

TEACHING POLITICAL ADVOCACY IN NORTH PORTLAND: AN ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL EQUITY CURRICULUM



Prepared by Teachers from Roosevelt High School

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Teaching Political Advocacy in North Portland

North Portland has long had a reputation, valid or not, of being a tough part of town with a contentious citizenry. Its boundaries, (the Columbia and Willamette Rivers and the I-5 freeway) tend to isolate the community from the Portland metropolitan area, creating, for many, a physical as well as a social barrier to the larger city community and raising questions of equity, particularly for children. It is a community that often feels neglected with a sense that much needed resources go to other parts of the city and county where the voices are louder.

Roosevelt High School reflects the diversity of St Johns. Out of a total population of 1,131 students, 50.4% are of American Indian, African American, Asian American, or Hispanic American descent. (PPS School Enrollment Report, October 2000). As with its founder James Johns, the students and staff still feel a deep independence about their school from the rest of the city, but have a strong sense of loyalty to the neighborhood. Roosevelt, at its heart, is a neighborhood school with a strong sense of place.

We are five teachers, the architects of this unit, with similar ideals and diverse teaching responsibilities. Our individual tasks and projects may be different, however the universal theme of teaching political advocacy rings true for all of us. "Knowledge is power" (Francis Bacon) is a guiding pedagogical force inherent in our overall intention. We want our students to be better educated about their community and well-informed citizens of Portland. They will also learn to become educators to the larger community about North Portland. Our goals are to support students in being agents of community cohesiveness and in developing the skills to steward Portland's environmental and cultural resources.

The individual teachers who designed this unit are as follows:

Amy Ambrosio. Amy is teaching a History course that will focus on the local history of Oregon and North Portland. For this project her students will create personal and cultural geographies of significant places and events in order to establish and affirm their connection with the Columbia Slough / North Portland Community.

Kathy Anderson. Kathy is teaching a Drama as Literature class and is highlighting the play *The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail*. This play contains an environmental theme with an example of civil disobedience; thus the ideas of political advocacy and social justice are woven into her project.

Santha Cassell. Santha is teaching freshman English and will be addressing community building and developing self-concept. "Creating Monologue from a Family Story" and "Class Directory" addresses these two concepts. She is also

teaching Journalism and will be resurrecting our school newspaper after a long hiatus. Central to this course/project is developing and working with students' sense of place as they write about Roosevelt and its surrounding community. They will take on reporters' habits of mind: inquiry, investigation, interviewing. "Proposal for Change" will address these processes, as well as her two aforementioned projects.

Anne Lesch. Anne is teaching Creative Writing and her project, "The Politics of Personal Narratives" utilizes narrative writing as a forum for expressing political advocacy. Students will read writings about personal experiences with a political message and use these writings as a model for creating their own narratives.

Catherine Theriault. Catherine is teaching Environmental Community, an English course that is a collaborative project with the Center for Columbia River History and Dr. Katrine Barber of PSU. Embedded in this class will be readings and writings that explore environmental and social themes. "Talk Story," "Land Journals," "Second Hand Stories," and "Writing to Evoke a Sense of Place," all serve to cultivate a deeper understanding of our students' place in their community.

It should be noted that each one of us is teaching the classes we mention for the first time. We are all pioneers in this process. All of these classes are untracked with ELL, Title I, and Special Education students included. This unit represents a collaboration of five Roosevelt teachers, a fusion of hearts and minds. It is our hope that this project will inspire further collaboration at our school. It is also our fervent wish that this unit serves as a foundation for our school's new vision: We are committed to improving *relationships* both within the school and with the community, teaching *relevant* curriculum, implementing *rigorous* academics, improving our *reputation*, and broadening our *resource* base. Teaching political advocacy to our students is our way of applying "Knowledge is power" so their voices ring as loud, if not louder, than all the others.

CIM Applications

This curriculum offers opportunities for a multitude of CIM writing and speaking samples. As we all know, the boundaries between various writing and speaking modes—narrative, expository essay, informative speech, and persuasive essay or speech—are actually quite ambiguous and often depend on the particular emphasis the writer chooses to adopt. The examples we provide here often fit into several categories of writing modes, depending on how you, as the teacher, decide to direct your students' efforts. With that in mind, use the following menu to locate the different CIM work sample applications in the sections of the text.

WRITING SAMPLES

Narrative or Imaginative

- Talk Story
- Land Journals
- Personal and Cultural Geographies
- Creating a Monologue from a Family Story
- Second Hand Stories
- The Politics of Personal Narratives

Expository Essay

- Creating a Monologue from a Family Story
- The Politics of Personal Narratives

Persuasive Essay

- Writing Strategies to Evoke a Sense of Place
- Personal and Cultural Geographies
- The Politics of Personal Narratives
- Proposal for Positive Change in Education

SPEAKING SAMPLES

Impromptu Speech

- Talk Story

Informative Speech

- Land Journals
- Personal and Cultural Geographies
- Creating a Monologue from a Family Story

Persuasive Speech

- Proposal for Positive Change in Education

Class Directory

A Writing and Community-Building Strategy

Description:

The Class Directory serves several purposes. It provides a forum for talking about composition, engaging leads, paragraph development, and transitions while building community and closeness early in the year. This project is drawn from Peggy Ammann's article, "Writing for a Real Audience," which includes an entertaining and inspiring narrative and follows this lesson plan.

Advance Preparations:

1. Brainstorming materials (overhead or butcher paper)
2. Profile of a celebrity or local person in the news to read as a model (Sunday edition of *The Oregonian* is a good source for this)
3. Prepare data sheets (See Appendix)

First Steps:

1. Ask students to brainstorm interview questions that they could ask a new acquaintance. Here is a start: "What are your future goals?" "What school activities do you like to do?" "Where were you born?"
2. Hand out Class Directory Data Sheets to each student and assign each a number.
3. Demonstrate how to conduct a short interview using the list of questions. The product of the interview is a one-sentence piece of information that fits in the box.

Here are some guiding rules the students should understand before engaging in interviews:

- Don't tell anyone anything you don't want to see in print.
- If a question makes a student uncomfortable, MOVE ON TO ANOTHER QUESTION.
- Don't answer the same question more than once.

Here are some tips for teachers that Peggy includes in her article:

- Don't do data collection for a whole period. Reserve the last few minutes of class for several days and prepare to spread the interviewing over several days or weeks.
- Give a quota for completed interviews per day and encourage students to conduct interviews by phone at home.

- Allow students to fill their own square on their own data sheet with a one-sentence juicy fact. An award, honor, or little-known piece of info works well here.

Next Steps:

1. When data collection is complete, collect all the data sheets and cut out the squares. Put all squares marked with the same number (about the same person) in an envelope marked with that person's number. Each envelope contains 30 pieces of information about one student. Pass out the envelopes so that each student is writing about someone else.
2. Group slips of similar information and paper clip together—each little pile probably has the makings of a paragraph. Mini-lessons on paragraph structure, transitions, engaging leads and other composition concepts are useful here.
3. Students write a rough draft of their profiles from the paper slips. After the rough drafts are written, you may choose to create editing partnerships or groups. Writers ask, "what else would you like to know about this person?"
4. Writer of the profile connects with the subject, adding detail and clarification to the drafts. Students revise their drafts. Now is a good time for a mini-lesson on leads and intros.
5. Editing groups focus on paragraphing, leads, transitions, clarity, spelling, and mechanics. Writers submit drafts to teacher.

At this point Peggy Ammann gives the copies with corrections to a typing class or parent volunteers. She commissions cover art from the class and then copies and collates a copy for each class member, with extra copies for transfers and newcomers.

