 2018). Being able

to discuss these topics and understand their place in the context of our society is a skill needed in order to be part of the society itself (Mayo, 2018). In order for conversations to go beyond surface level analysis or debate, they must include what Mayo (2018) called “ground rules of humanization.” This means that whether or not a specific human deserves certain rights within our society should never be the question, or if oppression exists or not. The purpose of conversations surrounding social topics should be to understand the specific reasons why our individual lives can be so different, the power struggles and systems that exist to perpetuate that difference, and what that means for our place in the world.

As said by Freeman and Sokoloff (1995), “topics are a way of organizing facts and discrete bits of information into classes of experiences.” Appleman (2015) demonstrates a few examples of how to read through lenses of experience such as class structures, gender and sexuality expression, colonialism, and race. When discussing real life examples of how students and teachers have used these lenses in their own studies, Appleman (2015) said,

“... students and teachers... transformed their study of literature into theoretical odysseys marked by significant critical encounters. Rather than simply covering literatures as cultural content or focusing exclusively on the skills of reading and writing, these students and teachers used the lenses of literary theories to construct multiple ways of reading texts. Together they constructed and enacted a different kind of knowing in the literature classroom.”

It is with this odyssey in mind that themes should be selected and subsequently the topics and facts that will allow students to explore their significance.

Benefits

The topics and facts that create the foundation of classroom interactions allow students to apply personal opinion and beliefs to external examples, rather than having to constantly use their personal knowledge or experience (Beach, Thein, Webb, 2016). The use of personal response in classrooms absolutely has its own benefits, and part of using theme in the classroom is to encourage such a response. However, to assume that every student is comfortable sharing their personal experiences with their classmates is to assume the comfort level of that student in an institution that is notorious for alienating marginalized identities (Appleman, 2015). Topics and facts create a safe space in which students can challenge the very systems that oppress them without using themselves as examples of oppression.

Grounding these discussions and responses in facts gives students the tools to collect their own facts for the themes that they want to discuss outside of the classroom. Creating a culture in which students understand the impact they can have on their own community can empower them to do just that. Young people are often dismissed by public leaders and forums for being unable to adequately participate and affect change. This framework tells students the exact opposite and shows them how to prove anyone who says that wrong. Students want to be heard and taken seriously, and they deserve nothing less. As Mayo (2018) puts it “they wanted to look into the eyes of adults and make it impossible for those adults to deny the rigor and righteousness of their research.”

There is so much more freedom to be enjoyed in a classroom that is structured around theme, rather than specific textual content. This freedom is enjoyed by both students and teachers alike, as they work together to construct the essential questions of

the class, as well as the texts being used to answer those questions. It changes the very culture of learning taking place in the classroom, and eventually the learning that students engage with when they leave the classroom (Minor, 2019). Rather than telling students that they learn for the purpose of doing well on an exam, a thematic framework tells students that they are learning in order to lead better lives. Everything that is done in the classroom should be treated like practice for when students are on their own and in need of the skills they have learned (Beach, Thein, & Webb, 2016). Their classroom is a safe space for students to make mistakes, ask questions, and receive guidance from their teachers (Beach, Thein, & Webb, 2016). In order for this experience to be as authentic as possible, students need a framework that places their perspective as a tool to filter their learning through.

Ultimately, teaching that is based around a major theme that the class will care about and feel is pertinent to their experiences creates a space for connected learning (Mayo, 2018). Students have the opportunity to use their personal experiences, passions, and identities to be the driving force in their pursuit of academic knowledge and success (Mayo, 2018). This ultimately helps students connect more with what they're learning, take ownership of the material, build's their confidence, and builds their autonomy (Mayo, 2018; Miller, 2015; Beach, Johnston, & Thein, 2015).

2. STUDENTS GET TO CHOOSE

It would be counterintuitive to tell students that their perspectives, voices, experiences, and interests can be part of the classroom but then not build space into the actual class for students to engage with those same parts of themselves. In ELA classes, we use texts as a way to demonstrate the importance of expression and the massive

contributions that one voice can make to an entire society. It makes sense for the teacher to provide texts that demonstrate such a message. However, the learning is incomplete without students being able to do the same. Communication itself has become such a diverse behavior that a text can present itself in a variety of forms, each equally impactful. It makes sense to provide students the opportunity to analyze the multitude of forms they may encounter, as well as practice creating with these forms themselves. Students need to know that the texts that matter to them, as well as the content that they feel passionate about creating, is important and needs to be shared. Students need to know how to “use the power of the text for social transformation,” (Mayo, 2018).

In order for students to understand how their writing can be this powerful, they need to interact with texts that can serve as examples of how to wield that power. This relationship is how we would normally describe a mentor text (Laminack, 2017). Mentor texts can be in any form that is meaningful and demonstrates the power of literacy and communication (Laminack, 2017). However, too much emphasis on small pieces of writing to demonstrate one skill can take away from the reader’s experience interacting with the text as a whole (Laminack, 2017). When this happens, students start simply trying to replicate behaviors in order to please their teachers, rather than uplift their own voices (Laminack, 2017).

Laminack (2017) puts forth that a mentor text should be one that the reader is familiar with, not just in a passing sense of having interacted with the text and knowing what it is about. The reader has a true understanding of the purpose of the text, how successful the text is given its purpose, and what methods the author used to contribute to that success (Laminack, 2017; Beach, Thein, & Webb, 2016). With this in mind, a classroom

that only allows students to interact with texts that are chosen by the teacher and that most students have never read before does not provide the most fruitful learning experience.

Laminack (2017) outlines the roll of the teacher by stating “we become the bridge between the world of professional writers and the daily work of student writers.”

Teachers are not responsible for giving students a significant connection to a powerful text. Students can do that on their own. Teachers are responsible for providing students with the tools to understand why a text is so meaningful, and to integrate this style into their own writing. In order for students to know what forms of texts they prefer, for both their writing and their reading experiences, the ability to choose needs to be built into the class for them. In this time of technological and communicative advancements, there are too many ways a text can present itself for a teacher to be able to provide examples for. So instead of taking on this impossible task, just let students choose and bring in those texts themselves.

Multimodal Texts in the Curriculum

Students are used to the traditional set up of curriculum based around selected texts that they are asked to interact with (Freeman & Sokoloff, 1995). As a result, they need to be provided opportunities to interact with nontraditional texts the same way they would any other text as a means of practicing their skills with critical inquiry and rigorous analysis. This also provides students with an opportunity to feel success when engaging in scholarly behaviors, thereby encouraging them to repeat those behaviors in the future (Beach, Thein, & Webb, 2016; Miller, 2009). Beach, Thein, and Webb (2016) stated, “When students can feel successful reading one type of text, confidence in their ability to read other types of texts can grow.” This is similar to the ideas that drive differentiation.

However, differentiation fails to center student control over content. The idea here is to demonstrate to students how the reading and writing that they do on their own can also belong in the classroom and show them how that can work. In this way, students build reading habits that can be applied to a variety of genres and formats (Miller, 2009).

Sometimes a bit of control is needed in the classroom when students are still getting used to those habits and applying them appropriately (Beach, Thein, & Webb, 2016; Burke, 1999). These restrictions can be lifted later when students are ready to take full control of the process. A popular way to provide students with choice is through book clubs, providing students with several choices of what they can engage with and allowing them to take over the choice from there (Miller, 2009). If there is a wish for more freedom, guidance can be provided in the way of genre or the topic being discussed in the text (Miller, 2009). It is the responsibility of the teacher to make sure that they are consistently staying up to date with the kinds of texts that students can engage with and maintaining a critical analysis of the quality of those texts (Miller, & Sharp, 2018).

Some examples of texts that have demonstrated positive contributions when included in curriculum are as follows:

- Young Adult Literature
- Graphic Novels
- Social media sites (i.e. Twitter threads, Tik Tok videos, Instagram posts, blog posts, etc.)
- Podcasts
- Television shows
- Movies

This is not an exhaustive list, but what these examples all have in common is that they are increasingly being used as tools for critical discussions and sophisticated communication (Burke, 1999). By creating a space in the classroom where students can assess the materials they encounter on their own, they are given practical applications for their literacy skills that can be used immediately. Students are constantly asking when they are going to need their classroom skills in the proverbial “real world.” The answer is: right now.

Freedom in Assessment

While teachers can certainly try to come up with as many ways as possible to provide students with creative ways to express themselves, sometimes we do more for our students by relinquishing control (Beach, Thein, Webb, 2016; Minor, 2019). In the interest of treating the classroom as a practice ground for students the skills they personally value, assessments must be created with the goal of allowing students to use the same skills they will need outside of the classroom, making the assessments what Frey (2014) would call authentic assessments. Ultimately the goal is for students to be able to demonstrate their learning in a way that is engaging and connects with student identity, choice, and autonomy. The best way to do this is to create conditions for assessment that allow freedom of delivery and creativity but are specific in what students are being asked to demonstrate with regards to their learning and connection to theme (Frey, 2014; Minor, 2019).

Rubrics are an important part of the assessment process. Being able to specifically identify the learning targets and standards that students are focusing on is important for students to know what goals they are attempting to achieve, as well as for teachers to know

what growth will look like in their students' work (Frey, 2014; Minor, 2019). Asking for student input in creating those goals is a way to center their identity, personal ambitions, and autonomy (Minor, 2019; Strom, 2020). This also places students in a position of taking responsibility for their own learning and gives them ownership of the standards they are attempting to meet, or exceed (Beach, Stein, & Webb, 2016; Strom, 2020).

Strom (2020) asks the following questions of her students when creating her curriculum

What are your hopes for your senior year writing course? What curriculum could I develop to teach you the skills you feel you need to improve your writing? What specific writing instruction and/or activities could benefit your writing, research, and revision processes?

