

FINAL MA PORTFOLIO

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The Students Come First

“You’re not getting any younger, Babe.” These harsh-seeming words from my loving, pragmatic, octogenarian mother were the final impetus I needed to pursue something about which I have dreamed for years: an advanced degree. My reasons for pursuing a master’s degree in English were manifold. Of primary importance was the desire to expand my own knowledge in the field to increase the quality of my teaching and better meet my students’ needs. With an undergraduate music education degree and only enough additional credits to obtain a teaching endorsement in English, I felt my skills and knowledge base were not as strong as they could be. Through the classes I have been privileged to take during my program’s course, I have gained familiarity with and understanding of literary and social theory, strengthened my writing and editing skills, broadened my experience with literature, and developed relationships with classmates who are fellow educators with whom I can share ideas and from whom I can seek advice and feedback.

Second, after preaching to my students the importance of doing everything possible to reach their potential, I started to feel like a hypocrite. I had not yet reached my own full potential, nor was I pursuing it, so I needed to practice what I preached and start more obviously modeling being a lifelong learner. As my program has progressed, I have been able to share my own experiences and knowledge making with my students and guide them as they develop new knowledge and knowledge making skills.

Obtaining an advanced degree is required by community colleges to teach dual credit courses, my third reason for pursuing a master’s degree. The high school administration where I teach strongly favors offering our students as many educational opportunities as possible, especially taking courses that will both fulfill Iowa high school graduation

requirements and give our students a head start on their college educations. There are only two English teachers in our high school, and the other one teaches Composition I and II, the college-level writing courses offered through Northeast Iowa Community College. My master's degree will qualify me to teach Introduction to Literature as a dual credit class through the same institution. In addition, when I retire from the secondary classroom, holding a master's degree opens the door for teaching part-time college classes, including online courses.

Finally, obtaining my master's degree is a matter of pride. My father, who already held a master of divinity degree, earned a master's degree in communication late in his military career and, following his retirement, a doctor of ministry degree in marriage and family counseling. My mother went to many of his classes with him and read the same materials but chose not to pursue the credentials or seek the recognition that accompanies such accomplishments. Because he could include abbreviations for earned academic degrees following his name, right or wrong, my father received significantly more credibility and respect than my mother, a no less intelligent or educated woman. Displaying that ornately lettered piece of paper on my wall will, I believe, lend me more credibility in the eyes of both my students and their parents.

Four projects are included in this master's portfolio. A compilation that illustrates my growth as a writer, a student, and a teacher, the overarching theme of my portfolio is my career as an educator and my commitment to my students. Of the four projects, the first explores a student population often representing a conundrum to teachers: students who exhibit Asperger's Syndrome traits without official recognition of such. Two lesson plans, one that teaches grammar through descriptive writing strategies and one that focuses on

Native American literature, comprise the second and third projects. Although the grammar lesson plan is designed for high school freshmen and the literature unit is written for high school juniors, the grammar skills learned in the former directly apply to the writing projects of the latter. The final project, a rhetorical fieldwork project, represents a fascinating personal learning experience that informed my Native American literature unit plan.

My first essay, “Asperger’s Syndrome in the Classroom: A Teacher’s Perspective,” was composed as my final research project for ENG 6040 – Graduate Writing. Dr. Robert Wallace, the professor, encouraged the class to choose a piece of writing we wanted to improve; however, since this was the first class in my program, I researched and wrote my project “from scratch.” Through this essay, I expanded my understanding of an issue faced by students who are frequently misdiagnosed—or, more accurately, inadequately diagnosed—with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). My oldest daughter, a college student identified as ADHD in second grade and as an Aspergian late in her high school career, suggested this topic, acted as a knowledgeable sounding board, and agreed to allow me to interview her. The project’s anticipated audience is middle school and high school teachers who are observing behaviors indicative of Asperger’s Syndrome in some of their students. While I in no way encourage teachers to become diagnosticians, I do provide classroom strategies and suggested resources to make the classroom a more successful place for these students, whether or not an official diagnosis has been made.

Dr. Wallace’s feedback and suggestions, focusing on clarity and conciseness, provided the foundation for my revisions. Reading the paper as an educator, Dr. Wallace asked relevant questions that guided my writing both in content and in organization. Since Aspergian children face a variety of challenges, I divided the paper into sections addressing

three specific challenges affecting their success in the classroom, then divided the third challenge, sensory issues, under subheadings addressing the five senses. For each category, the specific challenge was defined and its implications to the classroom explained, followed by appropriate interventions for overcoming the challenge with minimal impact to the class as a whole. In the final version, I chose to combine the implications and interventions under a single heading to allow for more fluidity. In addition, I began learning and applying skills for balancing sentence length and complexity with clarity, my natural inclination tending toward syntactic intricacy.

My second essay, and the first of the two pedagogy-based projects included in this portfolio, is the final project for ENG 6220 – Teaching Grammar in the Context of Writing. The “Lesson Plan - Grammar in Context” has proven to be eminently practical; I have used it twice with great success in my English I classroom in conjunction with a short story project. This project confirmed my perception of how much time is required to thoroughly grasp a grammar concept (years) and how teaching grammar concepts within a writing assignment is much more effective than teaching those same concepts in isolation.

Although Dr. Sue Wood’s comments were filled with praise and encouragement, I endeavored to review and re-vision the Grammar in Context lesson plan, finding the process challenging since I myself have been quite pleased with the plan’s effectiveness; however, I noted that I had failed to incorporate an intermittent assessment element for checking student understanding. Consequently, in addition to a small number of minor revisions that provide more detail and clarity to the lesson plan, I have added a formative assessment component to ascertain students’ grasp of each concept before proceeding to the next. While formative assessments are normally not graded, points can be awarded for punctual assignment

submission if such motivation proves necessary; this has proven to be the case both times I have taught this lesson. I have also added the requirement that students color code each grammatical construction added within their narratives and provide a key, allowing much more efficient use of instructor time for the formative assessments while giving my students an opportunity to see the impact of the grammatical constructions on their writing.

Of all the coursework I have taken in pursuit of my degree, ENG 6800 – Decolonial Theory and Methods, taught by Dr. Riley-Mukavetz, in combination with Dr. Khani Begum’s ENG 6800 – Post-colonial Film and Literature and Dr. William Albertini’s ENG 6800 – The Body and Disability in Literature, was perhaps the most personally impactful and required the most introspection and self-reflection. All three of these classes forced me to reexamine who I am as a teacher and as a person, sometimes inviting me to stick my toe out to test the waters, at other times demanding that I crawl out of my comfortable rut. While every part of my program has stretched me as a scholar and as a teacher, these three classes stretched me the most as a person. The final project and the rhetorical fieldwork assignment for ENG 6800 – Decolonial Theory and Methods, taught by Dr. Andrea Riley-Mukavetz, comprise my final two submissions.

My third portfolio essay and second pedagogy-based project is a lesson plan designed with my English III – American Literature students in mind, embodying my desire to expose my students to the earliest forms of American literature, as well as introduce my students to contemporary Indigenous authors. Rather than simply focusing on literature, however, the “Unit Plan - Native American Literature” also provides opportunity for students to explore colonialism and decolonialism, Indigenous stereotypes, and alternative perspectives related to these topics. More broadly, I believe this lesson plan will teach my students to avoid

making snap judgments and to view issues from multiple perspectives rather than just their own. From a technical standpoint, the writing assignments work in tandem with the first lesson plan in that students will have opportunity to review and experiment further with the grammar forms learned in the former unit while composing the writing assignments in the latter.

Revisions to this project included adding more detail regarding the Iowa Common Core State Standards and additional connections to theory discussed during the course. I was also challenged to think more deeply about the “why” for specific lessons and for the unit as a whole. Was my purpose simply to expose my students to another culture? Or could deeper meaning and learning be drawn from the activities? Why choose story as the vehicle for exploring and creating knowledge?

Finally, my fourth essay is the Decolonial Theory and Methods rhetorical fieldwork essay. Calling for a less formal, more engaged approach than most academic writing, this essay offered the opportunity to put into practice Indigenous research methods and to connect with the land I have begun to call “home.” My students also call this land along the Mississippi River “home,” yet they have so little understanding of its history, biology, and geology. Incorporating what I learned through this project into the lesson plan project will, hopefully, strengthen the connection my students have with this region and foster in them a greater respect and appreciation for its Indigenous past, present, and future. This project, in conjunction with the resultant unit plan’s development, has affirmed my view that teacher education, both formal and informal, is critical to teacher and student success. By taking advantage of every opportunity to discover and explore other cultures and “niche” literatures, whether researching from the comfort of my easy chair or traveling to the far reaches of the

continent (e.g., a trip to Nunavut, Canada, and the west coast of Greenland this summer), experiences such as my fieldwork at Effigy Mounds can only serve to enrich my own knowledge making, my teaching, and consequently, my students' knowledge making.

The revisions to this project consisted primarily of establishing terminology consistency (usage of “Native American,” “American Indian,” “Indigenous Peoples,” “First Nations,” and clarification between “decolonial practice” and “decolonial experience”), adding detail to adjust for an audience broader than the original, and learning new ways to condense image files so some of the photographs I captured during my experience could be included in the paper. My instructor's comments also helped me condense my thoughts, create more distinct connections between my experience and one of my interviewees' history, and refine my writing.

Earlier I mentioned that one of the motivations behind pursuit of a master's degree was the realization of how much I needed to learn. Through this process, I believe I have become a stronger teacher, one who is better equipped to meet my students' needs and challenge my students to greater heights. Through this process, I have become a stronger person, one who is better able to consider issues from multiple perspectives and viewpoints without compromising my own personal integrity. Through this process, I have also realized how much I *still* need to learn. Making knowledge does not end as one walks across the stage to receive her degree; making knowledge continues until one is no longer able to study, to explore, to discover, to question, to learn. Possibly the most valuable and lasting benefit of my degree program has been the acquisition of tools and strategies by which I can continue to learn—to make knowledge, tools and strategies I can use to continue to improve my teaching skills and that I can share with my students as they look toward their futures.

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English 6040

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Asperger's Syndrome in the Classroom: A Teacher's Perspective

Recent studies cited in Tony Atwood's reference work, *The Complete Guide to Asperger's Syndrome* (232), note, "at least 75 percent of children with Asperger's syndrome also have a profile of learning abilities indicative of an additional diagnosis of Attention Deficit Disorder." Likewise, Ozonoff, Goodlin-Jones, and Solomon, in their chapter on autism spectrum disorders in *Assessment of Childhood Disorders*, referred to a study by Ghazziuddin, Weidner-Mikhael, and Ghazziudin in which the authors "reported that approximately 30% of individuals with Asperger's syndrome meet diagnostic criteria for ADHD" (492). Since attention deficit disorder/attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADD/ADHD) often presents itself at earlier ages than Asperger's syndrome (AS), many children who fit the profile for AS are misdiagnosed with ADD/ADHD, a situation that bears direct impact on their success in the classroom and of which teachers must be aware. The following essay, prompted by the author's personal experiences with her misdiagnosed daughter, will analyze some of the issues faced by students with AS, utilizing research into medical literature, memoirs and biographical writings by individuals with high functioning autism, as well as ethnographic data provided by Luran White, daughter of the author.

Commonly referred to as "Aspergians" or "Aspies," students exhibiting AS traits face challenges in the academic realm due to the unique characteristics inherent in AS, even though these students are usually quite bright. These challenges are related to the social,

organizational, and sensory issues Aspy students face. Lauran White, a college sophomore who was identified as having Asperger's traits in high school, shared several of her experiences from elementary, middle, and high school in a recent interview. An intelligent and articulate young lady, she did not feel that her social interactions impacted her educational success to the extent it was impacted by her lack of organizational skills. Yet other Aspy students are negatively impacted by the social challenges they face due to the bullying their social inadequacies invite. "Children with AS lack the social skills and social support to counter their attackers and, therefore, often become chronic targets of bullying" (Heinrichs 55). Interventions, strategies, modifications, and accommodations are necessary aspects educators and parents need to consider and determine for the wellbeing and development of the student. The collaborative effort between teacher and parent makes it possible to provide a safe and nurturing learning environment. Creativity is essential, especially since each Aspy student is a unique individual with equally unique challenges and needs. Many tips and strategies have been successfully used in a variety of settings but, until recently, finding those tips and strategies has required tedious efforts by individual educators and parents who have been faced with the experience of working with an Aspy student.

To determine which tips and strategies will be most effective for the individual student, the importance of gaining an understanding of AS and the students afflicted with this condition should not be underestimated and must begin with a review of its history, characteristics, and methods of diagnosis.

History

Evident in the human species throughout history and considered one of the pervasive developmental disorders (PDDs) recognized by the American Psychiatric Association

(Ozonoff, Goodlin-Jones, and Solomon 487), Asperger's syndrome (AS) was first most clearly described in the mid-1940s by Viennese pediatrician Dr. Hans Asperger, who had observed similar behaviors and personality characteristics among a small group of his young patients (Atwood 12-13). Originally diagnosed as childhood schizophrenia, a recognized mental illness, Dr. Asperger's work led to the reclassification of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and AS as personality disorders (Atwood 13), partially alleviating the stigma associated with such diagnoses. Further research revealed that conditions associated with PDDs, which include autism, high-functioning autism/Asperger's syndrome (HFA/AS), and pervasive developmental disorders-not otherwise specified (PDD-NOS), have a biological source: changes in the brain driven by genetics lead to the onset of symptoms (Ozonoff, Goodlin-Jones, and Solomon 496); hence, as John Elder Robison concisely explains in his memoir, *Look Me In the Eye*, "Asperger's is not a disease. It's a way of being. There is no cure, nor is there a need for one" (5).

Characteristics

Asperger's syndrome (AS) is characterized by many of the same delays and abnormalities as autism. "Symptoms of autism spectrum disorder [ASD] fall into three domains: social relatedness, communication, and behaviors and interests, with delays or abnormal functioning in at least one of these areas evident in children prior to three years of age" (Ozonoff, Goodlin-Jones, and Solomon 487). These symptoms can present themselves in varied ways depending on the individual child, but the key indicators for AS include an inability to express empathy, a lack of recognition of social cues, and difficulty in communicating and controlling emotions, all of which lead to difficulty in making friends, maintaining friendships, and analyzing acrimonious relationships such as bullying. In addition, Aspy children are inordinately focused on a particular topic yet have difficulty

maintaining focus in a classroom setting, which often leads to the aforementioned misdiagnosis of attention deficit disorder/attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADD/ADHD).

Aspy children also show physical characteristics that can be misleading when seeking a diagnosis, to include lack of coordination, an awkward gait, and sensitivity to sensory stimuli (Atwood 33). Notably absent when comparing the symptoms of AS with autism are delays in language development and impairment in intellectual functioning (Ozonoff, Goodlin-Jones, and Solomon 487). In fact, some parents note large vocabularies and adult phrasing and usage in their young children, characteristics that do not generally raise concerns (Ozonoff, Goodlin-Jones, and Solomon 489). Luran White is a good example of this. Talking in complete sentences and implementing an extensive vocabulary accurately at a very young age were not viewed as warning signs, but rather as an indication that she was a very intelligent and precocious young lady.

Diagnostic Methods

While a method of assessment has been in place to evaluate children suspected of having autism, a lack of consensus exists among psychiatric professionals on which assessments, particularly parent reports, are most accurate when determining Asperger's syndrome (AS), largely driven by a "lack of consensus in the field about the definition and boundaries of the condition" (Ozonoff, Goodlin-Jones, and Solomon 503). Atwood (33) enumerates several avenues that might lead to an accurate diagnosis:

- ♦ Diagnosis of autism in early childhood and progression by the middle school years to High Functioning Autism or Asperger's syndrome.

- ♦ A teacher's recognition of Asperger's syndrome when the child starts primary school.
- ♦ Previous diagnosis of another developmental disorder such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, a language or movement delay or disorder, a mood disorder, eating disorder, or Non-verbal Learning Disability.
- ♦ The signs of Asperger's syndrome only becoming conspicuous during adolescence, when the social and academic expectations are more complex.
- ♦ The development of behavior problems and conflict with parents, teachers and school authorities.
- ♦ The identification of signs of Asperger's syndrome in a relative, where a review of the child's family history identified other family members who have similar characteristics.
- ♦ Descriptions of Asperger's syndrome in the media and literature may lead someone to seek a diagnosis for him- or herself or a family member.
- ♦ Employment problems, especially achieving and keeping a job appropriate to the person's qualifications and abilities.

Notably absent from this list of diagnostic methods are lab tests and brains scans. Current diagnostic methods are dependent upon observation and are primarily behavior-based. Further research is being done to confirm diagnoses based on behavioral observation using brain scans; however, these tests are very expensive and, as such, are not used as a primary diagnostic tool.

Children with AS generally display traits more subtly and at later ages than children with autism (Ozonoff, Goodlin-Jones, and Solomon 493). In addition, because they have a greater opportunity to observe children in social interactions in the context of school, teachers are often the first to notice AS characteristics in children (Atwood 15). Some students with AS “fly under the radar” until they reach their teen years, when changes in educational expectations and circumstances create added stress (Atwood 19). Because of the subjective nature of the diagnosis criteria for AS, teachers must carefully document any observations they make of students exhibiting the characteristics of AS. In addition, teachers are not medical professionals and, therefore, do not have the licensing or authority to make diagnostic statements. If a teacher suspects AS traits in a student, the teacher should consult with the special education staff of the school to discuss and confirm the teacher’s suspicions before raising those concerns with the administration and with the student’s parents or guardians. At that point, it becomes the responsibility of the parents to seek a medical diagnosis from a licensed psychiatrist.

Whether or not officially diagnosed with AS, students with Aspy traits face challenges in a number of areas as a result of their unique characteristics, including social interactions, organizational skills, and sensory issues. These challenges have implications in a variety of content areas and can be met and overcome by utilizing a number of interventions and strategies that will benefit the students and meet their specific individual needs.

Social Interactions

Specific Challenges

John Elder Robison opens the author's note to his memoir with, "Welcome to *Look me in the Eye* and my Aspergian world" (ix). The vast majority of students with Asperger's syndrome (AS) do live in their own world, although not to the extent of autistic students. They view their surroundings differently than those who might be called "normal," however one might define that term. As a result, their social interactions are impacted. Temple Grandin, herself autistic and author of *The Way I See It*, explains this phenomenon when she writes, "Without a fully functioning social thinking system, individuals with higher functioning autism or Asperger's Syndrome (HFA/AS) stumble along through academic and social situations, missing valuable bits of verbal nuance or nonverbal body messages that are woven into typical conversation" (167). This is true regardless of intellectual or verbal ability. Likewise, Ellen Notbohm and Veronica Zysk (220) describe the contrast between the general population, those who "awake with our social awareness present and operational," and autistic and Aspy children, who "arrive in this world without a social navigation system, without the neural network of social understanding that allows them to notice where they're going in the social world, or course-correct when they take a wrong turn." One way to better understand this challenge is to picture oneself in a large, unfamiliar city (Los Angeles, Boston, Minneapolis-St. Paul) without benefit of a map, written or verbal directions, or a global positioning system. Couple this with an inability to read road signs of any kind, and a taste of what AS children "see" in their social relationships becomes evident.

When Lauran White was four years old, her parents were concerned that she was either experiencing hearing loss or petit mal seizures because of her lack of response to

verbal cues and, at times, physical touch. Following a battery of tests, including an electroencephalogram, Lauran's pediatrician noted an absence of evidence of seizure activity, concluding that Lauran was bored with her environment and would escape into an imaginary place that was far more interesting to her. Lauran affirmed this conclusion when, upon being asked where she had gone during one of these episodes, she explained to her mother that she was "up looking at the moon."

Lauran could be categorized as more introverted in her social interactions. The introverted Aspy tends toward isolation and passivity, choosing to spend time alone instead of seeking out others. They also tend to avoid eye contact. Often while growing up, Lauran would have to be reminded to look at the person to whom she was speaking. She still struggles today with this aspect of being an Aspy, although much less than when she was young. In addition, she reports finding it much easier to comprehend what someone is saying to her if she can watch that person's mouth form the words, almost as if she is lip reading. There is no issue with her hearing; she simply finds the processing of language more effective if she sees "the whole picture."

By contrast, the extroverted Aspy actively seeks social interaction with his or her peers; however, this interaction is sought in a socially awkward manner. Extroverted Aspies often come across as bossy or inflexible, characteristics also present in strong-willed children, making this characteristic more difficult to associate with AS (Heinrichs 53). John Elder Robison (8-9) showed these characteristics clearly when he started nursery school. When attempting to make friends with one particular little girl, he petted her like a dog, thinking she would enjoy the same kind of contact in which dogs took pleasure. When her response was not what he expected, he decided to pet her longer with a stick so she would not be able

to hit him, an endeavor which garnered a quick response from his nursery school teacher. The following day, upon observing this same little girl playing with a truck, John took the truck away from her with the purpose of showing her the correct way of playing with it. Instead of the admiration and gratitude he thought was his due for being so helpful, he was again reprimanded and redirected to a different activity.

Both introverted and extroverted Aspies have unusual expertise in some chosen area of interest. “An essential component of the interest is the accumulation and cataloguing of objects or the accumulation of facts and information about a specific topic” (Atwood 172). Temple Grandin, an admitted visual thinker, identifies her area of expertise as animal science, a field in which she is respected as an authority and in which she has built a successful career creating cattle handling systems and teaching at the college level (Grandin, “My Experience”). John Robison, who thinks more in patterns than pictures, has become well known not just for his work creating special-effects guitars for the rock band KISS (133-141), but has established in the Northeastern United States a respected repair and restoration service for Europe’s finest automobiles (212-217). Jason McElwain, fascinated by numbers, claims an obsession with basketball, a fact supported throughout his memoir, *The Game of My Life: A True Story of Challenge, Triumph, and Growing Up Autistic*. By contrast, Luran White is more fascinated by word details. She says,

I’m language and words and creating ideas, analyzing things . . . what words mean and how they can change, how we can change words, how there can be so many words and yet you still can’t find the right one to say what you want to say, how some languages have words that say things that another language

can't possibly say, so you can only explain in sentiments. That's fascinating to me.

These areas of chosen expertise, of which an Aspergian can speak at great length and in extensive detail, can negatively impact their social relationships. Most non-Aspies, especially children and young adults, do not have the attention span or level of interest necessary to give an Aspergian their undivided attention for lengthy periods of time as minute and seemingly trivial details are analyzed down to their smallest component. Hence, Aspies will sometimes be avoided by their peers or excluded from activities.

Implications for the Classroom and Interventions

At the elementary level, the predominant implication in the classroom is the challenge an Aspy student has in making friends and relating to classmates. This can be observed on the playground and in group settings. Children quickly notice a differentness between the Aspy student and the general student population, often leading to rejection or exclusion of the Aspy student. A more extroverted Aspy student will inadvertently alienate their classmates because his or her manner of speaking is more adult or because he or she is too aggressive and awkward in their approach to interpersonal relationships.

In the middle school and high school years, students' primary focus is acceptance by their peers. The social awkwardness of Aspy children becomes more pronounced at this age as social and academic expectations increase. The combination of their lack of a social support structure, their inability to predict behavior in others, and their innate social awkwardness makes Aspy children prime targets for bullies. For children who are bullied, school is not a safe, nurturing environment that promotes learning; school is a fearful place one must attempt to survive. Because close parallels exist between children from the general school population targeted by bullies and the characteristics of children with AS (Heinrichs

53-55), when educators create a safe educational environment for their Aspy students, they and their schools experience the added benefit of having a safe educational environment for all of their students.

Appropriate social interaction must be directly taught to Aspy children since they are incapable of perceiving social cues (body language, facial expressions) from simple observation and assimilation. The increased social interaction available to students in the elementary school setting provides an excellent opportunity for these skills to be reinforced in the general school population and developed in Aspy students. Teaching social skills is teaching life skills, a process that “is an ongoing journey that requires patience, repetition, and above all, adaptability” (Notbohm and Zysk 221). In addition, Temple Grandin (*The Way I See It* 69) points out that explaining social skills, including classroom guidelines, should be done using concrete language and specific examples. In many instances, *showing* an Aspy student what is expected, whether in terms of behavior or work produced, is far more effective than simply telling them what is expected.

In the earliest years, autistic and Aspy children need help forming the very basis for social interaction. Whereas most children seek out cues from their parents as early as six months of age, autistic and Aspy children completely lack any social referencing, leaving them unable to benefit from social cues. As a result, this social referencing must be actively taught. Notbohm and Zysk (222-223) recommend games and activities that teach the child to look to a partner for information or “pay attention to the partner’s actions.” Temple Grandin (“My Experience”) stresses the importance of a disciplined upbringing during which manners are consistently taught and reinforced. While primarily the responsibility of the parents, this

training in social skills heightens an Aspy child's sense of others and can be reinforced in the school setting.

Additional strategies for building social awareness and developing social skills in young Aspy children include the teacher asking the child to "teach the teacher" something in which the child excels, thereby giving the child a sense of empowerment. Limiting an Aspy student to a small number of facts or figures about his or her particular area of interest will teach the student to avoid bombarding others with specialized knowledge. For example, after identifying the Aspy student's area of expertise, the teacher might have the student share two or three different facts with each student in the classroom. The teacher can enlist the help of classmates in teaching necessary social skills, closely supervise play in the classroom and during recess to identify those teachable moments and to avoid situations in which bullying might occur, and create a board game or play board games to encourage development of logical thought progression, understanding of beginning/middle/end, and perspective-taking (Notbohm and Zysk 225-229). In her lecture to the M.I.N.D. Institute, Temple Grandin also advocates the use of turn-taking games to teach and encourage appropriate peer social interaction ("My Experience"). Every successful social interaction an Aspy student experiences serves as a beneficial building block in their structure of social awareness.

Older Aspy children face the same challenges as their younger counterparts but on a different level. Increased academic and social expectations contribute added stress to middle school and high school students, which can exacerbate symptoms. Children and young adults at these age levels tend to be less accepting of differences; as a result, bullying becomes more prevalent in middle school and high school. Rebekah Heinrichs (121) points out that "some students with AS do not even recognize that they are being bullied and are

susceptible to being talked into doing things that will get them in trouble or that will make them the object of ridicule.” Some Aspy students will recognize teasing but will make excuses for those who are doing the teasing, often misinterpreting the intent. Jason “J-Mac” McElwain addresses this issue in his memoir. Known for his encyclopedic basketball knowledge and prowess, Jason is quick to qualify the teasing he underwent in high school: “They’d tease me about how loud I was during the game, how enthusiastic. I didn’t mind the teasing because it wasn’t the mean kind of teasing. They knew I was really into the game, that I was really trying to pump up my team, that I was keeping my focus the only way I knew how” (47). Jason is one of a very small number of Aspy students whose classmates were supportive in this way, although he suffered his share of mean pranks (9). Constant vigilance for bullying in all its forms – physical, verbal, emotional/social, and even educational – on the part of teachers and administrators forms an essential component in creating a safe learning environment for Aspy students.

Often in middle school and high school, students are asked to work in a small group setting to complete a project or assignment. A “pick your own groups” scenario can become a major problem related to bullying for the Aspy student. The main issue Lauran dealt with was always “end[ing] up with the leftover kids that no one wanted to associate with, like they were smelly or they were slackers. I felt bad because I ended up leading these kids around by the collar, which I didn’t want to do. It made me feel bossy and made me feel mean . . .” When asked how a teacher could handle this uncomfortable social aspect, she suggested keeping groups small and “shuffling kids around . . . not letting a kid get used to, you know, this is the only group I can feel comfortable around . . . It might be initially discomforting, but if they can interact with more people, but not more people as in a bigger group, . . . then

they'll have a more solid grip on social interactions.” She also pointed out the passion to the point of obsession most Aspergians have in a limited field of interest. If the topic of study addressed in the small group setting is of particular interest to an Aspy student, it would be more equitable to the other students in the class for the Aspy student to be switched among the various groups. This can be accomplished by randomly drawing names to form groups or, although time consuming, by carefully selecting the members of each group, taking into consideration the talents and interests of all the students involved.

To encourage Aspy students to broaden their scope of knowledge beyond their one topic of focus, thus providing a more extensive pool of knowledge from which to draw to enhance social interaction, Luran recommends that teachers find connections between the Aspy students' interest areas and the content currently being covered in the classroom. In order for this endeavor to be successful, time and effort must be expended on the part of the teacher to identify connections that can sometimes be obscure or convoluted; however, the benefits for the students are immeasurable and include increasing skills in making their own connections and creating awareness of a broader base of knowledge.

Organizational Skills

Specific Challenges

Executive function, that psychological feature that makes possible organizing and planning, evaluating and monitoring oneself, controlling impulses, managing time, understanding new strategies, and understanding abstract concepts, among others, is impaired in children with Asperger's syndrome (Atwood 234). As a result, Aspy students struggle with organizational skills, which are fundamental to reaching academic goals and which also impact language acquisition and assimilation of appropriate behaviors (Dorminy, Luscre, and Gast 538) and with problem solving. If not addressed, this challenge can continue to affect an Aspy student into adulthood, negatively impacting the possibility of success in career and personal life.

Implications for the Classroom and Interventions

Aspy students with deficits in executive functioning will generally appear uncommitted to their academics or lazy, forgetting assignments, losing papers, or turning work in late. In reality, they are neither uncommitted nor lazy. As a result of their deficits in executive functioning, the part of human cognitive ability that organizes and plans, these students will frequently misplace assignments and materials necessary for their success in the classroom, giving the appearance of lack of commitment or laziness. Dorminy, Luscre, and Gast (540-542) studied four elementary students identified with high functioning autism/Asperger's syndrome (HFA/AS) who were consistently receiving a grade of zero on assignments because those assignments were not turned in to the teacher. One of the four students was given additional time to complete work assignments because of a deficit in fluency; however, he was still unable to submit work assignments because he placed the finished work in his desk among other papers, essentially losing his assignments. The other

three students were not given additional time; however, each of them completed work on time and accurately but placed their work in a location other than where they were supposed to place it (e.g., the wrong folder, in an unrelated book, inside the student's desk).

In the case of the four elementary students studied by Dorminy, Luscre, and Gast, a file box system was designed, explained, and implemented with the assistance of the special education teacher and the paraprofessionals who worked with the students (542-548). Rather than a folder system kept out of sight inside the students' desks, all of the students' materials were organized in these file boxes next to their desks. Additionally, the files were set up to mimic the course of the school day. In addition to the file boxes, the students were given a self-monitoring chart as "visual reminders to keep their file boxes organized" (546). The special education teacher taught the students how to use the file boxes in one session using a verbal description of the system coupled with modeling. The classroom teacher reminded the students at the beginning of the day to keep their items organized and checked their file boxes and self-monitoring charts at the end of the school day (544). This file box system was proven to be effective in significantly reducing the number of misplaced assignments and the time necessary for the students to locate the work they needed to submit to their teachers (544-546).

While studied at the elementary school level, this intervention could easily be adapted to fit middle school, high school, and college students' use of lockers and book bags. Laura Morarend, resource room teacher at Clayton Ridge High School in Guttenberg, Iowa, has successfully used an accordion file system with her high school students similar to the file box system suggested by the aforementioned study. With Morarend's assistance, students who struggle with organization issues develop a filing system using a heavy-duty plastic

accordion file available at most discount stores. Each pocket in the file is labeled with the name of the classes the student will be taking in the order in which they occur in the school day. The files accompany the student throughout the school day, making it possible to keep papers organized on a real-time basis and for content-area teachers to check as necessary. While none of the students with whom Morarend used this system had been diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome, it would be an effective adaptation for older students.

Issues with organizational skills are prevalent in settings other than the classroom as well. The single intervention presented above can be modified as necessary to address organizational issues at home, an area that can impact school performance and success because of the same concerns that can be found in the classroom: missing materials and missing assignments. Parents implementing this strategy with their children in the home can significantly curtail some of the stress associated with that last-minute rush in the morning to corral everything their child needs for the school day.

Sensory Issues

Missing assignments, mislaid articles of clothing, and general messiness were a hallmark of Lauran White's growing up years. While attributable to a lack of organizational skills, Lauran's messy room is more a reaction to unpleasant sensory stimuli. In her interview, she comments on her dislike of the sharp edges of most furniture, although she cannot explain why this is so. Her way of combating that uncomfortable visual stimulus is to keep her clothes and blankets scattered around the room to soften the edges of the walls and furniture.

All autistic and Aspergian individuals experience some form of sensory hypersensitivity as individual as each person experiencing it. Temple Grandin states,

One of the problems in understanding sensory issues is that sensory sensitivities are very variable, among individuals and within the same individual. A person can be hyper-sensitive in one area (like hearing) and hypo-sensitive in another (like touch). . . . Complicating matters even further, on a day-to-day basis, in the same individual, the sensory sensitivities can change, especially when the person is tired or stressed (*The Way I See It* 82).

In her lecture, “My Experience with Autism,” Grandin further states, “You must not mix up sensory problems with bad behavior” and points out that the problem is not with the sensory organs themselves (eyes, ears, tongue, skin, nose) but rather inside the head, in the brain.

The same lack of connections in the brain that leads to the social impairment experienced by Aspy students also affects their sensitivities. Reactions to these sensitivities can include verbal outbursts or striking out if the child becomes overloaded; hence, it is imperative that teachers understand their individual students as much as is humanly possible.

Visual Sensitivity

Specific Challenges. Visual sensitivity usually becomes evident in an environment in which fluorescent lighting is used. Many Aspy students experience discomfort from the flicker of fluorescent lighting and from the glare associated with such lighting (Atwood 285, Grandin, “My Experience” and *The Way I See It* 84). Additionally, bright lighting, high levels of contrast in colors (e.g., black/white, bright yellow/black), neon colors (White), or a particular color can be areas of sensitivity.

Aspy children with visual sensitivity also have issues with movement. Atwood (287) attributes this to a problem with the vestibular system, which contributes to balance and a sense of spatial orientation. He refers to children with this problem as “gravitationally

insecure.” Lauran reports a fear of stairs and escalators. Her fear of stairs is due to the potential that someone might grab her feet through the open riser. Of escalators she says,

I’ve learned to look at the step above or the step beneath me because that’s the one I’ve realized I need to focus on for when it’s time to get off in either direction, and it prevents me from looking over the side. Also, if I’m looking down, I can see people’s feet if they’re trying to make it past me. Unlike stairs, people generally tend to stay stationary on an escalator, so I don’t have to worry about people in addition to where I need to be moving.

In this and other similar contexts, visual sensitivity can be debilitating to the Aspergian in school and in society in general.

Temple Grandin (“My Experience”) points out that Aspy and autistic children with visual sensitivities have a hard time judging depth and have trouble catching a ball, in addition to hating escalators and fluorescent lights. Atwood (287) notes that while some Aspy students do have severe issues with motion, others have no issue at all, a testament to the variability of sensitivity issues. Lauran noted difficulty with coordination during growth spurts, an experience that is not limited to the high functioning autistic/Aspergian population. However, of gym class, she does say she was good at dodging dodge balls because of her peripheral vision, but catching a ball that was thrown directly at her was almost an impossibility.

