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Shakespeare: "Words, words, words."

Lesson Plan Justification Commentary

EDU 532: Multi-cultural Education

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Lesson Plan Justification Commentary

This is an analysis and commentary on the lesson plan I adapted to introduce an English honors grade 9 class to Elizabethan vocabulary for the beginning of an upcoming Shakespeare Unit. Most of the students are highly capable, even though a few have some learning challenges (like dysgraphia, dyslexia, and Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder - ADHD). The group of students is diverse, with 55% Caucasian, and the remainder are a wide variety of ethnicities. Class length is 50 minutes (context for learning appendix A). The Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction has adopted the Common Core State Standards Initiative for its English language arts standards. In this lesson, the applicable standards can be found in the language section, for grade 9 (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10) and more specifically in 9-10.4 – 9-10.6 stating that it is expected that students will be able to: gather vocabulary knowledge independently, apply strategies like analyzing contextual clues, pattern changes in words, or accessing appropriate dictionary, thesaurus, glossary, or other appropriate materials to define unfamiliar terms, clarifying and demonstrating the nuances of meaning, word relationships, figures of speech, or figurative language (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010).

This lesson plan is adapted from a Shakespeare insult lesson created by an award-winning high school English teacher blogger at Sadlier School under the name Vocab Gal, providing a variety of engaging activities and English language arts lessons (William H. Sadlier, Inc & Wright, 2018). This Shakespeare station-based interactive lesson introduces an upcoming Shakespeare unit by familiarizing them with Elizabethan vocabulary, deciphering strategies, the relevance of Shakespeare in culture today. It also seeks to establish student confidence through low-stakes, interactive, skill building activities that engage practice of multiple strategies using productive struggle, assessment as learning, and more.

Use of Foundational Knowledge

The planning approach of this lesson utilizes backwards design. Wiggins and McTighe (2005) identifies the steps for this design method as, "identify the objectives, determine measure and quantity of evidence, then plan the learning activities and instruction." My lesson objectives were created by incorporating the specific strategies of "beginning with the end" and the "4 M's" (measurable, manageable, made first, and most important) as were both outlined in *Teach Like a Champion 2.0* by Lemov (2015). The first step in beginning with the end is to pinpoint the objective outcomes, and be sure they are measurable, manageable and priority. The student friendly learning objectives for this Shakespeare introductory lesson are:

1. *I can identify, define, and decipher meaning of, Elizabethan words, phrases, and figures of speech from a variety of Shakespeare's works*.

2. *I can construct sentences using Elizabethan vocabulary and construct the modern sentence equivalents from Elizabethan phrases*.

3. *I can discuss and explain the reasoning for my inferences and language choices with peers and provide evidence to support my claims (for interpreting meaning of Shakespeare words and phrases)*.

Students at the 9th grade level are expected to begin their initial study of Shakespeare and the study of complex texts in their academic language (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010). This lesson is designed as an introduction to Shakespeare and a review of the strategies needed in analysis and definition of unfamiliar vocabulary. In measuring the student competency and confidence level in this skill set, I wanted the assessment to be completed as the students practiced these skills in class. This led to researching the most effective approach for introducing Shakespeare, while bridging the language gap between old English and modern.

Shakespeare's works are among the most frequently resisted and disliked by secondary students (Kleypas, 2004), and often, the language which is used in his texts presents a great obstacle for modern students (Milburn, 2002). Traditional scaffolding methods for complex texts (including glossaries, organizers, and instructor led analysis) alone often fail to provide students with the tools necessary for self-directed interpretation or analysis (Kleypas, 2004). Without which, students are unable to connect to the text on a personal level. These traditional supports are instead paired with student directed translation and interpretation, student's comprehension and connection to the readings improves (Kleypas, 2004). Wortham (2001) suggests that to accomplish this, teachers ought to treat Shakespeare's language as an alternative form of dialect, similar to regional forms of English. Subsequently, Wortham (2001) recommends use of activities that engage the class in translating Shakespeare's language into modern English, or further into slang. Apprehension lessens when students are introduced to Elizabethan English in this way, and students will frequently exhibit increased interest in the language and its complexities (Wortham, 2001). Further research suggests that to increase engagement and connection with classic texts, teachers must endeavor to make them accessible, current, and personally relevant for the 21st century high school student (Heilmer, 2009).