These questions demonstrate to students that their input matters for the success of the course, they have the authority to decide what they want to learn about, and they have the right to ask for the help they feel they need in order to improve themselves as writers.

Strom (2020) also asks students to engage in a letter writing activity after they have completed a summative assessment for the class. This letter asks students to reflect on their writing process, engaging in self-assessment, but also providing Strom with data to use as a formative assessment.

The use of rubrics for assessing the quality of an assessment gives an opportunity to break the learning goal down into its basic characteristics (Frey, 2014). The very nature of the rubric asks the creator to be specific with regards to the purpose of the assessment (Frey, 2014). That purpose is then broken down into a set of criteria which is then applied to a scoring system (Frey, 2014). Frey (2014) points out that "students who participate in

rubric creation and application start to think about their own learning and develop the ability to judge for themselves the quality of their work.” It is worth noting that rubrics need to be created with student success and freedom in mind. The point is to create ways for students to demonstrate their learning in ways that provide them with a feeling of success (Burke, 1999).

Community building and trust is an important part of creating assessments that will work best for students (Minor, 2019). Minor (2019) discusses his use of universal design learning (UDL) as a way to help his students overcome barriers and make their learning experience the best it can be for all of them. With this in mind, part of appropriately using UDL is creating a classroom in which students feel they can create their own ideas of how they want to cultivate their final projects. This might mean allowing students to try something that might not work on their first try (Beach, Stein, Webb, 2016). This is okay! It is part of the growth mindset of teaching (Burke, 1999). Minor (2019) provides his take on the trial-and-error aspect of choice in learning by pointing out that students are not problems to solve.

The same way students need experience working with different texts, they will also need experience working with different forms of presenting their knowledge in order to decide which one they like best (Burke, 1999). The goal is to provide students with a multitude of ways to discover how they feel the most successful (Burk, 1999). Portfolios are an excellent tool for demonstrating learning, growth, and creativity (Frey, 2014). One pagers are growing in popularity for demonstrating topic comprehension (Potash, 2019). One pagers ask students to engage with the same critical thinking skills that they would use for a traditional essay, but allows them to do so in a way that works best for them

(Potash, 2019). For example, students may choose to focus more on textual aspects of their one pager, or they may choose to include images to demonstrate the point they are making (Potash, 2019). Potash (2019) has also used templates with their students who feel like the blank page of a one pager is a bit too intimidating.

As long as students have a clear rubric to work from, there is no limit to the forms of expression they can choose from to demonstrate their learning. Sohoni (2019) has found success in their college classes with providing students the option of either a traditional text written paper to demonstrate their learning, or the option of creating a social media page. The social media option of the assignment requires students to create a page to that demonstrates their knowledge collected throughout the semester (Sohoni, 2019). It is important to note here that students still have the option of completing the traditional paper if they so choose (Sohoni, 2019). The significance is that it is ultimately the students' choice of the work that they prefer to do.

Chapter 3: Applications

Unit Author	Katia Nasra
Unit Plan Title	Constructing Identity
Subject Area	English Language Arts
Grade Level	10 th
Focus/Essential Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is identity? • What do we learn from an author's identity? • What do we learn from the identity of characters? • How does reading help us understand identity?
Unit Summary	In this unit, students will contemplate the concept of identity and building on the relationship they have with their personal identities as well as the identities of their classmates. Students will engage with literary and non-literary texts that demonstrate how identity can be meaningful to an author and effects their work. Students will discuss and construct responses regarding the importance of learning about identities beyond their own.
Standards	See Individual Lessons
Approximate Time Needed	20 x 1 hour class periods
Materials Needed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology • Printed Materials • Supplies 	See Individual Lessons
Internet Resources	See Individual Lessons
Accommodations	See Individual Lessons
Final Assessment	Identity Puzzle Pieces

Calendar

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Lesson 1: Identity Web	Lesson 1: Identity Web	Lesson 2: How do we choose books?	Lesson 3: Book Preview Day	Lesson 4: Double Entry Diaries/Reading Day
Lesson 4: Double Entry Diaries Discussion Day	Lesson 5: Identity Poetry	Lesson 5: Identity Poetry	Lesson 6: Save the Last Word for Me Protocol/Reading Day	Lesson 6: Save The Last Word for Me Discussion
Lesson 7: RAFT	Lesson 8: Brown Bag Exam	Lesson 9: "Big 8" Identity Aspects	Lesson 10: Character Casting	Lesson 10: Character Casting
Lesson 11: Assessing Identity	Lesson 12: Identity Puzzle Pieces	Lesson 12: Identity Puzzle Pieces	Lesson 12: Identity Puzzle Pieces	Lesson 12: Identity Puzzle Pieces

Lesson 1Grade Level: 10th

Subject / Content area: English Language Arts

Unit of Study: Analytical reflection on identity focused texts and construction of personal definitions for identity.

Lesson Title: Start Defining Identity

Central Focus for the learning segment: Students will start contemplating the definition of identity and the relationship it has with reading and writing. Students will start trying to break down their own identities.

Content Standard(s):

- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2](#)
Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1.D](#)
Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.

Learning Objectives associated with the content standards:

By the end of the lesson, students will have a working idea of how they, and their classmates, would like to define identity. Students will have completed a “Think, Pair, Share” activity regarding what they currently know about identity and associate with the concept. Students will create an identity web for their favorite characters from a story of their choosing. Students will then create an identity web for themselves.

Instructional Resources and Materials to engage students in learning:

- “Writer’s Journal” (available as a physical notebook or a Google Document)
- Instructions for creating an Identity Web

Instructional Strategies and Learning Tasks that support diverse student needs. (Include what you and students will be doing.):*Day 1*

1. The lesson begins with students opening their “Writer’s Journal.” Instruct students to write the word “identity” in the middle of the page and write down as many words or phrases that they can think of that relates to the word “identity.” (10 minutes)
2. Students will pair with someone near them and discuss what they each have written. (10 minutes)
3. During whole class discussion students will share something that their partner said that was a new idea for them and how that has changed or added to the way they think about identity. (10 minutes)

4. Close discussion and transition to the next activity by asking students to start thinking about a definition of identity that they would want to use in class while instructions for creating an identity web are passed out.
5. Go over instructions for creating an identity web and tell students to think of a childhood character that they love to use for their first web in their Writer's Journal. Teacher will use their own character as an example to show students how it works. (5 minutes)
6. Students will create an Identity Web for their character. (15 minutes).
7. Exit tickets will be for students to be able to say why they chose their character. (Leave 5 minutes at the end of class for this).

Day 2

1. Tell students that they will be creating their own identity webs today. Teacher will share their personal identity web. Tell students they will need to include a detail in their web that is a tribute to the character they chose the previous day. (10 minutes)
2. Review instructions for creating an identity web and ask students to make suggestions for what can be included as part of the web. (10 minutes)
3. Give students time to work on their Webs in their Writer's Journals. (20-30 minutes)
4. Students will share their webs with a partner and write down something they have in common with their classmate and something new they learned about their classmate in their Writer's Journal (5-10 minutes)
5. Using a Nearpod collaboration board, students will post possible definitions for identity or aspects they feel should be included in the class definition (5-10 minutes)
6. Remaining class time will be used to write a definition of identity that the whole class agrees on and will use for the remainder of the unit.

Differentiation and planned universal supports:

Students have the opportunity to center themselves as the topic of their assignment. Giving students time to work in class ensures that they each have an opportunity to receive support from their teacher. Students working in the classroom provides access to materials they may not have at home. Students working together provides the opportunity for collaboration.

Type of Student Assessments and what is being assessed:

- **Informal Assessment:**

Favorite Character Identity Web: This activity will be used to make sure students understand the concept of the web and the different parts of a person's character that makes up their identity

Partnered discussions: Discussions will give an idea of student involvement in the topic that may not be seen in whole class discussions or written assignments.

Nearpod Collaboration Board: Visual representation of what students consider when defining the abstract concept of identity.

- **Formal Assessment**

Student's personal identity web: Completing this activity is how students will demonstrate the consideration of their own identities and what they prioritize as the most important parts of themselves.

Definition of Identity: Creating an identity as a group asks students to consider what is important to each other, as well as themselves, as part of the concept. Students take responsibility with their definition in shaping their classroom experience.

- **Modifications to the Assessments:**

Students can emphasize words or pictures in their webs to communicate their identity.

Students are able to use their own lives and experiences as the basis for this activity, meaning that each student will be creating their web in a way that is meaningful to them.

Evaluation Criteria:

Students will be evaluated based on their engagement and participation in the lesson. Completion of all the checkpoint activities is expected.

Relevant theories and/or research best practices:

Identity Focused Teaching (Beach, Johnston, & Thein, 2015)

Identity Webs (Ahmed, 2018)

Student collaboration (Burke, 1999)

Student/Teacher Co Creating Content (Minor, 2019)

Name _____

Making an Identity Web

Directions: Creating an Identity Web starts by writing your name, or a visual representation of yourself, in the center of your paper. Branching away from that will be all of the traits and qualities that make up your identity.

Step 1: Write your name in the center of your paper

Step 2: Draw a line going away from your name

Step 3: At the end of the line you've drawn, write a word that will reveal part of your identity

Step 4: Repeat Step 3 as many times as necessary.

Use the space below to brainstorm what should be included in an identity web.

Lesson 2

Grade Level: 10

Subject / Content area: ELA

Unit of Study: Analytical reflection on identity focused texts and construction of personal definitions for identity.

Lesson Title: How Do We Choose Books?

Central Focus for the learning segment: Students will engage in conversations with their classmates regarding how to choose a book and go over the protocol for choosing books for their book clubs. Students will also discuss the meaning of being part of a book club.