Implications in the Classroom and Interventions. Most classrooms in the United States use fluorescent lighting, in itself a potential major issue for Aspy students. Teachers are encouraged to keep the lighting in the classroom bright and their walls decorated with visually stimulating educational and motivational posters. For the Aspy student who has

visual sensitivities, this type of classroom could prove to be his or her undoing. Lauran White reports of her experience, “It’s not something that scares me or disturbs me or anything like that. It doesn’t cause me to shut down, but it’s very annoying and unpleasant.” Classroom desktop computers also have a pattern of flickering that can be a major distraction for Aspy students. Visual sensory overload can lead to students experiencing fear or anxiety, blurred or unclear vision, or confusion (Atwood 285). In schools with stairs, the reduced or lacking depth perception of some Aspy students can lead to problems traveling between classes.

“Gravitational insecurity” mentioned by Atwood (287) has direct implication on the physical education classroom. Whether the visual-spatial problems lead to issues with motor skills or the motor skills are their own separate but related issue, most Aspy kids struggle with physical education. Notbohm and Zysk point out that “PE can be a confusing mix of motor skills, rules, and the social complexity that goes along with the concept of teamwork and competition, offense and defense” (306). Teacher awareness of student issues and abilities is of primary importance, followed by necessary accommodations or modifications designed to fit the specific needs of each individual student.

Temple Grandin (*The Way I See It* 84) tells the story of a little girl who could not tolerate for more than five minutes the flickering fluorescent lights at the supermarket her mother frequented. Once her mother allowed her to try on some tinted glasses to reduce the flickering of the light, she was able to tolerate being in the supermarket for an hour, a marked difference. Interventions can be as simple, inexpensive, and effective as a pair of tinted glasses. Other suggestions include allowing an Aspy student to wear a baseball cap when reading to block some of the flicker, putting an incandescent lamp on or near the student’s

desk to counteract flicker, printing assignments on pastel or grey paper to decrease contrast, and procuring a laptop for the Aspy student to use since laptops have less screen flicker than desktop models (Grandin, *The Way I See It* 90). Lauran notes that laminated posters were especially distracting because “I had to deal with color and this bright light reflecting everywhere . . . if there’s too much visually going on, you have to pick one to focus on, and you don’t know if it’s the right one.” To reduce visual stimuli in the room, teachers should consider removing or, at the very least, paring down the number of posters on classroom walls, only leaving those that have direct relevance to the current topic of study. This allows Aspy students to narrow their focus to what is truly of greatest import. If posters are laminated, using a matte-finish film designed to cut down on glare would be beneficial.

In the physical education classroom, Simpson et al. (50-51) recommend basing exercises and activities on individual student interests; presenting rules in a simple, literal manner; implementing a consistent system of reinforcement; and limiting unstructured time, among others. Additional interventions are more dependent on the needs of the specific child, but can include reduction of excess noise and limiting visual distractions, especially when giving instructions. Giving visual cues at the same time that verbal instructions are given can be instrumental in Aspy students maintaining their focus and retaining more information.

Auditory Sensitivity

Specific Challenges. Temple Grandin (*The Way I See It* 84) refers to auditory sensitivity being the primary sensory challenge for autistic or Aspergian individuals, noting that this sensitivity can take two forms: “1) sensitivity to loud noise in general and 2) not being able to hear auditory detail.” Jason “J-Mac” McElwain says, “Also, my parents said that one of the things that really bothered me when I was little was my hearing. My ears

were very sensitive. This happens a lot with autistic kids” (80). Lauran White claims sensitivity to loud, sharp noises and will wear earplugs in thunderstorms and to movies during which she expects such sounds to occur. When she was younger, any loud noise would hurt her ears, but she has gradually become desensitized to some of the painful noises that bothered her most when she was little. Temple Grandin, (“My Experience”) found the school bell especially painful, while Rebekah Heinrichs (121) presents a scenario in which an Aspy student is most bothered by whispering. These give evidence to the uniqueness of autistic and Aspergian individuals and their sensory sensitivities.

Lauran White states that one reason Aspies do not look people in the eye when conversing with them is they can hear auditory detail better when they are looking at the speaker’s mouth. She feels doing so gives her a more complete picture – visual and auditory - of what the person is saying. She shares, “You can engage their eyes and smile and nod, and they’d feel like they’ve made a connection with you, but if you want to actually get what they’re saying, you look at their mouth.” Her hearing is not the issue; if she had her hearing checked, it would test as normal. Processing what is being heard is the issue.

Implications in the Classroom and Interventions. Understanding that loud noises or particular sounds (chairs scraping, the tick of a clock) can be a major distraction and can, in fact, be painful for their Aspy students, educators must first be aware of the sounds in their classrooms. Exposure to auditory sensitivities can result in behavior issues with Aspy children. They will lash out in some way when they are in pain, as will any child. Teachers may feel that an Aspy student is being disrespectful when he or she does not look into the speaker’s eyes, but there may be a valid reason for lack of eye contact. It behooves teachers,

parents, and students to discuss specific problems that are encountered, possible reasons for those problems, and the most effective remedies available so the problems do not recur.

Aspy students who experience hypersensitivity to sound may be allowed headphones to block out extraneous noise when working on in-class assignments or earplugs with low noise reduction ratings to reduce but not eliminate sound when attending classes that are notably loud (band or physical education, for example). Revising the bell system from a loud, jangling sound to a more subdued tone would eliminate a common point of sensitivity.

Teachers must understand that Aspy students who are looking at a speaker's mouth instead of his or her eyes are not being disrespectful but are doing their best to process the information the speaker is presenting. Lauran White points out, "if the kid is not focusing on them [teachers], they'll tell the kid, 'Look me in the eye.' That gives the teacher assurance; that makes the teacher feel that the child is understanding. But if they really want the *child* to understand...you could see if you get a better response by telling them to look at your mouth." The Aspy child should not be forced to look in a person's eyes during verbal communication.

Tactile Sensitivity

Specific Challenges. Tactile sensitivity can take the form of a disinclination to be touched, discomfort when dressed in particular clothing, distress at having one's hair touched or cut, or a dislike of having water on one's face, among others (Atwood 279-280). This sensitivity impacts relationships, both in the family and at school, and can easily be misinterpreted. Something as seemingly insignificant as the tag on a shirt rubbing the back of an Aspy's neck or the seam of a pair of pants being pressed into the side of an Aspy's leg can cause not just mild discomfort but actual pain. Conversely, some Aspies prefer tight clothing.

Lauran White reports, “I like clothing that is tighter, that’s closer to my skin. That feels more comfortable than something that’s loose.”

Implications in the Classroom and Interventions. Reacting to tactile stimuli that are perceived as uncomfortable or painful can distract students, interrupting their focus on instruction, schoolwork, and social interaction. “When senses are disordered, the attention and concentration that learning requires becomes difficult and in some cases, impossible” (Grandin, *The Way I See It* 102). Students who feel distracted, uncomfortable, or in pain are not going to be able to learn. Their distraction can, in turn, distract others in class, resulting in an environment nonconducive to learning for anyone.

In the early grades, helping his or her peers understand the Aspy student’s tactile sensitivities can be helpful in alleviating much of the stress associated with those sensitivities. Students should not be forced “to endure the [unpleasant tactile] experience if it can be avoided” (Atwood 281). Primarily, dealing with tactile sensitivity issues will happen at home; however, the child’s teachers need to be aware of tactile sensitivities in order to provide a safe learning environment for the child.

Sensitivity to Taste and Smell

Specific Challenges. “Parents often report that their young child with Asperger’s syndrome has a remarkable ability to detect odours [sic] that others do not notice, and can be extremely fussy in his or her choice of food” (Atwood 282). The taste and texture of different foods and odors from those foods or from other sources can provoke a strong reaction from the Aspy child. Such sensitivities may be evidenced in a willingness to eat only a limited diet, one without fibrous foods, for example. Olfactory sensitivity manifests itself in hypersensitivity to smells that may be experienced as pleasant by the general

population. Tony Atwood (283) gives the example of a ripe peach, which may smell delicious but will be perceived as being “overly pungent” to the Aspy child. Likewise, deodorants and perfumes can be nauseating.

Implications in the Classroom and Interventions. Aspy students with sensitivity to taste and smell may have difficulties during the course of the school day. Exposure to a food that is repugnant or a smell that nauseates creates a distraction for that student, as well as the other students with whom he or she has contact. This sensitivity could also preclude the Aspy student from involvement in some activities or projects if the supplies necessary might trigger a negative reaction.

More often than not, Aspergian children who have sensitivity to taste and food texture will bring their own lunch to school that contains food they are able to eat without repercussion. In elementary school, a time in a child’s life when treats are often brought to school, informing the parents of the other students in the classroom about food aversions may be advisable. Aspy children who experience olfactory sensitivity should avoid being around areas of the school in which cleaning chemicals are used (e.g., the cafeteria, the janitors’ closet) and where supplies that have strong aromas are stored and used (e.g., paints, art supplies, markers) (Atwood 284). Activities that require the use of supplies with a pungent odor or an unpleasant texture (for students with tactile sensitivity) may require modification.

Conclusion

“I’m used to people looking at me like I’m different. It doesn’t bother me. . . . When they ask me what it’s like to be autistic, I don’t know how to answer. It’s just how I am. . . . It’s normal. It’s me” (McElwain 39). Jason McElwain’s parents knew he was different; his deficits were readily apparent when he was an infant. Children with high functioning

autism/Asperger's syndrome do not have that benefit. Often misdiagnosed with attention deficit disorder/attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADD/ADHD) until other Asperger's traits manifest themselves as these students enter the social and academic rigors of middle school and high school, Aspy children rely on engaged, vigilant teachers to recognize those other traits and address the individual students' needs. Asperger's syndrome is an identity, a way of being that requires added understanding on the part of educators to successfully offer a safe and nurturing learning environment for these special children.

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Appendix A

Transcript of Interview with Lauran White

October 5, 2012

Valeria White (VW): This is an interview between Valeria White, graduate student at Bowling Green State University, and Lauran White, the author's daughter and sophomore at Bryan College in Dayton, Tennessee. The interview is about Asperger's Syndrome and Lauran's experiences with Asperger's.

Lauran, how old were you when you were first identified as having Asperger's traits?

Lauran White (LW): Um, I forget. Mom, how old was I.

VW: (Laughing) I think it was either right before your junior year of high school or early in your junior year of high school.

LW: Yeah, it was about then.

VW: You had previously been diagnosed with ADD/ADHD.

LW: They called it ADD then, but about that time they decided to thrust it all under ADHD.

VW: Right. I think they do still distinguish between the two because there are noted increases in hyperactivity with some kids with ADD. That was second grade, I believe, when we had you evaluated for ADD, although we had noticed the spacing out, the inability to remember instructions, and the inability to remember more than one instruction, and even the one instruction you would often forget between the time you left the living room downstairs and got to the top of the stairs; it would be gone.

LW: You had to give me one instruction at a time. Like, if you asked me to go get my hairbrush and ponytail holders, I could remember maybe the hairbrush or the ponytail holders, but not the other, so I'd have to go back down and ask you what the second one was.

VW: And, of course, we just assumed that was part of the ADD aspect as well. You've done a lot of your own research on Asperger's and learning a lot about Asperger's. Looking back, when do you think you started exhibiting those traits?

LW: I think they've always kind of been there, but definitely once I hit puberty, I think a lot of them started to come to light more.

VW: Which of the Asperger's traits do you feel you exhibited predominantly?

LW: I do have the auditory trouble a little bit.

VW: Can you explain that a little?

LW: If people are talking to me, especially from a distance, it's difficult sometimes for me to make out exactly what they're saying. I get something that sounds like it, but it's not the same. So it's not like their voice is faint, I just...

VW: The words just don't come through clearly?

LW: Yeah. In my research, I've discovered that part of the reason why, in addition to the fact that it intimidates them, part of the reason why you'll notice Aspergians not looking people in the eye is because they are trying to focus on your mouth, because they're basically naturally lip reading to some extent. And so that's probably why when my roommate is talking to me and she's facing her computer on her bed and I'm, like, looking at her from the side, it's more difficult for me to tell exactly what she's saying.

VW: So it's not necessarily the hearing that's the issue, it's the processing of the words that's the issue.

LW: Yeah, I think so.

VW: And by seeing those words being formed by the mouth, it's easier for your brain to process.

LW: It's a whole picture as opposed to, like, just part of it.

VW: Which brings up Temple Grandin's *Thinking in Pictures*.

LW: Yes!

VW: Do you think in pictures?

LW: I haven't read the book, so I'm not exactly sure what that means.

VW: When you're reading and when you're hearing people talk, do you have a running movie in your head of what they're talking about so that it's more a visual than an auditory experience?

LW: I think to some extent, especially when people are reading stuff to me. I very easily go into visual intake of what they're saying, especially with anecdotal things that they say. I recreate it with my own knowledge in my mind. If they're giving me fact, obviously not so much. Although I do sometimes make connections to literature or movies in classes. That helps me remember. So I think, to a certain extent, even then I'm making connections to pictures.

VW: It has been said that Aspies generally have a specific area in which they focus their energies, in which their interest is focused. Do you find this to be true for you?

LW: To a certain extent. I feel like this trait is kind of spastic, because I for several months I will be very keyed in on one thing, and that will always remain an interest. After several months, on to something new. Then for maybe three months, I'll be extremely interested in something else, and so on and so on.

VW: Do you think this is what has happened with the Harry Potter books?

LW: Well, I finished the books, so it's not like I could have kept on going unless I wanted to read them over and over and over again. But I'm not that obsessed. I do still want to watch the movies.

VW: Of course, I've just seen your birthday list on Amazon recently, and you have the Ravenclaw sweater and the Ravenclaw patch...

LW: Well, "Wit beyond measure is man's greatest treasure." That's on my Facebook cover.

VW: So there's still that lingering interest in Harry Potter, of course, with wanting to see the movies and wanting to start an intramural Quidditch team here at Bryan.

LW: Well, it just sounds like a whole bunch of fun and, because it's such a start-up thing, I wouldn't feel as intimidated by it. This is new for everybody, so it's not like I'm walking into volleyball. . .

VW: ...which everybody else already knows how to play. This brings up another aspect of being an Aspy, and that is coordination, physical coordination, or the lack thereof, is a trait of Aspies. Another trait that I'd like to discuss with you, which we'll get back to that one, and we'll get back to that one, is the inability of Aspies to recognize facial expressions and associate those facial expressions with a need, a desire, or reaction to things. Another characteristic trait that I wanted to talk to you about is...well, I can't remember the other one, and so we'll come back to that one. Let's start with the physical coordination issue. Have you seen that in your life? In what areas and ways have you seen that?

LW: Definitely during growth spurts, especially. I bumped into stuff a lot. And catching a ball that's thrown at me. So I was not that great at gym class. Probably one thing I was really good at was dodging dodge balls, but I couldn't throw worth anything.

VW: Is that because of the visual/spatial issues that Aspergians face, I believe that's what Temple Grandin says in her book, that with all the sensory issues Aspergians face, one of them is the visual/spatial issue, where you see the ball coming at you in a slightly different way than other people see it, so you can...

LW: If I see the ball coming, I'm not as great at up and down wise, but from side to side, I understand how much ground I have. I can have a ball whoosh right under my arm and I understand how much space I have. I think even once, with just my peripheral vision, someone bounced a ball down and it was distracting me, so I just grabbed it from the side and they were all like, "What?"

VW: But if it involved someone throwing a ball to you to catch?

LW: To me for me to catch? If I was trying not to get caught by the ball, they would either have to throw it very slowly so I could follow its arc, or wide swipe it.

VW: The other question that I have about that part of it, what about things like running, jumping rope, riding a bicycle.

LW: Not off training wheels! Really, as far as riding a bike without training wheels, the timing was really off. That was around the time, wasn't it, when Dad died?

VW: Yeah, it was about a year before.

LW: But the focus was not on me riding bike. This was something I needed help with. Really, that got put by the wayside, and by the time there was renewed focus, like "You should really learn how to ride a bike," by then I would have had to retrain myself, and it would have looked kind of pathetic for this older girl to be on training wheels. I really didn't want to go through that.

VW: What about your fear of heights, because even with training wheels, getting you up on the bicycle was a traumatic experience for you because you were so scared of being up off the ground. Do you think we could attribute that to being an Aspy?

LW: I'm not sure.

VW: And relating that to your fear of escalators and even stairs where there's open space between the treads or open space at the back of the treads?

LW: Um hmm.

VW: I think that's called the skirt. If that was open, you always had issues with going up or down stairs.

LW: Well, the slats and open areas, that's where I could see how far up I was. That was kind of disorienting to me. I remember one time, it was on our trip across the United States, I thought people were looking at a display, and it was actually looking straight down, and I backed up against the wall because I felt so sick.

VW: Was that the St. Louis Arch?

LW: No, it was just an old tower, this landmark we were visiting. I don't remember if it was an old lighthouse or what it was, but it was a very old, straight-up tower, and for some reason I thought people were looking at a display in the middle. And it wasn't; it was just a hole going all the way down. So heights where I can actually see, that would bother me. I think to a certain extent, with the slats, at least going down there's this childhood fear of

somebody grabbing your foot, so that might have been part of that. As far as escalators, that might have had more to do with the depth perception. When is it time to get off? Also, being by the edge. I've learned to look at the step above or the step beneath me because that's the one I've realized I need to focus on for when it's time to get off in either direction, and it prevents me from looking over the side. Also, if I'm looking down, I can see people's feet if they're trying to make it past me. Unlike stairs, people generally tend to stay stationary on an escalator, so I don't have to worry about people in addition to where I need to be moving.

VW: With the whole sensory issue as well, we've already talked, outside of this interview, about the flickering of fluorescent lights being an issue for you.

LW: Yes.

VW: What does that make you feel?

LW: It's very irritating and grating. It kind of has a disorienting...not a fully disorienting effect...it's kind of like, I don't know, I guess you could equate it with how you feel when there's that frequency that just buzzes that mainly teenagers can hear, it's that kind of irritating, only it's visual. It's not something that scares me or disturbs me or anything like that. It doesn't cause me to shut down, but it's very annoying and unpleasant.

VW: What does cause you to shut down?

LW: When people say things to me that are intimidating or when they present themselves to me in an intimidating way, I shut down. Like, if there's just tons of things going on around me, I'll shut down. When I say I shut down, I don't shut down mentally; I tend to shut down emotionally, especially when I feel threatened or intimidated.

VW: Back to the sensory issues again. Ever since you were little, you've always complained about noise, loud noises. We go to movies, and you want to take earplugs with you. When we go to a fireworks display, your hands are over your ears. Describe to me, if you can, what those loud noises do to you and how you hear them. I realize that's a very subjective thing, but describe to me what those loud noises do to you.

LW: Depending on how loud they are or how sharp it is... Now it's kind of down to if something is very sharp and unexpected, like thunderclaps instead of loud rumbles. I can deal with the bass, but it's when it actually cracks, when it sounds like a bullwhip, which is a similar sound that I can't really deal with. Sharp noises are more difficult for me to deal with. It used to be any loud noise hurt my ears, so when people were raising their voices in movies or when animals were roaring or growling, which is probably one of the reasons why I disliked *The Land Before Time* and, therefore, all things dinosaur. Also, they have really big teeth. Now, unless you set me in front of a model of a dinosaur that's life-sized, I generally joke about the tiny hands. That's hilarious now. Just attaching the noise to the animals, that's what got me really scared of bears. I was petrified of bears, do you remember?

VW: I remember that! When we were in Canaan Valley State Park and staying in the lodges in West Virginia, you were so antsy about black bears coming up on to the porch.

LW: It was really funny because I had this large stuffed bear, Champagne, and I would do this thing where I would put him in the corner of the bed where he wasn't right next to me but I could still keep my eye on him. No sudden moves, buddy!

VW: I still have Champagne, by the way.

LW: He's got a hunter's vest on him now.

VW: Well, he did, but your dad had to take the vest with him for his moose hunt in Canada. What other sensory issues have you experienced?

LW: I like clothing that is tighter, that's closer to my skin. That feels more comfortable than something that's loose.

VW: Which is interesting because, on my flight from Atlanta to Chattanooga, a whole 40-minute flight, I pulled out a Sky Mall magazine, and they were advertising Thunder Shirts or Thunder Vests for dogs...

LW: Yeah, I've seen those.

VW: ...and it said in the advertisement, and I'll have to see if I can get a copy on my flight home so I can quote it for this paper and get one for Daisy because she gets very antsy when we have thunderstorm, it said in there, just like you swaddle a baby or an autistic person likes to have tight clothing on to feel more secure, that same sensory strategy works for dogs when they feel very stressed out because of thunderstorms or fireworks or loud shooting, things like that. Here they mentioned in this advertisement about autistic children having tighter clothing on, and that immediately made me think of you and your skinny jeans and your wanting to have shirts on with tight sleeves. Which brings up another point, since we're talking about clothing, and this is where I am going to cross the line from being an interviewer to being mom. Your bedroom.

LW: (Laughing) Okay. Maybe I should have you like warp my voice or something.

VW: You've commented to me, because your dad and I have been after you for years about cleaning your room, picking your things up, hanging your clothes up, putting your clothes in your drawers, and organizing your clothes so that you don't have pants and shirts and socks and underwear and pantyhose all in the same drawer, that you have your life more compartmentalized, which to us means more organized. But I'm learning to Aspies that does not mean more organized, which is hard for a Type A, accused-of-being-anal person to deal with. You made comments to me a few years ago about how, when your clothes are strewn all over your room, all of the edges are soft.

LW: Yes.

VW: Explain that.

LW: I don't like sharp corners. I'm not sure how to explain it. I'm still trying to figure out why exactly. But I don't like exposed, pointy corners. I like it when it's a softer edge, and if I have stuff up against the wall and that sort of thing, it softens the room up. I'm trying to figure out now, after I leave college and I have my own place, how do I recreate this without having my clothes all over the place. I'm thinking about having a lot of those low couches against the walls and cushions on the floor, especially in the living room.

VW: The challenge comes, though, when you're having... Well, even an ottoman with soft edges you can use as a coffee table and have a tray on it to give you a flat surface. But what about a dining room table and chairs? That's going to be a challenge, but not one you will be unable to overcome. You also have to consider that you don't live in the room where you eat, either. It's interesting that you're coming up with your own strategies for dealing with that.

Going back to school, or looking at school and your interpersonal relationships with your fellow students. Can you qualify those for me? Can you tell me how you perceive your relationships with students back when you were in high school, middle school, elementary school, and what your relationships are with your classmates now? Differences and similarities?

LW: Elementary school was very fun and easy because everybody was everybody's friend, basically, and we came from such a small school that that was doubly true. When we left elementary school and went to a larger middle school, there were a bunch of kids I did not know, so I tended to stick with the group from my elementary. I was only in middle school for a few years, through sixth grade, was it?

VW: Yes, because you did 7th and 8th grade in Cedar Springs.

LW: Cedar Springs, that was 7th, 8th, and 9th.

VW: Yes, 7th and 8th at the middle school and 9th at the high school.

LW: I kind of...I was the new girl, so I saw that when I came, I was something that was shiny and new, something for people to try out. Where do I fit in the ecosystem of students? Where was my niche? I basically fell in with the people that didn't really have a niche, people who liked and were obsessed with Anime or believed they had been abducted by aliens, that colorful crew. So that was interesting.

VW: Were you comfortable being part of that crew or did you feel out of place among them?

LW: I think there was some sort of fake camaraderie in the fact that we didn't really have a group, that we were just kind of banding together because we didn't really have a specific group. There were kids there who were involved in music, and I didn't know how to relate to that. I didn't know how to relate to Anime. Obviously, I couldn't relate to people being

abducted by aliens so much. I had a kid try to show me the chip in his foot. I think he was trying desperately to make it into “We should go out.” This was him being super-open and vulnerable with me. It was like, “Do you want to see the chip in my foot?” And he started taking off his shoe. “You can listen to radio frequencies with me,” and I was like, “OK, no thank you.” Those are the kind of people I hung out with.

Completely separate from that, I was friends with a girl who didn’t share very many of my political and moral and religious ideas, but she was somebody who would listen to me and just let me talk, and then she would respond. I found that very enjoyable because, since I was approaching this social life as an exploration, like an entirely...I don’t know if it was a language or more of a dialect...it wasn’t completely foreign, but as social behaviors and relationships became more complex, I wanted to find out about what other people were thinking so I wasn’t stuck in my own head. So she didn’t think it was completely taboo to just talk about her opinions, so I really enjoyed that. She ended up being more of a managerial friend. That didn’t always work out, but I do think that I learned a lot from her.

VW: Since we’re still in elementary and middle school, did you ever feel bullied?

LW: I didn’t necessarily feel bullied. I felt like I was, on occasion, a situational friend. If somebody needed me, then they would go to me, but then they would leave until they had a problem again. Initially, I was okay with this, but then I began to realize I was being used. Not really being taken advantage of like they were completely aware of it. They were just spouting off their problems to me because they didn’t feel like I was a threat to them, but that was basically what they went to me for, then they left.

VW: Same thing in middle school?

LW: Same thing in middle school. I didn’t really feel bullied. I was lucky enough to go to a fairly diverse middle school, really diverse as far as ethnicity and lifestyle choices. That exposure really brought in my ideas of people.

VW: What about high school?

LW: I think that ninth grade I was still with the same group of people, so it was similar. Tenth through 12th grade was a smaller school and I was in a place where people had known each other since before kindergarten, so it was very difficult to fit in, especially because, by that point, the guy-girl dynamic was chasing and being chased, and everyone else is either weird or a prude. I kind of fell into the prude category.

VW: Did you feel that your classmates and, to a certain extent, your teachers bullied you in any way or excluded you from certain things because of who you were? I can remember you coming home and making comments about kids telling you that you’re so smart, which you tended to take as a compliment and not as a put-down. Do you think it ever was a put-down for them to say that?

LW: It might have been. It might have made me nervous that that was the only thing they identified me as - my intellect and nothing beyond that. I wasn’t getting feedback on

whether I was being a good friend, which made me nervous because I wanted to be a good friend to as many people as possible.

VW: Did you ever... I don't remember that you had any good friends other than Savannah in high school.

LW: And as soon as Savannah met Emily, we kind of fell by the wayside, because Emily is more dynamic and socially adept.

VW: So how is college different?

LW: There are people who are on the same mental level as I am, so I don't have to control at what level I'm talking to them. Or they have a broader vocabulary, a broader knowledge, so it's easier to talk to them because I'm talking at my own pace. People are more mature, more likely to listen. They're more understanding, more forgiving, I think. College here is a small community, so it doesn't feel like I'm a little fish in a big ocean. I have groups that I fit into, especially as I'm allowing different interests to enter my life. I've been introduced to Anime finally. There are some that I really enjoy. Some of them are just really silly. But I am finding some of them to be very intriguing. I'm being introduced to foreign films, globalizing my media intake, and being able to talk with people about that. I tend to fall in sometimes with the homeschoolers, which is funny because I've been public schooled my entire life. We actually...there is this online test, "How homeschooled are you?" I think it was my roommate, she got 14 and I got 28, so I was more "homeschooled" than she is.

VW: She's homeschooled?

LW: Yes, she's homeschooled! It's funny. Whenever I start talking about PBS children's shows, the homeschooled kids remember them. We have a lot more relatable things because I just feel like I was exposed to the same sort of things and kept away from the same sort of things that homeschooled kids are. The only things I'm like, "What are you talking about?" are the things they're like "Oh, you were under the same curriculum." Some of the extra-curricular activities that they got to do, like learn to play violin, ballroom dancing, and making their own Civil War dresses, I kind of missed out on that.

VW: Yeah, just a little bit.

LW: But I explained to them that I asked you why don't you homeschool me, and you said, "Lauran, homeschooling is for parents with patience."

VW: And I have none.

LW: And you have none (laughs).

VW: Of course, I think now, looking back, had I understood you more, I think I could have very successfully homeschooled you for a while. But you would have fairly quickly outstripped my arsenal, shall we say, because you are an incredibly intelligent young lady

and I think you are actually far smarter than I am. It would have been a real challenge as we got into the upper years for me to keep you occupied, keep you engaged, and keep you challenged because I would have been really challenging myself in the process. Not necessarily a bad thing, but with some of the interruptions we've had in our life that we won't go into here, it just didn't work out that way.

LW: I think, as far as me outstripping you, if we look at pure – I don't want to say it, but I'll go ahead and say it – data processing, yeah, I think there, yes. But you have a rounder intelligence than I do as far as understanding people, being emotionally intuitive, so I still tend to look up to you for how you're reacting to things.

VW: Do you find that you are getting better at recognizing facial expression and emotional reaction in people? From the time you were in kindergarten, I was encouraging you to look at the person to whom you are speaking. That's always been a bit of a challenge for you, but you did improve over the course of time with looking people, not necessarily in the eye, but at least in the face so there was a connection there. One of the things I've learned from my research is that one of the reasons Aspergians don't look people in the eye when they're talking to them is because that's a distraction to them from what they're trying to say.

LW: Because their eyes are going all over the place. So you've got eyes going like this and lips going like this. Choose!!

VW: Then if you get stuck on the eyes, you have no idea what they're saying.

LW: You can engage their eyes and smile and nod, and they'd feel like they've made a connection with you, but if you want to actually get what they're saying, you look at their mouth.

VW: Or you look over their shoulder and look at something very stationary that you can focus on so your ears can hear what they're saying or process what they're saying.

LW: Actually, going back to blocking, if I want to block you – I think I've explained this before – I don't even look over your shoulder. I look at you but I visually zone out. I hear words, but I don't have to make eye contact because it's intimidating to me.

VW: What did your teachers do in school that you found distracting or harmful to your education or your interpersonal relationships with your classmates?

LW: Probably, especially earlier on, like in elementary school, putting up just gobs of posters, especially laminated ones, because then I had to deal with color and this bright light reflecting everywhere. That was super distracting. Not to mention the fact that in second grade they had posters of dinosaurs.

VW: So too much stimuli in the room.

LW: Too much visual stimulation, because if there's too much visually going on, you have to pick one to focus on, and you don't know if it's the right one. Added to that, in the old buildings like Buffalo Crossroads especially, there were flickering lights all over the place, and it was yellow light, really poor lighting. That was not fun at all. To some extent, as I got farther on, pick your own groups was a problem. I ended up with the leftover kids that no one wanted to associate with, like they were smelly or they were slackers. I felt bad because I ended up leading these kids around by the collar, which I didn't want to do. It made me feel bossy and made me feel mean, but...

VW: But we have to get this project done.

LW: Yeah.

VW: What about in middle school classrooms? Now you're not just in one classroom; you're in multiple classrooms with multiple teachers.

LW: In middle school, I think this was in Cedar Springs, they didn't have this class is what you do at 8:00; this is what you do at 10. It was on a rolling thing, and they were working under this theory that because some kids don't function as well in the morning and some don't function as well in the afternoon, we give every kid a chance to have every class in their prime area. In theory, and to most of the kids, it was probably very beneficial, but it was hard to keep track of for me.

VW: So you find structure important.

LW: To some extent. Schedule, yes. Knowing what's coming ahead, yes. Actually, planning for stuff, maybe not so much, but being aware that this is coming. I need to be at least somewhat aware of it. It's not so much organization, that kind of structure; it's just the idea that someone is warning me that this is coming up.

VW: What about high school?

LW: When I got to high school, especially in Iowa, this was with the old system, so this was one class at one time.

VW: You always had English 4th block every day. Wasn't it 4th block when you had English with Mr. Thompson? So you knew what was happening every single day; it was always the same thing. You didn't have to think about, gee, is today the day we have science first period or is today the day we have math first period.

Getting back to the whole breaking away from structure, I don't know if you remember this, but there was one time when we went up to Aunt Joy and Uncle Gary's house.

LW: Yeah, I remember that.

VW: Tell the story of that weekend. I don't even remember what it was we were going to try to do.

LW: We had gone to Black Friday, and we had gotten Christmas gifts, and I had gotten you a DVD. I don't know if this was the next day or later on the same day, but we went off to Goodwill to do some shopping, but Grandma and Grandpa emotionally needed to get back, so we all had very short notice about this. I had not had all my stuff packed because I wanted to pack it a certain way and we needed to go to Goodwill now, and I didn't want to miss out on that because I love Goodwill. Dad had gotten angry and went ahead and packed all my stuff and just threw it in the bottom of the car. I was very angry, and I feared that, I didn't know how he'd packed, so I didn't know if the DVD...which DVDs are breakable if you put enough stuff on them...I didn't know if it would be safe. He asserted that, if I had done what I was supposed to do back then, this wouldn't have happened, not remembering that, even if my stuff was packed, I had no way of knowing that he was in a rip to get the stuff packed in the car. I could not have told him, "No, put this on top." It would have still been put on the bottom and the problem would have still been present.

VW: Do you think that, because we had to change our plans at the last minute because of Grandma and Grandpa's needs, do you think that change in plans, that change in what you thought was coming, contributed to the meltdown that occurred that day?

LW: I think so, because I had been expecting that we would be able to do this and not be rushed. I hate shopping rushed, and I was in the middle of shopping and looking around for stuff. I had some time, but it wasn't enough to get very much done, but it was too much to not do something, so I felt just kind of in limbo. That was difficult to deal with. Just the announcement after getting the call that Dad wants us gone **now**; it's like, "Urr."

VW: And then finding that he had packed all your stuff and put it in on the bottom on top of that was just enough to really throw you for a loop. Then, I don't think we understood what was going on in your head. Now, I think we have a better understanding of what was going on in your head after having done more research. I think that was before you were identified with Asperger's. That was actually the motivator that got us thinking maybe there was something more going on here, because there shouldn't have been this kind of a meltdown for something like ADD. It was a pretty major meltdown.

LW: Yeah. I was pretty stressed out. I think everything, in addition to the fact that both Grandma and Grandpa were kind of testy and raring to get home and Dad was angry because I hadn't anticipated this sudden need, I thought I had time. It was basically implied very strongly that, oh yeah, we have plenty of time. At least enough time to get your stuff packed. If I had the time that I was supposed to have been given, everything would have gone perfectly. If he had waited until I got home, I could have packed my stuff in like 30 seconds.

VW: But that was not what was planned.

LW: That was not what was planned. I was given no warning. I was told immediately that I was in the wrong. Dad was angry, Grandma and Grandpa were testy, it was just rushing around, and that caused it.

VW: That was not fun.

LW: No.

VW: Have we talked about how your interpersonal relationships are here on campus now that you're in college and you have a roommate, may I add, a very tolerant roommate?

LW: She's awesome. She says she's OCD, but she says it's mainly about her own stuff. She could care less about my stuff.

VW: She doesn't care about your stuff, but her stuff has to be just this way?

LW: It's crazy because my side of the room is a pit and she's fussing, "Oh, it's so messy in here." I tell her, "I'm so sorry," and she says, "No, no, no. It's not your stuff," and she has like two things on the ground. It's hilarious.

VW: Oh, my. It looked like both of you were contributing to that mess when I was up in your room.

LW: I mean, it's spirit week. We've got stuff everywhere.

VW: Oh, sure. You've got to have face paint all over your faces and all that stuff for spirit week. How could your teachers, say in high school - we've already talked about elementary school with all the laminated posters all over the walls - did you find the same distractions at the middle school or high school level that you found at the elementary level?

LW: I don't think so. As they expect kids to get more mature, the whole colored poster thing goes kind of down in numbers, and more words, less pictures, so I think that improved.

VW: Did you find that there were things in the high school classroom that were a distraction to you?

