

Synthesis Final Paper: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Monica R. Yates

University of Mary

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This semester, I was able to spend several months learning about three critical components of teaching: curriculum, instruction, and assessment. In the following paper, I will address the nine main parts of the semester that we considered, explaining each section and how I will integrate them into that knowledge into my classroom. I will also provide specific examples of work that I have done relating to the topic being discussed; these may be found in the appendix following the conclusion of this paper.

Chapter 1: An Effective Teacher

While it may seem like a simple question, asking what makes a “good” teacher demands a fairly complex and divergent answer, one without a simple right or wrong conclusion. When reflecting on my own experience with teachers, one woman in particular comes to mind as the one who inspired me to become a teacher myself—and to not only become a teacher, but to become an *excellent* teacher. Though she was my piano teacher, she did not only teach me how to play piano; rather, she also taught me the importance of valuing each individual person, of getting to know each student, and respecting their minds, opinions, and beliefs— all while challenging growth and supporting them in love. This is what I strive to exemplify in my own classroom. (For a more complete version of this story, see appendix A for my reflection paper).

Chapter 2: Understanding Your Students

Now, one essential characteristic of an excellent teacher is their ability to share knowledge with students in a way that allows them to learn and retain the information. There are countless approaches, and, as each and every person is unique, there is no one, right technique; nonetheless, there are several excellent methods and approaches that all effective teachers will meet in some way. Perhaps one of the most important ways to teach a class effectively is to

account for differentiation within the lesson. Differentiation can be applied in three areas: input (content), process, and output (assessment). While there are countless ways a teacher may differentiate within their classroom, a few examples include flexible grouping, tiered assignments, and choice activities. I can incorporate these techniques in my classroom by arranging students to work according to shared interests, providing a series of related tasks varying in complexity, or by giving students the opportunity to choose from a variety of assessment assignments. An effective teacher also recognizes the validity of different types of learners within each classroom. This means that the teacher is willing and able to create a lesson that will apply to several types of intelligences, whether that relates to a kinesthetic learner, an introspective learner, or a natural learner, for example. (For my lesson plan incorporating learning intelligences, see appendix B). In addition to learning and accepting each student's different learning intelligence, a teacher also spends time getting to know their students, both personally and academically, in order to understand them (for an example of how I will get to know my students, see appendix C). Finally, teachers that recognize and address their own personal biases are more effective and impactful teachers. Recognizing personal biases means that the teacher has an awareness of self and accounts for that when teaching. For example, I know that I am very sensitive towards different occupations of parents, and that I may make certain judgements about characters based on this information. Knowing myself in this area will allow me to best address this issue and deal with it fairly in my classroom. The potential for a teacher's growth is endless and these few valuable techniques only begin to touch on the ways in which a teacher may grow and develop each day.

Chapters 5 and 6: Goals, Standards, and Objectives- Unit and Lesson Planning.

After consider how to be an effective teacher and how to develop knowledge and understanding of students, our class began working on understanding goals, standards, and objectives. I had only briefly encountered these terms before this class, and so it was exciting and interesting to learn how to apply them in my classroom. I learned the importance of working at a school where you agree with the mission statement, or goal, for every student, teacher, and classroom, as the goals are the general expressions of values that give direction. I will necessarily need to incorporate standards and objectives in my classroom, as this is required by every state. I learned how standards were created, and the purpose of learning targets (for my exploratory paper on the CCSS, see appendix D). One of the most interesting ideas to me was that objectives were created as a measure for standards; this was even exciting to learn as a student, as so many of my assignments make more sense to me now that I understand the connection between assignment and objective. I also learned several ways to best write a learning objective, which is valuable information for when I am write my own lessons. I was able to implement and incorporate all of this knowledge by creating a lesson plan (to see this lesson plan, refer to appendix E) Finally, I was able to expand this topic more by working on an interdisciplinary plan. This project showed me the fun and beneficial opportunities accompanying interdisciplinary planning, and this is something I hope to do at my school in the future (to see this interdisciplinary lesson plan, refer to appendix F).

Chapter 7: Technology Integration.

Another area of focus was that of technology. Before I reached this section of the course, I considered using power points as “technology integration”; however, I learned that this is actually an inadequate understanding of technology integration in a lesson. It is not enough to

simply have technology present in the classroom; rather, the students themselves need to be using the technology in the lesson. In addition, technology should be integrated in such a way that students see the connection of their classroom activities to the real world outside of their classroom. Technology should be used to communicate knowledge and guide learning, not simply to supplement a poorly designed lesson or keep the students entertained for a while (for an example of my technology integration lesson plan, see appendix G).

Chapter 8: Questioning Strategies

After our unit on technology, we moved on to one of my favorite sections: questioning strategies. In this part of our semester, we worked on understanding what made a good or bad question, the different types of questions and questioning techniques, as well as how to write and ask good questions. One idea I found very interesting was the difference between convergent questions, those with only one answer, and divergent questions, those with several appropriate answers. As a student, I rarely answer a convergent question, even if I feel confident that I know the one, expected answer— after all, what if I say it in a way that the teacher still interprets as wrong? I intend to use convergent questions rarely, and only if absolutely necessary, in my classroom, as they often do not contribute to a safe environment if used frequently. However, I recognize that they serve a purpose, and if I create a caring environment, students may not feel as intimidated about guessing an answer, even if they may get it wrong. I feel very strongly about the entire idea surrounding questioning strategies; as a student, this is an area I really struggle with. I believe that providing students with fair chances and respectful questioning goes a long way in showing respect, particularly when the students already feel that they are in a safe and valued environment.

Another area we explored regarding questioning strategies was the purpose of

questions, as well as the different types of questions we can ask. One way I might integrate what we learned regarding the purpose of questions would be to allow for expression. I am passionate about providing students with opportunity to express themselves, and by asking an expression questions, I allow students to show me how to better teach them, while also giving them a voice in what they are learning. I might also use questions to gain attention or diagnose the level of learning my students have achieved.

Another area of questioning strategies that we explored was that of the cognitive complexity of questions. We learned about the 6 different kinds and how they might be integrated into the classroom (for an example of my lesson plan that integrates complex questions, see appendix H). For example, in my classroom I would want to start with knowledge or comprehension type questions; however, as I progressed in the content, I could hopefully ask higher level questions, such as analysis, evaluation, and synthesis type questions. When I give exams to students, the structure previously used will be similar, though there would be fewer beginning level questions and more higher-level questions—ones which allow me to see if students truly understand the content. After I ask these questions though, I need to be able to probe students towards even greater thinking. An example of this technique might be a redirection of an answer, or a request for clarification. However, I will make sure that I never probe a student until I have first encouraged them. As a student, I find it very discouraging when a teacher shuts you down right away and directs you to another topic; rather, encouragement, thanks, and then redirection will be how I hope to respond to students.

Chapters 9: Direct Instruction.

Once we finished the section on questioning strategies, our class moved on to teaching strategies

involved in direct instruction. For this, we learned that direct instruction is one type of learning that mainly addresses facts, rules, and knowledge acquisition. This type of instruction is important and necessary when sharing, specific and detailed information. With this type of teaching, there are three steps one should follow: first, present the goals and main points, next, present the content in the sequential order, being specific and concrete, and finally, check for understanding. Though direct lesson is a teacher-centered approach rather than a student-centered approach, I recognize that there will be times when I need to use direct instruction in my lesson. Nonetheless, the direct lesson can be engaging and keep students involved through questions and by asking them to follow along with what I do. My aim for direct lessons is to begin with telling how the thing is done, showing the students how it is done, helping the students do it, and finally, letting them complete work independently (for an example of my direct lesson, see appendix I).

Chapter 10: Indirect Instruction.

Closely relating to direct lessons are indirect lessons; this is a type two learning, which means it focus on ideas such as concepts, patterns, relationships while developing questions of analysis and synthesis. This type of lesson is more student-focused than direct instruction, and I hope to use this more often in my classroom. This can be implemented in several ways; one way might be to use student's examples to shape or create the lesson, or I might have opportunities for group discovery and group discussions. This type of learning involves assignments such as projects, reports and problem solving, as well as a great deal of collaborative and cooperative learning— both of which I want to use often in my classroom (for an example of my indirect lesson, see appendix J).

Chapter 13: Assessing Learners and Appropriate Test-Making Skills.

The last topic covered this semester was the area of assessment. This was another interesting and exciting area for me, as I have had many concerns and questions surrounding the entire assessment process. While learning about assessment, we covered a variety of techniques, strategies, and guides for creating not only a good assessment, but a variety of different assessments as well. The consideration of varying assignments that may be used to assess the student's learning was addressed first. During this time, we considered ways other than simple written tests that one could use to assess the student's learning. For example, I might provide students a choice for their final exam, whether that is creating a power-point presentation, building a model of something, writing a paper, creating a blog, or countless other possibilities (for an example of a performance assessment, see appendix K).