Writing Strategies to Evoke a Sense of Place

The goal of the following nature writing and journal keeping activities is to instill a strong sense of place based on careful observation derived from personal involvement with the land and its inhabitants.

Exercises:

Favorite place. Students imagine an **actual** place that offers sanctuary. The following questions can guide their imagery.

1. Where do you look forward to being when you are in a place you do not like?
2. Where do you spend vacation time?
3. Where do you like to be when you have problems to work out?
4. Where might you like to live as an adult?
5. Where would you rather be than here?

Once students discover their favorite place, have them extend on all aspects including sensory, emotional, and physical detail. Create a scene in which the reader can actually place himself or herself there along with the writer.

Students share descriptions in class and discussion centers on what makes them “favorites.” Note how many of the favorite places are in nature and discuss reasons for such. Reasons may include aesthetics, away from normal surroundings, or an escape. Discuss the qualities of what makes a favorite place and what kinds of joy or peace it offers. Ultimately, make a connection to the importance of having a place that offers a sanctuary in times of joy or trouble.

Activity: Literary Postcards Have student create a postcard by drawing a picture of their favorite place on one side and filling out the back side as if it were a real postcard. They could address it to a friend and describe their place as if writing from that location. The format could be as simple as a postcard size heavy weight paper cut into postcard size, a blank postcard from the post office, or watercolor postcards purchased from an art supply store. Large index cards with a blank side work nicely, too. When finished, the literary postcards make a wonderful display in the classroom.

Land Autobiography. Students reflect on all the natural places that are special to them and have shaped who they are. It helps to include an example of your own writing to use as a model for students.

Activity: Talk Story The “Talk Story” activity included in this packet could be a brainstorming strategy for developing the land autobiography ideas. The prompt would be for students to tell a story about a natural place that’s special to them and give an example of how they’ve been affected by this

place. Questions generated by classmates will help students develop details for their autobiographies.

Sensory Writing. Students write descriptions as “sensory monologues”. Ideas include describing sounds, textures, aromas, and taste. After doing this in the classroom, students go outside and apply the same awareness to their natural surroundings.

Activity: Sensory Brainstorming 1) Have students brainstorm a list of things in nature. Start with individual lists and then move on to generating a class list. 2) Students choose one of the objects. 3) Have students make five columns on their paper and make sensory lists about their nature object: What does their object a) look like, b) sound like, c) smell like, d) taste like, e) feel like. Again, give students an opportunity to share. 4) Students list five reasons why it’s important to them. 5) Students list two emotions it provokes. 6) Students write their descriptive piece about their chosen object. This exercise could evolve into poetry or prose.

Personification. Students imagine that an object in their environment has the ability to think and feel. They could write from the point of view of a tree, a rock, a trail, or a mountain.

Activity: Place Perspective Tell the story of a place from its viewpoint. The student could go back a hundred years and describe some of the significant events that have occurred at this place.

Thirteen Ways of Looking At... Discuss Wallace Steven’s poem, “Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird”. Note the structure and sequence, from sensory to personal to philosophical and back to a concrete image. Have students choose something to observe outside and find thirteen ways to describe it. Encourage students to include a few lines of writing for each description and to move beyond superficial impressions for deeper ideas.

Activity: Poetry Guide Environmental Defense has a website with ten prompts for writing poetry about the natural world.

<http://www.earth2kids.org/teachers/poetryguide.html>

See enclosed example in the Appendix.

A Journey. Have students write about field trips or family trips using this format.

- *Anticipations.* What are your expectations, hopes, concerns, goal, and wishes?
- *Observations and reactions.* Compare and contrast new environment with home environment. Compare newcomer observations with a native’s. Note any environmental problems.

- *Reflections.* Were expectations met? Goals? Any surprises? Disappointments? Describe high points and low points. What did you learn? How did the experience affect your view of home?

Activity: Eastside Esplanade Take students on a field trip to the new Eastside Esplanade which combines pedestrian access to Portland's urban ecosystem. Note that some of the proponents of the new river walkway believe that it will bring more people to the river, thereby inspiring more involvement in actively cleaning it up. The Eastside Esplanade is a mixed bag; it has a 1200-foot floating walkway near a sewer overflow outlet. Portland's newest project remains a controversial subject by wrestling with issues such as public safety, justifying the cost, aesthetics, and freeway noise, to name a few. There's plenty of information to research before embarking on this outing; one of the most relevant issues to explore for the purpose of this unit would be the environmental impact on the Willamette River. After conducting the research and going on the field trip, students can write a persuasive essay taking a pro or con stance on the development of the Eastside Esplanade. They can even carry it a step further and submit their finished essays to *The Oregonian*.

Acknowledgements: Santha Cassell for "Literary Postcards" and Video Poetry Presentation on August 30, 2000 by Kathy Boyea and Kate Mann for "Sensory Brainstorming".

Resource: Literature and the Land: Reading and Writing for Environmental Literacy, 7-12.

Land Journals

A Writing and Speaking Strategy

“When we enter the landscape to learn something, we are obligated to pay attentionto approach the land as we would a person, by opening an intelligent conversation. And to stay in one place, to make of that one, long observation a fully dilated experience. (Lopez, p.36)

Rationale: Students keep a journal about a chosen piece of land that is special to them. The goals of this activity are:

- To increase awareness and powers of observation about the natural world, including seeing changes over time
- To apply a variety of points of view in looking at land, including poetic, historic, scientific, personal, artistic, and political
- To see the land as an integrated, ecological whole
- To learn a variety of journal keeping styles and to discover and develop personal voice
- To develop a personal relationship with and a sense of caring for a piece of land
- To have a weekly time out from routine activity

Steps:

1. *Choice of site.* Students choose a site they are familiar with and willing to visit once a week. Locations can range from a yard, a baseball field, mountain biking trail, a favorite park or garden, or a plaza. Students in urban areas can choose any exterior space that can provide rich descriptions of how people use outdoor spaces, the changed that occur over time, and the impact of human use on the environment.
2. *The Journal.* Students purchase own journals especially for this purpose. Some students may settle for notebooks, although point out that choosing something without lines will allow for drawing as well as writing. Students should be encouraged to decorate regular notebooks with collages, quotes, and drawings.
3. *Due Dates.* Students can write either on the site or at home, but must go to the site once a week. It's best to collect the journal on the same day weekly and return them within 2 days.
4. *Length.* Students are encouraged to utilize a variety of approaches - drawing, mapping, collecting samples, pressing flowers, or photographing, and to write the equivalent of about 700 words a week. Students can also include news articles and historical documents related to their land.
5. *Feedback.* The teacher should comment on the entries once a week using post-it notes or inserting scrap paper to preserve the integrity of student's work. Specific feedback suggested could be asking

questions and expecting answers, sharing own anecdotes, and comments on content. If the class gives permission, students could also share journals to read and comment on each other's entries.

Examples: The journal entries can be assigned and structured, completely open ended, or a combination of the two. "The Naturalists Journal," an article by Dale Laurence, delineates six types or styles of journal keeping. The following is a summary of each model.

The "Day Book" This is a detailed method of recording changes in the physical environment, which can reveal patterns in natural phenomena over a specific length of time. This style does not include personal reflection or poetic description, however it does encourage students to notice the small things at their site. The "day book" is an effective journal keeping style for the scientifically inclined student.

The "Exploratory Journal" This style is based on Darwin's field notes which he expanded into diaries while traveling around the world. His diary offers a model of combining personal feeling and discovery with scientific observation, and demonstrates that scientific writing can be infused with youthful enthusiasm. .