LW: In high school?

VW: Yes.

LW: Well, I don't think so unless we're talking about the time when a mouse died in the walls between the science rooms and the whole place stank.

VW: I think that was pretty distracting for everybody though.

LW: That was awful. Like when Mr. Anderson accidentally cut open the odor sack on the mink he brought into biology class, and on top of that he sprayed this orange stuff, hoping to make it better, and it actually made it so much worse! That was very difficult to focus, so I focused on breathing through my mouth. Other than that, I don't remember any specific distractions.

I think I started noticing in high school that, because courses were getting more specific, teachers were more passionate about their subjects specifically, and so that kind of encouraged me to get excited with them, even if I wasn't particularly good at something, like chemistry. Because Mr. Langhus was so intensely motivated by a joy and the desire to share this joy of chemistry with students, that motivated me to want to be excited with him, especially because he was depressed because he felt not a lot of kids cared about it anymore. Even if I wasn't the best at it, I wanted to let him know that he had my time and my attention. Of course, Mr. Thompson, being more specific, I think I took every single one of his classes and enjoyed every single one. He actually scared me my first year because he had a sudden temper. That was difficult for me to deal with. And then, on top of that, transitioning from one year to the next, I had gotten used to the fact that, if he had had an outburst in the previous class, it didn't matter if we were cherubs, it was still going to affect us. You could hear him all over the place. He would yell when he was angry. The next year, I felt very intimidated by the fact that he gave no vocal indication when I had gotten used to him vocalizing when he was angry. He said, "Apparently, the school board does not like it when I vocalize my anger, so I'm going to be quiet angry now," and I was like, "Oh, no!"

VW: Now you're dependent on facial expression and body language.

LW: Well, he still growled, so there was some indication.

VW: But did you start noticing facial expression with him? Did you start watching for the indicators?

LW: His eyes were just a certain way. His face got a little redder. He was trying very hard not to get angry. But I didn't, once I came to understand his anger, once I understood his reasoning for being angry, I didn't feel threatened by it because I knew that his anger was related to a desire for kids to do their best, to get the most out of what he was trying to give them, and if they just checked out, then he had no time for them. If they gave him problems, then heaven help them, because I've given you my time, my experience, my attention. You can't throw that in my face and get away with it. It was really because he cared and you could feel that he was hurt when kids said stuff like, "You expect me to have a job and do my homework?" I was like, "Oh, you genius. You genius!" That was when he was quiet angry, so he just pointed toward the door and said, "Get out. I don't ever want to see you in here again."

VW: Leave my room.

LW: I could understand, just from the situation, what would make him angry, so I got used to that. When people said dumb things or did stupid things. You could answer a question wrong all you wanted and that wouldn't affect him as long as he knew you put effort into it. It would reflect in your grade if you did it over and over again, but he wouldn't say you were a bad student if you tried. I really valued that in him, that he expected a lot of us and he set his standards very high, but he also appreciated a desire to learn and a willingness to give your best. And he was very supportive of me when I was doing my semester-long paper and I fell behind. I think I got a B- or C in that class.

VW: I think you got a B.

LW: I got a B?

VW: I think so.

LW: Because I couldn't find half of the sources that I needed, because I wanted to make an unbiased topic and because an entire side was not willing to speak on the issue I was looking at, which was demon possession. The scientific community wouldn't even say why they didn't believe in this aspect of the supernatural, they just started with the assumption that we knew. I felt that I couldn't include a lot of what they were saying. I couldn't overwhelm everybody with religious stuff. Then it makes it look like I'm a zealot. I had to almost pare down on the religious aspect just to make it still unbiased. That got me docked points. But he understood that it was a frustrating topic. It was draining on mental, spiritual, and emotional levels. Made my hair curl, literally. He was very supportive throughout that. I really valued that. When teachers care about individual students and when they keep their standards high, they don't lower their standards for a student, but they encourage the student with this knowledge that their personal opinion of you, as long as you keep on trying your darnedest, stays the same, because students, especially people like me, are looking for affirmation that, yeah, you're on the right track. You're doing a good job of just trying. I'm not going to give you an A if you have a B paper, but you're doing well. Just being encouraging on a more personal level and being available is valuable for all students, definitely.

VW: What about the sensory issues in high school.

LW: By this time the number of posters has significantly decreased, all the walls are neutral colors – they weren't white, they were off white, which was good, and they weren't yellow, which is very good because I don't like yellow – so the tone of the room was warm but not distracting, kind of like the walls here. It was an older building, so the light fixtures sometimes they let run out, so that was sometimes distracting. But other than the lights, I don't think I had a lot of problems from the actual atmosphere of the building, apart from when there were stinky dead animals. Other than that, high school was a very positive experience...except for the stairwell, but I just got used to that. They were very shallow steps and they were kind of sloping weirdly because it was such an old building. I just remembered that.

VW: It didn't feel like a normal staircase.

LW: Right. It was kind of warped and really shallow, so I had to take a lot more steps. Plus, they were slippery surfaces. They didn't really have any grip to them, and they were made of, I don't know, they looked almost like ceramic.

VW: They did. I think it was some sort of concrete with a sealant on it.

LW: Not the best.

VW: Very worn down.

LW: Those were the only things with the actual building that I took issue with.

VW: As far as a teacher teaching in the classroom, you talked about them being passionate about what they do, making themselves accessible to the students, being encouraging to students, making sure that their standards are high, not lowering those standards for the student but encouraging the student to meet those standards.

LW: Yes.

VW: Are there things that a teacher can do to help any Aspy student with the social issues that an Aspy student deals with?

LW: I would think focusing on small groups and shuffling kids around.

VW: So not necessarily letting them pick their partners but actually...

LW: Right. On the level of kids getting left out and also on the level of not letting a kid get used to, you know, this is the only group I can feel comfortable around. Kind of pushing them out of that. It might be initially discomforting, but if they can interact with more people, but not more people as in a bigger group, but they can introduce themselves to...

VW: A wider variety.

LW: Yes, to different groups, then they'll have a more solid grip on social interactions. If they're really passionate about the subject that is going on, it might be fair to the rest of the class to shuffle the kid around, too.

VW: OK. Do you find it a challenge, if you're given a project to do that's really a topic you're not interested in very much, do you find it more of a challenge to pursue that particular project, or do you look at it as another challenge, I'm going to pursue this, but after I'm done, I'm not going to go back to it.

LW: I think it is difficult to a certain extent. I've experienced this, especially trying to write timed essays on standardized tests because they claim to be about relevant issues, but truly they are about the most mundane, uncontroversial issues, and you're supposed to take a strong stand on whether motorcyclists should constitutionally have to wear their helmets. With those, I understand I have a set amount of time to write a strong argument, so I pretend that I have nothing better to do than to be passionate about the rights of bikers and whether it is a bigger priority for them to have freedom from head trauma or them to have freedom to ride in whatever garb they want, barring public nudity, because they'd never address that on an ACT. In those kinds of situations, that's what I do. If it's a full-blown project, I tend to take less time on it. I might wait longer to do it, might procrastinate, either because I don't

care that much or because, when I feel that pressure to produce something passionately and quickly, a smaller time frame raises the stakes enough for me to get somewhat interested in doing it.

VW: Is there anything else you want to add, any insights into an Aspy student you think teachers need to know, need to be aware of, so they can better serve their Aspy students, whether they've been identified or not?

LW: Um, I think as far as auditory, if some teachers, especially toward the younger end, if the kid is not focusing on them, they'll tell the kid, "Look me in the eye." That gives the teacher assurance; that makes the teacher feel that the child is understanding. But if they really want the child to understand, if they notice that the kid doesn't want to look at their eyes, but they're not indicating that they don't care, you could see if you get a better response by telling them to look at your mouth. That might be something to try. I haven't had any experience with that, but I would think that would improve things. Watch your light bulbs, your fluorescent light bulbs, if they're blinking a lot. Do you ever notice that?

VW: Not unless the light bulb is about to go out. Then I can see the flickering and it's very annoying. Do you notice flickering in the light bulbs we have in here?

LW: No. It's pretty steady. Actually, I don't know if you heard this from Temple Grandin, that's why Aspy kids will do better with laptops because the ones that are just big monitors flash a lot, so kids don't do well. The LED screens like this are very stable as far as lighting. Since you don't notice it, maybe offer it up to kids that if something about the room is bothering you, not like "Oh, I need less homework," or "We should put up posters from Rolling Stone," if it's something that is distracting you, they could put notes in a box or e-mail you. Just make that known that that's something these kids have access to. They can ask. I'm not sure, since it's a maintenance issue, how much control teachers have over lighting fixtures.

VW: The squeaky wheel gets the grease.

LW: Yeah. Also, if you're showing films, asking if something is too loud. If you've seen the movie before, maybe if you notice that kids react to loud things, you could shoot them an e-mail and tell them, "If you see this, you can expect..."

VW: ...a bomb blowing up or some other loud event...

LW: ...or some sudden thing. That's most of the reason why I don't like straight-up horror movies. It's not that they're disgusting; it's that they, especially American horror movies, rely so much on jump scares because they're cheap scares. Things just popping out of nowhere and going "Rowr." They think that scares people, but it hurts when you have sensitive hearing. Maybe making that available to them.

VW: So not having lots of posters...

LW: Right, especially laminated posters that glare back. Ones that are not laminated, that have the matte finish are not as bad; they're not as distracting. Especially if they have darker or more neutral tones, those aren't as boisterous as if they're neon or that sort of thing. Maybe...I don't know...if you see a child being passionate about one thing and being obsessed with one thing, maybe try to encourage students to make connections instead of trying to completely get them off this kick. This applies to this in some way, kind of give them...

VW: Kind of broadening their scope?

LW: Yes, so that you have reason to be interested in this because you're interested in this. Definitely encourage kids' passions, but encourage them to broaden. Don't let them be one-track mind all the time. If the kids are socially...you can tell that they're kind of socially flailing, encourage them to talk with people and notice how people react to them. I've actually heard that it's best if you can diagnose Aspy kids earlier because that's when these thought processes are being formed. I was caught later on, so a lot of the things that are Asperger's traits that I have to deal with, it's going to be harder for me to remove them from my existence. I can go around them or use them in different ways, like my knowledge of people's emotions has been increased through working hard and practicing watching people's faces. Whereas, if you catch a kid early with diagnosis, there are so many things you can do.

Encourage the kid to watch movies with a mature audience in mind, like something that is drama-related. Obviously, not something that is not inappropriate for that age group, but something that is serious, so they can watch how grown-up people react. Actors, by their nature, have to exaggerate emotional reactions to stimuli. It's not on the more subtle level that real people have, but if you can get kids to pick up on how the actors are reacting, they can learn how to sense that in other people and respond in kind, respond to people in that same way.

Definitely keep in contact with parents. You can definitely, if you notice that just one thing is bothering a kid, work with the student on that, but keep in contact with the parents and get them involved. They see the kid all the time and you just get to see them for a little while. It might be that they notice something you don't, or it could be that, because you are with the child for a smaller amount of time and there are breaks in between, they may not see things you see from your distance as a teacher. Be in communication. Let the parents be the parents, but definitely have a strong teacher-parent relationship. Don't let kids get bored. A bored mind is...when an intelligent kid gets bored, that's disastrous for them academically. If they're not getting challenged enough, they check out, and that's the last thing you want. Provide appropriate challenges for kids as they grow. Encourage them to grow. Try your best not to punish them for having to wait around for the rest of the class. Give them something to do that they're interested in. I don't know if you'd even need to grade it; just show interest in this passion that the kids have and encourage it.

VW: We have talked very briefly this year about your change in plans. You still have a desire to go to Turkey. You still have a very strong interest in the Middle East. We have talked about one way of going, which would be to be an English teacher, and you're discovering that this might not be the niche for you.

LW: At least on the public/private school level, not formally. Just because of what I've found out from a lot of teachers there. The work environment is not very professional, especially in Istanbul. Evidently, you have to be very careful about your own personal signals; otherwise, very easily male coworkers and bosses can think that you're easy. Because I am not extremely self-aware, that whole prospect makes me nervous.

VW: Do you think the reason you're not very self-aware has to do with being an Aspergian or being an Aspy?

LW: I think so. I'm somewhat emotionally detached, especially with things I can't immediately relate to. If I've experienced something to any extent, then I can make another connection and I can have some, however shallow, understanding of what a person is going through. As sorry as I can feel for them if something bad has happened to another person, or as much as I can feel bad or feel happy for somebody, I don't exactly know why. I'm happy because they're happy, I'm sad because they're sad. I can't empathize with them. I find it very frustrating. That's where the emotional detachment comes into play. I don't really cry at movies either.

VW: Except for *The Fall*.

LW: Yeah, except for *The Fall*. And I didn't cry the last time we watched it. Not really. But there are only a few movies, and they all relate back to something that strikes a chord with me. Like *Edward Scissorhands*, being different and misunderstood, and how sometimes it's funny and it's innocently funny, that this person is this stranger trying to function in this new, colorful world, not necessarily aware if they're hurting others and people not being aware that they are hurting this new person.

VW: Do you think that's a really good analogy for the Aspy's world?

LW: I think so, because we see Edward getting very hurt by the fact that his attempts to make connections kind of get him in trouble. He's also very excited and enthusiastic, especially initially, about this world he's been introduced to. He wants to be everybody's buddy, very friendly, very innocently excited. It's not that we don't want to be a part of the world, it's just that we're not able to adapt to everything, and sometimes that means that sometimes we end up unintentionally hurting people and sometimes that means that people intentionally or unintentionally hurt us. I think that works to some extent.

Another movie that makes me cry is *A.I. Artificial Intelligence*. Particularly something that shocked me was this little boy robot that Haley Joel Osment is playing discovers that he is not unique. He's been told that he is unique all his life, that he's special, that makes him valuable, that's where his value is. In his search to become a little boy that his mother can really love, he happens upon the warehouse that holds the rest of the Davids, the rest of the robots that are basically him. He's just a robot. There was something very gut-wrenching and disturbing about this little boy totally destroying all these other robots, throwing them on the ground, busting them open, and screaming, "But I'm special. I'm

unique.” It’s choking me up now because that’s something all humans experience. I’m special; you can’t tell me I’m just somebody else.

VW: Just another of a long series of the same thing.

LW: Umhmm.

VW: So do you believe that you are unique?

LW: I think I am in certain ways, and that’s what I was...Like when I first found out that I had Asperger’s, I didn’t know how to handle it because it felt like a more encompassing label than, oh, you’re the smart girl. That was one-dimensional. But this new word basically, supposedly, encapsulated my entire being, and I felt very threatened by that. I had to discover that it did not own me. Just because I had it didn’t mean that everything I was was Asperger’s or ADD, or that something was not specifically Asperger’s or not Asperger’s. I had to take ownership of Asperger’s and not let it take ownership of me. I don’t know if my reaction to this movie was just something that applies to all humanity, this desire to be unique, to be one’s self, or if this was a specific reaction to my processing, like, am I just some mutation of a species, or am I Luran, am I myself. So, coming to terms with that.

VW: Have you discovered that there can be labels that are associated with being Luran, that being Luran can mean being an Aspergian or an Aspy, that being Luran can be being smart, that being Luran can mean being passionate about certain things?

LW: But that’s not all there is. That’s the key.

VW: No, it’s not just: You’re Luran, you’re an Aspy. End of discussion. It’s you’re Luran, and these are all different aspects of who you are as a person. These are all things that make you who you are.

LW: These are all words that people use to try and understand. And I’ve come to value people’s desire to understand me. If words can help with that, and if words can help me understand myself, then that’s o.k. It doesn’t have to own me. I don’t have to be just a smart girl or just a prude, or just any one thing. But if words are how people need to understand me or come to grips with me, then I have to be somewhat satisfied with that and understand that they’re just coming about trying to understand something new from the opposite perspective than I am. They’re not trying to necessarily stereotype or degrade me; they’re just trying to figure me out.

VW: Thank you! You’ve given me 45 minutes longer than I thought we were going to do.

LW: WOW!

VW: Yeah, we’ve been sitting here talking for over an hour and a half about the qualities of an Aspergian and what it is like to view the world from your perspective because, if there’s one thing I’ve learned in my research, it’s that Aspies see the world differently than I do. I

need to be aware of that as a teacher. I need to recognize that some of my ADD kids might be Aspy.

LW: But ADD does not necessarily lead to Aspergian. And once you've met one kid on the autism spectrum, congratulations, you've met one kid on the autism spectrum.

VW: That's right because every single individual who is identified in any way with autism is at a different place.

LW: And it's not just linear, it's not, like, how bad is it. A lot of Aspies get stereotyped as those people who hide away behind computers and figure out all the world's problems but are never seen because they're working out the numbers. There are some that work like that, but I'm not bosom buddies with numbers. I'm language and words and creating ideas, analyzing things.

VW: More analyzing words than analyzing numbers?

LW: Yeah. What words mean and how they can change, how we can change words, how there can be so many words and yet you still can't find the right one to say what you want to say, how some languages have words that say things that another language can't possibly say, so you can only explain in sentiments. That's fascinating to me. Which is interesting, since I tend to think more visually, that I think about words in a visual way. We're not all Commander Data, although I did identify with him. I liked him a lot. I sympathize with him a lot.

VW: Do you think that maybe Commander Data represents the Aspy?

LW: There are a lot of t-shirts that say, "Spock was an Aspy" or "Data was an Aspy." And I think they could represent that. Definitely with Spock we see that...I would think he would be the more confident and self-satisfied Aspy. Logic is all I really need. Anything that's not logical...maybe I can understand why you have these ideas, but this is what we need to do; I'm sure of it. Data - he desired to have emotions. He was so interested in humans and how they interacted with each other. I think he represents an Aspy who is trying very hard to enter the world of so-called "normal" people and interact with them on a meaningful level. He wants to have meaningful relationships. He's not satisfied by knowing he's right. He wants to know what other people think and he finds that it's very intriguing that they think that. Whether he knows that this is the way it's got to be or not, he's still, like, Ah, that's really interesting. He can learn, so he grows more. I think he reflects what Aspergians desire; me, at least. I want to be a part of this world. I want to have a meaningful relationship with this world. I want to engage the world. I'm not satisfied just by knowing that I know what makes sense and that's all that needs to matter to me. That's the Trek rant!

VW: Thank you. I appreciate it. Not that I'm going to be able to see much of you this weekend, but this has been really good.

LW: Yeah. Oh, one more thing.

VW: What's that.

LW: I like dogs now more than cats in general because dogs are simpler. They're less complex. If you show them affection, unless they have been abused or traumatized by some specific stimuli, you can expect them to be like, "Oh, yeah!! Buddy!" You can do anything. You can talk to them for hours and they'll just be like, "yeah, yeah." Their much more consistent in their behavior. You might not know initially: do you like to be scratched behind the ears or do you feel safe enough with me to let me scratch your belly. But it's pretty easy, pretty straightforward: if this is true one time it's going to be true most of the time. With cats, you can try and pet them and they might slap at you, but then two seconds later they're winding themselves around your leg and saying, "Pet me," and it's like, "I just did! What do you want?" So cats are more like people.

VW: Unpredictable?

LW: Unpredictable, and their actions are situational. Unsure. I'm on very uneasy footing around cats because they're such complex critters.

VW: I am the lone cat person in our family now.

LW: I think they're elegant; I think they're intelligent; I think poetically you can get a lot more out of cats than dogs because they're so complex. And I've had a cat, and she was a very patient cat. She was not quick to anger and wrath, so even then, I grew up with this cat. I grew up with you...

VW: You're talking about Kit, right?

LW: Kit, yes. I grew up with you. You're a normal person, but we have somewhat of an understanding because I grew up with you. I grew up with Kit, so I knew enough about Kit. I had a chance to grow with her. But if I'm just meeting a cat, there's just no acting like a cat. There's acting like Chester or Tigger or whatever – one cat.

VW: Right. That's interesting.

LW: OK. So that's that.

VW: So, are we done now?

LW: Yep.

-- End of Interview --

Appendix B

Other Helpful Resources

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Valeria A. White

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English 6040

9 November 2012

Asperger's Syndrome in the Classroom: A Teacher's Perspective

Recent studies cited in Tony Atwood's reference work, *The Complete Guide to Asperger's Syndrome* (232), note "at least 75 percent of children with Asperger's syndrome also have a profile of learning abilities indicative of an additional diagnosis of Attention Deficit Disorder." Likewise, Ozonoff, Goodlin-Jones, and Solomon, in their chapter on autism spectrum disorders in *Assessment of Childhood Disorders*, referred to a study by Ghazziuddin, Weidner-Mikhael, and Ghazziudin in which the authors "reported that approximately 30% of individuals with Asperger's syndrome meet diagnostic criteria for ADHD" (492). Since Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/ADHD) often presents itself at earlier ages than Asperger's syndrome (AS), many children who fit the profile for AS are misdiagnosed with ADD/ADHD, a situation that bears direct impact on their success in the classroom and of which teachers must be aware.

The unique characteristics inherent in AS offer challenges to Aspy students in the academic realm, even though these students are usually quite bright. These challenges are related to the issues Aspy students face in their social interactions, organizational abilities, and sensory issues. Lauran White, a college student who was identified as having Asperger's traits in high school, shared several of her experiences from elementary, middle, and high school in a recent [interview](#). An intelligent and articulate young lady, she did not feel that her social interactions impacted her educational success to the extent it was impacted by her lack of

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Comment [1]: This information comes without an appropriate transition—I think you need a sentence in the first paragraph clearly articulating that the following essay will be analyze some of the issue surrounding AS, based on research into the medical literature, memoirs and biographical writings by Asbys, as well as ethnographic data provided primarily from Luran (you should also indicate your relationship).

organizational skills. Yet other Aspy students are negatively impacted by the social challenges they face due to the bullying their social inadequacies invite. “Children with AS lack the social skills and social support to counter their attackers and, therefore, often become chronic targets of bullying” (Heinrichs 55). Interventions, strategies, modifications, and accommodations are necessary aspects educators and parents need to consider and determine for the wellbeing and development of the student. The collaborative effort between teacher and parent makes it possible to provide a safe and nurturing learning environment. Creativity is essential, especially since each Aspy is a unique individual with equally unique challenges and needs. Many tips and strategies have been successfully used in a variety of settings, but until recently, finding those tips and strategies has required tedious efforts by individual educators and parents who have been faced with the experience of working with an Aspy student.

To determine which tips and strategies will be most effective for the individual student, the importance of gaining an understanding of AS and the students afflicted with this condition should not be underestimated and must begin with a review of its history, characteristics, and methods of diagnosis.

History

Probably in evidence in the human species throughout history and considered one of the pervasive developmental disorders (PDDs) recognized by the American Psychiatric Association (Ozonoff, Goodlin-Jones, and Solomon 487), Asperger’s syndrome (AS) was first most clearly described in the mid-1940s by Viennese pediatrician Dr. Hans Asperger, who had observed similar behaviors and personality characteristics among a small group of his young patients (Atwood 12-13). Originally diagnosed as childhood schizophrenia, a recognized mental illness,

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Dr. Asperger's work led to the reclassification of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and AS as personality disorders (Atwood 13), partially alleviating the stigma associated with such diagnoses. Further research revealed that conditions associated with PDDs, which include autism, high-functioning autism/Asperger's syndrome (HFA/AS), and pervasive developmental disorders-not otherwise specified (PDD-NOS), have a biological source: changes in the brain driven by genetics lead to the onset of symptoms (Ozonoff, Goodlin-Jones, and Solomon 496); hence, as John Elder Robison concisely explains in his memoir, *Look Me In the Eye*, "Asperger's is not a disease. It's a way of being. There is no cure, nor is there a need for one" (5).

Characteristics

Asperger's syndrome (AS) is characterized by many of the same delays and abnormalities as autism. "Symptoms of autism spectrum disorder [ASD] fall into three domains: social relatedness, communication, and behaviors and interests, with delays or abnormal functioning in at least one of these areas evident in children prior to three years of age" (Ozonoff, Goodlin-Jones, and Solomon 487). These symptoms can present themselves in varied ways depending on the individual child, but the key indicators for AS include an inability to express empathy, a lack of recognition of social cues, and difficulty in communicating and controlling emotions, all of which lead to difficulty in making friends, maintaining friendships, and analyzing acrimonious relationships such as bullying. In addition, Aspy children are inordinately focused on a particular topic yet have difficulty maintaining focus in a classroom setting, which often leads to the aforementioned misdiagnosis of Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/ADHD).

Aspy children also show physical characteristics that can be misleading when seeking a diagnosis, to include lack of coordination, an awkward gait, and sensitivity to sensory stimuli (Atwood 33). Notably absent when comparing the symptoms of AS with autism are delays in

language development and impairment in intellectual functioning (Ozonoff, Goodlin-Jones, and Solomon 487). In fact, some parents note large vocabularies and adult phrasing and usage in their young children, characteristics that do not generally raise concerns (Ozonoff, Goodlin-Jones, and Solomon 489).

Diagnostic Methods

While a method of assessment has been in place to evaluate children suspected of having autism, a lack of consensus exists among psychiatric professionals on which assessments, particularly parent reports, are most accurate when determining Asperger's syndrome (AS), largely driven by a "lack of consensus in the field about the definition and boundaries of the condition" (Ozonoff, Goodlin-Jones, and Solomon 503). Atwood (33) enumerates several avenues that might lead to an accurate diagnosis:

- ♦ Diagnosis of autism in early childhood and progression by the middle school years to High Functioning Autism or Asperger's syndrome.
- ♦ A teacher's recognition of Asperger's syndrome when the child starts primary school.
- ♦ Previous diagnosis of another developmental disorder such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, a language or movement delay or disorder, a mood disorder, eating disorder, or Non-verbal Learning Disability.
- ♦ The signs of Asperger's syndrome only becoming conspicuous during adolescence, when the social and academic expectations are more complex.
- ♦ The development of behavior problems and conflict with parents, teachers and school authorities.

- ♦ The identification of signs of Asperger’s syndrome in a relative, where a review of the child’s family history identified other family members who have similar characteristics.
- ♦ Descriptions of Asperger’s syndrome in the media and literature may lead someone to seek a diagnosis for him- or herself or a family member.
- ♦ Employment problems, especially achieving and keeping a job appropriate to the person’s qualifications and abilities.

Notably absent from this list of diagnostic methods are lab tests and brains scans. Current diagnostic methods are dependent upon observation and are primarily behavior related.

Children with AS generally display traits more subtly and at later ages than children with autism (Ozonoff, Goodlin-Jones, and Solomon 493). In addition, because they have greater opportunity to observe children in social interactions in the context of school, teachers are often the first to notice AS characteristics in children (Atwood 15). Some students with AS “fly under the radar” until they reach their teen years, when changes in educational expectations and circumstances create added stress (Atwood 19). Because of the subjective nature of the diagnosis criteria for AS, teachers must carefully document any observations they make of students exhibiting the characteristics of AS before approaching parents or guardians.

Students identified with AS face challenges in a number of areas as a result of their unique characteristics, including social interactions, organizational skills, and sensory/physical issues. These challenges have implications in a variety of content areas and can be met and overcome by utilizing a number of interventions and strategies.

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Comment [3]: Is this because these kind of lab tests are typically very expensive and/or require more complex medical facilities?

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Comment [4]: Yes—and I assume it would be risky to make such a diagnosis and be wrong! Seems like a situation where the threat of litigation would be on the minds of the school admin, teachers, and parents alike . . . Since I teach at the college level, I’m not aware of the kinds of procedures that k-12 teachers follow in these kinds of situations (i.e.—when you suspect a student may be exhibiting any kind of “non-standard” behaviors, either related to AS or not)—is there an official policy in place that requires teachers to report certain behaviors?

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Social Interactions

Specific Challenges

John Elder Robison opens the author's note to his memoir with, "Welcome to *Look me in the Eye* and my Aspergian world" (ix). The vast majority of students with Asperger's syndrome (AS) do live in their own world, although not to the extent of autistic students. They view their surroundings differently than those who might be called "normal," however one might define that term. As a result, their social interactions are impacted. Temple Grandin, autistic and author of *The Way I See It*, explains this phenomenon when she writes, "Without a fully functioning social thinking system, individuals with higher functioning autism or Asperger's Syndrome (HFA/AS) stumble along through academic and social situations, missing valuable bits of verbal nuance or nonverbal body messages that are woven into typical conversation" (167). This is true regardless of intellectual or verbal ability. Likewise, Ellen Notbohm and Veronica Zysk describe the contrast between the general population, those who "awake with our social awareness present and operational," and autistic and Aspy children, who "arrive in this world without a social navigation system, without the neural network of social understanding that allows them to notice where they're going in the social world, or course-correct when they take a wrong turn" (220).

When Lauran White was 4 years old, her parents were concerned that she was either experiencing hearing loss or petit mal seizures because of her lack of response to verbal cues and, at times, physical touch. Following a battery of tests, including an electroencephalogram, Lauran's pediatrician noted an absence of abnormal brain activity, concluding that Lauran was bored with her environment and would escape into an imaginary place that was far more interesting to her. Lauran affirmed this conclusion when, upon being asked where she had gone during one of these episodes, she explained to her mother that she was "up looking at the moon."

Lauran could be categorized as more introverted in her social interactions. The introverted Aspy tends toward isolation and passivity, choosing to spend time alone instead of seeking out others. They also tend to avoid eye contact. Often while growing up, Lauran would have to be reminded to look at the person to whom she was speaking. She still struggles today with this aspect of being an Aspy, although much less than when she was young. In addition, she reports finding it much easier to comprehend what someone is saying to her if she can watch that person's mouth form the words, almost as if she is lip reading. There is no issue with her hearing; she simply finds the processing of language more effective if she sees "the whole picture."

By contrast, the extroverted Aspy actively seeks social interaction with his or her peers; however, this interaction is sought in a socially awkward manner. Extroverted Aspies often come across as bossy or inflexible, characteristics also present in strong-willed children, making this characteristic more difficult to associate with AS (Heinrichs 53). John Elder Robison (8-9) showed these characteristics clearly when he started nursery school. When attempting to make friends with one particular little girl, he pet her like a dog, thinking she would enjoy the same kind of contact in which dogs took pleasure. When her response was not what he expected, he decided to pet her longer with a stick so she wouldn't be able to hit him, an endeavor which garnered a quick response from his nursery school teacher. The following day, upon observing this same little girl playing with a truck, John took the truck away from her with the purpose of showing her the correct way of playing with it. Instead of the admiration and gratitude he thought was his due for being so helpful, he was again reprimanded and redirected to a different activity. ▾

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Implications in the Classroom

At the elementary level, the predominant implication in the classroom is the challenge an AS student has in making friends and relating to classmates. This can be observed on the playground and in group settings. Children quickly notice a differentness between the AS student and the general student population, often leading to rejection or exclusion of the AS student. A more extroverted AS student will inadvertently alienate their classmates because his or her manner of speaking is more adult or because he or she is too aggressive and awkward in their approach.

In the middle school and high school years, students' primary focus is acceptance by their peers. The social awkwardness of Aspy children becomes more pronounced at this age as social and academic expectations increase. The combination of their lack of a social support structure, their inability to predict behavior in others, and their innate social awkwardness makes Aspy children prime targets for bullies. For children who are bullied, school is not a safe, nurturing environment that promotes learning; school is a fearful place one must attempt to survive. Because close parallels exist between children from the general school population targeted by bullies and the characteristics of children with AS (Heinrichs 53-55), when educators create a safe educational environment for their AS students, they and their schools experience the added benefit of having a safe educational environment for all of their students.

Intervention

Appropriate social interaction must be directly taught to Aspy children since they are incapable of perceiving social cues (body language, facial expression) from simple observation

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and assimilation. The increased social interaction available to students in the elementary school setting provides an excellent opportunity for these skills to be reinforced in the general school population and developed in Aspy students. Teaching social skills is teaching life skills, a process that “is an ongoing journey that requires patience, repetition, and above all, adaptability” (Notbohm and Zysk 221). In addition, Temple Grandin (169) points out that explaining social skills, including classroom guidelines, should be done using concrete language and specific examples. In many instances, showing an Aspy student what is expected, whether in terms of behavior or work productivity(?), is far more effective than simply telling them what is expected.

In the earliest years, autistic and Aspy children need help forming the very basis for social interaction. Whereas most children seek out cues from their parents as early as six months of age, autistic and Aspy children completely lack any social referencing, leaving them unable to benefit from the social cues. As a result, this social referencing must be actively taught. Notbohm and Zysk (222-223) recommend games and activities that teach the child to look to a partner for information or “pay attention to the partner’s actions.” Temple Grandin (“My Experience with Autism”) stresses the importance of a disciplined upbringing during which manners are consistently taught and reinforced.

Additional strategies for building social awareness and developing social skills in young Aspy children include asking the teacher asking the child to teach the teacher something in which the child excels, thereby giving the child a sense of empowerment; enlisting the help of classmates in teaching necessary social skills; closely supervising play in the classroom and during recess to catch those teachable moments and to avoid situations in which bullying might occur; and creating a board game or playing board games to encourage development of logical thought progression, understanding of beginning/middle/end, perspective-taking (Notbohm and

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Zysk 225-229). In her lecture to the M.I.N.D. Institute, Temple Grandin also advocates turn-taking games to teach and encourage appropriate peer social interaction.

Older Aspy children face the same challenges as their younger counterparts but on a different level. Increased academic and social expectations contribute added stress to middle schoolers and high schoolers, which can exacerbate symptoms. Children and young adults at these age levels tend to be less accepting of differences; as a result, bullying becomes more prevalent in middle school and high school. Rebekah Heinrichs (121) points out that “some students with AS do not even recognize that they are being bullied and are susceptible to being talked into doing things that will get them in trouble or that will make them the object of ridicule.” Jason “J-Mac” McElwain addresses this issue in his memoir, *The Game of My Life: A True Story of Challenge, Triumph, and Growing Up Autistic*. Known for his basketball knowledge and prowess, Jason is quick to qualify the teasing he underwent in high school: “They’d tease me about how loud I was during the game, how enthusiastic. I didn’t mind the teasing because it wasn’t the mean kind of teasing. They knew I was really into the game, that I was really trying to pump up my team, that I was keeping my focus the only way I knew how” (47). Constant vigilance for bullying in all its forms – physical, verbal, emotional/social, and even educational – on the part of teachers and administrators forms an essential component in creating a safe learning environment for Aspy students.

Organizational Skills

Specific Challenges

Executive function, that psychological feature that makes possible organizing and planning, evaluating and monitoring oneself, controlling impulses, managing time, understanding new strategies, and understanding abstract concepts, among others, is impaired in children with Asperger's syndrome (Atwood 234). As a result, Aspy students struggle with organizational skills, skills that are fundamental to reaching academic goals and which also impact language acquisition and assimilation of appropriate behaviors (Dorminy, Luscre, and Gast 538), and with problem solving.

Implications in the Classroom

Aspy students with deficits in executive functioning will generally appear uncommitted to their academics or lazy. In reality, they are neither uncommitted nor lazy. As a result of their deficits in executive functioning, the part of human cognitive ability that organizes and plans, these students will frequently misplace assignments and materials necessary for their success in the classroom. Dorminy, Luscre, and Gast (540-542) studied four elementary students identified with high functioning autism/Asperger's syndrome (HFA/AS) who were consistently receiving zero grades on assignments because those assignments were not turned in to the teacher. One of the three students was given additional time to complete work assignments because of a deficit in fluency but was still unable to submit work assignments because he placed the finished work in his desk among other papers, essentially losing his assignments. The other three students were not given additional time; however, each of them completed work on time and accurately but placed their work in a location other than where they were supposed to place it (e.g., the wrong folder, in an unrelated book, inside the student's desk).