Nonetheless, as tests will likely be the most common type of assessment we will give our students, we learned how to write an excellent test, working through different parts of a test, such as creating good true or false questions, providing clear instructions, or appropriate fill-in-the-blanks. This information is something I will integrate into my classroom constantly, and I have already noticed myself practicing proper test-writing techniques in all my classes (for an example of my test, see appendix L). Lastly, we learned a bit about pre-tests, and the importance of providing these for students as well (for an example of my pre-test, see appendix M).

Conclusion: How has my Time in Class Helped me Grow as a Pre-Teacher?

There are truly countless ways that I have grown in this class, and I am excited and encouraged to look back upon the semester and consider this. Nearly every area that covered in this class were unfamiliar to me, and in that way, it was an exploration and discovery of entirely new material. I think one valuable skill I learned was the connection between standards and objectives. This was an area that scared and intimidated me, but working with the standards,

learning how they shape your lessons for the year, and how the objectives are created from these given standards was extremely rewarding. One powerful lesson from the semester was the classroom response wait time for questions and answers. When we modeled and observed appropriate wait time in class, I was astonished by the effect it could have, as well as how easy it could be to use improper wait time. I also appreciated the assignment which allowed us to integrate different levels of thinking into questions in my lesson plan. This helped to solidify my understanding of these questioning strategies, as well as expand and enhance my original lesson plan. Lastly, one of my favorite assignments of all was writing a test. I knew subconsciously that there were bad and good tests, as I have been taking tests long enough to realize that; however, I never knew just how much consideration, care, and skill went in to writing a test. I have found this to be a subject I converse with all my friends about frequently, as they tell me about the awful test they had. During this course, I felt valued, respected and cared for; my experience was fair, and the work was beneficial. This provided me with the opportunity to experience the skills that I will bring to my own classroom someday. I will be an effective teacher, one who understands and respects her students, who utilizes the many resources for excellent lessons, learning and growing opportunities, and one whose goals and strategies create the best learning experience possible.

Works Cited

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Appendix A. Reflection Paper

When I was young, my mom decided to enroll me in piano lessons; while I went through phases of like and dislike, I generally loved the piano, even if I occasionally disliked the actual lessons. When I moved to a new state, we went through 3 different piano teachers, each one worse than the other, and each one leaving me more and more discouraged. Finally, I had reached the point where I thought I hated piano and I never wanted to play again; practising had become a burden, there was no fun in learning and my lessons were scary and frustrating. Fortunately, my mom asked me to try just one more teacher, and I am so grateful I did! In this new piano teacher, Mrs. Kulow, I realized that *I* wanted to be a teacher someday, and one just like her in every way. I quickly realized that I didn't actually hate piano, in fact, I absolutely loved everything about it. The dread I had previously felt before every lesson almost instantly melted away into excitement and a deep desire to not only learn, but master every new song, technique and exercise I was given. This teacher ignited a fire in me and helped me grow, not only as a pianist, but as a human as well.

Quintilian pointed out an excellent truth when he observed, "How much more readily we imitate those whom we like"; Mrs. Kulow reminded me just how valid this statement is. First, and at all times, she showed me respect and valued me as a person; this, I believe is one of the most essential qualities a teacher can possess, and it is certainly an important step towards better teaching. However, I received more than just respect from this woman; she also showed a deep concern for my life, my goals, adventures, studies and hobbies. Through taking the time to get to know me, and giving me an opportunity to get to know her, she quickly gained my deep love and complete admiration. In feeling loved and respected in return, I was all the more

inspired to do everything I could to please her, and constantly looked for ways to go above and beyond, so that I might make her happy.

Through this personal experience, I realized a number of things. Firstly, the difference between loving and hating learning may depend largely on the teacher. Looking back at some of the qualities that changed my view about piano and my ability to play, I noticed one of the major factors was the *teacher's* belief in me, particularly when this belief was paired with positive reinforcement. It wasn't that I had actually hated piano, but instead, that I was unfortunately taught by teachers who portrayed negativity, unfriendliness, rules without reasons, impatience and disinterest.

Through these experiences, I realized how deeply I wanted to become a teacher: someone who could guide a student's learning, inspire a desire to grow, and bring positivity, support and respect into their lives. Mrs. Kulow showed me qualities that an excellent teacher should have, and even in the struggle of the challenging teachers, I learned the characteristics I should avoid. The complete joy that I felt in being sincerely challenged by an adult that I admired, one that I knew had my back and was looking out for my best interest, was a feeling that I wanted to share with others. If there is only one person during my entire teaching career that is positively affected by my teaching, everything will be worth it to me. If I am able to be a positive guiding force, a person who inspires respect, challenges students to grow, leads them to love knowledge and encourages them to be better than they dreamed they could be— this is why I want to teach.

I believe Mrs. Kulow was an excellent teacher. She was extremely knowledgeable in her craft and was equally excellent at sharing that knowledge with her students. She took the time to get to know each person not only to learn how best to teach them, but to make them feel respected and loved. By asking my input, valuing my opinions and taking me out of my comfort

zone while building me up and encouraging me, she made me feel respected and valued. She was also generous with her time and talent, and always made me feel that my learning was her absolute priority. These are all qualities I want to emulate when I am a teacher, and I am grateful for the positive impact Mrs. Kulow had on my life. Her love and support carried over to many areas in my life and her inspiration led me discover how earnestly I want to be an excellent teacher as well.

Appendix B. Lesson Plan Incorporating Learning Intelligences

- **State:** Montana
- **Grade:** 9th
- **Area:** Reading for Literature
- **Standard 9-10.3:** “Analyze how the complex characters (e.g. those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, including those of American Indians, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.
- **Objective:** The learner will be able to explain the points of development/change within a main character’s actions and evaluate why these choices are important to the overall plot.
- **My lesson:** in this lesson, I will try and teach to three types of learners: bodily/ kinesthetic, interpersonal and logical/ mathematical.
 - First, for the bodily/ kinesthetic learner, I will have the students act out critical scenes from the book, allowing opportunities for some students to make a skit in which the character’s choice is different than in the book, so that they might see how the story could play out differently, depending on the character’s choices/actions. This will give them a visual of the choices made, and how this affects the individual, as well as demonstrating the importance of this choice or action to the overall plot through hypothetical examples of varying actions.
 - Secondly, to reach out to the interpersonal learners, I will create time for students to break into small groups, where they can talk amongst themselves about the defining moments in the book, as well as their significance. They will have a chance to work together and discuss issues, variations, impactful moments and key events.
 - Finally, after students have had a chance to collaborate with their peers, they will have an opportunity to draw an outline/chart, specifically for logical/ mathematical students. In this project, they will work through the book, highlighting the complex character’s development, for example, major choices that affect their personalities. They will also chart the important interactions and any similarities/differences between them and give brief reasons for their choices. Finally, they will outline the effects of these major choices and how they influence the book’s plot.

Appendix C. "Get to Know my Students" Tool

For my project, I would like to allow students to get to know each other, while I am also getting to know them. To do this, I will have a small questionnaire for the students to fill out and turn in. Then I will have them get up and designate one end of the room as "the most" and one end as "not at all", with the middle being no preference, or "on the fence". As I read off different answers students say about themselves in the questionnaire, students will move around the room to indicate their answers. For example, if one response is that the student love to hike, all the students can either move to the side of absolutely loving it, the middle ground, or the not at all end of the room. At the end, there is a private question that students can fill out if they want. I will not read through everyone's answers for every question, but I will keep these questionnaires for me to relate back to.

Help me Get to Know You:

- 1) Favorite food?
- 2) Favorite subject?
- 3) Why are you taking this class?
- 4) Do you have a job or are you involved in extracurriculars?
- 5) What kind of music do you like?
- 6) What states/countries have you visited or lived in?
- 7) Are there other kids in your family? If so, how many?
- 8) What is one way that you feel you learn best?
- 9) What is your favorite movie or TV show?
- 10) Do you prefer city or country?

Just for me to know:

- 1) Is there anything about yourself you feel that I should know?

Appendix D. Exploratory Paper: Common Core State Standards

Education, because it serves such an integral part in creating a successful and well-ordered society, it continues to arouse conversations and disagreements regarding the question of how to best teach and educate students. One area of tension surrounding this effort stems from the implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Since their creation in 2010, debates concerning the implementation of CCSS within the education system and the potential benefits or harm resulting from the adoption of these standards continue to arise. As I enter the education field, it has become apparent that this topic is still hotly debated and passionately fought from both sides. On the one hand, people assert that these standards will raise the academic knowledge of the American children by creating greater college-and-career readiness, by providing teachers with the standards that best prepare their students for a brighter future, and by building a more stable educational system across the country, one with shared goals and expectations. This view considers the CCSS as the means for greater creativity, rigor, depth, and equality within classrooms. However, there are those who feel that these standards are detrimental to students, particularly at the younger grade levels. Some believe that the standards harm students academically and emotionally, that these standards stifle the opportunity for growth and individuality within each unique classroom, and that the government is imposing restrictions and overreaching their power.