Taking the insights and practices recommended by this research, and the observational knowledge obtained through experience, I located and adapted an assessment and structured the learning activities. Knowing that: (1) these students are from diverse backgrounds, (2) many are highly capable, and (3) this will be most students' first experience with Shakespeare in an academic setting; I am opting to follow the advice of Wortham (2001), Heilmer (2009), and Kleypas (2004) by focusing on station and interactive translation activities. Paquette (2007) implies that the importance of teaching Shakespeare lies not in the complexity of it, but by

providing teens the opportunity to explore universal themes, as well as moral and ethical

dilemmas. Each station's learning activity and exit-ticket centers on deciphering/decoding the

meaning of Shakespeare text, or connecting it to them personally through familiar music and

movies. All contain those universal and timeless themes.

Instructional Planning for Effective Teaching

In planning the instruction for this lesson, Wiggins and McTighe's approach to backward

design was employed (2005). Additional specific strategies outlined by Lemov (2015). My

identified student friendly learning objectives were outlined above. The precise Common Core

Standards for English Language Arts applied in this lesson plan are:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.3 Apply knowledge of language to understand how

  language functions in different contexts.

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown words.

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.6 …Demonstrate independence in gathering

  vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or

  expression. (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010)

In determining the measure and quantity of evidence needed for competency, I created a

series of five single question google forms to serve as digital exit tickets for each station, to be

completed in conjunction with each stations' activity, to serve as a formal formative assessment

(the format and content of which is provided in appendix B). During the class time, I will be able

to observe the flexibly formed student groups as they move through the stations, making notes as

needed, as they complete the exit ticket individually before moving on (which Google collects

into a set of sheets for me). This data will be compiled to compare for benchmark assertation,

recording the data, noting trends, and preparing for group debrief in the morning and feedback

for any student needing redirection. This in-class learning as assessment will serve to measure the ability of a student to convert and understand the Shakespearean text and to demonstrate both comprehension and comfort in applying the skills needed to do so during the activities. 100% of the students need to meet this measure, to assure that they will be familiar with this practice so they can engage in independent reading of Shakespeare text in the upcoming unit. During the station activities in class, exit tickets both assess and confirm each student's participation in each station (station samples serve as instructional materials which are provided in appendix C).

 In planning a lesson, considering as many details as possible of the student side of the classroom experiences is as important as planning the detailed actions and materials used by the instructor. This exercise of "double-planning" is outlined in Teach Like a Champion 2.0, in which Lemov extorts educators to carefully plan students' activities during a lesson in equal detail to what the educator plans for themself (2015).

The root lesson plan structure I am using for my lesson is a modified version of the 4-A's model for lesson plans (Study.com, n.d.): (1) Activate prior knowledge, (2) Acquire new knowledge, (3) Application, and (4) Assessment. "Activate prior knowledge" refers to tying the current activity to past knowledge, acquire new knowledge refers to the understanding of the knowledge, then the practice of adding it to the prior knowledge using that understanding, and then demonstrating that understanding through assessment. In this lesson, each station executes this lesson in a minimal amount of time. Each station takes something familiar, introduces and instructs on the Shakespeare element, then the student must interact and apply that knowledge, then finally the student demonstrates that using the exit ticket to record the successful task completion.

I made this change to the original 4-A model after studying the research on the best methods for bridging the gap between the classic Shakespeare texts and teens. Striving for an engaging interactive variety of exercises, allowing for movement, scaffolding them with modeled examples and appropriate stems, which aligns with Vygotsky's insight that teachers should provide scaffolding to help the student work in their zone of proximal development (Ormrod, 2019). The students in this class are 9th graders and this is their first exposure to academic Shakespeare based on a survey of the students. Allowing for some of the productive struggle as they work to meet the demand, while also providing certain supports at each station, familiar format, and as observed additional scaffolding will be provided. It seems best to start at a higher level of struggle and scale as required (Ormrod, 2019, p. 45).