Intervention

In the case of the four elementary students studied by Dorminy, Luscre, and Gast, a file box system was designed, explained, and implemented with the assistance of the special education teacher and the paraprofessionals who worked with the students (542-548). Rather than a folder system kept out of sight inside the students' desks, all of the students' materials were organized in these file boxes next to their desks. Additionally, the files were set up to mimic the course of the school day. In addition to the file boxes, the students were given a self-monitoring chart as "visual reminders to keep their file boxes organized" (546). The special education teacher taught the students how to use the file boxes in one session using a verbal description of the system along with modeling. The classroom teacher reminded the students at the beginning of the day to keep their items organized and checked their file boxes and self-monitoring charts at the end of the school day (544). This file box system was proven to be effective in significantly reducing the number of misplaced assignments and the time necessary for the students to locate the work they needed to submit to their teachers (544-546). While studied at the elementary school level, this intervention could easily be adapted to fit middle school and high school students and their use of lockers and book bags.

Issues with organizational skills are prevalent in settings other than the classroom as well. The single intervention presented above can be modified as necessary to address organizational issues at home, an area that can impact school performance and success because of the same concerns that can be found in the classroom: missing materials and missing assignments. Parents implementing this strategy with their children in the home can significantly curtail some of the stress associated with that last minute rush in the morning to corral everything their child needs for the school day.

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Sensory Issues

Missing assignments, mislaid articles of clothing, and general messiness were a hallmark of Lauran White's growing up years. While attributable to lack of organizational skills, Lauran's messy room is more a reaction to unpleasant sensory stimuli. In her interview, she comments on her dislike of the sharp edges of most furniture, although she cannot explain why this is so. Her way of combating that uncomfortable visual stimulus is to keep her clothes and blankets scattered around the room to soften the edges of the walls and furniture.

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"One of the problems in understanding sensory issues is that sensory sensitivities are very variable, among individuals and within the same individual. A person can be hyper-sensitive in one area (like hearing) and hypo-sensitive in another (like touch)...Complicating matters even further, on a day-to-day basis, in the same individual, the sensory sensitivities can change, especially when the person is tired or stressed" (Grandin 82). In her lecture, "My Experience with Autism," Dr. Grandin further states, "You must not mix up sensory problems with bad behavior" and points out that the problem is not with the sensory organs themselves (eyes, ears, tongue, skin, nose) but rather inside the head, in the brain. The same lack of connections in the brain that leads to the social impairment experienced by Aspy students also affects their sensitivities. Reactions to these sensitivities can include verbal outbursts or striking out if the child becomes overloaded; hence, it is imperative that teachers understand their individual students as much as is humanly possible.

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Comment [7]: Previously you refer to her as "Temple Grandin" or "Grandin"—convention is to stick to just the surname unless it would be confusing by itself.

Specific Challenges – Visual Sensitivity

Visual sensitivity usually becomes evident in an environment in which fluorescent lighting is used. Many Aspy students experience discomfort from the flicker of fluorescent

lighting, additionally experiencing discomfort from the glare associated with such lighting (Atwood 285, Grandin 84). Additionally, bright lighting, high levels of contrast in colors (e.g., black/white, bright yellow/black), or a particular color can be areas of sensitivity.

Aspy children with visual sensitivity also have issues with movement. Atwood (287) attributes this to a problem with the vestibular system, which contributes to balance and a sense of spatial orientation. He refers to children with this problem as “gravitationally insecure.”

Lauran reports to a fear of stairs and escalators. Her fear of stairs is due to the potential that someone might grab her feet through her (?) open skirt. Of escalators she says, “I’ve learned to look at the step above or the step beneath me because that’s the one I’ve realized I need to focus on for when it’s time to get off in either direction, and it prevents me from looking over the side. Also, if I’m looking down, I can see people’s feet if they’re trying to make it past me. Unlike stairs, people generally tend to stay stationary on an escalator, so I don’t have to worry about people in addition to where I need to be moving.”

Dr. Grandin (“My Experience with Autism”) points out that Aspy and autistic children with visual sensitivities have a hard time judging depth and have trouble catching a ball, in addition to hating escalators and fluorescent lights. Atwood (287) notes that while some Aspy students do have severe issues with motion, others have no issue at all, a testament to the variability of sensitivity issues. Lauran noted difficulty with coordination during growth spurts, an experience that is not limited to the high functioning autistic/Aspergian population. However, of gym class, she does say she was good at dodging dodge balls because of her peripheral vision, but catching a ball that was thrown directly at her was almost an impossibility.

Implications in the Classroom – Visual Sensitivity

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Most classrooms in the United States use fluorescent lighting, in itself a potential major issue for Aspy students. Teachers are encouraged to keep the lighting in the classroom bright and their walls decorated with visually stimulating educational and motivational posters. For the Aspy student who has visual sensitivities, this type of classroom could prove to be his or her undoing. Classroom desktop computers also have a pattern of flickering that can be a major distraction for Aspy students. Visual sensory overload can lead to students experiencing fear or anxiety, blurred or unclear vision, or confusion (Atwood 285). In schools with stairs, the reduced or lacking depth perception of some Aspy students can lead to problems traveling between classes.

“Gravitational insecurity” mentioned by Atwood (287) has direct implication on the physical education classroom. Whether the visual/spatial problems lead to issues with motor skills or the motor skills are their own separate but related issue, most Aspy kids struggle with physical education. Teacher awareness of student issues is of primary importance, followed by necessary modifications.

Interventions – Visual Sensitivity

Dr. Grandin (84) tells the story of a little girl who could not tolerate the flickering fluorescent lights at the supermarket her mother frequented for more than five minutes. Once her mother allowed her to try one some tinted glasses to reduce the flickering of the light, she was able to tolerate being in the supermarket for an hour, a marked difference. Interventions can be as simple, inexpensive, and effective as a pair of tinted glasses. Other suggestions include allowing an Aspy student to wear a baseball cap when reading to block some of the flicker, putting an incandescent lamp on or near the student’s desk to counteract flicker, printing

assignments on pastel or grey paper to decrease contrast, and procuring a laptop for the Aspy student to use (less screen flicker than a desktop model (Grandin 90). To reduce visual stimuli in the room, teachers should consider removing visually stimulating posters from classroom walls, only leaving those that have direct relevance to the current topic of study.

In the physical education classroom, Simpson, Gaus, Biggs, and Williams, Jr. (50-51) recommend basing exercises and activities on individual student interests; presenting rules in a simple, literal manner; implementing a consistent system of reinforcement; and limiting unstructured time, among others. Other interventions are more dependent on the needs of the specific child, but can include reduction of excess noise and limiting visual distractions, especially when giving instructions. In addition, giving visual cues at the same time that verbal instructions are given can be instrumental in Aspy students maintaining their focus and retaining more information.

Specific Challenges – Auditory Sensitivity

Temple Grandin (84) refers to auditory sensitivity being the primary sensory challenge for autistic/Aspergian individuals, noting that this sensitivity can take two forms: “1) sensitivity to loud noise in general and 2) not being able to hear auditory detail.” Jason “J-Mac” McElwain says, “Also, my parents said that one of the things that really bothered me when I was little was my hearing. My ears were very sensitive. This happens a lot with autistic kids” (80). Lauran White claims sensitivity to loud, sharp noises and will wear earplugs in thunderstorms and to movies during which she expects such sounds to occur. When she was younger, any loud noise would hurt her ears, but she has gradually become desensitized to some of the painful noises that bothered her most when she was little. Temple Grandin, (“My Experience with Autism”) found

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Comment [8]: How might teachers negotiate what “visually stimulating” would entail?

the school bell especially painful, while Rebekah Heinrichs (121) presents a scenario in which an Aspy student is most bothered by whispering.

Lauran states that one reason Aspies do not look people in the eye when conversing with them is they can hear auditory detail better when they are looking at the speaker's mouth. She feels doing so gives her a more complete picture – visual and auditory - of what the person is saying. Her hearing is not the issue; if she had her hearing checked, it would test as normal.

Processing what is being heard is the issue.

Implications in the Classroom – Auditory Sensitivity

Understanding that loud noises or particular sounds (chairs scraping, the tick of a clock) can be a major distraction and can, in fact, be painful for their Aspy students, educators must first be aware of the sounds in their classrooms. Exposure to auditory sensitivities can result in behavior issues with Aspy children. They will lash out in some way when they are in pain, as will any child. Teachers may feel that an Aspy student is being disrespectful when he or she doesn't look into the speaker's eyes.

Interventions – Auditory Sensitivity

Aspy students may be allowed headphones to block out extraneous noise when working on in-class assignments or earplugs when attending classes that are notably loud (band or physical education, for example). Revising the bell system from a loud, jangling sound to a more subdued tone would eliminate a common point of sensitivity. Teachers must understand that Aspy students who are looking at a speaker's mouth instead of his or her eyes are not being

disrespectful but are doing their best to process the information the speaker is presenting. The child should not be forced to do otherwise.

Specific Challenges – Tactile Sensitivity

Tactile sensitivity can take the form of a disinclination to be touched, discomfort when dressed in particular clothing, distress at having one's hair touched or cut, or a dislike of having water on one's face, among others (Atwood 279-280). This sensitivity impacts relationships, both in the family and at school, and can easily be misinterpreted. Something as seemingly insignificant as the tag on a shirt rubbing the back of an Aspy's neck or the seam of a pair of pants being pressed into the side of an Aspy's leg can cause not just mild discomfort but actual pain. Conversely, some Aspies prefer tight clothing. Luran White reports, "I like clothing that is tighter, that's closer to my skin. That feels more comfortable than something that's loose."

Implications in the Classroom – Tactile Sensitivity

"When senses are disordered, the attention and concentration that learning requires becomes difficult and in some cases, impossible" (Grandin 102). Students who feel distracted, uncomfortable, or in pain are not going to be able to learn. Their distraction can, in turn, distract others in class, resulting in an environment nonconducive to learning for anyone.

Interventions – Tactile Sensitivity

In the early grades, helping the Aspy student's peers understand his or her tactile sensitivities can be helpful in alleviating much of the stress associated with those sensitivities.

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Students should not be forced “to endure the [unpleasant tactile] experience if it can be avoided” (Atwood 281). Primarily, dealing with tactile sensitivity issues will happen at home; however, the child’s teachers need to be aware of tactile sensitivities in order to provide a safe learning environment for the child.

Specific Challenges – Sensitivity to Taste and Smell

“Parents often report that their young child with Asperger’s syndrome has a remarkable ability to detect odours [sic] that others do not notice, and can be extremely fussy in his or her choice of food” (Atwood 282). The taste and texture of different foods and odors from those foods or from other sources can provoke a strong reaction from the Aspy child. Such sensitivities may be evidenced in a willingness to eat only a very limited diet, one without fibrous foods, for example. Olfactory sensitivity manifests itself in hypersensitivity to smells that may be experienced as pleasant by the general population. Tony Atwood (283) gives the example of a ripe peach, which may smell delicious but will be perceived as being “overly pungent” to the Aspy child. Likewise, deodorants and perfumes can be nauseating.

Implications in the Classroom – Sensitivity to Taste and Smell

Aspy students with sensitivity to taste and smell may have difficulties during the course of the school day. Exposure to a food that is repugnant or a smell that nauseates creates a distraction for that student, as well as the other students with whom he or she has contact. This sensitivity could also preclude the Aspy student from involvement in some activities or projects if the supplies necessary might trigger a negative reaction.

Interventions – Sensitivity to Taste and Smell

More often than not, Aspergian children who have sensitivity to taste and food texture will bring their own lunch to school that contains food they are able to eat without repercussion. In elementary school, a time in a child's life when treats are often brought to school, informing the parents of the other students in the classroom about food aversions may be advisable. Aspy children who experience olfactory sensitivity should avoid being around areas of the school in which cleaning chemicals are used (e.g., the cafeteria, the janitors' closet) and where supplies that have strong aromas are stored and used (e.g., paints, art supplies, markers) (Atwood 284). Activities that require the use of supplies with a pungent odor or an unpleasant texture (for students with tactile sensitivity) may require modification.

Conclusion

"I'm used to people looking at me like I'm different. It doesn't bother me...When they ask me what it's like to be autistic, I don't know how to answer. It's just how I am...It's normal. It's me" (McElwain 39). Jason McElwain's parents knew he was different; his deficits were readily apparent when he was an infant. Children with high functioning autism/Asperger's syndrome do not have that benefit. Often misdiagnosed with attention deficit disorder/attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADD/ADHD) until other Asperger's traits manifest themselves as these students enter the social and academic rigors of middle school and high school, Aspy children rely on engaged, vigilant teachers to recognize those other traits and address the individual student's needs. Asperger's syndrome is an identity, a way of being that requires added understanding on the part of educators to successfully offer a safe and nurturing learning environment for these special children.

Appendix A

Transcript of Interview with Lauran White

October 5, 2012

(To be included in the final paper)

Appendix B

Other Helpful Resources

- Ashley, Susan. *The Asperger's Answer Book: The Top 300 Questions Parents Ask*. Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks, Inc., 2007. Print.
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Valeria A. White

Instructor Sue Wood

ENG 6220 – Teaching Grammar in the Context of Writing

12 December 2013

Lesson Plan – Grammar in Context

As pointed out by Jones, Myhill, and Bailey in their article for *Reading and Writing* and as evidenced in the Common Core, “[p]ublic and political views of grammar tend strongly towards the prescriptive view, maintaining that the role of the teacher is to address grammatical accuracy in writing and eradicate error” (1245). Research of the efficacy of explicit grammar instruction in isolation cited in the texts explored this semester, what most would characterize as prescriptive, indicates that such grammar instruction is ineffective (Noden xiii-xv; Schuster xi-xix, 18; Weaver 1-3), primarily because the connection between grammar and writing is lost when instruction of the two integrally linked disciplines is disconnected. As a result of this realization, English teachers, scholars, linguists, and researchers in the last forty or more years have presented a variety of strategies and methodologies designed to improve the mastery and retention of grammar rules and guidelines among students at all levels of instruction. These include, but are not limited to, Schuster’s admonition that so-called “mythrules” are based on “pop-grammarians and hardened purists who look for their authority somewhere in the sky rather than here on earth” and are made to be broken (xii); Noden’s view of the writer as “an artist, painting images of life with specific and identifiable brush strokes” (1); Weaver’s strategy of “focus[ing] on writing and, in the process, guid[ing] students in using whatever grammatical options and features will make their writing more interesting

and more appreciated by their audience” (3); and the Killgallons’ assertion that the mimicry of model sentences from great writers will provide students with tools for “your own toolbox for composing sentences, develop[ing] your own writing style, and discover[ing] your own voice as a writer, while lastingly hearing the whispering of other voices . . .” (ix). The ultimate success of any strategy is dependent on the teacher’s knowledge of her students, their abilities, their needs, their local culture, and their backgrounds, as well as his or her ability to tailor the strategies to fit, capitalizing on the strengths and addressing the weaknesses as indicated.

Beginning with identification and remediation of status-marking errors (Hairston 796-798; Weaver 40-41, 145), this lesson plan will focus on the incorporation of grammar instruction in a ninth-grade English I autobiographical narrative writing project in two multi-period lessons. It is assumed that students at this level already have a rudimentary understanding of simple sentence structure, a grasp of basic punctuation and capitalization rules, and a relatively solid handle on subject-verb agreement. My approach will be one of layering when introducing Noden’s brush strokes and related adjectival modifiers from Weaver. Writing activities will vary in length, from a single sentence to several pages, allowing for the expansion of skills as my students “play” with their writing.

Class periods are comprised of 41 minutes, 37 minutes on Wednesdays due to early dismissal for Professional Learning Communities. Allowing for housekeeping duties (attendance, bell ringers, announcements, and other interruptions) and entertaining questions from students regarding sundry issues, I anticipate an average of 33 to 38 minutes of instruction time, depending on the day. Section sizes, of which there are three,

range from sixteen to twenty-four students and are not leveled. Students are seated in pods of three to four students each, creating groups for peer editing, brainstorming, and other pre- and post-writing activities. The ability levels of students in the ninth grade English I sections ranges widely, from students under Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and 504 Plans to those involved in the Talented and Gifted (TAG) enrichment program. This makes for a challenging teaching environment in that instruction must be scaffolded and assignments must be differentiated for each section to allow for such a wide range of abilities. The lesson plan presented here does not include such differentiation, but is designed with the average student in mind. Differentiation can be developed and implemented based on individual student needs and will vary from year to year, section to section.

Lesson One – Identifying Status-marking Errors

Time frame: Within the first week of school

Objective: Students will identify areas of grammar and usage noted as markers of status (educated vs. uneducated, intelligent vs. unintelligent) with which students are struggling.

Students will be able to remediate status-marking errors with the goal of eliminating them from their writing.

Rationale: Students leaving the hallowed halls of Clayton Ridge High School will either be entering the work force, entering the military, or entering an institution of higher learning. In each case, strong writing skills are essential for success. Employers, recruiters, and college admissions personnel, not to mention scholarship committees, will assess CRHS graduates based on their written applications, many of which will include essays. Assisting them in the elimination of status-marking errors in their writing will provide students with the best possible opportunities for success.

CCSS^{1,2}: L.9-10.1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
L.9-10.2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

Materials: Mrs. White's Mega-Amazing Grammar Inventory

Day One

Process:

1. Introduce the Grammar Inventory³ to the class. Note that this is not a graded assignment but will impact instruction for the remainder of the year.
2. Ask students to separate desks. While this is not a graded test, it is imperative that each student does his/her own work.

¹ Common Core State Standards for the State of Iowa.

² All Common Core State Standards listed are directly quoted from the Iowa Core document from the Iowa Department of Education published in 2011 and are listed on the Works Cited page as having been authored by Iowa Department of Education.

³ Adapted from Noden (244-247) and Hairston (800-806). Some questions are taken directly from these two authors, some are modified, and some are completely original.

3. Distribute Grammar Inventory. Students should complete the assignment in blue or black ink or pencil, marking each sample sentence as either correct (C) or incorrect (I). It is not necessary to mark corrections for those the students believe are incorrect.
4. Completed Grammar Inventories should be placed in the appropriate basket at the front of the room.

Days Two and Three

- Process:
1. Return students' Grammar Inventory papers, unmarked.
 2. Review each item on the Grammar Inventory. Have students mark their own papers with colored ink, indicating which items they identified correctly and which they failed to identify or identified incorrectly.
 3. Discuss each item, exploring the issues of the incorrect samples and characteristics of the correct samples.
 4. Based on identified grammatical issues, brainstorm a game plan for eliminating those errors from student writing. Possible ideas:
 - a. posters around the room highlighting focus areas;
 - b. checklist to be completed with each writing assignment, checking for those particular errors;
 - c. checklist to be completed by at least one peer editor.
 5. As a class, develop a checklist of the target problem areas for students to use for reviewing writing assignments throughout the year.
 6. Students return Grammar Inventories to appropriate basket. File in student portfolios for future reference.

*Note: Students will retake the Grammar Inventory at the end of the school year as a way to monitor progress of our efforts to eliminate these status-marking errors.

Lesson Two – Autobiographical Narrative Basic Brush Strokes

Time frame: Unit One – Fiction and Nonfiction
Halfway point – After “The Girl Who Can” by Ama Ata Aidoo

Objective: Students will write autobiographical narratives describing a real event in each writer’s life that “shares the lessons or wisdom the writer gained from the experiences” (Daniels, et al. 94).

Students will add artistic elements to their writing using the basic brush strokes as defined by Harry Noden (*Image Grammar*) in an effort to make their writing more descriptive and enjoyable for the reader, thus more effectively communicating their thoughts, ideas, and experiences.

Rationale: Students want their voices to be heard, whether written or spoken. Often, they go unheard because the manner in which students communicate does not engage their audiences. This strategy will give students the creative tools they need to communicate more effectively in the context of writing autobiographical narratives.

CCSS: L.9-10.1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
L.9-10.1b. Use various types of phrases (noun, verb, adjectival, adverbial, participial, prepositional, absolute) and clauses (independent, dependent; noun, relative, adverbial) to convey specific meanings and add variety and interest to writing or presentations.

W.9-10.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

- a. Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.
- b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
- c. Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole.
- d. Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.
- e. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.

W.9-10.4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

W.9-10.5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

W.9-10.10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Materials: *Prentice Hall Literature* (student textbooks)
 Autobiographical Narrative Instruction Sheet
 Brush Stroke Handout
 Sentence Combining Worksheet - Absolutes
 SmartBoard Notebook tool

Day One

- Process:
1. Introduce the autobiographical narrative assignment and distribute instruction sheet.
 2. Students independently brainstorm to identify three events in their lives that had a major impact on who they are as people or from which they learned a life lesson. Students should list these events, sensory words to describe details, and the impact the events had on them in a Pages document.
 3. Students briefly share their three events within their pods and discuss which might be the best to use for the autobiographical narrative

Days Two and Three

- Process:
1. Students determine which of the three events will be the subject of their autobiographical narrative.
 2. Students develop a timeline to record the sequence of events as per the instruction sheet.
 3. Students focus on writing their narratives. Narratives should be kept simple and brief to allow for the addition of detail and description using Noden's brush strokes. Provide assistance as needed, utilizing the associate where appropriate.
 4. Students should continue this activity as homework with the goal of having a rough skeleton of the event recorded by the beginning of class on Day Four.

Day Four

- Process:
1. Students review their narratives for status-marking errors.
 2. Students peer review their narratives within pods for status-marking errors. At least two peers should read and review each student's narrative.
 3. Students revise their narratives. Assist as needed.

Day Five

- Process:
1. Introduce "Painting with Participles" (using Noden's⁴ PowerPoint) and the concept of "fake verbs" from Yoder. (Use "If it looks like a duck, walks like a duck, and quacks like a duck, it's probably a duck" concept – Fake verbs look like an *-ing* verb, but they walk and quack like an adjective.) Point out examples on the Brush Strokes Packet, leading students to discover them and explaining the difference between an *-ing* verb that is functioning as a verb and one that is functioning as an adjective (participle) or a noun (gerund). Also point out that participles and participial phrases can be removed from a sentence without undermining the integrity of the sentence or its meaning because they are not the main verb (Killgallon and Killgallon 48-49). This is a good test to use when identifying participles in a sentence where the main verb is an *-ing* verb.
 2. Fake Verb Treasure Hunt – Each pod closely reads one of the texts we've read so far this year, looking for participles and participial phrases. Students share their findings and explain how they identified the "fake verbs." Texts include:
 Selection from Tillie Olsen's "I Stand Here Ironing" (TB p. 9-11)
 Selection from Elizabeth McCracken's *The Giant's House* (TB p. 12-15)
 Elizabeth McCracken's "Desiderata" (TB p. 18-21)
 Isaac Bashevis Singer's "The Washwoman" (TB p. 26-32)
 Edgar Allan Poe's "The Cask of Amontillado" (TB p. 60-68)
 Cynthia Rylant's "Checkouts" (TB p. 82-85)
 Ama Ata Aidoo's "The Girl Who Can" (TB p. 86-92)

⁴ Noden 5-6 and accompanying CD-ROM

Day Six

- Process:
1. Using a short, simple sentence, demonstrate adding a participial phrase at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end to produce different effects. (Use SMART Notebook tool to manipulate sentence parts.)
 2. Each pod composes a short, simple sentence. Then have the pods pass their short sentences clockwise around the room to the next pod, who will add a participial phrase to the sentence to make it more descriptive.
 3. Each pod shares the sentence they created. Project for all to see. Discuss choice of placement and effectiveness of description.
 4. Each pod passes the revised sentence clockwise to the next pod. Then, the next pod changes the location of the participial phrase.
 5. Each pod shares the revised sentence. Project for all to see, inserting the new sentence under the original. Discuss choice of placement and the impact of changing it's location.
 6. Students revisit their autobiographical narratives, incorporating **at least three participial phrases**. Students will color code their participial phrases and provide a key at the end of their narratives.⁵ Students should be able to support their choice of placement and the effectiveness of the description.
(Complete for homework if necessary.)

Day Seven

- Process:
1. Students submit autobiographical narrative with color-coded participial phrases via Edmodo. These will be checked and comments provided by next class.⁶
 2. Introduce absolutes using Noden's PowerPoint, the Brush Strokes Packet, and Weaver's "Absolutes, absolutely!" (106-111).

⁵ By color-coding each brushstroke, students will be able to see the combined effect of the fully implemented brush strokes on their writing. In addition, quick checks of student progress will require less time since changes to the original narrative will be immediately apparent.

⁶ In my experience, it is essential to check student understanding and progress with each step in the writing process. Any lack of understanding or failure to complete assignments should be addressed immediately.

3. Absolutes Treasure Hunt – follow the same procedure used for the Fake Verb Treasure Hunt.
4. Discuss findings.

Day Eight

- Process:
1. Post the sentences containing absolutes identified in the textbook selections in a SMART Notebook file. Divide the sentences between the pods.
 2. Students “decompose” the sentences, breaking them down into their constituent sentences.
 3. Each pod shares the broken down sentences they created. Project for all to see. Discuss choice of placement and effectiveness of absolutes. What do we notice about placement and what the absolutes modify?
 4. Pods practice the converse, using the Sentence Combining – Absolutes worksheet to practice creating sentences with absolutes from two shorter but related sentences.
 5. Pods share their results
 6. Students revisit their autobiographical narratives, incorporating **at least two absolutes**, either by combining two sentences in work they’ve already created or by creating new sentences. Students will color code their absolutes and add this to the key at the end of their narratives. Students should be able to support their choice of placement and the effectiveness of the device.
(Complete for homework if necessary.)

Day Nine

- Process:
1. Students submit autobiographical narrative with color-coded absolutes via Edmodo. These will be checked and comments provided by next class.
 2. Introduce appositives using Noden’s PowerPoint and the Brush Strokes Packet.

3. Appositive Treasure Hunt – follow the same procedure used for the Fake Verb Treasure Hunt and Absolute Treasure Hunt.
4. Discuss findings.

Day Ten

- Process:
1. Using a short, simple sentence, demonstrate adding an appositive phrase. (Use SMART Notebook tool to manipulate sentence parts.)
 2. Each pod composes a short, simple sentence. Then have the pods pass their short sentences counterclockwise around the room to the next pod, who will add an appositive phrase to the sentence.
 3. Each pod shares the sentence they revised. Project for all to see.
Discuss effectiveness of appositive and additional alternatives.
Discuss impact of moving the appositive to another location.
Can it be done? What is the effect?
 4. Students revisit their autobiographical narratives, incorporating **at least two appositives**. Students will color-code their appositives and add this to the key at the end of their narratives. Students should be able to support their choice of placement and the effectiveness of the description.
(Complete for homework if necessary.)

Day Eleven

- Process:
1. Students submit autobiographical narrative with color-coded appositives via Edmodo. These will be checked and comments provided by next class.
 2. Introduce out of order adjectives using Noden's PowerPoint and the Brush Strokes Packet.
 3. Out of Order Adjectives Treasure Hunt – follow the same procedure used for the previous treasure hunts.
 4. Discuss findings.

Day Twelve

- Process:
1. Using a short, simple sentence, demonstrate adding two adjectives to describe one of the main nouns in the sentence. Then demonstrate the effect of moving the adjectives to another location in the sentence. Discuss. (Use SMART Notebook tool to manipulate sentence parts.)
 2. Each pod composes a short, simple sentence. Then have the pods pass their short sentences clockwise around the room to the next pod, who will add at least two adjectives to describe a main noun. These adjectives should take up their traditional location, immediately preceding the noun they modify
 3. Each pod shares the sentence they revised. Project for all to see. Discuss adjective choice and possible alternatives.
 4. Each pod passes the revised sentence clockwise to the next pod. Then, the next pod moves the adjectives to an out-of-order position. Remind students to separate the adjectives from the rest of the sentence with a comma, two commas if they occur right after the subject (like a parenthetical phrase).
 5. Each pod shares the revised sentence. Project for all to see, inserting the new sentence under the original. Discuss choice of placement and the impact of changing the adjectives' location.
 6. Students revisit their autobiographical narratives, incorporating **at least two sets of out-of-order adjectives**. Students will color code their out-of-order adjectives and add this to the key at the end of their narratives. Students should be able to support their choice of placement and the effectiveness of the device. (Complete for homework if necessary.)

Day Thirteen

- Process:
1. Students submit autobiographical narrative with color-coded out-of-order adjectives via Edmodo. These will be checked and comments provided by next class.
 2. Introduce action verbs (aka strong verbs in RAFTS model) using Noden's PowerPoint and the Brush Strokes Packet.

3. Action Verb Treasure Hunt – follow the same procedure used for the previous treasure hunts.
4. Discuss findings.

Day Fourteen

- Process:
1. Using a short, simple sentence with a weak verb or a “to be” verb, demonstrate revising the verb by changing it to a stronger one. Project the dictionary.reference.com thesaurus to model using this tool as a revision aid. (Use SMART Notebook tool.)
 2. Each pod composes a sentence with a weak or “to be” verb. Then have the pods pass their short sentences counterclockwise around the room two pods. The recipient pods revise the main verb for strength/action, if possible listing at least two choices.
 3. Each pod shares the revised sentence. Project for all to see, inserting the new sentence under the original. Discuss choice of placement and the impact of changing the adjectives’ location.
 6. Students revisit their autobiographical narratives, revising **at least two weak verbs to add action/strength**. Students will color code the revised verb and include the original weak verb in parentheses following the new verb. The color coding will be added to the key at the end of the students’ narratives. Students should be able to support their choice of replacement and describe the impact their choice has on the action of the sentence.
(Complete for homework if necessary.)

Day Fifteen

- Process:
1. Students submit their autobiographical narratives with color-coded strong verbs via Edmodo. These will be checked and comments provided by next class.
 2. Students work within their pods today to review the five brush strokes. Smaller pods should either be combined or, if there is only one small pod, the members should be divided up among the larger pods to form small groups of no more than six.

3. Review the five brush strokes, referring to the Brush Strokes Packet and the Notebook files of work completed over the last two weeks.
4. Distribute the passage from *H is for Homicide* by Sue Grafton provided on the Noden CD-ROM, along with highlighters or colored pencils in yellow, blue, green, pink, and orange to each group.
5. Mission Possible: Working together as a team, locate as many brush strokes in this passage as possible, using the highlighters or colored pencils to color code the examples found.
6. Review as a class when all groups think they have found them all.
7. Exit Ticket: What do you think is the most valuable skill you have learned in this lesson?

Day Sixteen

- Process:
1. Students review, revise, and edit their autobiographical narratives, checking for fluidity and use of brush strokes.
 2. Present expectations on peer reviews and introduce Peer Review Checklist.

Days Seventeen and Eighteen⁷

- Process:
1. Distribute peer review checklists/comment sheets.
 2. Students exchange narratives with one person within their pods for peer review. Once finished, authors and reviewers confer to discuss comments.
 3. The author should then exchange narratives with one person from another pod and follow the same procedure.
 4. Students revise their autobiographical narratives and print a final copy for submission, due beginning of class on Day Eighteen (see footnote). Final submission should include
 - a. first draft
 - b. Status-marking Errors Checklists
 - c. rough draft(s)
 - d. Peer Review Checklists with comments
 - e. final draft

⁷ Depending on the day of the week on which Day Seventeen falls and depending on how thorough the peer reviews are, these activities could take more than two class periods.

5. Students write a journal entry reflecting on their experience writing an autobiographical narrative. Did incorporating the brush strokes enable them to look more deeply at their experiences? Did the life lessons they learned become more real to them through the writing process? What was their reaction to reading their classmates' papers?

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Appendix

The following pages include the student handouts—exercises, instructions, activities, rubrics, and resources—for this lesson plan. They appear in the order of the lessons. Citation information is provided on the lesson plan works cited page and, where necessary, on the handouts themselves.

Name: _____ Eng I-_____ Date: _____

Mrs. White's Mega-Amazing Grammar Inventory

Directions: Carefully read each of the following sentences. Mark each sentence as **C** if grammatically correct, **I** if grammatically incorrect, or **?** if you are unsure, placing your response in the blank provided. Errors may be in punctuation, capitalization, spelling, or usage.

- _____ 1. When the fire started, we was downtown at the movies.
- _____ 2. The principal didn't have no business accusing Josh.
- _____ 3. Amanda and I were there and saw the whole game.
- _____ 4. Each 30 second television ad shown during the Super Bowl costs sponsors on the average of \$1.9 million dollars. Partly because of the 85 to 90 million viewers.
- _____ 5. In some playing cards, Charlemagne is represented by the king of hearts, Caesar is represented by the king of diamonds, Alexander the Great is represented by the king of clubs, and King David is represented by the king of spades.
- _____ 6. While standing up for a fellow slave, a two-pound weight hit Harriet Tubman's head and missed the slave she was trying to protect.
- _____ 7. After the long day of practice, the football team sat down to rest.
- _____ 8. Using Euchre cards, bluffing played a key role.
- _____ 9. Winning fifty chess games and drawing six, the blind-folded, simultaneous chess match set a record for Grandmaster George Koltanowski.
- _____ 10. Maria Sharapova is a Wimbledon Champion, a multimillionaire, and also does very well acting.
- _____ 11. The team of volleyball players are going in a chartered bus instead of a school bus.
- _____ 12. There is hardly no problem more difficult than a geometry proof.
- _____ 13. Josie's ability to sing certainly surprised Mr. Radcliffe and I.
- _____ 14. Edgar Allan Poe did not have a steady hand, as you can see from his handwriting.
- _____ 15. Colten Rastetter booted a 45-yard field goal in the final game of the season against Iowa City-Regina but Zeke Anderegg, the biggest blocker on our team, is given much deserved credit.
- _____ 16. Mark Twain once wrote a novel about his steamboat experience on the mississippi river.

- _____ 17. Before buying the car, we set down with Mr. Brown and discussed a deal.
- _____ 18. Their here to observe how our school is doing RTI.
- _____ 19. Before Lock and Dam #10 was constructed, residents of Guttenberg were
unable to plant crops in the valley for fear of being flooded by an
overflowing river every year.
- _____ 20. Mr. Idler, our new band teacher, has experienced Germanfest, Winterfest, and
also marching in the Homecoming parade.
- _____ 21. Roger don't care if he fails this test.
- _____ 22. Having watched 24 hours of Pretty Little Liars reruns, the marathon special
finally came to an end.
- _____ 23. The Eagle mascot jumped, danced, and completed push-ups at each touchdown.
- _____ 24. Neither the captain nor the coach did their job.
- _____ 25. The bald eagle which has a wing span of up to 7 feet is easily spotted along the
rivers of Northeast Iowa. There's one in the field behind my house even as
I type this.
- _____ 26. The Garry shuttle with over 45 students were late to arrive at school.
- _____ 27. The game of flyswatter ended, having used all of the vocabulary words.
- _____ 28. The collection included books by Jane Austen Tom Clancy and Erma Bombeck.
- _____ 29. Each of the paper topics has their challenges.
- _____ 30. Meth production which has been a major problem in Clayton County is a
dangerous illegal business.
- _____ 31. Extra copies of the unit schedule will be provided for whoever needs them.
- _____ 32. He concentrated on his homework he never took a break.
- _____ 33. Mrs. Cano said, Spanish is a language that will prove beneficial to all of our
students.
- _____ 34. The three students talked among themselves and decided to stand up against
the class bully.
- _____ 35. Teachers are always impressed by his punctuality, diligence, and being
creative.
- _____ 36. The small towns like Millville are dying. One of the problems being that young
people are leaving.
- _____ 37. Our drill teams record is exceptional.
- _____ 38. There has never been no one here like that women.
- _____ 39. Him and Charlie were the last ones to make up the test.