Content Standard(s):

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.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.C

Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

Learning Objectives associated with the content standards:

- Students will be able to identify their personal techniques for selecting books.
- Students will be able to discuss the benefits of reading stories about personal experiences as well as unfamiliar experiences.
- Students will be able to discuss the benefits of reading books with others and collaborating throughout book discussions.

Instructional Resources and Materials to engage students in learning:

- Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors video
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AAu58SNSyc>
- Poster paper
- Writer's Journal
- Classroom Library

Instructional Strategies and Learning Tasks that support diverse student needs. (Include what you and students will be doing.):

Lesson Intro (20 minutes)

1. Go over learning targets with students.
2. Students will take out Writer's Journals and brainstorm how they like to choose their books. Students could also brainstorm how they choose television shows, movies, video games, etc.
3. Select three students to choose a book from the classroom library and to describe the details of the book that made them pick it up. Ask the class for their suggestions as well regarding the details of a book they use to guide their selection. Possible responses: cover art, familiar authors, familiar genre, book blurb, book review quotes, etc.
4. Ask students who has ever heard of a book club. Ask students who answer yes to share what they know. Ask students why they think the pros and cons of a book club can be. Ask students why a book club in a classroom can be beneficial.

Main Lesson (40 minutes)

1. Transition students by reminding them that they are focusing on identity for the unit, and that today they will focus on how reading is connected to identity.
2. Show students "Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors" video.
3. Divide students into groups. Around the room, three large poster papers are each labeled "Mirrors" "Windows" and "Sliding Glass Doors." Students will rotate around the room to each poster. During their first rotation, students will be asked to add information to their posters about how reading can be a window, mirror, or door, like Bishop describes in her video. The second rotation will allow students to expand on the ideas of their classmates by writing how their ideas connect to identity. The third rotation will be an opportunity for students to share why they think the ideas expressed on their current poster are important to be aware of in the classroom.
4. Students return to their seats and the teacher facilitates the sharing of ideas on the posters. Teacher will ask students if they have specific ideas they want to make sure the class is aware of or anything they want to add to each poster.

Exit Ticket: Students will write down a book or story that they feel was either a mirror, window, or sliding glass door for them.

Differentiation and planned universal supports: Students will be working together and learning from each other during the activity. There is time for group activity as well as individual reflection so that students can balance between learning together and individual contemplation. Teacher will be available to all students for supports.

Type of Student Assessments and what is being assessed:

- **Informal Assessment:** Student participation in group discussion will demonstrate their ability to work with their peers and contribute to the book club experience.
- **Formal Assessment:** Poster papers will be completed by students and serve as a constant reminder of the values they personally established for the reading experience

they are preparing for. Exit tickets will show a willingness for students to apply these ideas to their own reading experiences.

- **Modifications to the Assessments:** Groups who need assistance will have the chance to ask the teacher. The class will ultimately review all ideas together and add contributions if needed.

Evaluation Criteria: Students will be evaluated based on their participation and engagement. Students are expected to contribute to group activities so that larger discussions are based on ideas created by the whole class. The exit ticket will serve as proof that students are making an effort to apply these ideas to themselves.

Relevant theories and/or research best practices:

Mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors (Bishop, 2015)

Identity Focused Teaching (Beach, Johnston, & Thein, 2015)

Student collaboration (Burke, 1999)

Student/Teacher Co Creating Content (Minor, 2019; Beach, Thein, & Webb, 2016)

Student application of ideas to current classroom learning experience (Beach, Thein, & Webb, 2016)

Lesson 3

Grade Level: 10

Subject / Content area: ELA

Unit of Study: Analytical reflection on identity focused texts and construction of personal definitions for identity

Lesson Title: Book Preview Day

Central Focus for the learning segment: Students will critically analyze their first impression of identity focused YA novels to communicate their preference for which story they would like to read during their book clubs.

Content Standard(s):

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2.D

Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Learning Objectives associated with the content standards:

- Students will be able to critically justify their reading choices based on their first impressions of the books available to them.
- Students will be able to set reasonable goals for themselves regarding how they will contribute to their book club.

Instructional Resources and Materials to engage students in learning:

- Mad Bad and Dangerous to Know by Samira Ahmed
- Symptoms of Being Human by Jeff Garvin
- The Field Guide to the North American Teenager by Ben Phillipe
- Book Selection Form
- Reading Calendars
- Book Preview Stations

Instructional Strategies and Learning Tasks that support diverse student needs. (Include what you and students will be doing.):

Lesson Intro (20 minutes)

1. Remind students of yesterday's discussion and the techniques discussed for choosing books. Remind students that their goal should be to expand their relationship with identity in some way.

2. Distribute the instruction handout/request form to students and go over the instructions for the book preview activity.
3. Allow time for questions about the activity. Tell students that if there is a classmate that they want to be in the same group with then to go to the same station with that classmate.
4. Divide students into groups to rotate through stations.

Main Lesson (30 minutes)

1. Students will have 10 minutes to review the materials at each book station. Students will rotate three times.
2. With the remaining class time, students will fill out the book choice selection form. They may return to book stations if they wish to look at materials a second time.

Exit Ticket: Book Selection Form

Differentiation and planned universal supports: Students are choosing their own books to read and have a chance to choose classmates they want to be in the same group with. Students are working with their classmates to participate in discussions and create focus for their reading experience. Teacher is available throughout the lesson to provide guidance and support for students. All books will be available as audiobooks for students who require or prefer the method as they read their books.

Type of Student Assessments and what is being assessed:

- **Informal Assessment:** Student behavior and engagement during book previewing will demonstrate their level of commitment to the activity.
- **Formal Assessment:** Book selection forms will be handed in to demonstrate student ability to use critical thinking skills to make their book selections. Forms will also demonstrate a student's ability to support and justify their decision-making process.
- **Modifications to the Assessments:** Students who are struggling to make a selection will have an opportunity to receive feedback from their classmates and the teacher in order to help their decision.

Evaluation Criteria:

Students will be evaluated based on their completion of their book selection form and the depth of their answers.

Relevant theories and/or research best practices:

- YA literature as part of critical reading activities (Buehler, 2016; Beach, Thein, & Webb, 2016)
- Guiding student choice through genre (Miller, 2008)
- Book clubs (Miller, 2008)

Name: _____

Book Selection Form

First Choice Title & Author: _____

What is your first impression of the book? List three details about the book that added to your first impression.

What kind of lessons about identity do you hope to possibly learn from this book?

Do you think this book will be a mirror, window, or sliding glass door for you?

Is there someone in class that you want to be in the same book group with?

Second Choice Title & Author: _____

Why is this book your second choice? Would you still enjoy reading it if this is the club you were asked to join? BE HONEST.

Mad, Bad, & Dangerous to Know
Reading Calendar

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
				Weekend Reading: p. 1 – p. 62
p. 63 – p. 88	p. 89 – p. 114	p. 115-135	p. 136 – p. 156	Weekend Reading: p. 157 – p. 207
p. 208 – p. 223	p. 224 – p. 249	p. 250 – p. 265	p. 266 – p. 283	p. 284 – 317 (In other words... finish the book!)
One Pagers!	One Pagers!	Identity Artifacts!	Identity Artifacts!	Identity Artifacts!

The Field Guide to the North American Teenager
Reading Calendar

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
				Weekend Reading: p. 1 – p. 60
p. 61 – p. 92	p. 93 – p. 118	p. 119-138	p. 139 – p. 158	Weekend Reading: p. 159 – p. 201
p. 202 – p. 221	p. 222 – p. 248	p. 249 – p. 268	p. 269 – p. 295	p. 296 – 367 (In other words... finish the book!)
One Pagers!	One Pagers!	Identity Artifacts!	Identity Artifacts!	Identity Artifacts!

Symptoms of Being Human
Reading Calendar

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
				Weekend Reading: p. 1 – p. 62
p. 63 – p. 88	p. 89 – p. 111	p. 112-136	p. 137 – p. 167	Weekend Reading: p. 168 – p. 207
p. 208 – p. 226	p. 227 – p. 249	p. 250 – p. 262	p. 263 – p. 284	p. 285 – 330 (In other words... finish the book!)
One Pagers!	One Pagers!	Identity Artifacts!	Identity Artifacts!	Identity Artifacts!

Lesson 4

Grade Level: 10

Subject / Content area: ELA

Unit of Study: Analytical reflection on identity focused texts and construction of personal definitions for identity

Lesson Title:

Central Focus for the learning segment: Students will record their thoughts as they begin interacting with their books for the first time so they can understand how to read with intention.

Content Standard(s):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.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

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.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2.D

Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2.E

Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.

Learning Objectives associated with the content standards:

- Students will be able to develop critical questions about the foundational information in their texts as well as the thematic information.
- Students will be able to explain the importance of questioning and contemplating during their reading process.
- Students will be able to identify quotes that they find meaningful and explain why, as well as sections that trigger questions and attempt to answer them.

Instructional Resources and Materials to engage students in learning:

- Mad Bad and Dangerous to Know by Samira Ahmed
- Symptoms of Being Human by Jeff Garvin
- The Field Guide to the North American Teenager by Ben Phillipe
- Reading Calendars
- Double-Entry Diary Protocol

- Jacob's New Dress video
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SCckCeeCKpQ>
- Writer's Journal

Instructional Strategies and Learning Tasks that support diverse student needs. (Include what you and students will be doing.):

Day 1

Lesson Intro (10 minutes)

1. Students will receive their book selections and gather with their new book club members.
2. Class will be asked to talk about what behaviors they engage in, if any, while reading a book. Then they will be asked to think about what scholarly students might do while reading a book.
3. By the end of the discussion students should have an established expectation for themselves that they are not passively reading; they actively engaging with their books.