My own opinion of these standards has changed several times since first hearing about them, and I approached this topic with conflicting views and rival opinions. When they were first introduced, I was only exposed to a negative view: these standards would ruin the education system. I remained largely uninformed on this topic throughout high school, though still vaguely holding the belief that they were one of the most harmful things to happen to our education

system. In college, entering into the education department provided more opportunities to hear about the standards, which were often referred to in a positive light. During Sophomore year, I was given an assignment asking me to write a paper “highlighting points of interest” from the corestandards.org website; through this assignment, I began to alter my previously held opinions, feeling more reassured and informed on the process, quality, and goals of the standards.

However, after entering the classrooms during practicum and talking to more teachers, I again found disjointed opinions: some were frustrated and upset by the standards, while others seemed to embrace them. This left me feeling confused and conflicted once again. My growing curiosity and uncertainty on this topic led me to explore both sides of this debate through various articles, books, and websites to gain a deeper understanding of the benefit or detriment of implementing CCSS in the American education system.

When approaching this subject, it seemed reasonable to start with the statestandard.org website to understand what exactly the creators and supporters of the standards profess to believe and accomplish with the CCSS. I spent the majority of my time on a page titled “Facts v. Myths,” which explored a variety of topics, such as content, quality, process, and implementation of the standards, addressing common “myths” in these areas and providing “facts” to help one understand the “truth” behind the CCSS. I included the quotation marks to emphasize the necessary presumption that this source is, in fact, offering entirely true facts that address the wrongs within the misconceptions presented. If one put aside any biases and chose to accept this source as true and accurate, it would certainly calm fears and ignite enthusiasm for the standards. After all, the overall goal of the CCSS is

to build upon the most advanced current thinking about preparing all students for success in college, career, and life... there has been an explicit agreement that no

state would lower its standards. The standards were informed by the best in the country, the highest international standards, and evidence and expertise about educational outcomes. (corestandards.org)

With these goals and through this process, it hardly seems possible that any true educator could dislike what the standards claim to aim for and accomplish..

I found this source to be very interesting, and— in theory— very comforting. The page began by addressing some myths surrounding the quality and content of the standards; they note that standards are not designed— or allowed— to bring down any states already existing standards, and that they were made with

careful use of a large and growing body of evidence. The evidence base includes scholarly research, surveys on what skills are required of students entering college and workforce training programs, assessment data identifying college-and-career-ready performance, and comparisons to standards from high-performing states and nations. (corestandards.org)

This assertion contradicted my previous knowledge, as I had only heard that the standards did not actually take into account the opinions of teachers and other educators. Where did such different and conflicting assertions originate? If this site asserts that the standards were built from evidence and various studies, why are other people saying that they were not? And if they were based off of evidence and written with the help of teachers, why do so many teachers appear to hold such negative opinions about the CCSS?

This site also asserts that the federal government had no part in developing the standards and that adopting the CCSS was not mandatory for any state. They then renamed the intentions behind the standards, namely, “to establish clear, consistent guidelines for what every student

should know and be able to do in math and English language arts from kindergarten through 12th grade” (corestandards.org). After reading this website, I was reminded of the earlier assurance I had felt after writing my paper about the benefits from the standards. They seem clear, valid, helpful, and truly beneficial for the education system and the students in it. Why, then, is there so much dissention?

The book *Common Core Dilemma: Who Owns Our Schools?* might shed some light on this question. The author, Mercedes Schneider, discusses a variety of topics, including the No Child Left Behind act and Race to the Top grant, the role that billionaires, particularly Bill Gates, and major corporations had in creating the standards, as well as addressing many “lies” told by the creators of the CCSS. Chapter seven of this book breaks down five major surveys frequently used to convince the public that the standards are good and well received among educators and their students, as well as highlighting the major education changes (for example, NCLB, RttT) and explaining how they negatively affected the education system. Schneider also addresses the influence of Bill Gates as the nearly singular source of funds in the CCSS initiative and the influence and power that this one man held because of his wealth. In chapter seven, she shares her critical thinking about the surveys’ “proof” that the standards were beneficial and well received; she also notes that her research led her to believe the survey research was “overrated at best and fabricated at worst” (p.115).

Her observations pointed to things such as manipulation of results and errors in reasoning. For example, she shares one survey’s results that claim,

[a]ccording to a new poll by the National Education Association, the Common Core State Standards are strongly supported by its members. *Roughly two-thirds of educators are either wholeheartedly in favor of the standards (26%) or support*

them with some reservations (50%).’ [Emphasis added] Don’t miss this because this would have been the honest way to report: Strong support is not merely 26% ‘wholeheartedly in favor.’ (117)

I was surprised to find that only about a quarter of teachers in this survey actually offered “strong support” for the standards, and I was struck by the way the results were written to lead readers to believe that support was actually “strong.” Schneider also addresses the results of a survey by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), noting that the participants were all selected from a highly concentrated area; out of the 45 states that had adopted CCSS at the time, 36% of the polled individuals were from New York— about 288 of the 800 individuals (p.116). Considering the results of another survey by Stand For Children (SFC) of Louisiana, she addresses the results of the survey, which presented statistics stating that the CCSS were “well underway and that teachers overwhelmingly feel prepared to teach the higher standards” (p.119). However, Schnieder points to the

jump in logic from ‘overwhelmingly feel prepared to teach’ and the evidence that ‘over 90% of respondents felt like they had some or comprehensive knowledge of the Common Core’... In SFC language, ‘some or comprehensive knowledge’ of CCSS must equal ‘overwhelmingly feel prepared’... [And] as for ‘70% of respondents’ believing that CCSS is ‘more demanding and raises expectations’: this is not necessarily a positive finding. (190-20)

Here, Schneider notes that the survey’s results were clearly written to conflate terms and meanings and lump things together. She also explains how providing statistics on the number of teachers with “some or comprehensive knowledge of the standards” was unnecessary, as the

schools were mandating implementation by the next school year— naturally the teachers had “some or comprehensive knowledge” of the standards.

Reading this chapter led me to question why the survey creators might manipulate their results. I will admit that Schnieder’s critiques did seem to confirm a personal bias I have always had, namely, skepticism towards the government and large corporations with political and monetary agendas. However, I am also curious about her results. If the standards are truly accepted and appreciated, why would the often-cited surveys be created in this seemingly biased and manipulated manner? Do they need to trick the larger public into believing the good of these standards?

When trying to highlight this good, many people will address the claim that teachers and parents were included in the writing of the standards; however, according to the authors of one academic journal article written for the *Educational Review*, this information is actually another distorted claim. The authors write,

[t]he two working groups that comprised the primary writing teams for the grade and subject specific criteria set in the CCSS included six test-makers from the College Board, five from the test publishing company, ACT, and four from Achieve Inc., an educational reform organization with a focus on college-and-career readiness standards, assessment, and accountability. Unfortunately, the group did not include any classroom teachers... Though some authors of the standards had experience in education, most represented a variety of corporate business interests... [they did] organize groups of teachers to provide feedback during a two-month open comment period after the standards were actually drafted. (Matlock et. al.)

This lengthy quote is important for flushing out the details of who, exactly, was involved in the process and when. It does acknowledge that teachers did provide feedback; however, this was not until after the standards had been written and no information regarding the impact or influence of these teachers' feedback was given. Additionally, this list of writers lines up with the corporations or companies listed in Schnieder's book. Nonetheless, this does not seem like a bad crowd of individuals to create standards for education, though admittedly, they might lack some personal experience in the actual classroom and perhaps lean too strongly towards teaching for standardized tests.

Another important point raised in this article was the political side of the standards. Though corestandards.org and others in support of CCSS claim that adopting the standards is not mandatory, Matlock et. al. point out that, in order to qualify to receive billions of dollars in federal aid from Barack Obama's Race to the Top program, use of the CCSS, in fact, was mandatory. The authors also note that "[t]he pushback against the CCSS, interestingly enough, [wa]s not only a Republican versus Democrat issue, [as] candidates across the spectrum denounc[ed] the standards and how they were brought forth" (Matlock et al.). When considering the topic of party lines, I would have assumed that it would be split Republican versus Democrat, and I think it is significant that they point out that this is untrue; I would be interested to see if this is still the case in 2019 or 2020.

Lastly, the authors of this article addressed a survey they created and completed regarding teachers' overall satisfaction with the standards. After explaining their process, analysis, tools, and other important details of the survey, the authors address their conclusions, saying, "considering data through the three variables of grade level, teacher experience, and thoughts on leaving the profession, it does not appear that the teachers in this sample reflect

some of the negative concerns towards the CCSS which have been currently portrayed in national media and conversations” (Matlock et. al.). However, following this surprising and interesting fact, they add: “[i]n the time since the survey was administered, support for the CCSS has decreased steadily as the issue has become increasingly politicized” (Matlock et. al.). They then proceeded to name several states and court cases in which some issue surrounding the CCSS led the states to withdraw and refuse the standards in their schools.