- _____ 40. Amberlynn has went to prom every year of high school.
- _____ 41. Although Annabelle is new to Clayton Ridge she seems to be fitting right in.
- _____ 42. Good students require three qualities: motivation, diligence, and dedicated.
- _____ 43. When leaving for college, clothes suddenly become a major problem.
- _____ 44. Sheriff Tschirgi cannot predict, that meth production will diminish.
- _____ 45. Mrs. White does not think that low-cut tops, short skirts, or low-ride pants are acceptable clothing for school.
- _____ 46. Students are not the only users of the upstairs bathrooms, teachers and guests also use them from time to time.
- _____ 47. Mr. Mueller is prepared to increase fees for woodworking projects. In spite of student complaints.
- _____ 48. It is late in the semester and grades are soon due and some students are not passing.
- _____ 49. He went through a long battle. A fight against a horrible disease.
- _____ 50. These kind of errors could cost a student a scholarship for college.

Adapted from Maxine Hairston's "Questionnaire on Conventions of Grammar" (800-806) and Harry R. Noden's "The Shalersville University Occupational Inventory of Grammatical Knowledge" (244-246).

Mrs. White's Mega-Amazing Grammar Inventory
Answer Key

- | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. I | 13. I | 26. I | 38. I |
| 2. I | 14. C | 27. I | 39. I |
| 3. C | 15. I | 28. I | 40. I |
| 4. I | 16. I | 29. I | 41. I |
| 5. I | 17. I | 30. I | 42. I |
| 6. I | 18. I | 31. I | 43. C |
| 7. C | 19. C | 32. I | 44. I |
| 8. I | 20. I | 33. I | 45. C |
| 9. I | 21. I | 34. C | 46. I |
| 10. I | 22. I | 35. I | 47. I |
| 11. I | 23. C | 36. I | 48. I |
| 12. I | 24. I | 37. I | 49. I |
| | 25. I | | 50. I |

English I – Freshman English Autobiographical Narrative Instructions

Writers write best what they know, and what can anyone know better than his or her own life experiences. We've seen this in two of the selections we've read so far this year: Elizabeth McCracken's "Desiderata," and Isaac Bashevis Singer's "The Washwoman."

Our first major writing assignment of the year is an opportunity for you to write what you know: an autobiographical narrative. We will be following several steps as a class during the writing process, all of which are designed to help you eat this "elephant" one bite at a time.

As always, I'm available to answer any questions you might have and/or give you some extra assistance if you feel you need it. Check my schedule by my classroom door for my availability.

Day One Steps to Success:

1. Open your AutoNarrNotes template from my e-mail and **rename as**

Eng I-__ LastName AutoNarrNotes.

2. Brainstorm events in your life that have had a great impact on you or from which you have learned a valuable life lesson. List the three most impactful events in your AutoNarrNotes file. (These do not need to be in complete sentences.) **Save your file.**

3. Close your eyes and put yourself back into the event. Ask yourself, "What did I see? What did I hear? What did I smell? What did I feel? What did I taste?" Next to each sense listed in the AutoNarrNotes, note details that you can use in your narrative. (For example, when we went to the kennel to pick out a beagle puppy for our daughters for Christmas, I distinctly remember the sharp, burning smell of dog waste and the sound of the puppies' high-pitched barks as they rough-housed in the straw. I also remember Daisy's warm little puppy body and the feel of her baby-fine fur after her first bath. But enough about me... .) When you've jotted down all the details you can think of, **save your file.**

4. What important life lesson did you learn from these events? Add this information to your AutoNarrNotes document.

5. Share your three events, along with your sensory data and life lessons, with your podmates. Discuss which might be the most effective event to use for your autobiographical narrative. Then sleep on it.

Days Two and Three Steps to Success:

6. Decide which event you will use for your autobiographical narrative.
7. Develop a timeline. You may use your computer or the 11x17 paper and rulers available on the front supply table. Start with the first event on the left end of your timeline and work your way to the right, recording the events in the order in which they occurred and noting how important each event was to your overall story.
8. Under each event, list sensory details specific to that part of the story.
9. Open a new *Pages* file and begin writing your autobiographical narrative. Save your file as:

Eng I-__ LastName AutoNarr.

Save frequently as you type. Your rough draft will be due on Day Four.

Day Four Steps to Success:

10. Print one copy of your autobiographical narrative rough draft. Using the checklist we developed at the beginning of the year, check for status-marking errors.
11. Trade papers with a podmate and review each other's narratives, again checking for those status-marking errors. Remember to initial at the end of the narrative to indicate that you've reviewed it. Then trade papers with another podmate and review again.
12. Return papers to their authors. Revise your narrative to eliminate status-marking errors, and **save your file**. (The reason we're doing this first is so those errors are not a distraction to us when we start really having fun with your narrative.) Place your marked up copy of your narrative in your binder. You will be submitting this with your final copy at the end of this project.

Now, it's time to play with our wonderfully versatile language! Over the course of the next several class periods, we will be exploring what Harry Noden calls "brush strokes," devices you can use to make your writing more descriptive. Why do we want to do this? Every writer desires to make a connection with the person reading his or her work. By revising our work to create more vivid pictures, we can help the reader experience, at least in small part, what we experienced. As we explore the five basic brushstrokes, you will have an opportunity to incorporate them into your own writing.

Name: _____ Eng I-_____

English I – Freshman English
Autobiographical Narrative
Notes⁸

Event #1:

Sight:

Hearing:

Smell:

Taste:

Touch:

Lesson Learned:

Event #2:

Sight:

Hearing:

Smell:

Taste:

Touch:

Lesson Learned:

Event #3

Sight:

Hearing:

Smell:

Taste:

Touch:

Lesson Learned:

⁸ This template will be e-mailed to students in .pages format. Students will download the template and save it in their English I folders, adding information when instructed.

English I – Freshman English Autobiographical Narrative Rubric

Name: _____ Eng I- _____

_____/15	All project parts are included (first draft, completed Status-marking Error Checklists, rough draft(s), Peer Review Checklists, final draft). Project is presented in a neat and orderly manner.
_____/10	Target status-marking errors have been identified and addressed.
_____/15	Life lesson learned relates to the rest of the narrative
	Five basic brush strokes are effectively added and highlighted.
_____/15	At least three (3) participles/participial phrases
_____/10	At least two (2) absolutes
_____/10	At least two (2) appositives
_____/10	At least two (2) sets of out of order adjectives
_____/15	At least three (3) weak verbs replaced with action verbs
_____/100	TOTAL SCORE

COMMENTS:

Reviewer: _____

Date: _____

English I – Freshman English Autobiographical Narrative Project Brush Strokes Packet

Participles/Participial Phrases – *These are –ing verbs, often placed at the beginning or end of a sentence, which act like adjectives. For example, in the sentence “Yawning and stretching, the cat awoke from its long nap,” yawning and stretching are –ing verbs that describe cat. They are verbs functioning as adjectives.*

There he would stand, his arm around the fat pole, staring and wondering. (*To Kill a Mockingbird* 8)

I have dinner that night in my room, ordering an outrageous number of delicacies, eating myself sick, and then taking out my anger at Haymitch, at the Hunger Games, at every living being in the Capitol by smashing dishes around my room. (*The Hunger Games* 118)

My proximity to the Careers’ camp sharpens my senses, and the closer I get to them, the more guarded I am, pausing frequently to listen for unnatural sounds, an arrow already fitted into the string of my bow. (*The Hunger Games* 214)

Because men, groping in the Arctic darkness, had found a yellow metal, and because steamship transportation companies were booming the find, thousands of men were rushing into the Northland. (*The Call of the Wild* 1)

There he lay for the remainder of the weary night, nursing his wrath and wounded pride...Several times during the night he sprang to his feet when the shed door rattled open, expecting to see the Judge, or the boys at least. (*The Call of the Wild* 6)

When he flung himself against the bars, quivering and frothing, they laughed at him and taunted him. (*The Call of the Wild* 12)

Since the beginning of winter they had travelled eighteen hundred miles, dragging sleds the whole weary distance; and eighteen hundred miles will tell upon the life of the toughest. Buck stood it, keeping his mates up to their work and maintaining discipline, though he too was very tired. (*The Call of the Wild* 48)

“This has never happened to me before!” said Hykrion, twirling his black moustache. “I can’t believe my eyes!” grumbled Hysbald, stalking through the ruins on his long, thin legs. (*The Neverending Story* 272)

That night, crouched in the darkness, eavesdropping on my parents’ discussion, I felt truly alone for the first time in my life. The only two people in the world who had been on my side through this whole mess no longer believed in me. (*Please Stop Laughing at Me...* 47)

Matthias chuckled quietly and shook his head in admiration. He watched twelve rats falling over each other and bumping heads as they chased his friend around the common land. Every now and then Basil would pause and strike his “Noble Stag” attitude, letting the rats get to within a whisker of him. Nimble he would kick out with his long powerful legs and send them all sprawling in a heap. Adding insult to injury, he danced around the fallen sentries, sprinkling them with daisies until they arose, cursing him, to continue the chase. (*Redwall* 90)

Record examples you find and/or create, highlighting the participles/participial phrases:

[illegible]

Appositives – These are noun phrases that act as adjectives that modify the noun that comes immediately before the appositive, adding more detail or a second image.

I maintain that the Ewells started it all, but Jem, **who was four years my senior**, said it started long before that. (*To Kill a Mockingbird* 3)

All we had was Simon Finch, a fur-trapping apothecary from Cornwall whose piety was exceeded only by his stinginess. (*To Kill a Mockingbird* 3)

The Radleys, welcome anywhere in town, kept to themselves, a predilection unforgivable in Maycomb. (*To Kill a Mockingbird* 9)

The four-quarter troll, who up until then had been keeping his sleepy face foremost, now switched to the merry one. (*The Neverending Story* 278)

The bus driver, a robust older woman in her sixties, welcomed me warmly. “You must be Jodee Blanco, the new sixth-grader,” she said, smiling. (*Please Stop Laughing at Me...* 48)

Cluny was a bilge rat; the biggest, most savage rodent that ever jumped from ship to shore. (*Redwall* 17)

Record examples you find and/or create, highlighting the appositives:

[illegible]

Practice Passage – from *The Neverending Story*

If he went home now, his father would come out of his lab in a white smock, possibly holding a plaster cast, and he would ask: “Home so soon?” “Yes,” Bastian would answer. “No school today?” – He saw his father’s quiet, sad face, and he knew he couldn’t possibly lie to him. Much less could he tell him the truth. No, the only thing left for him was to go away somewhere. Far, far away. His father must never find out that his son was a thief. And maybe he wouldn’t even notice that Bastian wasn’t there anymore. Bastian found this thought almost comforting.

He had stopped running. Walking slowly, he saw the schoolhouse at the end of the street. Without thinking, he was taking his usual route to school. He passed a few people here and there, yet the street seemed deserted. But to a schoolboy arriving very, very late, the world around the schoolhouse always seems to have gone dead. At every step he felt the fear rising within him. Under the best of circumstances he was afraid of school, the place of his daily defeats, afraid of his teachers, who gently appealed to his conscience or made him the butt of their rages, afraid of the other children, who made fun of him and never missed a chance to show him how clumsy and defenseless he was. He had always thought of his school years as a prison term with no end in sight, a misery that would continue until he grew up, something he would just have to live through.

Name: _____ Eng I-_____

English I – Freshman English
Autobiographical Narrative
Sentence Combining Exercise - Absolutes

On a separate sheet of notebook paper, combine the following sentence pairs into a single sentence by revising one of the sentences into an absolute. For each sentence, provide two possible combinations.

Example:

Sentence A – Kenny took aim at the 14-point buck.

Sentence B – His adrenaline was pumping and his nerves were jangling.

Combined – **Adrenaline pumping, nerves jangling**, Kenny took aim at the 14-point buck.

Alternate 1 – Kenny took aim at the 14-point buck, **adrenaline pumping, nerves jangling**.

Alternate 2 – Kenny, **adrenaline pumping, nerves jangling**, took aim at the 14-point buck.

1. A. Daisy ignored all my calls to come back.
 B. Her nose was sniffing and her tail was wagging.

2. A. The riverboat steamed into the lock.
 B. Its bell rang merrily, its horn tooted jauntily, and its passengers waved happily.

3. A. The eagle soared over the bluff's rocky outcropping.
 B. Its wings were stretched and its talons were carrying a fat fish.

4. A. The archer drew her bow to its limit.
 B. Her brow was sweating and her muscles were quivering.

5. A. Miss Sandy came staggering out of the walk-in freezer.
 B. Her arms were loaded with frozen corndog bites and her breath came out in steamy puffs.

6. A. Mrs. White slogged through the snowstorm to get to school.
 B. Her lights dimmed because of the accumulating snow and her wipers struggled to keep up with the blizzard.

7. A. Mr. Radcliffe reveled in the choir's harmonious sound.
 B. He closed his eyes in pleasure.

8. A. Gabe fell asleep while watching a VeggieTales movie in Mrs. White's room after school yesterday.
 B. His eyes were drooping and his energy disappeared.

English I – Freshman English

Autobiographical Narrative

Peer Review Checklist & Comments

Author's Name: _____

Reviewer's Name: _____

- _____ 1. Status-marking errors have been identified and corrected.
- _____ 2. At least three (3) participles/participial phrases are included and have been highlighted.
- _____ 3. At least two (2) absolutes are included and have been highlighted.
- _____ 4. At least two (2) appositives are included and have been highlighted.
- _____ 5. At least two (2) sets of out of order adjectives are included and have been highlighted.
- _____ 6. At least three (3) weak verbs have been replaced with action/strong verbs and have been highlighted.
- Y N 7. I was able to see the action of the narrative in my head as I was reading.
- Y N 8. The descriptions using the brush strokes were vivid, so I could imagine experiencing what the author experienced.
- Y N 9. The lesson learned is presented clearly and is related to the events in the narrative.

Comments:

(Remember, include two positive comments for every suggestion!)

English I – Freshman English

Autobiographical Narrative

Pulling the Brush Strokes All Together

Working as a team in your pod or small group, identify as many of the brush strokes as you can in the following excerpt from Sue Grafton's *H is for Homicide*. Underline or highlight each instance of a brush stroke using the following color key.

participle/participial phrase -	yellow
absolute -	blue
appositive -	green
adjective out of order -	pink
action/strong verbs -	orange

Bibiana got to her feet, groping blindly for her handbag. Too late. The couple converged on us. The blond woman placed a firm hand on my shoulder, effectively nailing me to the chair. The guy pressed a Browning forty-five against Bibiana's spine. I saw Jimmy reach for his thirty-eight, but the guy shook his head.

"I got the option to smoke her if there is any problem whatsoever. It's your choice." Bibiana picked up her jacket and her handbag. Jimmy and I watched helplessly as the three of them moved toward the back door. The minute they were out of sight, he bolted for the front, attracting startled looks from all the patrons he bumped in passing. The front door banged open, and he was gone. I threw some money on the table and headed after him, elbows pumping, gun drawn. I ran after him, plowing straight through a puddle on the walk. . . .

I reached the intersection moments after Jimmy did. A Ford sedan shot out of the alley three doors down. Jimmy, as if moving in slow motion, took a stance and fired. The back window shattered. He fired again. The right rear tire blew and the Ford took a sudden fishtailing detour into a van parked at the curb. The Ford's front bumper clattered to the pavement and glass fragments showered down with a delicate tinkling. The front doors of the Ford seem to open simultaneously. The blond woman emerged from the passenger side; the big guy, from the driver's side, taking cover behind the yawning car door as he turned and took aim. I hit the pavement and flattened myself in the shelter of a line of trash cans. The ensuing shots sounded like kernels of popcorn in a lidded sauce

pan. I heard three more shots fired in succession, one of them plowing in the pavement near my head. I feared for Jimmy and felt a sixth sense of dread for Bibiana, too. Someone was running. At least somebody was alive. I just wasn't sure who. I heard the footsteps fade. Then silence.

I pulled myself up onto my hands and knees and scrambled toward a parked car, peering over the hood. Jimmy was standing across the street. There was no sign of the blond. Bibiana, apparently unhurt, clung to the Ford's rear fender and wept hysterically. I approached her with care, wondering where the guy in the plaid sport coat had gone. I could hear panting, a labored moan that suggested both anguish and extreme effort. On the far side of the Ford, I caught sight of him, dragging himself along the sidewalk, blood streaming down the left side of his face from a head wound. He seemed completely focused on the journey, determined to escape, moving with the same haphazard of a crawling baby, limbs occasionally working at cross purposes. He laid his head down, resting for a moment before he inched forward again. A crowd had collected like the spectators at the finish of a marathon. No one cheered. A woman moved toward the injured man and dropped down beside him, reaching out tentatively. At her touch, a deep howl seemed to rise from him, guttural and pain filled. There is no sound so terrible as a man's sorrow for his own death. (39-40)

Citation:

Grafton, Sue. *H is for Homicide*. New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1992. Print.
Selection reprinted in Noden, Harry R. *Image Grammar: Teaching Grammar as Part of the Writing Process*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2011. Print.

Instructor Comments

Essay #2 – Lesson Plan - Grammar in Context

Dr Sue Carter Wood
Mon 3/2/2015 8:16 PM
To: Valeria Ann White;
Cc: Andrea Marie Riley-Mukavetz;

Hi Valeria,

Well that was a long couple of weeks with a job search and some other things going on. I had the joy of re-reading your project this week and thought to send comments along--though please know that my words are strictly of encouragement and praise for a well thought out and planned project that I am delighted to know you have been able to use with your own students.

Introduction/Rationale: You go a great job of placing your project in the context of your integrated/contextual approach to teaching grammar as productive, using the sources and research to build the credibility of your approach. You also provide a useful context for your teaching context that helps me appreciate your focus on status-marking errors along with developing productive abilities through Noden's brush strokes.

Status-marking Errors--Lesson One, Grammar Inventory, and the return to this concept at strategic points through lesson Two: Nice, smart, and well developed. Your lesson objectives and rationale seem to come from a teacher who knows her students and community well. I love the way you set things up so that the visual elements of the classroom can serve as references during the school year for these errors.

Lesson Two--Narrative & Brush Strokes: Nice job throughout these lessons, Valeria, in drawing from Noden's materials and fitting them to the needs and purposes of your students and your classroom. I really appreciate the sequencing of tasks and the clear directions you provide for students to follow. Similarly, I like how you have students do treasure hunts through previously read literature--selected by you--to find examples of the stylistic structures they are studying. It is a cool way to teach re-reading along with re-vision. Likewise how you move between pod/group and individual work, scaffolding so that the task grows more sophisticated yet students are well prepared to move forward.

Attached student handouts: Ditto to my comments above. I can see how the handouts and worksheets keep the lesson focused for your 9th graders. I also love that you picked up on Noden's excerpt from Sue Grafton's H is for Homicide novel too--a nice choice!

All in all, your project is a more detailed and developed example of the very fine work you did throughout the course, demonstrating your intellectual and creative energies in

the course. I was delighted to learn alongside you, and to see you use the course project to advance your own teaching development.

All best,

Sue

Sue Carter Wood
Director, Rhetoric & Writing Doctoral Program
Associate Professor of Rhetoric and Writing
Department of English
Bowling Green, OH 43403
419-372-8107

Valeria Ann White
Mon 3/2/2015 10:09 PM
Sent Items
To: Dr Sue Carter Wood;
Cc: Andrea Marie Riley-Mukavetz

Hello, Sue! It is wonderful to hear from you! Thank you so much for taking the time to re-read my project and for your encouraging comments. I look forward to incorporating them into my portfolio.

I did take some time last week to dig back into the lesson plan and added some formative assessments along the way, using color coding as a way to spot check each brush stroke in the students' narratives. (My students do most of their writing on computers.) I do this when I teach the material in my own classes, so revising the lesson plan accordingly made sense.

I trust your job search is going well and that the "other things going on" have worked out positively.

Warmest regards,

Valeria

Dr Sue Carter Wood
Mon 3/2/2015 10:13 PM

Hi Valeria,

Adding the color coding is something I do myself when teaching my ugrad grammar class in a computer lab--it's such a great way to modify diagramming in a user-friendly and visually oriented world. That's a nice touch to add.

All best as you finish your portfolio--and congratulations on very soon receiving your Master's.

Warmly,

Sue

Sue Carter Wood
Director, Rhetoric & Writing Doctoral Program
Associate Professor of Rhetoric and Writing
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Valeria A. White

Instructor Sue Wood

ENG 6220 – Teaching Grammar in the Context of Writing

12 December 2013

Lesson Plan – Grammar in Context

As pointed out by Jones, Myhill, and Bailey in their article for *Reading and Writing* and as evidenced in the Common Core, “[p]ublic and political views of grammar tend strongly towards the prescriptive view, maintaining that the role of the teacher is to address grammatical accuracy in writing and eradicate error” (1245). Research of the efficacy of explicit grammar instruction in isolation cited in the texts explored this semester, what most would characterize as prescriptive, indicates that such grammar instruction is ineffective (Noden xiii-xv; Schuster xi-xix, 18; Weaver 1-3), primarily because the connection between grammar and writing is lost when instruction of the two integrally linked disciplines is disconnected. As a result of this realization, English teachers, scholars, linguists, and researchers in the last forty or more years have presented a variety of strategies and methodologies designed to improve the mastery and retention of grammar rules and guidelines among students at all levels of instruction. These include, but are not limited to, Schuster’s admonition that so-called “mythrules” are based on “pop-grammarians and hardened purists who look for their authority somewhere in the sky rather than here on earth” and are made to be broken (xii); Noden’s view of the writer as “an artist, painting images of life with specific and identifiable brush strokes” (1); Weaver’s strategy of “focus[ing] on writing and, in the process, guid[ing] students in using whatever grammatical options and features will make their writing more interesting

and more appreciated by their audience” (3); and the Killgallons’ assertion that the mimicry of model sentences from great writers will provide students with tools for “your own toolbox for composing sentences, develop[ing] your own writing style, and discover[ing] your own voice as a writer, while lastingly hearing the whispering of other voices . . .” (ix). The ultimate success of any of these strategies is dependent on the teacher’s knowledge of her students, their abilities, their needs, their local culture, and their backgrounds, as well as his or her ability to tailor the strategies to fit, capitalizing on the strengths and addressing the weaknesses as indicated.

Beginning with identification and remediation of status-marking errors (Hairston 796-798; Weaver 40-41, 145), this lesson plan will focus on the incorporation of grammar instruction in a ninth-grade English I autobiographical narrative writing project in two multi-period lessons. It is assumed that students at this level already have a rudimentary understanding of simple sentence structure, a grasp of basic punctuation and capitalization rules, and a relatively solid handle on subject-verb agreement. My approach will be one of layering when introducing Noden’s brush strokes and related adjectival modifiers from Weaver. Writing activities will vary in length, from a single sentence to several pages, allowing for the expansion of skills as my students “play” with their writing.

Class periods are comprised of 41 minutes, 37 minutes on Wednesdays due to early dismissal for Professional Learning Communities. Allowing for housekeeping duties (attendance, bell ringers, announcements, and other interruptions) and entertaining questions from students regarding sundry issues, I anticipate an average of 33 to 38 minutes of instruction time, depending on the day. Section sizes, of which there are three,

range from sixteen to twenty-four students and are not leveled. Students are seated in pods of three to four students each, creating groups for peer editing, brainstorming, and other pre- and post-writing activities. The ability levels of students in the ninth grade English I sections ranges widely, from students under Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and 504 Plans to those involved in the Talented and Gifted (TAG) enrichment program. This makes for a challenging teaching environment in that instruction must be scaffolded and assignments must be differentiated for each section to allow for such a wide range of abilities. The lesson plan presented here does not include such differentiation, but is designed with the average student in mind.

Lesson One – Identifying Status-marking Errors

Time frame: Within the first week of school

Objective: Students will identify areas of grammar and usage noted as markers of status (educated vs. uneducated, intelligent vs. unintelligent) with which students are struggling.

Students will be able to remediate status-marking errors with the goal of eliminating them from their writing.

Rationale: Students leaving the hallowed halls of Clayton Ridge High School will either be entering the work force, entering the military, or entering an institution of higher learning. In each case, strong writing skills are essential for success. Employers, recruiters, and college admissions personnel, not to mention scholarship committees, will assess CRHS graduates based on their written applications, many of which will include essays. Assisting them in the elimination of status-marking errors in their writing will provide students with the best possible opportunities for success.

CCSS^{9,10}: L.9-10.1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
L.9-10.2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

Materials: Mrs. White's Mega-Amazing Grammar Inventory

Day One

Process: 1. Introduce the Grammar Inventory¹¹ to the class. Note that this is not a graded assignment but will impact instruction for the remainder of the year.

2. Ask students to separate desks. While this is not a graded test, it is imperative that each student does his/her own work.

⁹ Common Core State Standards for the State of Iowa.

¹⁰ All Common Core State Standards listed are directly quoted from the Iowa Core document from the Iowa Department of Education published in 2011 and are listed on the Works Cited page as having been authored by Iowa Department of Education.

¹¹ Adapted from Noden (244-247) and Hairston (800-806). Some questions are taken directly from these two authors, some are modified, and some are completely original.

3. Distribute Grammar Inventory. Students should complete the assignment in blue or black ink or pencil, marking each sample sentence as either correct (C) or incorrect (I). It is not necessary to mark corrections for those the students believe are incorrect.
4. Completed Grammar Inventories should be placed in the appropriate basket at the front of the room.

Days Two and Three

- Process:
1. Return students' Grammar Inventory papers, unmarked.
 2. Review each item on the Grammar Inventory. Have students mark their own papers with colored ink, indicating which items they identified correctly and which they identified incorrectly.
 3. Discuss each item, exploring the issues of the incorrect samples and characteristics of the correct samples.
 4. Based on identified grammatical issues, brainstorm a game plan for eliminating those errors from student writing. Possible ideas:
 - a. posters around the room highlighting focus areas;
 - b. checklist to be completed with each writing assignment, checking for those particular errors;
 - c. checklist to be completed by at least one peer editor.
 5. As a class, develop a checklist of the target problem areas for students to use for reviewing writing assignments throughout the year.
 6. Students return Grammar Inventories to appropriate basket. File in student portfolios for future reference.

*Note: Students will retake the Grammar Inventory at the end of the school year as a way to monitor progress of our efforts to eliminate these status-marking errors.

Lesson Two – Autobiographical Narrative

Basic Brush Strokes

Time frame: Unit One – Fiction and Nonfiction
 Halfway point – After “The Girl Who Can” by Ama Ata Aidoo

Objective: Students will write autobiographical narratives describing a real event in each writer’s life that “shares the lessons or wisdom the writer gained from the experiences” (Daniels, et al. 94).

Students will add artistic elements to their writing using the basic brush strokes as defined by Harry Noden (*Image Grammar*) in an effort to make their writing more descriptive and enjoyable for the reader, thus more effectively communicating their thoughts, ideas, and experiences.

Rationale: Students want their voices to be heard, whether written or spoken. Often, they go unheard because the manner in which students communicate does not engage their audiences. This strategy will give students the creative tools they need to communicate more effectively in the context of writing autobiographical narratives.

CCSS: L.9-10.1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

L.9-10.1b. Use various types of phrases (noun, verb, adjectival, adverbial, participial, prepositional, absolute) and clauses (independent, dependent; noun, relative, adverbial) to convey specific meanings and add variety and interest to writing or presentations.

W.9-10.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

- a. Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.
- b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
- c. Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole.
- d. Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.
- e. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.

W.9-10.4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

W.9-10.5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

W.9-10.10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Materials: *Prentice Hall Literature* (student textbooks)
 Autobiographical Narrative Instruction Sheet
 Brush Stroke Handout (Participle, Absolute, Appositive, Adjectives Out of Order, and Action Verbs)
 Sentence Combining Worksheet - Absolutes
 SmartBoard and Notebook tool

Day One

- Process:
1. Introduce the autobiographical narrative assignment and distribute instruction sheet.
 2. Students independently brainstorm to identify three events in their lives that had a major impact on who they are as people or from which they learned a life lesson. Students should list these events, sensory words to describe details, and the impact the events had on them in a Pages document.
 3. Students briefly share their three events within their pods and discuss which might be the best to use for the autobiographical narrative

Days Two and Three

- Process:
1. Students determine which of the three events will be the subject of their autobiographical narrative.
 2. Students develop a timeline to record the sequence of events as per the instruction sheet.
 3. Students focus on writing their narratives. Provide assistance as needed, utilizing the associate where appropriate.
 4. Students should continue this activity as homework with the goal of having a rough skeleton of the event recorded by the beginning of class on Day Four.

Day Four

- Process:
1. Students review their narratives for status-marking errors.
 2. Students peer review their narratives within pods for status-marking errors. At least two peers should read and review each student's narrative.
 3. Students revise their narratives. Assist as needed.

Day Five

- Process:
and
1. Introduce "Painting with Participles" (using Noden's¹² PowerPoint)

the concept of "fake verbs" from Yoder. (Use "If it looks like a duck, walks like a duck, and quacks like a duck, it's probably a duck" concept – Fake verbs look like an *-ing* verb, but they walk and quack like an adjective.) Point out examples on the Brush Strokes Packet, leading students to discover them and explaining the difference between an *-ing* verb that is functioning as a verb and one that is functioning as an adjective (participle) or a noun (gerund). Also point out that participles and participial phrases can be removed from a sentence without undermining the integrity of the sentence or its meaning because they are not the main verb (Killgallon and Killgallon 48-49). This is a good test to use when identifying participles in a sentence where the main verb is an *-ing* verb.
 2. Fake Verb Treasure Hunt – Each pod closely reads one of the texts we've read so far this year, looking for participles and participial phrases. Students share their findings and explain how they identified the "fake verbs." Texts include:

Selection from Tillie Olsen's "I Stand Here Ironing" (TB p. 9-11)
 Selection from Elizabeth McCracken's *The Giant's House* (TB p. 12-15)
 Elizabeth McCracken's "Desiderata" (TB p. 18-21)
 Isaac Bashevis Singer's "The Washwoman" (TB p. 26-32)
 Edgar Allan Poe's "The Cask of Amontillado" (TB p. 60-68)
 Cynthia Rylant's "Checkouts" (TB p. 82-85)
 Ama Ata Aidoo's "The Girl Who Can" (TB p. 86-92)

¹² Noden 5-6 and accompanying CD-ROM

Day Six

- Process:
1. Using a short, simple sentence, demonstrate adding a participial phrase at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end to produce different effects. (Use SMART Notebook tool to manipulate sentence parts.)
 2. Each pod composes a short, simple sentence. Then have the pods pass their short sentences clockwise around the room to the next pod, who will add a participial phrase to the sentence to make it more descriptive.
 3. Each pod shares the sentence they created. Project for all to see. Discuss choice of placement and effectiveness of description.
 4. Each pod passes the revised sentence clockwise to the next pod. Then, the next pod changes the location of the participial phrase.
 5. Each pod shares the revised sentence. Project for all to see, inserting the new sentence under the original. Discuss choice of placement and the impact of changing it's location.
 6. Students revisit their autobiographical narratives, incorporating **at least three participial phrases**. Students should be able to support their choice of placement and the effectiveness of the description. (Complete for homework if necessary.)

Day Seven

- Process:
1. Introduce absolutes using Noden's PowerPoint, the Brush Strokes Packet, and Weaver's "Absolutes, absolutely!" (106-111).
 2. Absolutes Treasure Hunt – follow the same procedure used for the Fake Verb Treasure Hunt.
 3. Discuss findings.

Day Eight

- Process:
1. Post the sentences containing absolutes identified in the textbook selections in a SMART Notebook file. Divide the sentences between the pods.
 2. Students "decompose" the sentences, breaking them down into their constituent sentences.

3. Each pod shares the broken down sentences they created. Project for all to see. Discuss choice of placement and effectiveness of absolutes. What do we notice about placement and what the absolutes modify?
4. Pods practice the converse, using the Sentence Combining – Absolutes worksheet to practice creating sentences with absolutes from two shorter but related sentences.
5. Pods share their results
6. Students revisit their autobiographical narratives, incorporating **at least two absolutes**, either by combining two sentences in work they've already creating or by creating new sentences. Students should be able to support their choice of placement and the effectiveness of the device. (Complete for homework if necessary.)

Day Nine

- Process:
1. Introduce appositives using Noden's PowerPoint and the Brush Strokes Packet.
 2. Appositive Treasure Hunt – follow the same procedure used for the Fake Verb Treasure Hunt and Absolute Treasure Hunt.
 3. Discuss findings.

Day Ten

- Process:
1. Using a short, simple sentence, demonstrate adding an appositive phrase. (Use SMART Notebook tool to manipulate sentence parts.)
 2. Each pod composes a short, simple sentence. Then have the pods pass their short sentences counterclockwise around the room to the next pod, who will add an appositive phrase to the sentence.
 3. Each pod shares the sentence they revised. Project for all to see. Discuss effectiveness of appositive and additional alternatives. Discuss impact of moving the appositive to another location. Can it be done? What is the effect?

4. Students revisit their autobiographical narratives, incorporating **at least two appositives**. Students should be able to support their choice of placement and the effectiveness of the description.
(Complete for homework if necessary.)

Day Eleven

- Process:
1. Introduce out of order adjectives using Noden's PowerPoint and the Brush Strokes Packet.
 2. Out of Order Adjectives Treasure Hunt – follow the same procedure used for the previous treasure hunts.
 3. Discuss findings.

Day Twelve

- Process:
1. Using a short, simple sentence, demonstrate adding two adjectives to describe one of the main nouns in the sentence. Then demonstrate the effect of moving the adjectives to another location in the sentence. Discuss. (Use SMART Notebook tool to manipulate sentence parts.)
 2. Each pod composes a short, simple sentence. Then have the pods pass their short sentences clockwise around the room to the next pod, who will add at least two adjectives to describe a main noun. These adjectives should take up their traditional location, immediately preceding the noun they modify
 3. Each pod shares the sentence they revised. Project for all to see. Discuss adjective choice and possible alternatives.
 4. Each pod passes the revised sentence clockwise to the next pod. Then, the next pod moves the adjectives to an out of order position. Remind students to separate the adjectives from the rest of the sentence with a comma, two commas if they occur right after the subject (like a parenthetical phrase).
 5. Each pod shares the revised sentence. Project for all to see, inserting the new sentence under the original. Discuss choice of placement and the impact of changing the adjectives' location.

6. Students revisit their autobiographical narratives, incorporating **at least two sets of out of order adjectives**. Students should be able to support their choice of placement and the effectiveness of the device.
(Complete for homework if necessary.)

Day Thirteen

- Process:
1. Introduce action verbs (aka strong verbs in RAFTS model) using Noden's PowerPoint and the Brush Strokes Packet.
 2. Action Verb Treasure Hunt – follow the same procedure used for the previous treasure hunts.
 3. Discuss findings.