Objective. Using Lemov's (2015) strategy of "Post It," I have included the student friendly learning objectives in the introductory slide presentation, and in the digital Canvas environment for student access. Addressing the class with a brief overview of the agenda for the week and the objectives (or learning targets for the day). Those are displayed in a presentation slide in a bulleted manner for all to read along (student friendly objectives listed in first section of this paper, slide 3) prior to beginning.

Station one *Activate prior knowledge* is achieved as students are familiar with insults and structure, and dictionaries. Provided sentence stems and MadLibs instruction style support. *Acquire new knowledge* is the new language and definitions in unfamiliar Shakespearean English. This *application* will be in using those terms to construct first the Old English insult then the exact current English translation using the dictionary provide which achieve the effect of making the Shakespeare language less intimidating and the students less apprehensive in

studying it (Heilmer, 2009). Then the *assessment* portion is completed by the one question

Google form exit ticket where they enter the insult they created at the station.

       Station two. *Activate prior knowledge* by playing a multiple-choice quiz game on the

familiar platform we have been using all year, referencing lyrics by popular artists in

combination with the *acquiring of new knowledge* of the Shakespeare quotes. The *application* of

which uses proven theory of errors leading to learning as well as familiar figures aside

Shakespeare in comparison. Finally, *assessment* piece is met by completing the station's Google

form exit-ticket.

       Station three. *Activate prior knowledge* by reading lyrics and titles/artists of familiar pop

songs, then compare them to the pop sonnets to find a match. The *acquiring of new knowledge*

using pop sonnets, which are the Shakespearean English sonnet pattern version (as close to the

lyrics as possible) of the pop song. The *application* of which uses the pattern found between the

song they know and the unfamiliar language, physically matching the two, this increases the

likelihood of success in reaching familiarity with the independent skills needed to be able to

make the connections between an unfamiliar dialect of English and their modern existence

(Kleypas, 2004). Finally, *assessment* piece is met by completing the station's Google form exit-

ticket. The same continues for the other two stations.

<div align="center">Classroom Management and Discipline</div>

       The procedures in my classroom center around music as a cue and a tone setting tool. Our

procedures are set out and practiced on the first day. This is a practice that I have chosen to

incorporate based on advice from our texts by Knoster (2013), and Lemov (2015).

       Entry Routine. as students file in and follow the standard procedures of getting their

materials and then getting to their seat and getting their Chromebooks out. Any conversation is

kept to a volume lower than the music, and students know that when the bell rings the attendance

is taken, then the music stops.

Exit Routine. Beginning 2 minutes before dismissal bell, the priority list for our class is

projected coupled with a super brief overview, then music of the day starts playing (triggered by

a timer), which cues the students to pack up their belongings and to stand next to their chairs

while they wait to leave. The first row where all students are standing next to their seats, with

materials away and chairs pushed in, is pointed to by the instructor. They walk single file to the

front of the room, then out the door. Once the last student from the first group has retrieved their

phone, the next row is pointed to for release, etc. until all students have been released.

Group/Individual study. Class seating is assigned, as are table groups of 2 for ideal for

pair share and collaborative working. To encourage positive environment and assist individuals

to tune out other audible distractions to focus on tasks, non-lyrical music is utilized as tool and

action cue. It measures the time (as well as a projected timer) to help students manage their

expectations and it allows for the students to contribute to the classroom community by

providing their suggestions for music. It also provides a volume control for conversation and

group work, as they are familiar with the rule that voice volume must remain lower than music.

Absences/Late work. When deadlines are set, they must be met, or points will be

deducted for each day. The exception to this, is absences when absences are excused/arranged, or

arrangements that are communicated in advance. The high school experience is training for being

an adult, and as such having rules that are firm is important, but so is flexibility.