After considering the views of researchers, I was interested in learning what the perspective of actual teachers or principals might be on this subject. I was beginning to recognize the theme of assumed dishonesty surrounding the standards, particularly in the way they were created and advertised, so I was curious as to how those within the actual classrooms viewed the standards. The education-centered website, “The Hechinger Report” published an article that focused on a letter written by the principal of a high school in New York. The article, titled “Common Core will Lead to Misery, not Higher Achievement,” addresses a letter written by Jayne Ellsperman, principal living in Florida, where she served as a principal in elementary, middle, and high schools for 24 years (hechingerreport.org). In her letter, Ellsperman addresses why she changed her opinion regarding the CCSS from positive to negative. She notes her original attraction to the standards, drawn in by the promises of creating higher college-readiness, and offering fair and equal opportunities and education for all (hechingerreport.org). However, though this principle had originally embraced the standards with enthusiasm and optimism, she recounts how her teachers began to raise their concerns with the standards, “New York had implemented the Common Core standards, and it was not going well. Their children were frustrated. They were developing physical symptoms of stress. Homework was taking hours to complete—even for first-and second-grade children” (hechingerreport.org). She then moves

on to discuss the concerns of hundreds of early childhood health and educational specialists who note the harm of imposing strict and demanding standards that each Kindergartner must meet in order to meet “age-appropriate readiness.” The researchers believe that enforcing the rigorous and measurable expectations on such young children may cause long-term harm and certainly short-term issues as the children begin to dislike school and learning. Ellsperman restates many of the previously mentioned concerns, saying,

I am truly worried that we may lose an entire generation of students. The Common Core was hastily imposed and never field-tested. Moreover, the standards were not developed by teachers, principals and superintendents in conjunction with our State Boards of Education. Achieve, the National Governors Association, and the Council of Chief State School Officers, with funding from the Gates Foundation, developed the Common Core. There was minimal educator or public engagement. (hechingerreports.org)

She closes her letter by reiterating the need for challenging standards that prepare students for career-readiness and ultimate success; nonetheless, she does not believe that this should come in the form of nationally set standards that offer little opportunity for differentiation. She expresses her hope that each state can instead learn from others, building towards greater success and better education.

Now, while that idea seems to make sense on one level— of course we should work with each individual district, school, and child— if the standards simply act as a baseline that teachers can then differentiate and build upon, what is the harm in the standards? After all, there were real and problematic gaps between the knowledge that students held leaving high school and the expectations for the first year of college courses. One point I really agree with is Ellsperman’s

claim that we cannot simply look at academic expectations without also considering socio-emotional concerns, economic challenges, lack of support for the child or the school, and other significant factors. Still, it may be reasoned that unless CCSS are fundamentally harmful or incorrect, having them in place as a baseline to build upon could encompass the other factors.

Additionally, when the states did not adopt CCSS, they often “rejected” them while creating nearly the same standards, and simply renaming them to avoid the buzz words “common core standards.” For better or worse, these standards have deeply impacted the educational system in an irreversible way. One could reasonably adopt the attitude that, if these standards are here to stay, we should work to embrace and develop them, rather than attempting to erase them completely.

Despite a deeper exploration of this topic, I remain unable to take decisive stance for or against the CCSS. On one hand, some assert that the standards are beneficial to our country’s education system because they provide the baseline standards that all students must meet in order to reach college-readiness and successfully move forward towards their future. Because the standards do not dictate the curriculum, teachers are free to teach their classroom in the way they see fit. In addition, the clear gaps between high-school graduates and their ability to accomplish the demands of Freshman classes was a major problem that needed to be addressed. This added rigor to classrooms may also be seen as a benefit to the country, as it raises standards for all students and provides the nation with more competent, prepared, and educated citizens. The likeliness of drastic state-to-state variances in competency and skill could be greatly reduced. Teachers are given standards created for success by educational institutes such as the School Board of Education and Achieve to ensure that every classroom in the public school system is equipped for victory.

However, many people may still reasonably take the opposite viewpoint, seeing the CCSS as a negative and harmful overreach of government control and a detriment for teachers in the classroom. Many feel that the rigorous and challenging demands on teachers has been greatly increased, though the level of support and guidance has not been addressed proportionately. Additionally, a point of concern centers around the fear that CCSS are a governmentally imposed plan, shifting the power from the schools and into the hands of the wealthy and the most disconnected from the classroom. Teachers fear that the standards begin to move away from genuine, real-world, differentiated learning, and towards creating standards that allow teachers to “teach to the test,” which only ensures more national congruency in nationwide scores such as the ACT and SAT.

After exploring this topic more deeply, I can see both the pros and cons of the Common Core State Standards, and I remain unsure of my opinion. I believe that the deeper exploration of this topic has both confirmed past knowledge and exposed new information; ultimately, I am leaning towards not using the Common Core Standards in the classroom. I think I arrived at this conclusion because I agree with the hesitation surrounding large, governmental control, and because of the teachers whom I have talked to who express their dissatisfaction. In addition, while I do think it is important for rigorous schooling, I do not like the “one-size-fits-all” approach required with the CCSS. I believe the standards will tend towards large, bureaucratic type learning, rather than truly allowing for a rich, exploratory, and diverse classroom. I am excited to continue my exploration in this topic, beyond the scope of this paper, as I attempt to learn more about this significant area of the education system in America.

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Appendix E. My First Lesson Plan

<p>Grade: 9th</p>	<p>Subject: English: Reading for Literature</p>
<p>Materials: "House of Purple Cedar"</p>	<p>Technology Needed: computer and powerpoint application</p>
<p>Instructional Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Direct instruction <input type="checkbox"/> Guided practice <input type="checkbox"/> Socratic Seminar <input type="checkbox"/> Learning Centers <input type="checkbox"/> Lecture <input type="checkbox"/> Technology integration <input type="checkbox"/> Other (list) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Peer teaching/collaboration/cooperative learning <input type="checkbox"/> Visuals/Graphic organizers <input type="checkbox"/> PBL <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion/Debate <input type="checkbox"/> Modeling 	<p>Guided Practices and Concrete Application:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Large group activity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Independent activity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pairing/collaboration <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Simulations/Scenarios <input type="checkbox"/> Other (list) <p>Explain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Hands-on <input type="checkbox"/> Technology integration <input type="checkbox"/> Imitation/Repeat/Mimic
<p>Standard(s)</p> <p>9-10.3 "Analyze how the complex characters (e.g. those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text (including those of American Indians), interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme."</p>	<p>Differentiation</p> <p>Below Proficiency: For these students, I will provide audio books in case they are struggling with the reading and staying on track. I will also be available for one-on-one discussions and will have the opening questions available so that the student may feel confident enough with their understanding and prepared knowledge, to participate in group discussion. These students may be able to forgo journal entries (in which they keep a record of their questions, concerns, comments etc. regarding the reading) if they prefer a discussion with me instead. This discussion will need to take place every day for about 2-3 minutes after class, if they want to substitute the journal.</p> <p>Above Proficiency: For these students, I will ask them to create 2-3 of their own opening questions "for the class" and write what they would want to establish from these questions/where the class discussion might lead in addition to the journal entries/their reasoning behind these questions. If they would prefer, these students may choose instead to read ahead of the lesson and write an entry about what they think are important points/what they believe should be issues that get addressed, crucial moments they noticed, etc. They may then compare this entry with the journal entry completed after the actual reading.</p> <p>Approaching/Emerging Proficiency: These students will be required to keep journal entries, but they do not need to create additional questions. They will also have opportunities for one-on-one assistance if they feel they might be falling behind the class.</p> <p>Modalities/Learning Preferences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First, for the bodily/ kinesthetic learner, I will have the students act out critical scenes from the book, allowing opportunities for some students to make a skit in which the
<p>Objective(s)</p> <p>The learner will be able to determine the important decisions that mark the development of a character's personality.</p> <p>The learner will be able to criticize the character's decisions based on how they relate to other characters in the story.</p> <p>The learner will be able to synthesis the character's decisions and interactions into an explanation of their advancement of the plot.</p> <p>Bloom's Taxonomy Cognitive Level: Comprehension, Evaluation and Synthesis</p>	