Day Fourteen

- Process:
1. Using a short, simple sentence with a weak verb or a “to be” verb, demonstrate revising the verb by changing it to a stronger one. Project the dictionary.reference.com thesaurus to model using this tool as a revision aid. (Use SMART Notebook tool.)
 2. Each pod composes a sentence with a weak or “to be” verb. Then have the pods pass their short sentences counterclockwise around the room two pods. The recipient pods revise the main verb for strength/action, if possible listing at least two choices.
 3. Each pod shares the revised sentence. Project for all to see, inserting the new sentence under the original. Discuss choice of placement and the impact of changing the adjectives' location.
 6. Students revisit their autobiographical narratives, revising **at least two weak verbs to add action/strength**. Students should be able to support their choice of replacement and describe the impact their choice has on the action of the sentence.
(Complete for homework if necessary.)

Day Fifteen

- Process:
1. Students work within their pods today to review the five brush strokes. Smaller pods should either be combined or, if there is only one small pod, the members should be divided up among the larger pods to form small groups of no more than six.

2. Review the five brush strokes, referring to the Brush Strokes Packet and the Notebook files of work completed over the last two weeks.
3. Distribute the passage from *H is for Homicide* by Sue Grafton provided on the Noden CD-ROM, along with highlighters or colored pencils in five different colors to each group.
4. Mission Possible: Working together as a team, locate as many brush strokes in this passage as possible, using the highlighters or colored pencils to color code the examples found.
5. Review as a class when all groups think they have found them all.
6. Exit Ticket: What do you think is the most valuable skill you have learned in this lesson?

Day Sixteen

- Process:
1. Students review, revise, and edit their autobiographical narratives, checking for fluidity and use of brush strokes.
 2. Present expectations on peer reviews and introduce Peer Review Checklist.

Days Seventeen and Eighteen¹³

- Process:
1. Distribute peer review checklists/comment sheets.
 2. Students exchange narratives with one person within their pods for peer review. Once finished, authors and reviewers confer to discuss comments.
 3. The author should then exchange narratives with one person from another pod and follow the same procedure.
 4. Students revise their autobiographical narratives and print a final copy for submission, due beginning of class on Day Eighteen (see footnote). Final submission should include
 - a. first draft
 - b. Status-marking Errors Checklists
 - c. rough draft(s)
 - d. Peer Review Checklists with comments

¹³ Depending on the day of the week on which Day Seventeen falls and depending on how thorough the peer reviews are, these activities could take more than two class periods.

e. final draft

5. Students write a journal entry reflecting on their experience writing an autobiographical narrative. Did incorporating the brush strokes enable them to look more deeply at their experiences? Did the life lessons they learned become more real to them through the writing process? What was their reaction to reading their classmates' papers?

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Appendix

The following pages include the student handouts—exercises, instructions, activities, rubrics, and resources—for this lesson plan. They appear in the order of the lessons. Citation information is provided on the lesson plan works cited page and, where necessary, on the handouts themselves.

Name: _____ Eng I-____ Date: _____

Mrs. White's Mega-Amazing Grammar Inventory

Directions: Carefully read each of the following sentences. Mark each sentence as **C** if grammatically correct, **I** if grammatically incorrect, or **?** if you are unsure, placing your response in the blank provided. Errors may be in punctuation, capitalization, spelling, or usage.

- _____ 1. When the fire started, we was downtown at the movies.
- _____ 2. The principal didn't have no business accusing Josh.
- _____ 3. Amanda and I were there and saw the whole game.
- _____ 4. Each 30 second television ad shown during the Super Bowl costs sponsors on the average of \$1.9 million dollars. Partly because of the 85 to 90 million viewers.
- _____ 5. In some playing cards, Charlemagne is represented by the king of hearts, Caesar is represented by the king of diamonds, Alexander the Great is represented by the king of clubs, and King David is represented by the king of spades.
- _____ 6. While standing up for a fellow slave, a two-pound weight hit Harriet Tubman's head and missed the slave she was trying to protect.
- _____ 7. After the long day of practice, the football team sat down to rest.
- _____ 8. Using Euchre cards, bluffing played a key role.
- _____ 9. Winning fifty chess games and drawing six, the blind-folded, simultaneous chess match set a record for Grandmaster George Koltanowski.
- _____ 10. Maria Sharapova is a Wimbledon Champion, a multimillionaire, and also does very well acting.
- _____ 11. The team of volleyball players are going in a chartered bus instead of a school bus.
- _____ 12. There is hardly no problem more difficult than a geometry proof.
- _____ 13. Josie's ability to sing certainly surprised Mr. Radcliffe and I.
- _____ 14. Edgar Allan Poe did not have a steady hand, as you can see from his handwriting.
- _____ 15. Colten Rastetter booted a 45-yard field goal in the final game of the season against Iowa City-Regina but Zeke Anderegg, the biggest blocker on our team, is given much deserved credit.
- _____ 16. Mark Twain once wrote a novel about his steamboat experience on the mississippi river.

- _____ 17. Before buying the car, we set down with Mr. Brown and discussed a deal.
- _____ 18. Their here to observe how our school is doing RTI.
- _____ 19. Before Lock and Dam #10 was constructed, residents of Guttenberg were
unable to plant crops in the valley for fear of being flooded by an
overflowing river every year.
- _____ 20. Mr. Idler, our new band teacher, has experienced Germanfest, Winterfest, and
also marching in the Homecoming parade.
- _____ 21. Roger don't care if he fails this test.
- _____ 22. Having watched 24 hours of Pretty Little Liars reruns, the marathon special
finally came to an end.
- _____ 23. The Eagle mascot jumped, danced, and completed push-ups at each touchdown.
- _____ 24. Neither the captain nor the coach did their job.
- _____ 25. The bald eagle which has a wing span of up to 7 feet is easily spotted along the
rivers of Northeast Iowa. There's one in the field behind my house even as
I type this.
- _____ 26. The Garry shuttle with over 45 students were late to arrive at school.
- _____ 27. The game of flyswatter ended, having used all of the vocabulary words.
- _____ 28. The collection included books by Jane Austen Tom Clancy and Erma Bombeck.
- _____ 29. Each of the paper topics has their challenges.
- _____ 30. Meth production which has been a major problem in Clayton County is a
dangerous illegal business.
- _____ 31. Extra copies of the unit schedule will be provided for whoever needs them.
- _____ 32. He concentrated on his homework he never took a break.
- _____ 33. Mrs. Cano said, Spanish is a language that will prove beneficial to all of our
students.
- _____ 34. The three students talked among themselves and decided to stand up against
the class bully.
- _____ 35. Teachers are always impressed by his punctuality, diligence, and being
creative.
- _____ 36. The small towns like Millville are dying. One of the problems being that young
people are leaving.
- _____ 37. Our drill teams record is exceptional.
- _____ 38. There has never been no one here like that women.
- _____ 39. Him and Charlie were the last ones to make up the test.

- _____ 40. Amberlynn has went to prom every year of high school.
- _____ 41. Although Annabelle is new to Clayton Ridge she seems to be fitting right in.
- _____ 42. Good students require three qualities: motivation, diligence, and dedicated.
- _____ 43. When leaving for college, clothes suddenly become a major problem.
- _____ 44. Sheriff Tschirgi cannot predict, that meth production will diminish.
- _____ 45. Mrs. White does not think that low-cut tops, short skirts, or low-ride pants are acceptable clothing for school.
- _____ 46. Students are not the only users of the upstairs bathrooms, teachers and guests also use them from time to time.
- _____ 47. Mr. Mueller is prepared to increase fees for woodworking projects. In spite of student complaints.
- _____ 48. It is late in the semester and grades are soon due and some students are not passing.
- _____ 49. He went through a long battle. A fight against a horrible disease.
- _____ 50. These kind of errors could cost a student a scholarship for college.

Adapted from Maxine Hairston's "Questionnaire on Conventions of Grammar" (800-806) and Harry R. Noden's "The Shalersville University Occupational Inventory of Grammatical Knowledge" (244-246).

Mrs. White's Mega-Amazing Grammar Inventory Answer Key

- | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. I | 13. I | 26. I | 38. I |
| 2. I | 14. C | 27. I | 39. I |
| 3. C | 15. I | 28. I | 40. I |
| 4. I | 16. I | 29. I | 41. I |
| 5. I | 17. I | 30. I | 42. I |
| 6. I | 18. I | 31. I | 43. C |
| 7. C | 19. C | 32. I | 44. I |
| 8. I | 20. I | 33. I | 45. C |
| 9. I | 21. I | 34. C | 46. I |
| 10. I | 22. I | 35. I | 47. I |
| 11. I | 23. C | 36. I | 48. I |
| 12. I | 24. I | 37. I | 49. I |
| | 25. I | | 50. I |

English I – Freshman English Autobiographical Narrative Instructions

Writers write best what they know, and what can anyone know better than his or her own life experiences. We've seen this in two of the selections we've read so far this year: Elizabeth McCracken's "Desiderata," and Isaac Bashevis Singer's "The Washwoman."

Our first major writing assignment of the year is an opportunity for you to write what you know: an autobiographical narrative. We will be following several steps as a class during the writing process, all of which are designed to help you eat this "elephant" one bite at a time.

As always, I'm available to answer any questions you might have and/or give you some extra assistance if you feel you need it. Check my schedule by my classroom door for my availability.

Day One Steps to Success:

1. Open your AutoNarrNotes template from my e-mail and **rename as**

Eng I-__ LastName AutoNarrNotes.

2. Brainstorm events in your life that have had a great impact on you or from which you have learned a valuable life lesson. List the three most impactful events in your AutoNarrNotes file. (These do not need to be in complete sentences.) **Save your file.**

3. Close your eyes and put yourself back into the event. Ask yourself, "What did I see? What did I hear? What did I smell? What did I feel? What did I taste?" Next to each sense listed in the AutoNarrNotes, note details that you can use in your narrative. (For example, when we went to the kennel to pick out a beagle puppy for our daughters for Christmas, I distinctly remember the sharp, burning smell of dog waste and the sound of the puppies' high-pitched barks as they rough-housed in the straw. I also remember Daisy's warm little puppy body and the feel of her baby-fine fur after her first bath. But enough about me...) When you've jotted down all the details you can think of, **save your file.**

4. What important life lesson did you learn from these events? Add this information to your AutoNarrNotes document.

5. Share your three events, along with your sensory data and life lessons, with your podmates. Discuss which might be the most effective event to use for your autobiographical narrative. Then sleep on it.

Days Two and Three Steps to Success:

6. Decide which event you will use for your autobiographical narrative.
7. Develop a timeline. You may use your computer or the 11x17 paper and rulers available on the front supply table. Start with the first event on the left end of your timeline and work your way to the right, recording the events in the order in which they occurred and noting how important each event was to your overall story.
8. Under each event, list sensory details specific to that part of the story.
9. Open a new *Pages* file and begin writing your autobiographical narrative. Save your file as:

Eng I-__ LastName AutoNarr.

Save frequently as you type. Your rough draft will be due on Day Four.

Day Four Steps to Success:

10. Print one copy of your autobiographical narrative rough draft. Using the checklist we developed at the beginning of the year, check for status-marking errors.
11. Trade papers with a podmate and review each other's narratives, again checking for those status-marking errors. Remember to initial at the end of the narrative to indicate that you've reviewed it. Then trade papers with another podmate and review again.
12. Return papers to their authors. Revise your narrative to eliminate status-marking errors, and **save your file**. (The reason we're doing this first is so those errors are not a distraction to us when we start really having fun with your narrative.) Place your marked up copy of your narrative in your binder. You will be submitting this with your final copy at the end of this project.

Now, it's time to play with our wonderfully versatile language! Over the course of the next several class periods, we will be exploring what Harry Noden calls "brush strokes," devices you can use to make your writing more descriptive. Why do we want to do this? Every writer desires to make a connection with the person reading his or her work. By revising our work to create more vivid pictures, we can help the reader experience, at least in small part, what we experienced. As we explore the five basic brushstrokes, you will have an opportunity to incorporate them into your own writing.

Name: _____ Eng I-_____

English I – Freshman English
Autobiographical Narrative
Notes

Event #1:

Sight:

Hearing:

Smell:

Taste:

Touch:

Lesson Learned:

Event #2:

Sight:

Hearing:

Smell:

Taste:

Touch:

Lesson Learned:

Event #3

Sight:

Hearing:

Smell:

Taste:

Touch:

Lesson Learned:

English I – Freshman English Autobiographical Narrative Rubric

Name: _____ Eng I-_____

_____/15	All project parts are included (first draft, Status-marking Error Checklists, rough draft(s), Peer Review Checklists, final draft). Project is presented in a neat and orderly manner.
_____/10	Target status-marking errors have been identified and addressed.
_____/15	Life lesson learned relates to the rest of the narrative
	Five basic brush strokes are effectively added and highlighted.
_____/15	At least three (3) participles/participial phrases
_____/10	At least two (2) absolutes
_____/10	At least two (2) appositives
_____/10	At least two (2) sets of out of order adjectives
_____/15	At least three (3) weak verbs replaced with action verbs
_____/100	TOTAL SCORE

COMMENTS:

Reviewer: _____

Date: _____

English I – Freshman English Autobiographical Narrative Project Brush Strokes Packet

Participles/Participial Phrases – *These are –ing verbs, often placed at the beginning or end of a sentence, which act like adjectives. For example, in the sentence “Yawning and stretching, the cat awoke from its long nap,” yawning and stretching are –ing verbs that describe cat. They are verbs functioning as adjectives.*

There he would stand, his arm around the fat pole, staring and wondering. (*To Kill a Mockingbird* 8)

I have dinner that night in my room, ordering an outrageous number of delicacies, eating myself sick, and then taking out my anger at Haymitch, at the Hunger Games, at every living being in the Capitol by smashing dishes around my room. (*The Hunger Games* 118)

My proximity to the Careers’ camp sharpens my senses, and the closer I get to them, the more guarded I am, pausing frequently to listen for unnatural sounds, an arrow already fitted into the string of my bow. (*The Hunger Games* 214)

Because men, groping in the Arctic darkness, had found a yellow metal, and because steamship transportation companies were booming the find, thousands of men were rushing into the Northland. (*The Call of the Wild* 1)

There he lay for the remainder of the weary night, nursing his wrath and wounded pride...Several times during the night he sprang to his feet when the shed door rattled open, expecting to see the Judge, or the boys at least. (*The Call of the Wild* 6)

When he flung himself against the bars, quivering and frothing, they laughed at him and taunted him. (*The Call of the Wild* 12)

Since the beginning of winter they had travelled eighteen hundred miles, dragging sleds the whole weary distance; and eighteen hundred miles will tell upon life of the toughest. Buck stood it, keeping his mates up to their work and maintaining discipline, though he too was very tired. (*The Call of the Wild* 48)

“This has never happened to me before!” said Hykrion, twirling his black moustache. “I can’t believe my eyes!” grumbled Hysbald, stalking through the ruins on his long, thin legs. (*The Neverending Story* 272)

That night, crouched in the darkness, eavesdropping on my parents’ discussion, I felt truly alone for the first time in my life. The only two people in the world who had been on my side through this whole mess no longer believed in me. (*Please Stop Laughing at Me...* 47)

Matthias chuckled quietly and shook his head in admiration. He watched twelve rats falling over each other and bumping heads as they chased his friend around the common land. Every now and then Basil would pause and strike his “Noble Stag” attitude, letting the rats get to within a whisker of him. Nimbly he would kick out with his long powerful legs and send them all sprawling in a heap. Adding insult to injury, he danced around the fallen sentries, sprinkling them with daisies until they arose, cursing him, to continue the chase. (*Redwall* 90)

Record examples you find and/or create, highlighting the participles/participial phrases:

[illegible]

Appositives – These are noun phrases that act as adjectives that modify the noun that comes immediately before the appositive, adding more detail or a second image.

I maintain that the Ewells started it all, but Jem, **who was four years my senior**, said it started long before that. (*To Kill a Mockingbird* 3)

All we had was Simon Finch, a fur-trapping apothecary from Cornwall whose piety was exceeded only by his stinginess. (*To Kill a Mockingbird* 3)

The Radleys, welcome anywhere in town, kept to themselves, a predilection unforgivable in Maycomb. (*To Kill a Mockingbird* 9)

The four-quarter troll, who up until then had been keeping his sleepy face foremost, now switched to the merry one. (*The Neverending Story* 278)

The bus driver, a robust older woman in her sixties, welcomed me warmly. “You must be Jodee Blanco, the new sixth-grader,” she said, smiling. (*Please Stop Laughing at Me...* 48)

Cluny was a bilge rat; the biggest, most savage rodent that ever jumped from ship to shore. (*Redwall* 17)

Record examples you find and/or create, highlighting the appositives:

[illegible]

Practice Passage – from *The Neverending Story*

If he went home now, his father would come out of his lab in a white smock, possibly holding a plaster cast, and he would ask: “Home so soon?” “Yes,” Bastian would answer. “No school today?” – He saw his father’s quiet, sad face, and he knew he couldn’t possibly lie to him. Much less could he tell him the truth. No, the only thing left for him was to go away somewhere. Far, far away. His father must never find out that his son was a thief. And maybe he wouldn’t even notice that Bastian wasn’t there anymore. Bastian found this thought almost comforting.

He had stopped running. Walking slowly, he saw the schoolhouse at the end of the street. Without thinking, he was taking his usual route to school. He passed a few people here and there, yet the street seemed deserted. But to a schoolboy arriving very, very late, the world around the schoolhouse always seems to have gone dead. At every step he felt the fear rising within him. Under the best of circumstances he was afraid of school, the place of his daily defeats, afraid of his teachers, who gently appealed to his conscience or made him the butt of their rages, afraid of the other children, who made fun of him and never missed a chance to show him how clumsy and defenseless he was. He had always thought of his school years as a prison term with no end in sight, a misery that would continue until he grew up, something he would just have to live through.

Name: _____ Eng I-_____

English I – Freshman English
Autobiographical Narrative
Sentence Combining Exercise - Absolutes

On a separate sheet of notebook paper, combine the following sentence pairs into a single sentence by revising one of the sentences into an absolute. For each sentence, provide two possible combinations.

Example:

Sentence A – Kenny took aim at the 14-point buck.

Sentence B – His adrenaline was pumping and his nerves were jangling.

Combined – **Adrenaline pumping, nerves jangling**, Kenny took aim at the 14-point buck.

Alternate 1 – Kenny took aim at the 14-point buck, **adrenaline pumping, nerves jangling**.

Alternate 2 – Kenny, **adrenaline pumping, nerves jangling**, took aim at the 14-point buck.

1. A. Daisy ignored all my calls to come back.
 B. Her nose was sniffing and her tail was wagging.
2. A. The riverboat steamed into the lock.
 B. Its bell rang merrily, its horn tooted jauntily, and its passengers waved happily.
3. A. The eagle soared over the bluff's rocky outcropping.
 B. Its wings were stretched and its talons were carrying a fat fish.
4. A. The archer drew her bow to its limit.
 B. Her brow was sweating and her muscles were quivering.
5. A. Miss Sandy came staggering out of the walk-in freezer.
 B. Her arms were loaded with frozen corndog bites and her breath came out in steamy puffs.
6. A. Mrs. White slogged through the snowstorm to get to school.
 B. Her lights dimmed because of the accumulating snow and her wipers struggled to keep up with the blizzard.
7. A. Mr. Radcliffe reveled in the choir's harmonious sound.
 B. He closed his eyes in pleasure.
8. A. Gabe fell asleep while watching a VeggieTales movie in Mrs. White's room after school yesterday.
 B. His eyes were drooping and his energy disappeared.

English I – Freshman English
Autobiographical Narrative
Peer Review Checklist & Comments

Author's Name: _____

Reviewer's Name: _____

- _____ 1. Status-marking errors have been identified and corrected.
- _____ 2. At least three (3) participles/participial phrases are included and have been highlighted.
- _____ 3. At least two (2) absolutes are included and have been highlighted.
- _____ 4. At least two (2) appositives are included and have been highlighted.
- _____ 5. At least two (2) sets of out of order adjectives are included and have been highlighted.
- _____ 6. At least three (3) weak verbs have been replaced with action/strong verbs and have been highlighted.
- Y N 7. I was able to see the action of the narrative in my head as I was reading.
- Y N 8. The descriptions using the brush strokes were vivid, so I could imagine experiencing what the author experienced.
- Y N 9. The lesson learned is presented clearly and is related to the events in the narrative.

Comments:

(Remember, include two positive comments for every suggestion!)

English I – Freshman English

Autobiographical Narrative

Pulling the Brush Strokes All Together

Working as a team in your pod or small group, identify as many of the brush strokes as you can in the following excerpt from Sue Grafton's *H is for Homicide*. Underline or highlight each instance of a brush stroke using the following color key.

participle/participial phrase -	yellow
absolute -	blue
appositive -	green
adjective out of order -	pink
action/strong verbs -	orange

Bibiana got to her feet, groping blindly for her handbag. Too late. The couple converged on us. The blond woman placed a firm hand on my shoulder, effectively nailing me to the chair. The guy pressed a Browning forty-five against Bibiana's spine. I saw Jimmy reach for his thirty-eight, but the guy shook his head.

"I got the option to smoke her if there is any problem whatsoever. It's your choice." Bibiana picked up her jacket and her handbag. Jimmy and I watched helplessly as the three of them moved toward the back door. The minute they were out of sight, he bolted for the front, attracting startled looks from all the patrons he bumped in passing. The front door banged open, and he was gone. I threw some money on the table and headed after him, elbows pumping, gun drawn. I ran after him, plowing straight through a puddle on the walk. . . .

I reached the intersection moments after Jimmy did. A Ford sedan shot out of the alley three doors down. Jimmy, as if moving in slow motion, took a stance and fired. The back window shattered. He fired again. The right rear tire blew and the Ford took a sudden fishtailing detour into a van parked at the curb. The Ford's front bumper clattered to the pavement and glass fragments showered down with a delicate tinkling. The front doors of the Ford seem to open simultaneously. The blond woman emerged from the passenger side; the big guy, from the driver's side, taking cover behind the yawning car door as he turned and took aim. I hit the pavement and flattened myself in the shelter of a line of trash cans. The ensuing shots sounded like kernels of popcorn in a lidded sauce

pan. I heard three more shots fired in succession, one of them plowing in the pavement near my head. I feared for Jimmy and felt a sixth sense of dread for Bibiana, too. Someone was running. At least somebody was alive. I just wasn't sure who. I heard the footsteps fade. Then silence.

I pulled myself up onto my hands and knees and scrambled toward a parked car, peering over the hood. Jimmy was standing across the street. There was no sign of the blond. Bibiana, apparently unhurt, clung to the Ford's rear fender and wept hysterically. I approached her with care, wondering where the guy in the plaid sport coat had gone. I could hear panting, a labored moan that suggested both anguish and extreme effort. On the far side of the Ford, I caught sight of him, dragging himself along the sidewalk, blood streaming down the left side of his face from a head wound. He seemed completely focused on the journey, determined to escape, moving with the same haphazard of a crawling baby, limbs occasionally working at cross purposes. He laid his head down, resting for a moment before he inched forward again. A crowd had collected like the spectators at the finish of a marathon. No one cheered. A woman moved toward the injured man and dropped down beside him, reaching out tentatively. At her touch, a deep howl seemed to rise from him, guttural and pain filled. There is no sound so terrible as a man's sorrow for his own death. (39-40)

Citation:

Grafton, Sue. *H is for Homicide*. New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1992. Print.
Selection reprinted in Noden, Harry R. *Image Grammar: Teaching Grammar as Part of the Writing Process*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2011. Print.

Valeria A. White

Dr. Andrea Riley Mukavetz

ENG6800 – Decolonial Theory and Methodology

18 December 2014

Unit Plan – Native American Literature

Dear Dr. Riley-Mukavetz,¹⁴

Native American literature, especially that which is part of Indigenous¹⁵ oral tradition, comprises the earliest literature which can justifiably be identified specifically as American. Whether rooted in Mayan or Aztec traditions or in tribes and nations in the northern half of the Americas, Indigenous stories and histories form the very foundation of what has come to be known as American literature. Sadly, recognition of this continually growing body of work is often lacking, especially in high school classrooms. Courses focusing on literature of the Americas more often than not restrict exploration to texts produced by the dominant, colonizing culture (i.e., white European males with a relatively small representation of white European females) with only a passing mention of the oral literary traditions of Indigenous peoples. This unit plan is designed to rectify the gap that exists in the American literature canon and in the education of American youth, especially those of the dominant culture, providing students with the opportunity

¹⁴ The assignment instructions required that I compose a writer's memo addressed to the instructor.

¹⁵ For the purpose of brevity, the term "Indigenous" (capitalized) will be used throughout this unit plan to refer to those people groups whose presence in the Americas, specifically North America, predate European colonization. These people groups include but are certainly not limited to the Cherokee, Ojibwe, Iroquois, Modoc, Navajo, Dogrib, and Inuit. The non-capitalized term, if used at all, will refer to people who have lived in an area for an extended period of time and are considered "native," but may not necessarily be classified as Indian.

to experience and explore early texts, both oral and written, as well as contemporary texts by Indigenous authors.

This unit plan is designed for grade 11 American Literature classes offered in a small, Northeast Iowa high school. Individual class sizes range from ten to 24 students, with a total junior class population of 50 to 60 students. Instructional periods run for 43 minutes, with 38-minute periods on Wednesday due to a weekly Professional Learning Community early dismissal. The location of the school offers easy access to Effigy Mounds National Monument, a surprisingly decolonial site known for its Indigenous history and educational programs. If this unit plan was implemented in another location, adjustments would need to be made based on the availability of decolonial sites and guest speakers.

Of necessity, this unit will be only a survey of Indigenous literature—time limitations and the responsibility to address a wide range of Iowa Common Core State Standards (CCSS)¹⁶ objectives during the course of the school year do not allow for a more in-depth exploration of Indigenous texts. However, the goals of this plan are manifold, incorporating both academic and social objectives. Academically, this unit will expose students to historically and literarily significant texts created by a broad representation of North American Indigenous peoples, as well as allowing them to discuss colonialism, its impact on Indigenous peoples, and decolonialism, defined as

¹⁶ The Iowa CCSS are limiting insofar as the standards requirements do not allow for much exploration of texts beyond the overview provided in this unit. Ideally, a study of Indigenous literature could easily absorb a quarter or more of the school year; however, in so doing, other standards requirements would not be met. Not one standard incorporates Indigenous literature specifically; therefore, I take advantage of the fact that I can teach this unit and utilize the assignments to fulfill a number of standards while still exposing my students to the literature of America's earliest inhabitants and their descendants.

“stories of the colonized written about the colonized in service of healing, of self-determination, of autonomy, of survival. Much more than writing, [decolonialism] includes making knowledge and sharing knowledge” (Riley-Mukavetz)¹⁷. In addition, students will meet Iowa CCSS in English Language Arts, to include standards in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. This will take the form of reading narrative and theoretical text excerpts, composing creative or personal narratives in story form and more formal reflective essays, participating in a field trip to Effigy Mounds National Monument, contributing to class discussion, and producing oral presentations of their narratives to share with the class. Socially, this unit will expose any colonial attitudes students may hold and provide the opportunity to evaluate and consider alternative perspectives in an effort to rectify their misconceptions.

The importance of prior knowledge cannot be overestimated and will provide the springboard from which this unit will commence. As such, the first lesson will involve individual and small group brainstorming in a KWL format to determine and record everything they know or think they know about Indigenous peoples, their history, and their literature. This KWL activity might, and hopefully will, include facts and fictions related to Columbus’ “discovery” of North America, the first Thanksgiving, Squanto, Sacagawea, Pocahontas, Crazy Horse, Keokuk, Black Hawk, and many others. The latter part of the period will be a coming together for whole-class discussion and an evaluation of what pieces of “knowledge” might actually be misconceptions. All lessons will be centered around and introduced with questions as a means of drawing attention to specific aspects of the topic.

¹⁷Dr. Andrea Riley-Mukavetz provided this definition of *decolonialism* in her Week One Lecture for ENG 6800 - Decolonial Theory and Methodology, fall of 2014.

A major goal of this unit is to provide opportunity for students to rethink their participation in colonial attitudes and behaviors; for this reason, the culmination of this unit will coincide with Columbus Day. Students will have had the opportunity to rename the holiday more appropriately earlier in the unit and will have researched Indigenous foods from across North America. On [Columbus] Day, each American Literature section will invite an honored guest to join the class for a celebration of Indigenous culture, for which students will prepare and share Indigenous foods, stories, book reviews, and reflections.

This unit will take place early in the school year, not only because of the foundational nature of Indigenous literature, but also because of the anticipated field trip to Effigy Mounds National Monument.¹⁸ Prior to this unit, a brief review of grammatical conventions and writing strategies will take place, followed by a discussion about American identity, American exceptionalism as it relates to literature, and what constitutes American literature. This discussion will segue nicely into our exploration of Indigenous literature and literary traditions. The succeeding unit will focus on slave narratives, another form of decolonial text, and literature of emancipation and the Civil Rights Movement.

¹⁸ Effigy Mounds National Monument has a visitors' center with a small auditorium, but the main focus of the monument is the mounds created by the ancestors of 18 affiliated tribes from the region. These are located on the bluffs above the Mississippi River and are accessible via several hiking trails. Indigenous peoples are actively involved in the monument both as park staff and in the volunteers who provide interpretation to park guests.

I believe this unit has several strengths. Through a variety of strategies, students are exposed to carefully reviewed texts¹⁹ embodying multiple literary forms (i.e., written, oral, film) arising from multiple sources and encompassing multiple time periods. In addition, students are allowed, even encouraged, to reflect on their connections to the literature and to change their own misconceptions as a result. As with any unit plan, however, until it is tested in the “real world” of the classroom, its effectiveness is in question. A closer review of available literature may lead to changes and additions to the texts explored, which will then impact the amount of time involved to complete the unit. Since this course is offered in the same grade as American History, coordination with the American History teacher will be necessary to maintain the collaborative relationship between the two classes. Further, evaluation of student ability may lead to adjustment of content or requirements and may allow for deeper exploration of theoretical texts. Adjustment to allow for use of technology would also be appropriate. One possible option would be the incorporation of a blog requirement to replace the quick writes. This would allow students the freedom to record their reactions and reflections in a more timely manner rather than waiting until a specific writing prompt is assigned.

Following is the lesson-by-lesson plan for this unit, beginning with a unit schedule that will be distributed to students at the beginning of the first class.

¹⁹ A number of novels appropriate for middle school and young adult readers are inaccurate in their portrayal of Indigenous/First Nations beliefs and practices. Hence, careful evaluation must be made to ascertain textual authenticity before inclusion in the reading list for this course.

English III – American Literature
Indigenous Literature
Unit Schedule

The following schedule reflects what you can expect as we explore Indigenous (Native American) literature over the next several weeks. Changes to the schedule may—and probably will—occur, so you are encouraged to be flexible. Be reminded that you are responsible for the assignments and due dates on this schedule. You will be notified via e-mail of any adjustments.

Day	Date	What's Due?	Activity
1			KWL and Discussion: What do we know or think we know about Indigenous Peoples?
2			What is colonialism? What is decolonialism? What do they look like? HW: Find an example of each
3		Examples of colonialism and decolonialism	Discuss examples of colonialism/decolonialism Introduce literature circles – book talks HW: Decide which text you would like to read
4		Text Choice	Lit Circles – divide into groups based on text choice Set group rules and reading goals HW: Begin reading Lit Circle text
5			Introduce Effigy Mounds field trip Lecture and discussion of Indigenous interconnectivity (connections to land/family/tribe) HW: Lit Circle text
6			Effigy Mounds Field Trip HW: Lit Circle text
7			QW: Reflect on yesterday's field trip (15 min.) Lit Circle 1 HW: Lit Circle text
8			What is the role of story? Read and discuss Thomas King excerpt on story. HW: Lit Circle text
9			Story as History How is story used to relate history (tribal and/or family)? Explore and discuss examples HW: Interview for Story as History text
10			Work/Conference Day
11			Work/Conference Day Lit Circle 2
12		Story (history)	Story as a Teaching Tool How is story used to teach morals? Explore and discuss examples HW: Write a short story that teaches a moral

13			Work/Conference Day
14			Work/Conference Day and Lit Circle 3
15		Story (moral)	Story as Conflict Resolution How is story used to resolve conflict? Explore and discuss examples HW: Story that resolves conflict.
16			Work/Conference Day
17			Work/Conference Day Lit Circle 4
18-19		Story (conflict)	Connection to the Land How is connection to the land expressed? What is your connection to the land? How is connected to the land reflected at Effigy Mounds? Explore and discuss examples
20			Why are the Sky Woman stories slightly different? Compare and contrast several differing accounts.
21			Story as Decolonial Practice How is story used as a decolonial practice? Can this be classified as activism? Explore and discuss examples
22			QW: Reflect on the three texts we explored in class yesterday. (10 minutes) Lit Circle 5 More 1491s videos (because they're impactful AND fun) and discussion as time allows.
23			What is the real story behind Columbus? Explore Columbus Day videos and discuss Small group project: Rename the Day/honored guest suggestions
24		Holiday's new name Honored guest suggestions	How will we celebrate this newly named holiday? What shall we include in our celebration? In what ways can our celebration be categorized as ceremony? Plan celebration HW: Work on Celebration preparation
25			Lit Circle 6 Celebration Preparation
26			Celebration Preparation
27			Celebration Preparation
28	Columbus Day	Food and Supplies	*****?? Day Celebration*****
29			QW: Reflect on the ?? Day Celebration Revisit KWL from beginning of unit. What have we learned? Begin compiling portfolio of unit writings. HW: Continue working on portfolio
30			Work/Conference Day
31		Portfolio	Submit portfolio (print copy) Class discussion – unit evaluation

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 1 – What do we know or think we know about Indigenous Peoples?

Objectives: Students will access prior knowledge (whether fact or misconception) on the subject of American Indians, their history, their culture, and their literature.

Students will demonstrate the ability to work effectively in small groups to activate and record prior knowledge.

Iowa CCSS (11-12)²⁰: SK.H.2.1, SK.H.2.3, 11-12.SL.1, 11-12.SL.6

Materials Needed: KWL worksheet
Post-it easel pad
flip chart markers

Process:

1. Outline rules for group discussion (respect, positive feedback, etc.)
2. Students brainstorm individually to access prior knowledge, recording thoughts on KWL worksheet (3-4 minutes)
3. Students gather into small groups (3-4 students per group) and identify spokesperson. Students share their KWL information, activating additional prior knowledge and recording info on Post-it easel pad paper (5-7 minutes).
4. Spokespersons post KWL information on white board.
5. Class discussion. Identify possible misconceptions.

Assessment: Observation of student involvement/participation
KWL worksheets and Post-it easel pad papers

Homework: Think about what you've discovered today. Allow that prior knowledge and anything new you've learned to percolate.

²⁰ Detailed descriptions of the Iowa Common Core State Standards are located in Appendix A.

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 2 – What is colonialism? How are colonial attitudes propagated? How can they be changed? Is it important to change them? What is decolonialism? What does that look like?