Student Performance Assessment

The student performance assessments included in this lesson (underline appendix B) are a series of short

formal formative assessment exit tickets, or "a collection of formal and informal processes

teachers and students use to gather evidence for the purpose of informing next steps in learning"
(Chappuis & Stiggins, 2017, 21). This specific assessment set is designed to be completed
throughout the class at each station, *while* learning activities are happening, and will allow for
clarification in the moment, and a class wide discussion/reflection the following day.
Assessments include: The matching of Elizabethan English in the pop sonnets to lyrics of songs
familiar to the students, Shakespearean insult, and the literal translation, as recommended by
Wortham (2001). Student choice of 1 of 6 quotes from Shakespeare's plays for students to
decipher/infer the meaning of putting it into their own words as recommended by Heilmer
(2009). GimKit.com game of Who said it, providing data on engagement as Shakespeare's
relevancy today is demonstrated, Disney station connects their childhood nostalgia on a personal
level to Shakespeare's influence.

  The formative assessment is collected through the google form and the data is
automatically organized. This efficiency will allow for time to analyze the data the provides the
evidence needed for moving forward as a class after the debrief the following day, and the DO
NOW reflection activity that looks back on the student experiences at the stations
metacognitively. Additionally, that data will reveal which (if any) students may need additional
connection, correction, and follow-up during the further class-wide practice translation activities.
The feedback goal is to validate and encourage the continued practice of the translation strategies
and skills. An example of such a follow-up activity in response to that data may be to feature a
single Shakespeare idiom analysis translation activity as a do now for the next several days.

Diverse Populations

  The class that is the focus of the learning segment is quite large, and as such, there are a
variety of students who fall within the consideration of diverse populations, including different

learners. I am utilizing interactive engagement paired with physical movement activities that are research proven strategies creating successful learning environments for students with ADHD (Barkley, 2018). While the initial grouping with is randomized, the hands-on style activity forms natural flexible groupings, as some students move on more quickly than others. Both interactive engagement and the flexible grouping instructional strategies suit other categories of different learners as well. Including those students in the class who have been diagnosed with generalized anxiety, as studies have proven these students benefit from the more informal groupings and low-pressure learning activities. (Moran, 2015).

Given the diversity of cultures and identities within the group, gamification is used as a type of stereotype threat removal, establish a learning environment safe for equitable interaction (Steele, 2010). Additionally, the introduction integrates a variety of familiar language formats including slang and memes, breaking the ice, and validating the method of communication (Heath, 1983). In effort to incorporate any of the current common language terms for the students that may not be known to me, station five also encourages the students to use their own words (and phrasing) to identify meaning of a Shakespeare quote (of their choice from the six presented that are indicative of a universal theme). The following day's DO NOW task and reflective discussion will continue to construct the relevance and connections between the world of communication students experience and the parallels to Shakespeare's works, giving me an in-class opportunity to give feedback. This discussion allows for consideration of new perspectives, see familiar things in a new way, and to see one another in a new light.

My lesson design implements a series of activities that widely appeal to the specific age group and interests of the students in this class, while simultaneously not trying to play into any stereotypes or assumptions about likes or dislikes based on race or other identity. However, I

have built in subtle varieties in the types of music genres, appeal, artists, and the memes. This age group has been constantly exposed to and has a familiarity and connection to Disney films (nearly universally) and a nostalgia that accompanies it. There is a similar connection to music. There is also the appeal of amusement that teens find in criticism, in this instance insults, which crosses the culture divide. Further common ground is found in the universal themes found in Shakespeare across cultures, status, and time.

While nothing is ever universally successful, this calculated and inclusive approach comes close. Each station in this lesson employs one if not more of the strategies referenced above in the activity. Each station offers translation and/or connection activities that use one of these tools to connect the students to Shakespeare. Studies have shown that using these approaches combination is the most effective in consideration of the diversity, age, and interests (Wortham, 2001). Using the teen fondness of apps and technology to make the exit tasks at each station feel quick and effortless, each completed station exit-ticket leaves the student with a gold star on their virtual chart, which is likely to illicit their investment in completing each of the station's tasks to meet the goal.

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