	<p>character’s choice is different than in the book, so that they might see how the story could play out differently, depending on the character’s choices/actions. This will give them a visual of the choices made, and how this affects the individual, as well as demonstrating the importance of this choice or action to the overall plot through hypothetical examples of varying actions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondly, to reach out to the interpersonal learners, I will create time for students to talk within small groups, where they can talk amongst themselves about the defining moments in the book, as well as their significance. They will have a chance to work together and discuss issues, variations, impactful moments and key events. • Finally, after students have had a chance to collaborate with their peers, they will have an opportunity to draw an outline/chart, specifically for logical/ mathematical students. In this project, they will work through the book, highlighting the complex character’s development, for example, major choices that affect their personalities. They will also chart the important interactions and any similarities/differences between them and give brief reasons for their choices. Finally, they will outline the effects of these major choices and how they influence the book’s plot.
<p>Classroom Management- (grouping(s), movement/transitions, etc.) On each student’s desk, I will place a color sheet of paper-this will be how they divide into groups. The matching colors will be placed in three different spots of the room with brief instructions of the group’s role, above the color sheets. These three groups will remain the same (and in the same spot) for the small group discussion.</p>	<p>Behavior Expectations- (systems, strategies, procedures specific to the lesson, rules and expectations, etc.) No making fun of any students at any point. After the student skits, students will be supportive and kind. (Note to self: make sure not to put Marley and Gavin in the same group)</p>
<p>Minutes</p>	<p>Procedures</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>Set-up/Prep: Make sure the discussion prompts are up on the board and each student’s desk has a colored paper on it-colors/ instructions are also on the wall in appropriate places. Today is national avocado day, so as the students walk in, I will greet them with squares of homemade avocado fudge.</p>

6	<p>Engage: (opening activity/ anticipatory Set – access prior learning / stimulate interest /generate questions, etc.) Students will briefly turn and talk about the two question prompts before we come together for a group discussion of thoughts, concerns, ideas etc.</p>
6	<p>Explain: (concepts, procedures, vocabulary, etc.) I will spend this time articulating the particular points I want the students to pay attention to during the lesson, and give a brief explanation of why they are important. Instruct the students to now break into their groups, read instructions and begin working.</p>
32	<p>Explore: (independent, concrete practice/application with relevant learning task -connections from content to real-life experiences, reflective questions- probing or clarifying questions) During this section, the students will have about 8 minutes to prepare for the short skits- each group will then present it to the rest of the class. After this, students will remain in the groups to have small discussions about the three skits: one with the actual plot from the book based on the character’s actual decisions, and the other two with hypothetical events that could result from the character’s different choice. (about 8-10 minutes) Students will then return to their seats and work quickly for the remaining time plotting/outlining what they learned through the skits, group discussions in relation to the character’s growth through the book/interactions with others and effect on the plotline.</p>
6	<p>Review (wrap up and transition to next activity): At this time, I will re-iterate the important points we should have covered (this will be on the slide so that students can be sure that they have them write down on their notes-this way, even if the group didn’t come up with these answers, the students are all sure to get essential info) and the remaining few minutes will be spent in journal entries.</p>
<p>Formative Assessment: (linked to objectives) Progress monitoring throughout lesson- clarifying questions, check-in strategies, etc. Each child will complete a brief journal entry in a notebook that will be turned in at the end of the day for me to see how well they are understanding what I am teaching. In addition, I will be sure to ask the class questions throughout, as well as encourage them to ask me questions, as well as asking their peers.</p> <p>Consideration for Back-up Plan: If this fails, and students are still confused, Then what do I do?</p>	<p>Summative Assessment (linked back to objectives) End of lesson: Each student will complete a final essay on this topic, incorporating ideas, concerns, thoughts etc. prompted from the class discussion and personal reflection.</p>
<p>Reflection (What went well? What did the students learn? How do you know? What changes would you make?)</p> <p>I think that, if I went back to this lesson again, I would not try to fit so much into the one day. While they might all be important things to accomplish, there was not enough time to really fit it all in. Over-planning is good, but some of this needs to be cut to allow more time for them to develop their skits/reviews. I think I would also like to allow for a more broad end assignment than just a paper-what could those be?</p>	

Appendix F. Interdisciplinary Lesson Plan

Grades: Secondary Education

Unit Topic: Presidential Election

Approximate Time Required: Two weeks

1. Main Purpose of the Unit: Encourage students to vote, and explain the significance of informed voting by understanding the democratic system.

2. Performance Objectives:

The student will be able to:

A. English—

- Explore rhetorical strategies of different political speeches (past and current candidates)
- Compare the literary canon under different regimes.

B. History—

- Synthesize the history of democracy in America.
- Discuss the history of the two party system and how it has evolved
- Discuss past candidate strategies and how they're similar or different today

C. Business/Econ—

- Determine the economic effects of presidential campaigns
- Articulate the role of special interest groups and different campaign funding strategies
- Discuss the candidates views and whether they're aligned with realistic expectations or practices regarding trade, taxes, etc.

D. Math—

- Find the probability of different voting outcomes based on primary projections and understand what the probability means
- Examine flaws in current election methods
- Use the Borda Count method to determine an election winner.

3. Content Outline

A.English

1. Rhetorical strategies of different political pieces:

- Appeal to logos
- Appeal to ethos
- Appeal to pathos
- Word choice
- Intended audience (both parties, one party, women, men, Hispanics, lower class, etc..)

2. Literary canon themes under:

- Washington - Patriotism

- Lincoln - Civil Rights
- Nixon - Post Jim Crow
- Bush - Renewed Patriotism

B. History

1. History of Democracy in America:

- Why the democratic system of government
- The first vote
- Voting changes: opening votes to women and minorities
- Voting trends: democratic vs. republican wins, number of voters compared to citizens
- The electoral college

2. Candidate strategies:

- Slogans
- Commercials
- Grass-roots
- Posters/signs
- Debate rhetoric

C. Economy

1. Economic Effects of Presidential Campaigns:

- Economic prosperity vs. Economic uncertainty
- Trends in economic shifts during major elections

2. Candidate Views vs. Reality:

- Are the candidates voting for and supporting bills which are aligned with their rhetorical claims regarding taxes, trade, etc..

3. Campaign Funding Strategies:

- Special Interest Groups
- Fundraising
- Allocation of funds

D. Math

1. Probability of Voting Outcomes:

- Understand the odds of a candidate winning based off a projection

2. Flaws of the popular vote

- Show why popular vote is not sound with more than two candidates

3. The Borda Count

- Show why is the Borda Count a sound method
- Show mathematical process of the Borda Count

4. Procedures and Activities:

- A. Small group reading
- B. Discussion
- C. Measurement

- D. Lecture
- E. Debate
- F. Journal entries

5. Instructional Aids and Resources

A. Literature Selections— Campaign Speeches:

- Obama: Democratic National Convention Speech (Boston, MA. 2004)
- Trump: Inaugural Address (2017)
- Kennedy: “The City Upon a Hill” Speech (1961)
- Reagan: “ A Vital Economy: Jobs, Growth, and Progress for Americans” (1980)

B. Literature Selections— Literary Canon:

- Washington: The Federalist Papers
- Lincoln: “Good Wives” by Louisa May Alcott
- Nixon: “The Bluest Eye” by Toni Morrison
- Bush: “Because of Winn-Dixie” by Kate DiCamillo

C. Research:

- Last 3 Presidential Races:
 - Different viewpoints on Trade, Unemployment, National Debt, etc.

D. Items Indicative of the lesson

A. English Materials:

- Handouts of the Federalist papers
- Books - enough for each student to choose one
- Rhetorical outline handout
- Fallacious reasoning/ logical fallacies handout

B. History:

- History book
- Debate outline/expectations handout

C. Business/Economics:

- Powerpoint
- iPad or Laptop

D. Math:

- Mock ballot

6. Assessment/Evaluation:

A. English:

- Short essay convincing the reader which speech they found most persuasive/effective and why.
- Identify/Outline rhetorical strategies in a given speech.
- Matching given phrases from the 4 speeches to the correct date/president.

B. History: Students are given 5 questions that they will prepare answer for in advance. Students will debate their answers in class and be graded on both their prepared material and participation.

C. Business/Econ: 3 groups, Each have a poster board: they would compare and contrast different viewpoints that each candidates have.

D. Math: Have students conduct a mock election in which the students explain flaws in the determining of the winner through popular vote. In addition, have students determine a winner through the Borda Count.

7. Standards:

a. English:

RI.9-10.8: Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning.

L.9-10.3: Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

b. History: 7.4.2 Explain how people create and change structures of power (e.g., force, elections, wars, reactions to economic conditions and natural disasters)

c. Business/Econ: Economics and Personal Finance 5.3.1 Analyze the role of core economic institutions and incentives in the U.S. economy

d. Math:

7.SP.5 Understand that the probability of a chance event is a number from 0 through 1 that expresses the likelihood of the event occurring. Larger numbers indicate greater likelihood. A probability near 0 indicates an unlikely event, a probability around $\frac{1}{2}$ indicates an event that is neither unlikely nor likely, and a probability near 1 indicates a likely event.

7.SP.7 Develop a probability model and use it to find probabilities of events.