Main Lesson (20 minutes)

1. Distribute Double-Entry Diary Protocol and go over instructions.
2. Go over the examples of what can be included in the right-side column and ask students if there is anything they think should be added.
3. Play video of Jacob's New Dress
4. Tell students to make a T chart in their writer's journals so that when they watch the video a second time, they can take notes on the left side of their chart and add their responses to the right side. Remind students that the theme of identity should be in their minds when viewing the video as well as completing their charts, but that any ideas or thoughts they have are welcome in the class.
5. Ask a few students to volunteer to share some of what they wrote.

Students will be given the rest of class time to read independently and complete their Double Entry Diaries.

Day 2

Lesson Intro (10 minutes)

1. Seats will be arranged so that students are already sitting with their book club members.
2. Start by asking students how their reading experience is going so far and if there is anything anyone would like to share.
3. Students will take 5 minutes to decide on their three favorite entries in their Double-Entry Diaries that they would like to share.

Main Lesson (30 minutes)

1. Students will take turns sharing their three favorite details they included in their Double-Entry Diaries. Students who are listening will add at least one new entry to their diary based on what their group members shared.

Students will be given the rest of class time to read independently.

Differentiation and planned universal supports:

All books will be provided to students in the format of a text as well as an audiobook. Students will have access to the youtube video on their personal devices if necessary. Students will have access to all handouts and activities electronically if that is necessary.

Type of Student Assessments and what is being assessed:

- **Informal Assessment:** Independent reading will be used as a time for the teacher to observe students interacting with their books and observe anyone who appears to be struggling.
- **Formal Assessment:** Double Diary Entries demonstrate a student's ability to intentionally engage with their reading as well as identify the details where they need more clarification.
- **Modifications to the Assessments:** This activity is easy modifiable/applicable to the learning goals and targets of students with IEPs or alternate learning experiences.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Each left side entry should be based on a specific quote, passage, detail, or word choice in student reading.
- Each right side entry should critically interact the passage it corresponds to. Student thinking is thoughtful and includes personal connections, and contemplation of identity.
- Entries demonstrate diverse methods of interacting with the text (questions, connections, inferences, etc.).

Relevant theories and/or research best practices:

- Double-Entry Diaries (Buehl, 2017)
- YA literature as part of critical reading activities (Buehler, 2016; Beach, Thein, & Webb, 2016)
- LGBTQ recognition in the classroom (Mayo, 2014)
- Book Clubs (Miller, 2008)

Name: _____

Double Diary Entry Protocol

Why are we doing this? Because scholarly readers read with intention! Draw a T chart in your Writer's Journal to get started.

Left Side Column

The column on the left side of your chart is used to record specific notes from your reading. This can include but is not limited to:

- Specific quotes
- Paraphrased notes
- Unfamiliar vocabulary
- Unfamiliar concepts
- Anything else you think should be included!

Right Side Column

The column on the right side of your chart is used to create written responses that correspond to the text material on the left side. Responses might sound something like:

- "I'm wondering..." (Questioning)
- "I'm thinking that..." (My ideas)
- "The author may be saying..." (Inferences)
- "What this means is..." (Implications)
- "This is important because..." (Importance)
- "We need to know this because..." (Importance)

Use this space to write down any notes or clarification that you need on these instructions!

Lesson 5

Grade Level: 10

Subject / Content area: ELA

Unit of Study: Analytical reflection on identity focused texts and construction of personal definitions for identity

Lesson Title: Expressing Identity Through Poetry

Central Focus for the learning segment: Students will read poetry that is centered around the author's identity and evaluate how that affects the overall experience of reading the poem. Students will select a text of their choosing that is an example of how identity influences creation.

Content Standard(s):

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

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).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.6

Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature.

Learning Objectives associated with the content standards:

By the end of the lesson, students will have exposure to writing styles that incorporate author identity as a way to create representation and education for a specific culture or experience. Students will read four poems. One poem will be analyzed by the whole class as a model. Students will then work in groups to analyze one poem together. Students will then split into new groups, with a member that analyzed each poem. Students will then go over their analyzed poem with their group members, discussing the questions they completed in their poetry packets. Students will listen to their group members and write notes about each poem in their packets.

Instructional Resources and Materials to engage students in learning:

- *Where I'm From* by George Ella Lyon
- *I Ask My Grandmother If We Can Make Lahmajoun* by Gregory Djanikian
- *Perhaps the World Ends Here* by Joy Harjo
- *Refugee Ship* by Lorna Dee Cervantes

- Identity Poetry Packet

Instructional Strategies and Learning Tasks that support diverse student needs. (Include what you and students will be doing.):

Day 1

Lesson Intro (20 minutes)

1. Students will open their Writer's Journal and write the words "Author Identity" in the middle of the page.
2. Students will write as many words as they can think of having to do with the concept of "Author Identity" surrounding the main concept on their page.
3. Teacher will put the words "Author Identity" in the middle of the smartboard. Students will then come up to the board to add the words that they felt go with the concept so that the whole class can see.
4. After the class has added their individual words to the board, the next step will be to have students draw a single line connecting two words that they believe go together. Students may connect as many words to each other on a chain as they feel go together.
5. Once all the words are grouped and connected, students can engage in an open discussion of how an author's identity is connected to what they create in their writing.
6. Exit ticket: Students will provide a goal for how much they would like to read from their YA books that evening.

Main Lesson (20 minutes)

1. Teacher will pass out poetry packets to students and explain that the class will analyze the first poem together.
2. Teacher will ask for student volunteers to read each stanza of *Where I'm From* by George Ella Lyon.
3. Students will be given time to answer the analysis questions that go with the poem, teacher will encourage students to reread the poem to themselves to help with answering the questions.
4. Teacher will ask students to volunteer to share their answers to each question and facilitate additional conversation.
5. Exit ticket: Students will need to give a first, second, and third choice for which poem they would like to analyze in a group the next day.

Day 2

Main Lesson Cont. (40 minutes)

1. Class begins with students receiving their poem assignments and forming groups to read the poem together and answer the discussion questions with their group members.
2. New groups will be formed containing members who have each read a different poem. Students will provide a summary of the poem to their group members and discuss their experience with analyzing it and answering the questions in the packet.

3. The remaining class time will be used to discuss how author identity affected the experience of reading these poems, what students learned about the authors of their poems, and what students learned about how to express their own identities in their writing.

Inform students that their homework as they are reading their YA books that night is to come to class with a powerful quote that they feel comfortable sharing and discussing with their groups.

Exit ticket: Students will write down their reading that is due for the next day and show it to the teacher on the way out.

Differentiation and planned universal supports:

The activity is modeled to students prior to the independent work portion. Students will be able to communicate their preference regarding the poem they want to analyze. Students have the opportunity to work groups and collaborate ideas, as well as teach each other about the ideas that were developed in group discussions.

Type of Student Assessments and what is being assessed:

- **Informal Assessment:** There will be several opportunities for students to participate in conversations with the whole class and smaller groups to demonstrate their learning.
- **Formal Assessment:** Students' poetry packets serve as their personal record of their analysis and thought process during the activity. If the packets demonstrate that the student is struggling with analysis or connecting with identity, then the teacher will be aware of this and can take steps to conference with the student and support them where needed.
- **Modifications to the Assessments:** Students are working together on this activity so anyone who feels like they are struggling will be able to learn from their classmates to fill in those gaps.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Students demonstrate active engagement and collaboration with their group members.
- Students fully completed their poetry packets with responses that consider the text of the poem, the themes of each poem, and the concept of identity.

Relevant theories and/or research best practices:

Where I'm From Poems (Ahmed, 2018)

Identity Focused Teaching (Beach, Johnston, & Thein, 2015)

Thought mapping (Buehl, 2017)

Name _____

Identity Poetry Packet

Directions: Read the poems included in this packet and complete the analysis questions that go with them. Remember to annotate your poems for unfamiliar language, powerful literary techniques, and your favorite parts.

Poems

Where I'm From by George Ella Lyon

I Ask My Grandmother If We Can Make Lahmajoun by Gregory Djanikian

Perhaps the World Ends Here by Joy Harjo

Refugee Ship by Lorna Dee Cervantes

Where I'm From
By George Ella Lyon

I am from clothespins, 1
 from Clorox and carbon-tetrachloride.
 I am from the dirt under the back porch.
 (Black, glistening,
 it tasted like beets.) 5
 I am from the forsythia bush
 the Dutch elm
 whose long-gone limbs I remember
 as if they were my own.

I'm from fudge and eyeglasses, 10
 from Imogene and Alafair.
 I'm from the know-it-alls
 and the pass-it-ons,
 from Perk up! and Pipe down!
 I'm from He restoreth my soul 15
 with a cottonball lamb
 and ten verses I can say myself.

I'm from Artemus and Billie's Branch,
 fried corn and strong coffee.
 From the finger my grandfather lost 20
 to the auger,
 the eye my father shut to keep his sight.

Under my bed was a dress box
 spilling old pictures,
 a sift of lost faces 25
 to drift beneath my dreams.
 I am from those moments--
 snapped before I budded --
 leaf-fall from the family tree.