The "Literary Journal" Styled after Henry David Thoreau, this relationship with nature model offers literary, intellectual, and spiritual dialogue writing. Reading selections from Walden is suggested to prepare students.

The "Field Journal" John Muir's journal of his walk from Indiana to Florida provides the example of this style. "Filled with ecstasies, enthusiasms, and verbal celebrations," this journal style encourages students to write on their land site.

The "Naturalist's Sketchbook" The book A Trail Through Leaves, The Journal as a Path to Place by Hannah Hinchman, provides the example for this illuminated journal. This style combines verbal observations with illustrations and is a great springboard for creativity. Examples of illustrations include maps and nature walks, along with botanical, geological, and astronomical drawings and text.

The "Renaissance Journal" This final journal offers an eclectic approach that combines scientific field observation, personal experience, illustration, and photography. This could be the most popular choice as it offers the most options.

Suggestions: Once the students get started, offer them additional approaches to journal writing suggested by Solly and Lloyd in Journeynotes: Writing for Recovery and Spiritual Growth.

Stream of Consciousness After demonstrating this “speed writing” or “whatever comes to mind” approach, sustained over a period of time (10-15 minutes), encourage students to try this on their land sites. Remind students that they should disregard grammar and logic and that this method is a great way to jumpstart the brain. I tell students that I go through periods of writing my “morning pages” using this approach (based on Cameron’s The Artist’s Way). It’s how I get inspired for the day.

Listing Used as a form of brainstorming, students can list sense impressions, wildlife sightings, plants, or memories. They can then choose three items from their list to describe in detail.

Shifting Point of View Writing from another point of view offers many opportunities for “walking in the shoes of another.” Students can imagine being a pre-European contact native living on their land site or an explorer seeing the land for the first time.

Letter Writing Students can write letters to previous owners of the land as well as a future occupant a hundred years in the future.

Storytelling Students can make up a story about how their place came to be or imagine an event that has happened in the past or will happen in the future. There are countless opportunities for storytelling in their journals.

Poetry Student poets can shine here. The following is a student example from Literature and the Land.

Environmental Unconsciousness

Shoveling plastered
flakes off the milky cliffs
of the basin, you rhythmically
clank your spoon on the glass.
The morning paper blankets
the table in front of your
careless mind.
Scanning the dull pages
on your way to another essential episode
of Peanuts, bits of
oil spills and dead elephants
paste themselves to your always preoccupied
brain, like the fragments of flooded
fields on your side of the bowl.

(Amanda L.)

See the Appendix for an environmental poetry guide.

Data Collection and Research Entries The land journal offers many opportunities for research in the social and natural sciences. Students can gain understanding of an ecosystem by gathering information in geology, botany, zoology, human history, and current use. Students can also collect oral histories, do archeological digs, or learn zoning and land protection ordinances. The possibilities are endless.

Evaluation: Half-way through the semester, students self-evaluate by writing in their journals what they have learned so far about themselves, their land, and journal keeping. They are also asked to write goals for the remainder of the semester. What approaches have worked and what new approaches would they like to try? What else do they want to know? At the end of the course students write a final entry, using their stated goals, to evaluate what they have learned from the process of using a land journal.

Grading is based on consistency and quality of effort. Have they turned in a full entry each week? Do entries show observations and reflections that go beyond a cursory, superficial description?

Extension: In addition to the self-evaluation entry, students prepare an oral presentation on their land sites for the end of the course. Presentations include 1) thoughts from the self-evaluation and personal reflections on the journal keeping process, 2) selected excerpts from their journals, 3) information they have researched or gathered about soils, plants, animals, and history (including any documents and interviews), 4) possible future uses, 5) environmental problems associated with their site and possible solutions, 6) some visual representation of their land.

Timeline: Recommended as a semester or a yearlong project.

This assignment has been summarized from Literature and the Land: Reading and Writing for Environmental Literacy, 7-12.

Constructing Personal and Cultural Geographies

Description: Students will create personal and cultural geographies of significant places and events in order to establish and confirm their connection with the North Portland community. Following on that connection, students will look begin to comprehend how the events and places of their personal geographies are part of the cultural geographies of their community. This in turn reflects the role of socio-cultural patterns and forces shaped by contemporary, historical, local, state, national, and global factors. The ultimate goal for the entire curriculum is to encourage, educate, and aid students in envisioning themselves as, and becoming, active change agents for justice and equity in the North Portland community.

PERSONAL GEOGRAPHIES

Students will delineate on maps of North Portland places marking events of personal significance to each of them. They will use preprinted maps of the Columbia Slough/North Portland area and plot the location of places that are important and places where significant events have occurred in their lives. These maps will become the basis for determining common places of importance as well as charting common and differing meaningful experiences. Local maps can be obtained from the Center for Columbia River History website: <http://www.ccrh.org/comm/slough>.

Personal Geography Project

(Extrapolated from a lesson presented by Linda Christensen during the Portland Writing Project, Summer 1999)

Materials:

- 3 or more small (3x5) index cards per student;
- 3 large (5x7) cards per student;
- 1 copy of Columbia Slough/North Portland Map per student;
- copies of Portland maps, U.S. maps, world maps
- embroidery thread, thin colored string, or yarn
- variety of art materials (colored pencils, chalk, markers, etc.)
- glue or glue sticks

Procedure:

Each student will list all key events in her/his life. You might need to brainstorm with students, modeling with examples from your own life. Encourage and variety and creativity in their choices. Each student will choose three events to focus on for this project. The student will write on each of three small (3X5) cards a **brief description of a key event** in her/his life (i.e. one event per card), describe (with some detail) the **place or location** in which the event occurred, the **meaning or understanding** s/he derives from the event, and any **metaphorical connections** s/he may see between the place and

the event. Key themes: the pivotal event, the location of the event, personal understanding of that event, metaphorical connections between place and event.

Possible things to consider significant events: times you have given up hope or discovered a solution to despair, times when you faced barriers or found entrances for change or growth, etc.

Possible things to consider significant places: geographical barriers significant to a time; natural/man-made entrances which are significant; the setting as a metaphor of one's life (example, south Texas—flat, brown, "barren" vs. Pacific Northwest—green, lush, "fruitful")

Each student will use each of the large (5X7) cards to depict one of the three events in their setting (choose key images from the place to help specify the location—example: St. Johns Bridge, some detail of a house, a particular tree, etc.). As always, emphasize that drawing skill is not important here. In fact, some students may choose to use abstract images or simple stick figures.

Each student will mount the maps on poster board, position and attach the cards outside the map, and connect the cards to the locations by string.

Speaking: In small groups or a whole class share, students present their personal geographies.

Writing: Each student can write a narrative or imaginative piece about the link between a particular place and event, using one of the stories from the map project to prompt their writing. The readings below can serve as models for the writing.

Reading: The following are fiction and non-fiction examples of youth and adult writing about significant events and places in young people's lives.

Youth Writing:

"Neighborhood Hassle" by Stephanie Lincoln, "Coming Out" by Krona Adair, "Granny's" by Alyss Dixon, "Grandma's Kitchen" by Alisha Moreland. All can be found in *Reading, Writing, and Rising Up: Teaching About Social Justice and the Power of the Word* by Linda Christensen

Youth and Adult narratives:

Excerpts from *I Begin My Life All Over: The Hmong and the American Immigrant Experience*, edited by Lillian Faderman with Ghia Xiong

Adult Writing:

Various selections from *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* by Sherman Alexie

“Five Hundred Steps” by Kathleen Tyau in *A Little Too Much Is Enough*

“Argue Not Concerning God” by Martín Espada in *Zapata’s Disciple: Essays*

“The Lesson” by Toni Cade Bambara and “South Brooklyn, 1947” by Fran Claro in *Hear My Voice: A Multicultural Anthology of Literature in the United States*, edited by Laurie King.