Appendix G. Technology Lesson Plan

<p>Grade: 9th</p>	<p>Subject: English: Reading for Literature</p>
<p>Materials: "House of Purple Cedar"</p>	<p>Technology Needed: computer and powerpoint application – 3 tablets for students use</p>
<p>Instructional Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Direct instruction <input type="checkbox"/> Guided practice <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Socratic Seminar <input type="checkbox"/> Learning Centers <input type="checkbox"/> Lecture <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Technology integration <input type="checkbox"/> Other (list) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Peer teaching/collaboration/cooperative learning <input type="checkbox"/> Visuals/Graphic organizers <input type="checkbox"/> PBL <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion/Debate <input type="checkbox"/> Modeling 	<p>Guided Practices and Concrete Application:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Large group activity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Independent activity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pairing/collaboration <input type="checkbox"/> Simulations/Scenarios <input type="checkbox"/> Other (list) <p>Explain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Hands-on <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Technology integration <input type="checkbox"/> Imitation/Repeat/Mimic
<p>Standard(s) 9-10.3 "Analyze how the complex characters (e.g. those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text (including those of American Indians), interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme."</p>	<p>Differentiation</p> <p>Below Proficiency: For these students, I will provide audio books in case they are struggling with the reading and staying on track. I will also be available for one-on-one discussions and will have the opening questions available so that the student may feel confident enough with their understanding and prepared knowledge, to participate in group discussion. These students may be able to forgo journal entries (in which they keep a record of their questions, concerns, comments etc. regarding the reading) if they prefer a discussion with me instead. This discussion will need to take place every day for about 2-3 minutes after class, if they want to substitute the journal.</p> <p>Above Proficiency: For these students, I will ask them to create 2-3 of their own opening questions "for the class" and write what they would want to establish from these questions/where the class discussion might lead in addition to the journal entries/their reasoning behind these questions. If they would prefer, these students may choose instead to read ahead of the lesson and write an entry about what they think are important points/what they believe should be issues that get addressed, crucial moments they noticed, etc. They may then compare this entry with the journal entry completed after the actual reading.</p> <p>Approaching/Emerging Proficiency: These students will be required to keep journal entries, but they do not need to create additional questions. They will also have opportunities for one-on-one assistance if they feel they might be falling behind the class.</p> <p>Modalities/Learning Preferences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First, for the bodily/ kinesthetic learner, I will have the students act out critical scenes from the book, allowing opportunities for
<p>Objective(s) The learner will be able to determine the important decisions that mark the development of a character's personality. The learner will be able to criticize the character's decisions based on how they relate to other characters in the story. The learner will be able to synthesis the character's decisions and interactions into an explanation of their advancement of the plot.</p> <p>Bloom's Taxonomy Cognitive Level: Comprehension, Evaluation and Synthesis</p>	

	<p>some students to make a skit in which the character’s choice is different than in the book, so that they might see how the story could play out differently, depending on the character’s choices/actions. This will give them a visual of the choices made, and how this affects the individual, as well as demonstrating the importance of this choice or action to the overall plot through hypothetical examples of varying actions. This skit will ultimately be recorded into a short “movie” that will be presented next class.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondly, to reach out to the interpersonal learners, I will create time for students to talk within small groups, where they can talk amongst themselves about the defining moments in the book, as well as their significance. They will have a chance to work together and discuss issues, variations, impactful moments and key events. • Finally, after students have had a chance to collaborate with their peers, they will have an opportunity to draw an outline/chart, specifically for logical/ mathematical students. In this project, they will work through the book, highlighting the complex character’s development, for example, major choices that affect their personalities. They will also chart the important interactions and any similarities/differences between them and give brief reasons for their choices. Finally, they will outline the effects of these major choices and how they influence the book’s plot.
<p>Classroom Management- (grouping(s), movement/transitions, etc.) On each student’s desk, I will place a color sheet of paper-this will be how they divide into groups. The matching colors will be placed in three different spots of the room with brief instructions of the group’s role, above the color sheets. These three groups will remain the same (and in the same spot) for the small group discussion. After students have been divided into groups, each group will be given one tablet for recording their skit.</p>	<p>Behavior Expectations- (systems, strategies, procedures specific to the lesson, rules and expectations, etc.) No making fun of any students at any point. When working on the skits, students will be supportive and kind, encouraging each other to do their best. When students use the recording device, they are expected to treat it with care and respect. If anyone is fighting over the device, handling it roughly or using it for any purpose besides the task given, the student will receive a warning. If they continue to act inappropriately, they will be taken off the task and asked to return to their desk to work on reading/writing/homework, (whatever project is appropriate for the day) When the time for recording is</p>

	completed, I will ask them to turn off and set aside the tablets. (Note to self: make sure not to put Marley and Gavin in the same group)
Minutes	Procedures
5	<p>Set-up/Prep: Make sure the discussion prompts are up on the board and each student's desk has a colored paper on it- colors/ instructions are also on the wall in appropriate places. Today is national avocado day, so as the students walk in, I will greet them with squares of homemade avocado fudge.</p>
6	<p>Engage: (opening activity/ anticipatory Set – access prior learning / stimulate interest /generate questions, etc.) Students will briefly turn and talk about the two question prompts before we come together for a group discussion of thoughts, concerns, ideas etc.</p>
6	<p>Explain: (concepts, procedures, vocabulary, etc.) I will spend this time articulating the particular points I want the students to pay attention to during the lesson and give a brief explanation of why they are important. Instruct the students to now break into their groups, read instructions and begin working.</p>
32	<p>Explore: (independent, concrete practice/application with relevant learning task -connections from content to real-life experiences, reflective questions- probing or clarifying questions) During this section, the students will have the first (about) 8 minutes to complete the work they began on their short skits- each group will assign someone to use their school tablet to video record what has been finished so far, switching between members as each person has a turn to act. (the short scripts have already been written up and students know the entire skit) After this, students will remain in the groups to have small discussions about the three skits: one with the actual plot from the book based on the character's actual decisions, and the other two with hypothetical events that could result from the character's different choice. (about 8-10 minutes) Students will then return to their seats and work quickly for the remaining time plotting/outlining what they learned through the skits, group discussions in relation to the character's growth through the book/interactions with others and effect on the plotline.</p>
6	<p>Review (wrap up and transition to next activity): At this time, I will re-iterate the important points we should have covered (this will be on the slide so that students can be sure that they have them write down on their notes-this way, even if the group didn't come up with these answers, the students are all sure to get essential info) and the remaining few minutes will be spent in journal entries.</p>
<p>Formative Assessment: (linked to objectives) Progress monitoring throughout lesson- clarifying questions, check-in strategies, etc. Each child will complete a brief journal entry in a notebook that will be turned in at the end of the day for me to see how well they are understanding what I am teaching. In addition, I will be sure to ask the class questions throughout, as well as encourage them to ask me questions, as well as asking their peers.</p> <p>Consideration for Back-up Plan: If this fails, and students are still confused, Then what do I do?</p>	<p>Summative Assessment (linked back to objectives) End of lesson: Each student will complete a final essay on this topic, incorporating ideas, concerns, thoughts etc. prompted from the class discussion and personal reflection.</p>
<p>Reflection (What went well? What did the students learn? How do you know? What changes would you make?)</p>	

I think that, if I went back to this lesson again, I would not try to fit so much into the one day. While they might all be important things to accomplish, there was not enough time to really fit it all in. Over-planning is good, but some of this needs to be cut to allow more time for them to develop their skits/reviews.

I think I would also like to allow for a more broad end assignment than just a paper-what could those be?

Appendix H. Questioning Lesson Plan

Grade: 9 th	Subject: English: Reading for Literature
Materials: "House of Purple Cedar"	Technology Needed: computer and powepoint application – 3 tablets for students use
Instructional Strategies: <input type="checkbox"/> Direct instruction <input type="checkbox"/> Guided practice <input type="checkbox"/> Socratic Seminar <input type="checkbox"/> Learning Centers <input type="checkbox"/> Lecture <input type="checkbox"/> Technology integration <input type="checkbox"/> Other (list) <input type="checkbox"/> Peer teaching/collaboration/cooperative learning <input type="checkbox"/> Visuals/Graphic organizers <input type="checkbox"/> PBL <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion/Debate <input type="checkbox"/> Modeling	Guided Practices and Concrete Application: <input type="checkbox"/> Large group activity <input type="checkbox"/> Independent activity <input type="checkbox"/> Pairing/collaboration <input type="checkbox"/> Simulations/Scenarios <input type="checkbox"/> Other (list) Explain: <input type="checkbox"/> Hands-on <input type="checkbox"/> Technology integration <input type="checkbox"/> Imitation/Repeat/Mimic
Standard(s) 9-10.3 "Analyze how the complex characters (e.g. those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text (including those of American Indians), interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme."	Differentiation <p>Below Proficiency: For these students, I will provide audio books in case they are struggling with the reading and staying on track. I will also be available for one-on-one discussions and will have the opening questions available so that the student may feel confident enough with their understanding and prepared knowledge, to participate in group discussion. These students may be able to forgo journal entries (in which they keep a record of their questions, concerns, comments etc. regarding the reading) if they prefer a discussion with me instead. This discussion will need to take place every day for about 2-3 minutes after class, if they want to substitute the journal.</p> <p>Above Proficiency: For these students, I will ask them to create 2-3 of their own opening questions "for the class" and write what they would want to establish from these questions/where the class discussion might lead in addition to the journal entries/their reasoning behind these questions. If they would prefer, these students may choose instead to read ahead of the lesson and write an entry about what they think are important points/what they believe should be issues that get addressed, crucial moments they noticed, etc. They may then compare this entry with the journal entry completed after the actual reading.</p> <p>Approaching/Emerging Proficiency: These students will be required to keep journal entries, but they do not need to create additional questions. They will also have opportunities for one-on-one assistance if they feel they might be falling behind the class.</p> <p>Modalities/Learning Preferences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First, for the bodily/ kinesthetic learner, I will have the students (Analysis) act out critical scenes from the book, allowing
Objective(s) The learner will be able to determine the important decisions that mark the development of a character's personality. The learner will be able to criticize the character's decisions based on how they relate to other characters in the story. The learner will be able to synthesis the character's decisions and interactions into an explanation of their advancement of the plot. Bloom's Taxonomy Cognitive Level: Comprehension, Evaluation and Synthesis	