Objectives: Students will learn the meaning of colonialism, decolonialism, and stereotype and will be able to recognize examples of each. Students will learn vocabulary associated with the topic of study and be able to apply the vocabulary to their writing assignments (unit-long).

Iowa CCSS (11-12): SK.H.2.1, 11-12.L.6, 11-12.SL.1, 11-12.SL.6

Materials Needed: White board and markers
Vocabulary Keynote
The Berenstain Bears Give Thanks, Jan and Mike Berenstain

Process:

1. Introduce students to vocabulary (Keynote).
2. Discuss the meaning of colonialism. Where do we see this happening.
3. Read *The Berenstain Bears Give Thanks* or other children's picture book influenced by colonialism.
4. Discuss images, attitudes, revisionist history.
5. Discuss the meaning of decolonialism.
6. Watch video (tbd) of the "true" Thanksgiving story.
7. Additional discussion.

Assessment: Observation of student involvement/participation.

Homework: Scavenger hunt: Find examples of colonialism and decolonialism. You may look in magazines, newspapers, books, movies, textbooks, and/or online. A reward for each example will be offered.²¹

²¹ This will take the form of either a Starburst candy or a pack of Smarties.

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 3 – What did you find in your scavenging through media? How is this unit going to work? What are you going to be required to do?

Objectives: Students will demonstrate an understanding of colonialism and decolonialism through the examples they have found.
Students will understand unit requirements and expectations.

Iowa CCSS (11-12): SK.H.2.2, SK.H.2.5

Materials Needed: Unit Schedule
Literature Circle Information Sheet
Literature Circle Book List²² for outside reading
Book talk information on each book option

Process:

1. Students share examples of colonialism and decolonialism they found during their scavenger hunt.
2. Distribute and review unit schedule/unit expectations. Entertain any questions or concerns that arise.
3. Distribute field trip permission forms (due Day 5).
4. Explain outside reading requirement and literature circles (ultimate goal is a group presentation about the book at our final celebration).
5. Distribute Literature Circle Book List.
6. Give book talk on each book option (stations around room).
7. Students circulate among stations to give the books a look-see.

Assessment: Observation of student involvement/participation

Homework: Determine first, second and third choice for outside reading text.
Complete outside reading survey (SurveyMonkey).

²² This list has been compiled from a blog by Debbie Reese (Nambe Pueblo) on the American Indians in Children's Literature web site, and is included in Appendix B.

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 4 – What are we going to read? How will we set up our groups? What are our guidelines and goals?

Objectives:	<p>Students will choose an outside reading text, considering text difficulty(Lexile), book talks, and a cursory review.</p> <p>Students will divide into groups based on their outside reading choice.</p> <p>Student groups will collaborate to establish a reading schedule and guidelines for discussion.</p>
Iowa CCSS (11-12):	SK.H.2.1, SK.H.2.2, SK.H.2.3, SK.H.2.4, 11-12.SL.1 (a-d), 11-12.SL.5, 11-12 SL.6, IA.1
Materials Needed:	<p>Outside reading books (20 copies of each)</p> <p>Supplemental book sign-out sheets</p> <p>Student computers (GoogleDoc for recording group guidelines and goals)</p>
Process:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Remind students that Field Trip Permission forms are due next class. 2. Based on survey results, divide students into LC groups.²³ 3. Students move to LC area of classroom. 4. Students sign out copies of LC texts using sign-out sheets. 5. Groups of students collaboratively develop guidelines for discussion and set reading goals, recording these on a GoogleDoc so all group members and the teacher have access. 6. Students begin reading LC text (if time allows).
Assessment:	Observation of student involvement/participation.
Homework:	<p>Read LC text.</p> <p>Field Trip Permission forms due next class</p>

²³ Allowing students a choice of text provides them a certain amount of autonomy and ownership, although the pool of texts will be somewhat limited due to quality analysis (I want the texts to be authentic, accurate, and impactful) and school budgetary restrictions.

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 5 – We get to go on a field trip? Really?!

Objectives: Students will understand the purpose and expectations for the Day 6 field trip, including behavior and long-range goals.
 Students will take notes during lecture, using instructor cues (visuals on board) to ascertain important information.
 Students will demonstrate responsibility by turning in their Field Trip Permission forms.

Iowa CCSS (11-12): SK.H.2.1, 11-12.SL.1, 11-12.SL.6

Materials Needed: White board
 Field trip information sheet (expectations, short-range goals, long-range goals)

Process:

1. Students turn in their signed Field Trip Permission forms via their class basket.
2. Description of field trip goals (short- and long-range).
3. Distribute information sheet.
4. Lecture on and discuss the importance of connections (to the land, to nature, to family, etc.) to Indigenous Peoples and how this relates to the field trip.

Assessment: Observation of student involvement/participation

Homework: Read LC text
 Pack a sack lunch for the field trip

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 6 – EFFIGY MOUNDS FIELD TRIP

Objectives: Students will demonstrate respectful behavior as guests and learners.
Students will be exposed to North American Indigenous histories, traditions, ceremony, and story through participation in lectures, small group activities, and hikes along the trails.

Iowa CCSS (11-12): SK.H.2.2, SK.H.2.3, 11-12.SL.1 (c&d), 11-12.SL.2, 11-12.SL.3, 11-12.SL.6

Materials Needed: Students bring: Sack lunches!
Field trip information sheets
Tablet and pen/pencil (for note taking)
Loose tobacco^{24,25}
Permission forms
Medical supplies for any at-risk students (food, insect allergies)

Process:

1. Students will be divided up into four (4) groups. Each group will be accompanied by at least one chaperone.
2. Welcome and introduction (9:00 – 9:15), including reminder of park rules.
3. The field trip will be divided into four (4) stations:
 - a. History of Indigenous Peoples pre- and post-contact (Albert LeBeau – Lakota Sioux)
 - b. The mounds and their purpose (Sheila Oberreuter and Merle Frommelt)
 - c. Indigenous ceremony: tobacco, smudging, pipe ceremony, etc. (Chloris Lowe – Ho-Chunk)
 - d. Indigenous story (??)

²⁴ This is tentative; I will need to check possible exceptions to school policy before I can have tobacco on the field trip. However, if I am able to include this, it would be under the control of the chaperones and used to show respect at the mounds. Ironically, the only loose tobacco available in my area is Red Man brand.

²⁵ My goal here is for my students to learn the importance of recognizing and understanding cultural norms for a people group other than their own, and to find ways of respecting other cultures in their behavior. By allowing students to place tobacco at identified burial sites, students will experience a decolonial activity, offering respect in a culturally significant manner rather than the accepted manner of the colonizer.

Each station will last one hour and 10 minutes to allow sufficient time for those hiking up to the mounds to get back to the visitor center. Station times will be 9:15 – 10:25, 10:25 – 11:35, 12:05 – 1:15, and 1:15 – 2:25, with lunch from 11:35 – 12:05. The bus will leave the monument to return to school promptly at 2:30. Each chaperone will be provided with an itinerary for the day, along with a list of students for whom they are responsible.

4. Student groups will rotate among the stations, breaking at midday for a picnic lunch on the grounds.

Assessment: Observation of student involvement/participation

Homework: Spend some quiet time outside processing what you experienced at Effigy Mounds today.²⁶ Review your notes and be prepared to reflect on and discuss your experiences in our next class.
Read LC text.

²⁶ In *Books and Islands in Ojibwe Country*, Louise Erdrich tells the story of John Tanner, a white man who lived as an Ojibwe for most of his life after having been kidnapped by the Shawnee as a boy (42-46). Demonstrating that indigeneity is performative and not just a matter of blood, Erdrich writes, “As he was to all respects a ‘white Indian,’ and saw the world as an Ojibwe, his is the first narrative of native life from an Ojibwe point of view” (46). Even though only a few of my students can claim Indigenous ancestry, all of them can claim connections to history, to family/community, and to the land. Each student can benefit from learning indigenous literatures, from the ancient oral traditions to the most modern histories, memoirs, and novels, as they explore these connections. At the very least, they can develop an appreciation of and respect for Indigenous culture; however, I would hope that they would learn knowledge making skills as they explore and gain a deeper understanding of local history and as they, throughout the entirety of the American Literature course, grapple with the complexities of just what is American literature. I also hope that, through the exploration of Indigenous connections (to history, to family, to the land), my students will strive to create and/or strengthen their own connections. In addition, while I do not intend for my students to embrace indigeneity to the extent of John Tanner, I do want them to develop an understanding of and respect for Indigenous Peoples such that they will recognize when proposed solutions to national issues (e.g., the Keystone pipeline) encroach upon Native rights and will speak up on behalf of their Indigenous neighbors.

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 7 – Whew! What a day! How do we process everything we learned?

Objectives: Students will reflect on their field trip experience, completing a short writing assignment to synthesize their thoughts.
Students will participate in their literature circles, discussing the first reading goal.

Iowa CCSS (11-12): SK.H.2.1, SK.H.2.2, SK.H.2.3, SK.H.2.4, 11-12.L.1, 11-12.L.2, 11-12.L.6, IA.1, IA.2, 11-12.RL.1, 11-12.W.3 (a-e), 11-12.W.4, 11-12.W.10, 11-12.SL.1 (a-d)

Materials Needed: Notebook paper
Writing implement (pen/pencil)

Process:

1. Distribute notebook paper and pens/pencils (if needed)
2. Students write a 15-minute reflection (quick write) about their field trip experience.
3. Remind students that the culmination of the unit will be a celebration during which each LC group will be doing a presentation about their particular book.
4. LC1 – Students divide into their literature circles and discuss the first reading selection, focusing on Indigenous traditions, history, ceremony, and story and making connections with Effigy Mounds.

Assessment: Quick writes
Observation of student involvement/participation
LC log from record keeper

Homework: Read LC text

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 8 – What is story? How is it used? What makes it work?

Objectives:	<p>Students will understand the concept of story and its use in Indigenous culture.</p> <p>Students will read and discuss excerpts from Thomas King's <i>The Truth About Stories</i>,²⁷ relating King's writing to their field trip lecture on story in local tribal culture.</p>
Iowa CCSS (11-12):	SK.H.2.1, SK.H.2.2, SK.H.2.3, 11-12.L.1, IA.1, IA.2, 11-12.RI.1, 11-12.RI.4, 11-12.RI.6
Materials Needed:	Copies of King excerpts
Process:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Break students up into small group. 2. Have each group read and discuss one excerpt from Thomas King's <i>The Truth About Stories</i>. 3. Each student group shares the important points they gleaned. 4. Teacher input, if necessary (i.e., inserting an important point that was missed)
Assessment:	<p>Observation of student involvement/participation</p> <p>Presentation of points gleaned from King excerpts</p>
Homework:	<p>Review Thomas King excerpts</p> <p>Read LC text</p>

²⁷ In *The Truth About Stories*, Thomas King states, "The truth about stories is that that's all we are" (2). He also points out that, "...once a story is told, it cannot be called back. Once told, it is loose in the world," after which he cautions his readers to be careful both with the stories they tell and with the stories told to them (10). As students read and identify the excerpts' key points, and as they begin examining stories by others and composing new stories from their own lives, it is my hope that they will experience the river of stories described by Dian Million when she writes, "The stories, unlike data, contain the affective legacy of our experiences. They are a felt knowledge that accumulates and becomes a force that empowers stories that are otherwise separate to become a focus, a potential for movement" (31-32). It is because stories "are a felt knowledge" that I have chosen story as the means for exploring Indigenous culture and literature, and as the platform for the writing assignments. I believe that my students will connect more with story than with a more formal style of writing.

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 9 – How is story used to relate history (tribal and/or family)?

Objectives: Students will explore and discuss examples of story as history.
Students will connect with an older member of their family and their family history.
Students will compose a text that demonstrates their understanding of story as history.

Iowa CCSS (11-12): SK.H.2.3, 11-12.L.1, IA.1, IA.2, 11-12.RL.1, 11-12.RL.3, 11-12.RL.5

Materials Needed: *Atanarjuat* (DVD)²⁸
Books and Islands in Ojibwe Country by Louise Erdrich²⁹
 Instructions and rubric for Story as History assignment

Process:

1. View excerpt from *Atanarjuat* showing history being shared as story.
2. Read excerpt from *Books and Islands* showing history being shared as story.
3. Discuss and connect texts to Effigy Mounds field trip experience.³⁰
4. Assign and explain Story as History writing assignment.

²⁸ I selected *Atanarjuat* because the film depicts Inuit traditions and is itself story as history. The matriarch of the clan demonstrates story as history in a couple of scenes that will model this concept for my students. I will be using this moving to illustrate other forms of story as well.

²⁹ Louise Erdrich shares history through story on several levels in her narrative: Ojibwe ancestral history, Ernest Oberholtzer's story, and her own personal history. In doing so, she demonstrates how stories can be intertwined, an important concept to note given the interconnectedness of many students' families.

³⁰ Questions to promote discussion will include but are not limited to: What was the purpose of the stories in told by the matriarch of the clan in *Atanarjuat*? Why is history told in stories in this culture? How did place influence the stories told? What about the stories from the Erdrich excerpts? How do her stories differ from the stories in the film? Why do you think that is the case?

- Assessment: Observation of student involvement/participation
- Homework: Interview an older member of your family about your family's history.³¹
Write a story about what you learn (as opposed to simply regurgitating facts).

³¹ By strengthening connections with their ancestors and family histories, my students will be able to better grasp and appreciate the ancestral connections experienced by other cultures (e.g., Indigenous and First Nations Peoples, Asian, African, etc.). In addition, they will be keeping their own histories alive, the importance of which they are probably not considering at their age. As Deborah Miranda points out in *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir*, "Culture is ultimately lost when we stop telling stories of who we are, where we have been, how we arrived here, what we once knew; when we stop our retelling of the past, our imagining of the future, and the long, long task of inventing an identity every single second of our lives" (xiv).

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 10 – Story as History (cont.) – Writing/Conference Day

Objectives: Students will connect with an older member of their family and their family history.
Students will compose a text that demonstrates their understanding of story as history.

Iowa CCSS (11-12): SK.H.2.5, 11-12.L.1, 11-12.L.2, 11-12.W.3 (a-e), 11-12.W.4, 11-12.W.5, 11-12.W.6, 11-12.W.10

Materials Needed: Student computers
Notes from family member interview

Process: Students will compose their texts in class, conferencing with instructor as needed.

Assessment: Observation of student involvement/participation

Homework: Work on story as history.
Read LC text.

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 11 – Story as History (cont.) – Writing/Conference Day

Objectives:

- Students will connect with an older member of their family and their family history.
- Students will compose a text that demonstrates their understanding of story as history.
- Students will participate in their literature circles, discussing the second reading goal.

Iowa CCSS (11-12): SK.H.2.1, SK.H.2.2, SK.H.2.3, SK.H.2.5, SK.H.5.2, 11-12.L.1, 11-12.L.2, 11-12.W.3 (a-e), 11-12.W.4, 11-12.W.5, 11-12.W.6, 11-12.W.10, 11-12.SL.1 (a-d), 11-12.SL.4, 11-12.SL.6

Materials Needed:

- Student computers
- Notes from family interview

Process:

1. Students will compose their texts in class, conferencing with instructor as needed.
2. LC2 – Students divide into their literature circles and discuss the second reading selection, focusing on Indigenous traditions, history, ceremony, and story and making connections with Effigy Mounds.

Assessment:

- Observation of student involvement/participation
- LC log from record keeper

Homework:

- Work on story as history.
- Read LC text.

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 12 – Story as History (cont.) – Writing/Conference Day

Objectives: Students will promptly submit assignments.
 Students will explore and discuss examples of story as teaching tool.
 Students will connect with a younger family member by creating a story for him/her to teach a moral lesson.
 Students will compose a text that demonstrates their understanding of the use of story as a teaching tool.

Iowa CCSS (11-12): SK.H.2.1, IA.1, 11-12.RL.1, 11-12.RL.4, 11-12.SL.1 (b-d), 11-12.SL.6

Materials Needed: *Atanarjuat* (DVD)
 Moral tales from multiple cultures (Aesop, Bible, Anansi, Coyote, etc., specifics to be determined)³²
 Instructions and rubric for Story as Teaching Tool assignment

Process: 1. Students submit Story as History assignment to class basket.
 2. View and discuss excerpt from *Atanarjuat* showing story being used to teach morals.³³
 3. Read and discuss examples of moral tales from other Indigenous Peoples and world cultures, noting similarities and differences.

³² From the parables of Jesus, the fables of Aesop, the West African Anansi stories and North American Indigenous Coyote tales to Big Idea Entertainment's VeggieTales videos, story has been used as a moral teaching tool to offer children lessons in human decency (kindness helpfulness, respect, etc.) across time and cultures. The specifics may differ from culture to culture, era to era, but many lessons are the same. A majority of my students are Catholic, so they will be readily able to make the connection. This activity will focus on the moral lesson rather than the differences in how various cultures make and understand stories with which the lessons are taught. Rather, I want my own students to understand how they themselves make and understand their stories.

³³ Questions to prompt discussion will include but are not limited to: What moral lesson was the matriarch trying to teach through her story? What action prompted the story? How effective was her story? Would teaching the lesson in a more direct, confrontational manner have been more or less effective? Why?

4. Connect texts to Effigy Mounds field trip experience.
5. Assign and explain Story as Teaching Tool writing assignment.

Assessment: Story as History student texts
Observation of student involvement/participation

Homework: Choose a moral (e.g., “Those who work hard will receive a reward.”) that you feel a younger family member might need to learn. Write a short story, connected to the land/nature in some way, that you could use to teach a younger family member that moral lesson.³⁴

³⁴ A possible extra credit assignment would be creating a video of the student reading his/her story to the young family member for whom it was written and the child’s reaction to the story.

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 13 – Story as Teaching Tool (cont.) – Writing/Conference Day

Objectives: Students will connect with a younger family member by creating a story to teach a moral lesson to for him/her to teach a moral lesson.
Students will compose a text that demonstrates their understanding of the use of story as a moral teaching tool.

Iowa CCSS (11-12): SK.H.2.5, 11-12.L.1, 11-12.L.2, 11-12.W.3 (a-e), 11-12.W.4, 11-12.W.5, 11-12.W.6, 11-12.W.10

Materials Needed: Student computers

Process: Students will compose their texts in class, conferencing with instructor as needed.

Assessment: Observation of student involvement/participation.

Homework: Work on moral story.
Read LC text.

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 14 – Story as Teaching Tool (cont.) – Writing/Conference Day

Objectives:

- Students will connect with a younger family member by creating a story to teach a moral lesson to for him/her to teach a moral lesson.
- Students will compose a text that demonstrates their understanding of the use of story as a moral teaching tool.
- Students will participate in their literature circles, discussing the third reading goal.

Iowa CCSS (11-12): SK.H.2.1, SK.H.2.2, SK.H.2.3, SK.H.2.5, SK.H.5.2, 11-12.L.1, 11-12.L.2, 11-12.W.3 (a-e), 11-12.W.4, 11-12.W.5, 11-12.W.6, 11-12.W.10, 11-12.SL.1 (a-d), 11-12.SL.4, 11-12.SL.6

Materials Needed: Student computers

Process:

1. Students will compose their texts in class, conferencing with instructor as needed.
2. LC3 – Students divide into their literature circles and discuss the third reading selection, focusing on Indigenous traditions, history, ceremony, and story and making connections with Effigy Mounds.

Assessment: Observation of student involvement/participation
LC log from record keeper

Homework: Work on moral story (due next class).
Read LC text.

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 15 – How is story used to resolve conflict and restore relationship?

Objectives: Students will promptly submit assignments.
 Students will explore and discuss examples of story used to resolve conflict and restore relationship.
 Students will connect with a friend or family member with whom they are currently having or have had a conflict.
 Students will compose a text that demonstrates their understanding of story as a means of resolving conflict and restoring relationship.

Iowa CCSS (11-12): SK.H.2.5, 11-12.L.1, 11-12.L.2, IA.1, IA.2, 11-12.RL.1, 11-12.RL.3, 11-12.RL.5, 11-12.SL.1 (b-d), 11-12.SL.6

Materials Needed: *Atanarjuat* (DVD)
 The Lesser Blessed (DVD)
 Excerpts of other texts (tbd)
 Instructions and rubric for Story as Conflict Resolution assignment

Process: 1. Students submit Story as Teaching Tool assignment to class basket.
 2. View and discuss excerpts from *Atanarjuat* and *The Lesser Blessed* that depict story being used to resolve conflict and restore relationship.
 3. Read and discuss excerpt from [*selected texts*]³⁵ showing story used to resolve conflict and restore relationship.
 4. Connect texts to Effigy Mounds field trip experience.
 5. Assign and explain Story as Conflict Resolution writing assignment.

³⁵ As I explore various texts by Indigenous and First Nations authors, I will identify several selections that can be used effectively here. My primary goal is to select texts that, as Linda Tuhiwai Smith states in her discussion about research methodologies and approaches, are “respectful, ethical, sympathetic, and useful” (Smith 9), as well as being accurate from the Indigenous perspective rather than a colonial, euro-centric perspective. Richard Van Camp’s *The Lesser Blessed* is an excellent example of this. Both the novel and the film version show several instances of characters using story to resolve a family conflict.

- Assessment: Story as Teaching Tool student texts.
Observation of student involvement/participation
- Homework: Think of a conflict you've recently had with a family member or friend.
Write a story that resolves the conflict by respectfully expressing your feelings and offering a reasonable solution.

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 16 – Story as Conflict Resolution (cont.) – Writing/Conference Day

Objectives: Students will connect with a friend or family member with whom they are currently having or have had a conflict.
Students will compose a text that demonstrates their understanding of story as a means of resolving conflict and restoring relationship.

Iowa CCSS (11-12): SK.H.2.5, 11-12.L.1, 11-12.L.2, 11-12.W.3 (a-e), 11-12.W.4, 11-12.W.5, 11-12.W.6, 11-12.W.10

Materials Needed: Student computers

Process: Students will compose their texts in class, conferencing with instructor as needed.

Assessment: Observation of student involvement/participation.

Homework: Work on conflict resolution story.
Read LC text.

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 17 – Story as Conflict Resolution (cont.) – Writing/Conference Day

Objectives:

- Students will connect with a friend or family member with whom they are currently having or have had a conflict.
- Students will compose a text that demonstrates their understanding of story as a means of resolving conflict and restoring relationship.
- Students will participate in their literature circles, discussing the fourth reading goal.

Iowa CCSS (11-12): SK.H.2.1, SK.H.2.2, SK.H.2.3, SK.H.2.5, SK.H.5.2, 11-12.L.1, 11-12.L.2, 11-12.W.3 (a-e), 11-12.W.4, 11-12.W.5, 11-12.W.6, 11-12.W.10, 11-12.SL.1 (a-d), 11-12.SL.4, 11-12.SL.6

Materials Needed: Student computers

Process:

1. Students will compose their texts in class, conferencing with instructor as needed.
2. LC4 – Students divide into their literature circles and discuss the fourth reading selection, focusing on Indigenous traditions, history, ceremony, and story and making connections with Effigy Mounds.

Assessment: Observation of student involvement/participation
LC log from record keeper

Homework: Work on conflict resolution story (due next class).
Read LC text.

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 18-20 – How is connection to the land expressed in story? How is this reflected at Effigy Mounds? Why are the Sky Woman stories slightly different? What is your connection to the land?

Objectives:

- Students will promptly submit assignments.
- Students will explore and discuss examples connection to the land expressed in story.
- Students will connect relationship to the land to differences in the Sky Woman stories between various tribes.
- Students will have an opportunity to connect with the land in their own space.

Iowa CCSS (11-12): SK.H.2.1, SK.H.2.2, SK.H.2.3, SK.H.2.4, SK.H.2.5, 11-12.L.1, 11-12.L.2, 11-12.L.2b, IA.1, IA.2, 11-12.RL.1, 11-12.RL.7, 11-12.W.2 (a-b and d), 11-12.W.4, 11-12.W.9, 11-12.W.10, 11-12.SL.1 (b-d), 11-12.SL.2, 11-12.SL.4, 11-12.SL.6

Materials Needed:

- Christi Belcourt’s explanation of “My Heart is Beautiful.”
- Origin myths from English III textbook
- Sky Woman stories from various tribes (tbd)
- Post-it easel pad paper
- Flip chart markers
- Instruction sheet for Connection to the Land Reflection writing assignment

Process:

1. Students submit Story as Conflict Resolution assignment to class basket.
2. View video of Christi Belcourt explaining her painting “My Heart is Beautiful.”
3. QW: Noting how each image in Belcourt’s painting is steeped in meaning and deeply connected to the land, from the plant roots and insects to the birds and flowers, describe in detail how you would depict your connection to the land? What would your painting look like?
4. Read origin myths from English III textbook.
5. Read additional Sky Woman stories from various tribes.

6. In small groups, create Venn diagrams or T-charts to compare/contrast Sky Woman stories on Post-it easel pad paper, noting location of tribe.³⁶
7. Based on comparison, reflect on the connection between versions of the Sky Woman story and the land from which those versions arose. Note on diagram/chart.
8. Post diagrams/charts around the room and do gallery tour. As a class, discuss connections observed.

Assessment:

Story as Conflict Resolution student texts.
 Observation of student involvement/participation
 Review of diagrams/charts created in small groups.

Homework:

Spend some time outside reflecting on your connection to the land.
 Walk around your yard, your family's property, the space where you dwell. What is that space like? How do you feel when you're there? How do you feel when you're not there? Write a brief (2-3 paragraph) reflection.
 Read LC text.

³⁶ Linda Tuhiwai Smith points out, "The term 'indigenous' is problematic in that it appears to collectivize many distinct populations whose experiences under imperialism have been vastly different" (6). While not exploring quite the diversity to which Smith refers, one of my goals for this part of the lesson plan is to lead my students to discover the close link between the land and the people who dwell there as expressed through their stories, especially creation stories, focusing on various North American Indigenous Peoples.

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 21-22 – How is story used as decolonial practice?³⁷

- Objectives:
- Students will promptly submit assignments.
 - Students will explore and discuss examples of story used as decolonial practice.
 - Students will compose a brief text that demonstrates their understanding of story as a decolonial practice.
 - Students will participate in their literature circles, discussing the fifth reading goal.
- Iowa CCSS (11-12): SK.H.2.1, SK.H.2.2, SK.H.2.3, SK.H.2.5, SK.H.5.2, 11-12.L.1, 11-12.L.2, 11-12.L.6, IA.1, IA.2, 11-12.RL.1, 11-12.RL.2, 11-12.RL.3, 11-12.RL.5, 11-12.RL.6, 11-12.RI.1, 11-12.RI.2, 11-12.RI.3, 11-12.RI.7, 11-12.W.2 (a-e), 11-12.W.4, 11-12.W.5, 11-12.W.6, 11-12.W.10, 11-12.SL.1 (a-d), 11-12.SL.4, 11-12.SL.6
- Materials Needed:
- Atanarjuat* (DVD)
 - The Lesser Blessed* (DVD)
 - 1491s’ “The Indian Store” and other videos³⁸
 - Christi Belcourt’s interview for *Walking with our Sisters*
 - “Don’t Believe the Hype: Beyond Poverty Porn, Pain, and Drunk Indians” by Gyasi Ross

³⁷ I consider this lesson plan a decolonial practice for me, and I hope it will become a decolonial practice for my students as well. As I have learned about imperialism and colonialism and have experienced the guilt related to my own role in propagating these attitudes through my ignorance and inactivity, I have found decolonization to be overwhelming at best. As Walter Mignolo points out in *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options*, “Much has to be done...the goal of decolonial options is not to take over, but to make clear, by thinking and doing, that global futures can no longer be thought of as one global future in which only one option is available; ...” (24). It is my hope that this lesson plan will provide one option to achieving decolonization, one small step forward in the “much” that needs to be done.

³⁸ I’ve chosen to use the 1491s, Christi Belcourt, and Gyasi Ross’ texts because I believe my students can relate to their work. In addition, the 1491s videos provide an excellent opportunity to teach my students about sarcasm, satire, and irony, a requirement of the Iowa CCSS.

Process:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students submit Connection to Land Reflection assignment to class basket. 2. Review excerpts from <i>Atanarjuat</i> and <i>The Lesser Blessed</i>. How are these examples of decolonial practice? 3. Watch “The Indian Store” and one additional video that highlights stereotypes of Indigenous Peoples. Discuss. 4. Read/watch Gyasi Ross article using projector. Note stereotypes addressed. 5. Connect texts to Effigy Mounds field trip experience. 6. QW: Reflect on the three texts we have explored in class. How are stereotypes harmful to the people group stereotyped? How are they harmful to society? Have you been guilty of holding some of the stereotypes addressed in these texts? How will these texts impact you personally? 7. LC5 – Students divide into their literature circles and discuss the fifth reading selection, focusing on Indigenous traditions, history, ceremony, and story and making connections with Effigy Mounds. 8. Watch additional 1491s videos (because they’re impactful AND fun) and discuss, as time allows.
Assessment:	<p>Connection to Land Reflection student texts. Observation of student involvement/participation Quick write on Belcourt, 1491s, and Ross texts LC log from record keeper</p>
Homework:	Read LC Text.

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 23 – What is the real story behind Christopher Columbus?

Objectives:	<p>Students will explore and discuss videos depicting accurate history of Columbus that begs the question, “Why do we celebrate and honor a despot?”</p> <p>Students will apply critical thinking skills and the knowledge made during the course of this unit to date to evaluate anti-Columbus Day messages contained in video presentations.</p> <p>Students will create a new name for Columbus Day that is more appropriate for celebration.</p>
Iowa CCSS (11-12):	<p>SK.H.2.1, SK.H.2.2, SK.H.2.3, SK.H.2.4, SK.H.2.5, SK.H.5.3, SK.H.5.4, 11-12.L.1, 11-12.L.5b, IA.1, 11-12.RI.1, 11-12.RI.4, 11-12.RI.7, 11-12.SL.1 (b-d), 11-12.SL.2, 11-12.SL.3</p>
Materials Needed:	<p>David and Remus Bad Crayfish video “Christopher Columbus: What Really Happened?”</p> <p>Nu Heightz Cinema video “Reconsider Columbus Day”</p>
Process:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. View and discuss Columbus videos, evaluating the messages contained in the videos and researching to confirm information about which students are skeptical. 2. Break students up into small groups. Each group discusses possible alternative names for the Columbus Day holiday and an honored guest we should invite to our celebration. The group must come to consensus by the end of class and be prepared to present their suggestions next class.
Assessment:	Observation of student involvement/participation
Homework:	Read LC text.

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 24-27 – What is our new holiday name? How will we celebrate this newly named holiday? What shall we include in our celebration? In what ways can our celebration be categorized as ceremony?

Objectives: Students will apply 21st century skills to planning a ??? Day celebration, including researching and choosing Indigenous foods to prepare, creating an “agenda” for the celebration, and preparing presentations and reflections to share.

Iowa CCSS (11-12): SK.H.2.1, SK.H.2.2, SK.H.2.3, SK.H.2.4, SK.H.2.5, SK.H.5.2, 11-12.L.1, 11-12.L.2, 11-12.L.2b, 11-12.L.6, 11-12.W.4, 11-12.W.5, 11-12.W.6, 11-12.W.9, 11-12.W.10, 11-12.SL.1 (a-d), 11-12.SL.2, 11-12.SL.4, 11-12.SL.5, 11-12.SL.6

Materials Needed: TBD

- Process:
1. Student groups present their holiday name and honored guest suggestions to the class. The class votes as a whole using secret ballot. The name and honored guest receiving the most votes wins.
 2. Divide students into 3-4 small groups. Each group commits to research, choose, and prepare an Indigenous food or dish that is connected to the land which will be shared with the class and honored guest (e.g., apple slices, fresh vegetables, other fruit, venison jerky, soups, breads, etc.)
 3. Small groups also decide on decorations and what supplies will be needed (e.g., plates, forks, napkins, etc.)
 4. Each LC group prepares a presentation on their book, which should be completed by this point. This presentation can use whatever media groups wish to use, including digital media.
 5. Each student prepares a one- to two-sentence reflection on what s/he learned and what impact that new knowledge has had and/or will have on her/his life. Students write their reflections on card stock for display during the celebration.³⁹

³⁹ Students will read these brief reflections and post them on a display wall prepared for the occasion as a part of the ceremony of the new celebration.

6. Students who wish may sign up to share one of their stories of which they are most proud.

Assessment: Observation of student involvement/participation

Homework: Prepare reflection, LC presentation, and Indigenous foods.

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 28 – CELEBRATION DAY!

Objectives: Students will apply communication skills to set up and clean up celebration in a limited amount of time.
 Students will celebrate what they have learned and the Peoples who populated this country before European colonization, honoring their traditions, their connection to the land, their history, and their stories.

Iowa CCSS (11-12): SK.H.2.1, SK.H.2.2, SK.H.2.3, SK.H.2.4, SK.H.2.5, 11-12.L.1, IA.6, 11-12.SL.1b, 11-12.SL.4, 11-12.SL.5, 11-12.SL.6

Materials Needed: TBD

Process:

1. Set up room as much in advance as possible with assistance from students.
2. Student delegation meets and escorts honored guest to the celebration.
3. Celebrate according to student-planned program.

Assessment: Observation of student involvement/participation

Homework: None

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 29 – What a party! How did it feel to celebrate something worthy of celebration? Can we continue this tradition? How can we have an impact on behalf of those without a voice? How can we tie this all up into a neat bow?

- Objectives:**
- Students will evaluate the contributions of their LC partners and celebration teammates, as well as their own, using the Team Project Evaluation Form.
 - Students will reflect on the Indigenous Literature Unit, revisiting the initial KWL activity and analyzing what has been learned.
 - Students will compile writings into a portfolio suitable for presentation, synthesizing their work with an introductory narrative.
- Iowa CCSS (11-12):** SK.H.2.4, SK.H.2.5, 11-12.L.1, 11-12.L.2 (a-b), 11-12.L.6, 11-12.W.3 (a, b, d, e), 11-12.W.4, 11-12.W.11-12.W.9, 11-12.W.10
- Materials Needed:**
- Team Project Evaluation Forms (2 per student)
 - KWL Charts from Day 1
 - Portfolio instruction sheet
- Process:**
1. QW: Write a brief reflection on the ??? Day Celebration. What went well? What could have gone better? Was what we did a decolonial practice? Did we honor Indigenous Peoples in our activities, our behavior, our conversation? Did we honor our special guest by offering respect, stories, and food?
 2. Distribute Team Project Evaluation Forms to students. Have students complete one form for their LC partners (analyzing contributions to LC groups and final presentation) and one form for their celebration preparation group.
 3. QW: Review KWL charts from Day 1. What have we learned? What misconceptions did we have before that have been dispelled? How should this impact our lives?
 4. Explain portfolio project.

5. Students begin working on portfolio project, which will include all writings from the unit, to include quick writes, stories, and reflections, along with a one- to two-page introductory narrative which reflects on the unit. Students may use the quick write assignments as a springboard for their narratives.

Assessment: Observation of student involvement/participation
 Quick writes reflecting on celebration
 Team Project Evaluation Forms

Homework: Work on final portfolio project

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 30 – Writing/Conference Day

Objectives: Students will compose an introductory narrative to synthesize their experiences with this unit as an opening to their portfolio.⁴⁰
Students will compile their writings from this unit into a neat, organized portfolio suitable for presentation.