CULTURAL GEOGRAPHIES

Students Finding Connections

Students will use their personal geographies to find common significant locations in the North Portland community. They will also look for common personal events (such as graduation from George or Portsmouth Middle School). These places and events will serve as markers of “cultural” significance in the community.

Materials:

- chart paper
- colored markers
- large map of the Columbia Slough/North Portland area,
- highlighters in many colors

Procedure:

After sharing their personal geography projects, students will list all the places where more than one event occurred. They will also list events that are similar. These can be recorded on a single sheet of chart paper.

After reviewing the lists, students will locate places of common occurrence and mark them with different colored highlighters on the large map. These will be designated as significant “cultural” locations. For example, if many students describe middle school graduation ceremonies held at Roosevelt High School, this would receive a special color marking. The goal here is to begin to find patterns in important locations in the community and determine if there are also patterns for pivotal events at those locations.

Community Stories

Students will interview two members of the North Portland community. The interview will cover questions about the person’s “economic” story and about community change. See attached instructions and interview questions from *A Very Popular Economic Education Sampler*, compiled by the Highlander Research and Education Center). Students and teacher can adapt the questions to include more attention to location, place, environment, etc.

While students can record and transcribe the interviews by hand, we highly recommend obtaining small, portable audio recorders from PPS for students to use during the interviews. These tapes can then be edited and included in the audio/video installation discussed in “The Classroom Is a Bridge to the World” section at the end of this curriculum.

Once the community stories are collected, students will look for other examples of repeated patterns of events and locations to chart on the large map. At this point, expect to find concentrations of multiple events at certain key places as well as repetition of types of stories from their informants’ stories. As students determine and mark these locations/places, encourage them to discuss why these kinds of places are “culturally” significant, not merely personally significant.

Understanding Social and Cultural Factors Underlying Community Inequity

Students will learn central concepts in anthropology (the study of culture), including economics, ritual and belief, kinship and social systems, history, politics, language, and inequality, in order to develop a structural analysis of inequities affecting the North Portland community.

Activity: Prepare students to learn and apply these anthropological concepts through semantic mapping as a pre-reading exercise and following with short selections from an Anthropology test.

Semantic Mapping: For a brief, clear description of this activity, see “Semantic Mapping...before Reading” included in the Appendix of this curriculum.

Reading: Excerpts from the introductions to the relevant sections of Johnetta B. Cole’s excellent reader: *Anthropology for the Nineties: Introductory Readings*. This will provide a basic grounding in these concepts.

Discussion: Use the concepts above to contextualize the events and places described by students and their informants. The goal is to help students move away from individual blaming to seeing the structural factors that set up events and impinge on places in their community.

Two hypothetical examples:

- **Graduation from middle school.** Many students at Roosevelt High School describe this as a key event in their lives. Why is this a significant event? Is it significant in all communities, in Portland in general, in CS/NP in particular? How does the importance of this event reflect the meaning of education? What does it say about the challenge of graduation for many students in PPS or CS/NP? The history of

educational completion in families in their community? The importance of ritual and tradition in the CS/NP community? The inequities of educational opportunities in Portland or in Oregon?

- **Violent physical conflicts.** Several students describe getting into physical fights at a particular park. Why this park? Why fighting? What are the causes of the events? Why did they occur in that particular park? Does the conflict reflect issues of ethnic inequality in the community? Are ritualized behaviors of malehood or territorial positioning being enacted? Is the park poorly lighted and not well patrolled—thus reflecting both community inequities and weaknesses in the economics and social systems of policing and protecting a space intended for play? Are we seeing the results of economic and familial stress as parents are overworked and not at home, or stressed and, thus, not available to help youth mediate conflict or make better choices for leisure time activity?

By discussing the events in the context of cultural analysis, students can begin to discover patterns in their personal experiences and the community stories that reflect larger social/cultural factors. With this knowledge, students can begin to explore where the power to change the conditions of their community lies.

Reading: “Troubled Waters in Ecotopia: Environmental Racism in Portland, Oregon” by Ellen Stroud. Stroud’s essay provides a portrait of the historical, political, economic, and political factors that have shaped the environmental degradation of the Columbia Slough/North Portland area. The essay is an example of the way in which local information can be analyzed and used in a piece of writing to say something meaningful about patterns of inequity in a community. See “Environmental Racism” in this curriculum for reading strategies to assist students in comprehending this challenging, yet important, essay.

Writing: Students can write letters or essays to chosen audiences, such as PPS school board members, the editor of *The Oregonian* or *The St. Johns Review*, for example, in which they use the evidence from their geographies and their analysis of the socio-cultural factors underlying events to call attention to the patterns of inequity in their community. Their letters and essays should provide action plans for resolving the inequities. See “Proposal for Positive Change in Education” for a lesson plan for writing a persuasive essay.

Creating a Monologue From a Family Story

A Writing and Speaking Strategy

Description:

In this project, students create short monologues based on an interview with a family member. This drama technique may be adapted for theater, language arts, journalism, or social studies classes. Teachers may choose to emphasize various elements of the project. Some areas of emphasis are a sense of place ("stories from North Portland") character, or narrative.

Using interviews as a source for writing and performing was inspired by the work of Anna Deveare Smith. Her piece "Twilight Los Angeles, 1992" is powerful and rich theater. In this one-woman show, Smith wrote and performed 30 monologues based on hundreds of interviews she taped around the Rodney King case and riots. Smith uses language to create character in an amazing way. The video is a compelling lead-in to talk about point of view, social justice, race issues, or law.

Advance Preparations:

1. Order small tape recorders from PPS A-V department (optional)
2. Show Anna Deveare Smith's "Twilight Los Angeles, 1992" (optional) or use another video that has monologues and characters in it. Smith's video is part of a PBS series called "Stage On Screen" and can be ordered through WNET Video (800-336-1917).
3. Preliminary transcription exercise:
 - a. Make a short tape of yourself telling a story.
 - b. Transcribe 2 minutes of your story to type and distribute.
 - c. Play tape for class and model transcription using overhead.

Process

1. Brainstorm a class list of questions that would elicit good stories. These are interview questions. Some questions might be:
 - What is your first memory of living in St. Johns?
 - How did our family come to live here?
 - What was your favorite place growing up? What did you do there?
2. Students make their own lists using the overhead and their own ideas.
3. Interview the family member and tape the interview. (Ask permission to tape first).
4. Choose a section of the tape to transcribe. Ideally, pick the part that has the most action or the most distinctive speech patterns in it. Transcribe the story. Transcription is not easy. Ask students to aim for a paragraph or two (perhaps not the whole story). A one-minute speech is a lot of

- work and will take a long time to write from tape. This is a challenging assignment and should be shorter rather than discouraging. Remind students to take down every word the person says, even “uhms” and throat clearing. Repetition, patterns, odd turns of phrase, even the “ahs and uhms” will make the person come alive.
5. Edit the transcript so that it makes the most sense and has the most power. Punctuate sentences and indent paragraphs.

Final exhibition of the monologues may take several forms. Students may read their monologues for the class or memorize and perform them. It all depends on the objectives of the class.

Supplemental Ideas:

- Use one gesture or mannerism that your subject has and incorporate it into the performance.
- Bring in one object that can serve as a prop or an object that adds focus or meaning to your monologue. Anna Deveare Smith’s minimal additions to her performances work very well: a pair of glasses, hat, or bandana can help define character.
- Use this exercise as a prewriting activity for writing an I-Search paper on family, community, an area, or another connection.