***Where I'm From* by George Ella Lyon**

- 1. What is the significance of the title, *Where I'm From*? Support your answer using details from the poem.**
- 2. Was there any unfamiliar vocabulary that you had to look up to understand the poem? Please list and define the words that you taught yourself.**
- 3. List at least three "places" that Lyon is from. For each "place," describe what it teaches you about Lyon.**
- 4. Where are you from? In the same way that Lyon described where they were from, choose three "places" where you are from and list them below.**

***I Ask My Grandmother If We Can
Make Lahmajoun* by Gregory
Djanikian**

Sure, she says, why not, 1
we buy the ground lamb from the
market

we buy parsley, fresh tomatoes,
garlic 5

we cut, press, dice, mix

make the yeasty dough
the night before, kneading it
until our knuckles feel the hardness
of river beds or rocks in the desert 10

we tell Tante Lola to come
with her rolling pins we tell
Zaven and Maroush, Hagop and
Arpiné
to bring their baking sheets 15

we sprinkle the flour on the kitchen
table
and it is snowing on Ararat
we sprinkle the flour and the
memory 20
of winter is in our eyes

we roll the dough out
into small circles
pale moons over

every empty village 25

Kevork is standing on a chair
and singing

*O my Armenian girl
my spirit longs to be nearer*

Nevrig is warming the oven 30
and a dry desert breeze
is skimming over the rooftops
toward the sea

we are spreading the *lahma*
on the *ajoun* with our fingers 35
whispering into it the histories
of those who have none

we are baking them
under the heat of the sun
the dough crispening 40
so thin and delicate

you would swear
it is valuable parchment
we are taking out
and rolling up in our hands 45

and eating and tasting again
everything that has already
been written
into the body.

I Ask My Grandmother If We Can Make Lahmajoun by Gregory Djanikian

1. What does the title of the poem tell you about what is important to the author?
2. Was there any unfamiliar vocabulary that you had to look up to understand the poem? Please list and define the words that you taught yourself.
3. What is the relationship between cooking and identity? Use at least one piece of evidence from the poem to support your answer.
4. If you had to write a poem about something you do with the people you care about (ex. The adults you live with, your friends, your siblings, your cousins), what would that poem be about?

***Perhaps the World Ends Here* by Joy Harjo**

The world begins at a kitchen table. No matter what, we must eat to live. 1

The gifts of earth are brought and prepared, set on the table. So it has been since creation, and it will go on.

We chase chickens or dogs away from it. Babies teethe at the corners. They scrape their knees under it. 5

It is here that children are given instructions on what it means to be human. We make men at it, we make women.

At this table we gossip, recall enemies and the ghosts of lovers.

Our dreams drink coffee with us as they put their arms around our children. They laugh with us at our poor falling-down selves and as we put ourselves 10 back together once again at the table.

This table has been a house in the rain, an umbrella in the sun.

Wars have begun and ended at this table. It is a place to hide in the shadow of terror. A place to celebrate the terrible victory.

We have given birth on this table, and have prepared our parents for burial 15 here.

At this table we sing with joy, with sorrow. We pray of suffering and remorse. We give thanks.

Perhaps the world will end at the kitchen table, while we are laughing and crying, eating of the last sweet bite. 20

Perhaps the World Ends Here by Joy Harjo

- 1. Why do you think Harjo chose to title her poem “Perhaps the World Ends Here?” Is the world ending a good or bad thing? What lines from the poem support your answer?**
- 2. Was there any unfamiliar vocabulary that you had to look up to understand the poem? Please list and define the words that you taught yourself.**
- 3. What was the atmosphere at the table for the author and their family? Support your answer with evidence from the poem.**
- 4. Where does the world “end” for you and the people you care about (ex. The adults you live with, your friends, your siblings, your cousins)? What is that place like?**

***Refugee Ship* by Lorna Dee Cervantes**

Like wet cornstarch, I slide 1
past my grandmother's eyes. Bible
at her side, she removes her glasses.
The pudding thickens.

Mama raised me without language. 5
I'm orphaned from my Spanish name.
The words are foreign, stumbling
on my tongue. I see in the mirror
my reflection: bronzed skin, black hair.

I feel I am a captive 10
aboard the refugee ship.
The ship that will never dock.
El barco que nunca atraca.

Lesson 6

Grade Level: 10

Subject / Content area: ELA

Unit of Study: Analytical reflection on identity focused texts and construction of personal definitions for identity

Lesson Title: Save the Last Word For Me

Central Focus for the learning segment:

Students will engage in thoughtful discussion regarding quotes they've personally selected while considering input from their peers.

Content Standard(s):

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.A

Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.C

Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.D

Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.

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.

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).

Learning Objectives associated with the content standards:

- Students will be able to identify meaningful quotes and rationalize why those quotes are deserving of attention in group discussion.
- Students will be able to analyze a quote provided to them by a classmate and share their thoughts and impressions.
- Students will be able to incorporate input from their classmates regarding quotes they originally selected independently.

Instructional Resources and Materials to engage students in learning:

- Save the Last Word For Me protocol
- Index Cards (3 per student)
- Mad Bad and Dangerous to Know by Samira Ahmed
- Symptoms of Being Human by Jeff Garvin
- The Field Guide to the North American Teenager by Ben Phillipe

Instructional Strategies and Learning Tasks that support diverse student needs. (Include what you and students will be doing.):

Day One

Lesson Intro (10 minutes)

1. Go over learning targets with students. Inform students that today they will go over the instructions for their group discussions for tomorrow and that the rest of class will be independent reading time as protocol instructions are being handed out.
2. Ask students to raise their hands and share basic do's and don't's for group discussions.

Main Lesson (20-30 minutes/the rest of class time)

1. Go over protocol for Save the Last Word For Me
2. Hand out index cards to students
3. The rest of class time will be used for independent reading

Student homework is to come back the next day with at least 3 quotes to use for their discussion activity

Day 2

Lesson Intro (10 minutes)

1. Quickly review instructions for STLWFM activity. Ask students if they have any questions or need clarification.
2. Have students get into their groups and decide the order they will be sharing their quotes in.

Main Lesson (30 minutes)

1. Students will take turns leading the discussion for their group while teacher moves around the room assessing and offering support.
2. When everyone has had a turn to discuss their quote, the group will pick the quote that prompted their favorite conversation to share and summarize the discussion for the class.
3. Any extra class time will be used as independent reading time.

Remind students of their weekend reading before the end of class.

Differentiation and planned universal supports:

- Students will be able to choose their favorite quote to share with their classmates.
- Students will be able to learn from each other during group discussions.
- Students who are not comfortable speaking in large group settings have a chance to share their thoughts with a smaller group.

Type of Student Assessments and what is being assessed:

- **Informal Assessment:** During group discussions, teacher will listen to conversations and check for engagement from the whole group.
- **Formal Assessment:** Index cards will be collected from each student. The thoughts that students record on their cards will show their thought process for pointing out the significance of the quote.
- **Modifications to the Assessments:** Students are choosing their own quotes from their books and listening to each other discuss them.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Selected quotes demonstrate the student's ability to discern importance within their reading.
- Student comments on their selected quotes demonstrate ability to critically analyze a text for the portrayal of theme, characterization, structure, author choice, and the connection to identity.

Relevant theories and/or research best practices:

- Save the Last Word For Me (Buehl, 2017)
- YA literature as part of critical reading activities (Buehler, 2016; Beach, Thein, & Webb, 2016)

“Save the Last Word For Me” Protocol

- 1. As you read, take note of 3 quotes or passages that you...**
 - a. Agree or disagree with**
 - b. Already know something about**
 - c. Are wondering something about**
 - d. Found interesting**
 - e. Want to say something about**
- 2. After you finish reading, write each statement on the front of a separate index card.**
- 3. On the back of each card, write the comment that you would like to share with your book club about that statement.**
- 4. When you meet in your book clubs, take the following steps:**
 - a. Select a group member to go first.**
 - b. The selected member reads their favorite selected quote on the front of their but is *not* allowed to make any comments.**
 - c. All other group members talk about the passage and make comments of their own.**
 - d. When everyone is done commenting, the member who wrote the passage makes comments.**
 - e. A second group member is selected, and the process is repeated until all cards are shared.**
- 5. When everyone has had a chance to share their quotes and participate in discussions, the group will select the quote that prompted their favorite conversation.**
 - a. Organize the main points of the conversation to share with the whole class.**

Lesson 7

Grade Level: 10

Subject / Content area: ELA

Unit of Study: Analytical reflection on identity focused texts and construction of personal definitions for identity

Lesson Title: RAFT

Central Focus for the learning segment:

Students will take on the perspective of a character that they have been reading about and use that perspective to construct a response appropriate to the topic, format, and audience.

Content Standard(s):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.

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.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.A

Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.B

Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.C

Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.D

Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.E

Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.

Learning Objectives associated with the content standards:

- Students will be able select a role, audience, format, and topic appropriate to their text and that allows for expansive writing opportunities.
- Students will be able to write in the style of the author who's work they are reading and with the voice of the characters they have chosen.

- Students will be able to select a topic appropriate to the overall theme of the book, and demonstrate a familiarity with the complexities of their chosen story.

Instructional Resources and Materials to engage students in learning:

- RAFT instructions
- Mad Bad and Dangerous to Know by Samira Ahmed
- Symptoms of Being Human by Jeff Garvin
- The Field Guide to the North American Teenager by Ben Phillipe

Instructional Strategies and Learning Tasks that support diverse student needs. (Include what you and students will be doing.):

Lesson Intro (10 Minutes)

1. Go over the day's activity with students and learning targets.
2. Pass out instructions for completing the RAFT assignment.
3. Allow time for questions and clarifications from students.

Main Lesson (50 minutes/the rest of class time)

1. Students will have the whole class period to work on their RAFT assignment.
2. Remind students to check their reading calendars for that night's reading assignment.

Exit Ticket: RAFT assignment.

Differentiation and planned universal supports:

- Students can complete the activity electronically or on paper, whatever they prefer.
- Students are choosing their own role, audience, format, and topic.
- Students are completing their assignment in class, while they have access to resources and the teacher for support.
-

Type of Student Assessments and what is being assessed:

- **Informal Assessment:** Overall creativity of the assignment. Some students might be more comfortable with creative writing assignments than others. The featuring of a student's artistic ability is simply an added benefit of this assignment.
- **Formal Assessment:**
Students are formally assessed on their completed RAFT assignment.
- **Modifications to the Assessments:** Students may receive help with choosing their roles, audience, formats, and topics.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Students remain consistent in the role and true to the character's voice and personality.