	<p>opportunities for some students to make a skit in which the character's choice is different than in the book, so that they might see how the story could play out differently, depending on the character's choices/actions. (to write these skits, I will ask questions such as, how can you break down the scene in order to capture the most important aspects of the scene in a few brief minutes? Can you model the opposite behaviors?) This will give them a visual of the choices made, and how this affects the individual, as well as demonstrating the importance of this choice or action to the overall plot through hypothetical examples of varying actions. This skit will ultimately be recorded into a short "movie" that will be presented next class.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondly, to reach out to the interpersonal learners, I will create time for students to talk within small groups, where they can talk amongst themselves about the defining moments in the book, as well as their significance. They will have a chance to work together and discuss issues, variations, impactful moments and key events. • Finally, after students have had a chance to collaborate with their peers, they will have an opportunity to draw an outline/chart, specifically for logical/ mathematical students. In this project, they will work through the book, highlighting the complex character's development, for example, major choices that affect their personalities. They will also chart the important interactions and any similarities/differences between them and give brief reasons for their choices. Finally, they will outline the effects of these major choices and how they influence the book's plot.
<p>Classroom Management- (grouping(s), movement/transitions, etc.) On each student's desk, I will place a color sheet of paper-this will be how they divide into groups. The matching colors will be placed in three different spots of the room with brief instructions of the group's role,</p>	<p>Behavior Expectations- (systems, strategies, procedures specific to the lesson, rules and expectations, etc.) No making fun of any students at any point. When working on the skits, students will be supportive and kind, encouraging each other to do their best. When students use the recording device, they are expected to treat it with care and respect. If</p>

<p>above the color sheets. These three groups will remain the same (and in the same spot) for the small group discussion. After students have been divided into groups, each group will be given one tablet for recording their skit.</p>	<p>anyone is fighting over the device, handling it roughly or using it for any purpose besides the task given, the student will receive a warning. If they continue to act inappropriately, they will be taken off the task and asked to return to their desk to work on reading/writing/homework, (whatever project is appropriate for the day) When the time for recording is completed, I will ask them to turn off and set aside the tablets. <u>(Note to self: make sure not to put Marley and Gavin in the same group)</u></p>
Minutes	Procedures
5	<p>Set-up/Prep: Make sure the discussion prompts are up on the board and each student's desk has a colored paper on it- colors/ instructions are also on the wall in appropriate places. Today is national avocado day, so as the students walk in, I will greet them with squares of homemade avocado fudge.</p>
6	<p>Engage: (opening activity/ anticipatory Set – access prior learning / stimulate interest /generate questions, etc.) <u>(Knowledge) What are the important decisions that we have outlined in class so far, regarding (Person's Name) character? (Comprehension) Can you rephrase/explain/summarize the reasons for why these are important/influential/necessary for the plot?</u> Students will briefly turn and talk about the two question prompts before we come together for a group discussion of thoughts, concerns, ideas etc. for few minutes. Next, I will move on to the opening question of the day: <u>(Getting interest and attention) (Application) can you think of a time when you made a choice that positively and actively affected you later in life? (ex. You signed up for a ski team and ended up meeting some of the best people and making some of the greatest memories, you chose to get a gym membership, and have since felt yourself grow in discipline, strength, self-control, etc., you bought rock climbing shoes so that you could take up your friends offer to rock climb with them, and you discovered a deep love for the activity)</u></p>
6	<p>Explain: (concepts, procedures, vocabulary, etc.) I will spend this time articulating the particular points I want the students to pay attention to during the lesson and give a brief explanation of why they are important. <u>(Managing) I will have the basic ideas on power point so students can see, and I will also ask them to write these down as reference for later.</u> I will then instruct the students to break into their groups, read instructions and begin working.</p>
32	<p>Explore: (independent, concrete practice/application with relevant learning task -connections from content to real-life experiences, reflective questions- probing or clarifying questions) During this section, the students will have the first (about) 8 minutes to complete the work they began on their short skits- each group will assign someone to use their school tablet to video record what has been finished so far, switching between members as each person has a turn to act. (the short scripts have already been written up and students know the entire skit) After this, students will remain in the groups to have small discussions about the three skits: one with the actual plot from the book based on the character's actual decisions, and the other two with hypothetical events that could result from the character's different choice. (about 8-10 minutes) <u>(Allowing expression of affect) This will be the time that students can also talk about lingering questions, iron out concerns and confusions. (Synthesis) Can you now combine the knowledge from skits and group discussions into an outline of the character's actions up to this point? Can you then hypothesize about how the character's potential choices might have played out differently?</u> Students will then return to their seats and work quickly for the remaining time plotting/outlining what they learned through the skits, group discussions in relation to the character's growth through the book/interactions with others and effect on the plotline.</p>
6	<p>Review (wrap up and transition to next activity): At this time, I will re-iterate the important points we should have covered (this will be on the slide so that students can be sure that they have them write down on their notes-this way, even if the group didn't come up with these answers, the students are all sure to get essential info). <u>(Recalling specific facts or information) I will ask students to help me with this, by encouraging them to recall and assert the main concepts we have covered. (Higher level thought-process)</u> The remaining few minutes will be spent in journal entries, <u>ask them</u></p>

<p>to consider the value in understanding and examining this topic. How might an understanding of their action’s consequences affect their own lives? (Structuring and Redirecting Learning) How might it affect other’s? Does it seem beneficial or negative? Helpful? Hindering?</p>	
<p>Formative Assessment: (linked to objectives) Progress monitoring throughout lesson- clarifying questions, check- in strategies, etc. Each child will complete a brief journal entry in a notebook that will be turned in at the end of the day for me to see how well they are understanding what I am teaching. In addition, I will be sure to ask the class questions throughout, as well as encourage them to ask me questions, as well as asking their peers. (Diagnosing and reflecting) For this specific lesson, I will be sure that I ask questions concerning ideas such as cause and effect (because he chose this, this thing happened) and I will ask them to reflect in their journal entries on the consequences of their actions, not just on themselves, but on those around them.</p> <p>Consideration for Back-up Plan: If this fails, and students are still confused, Then what do I do?</p>	<p>Summative Assessment (linked back to objectives) End of lesson: (Evaluation) Each student will complete a final essay on this topic, incorporating ideas, concerns, thoughts etc. prompted from the class discussion and personal reflection. To do this, students will answer questions such as “Can you defend (character’s name)’s decision to choose (action) over (another action)?” and “Decide which of (character’s name)’s major choices was the most influential in shaping the outcome of the story/effected the plotline”</p>
<p>Reflection (What went well? What did the students learn? How do you know? What changes would you make?)</p> <p>I think that, if I went back to this lesson again, I would not try to fit so much into the one day. While they might all be important things to accomplish, there was not enough time to really fit it all in. Over-planning is good, but some of this needs to be cut to allow more time for them to develop their skits/reviews. I think I would also like to allow for a more broad end assignment than just a paper-what could those be?</p>	

Appendix I. Direct Lesson

- **Learning** **excited** because...**When we are finished today**: better understand the parts of a sentences.
- Seem kind of **silly or pointless**, but **remember** how, when we were trying to learn how to classify different words in a sentence, we were kind of **struggling**, right?
 - **Diagramming forces us to clarify our thinking**
 - **It helps us to see the relationship of some words in a sentence to other words**
 - **And fix our sentences, which allows for strong, clear writing.**
 - **Helps prevent improper grammar, such as sentence fragments, or run-ons.**
- These are all part of the **reason** that we diagram...compare sentences: (POWERPOINT)
 - first= bad. Diagramming makes better— can't diagram? **highlight a weak and unclear sentence.**
- Idea of what diagramming looks like, here is a simple example (POWERPOINT)
 - our sentences
 - **main principles and concepts and apply** (POWERPOINT)
 - this gives you an **idea** of what you can do once you understand how to diagram sentences.
- So, this skill is important to develop because it allows you to
 - cement the meaning of your words into real sentences,
 - to clarify your meaning,
 - understand the relationships of each part of your sentence,
 - helps you to challenge your understanding of what you are trying to convey
 - **All of this combined, allows us to create *logical and clear* sentences, so as to become a stronger writer, and to create the best work you can.**
- (TRANSITION) **explain the purpose** to each other
- Now we know **why**, I will show you **how**
 - Pen, paper, do with me
 - Use these sentences (POWERPOINT) to diagram. **#1**
 - I like to start by drawing a **line**
 - First, **subject.** (first, or second noun in simple sentences)
 - **After noun, verb.**
 - After subject and verb, rest of the sentence. (predicate nominative: synonymously, renaming the subject.
 - P.N., **special line** to indicate **relationship**
 - Finish other words. **Adjectives and adverbs on a slanted line underneath the word they modify.**
 - **#2** first step? Subject, then verb. Diagram **prepositional phrases**, preposition vs. object of the preposition **placement.**
- **#3 You do** first steps
- **#4, D.O receives** the action of the verb? placement
- *work on own sentences, then, come together and discuss— do more, I.O, conjunctions, coordinate clauses, etc.*
- First, diagram these. (**start by** finding the subject and verb, and then work from there to identify how the other words function.)