Timeline: One period to watch parts of “Twilight Los Angeles, 1992,” one to practice transcription in the classroom with teacher modeling, one for writing, one (or more) for performing.

“Today one has the impression that the interviewer is not listening to what you say, nor does he think it important, because he believes that the tape recorder hears everything. But he’s wrong; it doesn’t hear the beating of the heart, which is the most important part of the interview.”

--Gabriel Garcia Marquez
(News Writing and Reporting, The Missouri Group)

Second Hand Stories

A Speaking and Writing Strategy

Description: This activity can be used as a preparation for informational interviewing. Many of our students will be collecting oral histories by talking and learning from community experts: people who live and work in their neighborhoods. Our students will be developing historical materials that will culminate in a public history project. "Second Hand Stories" can assist students in understanding how their own filters can affect the outcome of a story.

Steps:

1. Have students pair off and share stories about any particular topic. For example, students tell a story about any family member (parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc.) that illustrates something special about that person and how this person has affected them. Your success will be greater if you model this activity by sharing a story of your own.
2. Students move into groups of four with the original pairs staying together. The partners tell the stories in this new grouping with each student listening to how their story is being retold. (The listeners can share their perceptions of how their own story unfolds during the class discussion/ debriefing session the following day). In this group, students pick a "best" story to tell the class. During this process, the teacher can go around the room and facilitate by listening for good stories to promote to the next level.
3. The class reconvenes into a whole group. Yet another student tells the best story from each group of four. At this point, the original story is twice removed from the source.
4. **The next day** the teacher facilitates a discussion reviewing the stories that were shared the day before with the whole class. The fewer details the better, as the purpose is to jog students' memories, not to retell the stories again.
5. Students choose a story to retell in writing; the only requirement is that they can't choose their own story. Students are encouraged to include all the details and descriptions they can remember.
6. Once the written stories are collected, have students evaluate how their original stories have changed by having the source of each story read aloud the written interpretations. This is best done in a whole class discussion to provide an opportunity to explore objectivity/subjectivity in writing. It also is a great forum for discussing the responsibilities of the reporter, an important issue

when students are actually conducting the oral histories in their community.

Timeline: Two class periods, possibly three.

Suggestions: It is important to provide interesting and relevant prompts for this activity; otherwise some of the storytelling could be reduced to “what I did last weekend” and may not always be in good taste.

You may also want to form groups before class if you think students would benefit from this. Of course, you can always allow students to self-select their partners/groups. The following is a list of suggestions (from Lorna Lockwood) for randomly placing students together in groups for cooperative learning.

Line up, tallest to shortest, count off

Line up, alphabetical order, count off

Cut magazine pictures into four or five pieces; give one to each person, find partners

Place numbers 1-8 (for 8 groups, adjust if you need to) on index cards in a bowl; students make a blind selection

Students form four groups, according to the season of their birth; once in their groups, count off by twos to reconfigure into eight groups

The Politics of Personal Narratives

A Narrative Writing Strategy

Description:

We've all read them--hundreds of them, in fact. Personal narratives by students that leave us asking, "What is your point; why should I care?" My students have powerful, interesting, and important stories to tell about their lives; stories I believe it is necessary people hear in order to understand who youth are, what's important to them, and what they need from us as a society. Often narrative writing is one of the only forums in which students can express political advocacy. But making the leap from storytelling to telling a story with meaning seems the great divide. The following series of activities are designed to guide students toward crafting narratives that have a point and propose a vision for how the world might be better.

Texts:

"Another Oregon Trail" (welfare)

"Coming Out" (homosexuality)

"A Woman's Silent Journey" (anorexia)

"Always Running" (excerpt) Luis Rodriguez (immigration, Mexican)

"Seventh Grade" (race)

"Thank You Ma'am" (troubled youth)

"Little Things Are Big" (race/gender)

These are some ideas (further descriptions provided in the Annotated Bibliography). However, they certainly don't cover the wide range of concerns students have. Try to supplement the list with selections that target issues of particular concern to the population with whom you work.

1-2 Days

Text:

"Always Running"

"A Woman's Silent Journey"

Steps:

1) To help students recognize how authors use narrative to make a statement about injustice, read as a whole class "Always Running" and "A Woman's Silent Journey." The authors' political statements are clear and accessible.

2) Use some leading questions to guide students toward making observations about the political stances the authors advocate. What messages do the authors want us to take away from their stories? How do they use their personal experiences to make a statement about an injustice in the world? How do they want the world to change? Who would this benefit? Who would this hurt or outrage?

1-2 Days

Texts:

5-6 short narrative or imaginative pieces related to the central theme (see above list and supplement with your favorites).

Steps:

- 1) Present several stories and provide a brief description for each.
- 2) Students will then choose from these selections and read their pieces either individually or aloud in their small group (see Literature Circle model in *A Collection of Reading Strategies, 2000*).
- 3) They should then convene in a group with others who selected the same story and discuss its intent. Have students use the same, or similar, questions used in the whole-class discussion the day before. This provides students both the opportunity to look at models perhaps more focused toward their concerns and further practice in identifying the political themes embedded in narrative writing.
- 4) After groups have discussed their pieces, have a representative from each group share a brief summary or the theme of their group's piece. You could also use a jigsaw model for this in which groups exchange members so that there is a representative from each group in each newly formed group. Students then exchange their information within these small groups. However, this model is really only effective when you have fairly even distribution between the groups, which is often not the case when students make Literature Circle selections.
- 5) Next, use the themes identified in the Literature Circles to begin a brainstorm list of contemporary issues which affect students' lives. Then open it up to the class. Record all these ideas on an overhead, board, or chart paper (someplace where students can refer to it in the following class days). This is the beginning of a list my class might generate:
race
immigration
school funding
welfare
SCF and foster care
perceptions of teens
neighborhood reputation
demonization of youth
domestic violence
substance use/abuse

1 Day

Steps:

- 1) Have students choose the top 2 or 3 issues which connect most deeply with their lives. Remind them that they can use an issue not necessarily on the brainstorm list; often sensitive topics such as homosexuality and child abuse don't appear on the class list but might be a topic a student might want to pursue.
- 2) Students journal write about stories from their lives which relate to these topics. Ask students to consider which stories seem to have an underlying message. How do you want your story to change people's attitudes?
- 3) Students can then share in small groups (some material may not be comfortable for students to share in a large group) and get feedback from peers. Have them help each other make decisions about which piece to pursue.
- 4) To reinforce decisions made and help those still wandering in the fog of indecision, ask some volunteers to share their ideas with the whole class.

As Long As It Takes in Your Class

Steps:

- 1) At this point, have students begin writing. As a checkpoint before writing, I like to have students fill out a brief **Declaration of Topic** (see following worksheet) so I know what their topic is and they make a commitment to an idea. They can certainly change topics later, but I at least have an idea as to whether they are on the right track, or completely lost.
- 2) To help students hone and craft their pieces I use Linda Christensen's **Elements of Fiction** (page 29 of Linda Christensen's *Reading, Writing, and Rising Up*).
- 3) Many of you already have an established set of rituals around revising and editing; if you are looking, I also use Linda Christensen's format (page 28 of *Reading, Writing, and Rising Up*).

Extension piece:

Use Oregon Trail as an anchor piece for both pursuing a political theme, but also incorporating a metaphor throughout the narrative that symbolizes the central issue(s).

Or

Have students conduct interviews with elders in which they eventually create a narrative from the elder's life that uses the same structure.