- Students address the audience as the character would.
- Students stick to the conventions of the format.
- Students choose a topic that is thoughtful and resonates with their chosen role.
- Student writing demonstrates contemplation of implicit and explicit information of their texts.

Relevant theories and/or research best practices:

- RAFT (Buehl, 2017)
- YA literature as part of critical reading activities (Buehler, 2016; Beach, Thein, & Webb, 2016)

Let's Go RAFTing!

Your task is to choose a character who you would like to complete a writing response on. You will be writing from that character's perspective, addressing another character in their story.

For your response, be sure to

1. Remain consistent in the role and true to the character's voice and personality.
2. Address the audience as your chosen character would.
3. Stick to the conventions of the format that you've chosen (email, diary entry, letter, etc.).
4. Choose a topic that would matter to your character and discuss it as they would.
5. Employ proper spelling, grammar, and punctuation.
6. Be textually accurate and include relevant details from the text.

Role	Audience	Format	Topic
Who are you writing as?	Whom are you addressing within your role?	What type of writing are you doing?	What is your subject matter? What will you write about?

Role:

Audience:

Format:

Topic:

SCORING:

4(95): Advanced	3(85): Mastery	2(75): Emerging	1(65): Beginning
Sophisticated style with strong understanding of book	Appropriate style with understanding of book	Follows basic conventions with some understanding of the book	Basic understanding and conventions

Write your response on the following page...

Lesson 8

Grade Level: 10

Subject / Content area: ELA

Unit of Study: Analytical reflection on identity focused texts and construction of personal definitions for identity

Lesson Title: Brown Bag Exam

Central Focus for the learning segment:

Students will use objects that represent aspects of the characters in their books as tools for writing prompts in order to expand on their current ideas surrounding identity as it connects to their YA novels.

Content Standard(s):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.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1

Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2.C

Use appropriate and varied transitions to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.

Learning Objectives associated with the content standards:

- Students will be able to understand the implicit connection between an object and their YA books.
- Students will be able to effectively communicate thematic connections between their paper bag objects and their YA books.
- Students will be able to point to specific evidence in their texts to support their connections.

Instructional Resources and Materials to engage students in learning:

- Mad Bad and Dangerous to Know by Samira Ahmed
- Symptoms of Being Human by Jeff Garvin
- The Field Guide to the North American Teenager by Ben Phillipe
- Paper Bag Stations
- Item response organizer (3 per student or 1 for each item)

Instructional Strategies and Learning Tasks that support diverse student needs. (Include what you and students will be doing.):

Lesson Intro (15 minutes):

1. Go over the day's activities and learning targets with students.
2. Have students take out their writer's journals and engage in a 5 minute quick write activity. Students will write down every object they can think of that goes with their YA novel.
3. Ask 3-5 students to share an example of what they wrote down and why.
4. Draw student attention to brown paper bags for each book club. Go over the instructions and protocol for the activity.
5. Pass out the response organizer and go over how to fill it out.
6. Ask students if they have questions or need clarification.

Main Lesson (30 minutes):

1. Students will work with their group members to complete their analysis of each item in their bags.

Exit Ticket: Item Response Organizers

Homework: Remind students that they need to keep reading their books.

Differentiation and planned universal supports:

Students are working with their group members to construct their responses.
 Students are creating responses related to their chosen book club books.
 Students will be able to ask the teacher for support at any time.

Type of Student Assessments and what is being assessed:

- **Informal Assessment:** Student learning will be assessed during the activity based on engagement with the activity and participation with their group members. Students will also be informally assessed based on their quick write activity, to demonstrate prior knowledge and skills working with objects in a symbolic and inexplicit nature.
- **Formal Assessment:** Students will be formally assessed based on their completion of the item response organizers. Students will be communicating the connections they are making with the items at their stations.
- **Modifications to the Assessments:** Students will be able to work together to create their responses. Students who have IEPs will possibly only be required to create one or two well-constructed responses rather than responding to every object in the paper bag.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Student responses are thoughtful and demonstrate a connection between the item, the text, and the overall theme of identity.
- Student responses incorporate textual evidence that strengthens the student's claim.

Relevant theories and/or research best practices:

- Quick Write Activities (Buehl, 2017)
- Brown Bag Exam (Buehler, 2016)
- YA literature as part of critical reading activities (Buehler, 2016; Beach, Thein, & Webb, 2016)

Name: _____

YA Item Response Chart

YA Novel: _____

Item Description (Which item are you analyzing?):

Character Connection (How does this item connect to the character(s) in your story?):

Textual Evidence (Support your connection with quotes and passages from the text. Don't forget to include page numbers!):

Connection to Identity (What can we learn about identity through the connection between your character(s) and this item):

Lesson 9

Grade Level: 10

Subject / Content area: ELA

Unit of Study: Analytical reflection on identity focused texts and construction of personal definitions for identity

Lesson Title: Big 8 Identities

Central Focus for the learning segment: Students will engage in activities regarding the social structures that dictate identity in a way that is often out of our control.

Content Standard(s):CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.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.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.6

Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.

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.

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.

Learning Objectives associated with the content standards:

- Students will be able to use background knowledge and familiar vocabulary to match aspects of identity with their explanations.
- Students will be able to apply the information they have been provided to the identities of the characters in their books.
- Students will be able to reflect on the aspect of identity that they are the least familiar with and new knowledge they have gained.

Instructional Resources and Materials to engage students in learning:

- Mad Bad and Dangerous to Know by Samira Ahmed
- Symptoms of Being Human by Jeff Garvin
- The Field Guide to the North American Teenager by Ben Phillipe
- "Big 8 Identities" informational handout

- “Big 8 Identities” matching activity
- Writer’s Journals/writing prompt
- Highlighters

Instructional Strategies and Learning Tasks that support diverse student needs. (Include what you and students will be doing.):

Lesson Intro (20 minutes)

1. Go over learning targets and activities for the day.
2. Teacher will read off the terms on the Big 8 Identity term sheet before students see the definitions. Students will raise their hands if they have heard the word before.
3. Teacher will explain the instructions for the matching game for students. Each book club will have the terms on a set of notecards and the definitions on another set of note cards. Students will have to match them together.
4. Students will complete matching activity.
5. Once the activity is complete, students will all receive a handout with the Big 8 and definitions.

Main Lesson (40 minutes)

1. Teacher will post the following instructions on the smartboard (or where they are easily visible to the whole class):

Step 1: Get out your writer’s journals

Step 2: Read the description at the top of the handout of what the Big 8 actually is and how the author defines identity.

Step 3: Annotate any phrases that are new, stand out to you, that you agree with, or that you disagree with.

Step 4: In your writer’s journal, write your thoughts about your annotated phrases.

Step 5: Select 2 aspects of identity from the “Big 8” that you would like to analyze

Step 6: Repeat step three for both aspects of identity that you’ve chosen!

Step 7: Apply these aspects of identity to a character from your book club novel. Use at least one piece of textual evidence (either a direct or a paraphrased quote) to support your application.

2. Teacher will go over instructions and ask students if they have any questions or need clarification.
3. Provide highlighters to any students who request them.

Exit Ticket: Journal responses

Homework: Remind students to check their reading calendars. Students will be asked to prepare 3 discussion questions for their book clubs tomorrow. Remind students that they should be considering identity in some way when constructing their questions.

Differentiation and planned universal supports:

Students are working with their classmates to understand new vocabulary.

Students are applying their own background knowledge to a defined concept of identity. Students are applying their chosen aspects of identity to their chosen book club book as well as their choice of character within that book.

Type of Student Assessments and what is being assessed:

- **Informal Assessment:** Students will be informally assessed based on their working during the matching activity. This will be their first interactions with the vocabulary and definitions for these aspects of identity in the class. Students will also be informally assessed based on their annotating skills.
- **Formal Assessment:** Students will be graded based on their responses in their Writer's Journals.
- **Modifications to the Assessments:** Students will have access to their teacher for guidance and support.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Student acknowledges specific concepts outlined in the description of Big 8 aspects of identity and their thoughts on those concepts.
- Student identifies two aspects of identity that relate to their chosen character.
- Student uses at least one specific piece of evidence from their text to support the connection of each aspect of identity.

Relevant theories and/or research best practices:

- YA literature as part of critical reading activities (Buehler, 2016; Beach, Thein, & Webb, 2016)
- Identity Focused Teaching (Beach, Johnston, & Thein, 2015)

“Big 8 Identities”

The “Big 8” comprises eight of the major identities that help us understand parts of who we are and where we come from. While this list is not all encompassing, it gives us an opportunity to explore some of our social group memberships - many (but not all) of which we are born into. Understanding who we are and who others are helps us honor human dignity and create authentically inclusive spaces.

Age: This identity is about how people are categorized by society’s perceptions of different age groups. For example, college students may be referred to as “kids” despite technically being adults and may be dismissed because of assumptions about this group’s maturity level and capability. Older adults may also be discriminated against in employment or may be treated as children as they age.

Ability: This identity is about the diverse array of differences in physical, mental, cognitive, developmental, learning, and/or emotional make-up. It also includes mental health and the impact of social experiences such as trauma and surviving abuse.

Race: This identity refers to the concept used to classify humans based on perceived physical characteristics such as skin color, eye shape and color, hair texture, body shape and size, and other physical features.

Ethnicity: While race classifies people based on perceived physical characteristics, ethnicity relates more to culture, such as sharing a common language, ancestry, national origin, and/or a variety of cultural beliefs.