Appendix J. Indirect Lesson

In this lesson, I want students to begin learning how to diagram sentences. First, I will have students break into groups of 3-4. Before they start learning how it is done, I want them to understand WHY it is done— why it is important for them to learn. In their groups, they will each have between 5 and 10 minutes to research on their computers why it is important, as well, coming up with any of their own considerations. They will write down these reasons, and prepare to share them in a discussion. When we come back together as a whole group, each group will be able to contribute some of the reasons they found for why diagramming is an important skill to learn. I will provide some suggestions/considerations that I think are very important to learn, in addition to the student's findings.

Next, we will learn HOW we diagram. To begin this process, I will have 3 simple sentences diagrammed on the board. I will ask students to try and guess the reasoning behind the process. I will provide some hints, such as considering what part of speech each word is, the patterns between each diagrammed sentence, and the consistent/variations for line usage. My hope is that they can make assumptions such as, "The subject of the sentence is always on the first spot, followed by the verb, separated by another line".

After they have had a chance to consider their own explanations, evaluate patterns, and hypothesize reasoning, students, still in their groups, will research the rules for diagramming. The answers are all online, and they can be rather easily found. I will ask students to consider what similarities/differences they found. I will be sure to ask for questions at this point, and for any needed clarification.

Once this part has been ironed out a bit, I will now ask students to create their own sentences to diagram. They can simply create a simple sentence such as "The young girl ate

chocolate”, and then diagram how they feel is correct. They can, of course, be asking questions during this time, and I will be walking around to offer help. After this, each group will then present their sentence, while explaining their reasoning for how they set it up. This will (hopefully) provide them with an opportunity to not only more deeply grasp the concept, share it with their peers (giving peers another chance to learn), as well as giving me a chance to see what they have learned, and what has been missed.

Appendix K. Performance Assessment and Rubric

Name: _____

Date: _____

The first part of this assessment asks you to demonstrate your understanding of standard English grammar and common, proper usage, as well as control over capitalization, punctuation and spelling.

Instructions: The following paragraphs have been turned in to you, the teacher. However, they all contain several errors, whether in punctuation, spelling, structure, or any other type of grammatical error. The number of mistakes are given to you. Feel free to use your thesaurus to look up any words you need.

- Identify mistakes within each paragraph. Mark where it is wrong, and why it is wrong.
- Explain corrections as if you were teaching to a student. Don't just mark it as incorrect, write down why, and how it can be corrected.
- On your clean sheet of paper, rewrite the corrected paragraph.

Paragraph one contains (at least) 8 errors.

1. Almost two thousands of years after being baried by falling ash from a two-day volcanic eruption, pompeii reveals fascinating details about day to day life in the Roman Empire. Pompeii's Population roughly 20,000 inhabitants practiced several religions. This is evidenced by temples dedicated to the Egyptian goddess Isis, as well as the presense of Jews and worshipers of Cybele (called the "Great Mother" by her followers). Pompeii's citizens practiced all of these religions in apparent peaceful coexistence with followers of the state religion, but

worshipped Jupiter and the Roman emperor they led astonishingly long lives, assisted by doctors and dentists, and were very well educated.

Paragraph 2 largely centers around word choices. Before you begin correcting this sentence, look up the definition of the words listed below and write the definitions next to each word.

- Aberration
- Gregarious
- Ebullient
- Correlation
- Disconcerting
- Exuberance
- Exacerbate
- Malaise
- Unmitigated

With your understanding of these words, correct the paragraph below. There are at least 7 mistakes.

2. Jerry was recently informed of an upcoming test in statistics, which is a required portion of his Ph.D. curriculum although hearing about the upcoming test, Jerry has acted passionate and uninterested in social activities. This behavior is an aberration for him, he is normally quite gregarious and ebullient. All his friends concur that his recent behavior has some correlation with the exam. Everybody has tried to evoke some of his normal despair, but to no avail. His behavior is very disconcerting. They seem that efforts to bring out his usual

exuberance only exacerbate his malaise. I believe the only antidote to Jerry's uncharacteristic behavior to be unmitigated success on his statistics exam.

Short Story Writing Section

Instructions: The next section of this assessment asks you to write a short narrative to develop real or imagined experiences or events. This narrative can be real or fictional. It may be on any topic you choose. There is no minimum or maximum length. Your story must be neat and legible.

- Use effective techniques, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
- Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.
- Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another.
- You must use all of the terms listed below. Identify where in your writing you are accomplishing this, and how.
 - Passive voice
 - Active voice
 - Simple, complex, compound and complex compound sentences.
 - A predicate nominative
 - A coordinating and subordinating conjunction
 - An independent and a dependent clause
 - Gerund, participle and infinitive

Appendix L. Test

Name: _____

Date: _____

- **True and False**

- Directions: In the blank line following the question, write either an F or a T. If the answer is false, write the correct answer in the space provided below the question.

1. A noun is an action word. _____

2. A predicate nominative renames the subject and completes a verb. _____

3. “My” is a possessive adjective. _____

- **Matching**

- Directions: Column A contains a short description of grammatical terms. Match the appropriate word from column B to the blank space beside the numbers in column A. Use each option only once and not all options from column B will be used.

Column A	Column B
____ 1. May be used to separate appositive phrases	a. Active voice
____ 2. Represented by the mnemonic FANBOYS	b. Direct object
____ 3. Receives the action of a transitive verb	c. Comma
____ 4. Subject receives the action of the verb	d. Predicate
	e. Passive voice
	f. Indirect object
	g. Coordinating conjunction

- **Multiple Choice**

- Directions: Use the given sentence below to answer the following questions. Place a circle around the answer you determine is correct.

“A lot of chocolate was eaten by the girls; because of that, they felt very sick.”

1. “The” is an example of a/n:
 - a. Definite article
 - b. Indefinite article
 - c. Passive voice
 - d. Conjunction
2. “Because” is acting as a/n:
 - a. Prepositional phrase
 - b. Indefinite article
 - c. Adjective

- d. Subordinating conjunction
- 3. “Chocolate was eaten” is an example of:
 - . Passive voice
 - a. Predicate nominative
 - b. Simple sentence
 - c. Imperative sentence

- **Completion Items**

- Fill in the blank with the appropriate responses.
 - 1. An independent clause is a group of words made up of a _____ and a _____.
 - 2. Helping (auxiliary) verbs always precede the _____.
 - 3. A verb form ending in “ing” and acting as a noun is called a _____.
 - 4. “Stop eating my chocolate” is an example of an _____ sentence.

- **Short Answer Response**

- In this exercise, you will need to use the correct grammatical rules, functions and characteristics we have been discussing in class. This prompt serves as an opportunity to apply your understanding of language in a more practical way. The response may be any length, so long as it sufficiently covers the prompt.
- 1. *Prompt:* Teachers and administrators in many American schools are now authorized to conduct random inspections of students' lockers and backpacks. Explain why you support or oppose this practice. Be specific and make your stance clear.

Appendix M. Pre-Test

Name: _____

Date: _____

Directions: For this pretest, please work through every word in the given sentences below, writing down what you know about that word. Indicate things such as part of speech, tense, voice, types of sentences, types of phrases, etc.

Example:

				(Passive voice)	
	The	small	boy	↑ <u>was</u>	<u>hit</u>
<u>by</u>					
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
↓	Article	Adjective	Noun	Helping Verb	Main verb
Prep.	(definitive)	(qualitative)	(subject)	(being verb)	(action word)
the	ball.				
↓	↓				
Article	obj. Of prep.				
(definite)					

→ This sentence is a simple sentence. It is indicative.

1. The girls went to buy Christmas presents, but they ended up just buying chocolate instead.

2. Don't eat that food, Sam!

3. Don't you think that Christmas is the best time of the year?