CIM Application: The final essay from this project serves as a CIM narrative work sample.

Proposal for Positive Change in Education

A Persuasive Writing Strategy

Description of Project: People love to complain about problems, but few put forward the energy to work for change. For this project, students will identify a problem at their school and propose a *realistic, creative, and inexpensive* solution. Emphasizing the solution over complaint, they will develop a persuasive piece of writing (essay, memo, letter) addressed to someone who can make a change. The project may be used as a preparation for a persuasive speech.

Specific criteria for proposal:

1. **Identify the problem.** Clearly explain the problem as you see it. For example, many students identify the hat ban as a school problem. They feel the ban infringes on their right to fashion or style and we spend a lot of energy fighting over hats. Another said that a problem at school is that lunch is too short; by the time you get through the line, wolf down your lunch and come back to campus, the bell has rung and you are late. A student at Jefferson wrote about the need to bring students of color into upper level classes. She researched the specific numbers of people in the classes and compared them to the numbers in the general population. In this way she supported her opinion.

If you are stuck for a topic, talk with other students about what kinds of program or discipline changes they want to see at their school.

1. **The problem must be clear to the reader.** Readers must understand why your education is suffering under existing conditions.
2. **You must convince the reader that the problem is severe enough for action.**
3. **Clearly outline a solution to the problem.** What do you propose that will change the existing conditions? For example: You say that the food choices in the cafeteria are not as healthful as you would like. You propose a full salad bar in the cafeteria or a fruit cart in the hall, open during morning break.
4. **Use research.** If you say that students want more healthful snacks, you must document your claim. Develop a survey, type it up, distribute it, and tally the results. If you object to the hat rule, investigate other schools that had the hat rule and changed it, or be able to cite statistics about the effectiveness of the rule. Carefully interview people who know or care about your topic. Quotes are an effective part of your proposal.

5. **Find the appropriate audience for your proposal.** There are several decision-making groups at school. The administrative staff, the site council, and student leadership are all designed to make positive decisions for the school. Decide who the audience is for your report.
6. **Presentation of proposal.** A proposal for change is a formal document. It must look professional. It must be typed and error free. You are trying to convince people in power that you are knowledgeable and intelligent with sound ideas. The quality of your writing says you are serious.

Provide checkpoints and mini-assignments along the way so that students can put pieces together and strengthen their work. Here is a list of lessons and assignments that can bring students through this project:

- Brainstorm problems, research and solutions as a class
- Define the difference between complaining and supporting a point
- Identify different kinds of research that could support change
- Hand in individual brainstorm sheet
- Topic sheet with sample topic sentences for ideas in proposal
- Time for phone research, developing surveys, compiling info
- First draft, peer editing with rubric/score sheet

Checklist for success:

1. Problem is clearly stated.
2. Writer convinces the reader that the problem is urgent enough for action.
3. Research and quotes support writer's points.
4. Writer clearly outlines a feasible solution to the problem.
5. Writing is free of errors.

See Linda Christensen's "Essay With an Attitude: Criteria Sheet," from Reading, Writing, and Rising Up.

The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail

By Jerome Lawrence
and Robert E. Lee

A Collection of Strategies
For Teaching Drama

Literary Tea Party

A Reading Strategy

Description:

Students make connections with an essay's (play's) characters by attending a "tea party" where they circulate and talk as one of the characters. Since they chat with students who portray other characters, student interest in the reading is piqued.

Preparations and directions for this activity can be found in *A Collection of Reading Strategies by the High School Literacy Institute*.

Roles for the main characters in *The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail* are included here. There are probably more characters here than you would actually use, so choose those that you think would have the most appeal to your students. It may be interesting to leave out the "Henry" page and use only other characters' opinions of him.

One helpful addition to the activity would be to have students compile a list of things they learned about "Henry" through the other characters' descriptions and then draw some conclusions about his character.

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Waldo - I am a world-renowned philosopher. I travel the globe giving speeches on transcendentalism. I am Henry's best friend and his biggest admirer. While I have great and lofty ideas about how society should be, Henry is actually brave enough to live out these ideas. I am afraid, though, that one day he may go too far.

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Lydian - I am married to Waldo and am a great friend to Henry. I am a patient and supportive wife and a loving mother. If it weren't for my sensibilities, I'm afraid Henry and Waldo may go off the deep end. I am a very loyal wife, but Waldo is so often away for long periods and Henry is always around. And he is so good with my son. Sometimes, I wonder...

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Mother - I am Henry and John's mother. I don't know what gets into Henry. Actually, his name is David Henry, but his name is one more thing he had to change. He's always been such a strange boy, so full of notions and ideas, like moving out to the woods to live all alone in a shack. I just pray he doesn't get into trouble with all of those ideas of his.

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Bailey - I am Henry's cellmate in the jailhouse. I ain't never heard no man talk so good as that Henry. He's the smartest fella in all of Concord, probably in all of Massachusetts, too, even if I can't figure out what he's sayin' sometimes. I don't know what he did to get in jail, but it's probably real bad - otherwise, what would someone as smart as him be doin' in jail?

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Williams - When I ran away from Master Williams, I come across Henry's shack. I ain't never seen no white man live so poor before. Henry's a great man, though. He gave me food and rest and whatever I needed. He even let me take part of his name - I'm Henry Williams now. Ain't that a fine name for a free man?

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Debate: Civil Disobedience

Description:

After careful contemplation, students will conduct an informal debate on the topic of if/when it is okay to break the law.

Preparation:

It may be helpful to define for your class what "civil disobedience" means and provide one example (too many examples may bias the students and ruin the debate).

Directions:

- 1) Each student should divide a sheet of paper into halves. One half of the paper will be labeled, "Why laws must be upheld." The other half of the paper will be labeled, "When it is permissible to break the law."
- 2) Students should work independently to brainstorm at least ten examples on each half of their paper.
- 3) Students should be divided into two teams for the debate (if the class is very large, it may be helpful to divide them into three teams; the third team can serve as judges).
- 4) Flip a coin to determine which team argues for which side of the debate.
- 5) The group members should share their examples and discuss possible strategies for arguing.
- 6) As a group, both sides should prepare an opening and a closing statement. These statements should be at least two, but no more than four, sentences. They should include the team's position on the topic and offer vague (no specifics) support for that position. Each group will select someone to read its opening statement.
- 7) After opening statements have been read, the first team will offer a point of argument. The second team must counter that point and present a new point to argue. The first team will counter the new point and present another point, and so on. All team members should participate.

Judges will award tally marks whenever a point is offered that cannot be successfully countered.

Post debate writing:

Because students often feel frustrated when they are required to argue a side with which they disagree, it is important to give them an outlet for personal opinion. After the debate, students should summarize the points they thought were strongest and explain what they, personally, think about the issue of civil disobedience.

Color Marking Scripts

Description:

Students will use multiple colors to highlight scene changes on copies of the script.

Preparation:

- 1) Explain that set of *The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail* is intended to be very simplistic. There are no set changes and throughout the play, crucial information about Thoreau is illustrated through the use of "flashbacks." These two facts combined can create some confusion about whom characters are addressing and what time of Thoreau's life is being demonstrated.
- 2) Explain to students that the play's writers intended for the action to take place on four specific areas of the stage: the Emerson corner, the woods and meadow, the jail and town square, and the Mother/John corner. Each area represented specific people or time periods in Thoreau's life. The center of the stage should be reserved for the present time period (jail and town square).
- 3) Divide students into groups of four
- 4) Provide each group with a variety of colored markers, crayons, etc.