Gender: A person’s deep seated felt sense of who they are. Gender is different from sex in that sex is generally identified with one’s anatomy. Examples of sex are female, male, intersex (having a combination of female and male parts). Examples of gender include cisgender (people whose gender identity matches the gender or sex assigned at birth), transgender (people who identify differently than designated at birth), nonbinary gender identity (those who do not identify as the binary of man or woman in relation to society’s definitions and instead view gender as less fixed), genderqueer (a person who may not identify with and/or express themselves within the gender binary), and many more. Because of these varying gender identities, individuals may identify with a variety of gender pronouns that cannot be known by looking at someone (such as she/her/hers, he/him/his, they/them/theirs, and many more pronouns).

Sexual Orientation: A person’s sexual, emotional, romantic, and/or affectional attractions, not necessarily dependent on behavior. Examples of identities include heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual (people who are attracted to people of two genders), pansexual (a term referring to the potential for attractions or love toward people of all gender identities and sexes), asexual (people who either do not feel sexual attraction or do not feel desire for a sexual partner or partners. Some asexual individuals may still have romantic attractions), queer (a self-identification for a person whose gender identity/expression and/or sexual orientation does not conform to societal categories), and many more.

Socioeconomic Status: This category is commonly conceptualized as one's social standing in society based on income, wealth, or poverty. It is often used interchangeably with social class, but social class includes additional factors such as a combination of education, income, occupation, lifestyle, and family background.

Religion: This identity category relates to a person's or a group's beliefs about the existence of God or gods and/or an identification with a particular religion or set of spiritual practices. For example, a person may identify with one of the major world religions, and/or as agnostic, spiritual, atheist, and many more.

Lesson 10

Grade Level: 10

Subject / Content area: ELA

Unit of Study: Analytical reflection on identity focused texts and construction of personal definitions for identity

Lesson Title: Character Casting

Central Focus for the learning segment:

Students will read articles that discuss the issues with representation in casting actors for roles specific roles and how to consider identity in that task. Students will considering what they have learned in order to select someone that they think can embody the identity of a character from their YA books.

Content Standard(s):CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.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.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.2

Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.5

Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.6

Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.

Learning Objectives associated with the content standards:

- Students will be able to site evidence from their articles to support their analysis, explanations, and choices in application.
- Students will be able to understand the central idea of their articles as well as make an inference as to the author's intended purpose.
- Students will be able to use the information in their articles to understand new terms and concepts defined, as well as explain those concepts to their classmates.
- Students will be able to create a response regarding the social implications of the information in their chosen articles.

Instructional Resources and Materials to engage students in learning:

- <https://thisstage.la/2019/11/gender-conscious-casting/>
- <https://delshakes.org/2020/11/two-perspectives-on-color-blind-vs-color-conscious-casting-in-shakespeare/>
- Author Says/I Say handout
- Student chosen YA books
- Writer's Journals/Writing Prompt

Instructional Strategies and Learning Tasks that support diverse student needs. (Include what you and students will be doing.):*Day 1***Lesson Intro** (20 minutes)

1. Begin by asking students to think about what is important when it comes to casting an actor in a movie. Ask students to share their ideas. When at least three students have shared their ideas, ask students to now think about any news stories that they have heard regarding controversy in casting. Based on student responses, provide examples such as Scarlett Johansson playing a traditionally Asian character, Jared Leto and Eddie Redmayne playing trans women. Bring up the importance of appropriate casting such as Rami Malik playing Freddie Mercury.
2. Introduce the "Author says/I say" note taking handout. While passing out handout, make sure students understand that they are combining the information presented to them in articles with their own opinions to formulate what they have learned into a statement for the "and so" column. Allow students to ask questions or ask for clarification.
3. Provide students with access to "Gender Conscious Casting" article. Ask students if anyone has ever heard the term "Gender Conscious Casting." If yes, ask students to share what they know. If not, ask students to make a prediction about the meaning.

Main Lesson

Modeling (20 minutes)

1. Display article text as well as "Author says/I say" chart in a visible place where students can see modeled behaviors.
2. Draw student attention to the author or the article and ask students to share their thoughts on the author and how their identity can be used to enhance implicit and explicit information in the article.
3. Read the first paragraph aloud to students. Acknowledge the amount of unfamiliar vocabulary. Have students raise their hands to specifically identify the unknown words (teacher will write the words in a visible spot in the room as they are identified). Assign students to look up the unfamiliar words (one each).
4. Once all vocabulary is clarified, teacher identifies the first "Author says" statement using the first sentence. Teacher writes "Society is on the cusp of a major knowledge shift regarding transgender rights. Non-binary/gender nonconforming identities" are becoming more common."
5. Ask students to fill in the "I say" portion of their charts. Remind them that previous activities such as Double Diary Entries can help with sentence starters (I agree, I

disagree, this is important because..., etc.). When students have had enough time to write, ask for volunteers to share what they wrote.

6. In the “and so” column, write a final statement that combines thoughts shared by students as well as the information from the article.

Guided Practice (20 minutes)

7. Give students time to read the second paragraph of the article independently. Remind them to look up unfamiliar vocabulary and use each column of their handout appropriately.
8. When students have all read and taken notes on this section of the article, ask students to raise their hands and share their “Author says... I say... and so...” statements. Offer suggestions and support as needed.
9. Show students that the rest of the article has two sections, gender-swap casting cross gender casting. Remind students of the importance of reviewing headings in an article to be aware of main ideas and important information.
10. Give students the rest of class to complete their notes on the article.

Exit Ticket: Completed notetaking handouts

Remind students of their reading homework

Day 2

Lesson Intro (10 minutes)

1. Remind students of yesterday’s activity and learning targets. Ask students for their thoughts on the notetaking strategy and what they find helpful or unhelpful about it.
2. Pass out a new “Author says/I say” handout to students and provide them access to the “Two Perspectives” article.
3. Ask students to give initial thoughts on what the article is going to be about.
4. Read the intro paragraph out loud to students and ask for any thoughts.
5. Tell students that they will be split into three groups to read the different sections of the article (Defining Color-Blind Casting and Color-Conscious Casting, Conversation on Race in Shakespeare, Tokenism vs. Diversity). The groups will be the student book clubs.

Main Lesson

Article Work (20 minutes)

1. Explain that each group is responsible for reading their section of the article, taking notes, and being prepared to share their work with the class.
2. When students have enough time to read and take notes, have each group display their answers in a visible place one at a time while the rest of the class takes notes as well.
3. Read the “My experience” and conclusion section out loud to the class. Ask students to provide “Author says/I say/ and so” statements to add to the class notes.

YA Novel Work (20 minutes)

4. Have students take out their writer’s journals. Explain to students that their job is now to select one character from their book that they would like to cast in the movie version of the story. Remind students that they should use the information they just learned about from both articles that were read.
5. Display the following prompt in a visible place:

In your Writer’s Journals, please provide the following information:

Your character's name

The parts of their identity that you considered while casting them

The actor/actress you've chosen to portray your character

A reflection explaining why the actor/actress you chose is appropriate to play your chosen character.

Exit Ticket: Notetaking handout and writer's journals

Remind students that they need to be finished with their books by Monday.

Differentiation and planned universal supports:

Students are relating the information in the article to their personal opinions so that they are learning the information at the same time as they are thinking about its applications. Students will be applying their knowledge of conscious casting to a character of their choice and sharing how they would envision that character.

Type of Student Assessments and what is being assessed:

- **Informal Assessment:** Students will be informally assessed based on their notetaking skills using the Author says/I say handout. Student performance will influence notetaking lessons in the future based on the needs and strengths demonstrated.
- **Formal Assessment:** Students will be formally assessed based on their responses in their writer's journals. The assignment will allow students to demonstrate their understanding of consciously choosing how to represent a character and how those representations effect storytelling and how an audience will receive that story.
- **Modifications to the Assessments:** Students will have access to audio versions of the articles. Students will have access to hard copy or digital versions of materials and assignments. Students will receive support from available teachers as needed.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Student identified specific aspects of a character's identity that are crucial to their characterization.
- Student clearly explained how the aspects of this character's identity will be represented through the actor/actress that they chose.
- Student used information from the articles read in class to support their decision making.

Relevant theories and/or research best practices:

- YA literature as part of critical reading activities (Buehler, 2016; Beach, Thein, & Webb, 2016)
- Identity Focused Teaching (Beach, Johnston, & Thein, 2015)
- Author Says/I Say (Buehl, 2017).

Name: _____ Article Section Title: _____

Author says...	I say...	And so...

Lesson 11

Grade Level: 10

Subject / Content area: ELA

Unit of Study: Analytical reflection on identity focused texts and construction of personal definitions for identity

Lesson Title: Assessing Identity

Central Focus for the learning segment:

Students will learn about Marley Dias and her mission. Students will critically review and assess their texts on how well they represent identity and present their findings to the class.

Content Standard(s):CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.5

Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.6

Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

Learning Objectives associated with the content standards:

- Students will be able to assess their chosen YA novels through the lens of diversity.
- Students will be able to explain the main plot of their story and analyze their personal relationship to the characters.
- Students will be able to make a recommendation regarding the merits of reading their chosen YA book.