Directions:

- 1) Students should choose colors to represent the four areas of the stage.
- 2) As groups, students should begin to read the play together paying close attention to the stage directions.
- 3) Whenever students think that the action has switched to another part of the stage (another "setting"), they should mark the margin of the entire section in whatever color they have designated for that part of the stage. For instance, say the students decide to use yellow for the scenes where the Emersons are speaking. They will then mark the margins of all the lines that should be said from the Emerson part of the stage in yellow. Then, if they discover that in the next lines the setting has switched from the "Emersons" section of the stage (yellow) to the "meadow" part of the stage, they will mark all the lines that take place in the meadow in green (or whatever color they designated for the meadow).
- 4) After students have marked the number of pages required, each group will join another group and compare "setting" changes.

Text Rendering

Description: This is a good way for students to break down text, especially more difficult pieces, while creating a new text at the same time.

Preparations and directions for this activity can be found in *A Collection of Reading Strategies by the High School Literacy Institute*.

Suggestions:

- 1) Have students keep a running list of short quotes from the play that they think are inspirational, worthy of discussion, or that just “grab” them.
- 2) Put students into groups of six to seven.
- 3) Give students the task of representing Thoreau’s life and what he stood for in their text rendering.
- 4) Let students arrange their favorite lines in ways that sound pleasing to them but also make a point about Thoreau.
- 5) Encourage students to repeat lines or create refrains.
- 6) Encourage students to play with tone, timing, alliteration, etc. since these will be presented aloud.
- 7) Require each member of the group to have a speaking part of the poem.
- 8) Have each group present its poem from the “stage.”

Nature Walk and SSR

Description:

SYMBOLIC STORY REPRESENTATION, as created by Richard Wilhelm, requires students to create symbols from various objects to represent characters in the novel. This activity is very similar, but the differences are important.

Preparations:

If your campus is not very large or lacks open natural spaces, you may want to obtain written permission to take the students off campus to a near-by park or other area.

Directions:

- 1) Have students choose one (or two) characters to focus on.
- 2) Students will brainstorm a list of adjectives to describe their character
- 3) Students will write a character description including their adjectives and their character's motivations.
- 4) Keeping these writings in mind, students will go outside and find something in nature that could represent their character's personality. For instance, a twig with thorns on it may represent a bitter, unloving person; a person, who has given up on life, may be represented by a dry, brittle leaf, etc.
- 5) After returning to the classroom, students will present their objects and explain how their choice represents their character.

Suggestions:

This activity may be used as a springboard to creating an extended metaphor poem about their character or an expository essay that explains the relationship between their symbol and their character.

Costume Design

Description:

This activity gives students an opportunity to conduct research on a topic that most students find interesting: fashion.

Preparation:

You may want to reserve your computer lab or library for research or furnish students with resources that will help them locate the necessary information.

Directions:

- 1) Remind students that *The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail* takes place in 1846. Brainstorm what they know about men and women's fashions of the day.
- 2) Assign students the task of researching appropriate outfits for two of the characters. Assign (or have students choose) two very different characters. For instance, assign Williams, the fugitive slave, along with Ball, the chairman of the school committee and church deacon. Or, Lydian, an older married woman, with Edward, an eight-year-old son of an intellectual.
- 3) Once students have located examples of attire for the time period and social class, they will need to make adjustments to these examples for the stage. Students should consider what mood or tone the character contributes to the play and consider what color scheme would best accentuate this feeling. Students should also be careful not to create such elaborate costumes that they "upstage" the actor.
- 4) Each student will use the figure outlines (attached at the end of this section) to create a costume for their character.
- 5) Students should share and discuss their choices.

Suggestions:

This activity could serve as a springboard for an expository essay that compares and contrasts dress of the time period between genders and social classes.

Stage Design: A Shoebox Thrust Stage

Description:

This activity will explain how a thrust stage is different from other stages and will allow students to create a model stage for *The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail*.

Preparations:

Each group of students will need:

- a shoebox
- construction or other types of paper
- pieces of Styrofoam
- scissors, glue, etc.

Directions:

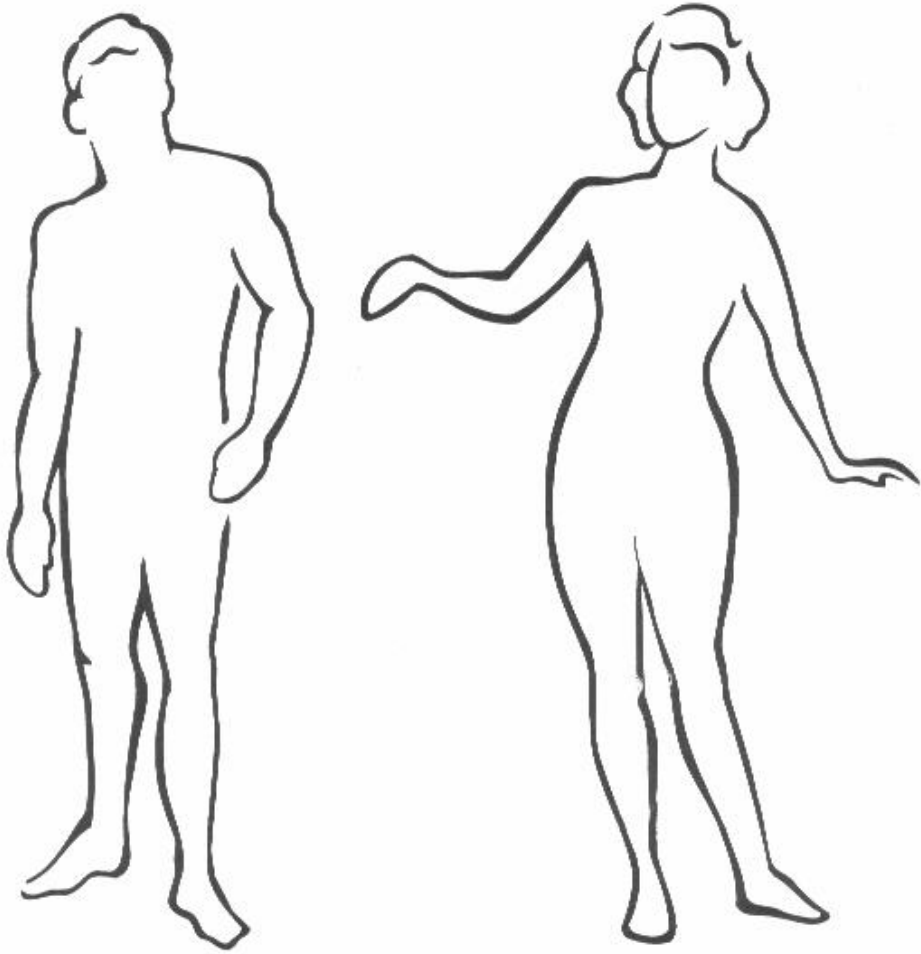
- 1) Pass out copies of a "thrust stage."
- 2) Discuss how these stages are different from other stages and what their advantages and disadvantages may be.
- 3) Explain that the authors of this play meant for the set to be very simple with just a few props that serve multiple purposes.
- 4) Discuss how the use of color can add to the mood of the piece and what feelings are often associated with what colors.
- 5) In groups, students will re-read the play paying particular attention to what props are essential and how these props can be created so that they can serve as other articles in additional scenes.
- 6) Students will discuss and decide what colors should serve as background for the stage (or parts of the stage). (See "Color Marking Scripts" assignment)
- 7) Students will build models of thrust stages and props out of the available materials.
- 8) Groups will present and discuss their choices.