Instructional Resources and Materials to engage students in learning:

- Reading Diversity Checklist
- Book Review Graphic Organizer
- Writer's Journals
- <https://www.njspotlight.com/video/11-year-old-marley-dias-creates-change-through-1000blackgirlbooks-campaign/>

Instructional Strategies and Learning Tasks that support diverse student needs. (Include what you and students will be doing.):

Lesson Intro (20 Minutes)

1. Ask students how they feel having finished their YA novels. Engage students in a brief conversation about their books, allowing more freedom.
2. Ask students to raise their hands if they would recommend their book to someone. Remind students that honesty is important, and they have a right to say they did not like the book.
3. Tell students that this day will be an opportunity to evaluate the merit of these books as tools to learn about identity.
4. Remind students of the importance of using books as mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors.
5. Provide students with access to NYspotlight video transcript and tell students they will be watching the video twice, once without taking notes, and once while annotating.
6. Play video for students the first time. Play video for students a second time, encouraging them to underline key information and make notes in the margins.
7. Ask students to share the information they thought was important and why. Display this information in a visible place in class as the discussion takes place.

Main Lesson (40 minutes)

1. Pass out “Reading Diversity Checklist” and “Book Review Organizer.”
2. Have students complete the checklist individually. If students are not already with their book clubs, have them move to be with their groups. Then have them discuss their answers to the questions on the checklist and why they answered the way they did.
3. Have students complete their review organizers individually and share their thoughts with their groups.
4. Have students get out their journals and display the following prompt:
What did you learn about different identities from this book? Choose a specific quote or passage that helped you with your new understanding.
How will you use this new understanding of identity outside of the classroom?
Would you recommend this book to someone else to read? Explain why or why not.
5. Students will have the rest of class to work on their responses.

Exit Ticket: Checklists, organizers, and writer’s journals

Differentiation and planned universal supports:

Students have access to transcripts for the video they are watching in order to annotate and follow along with dialogue. Students have the opportunity to share thoughts and work with their group members.

Type of Student Assessments and what is being assessed:

- **Informal Assessment:** Students will be informally assessed based on their understanding of Marley’s mission and their ability to discuss its importance.

- **Formal Assessment:** Students will be formally assessed based on their ability to apply what they know about identity work to the books they have just read.
- **Modifications to the Assessments:** Students have the chance to listen to and collaborate with their classmates throughout the lesson. Students may complete their work in digital or hardcopy form depending on student preference.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Student explained something they learned from the book referencing specific passages that support their lesson.
- Student communicated a realistic application for the knowledge they acquired.
- Student provided an opinion and clearly explained it.

Relevant theories and/or research best practices:

- Discovering My Identity (Learning for Justice)
- YA literature as part of critical reading activities (Buehler, 2016; Beach, Thein, & Webb, 2016)
- Identity Focused Teaching (Beach, Johnston, & Thein, 2015)

Name: _____

Reading Diversity Checklist

Directions: Answer the following questions based on your knowledge of your chosen YA novel.

Book Title: _____ **Author:** _____

1. Are people of different races, genders, ages and classes featured in the book?	Yes	No
2. Are certain types of people left out of the book?	Yes	No
3. Do the people and situations in the book seem real to you?	Yes	No
4. Does the book talk about being included or excluded?	Yes	No
5. Does the book talk about people being treated fairly or unfairly?	Yes	No
6. Are people in the book described as good or bad because of their race, gender, age or class?	Yes	No
7. Does the illustrator draw people in ways that look respectful to their identities?	Yes	No
8. Would you recommend this book to your friends?	Yes	No
Why would you recommend or not recommend this book?		

Name: _____

Book Review Graphic Organizer

Directions: Review your YA novel by filling out this organizer. Be sure to think about everything you've learned about identity while you're writing.

Book Title: _____

Author: _____

Plot Summary:

Are most characters similar to or different from me?

(Check one) Similar ___ Different ___

Why?

Would you recommend this book? (Check one) Yes ___ No ___

Explain

Lesson 12

Grade Level: 10

Subject / Content area: ELA

Unit of Study: Analytical reflection on identity focused texts and construction of personal definitions for identity

Lesson Title: Identity Puzzle Pieces

Central Focus for the learning segment:

Students will collect a portfolio of completed classwork and personal artifacts that demonstrates what they have learned about identity and their personal relationship with forming their own identities.

Content Standard(s):CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.5

Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.9

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.2

Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

Learning Objectives associated with the content standards:

- Students will be able to discuss their new ideas regarding identity and the role it plays in society.
- Students will be able to use multiple work days to create and refine their ideas.
- Students will be able to provide a rationalization for why it is important to understand different identities as well as our own identities.
- Students will be able to create a visual representation of texts that can help their audience understand their identity.

Instructional Resources and Materials to engage students in learning:

- Handouts and writing prompts from throughout the unit
- Student Chosen YA novels
- Identity Puzzle Pieces instruction sheet/templates/organizers
- Art Supplies

Instructional Strategies and Learning Tasks that support diverse student needs. (Include what you and students will be doing.):

Day 1

Lesson Intro

1. Remind students of the first activity that they did in class with their identity webs. Ask students to raise their hands if they feel like they have a better understanding of identity now than when they started their unit.
2. Inform students that they will be receiving their final project assignment today and that this is their opportunity to reflect on how they have learned.
3. Ask students to share any ideas they have for why it is important to reflect on the learning process.

Main Lesson

1. Go over instructions for the final assessment. Remind students of the activities they have done and can use for the project. Remind students of the in-class texts they have worked with.
2. Provide students with an explanation of the texts students can choose to include to share their personal identities. Provide examples if needed.
3. Go over the planning page and how students should use it to organize their initial ideas.
4. Go over possible formats for student final projects.
5. Show students Puzzle Pieces template. Tell students that this is what they will use to give visual representations of their texts to their readers. Ask students why they think puzzle pieces are being used in this context. Tell students that if they think a text is very important to their identity, they can demonstrate that by having it take up more than one puzzle piece.
6. Inform students that during their work time, they will be conferencing with the teacher to receive feedback and guidance.
7. Ask for any questions or if clarification is needed.
8. Inform students that if there are materials or supplies that they need to please ask.

Students will spend the rest of class working on their projects.

Days 2/3/4

These days will be used as student workdays to complete this assignment.

Differentiation and planned universal supports: Students will be selecting their favorite classroom texts and activities to use in order to discuss what they've learned about identity. Students will also select texts that they personally value as part of their identity or as a tool to help understand identity.

Type of Student Assessments and what is being assessed:

- **Informal Assessment:** Students will be informally assessed based on their use of planning organizers and their use of feedback.

- **Formal Assessment:** Students will be formally assessed based on their completed Puzzle Piece presentation sheet as well as their analysis of how their understanding of identity has grown.
- **Modifications to the Assessments:** Students will be allowed to collaborate with their teacher if they are not satisfied with the assignment format. Students will have the opportunity to discuss an alternate format that fulfills learning targets and is fulfilling for the student's experience.

Evaluation Criteria:

Students will be evaluated using a single point rubric that highlights the following criteria:

- Student chose three in class activities to evaluate.
- Student provides a thoughtful analysis of how their thinking towards identity has changed.
- Student provides an example of how they think their newfound understanding of identity can be used in their lives from now on.
- Student identified three classroom texts that contributed to their learning and explain how.
- Student identified at least three texts that they find personally meaningful.
- Students provide a visual representation for each text.
- Student's ideas are organized and clearly demonstrate meaningful ideas and themes from each text.

Relevant theories and/or research best practices:

- YA literature as part of critical reading activities (Buehler, 2016; Beach, Thein, & Webb, 2016)
- Identity Focused Teaching (Beach, Johnston, & Thein, 2015)
- Portfolio Assessments (Frey, 2014)

Name: _____

Identity Puzzle Pieces Assignment

Now that we are at the end of our unit on identity, it's time to think about what we've learned! This assignment will ask you to reflect back on the activities we've done in class, texts we've interacted with, and texts that you find personally meaningful that you would like to share with the class.

- Select three classroom activities and provide an explanation for how each one helped you learn about identity, changed the way you thought about identity, or reinforced ideas you already had about identity. The three activities you choose, and your explanation should demonstrate where you started in your knowledge of identity and where you are now.
- Select three texts that were used in class and incorporate them into your discussion of your journey to learn about identity. Specifically name the texts and discuss how they affected you during this unit.
- Select at least three texts that are personally meaningful to you! These could be books, movies, tv shows, video games, podcasts, drawings, or anything else you can think of! You must include the title of the text, the author, and why it is meaningful to you. Be sure to include how someone can better understand your identity by viewing each text.
- Provide a visual representation for ALL of your texts (both from class and your chosen texts) on your Identity Puzzle Pieces Template.

The way you represent your ideas and explanations is up to you! Here are some ideas:

- Traditional essay
- Power point
- Prezi
- One Pager
- Video Essay
- Nearpod
- Series of Tik Toks
- Anything else that you think will be inspiring!

Name: _____

Identity Puzzle Pieces Planning Page

First Classroom Activity Summary:

What you did:

What you learned:

Second Classroom Activity Summary:

What you did:

What you learned:

Third Classroom Activity Summary:

What you did:

What you learned:

First Classroom Text Title/Author:

What was this text about:

What did you learn:

Second Classroom Text Title/Author:

What was this text about:

What did you learn:

Third Classroom Text Title/Author:

What was this text about:

What did you learn:

Your Identity Texts!

List them here (Title/Author/Format)

What does each text teach us about your identity:

Chapter 4: Conclusion

The tremendous access our society has to informational tools and a means to share our thoughts has become a great blessing, as well as a tremendous burden. The way we take in the information we learn about, as well as what we do with that information is constantly changing and evolving. What doesn't change, are the universal human truths that allow our society to overcome, rather than disintegrate. Our students have a right to those lessons. English Language Arts is uniquely positioned as a subject that can be about all subjects (Burke, 1999). Students are more than capable; they are eager to make a difference in the world. They need only the tools to know how to do so. The ELA content standards provide adequate coverage of these tools for learning and amplifying voices. In order to go beyond adequate, teachers must provide students with scenarios to use these tools as a means to engage with their immediate, as well as worldly, community.

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