Suggestions:

It may be helpful to show a video clip of a play that features a simplistic set to help students visualize the task.

As a warm-up, bring in an ordinary object (like a cardboard oatmeal box) and let students use their imaginations to create scenarios where the box "becomes" whatever article the scenario requires.

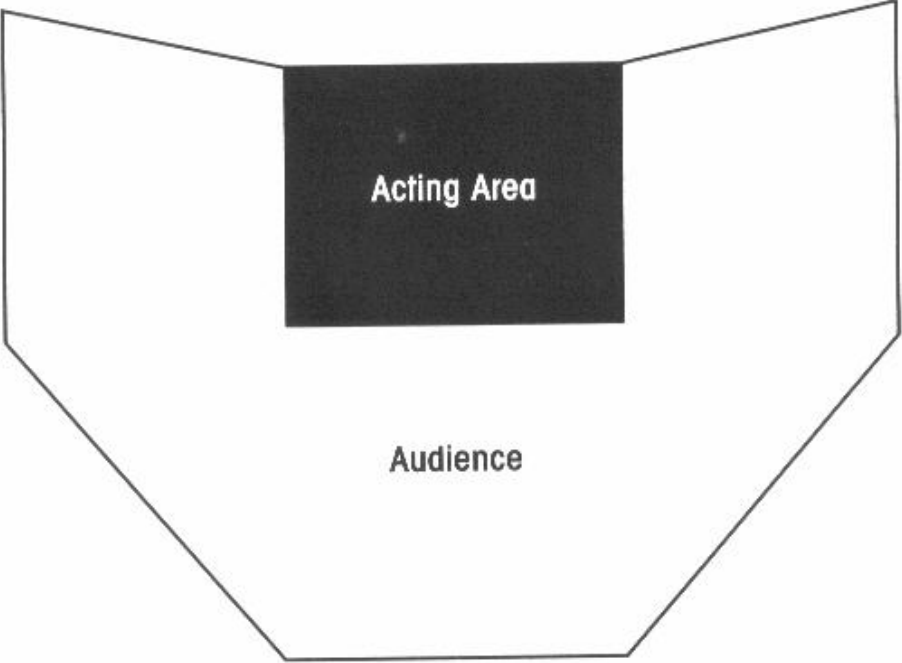
Costume Design Worksheet



Play: _____

Character: _____

The Thrust Stage



Environmental Racism

Reading Strategies

Description: Students will learn the concept “Environmental Racism” and understand how it applies to the North Portland community. We will read Ellen Stroud’s article “Troubled Waters in Ecotopia: Environmental Racism in Portland, Oregon” (see Appendix). This twenty-page article takes the reader through a chronology of events that occurred in the last century and highlights the mismanagement of the Columbia Slough. The central theme of this article is that the slough has been neglected and thus used as a dumping ground for toxic wastes because the surrounding communities are primarily people of color, hence the charge of environmental racism.

We will utilize the following reading strategies when reading this article in class:

Semantic Mapping - Pre-Reading Activity (see Appendix)

Teaching the Text Backwards - Pre-Reading Activity (see Appendix)

Jigsaw - During Reading Activity

Free-Form Mapping - Post-Reading Activity

Jigsaw

A Reading Comprehension Strategy

Rationale: The Jigsaw strategy is a collaborative technique that’s useful whenever there is a large amount of material to digest in a short amount of time and it’s not imperative for each student to read all the material. This approach promotes shared responsibility for learning.

What: Collaborative learning technique where individuals become experts on one portions of the text and share their expertise with their small group, called home teams.

Steps:

1. Divide participants into home groups.
2. Assign each person in each home group an expert number.
3. Reassemble into expert groups to master assigned content and to determine how best to teach the material to their home groups.
Note: We will copy sections of the article on colored paper with a specific color for each section. Instead of assigning an expert number, we will assign a color.

4. Experts return to home groups and share content learned in expert groups by teaching their home groups. (See visual in Appendix).

Timeline: One or two class periods. This activity is ideal for a block period.

Suggestions: If you choose not to send students to expert groups, assign members of the home team to become experts on a portion of the content and share with the home team.

Free-Form Mapping

A Reading Comprehension and Speaking Strategy

Rationale: This activity serves to instill active comprehension and dynamic discussion while assisting students in transforming information from one form to another.

What: With free-form mapping, students create their own text representations. The only criterion is that this is always a cooperative team effort. Student groups will work together to illustrate key concepts in the article and then will give oral explanations of their maps to the class.

Materials: Large sheet of paper for each group
Colored markers

Steps:

1. After students have read the assignment, organize them into cooperative teams. Give each team large sheets of paper and markers.
2. Instruct students to decide upon the important ideas in their reading assignment and to come up with a way of presenting their ideas on paper through words, pictures, and diagrams. **Note:** The result is not nearly as important as the thinking processes involved in discussing content and deciding upon how to organize it. No two maps will be the same. Several student examples representing a variety of maps are usually sufficient to launch students into creating their own unique illustrations.
3. Explain to students that there is no right way to map an assignment and to focus on representing main ideas and their inter-relationships. Encourage them to use words, pictures, and phrases to portray their analysis.

4. Teams share their maps with the class. Afterwards, embellish classroom walls with their colorful maps.

Timeline: One or two class periods. This activity is ideal for a block period.

Extensions: Use the free-form maps for test review. Different topics can be assigned to groups, and they can use their maps to present the information to the whole class.

Acknowledgements: Teaching to the Three I's presentation by Lorna Lockwood for "Semantic Mapping" and "Teaching the Text Backwards."

Resource: [Project CRISS: Creating Independent Student-owned Strategies.](#)

The Classroom is a Bridge to the World

We see our classrooms as a bridge to the larger world. In teaching political advocacy through this curriculum, we envision our students using the relationships, resources, and skills they gain to become agents for positive change in the North Portland community. We also see them challenging the stereotypes and questioning the inequities served upon North Portland and working for justice in our metropolitan area.

The following are examples of ways that we plan to make our classrooms bridges to the community:

- ❖ Roosevelt High School has been without a school newspaper for several years. In the 2001-2002 school year, teacher Santha Cassell, with material and technical support from *The Oregonian*, and a group of eager students, will resurrect the school paper. Once again, Roosevelt High School will have its own community voice and a voice to the community.
- ❖ With support from the Public History Project, sponsored by Katy Barber, historian with the Columbia River History Project and a professor at Portland State University, a literary journal will be produced. The journal will include poetry, essays, stories, photographs, and artwork by Roosevelt High School student writers and artists inspired by the courses taught through this curriculum. This publication will be available for distribution in North Portland and the metropolitan area. A public student reading will also be held.
- ❖ An audio and video installation of student monologues and oral history interviews will be on exhibit at Roosevelt High School, with plans for a tour of locations in North Portland and in the larger Portland area, bringing the voices and faces of the community out into the world.
- ❖ Students will send and present their letters, essays, and proposals for positive change to the Roosevelt High School administration, school-based site council meetings, PPS school board meetings, *The St. Johns Review*, *The Oregonian*, *Willamette Week*, and other public forums.
- ❖ A studio production of "The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail," with a student cast will be held at Roosevelt High School. Invitations to attend will be extended to the North Portland community.

Through reading, writing, and performance, Roosevelt High School students will make their voices heard, their faces seen, and their dreams realized. This curriculum will make certain that our students know how to act on the idea that "knowledge is power."

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A poetic collection of short fiction depicting the experiences of Native American youth by well-known Native author.

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A single mother explains how going on welfare made her a better parent.

Appendix

(The attachments are organized in the order of the Table of Contents)