Iowa CCSS (11-12): SK.H.2, SK.H.4, 11-12.L.1, 11-12.L.2 (a-b), 11-12.L.6, 11-12.W.3 (a-e), 11-12.W.4, 11-12.W.5, 11-12.W.6, 11-12.W.9, 11-12.W.10

Materials Needed: three-prong folders (for students who need them)
printer paper

Process: Students will work on their narratives and portfolios in class, conferencing with instructor as needed.

Assessment: Observation of student involvement/participation.

Homework: Complete portfolio. Due BOC next class.

⁴⁰ Students will have an opportunity, through this final assignment, to synthesize everything they've experienced, discovered, and learned during the course of this unit, with the long term decolonial goal that my students' future behavior and conversation will reflect their learning.

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 31 – Culmination

Objectives:	Students will submit completed portfolios as per the deadline. Students will participate actively in discussion and evaluation of the unit as a whole and in its parts.
Iowa CCSS (11-12):	SK.H.2.5, 11-12.L.1, 11-12.L.6, 11-12.SL.1 (a-d), 11-12.SL.4, 11-12.SL.6
Materials Needed:	None
Process:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students will submit completed, presentation-ready portfolios to the class basket at the beginning of class. 2. Class discussion of unit, addressing the following questions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What did you think of this unit? b. What should we have done differently? c. What would you have liked to see included that wasn't? d. Do you feel you have learned something you didn't know before? If so, what? e. How will this unit impact your view of Indigenous issues that come up in the news, like offensive sports mascot names/logos and tribal lands being taken for oil pipelines? f. How will what you've learned from this unit impact your own behavior and word choices?
Assessment:	Observation of student involvement/participation. Student portfolios
Homework:	None

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Appendix A – Common Core State Standards for Iowa^{41,42}

21st Century Skills

- SK.H.2.1 Communicate and work productively with others, incorporating different perspectives and cross-cultural understanding, to increase innovation and the quality of work.
Work appropriately and productively with others.
- SK.H.2.1a • Set goals
• Effectively communicate with group and stakeholders
• Demonstrate respectful behavior to group member ideas and opinions
• Manage and resolve conflict when appropriate
• Lead or support when appropriate
• Determine people's strengths and assign roles accordingly
• Contribute to a team by sharing information and expertise
• Agree to disagree in a respectful manner in a group dynamic
• Collaborate effectively with other teams/team members toward a common goal
• Recognize own and others' good efforts
- SK.H.2.2 Adapt to various roles and responsibilities and work flexibly in climates of ambiguity and changing priorities.
Adapt to varied roles, responsibilities, and expectations.
- SK.H.2.2a • Work independently or as a part of a team
• Learn from mistakes and accept feedback
• Carry out multiples tasks or projects
• Continuously monitor the success of a project or task
• Identify ways to improve project or task
• Consider multiple perspectives and represent a problem in more than one way
• Accept others; tolerant of differences
- SK.H.2.3 Demonstrate leadership skills, integrity, ethical behavior, and social responsibility while collaborating to achieve common goals.
Use interpersonal skills to influence and guide others toward a goal.

⁴¹ The source for this listing of Iowa Common Core State Standards is *planbook.com*, a subscription service used by my colleagues and me to develop and archive lesson plans.

⁴² This list of Iowa Common Core State Standards is not exhaustive. Only those standards directly applicable to the English/Language Arts content area for grades 11-12 and/or this unit are included.

- SK.H.2.3.a
- Positively support the work of others
 - Facilitate and delegate responsibilities to best accomplish goal(s)
 - Build relationships
 - Engage in the tasks to accomplish goal
 - Know when to listen and when to speak up
 - Maintain an open mind
 - Provide constructive feedback
- SK.H.2.4 Demonstrate initiative and self-direction through high achievement and lifelong learning while exploring the ways individual talents and skills can be used for productive outcomes in personal and professional life. Perform work without oversight.
- SK.H.2.4a
- Assess the situation and identify priority/necessary actions to be taken
 - Understand the value of the task in relationship to the greater goal
 - Understand that incomplete work—even if excellent—is a failure
 - Model self-confidence
 - Know how to find and evaluate appropriate resources
 - Implement solutions
 - Demonstrate commitment to self/group/society
- SK.H.2.5 Demonstrate productivity and accountability by meeting high expectations. Deliver quality job performance on time.
- SK.H.2.5a
- Recognize and understand required standards needed for successful completion
 - Set goals and establish timelines to reach required standards
 - Establish assessment checkpoints throughout work processes
 - Identify quality control issues and make needed adjustments to correct problems
 - Take initiative to see job completed without compromising quality
 - Reassess process on a regular basis to identify any opportunities for improvement
 - Demonstrate ethical behavior and work responsibly, reliably, and collaboratively with others
- SK.H.5.2 Use digital media and environments to communicate and work collaboratively, including at a distance, to support individual learning and contribute to the learning of others. Interact, collaborate, and publish with peers, experts, or others employing a variety of digital environments and media.

- SK.H.5.2a • Using technology, students interact and collaborate with peers, experts, and others to contribute to a content-related, media-rich knowledge base by compiling, synthesizing, producing, and disseminating information, models, and other creative works.
- SK.H.5.3 Apply digital tools to gather, evaluate, and use information.
Plan strategies to guide inquiry.
- SK.H.5.3a • Students design a process which establishes criteria for selecting digital tools and resources to use for in-depth investigation of a real-world task and justify the selection based on efficiency and effectiveness.
- SK.H.5.4 Demonstrate critical thinking skills using appropriate tools and resources to plan and conduct research, manage projects, solve problems, and make informed decisions.
Identify and define authentic, real-world problems and significant questions for investigation.
- SK.H.5.4a • Students identify global issues and analyze capabilities and limitations of current and emerging technology resources in order to develop and refine investigable questions.
- SK.H.5.5 Understand human, cultural, and societal issues related to technology and practice legal and ethical behavior.
Advocate and practice safe, legal, and responsible use of information and technology at an age-appropriate level.
- SK.H.5.5a • Students use technology efficiently and in a manner that does not harm them or others. Their choices demonstrate and advocate for legal and ethical behaviors among peers, family, and community regarding the use of technology and information. Students understand the concept of acceptable use of copyrighted materials, and how disregarding intellectual property affect others.

Language

- 11-12.L.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
- 11-12.L.1a Apply the understanding that usage is a matter of convention, can change over time, and is sometimes contested.
- 11-12.L.1b Resolve issues of complex or contested usage, consulting references (e.g., Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of English Usage, Garner's Modern American Usage) as needed.
- 11-12.L.2 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
- 11-12.L.2a Observe hyphenation conventions.
- 11-12.L.2b Spell correctly.
- 11-12.L.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.
- 11-12.L.3a Vary syntax for effect, consulting references (e.g., Tufte's Artful Sentences) for guidance as needed; apply an understanding of syntax to the study of complex texts when reading.
- 11-12.L.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 11-12 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
- 11-12.L.4a Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, a paragraph, or text; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
- 11-12.L.4b Identify and correctly use patterns of word changes that indicate different meanings or parts of speech (e.g., conceive, conception, conceivable).
- 11-12.L.4c Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning, its part of speech, its etymology, or its standard usage.

- 11-12.L.4d Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).
- 11-12.L.5 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
- 11-12.L.5a Interpret figures of speech (e.g., hyperbole, paradox) in context and analyze their role in the text.
- 11-12.L.5b Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations.
- 11-12.L.6 Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Reading Literature

- IA.1 Employ the full range of research-based comprehension strategies, including making connections, determining importance, questioning, visualizing, making inferences, summarizing, and monitoring for comprehension.
- 11-12.RL.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
- 11-12.RL.2 Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
- 11-12.RL.3 Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
- 11-12.RL.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)

- 11-12.RL.5 Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
- 11-12.RL.6 Analyze a case in which grasping point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).
- 11-12.RL.7 Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist.)
- 11-12.RL.9 Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth-, and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.
- 11-12.RL.10 By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 11-CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grade 11-CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Reading Informational Text

- IA.1 Employ the full range of research-based comprehension strategies, including making connections, determining importance, questioning, visualizing, making inferences, summarizing, and monitoring for comprehension.
- IA.2 Read on-level text, both silently and orally, at an appropriate rate with accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.
- 11-12.RI.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
- 11-12.RI.2 Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.

- 11-12.RI.3 Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.
- 11-12.RI.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines faction in Federalist No. 10).
- 11-12.RI.5 Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.
- 11-12.RI.6 Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness, or beauty of the text.
- 11-12.RI.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.
- 11-12.RI.8 Delineate and evaluate the reasoning in seminal U.S. texts, including the application of constitutional principles and use of legal reasoning (e.g., in U.S. Supreme Court majority opinions and dissents) and the premises, purposes, and arguments in works of public advocacy (e.g., The Federalist, presidential addresses).
- 11-12.RI.9 Analyze seventeenth-, eighteenth-, and nineteenth-century foundational U.S. documents of historical and literary significance (including The Declaration of Independence, the Preamble to the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address) for their themes, purposes, and rhetorical features.
- 11-12.RI.10 By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 11-CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literary nonfiction at the high end of the grades 11-CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Writing

- 11-12.W.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
- 11-12.W.1a Introduce precise, knowledgeable claim(s), establish the significance of the claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternative or opposing claims, and create an organization that logically sequences claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
- 11-12.W.1b Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.
- 11-12.W.1c Use words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.
- 11-12.W.1d Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
- 11-12.W.1e Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.
- 11-12.W.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
- 11-12.W.2a Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
- 11-12.W.2b Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.
- 11-12.W.2c Use appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.

- 11-12.W.2d Use precise language, domain-specific vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic.
- 11-12.W.2e Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
- 11-12.W.2f Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).
- 11-12.W.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
- 11-12.W.3a Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation and its significance, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.
- 11-12.W.3b Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
- 11-12.W.3c Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome (e.g., a sense of mystery, suspense, growth, or resolution).
- 11-12.W.3d Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.
- 11-12.W.3e Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.
- 11-12.W.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)

- 11-12.W.5 Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1-3 up to and including grades 11-12.)
- 11-12.W.6 Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.
- 11-12.W.7 Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
- 11-12.W.8 Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.
- 11-12.W.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
- 11-12.W.9a Apply grades 11-12 Reading standards to literature (e.g., “Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth-, and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics”).
- 11-12.W.9b Apply grades 11-12 Reading standards to literary nonfiction (e.g., “Delineate and evaluate the reasoning in seminal U.S. texts, including the application of constitutional principles and use of legal reasoning [e.g., in U.S. Supreme Court majority opinions and dissents] and the premises, purposes, and arguments in works of public advocacy [e.g., *The Federalist*, presidential addresses]”).
- 11-12.W.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Speaking and Listening

- IA.5 Prepare and conduct interviews.
- IA.6 Participate in public performances.
- IA.7 Debate an issue from either side.
- 11-12.SL.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
 - 11-12.SL.1a Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.
 - 11-12.SL.1b Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.
 - 11-12.SL.1c Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.
 - 11-12.SL.1d Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.
- 11-12.SL.2 Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, or orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.
- 11-12.SL.3 Evaluate the speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.

- 11-12.SL.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.
- 11-12.SL.5 Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.
- 11-12.SL.6 Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating a command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

APPENDIX B – Literature Circle Reading List

- Alexie, Sherman. *Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*. New York: Harper Perennial, 1994.
- . *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*. New York: Little Brown, 2007.
- Broker, Ignatia. *Night Flying Woman*. St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society, 1983.
- Bruchac, Joseph. *Skeleton Man*. New York: Harper-Collins, 2001.
- Campbell, Maria. *Halfbreed*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1973.
- Deloria, Ella. *Waterlily*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1988.
- Hale, Janet Campbell. *Bloodlines*. Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 1993.
- . *The Owl's Song*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1998.
- Harjo, Joy. *Woman Who Fell From the Sky*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996.
- Howe, Leanne. *Shell Shaker*. San Francisco, CA: Aunt Lute Books, 2001.
- Hungry Wolf, Beverly. *The Ways of My Grandmothers*. New York: Quill, 1980.
- King, Thomas. *One Good Story That One*. Toronto: Harper Perennial, 1993.
- . *Medicine River*. New York: Penguin, 1991.
- . *A Coyote Columbus Story*. Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre Ltd., 1992.
- . *Truth and Bright Water*. New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2000.
- McNickle, D'Arcy. *Wind from an Enemy Sky*. New York: Harper-Collins, 1978.
- . *The Surrounded*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1978.
- . *Runner in the Sun*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1987.
- Skolnick, Sharon. *Where Courage is Like a Wild Horse*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1997.
- Sterling, Shirley. *My Name is Seepeetza*. Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre Ltd., 1997.

Tapahonsa, Luci. *Blue Horses Rush In*. Tucson, AZ, University of Arizona Press, 1997.

Van Camp, Richard. *The Lesser Blessed*. Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre Ltd., 1998.

Wallis, Velma. *Two Old Women*. New York: Harper Perennial, 1993.

Instructor Comments

Essay 3 – Unit Plan - Native American Literature

Andrea Marie Riley-Mukavetz
Mon 12/22/2014 12:44 AM
To: Valeria Ann White;

Hi Valeria

I truly enjoyed reading your annotated bibliography. I think it was very impressive. It made me want you for an English teacher and I know your students will be grateful for the experiences you provide them. You demonstrated understanding and generosity throughout the unit. There are few suggestions that I have for this project in terms of portfolio revision. I would like you to include the CCSS for Iowa and perhaps a discussion on how or if these standards complicate your decolonial goals. I wanted to hear about your rationale (in footnotes) for the assignments. I want you to discuss (in the footnotes) how you plan to approach the readings that you assign. What questions will you ask your students? How would you approach the material? Why did you select these texts and what do you think they will do for your goals? I wanted you to ground your pedagogical approaches in the theory and discuss any implications or issues you need to consider. For example, how might incorporating these theories and practices contradict, complicate, modify, or compliment the institution that you work in? Or, the other courses your students will take? What are your decolonial pedagogical goals? I think you begin this discussion in the writer's memo but you abandon it once you get to the unit plan. Overall nice work. I am excited to see how you revise this project for the portfolio. I hope you have an excellent holiday and a restful break!

Warmly
Dr. RM

Dr. Andrea M. Riley Mukavetz
Assistant Professor
Rhetoric and Writing
Department of English
Bowling Green State University

Valeria A. White

Dr. Andrea Riley Mukavetz

ENG6800 – Decolonial Theory and Methodology

18 December 2014

Unit Plan – Native American Literature

Part 1 – Writer's Memo

Native American literature, especially that which is part of Indigenous⁴³ oral tradition, comprises the earliest literature which can justifiably be identified specifically as American. Whether rooted in Mayan or Aztec traditions or in tribes and nations in the northern half of the Americas, Indigenous stories and histories form the very foundation of what has come to be known as American literature. Sadly, recognition of this continually growing body of work is often lacking, especially in high school classrooms. Courses focusing on literature of the Americas more often than not restrict exploration to texts produced by the dominant, colonizing culture (i.e., white European males with a relatively small representation of white European females) with only a passing mention of the oral literary traditions of Indigenous peoples. This unit plan is designed to rectify the gap that exists in the American literature canon and in the education of American youth, especially those of the dominant culture, providing students with the opportunity

⁴³ For the purpose of brevity, the term “Indigenous” (capitalized) will be used throughout this unit plan to refer to those people groups whose presence in the Americas, and specifically North America, predate European colonization. These people groups include but are certainly not limited to the Cherokee, Ojibwa, Iroquois, Modoc, Navajo, Dogrib, and Inuit. The non-capitalized term, if used at all, will refer to people who have lived in an area for an extended period of time and are considered “native,” but may not necessarily be classified as Indian.

to experience and explore early texts, both oral and written, as well as contemporary texts by Indigenous authors.

This unit plan is designed for grade 11 American Literature classes offered in a small, Northeast Iowa high school. Individual class sizes range from ten to 24 students, with a total junior class population of 50 to 60 students. Instructional periods run for 43 minutes, with 38-minute periods on Wednesday due to a weekly Professional Learning Community early dismissal. The location of the school offers easy access to Effigy Mounds National Monument, a surprisingly decolonial site known for its Indigenous history and educational programs. If this unit plan was implemented in another location, adjustments would need to be made based on the availability of decolonial sites and guest speakers.

Of necessity, this unit will be only a survey of Indigenous literature—time limitations and the responsibility to address a wide range of Iowa Common Core State Standards (CCSS) objectives during the course of the school year do not allow for a more in-depth exploration of Indigenous texts. However, the goals of this plan are manifold, incorporating both academic and social objectives. Academically, this unit will expose students to historically and literarily significant texts created by a broad representation of North American Indigenous peoples, as well as allowing them to discuss colonialism, its impact on Indigenous peoples, and decolonialism, defined as “stories of the colonized written about the colonized in service of healing, of self-determination, of autonomy, of survival. Much more than writing, [decolonialism] includes making knowledge and

sharing knowledge” (Riley-Mukavetz)⁴⁴. In addition, students will meet Iowa CCSS in English Language Arts, to include standards in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. This will take the form of reading narrative and theoretical text excerpts, composing creative or personal narratives in story form and more formal reflective essays, participating in a field trip to Effigy Mounds National Monument, contributing to class discussion, and producing oral presentations of their narratives to share with the class. Socially, this unit will expose any colonial attitudes students may hold and provide the opportunity to evaluate and consider alternative perspectives in an effort to rectify their misconceptions.

The importance of prior knowledge cannot be overestimated and will provide the springboard from which this unit will commence. As such, the first lesson will involve individual and small group brainstorming in a KWL format to determine and record everything they know or think they know about Indigenous peoples, their history, and their literature. This KWL activity might, and hopefully will, include facts and fictions related to Columbus’ “discovery” of North America, the first Thanksgiving, Squanto, Sacagawea, Pocahontas, Crazy Horse, Keokuk, Black Hawk, and many others. The latter part of the period will be a coming together for whole-class discussion and an evaluation of what pieces of “knowledge” might actually be misconceptions. All lessons will be centered around and introduced with questions as a means of drawing attention to specific aspects of the topic.

A major goal of this unit is to provide opportunity for students to rethink their participation in colonial attitudes and behaviors; for this reason, the culmination of this

⁴⁴Dr. Andrea Riley-Mukavetz provided this definition of *decolonialism* in her Week One Lecture for ENG 6800 - Decolonial Theory and Methodology, fall of 2014.

unit will coincide with Columbus Day. Students will have had the opportunity to rename the holiday more appropriately earlier in the unit and will have researched Indigenous foods from across North America. On [Columbus] Day, each American Literature section will invite an honored guest to join the class for a celebration of Indigenous culture, for which students will prepare and share Indigenous foods, stories, book reviews, and reflections.

This unit will take place early in the school year, not only because of the foundational nature of Indigenous literature, but also because of the anticipated field trip to Effigy Mounds National Monument.⁴⁵ Prior to this unit, a brief review of grammatical conventions and writing strategies will take place, followed by a discussion about American identity, American exceptionalism as it relates to literature, and what constitutes American literature. This discussion will segue nicely into our exploration of Indigenous literature and literary traditions. The succeeding unit will focus on slave narratives, another form of decolonial text, and literature of emancipation and the Civil Rights Movement.

I believe this unit has several strengths. Through a variety of strategies, students are exposed to carefully reviewed texts⁴⁶ embodying multiple literary forms (i.e., written, oral, film) arising from multiple sources and encompassing multiple time periods. In

⁴⁵ Effigy Mounds National Monument has a visitors' center with a small auditorium, but the main focus of the monument is the mounds created by the ancestors of 18 affiliated tribes from the region. These are located on the bluffs above the Mississippi River and are accessible via several hiking trails. Indigenous peoples are actively involved in the monument both as park staff and in the volunteers who provide interpretation to park guests.

⁴⁶ A number of novels appropriate for middle school and young adult readers are inaccurate in their portrayal of Indigenous/First Nations beliefs and practices. Hence, careful evaluation must be made to ascertain textual authenticity before inclusion in the reading list for this course.

addition, students are allowed, even encouraged, to reflect on their connections to the literature and to change their own misconceptions as a result. As with any unit plan, however, until it is tested in the “real world” of the classroom, its effectiveness is in question. A closer review of available literature may lead to changes and additions to the texts explored, which will then impact the amount of time involved to complete the unit. Since this course is offered in the same grade as American History, coordination with the American History teacher will be necessary to maintain the collaborative relationship between the two classes. Further, evaluation of student ability may lead to adjustment of content or requirements and may allow for deeper exploration of theoretical texts. Adjustment to allow for use of technology would also be appropriate. One possible option would be the incorporation of a blog requirement to replace the quick writes. This would allow students the freedom to record their reactions and reflections in a more timely manner rather than waiting until a specific writing prompt is assigned.

Part 2 – Unit Plan

Following is the lesson-by-lesson plan for this unit, beginning with a unit schedule that will be distributed to students at the beginning of the first class.

English III – American Literature
Indigenous Literature
Unit Schedule

The following schedule reflects what you can expect as we explore Indigenous (Native American) literature over the next several weeks. Changes to the schedule may—and probably will—occur, so you are encouraged to be flexible. Be reminded that you are responsible for the assignments and due dates on this schedule. You will be notified via e-mail of any adjustments.

Day	Date	What's Due?	Activity
1			KWL and Discussion: What do we know or think we know about Indigenous Peoples?
2			What is colonialism? What is decolonialism? What do they look like? HW: Find an example of each
3		Examples of colonialism and decolonialism	Discuss examples of colonialism/decolonialism Introduce literature circles – book talks HW: Decide which text you would like to read
4		Text Choice	Lit Circles – divide into groups based on text choice Set group rules and reading goals HW: Begin reading Lit Circle text
5			Introduce Effigy Mounds field trip Lecture and discussion of Indigenous interconnectivity (connections to land/family/tribe) HW: Lit Circle text
6			Effigy Mounds Field Trip HW: Lit Circle text
7			QW: Reflect on yesterday's field trip (15 min.) Lit Circle 1 HW: Lit Circle text
8			What is the role of story? Read and discuss Thomas King excerpt on story. HW: Lit Circle text
9			Story as History How is story used to relate history (tribal and/or family)? Explore and discuss examples HW: Interview for Story as History text
10			Work/Conference Day
11			Work/Conference Day Lit Circle 2
12		Story (history)	Story as a Teaching Tool How is story used to teach morals? Explore and discuss examples HW: Write a short story that teaches a moral

13			Work/Conference Day
14			Work/Conference Day and Lit Circle 3
15		Story (moral)	Story as Conflict Resolution How is story used to resolve conflict? Explore and discuss examples HW: Story that resolves conflict.
16			Work/Conference Day
17			Work/Conference Day Lit Circle 4
18-19		Story (conflict)	Connection to the Land How is connection to the land expressed? What is your connection to the land? How is connected to the land reflected at Effigy Mounds? Explore and discuss examples
20			Why are the Sky Woman stories slightly different? Compare and contrast several differing accounts.
21			Story as Decolonial Practice How is story used as a decolonial practice? Can this be classified as activism? Explore and discuss examples
22			QW: Reflect on the three texts we explored in class yesterday. (10 minutes) Lit Circle 5 More 1491s videos (because they're impactful AND fun) and discussion as time allows.
23			What is the real story behind Columbus? Explore Columbus Day videos and discuss Small group project: Rename the Day/honored guest suggestions
24		Holiday's new name Honored guest suggestions	How will we celebrate this newly named holiday? What shall we include in our celebration? In what ways can our celebration be categorized as ceremony? Plan celebration HW: Work on Celebration preparation
25			Lit Circle 6 Celebration Preparation
26			Celebration Preparation
27			Celebration Preparation
28	Columbus Day	Food and Supplies	*****?? Day Celebration*****
29			QW: Reflect on the ?? Day Celebration Revisit KWL from beginning of unit. What have we learned? Begin compiling portfolio of unit writings. HW: Continue working on portfolio
30			Work/Conference Day
31		Portfolio	Submit portfolio (print copy) Class discussion – unit evaluation

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 1 – What do we know or think we know about Indigenous Peoples?

Objectives: Students will access prior knowledge (whether fact or misconception) on the subject of American Indians, their history, their culture, and their literature.
Students will demonstrate the ability to work effectively in small groups to activate and record prior knowledge.

Iowa CCSS (11-12): SK.H.2.1, SK.H.2.3, 11-12.SL.1, 11-12.SL.6

Materials Needed: KWL worksheet
Post-it easel pad
flip chart markers

Process:

1. Outline rules for group discussion (respect, positive feedback, etc.)
2. Students brainstorm individually to access prior knowledge, recording thoughts on KWL worksheet (3-4 minutes)
3. Students gather into small groups (3-4 students per group) and identify spokesperson. Students share their KWL information, activating additional prior knowledge and recording info on Post-it easel pad paper (5-7 minutes).
4. Spokespersons post KWL information on white board.
5. Class discussion. Identify possible misconceptions.

Assessment: Observation of student involvement/participation
KWL worksheets and Post-it easel pad papers

Homework: Think about what you've discovered today. Allow that prior knowledge and anything new you've learned to percolate.

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 2 – What is colonialism? How are colonial attitudes propagated? How can they be changed? Is it important to change them? What is decolonialism? What does that look like?

Objectives: Students will learn the meaning of colonialism, decolonialism, and stereotype and will be able to recognize examples of each. Students will learn vocabulary associated with the topic of study and be able to apply the vocabulary to their writing assignments (unit-long).

Iowa CCSS (11-12): SK.H.2.1, 11-12.L.6, 11-12.SL.1, 11-12.SL.6

Materials Needed: White board and markers
Vocabulary Keynote
The Berenstain Bears Give Thanks, Jan and Mike Berenstain

Process:

1. Introduce students to vocabulary (Keynote).
2. Discuss the meaning of colonialism. Where do we see this happening.
3. Read *The Berenstain Bears Give Thanks* or other children's picture book influenced by colonialism.
4. Discuss images, attitudes, revisionist history.
5. Discuss the meaning of decolonialism.
6. Watch video (tbd) of the "true" Thanksgiving story.
7. Additional discussion.

Assessment: Observation of student involvement/participation.

Homework: Scavenger hunt: Find examples of colonialism and decolonialism. You may look in magazines, newspapers, books, movies, textbooks, and/or online. A reward for each example will be offered.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ This will take the form of either a Starburst candy or a pack of Smarties.

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 3 – What did you find in your scavenging through media? How is this unit going to work? What are you going to be required to do?

Objectives: Students will demonstrate an understanding of colonialism and decolonialism through the examples they have found.
Students will understand unit requirements and expectations.

Iowa CCSS (11-12):⁴⁸

Materials Needed: Unit Schedule
Literature Circle Information Sheet
Literature Circle Book List⁴⁹ for outside reading
Book talk information on each book option

Process: 1. Distribute and review unit schedule/unit expectations. Entertain any questions or concerns that arise.

2. Distribute field trip permission forms (due Day 5).

3. Explain outside reading requirement and literature circles (ultimate goal is a group presentation about the book at our final celebration).

4. Distribute Literature Circle Book List.

5. Give book talk on each book option (stations around room).

6. Students circulate among stations to give the books a look-see.

Assessment: Observation of student involvement/participation

Homework: Determine first, second and third choice for outside reading text.
Complete outside reading survey (SurveyMonkey).

⁴⁸ Since identifying specific Iowa Common Core State Standards is a time-consuming task and trivial for the task at hand, I have left these blank for the moment.

⁴⁹ This list will be compiled from a blog by Debbie Reese (Nambe Pueblo) on the American Indians in Children's Literature web site, and will include books such as Sherman Alexie's *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, Ella Deloria's *Waterlily*, and Janet Campbell Hale's *The Owl's Song*.

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 4 – What are we going to read? How will we set up our groups? What are our guidelines and goals?

Objectives: Students will divide into groups based on their outside reading choice.
Student groups will collaborate to establish a reading schedule and guidelines for discussion.

Iowa CCSS (11-12):

Materials Needed: Outside reading books (20 copies of each)
Supplemental book sign-out sheets
Student computers (Googledoc for recording group guidelines/goals)

Process:

1. Remind students that Field Trip Permission forms are due next class.
2. Based on survey results, divide students into LC groups.
3. Students move to LC area of classroom.
4. Students sign out copies of LC texts using sign-out sheets.
5. Groups of students collaboratively develop guidelines for discussion and set reading goals.
6. Students begin reading LC text (if time allows).

Assessment: Observation of student involvement/participation.

Homework: Read LC text.
Field Trip Permission forms due next class

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 5 – We get to go on a field trip? Really?!

Objectives: Students will understand the purpose and expectations for the Day 6 field trip, including behavior and long-range goals.
 Students will take notes during lecture, using instructor cues (visuals on board) to ascertain important information.
 Students will demonstrate responsibility by turning in their Field Trip Permission forms.

Iowa CCSS (11-12):

Materials Needed: White board
 Field trip information sheet (expectations, short-range goals, long-range goals)

Process:

1. Students turn in their signed Field Trip Permission forms via their class basket.
2. Description of field trip goals (short- and long-range).
3. Distribute information sheet.
4. Lecture on the importance of connections to Indigenous Peoples and how this relates to the field trip.

Assessment: Observation of student involvement/participation

Homework: Read LC text
 Pack a sack lunch for the field trip

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 6 – EFFIGY MOUNDS FIELD TRIP

Objectives: Students will demonstrate respectful behavior as guests and learners.
Students will be exposed to North American Indigenous histories, traditions, ceremony, and story through participation in lectures, small group activities, and hikes along the trails.

Iowa CCSS (11-12):

Materials Needed: Students bring: Sack lunches!
Field trip information sheets
Tablet and pen/pencil
Loose tobacco⁵⁰
Permission forms
Medical supplies for any at-risk students (food, insect allergies)

Process:

1. Students will be divided up into four (4) groups. Each group will be accompanied by at least one chaperone.
2. Welcome and introduction (9:00 – 9:15), including reminder of park rules.
3. The field trip will be divided into four (4) stations:
 - a. History of Indigenous Peoples pre- and post-contact (Albert LeBeau – Lakota Sioux)
 - b. The mounds and their purpose (Sheila Oberreuter and Merle Frommelt)
 - c. Indigenous ceremony: tobacco, smudging, pipe ceremony, etc. (Chloris Lowe – Ho-Chunk)
 - d. Indigenous story (??)

⁵⁰ This is tentative; I will need to check possible exceptions to school policy before I can have tobacco on the field trip. However, if I am able to include this, it would be under the control of the chaperones and used to show respect at the mounds.

Each station will last one hour and 10 minutes to allow sufficient time for those hiking up to the mounds to get back to the visitor center. Station times will be 9:15 – 10:25, 10:25 – 11:35, 12:05 – 1:15, and 1:15 – 2:25, with lunch from 11:35 – 12:05. The bus will leave the monument to return to school promptly at 2:30. Each chaperone will be provided with an itinerary for the day, along with a list of students for whom they are responsible.

4. Student groups will rotate among the stations, breaking at midday for a picnic lunch on the grounds.

Assessment: Observation of student involvement/participation

Homework: Spend some quiet time outside processing what you experienced at Effigy Mounds today. Review your notes and be prepared to reflect on and discuss your experiences in our next class. Read LC text.

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 7 – Whew! What a day! How do we process everything we learned?

Objectives: Students will reflect on their field trip experience, completing a short writing assignment to synthesize their thoughts.
Students will participate in their literature circles, discussing the first reading goal.

Iowa CCSS (11-12):

Materials Needed: Notebook paper
Writing implement (pen/pencil)

Process:

1. Distribute notebook paper and pens/pencils (if needed)
2. Students write a 15-minute reflection (quick write) about their field trip experience.
3. Remind students that the culmination of the unit will be a celebration during which each LC group will be doing a presentation about their particular book.
4. LC1 – Students divide into their literature circles and discuss the first reading selection, focusing on Indigenous traditions, history, ceremony, and story and making connections with Effigy Mounds.

Assessment: Quick writes
Observation of student involvement/participation
LC log from record keeper

Homework: Read LC text

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 8 – What is story? How is it used? What makes it work?

Objectives: Students will understand the concept of story and its use in Indigenous culture.
Students will read and discuss excerpts from Thomas King's *The Truth About Stories*, relating King's writing to their field trip lecture on story in local tribal culture.

Iowa CCSS (11-12):

Materials Needed: Copies of King excerpts

Process:

1. Break students up into small group.
2. Have each group read and discuss one excerpt from Thomas King's *The Truth About Stories*.
3. Each student group shares the important points they gleaned.

Assessment: Observation of student involvement/participation

Homework: Review Thomas King excerpts
Read LC text

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 9 – How is story used to relate history (tribal and/or family)?

Objectives: Students will explore and discuss examples of story as history.
 Students will connect with an older member of their family and their family history.
 Students will compose a text that demonstrates their understanding of story as history.

Iowa CCSS (11-12):

Materials Needed: *Atanarjuat* (DVD)
Books and Islands in Ojibwe Country by Louise Erdrich
 Instructions and rubric for Story as History assignment

Process:

1. View excerpt from *Atanarjuat* showing history being shared as story.
2. Read excerpt from *Books and Islands* showing history being shared as story.
3. Connect texts to Effigy Mounds field trip experience.
4. Assign and explain Story as History writing assignment.

Assessment: Observation of student involvement/participation

Homework: Interview an older member of your family about your family's history.
 Write a story about what you learn (as opposed to simply regurgitating facts).

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 10 – Story as History (cont.) – Writing/Conference Day

Objectives: Students will connect with an older member of their family and their family history.
 Students will compose a text that demonstrates their understanding of story as history.

Iowa CCSS (11-12):

Materials Needed: Student computers
 Notes from family interview

Process: Students will compose their texts in class, conferencing with instructor as needed.

Assessment: Observation of student involvement/participation

Homework: Work on story as history.
 Read LC text.

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 11 – Story as History (cont.) – Writing/Conference Day

Objectives:

- Students will connect with an older member of their family and their family history.
- Students will compose a text that demonstrates their understanding of story as history.
- Students will participate in their literature circles, discussing the second reading goal.

Iowa CCSS (11-12):

Materials Needed:

- Student computers
- Notes from family interview

Process:

1. Students will compose their texts in class, conferencing with instructor as needed.
2. LC2 – Students divide into their literature circles and discuss the second reading selection, focusing on Indigenous traditions, history, ceremony, and story and making connections with Effigy Mounds.

Assessment:

- Observation of student involvement/participation
- LC log from record keeper

Homework:

- Work on story as history.
- Read LC text.

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 12 – Story as History (cont.) – Writing/Conference Day

Objectives:

- Students will promptly submit assignments.
- Students will explore and discuss examples of story as teaching tool.
- Students will connect with a younger family member by creating a story for him/her to teach a moral lesson.
- Students will compose a text that demonstrates their understanding of the use of story as a teaching tool.

Iowa CCSS (11-12):

Materials Needed:

- Atanarjuat* (DVD)
- Moral tales from multiple cultures (Aesop, Bible, Anansi, Coyote, etc., specifics to be determined)
- Instructions and rubric for Story as Teaching Tool assignment

Process:

1. Students submit Story as History assignment to class basket.
2. View excerpt from *Atanarjuat* showing story being used to teach morals.
3. Read examples of moral tales from other Indigenous Peoples and Western cultures, noting similarities and differences.
4. Connect texts to Effigy Mounds field trip experience.
5. Assign and explain Story as Teaching Tool writing assignment.

Assessment:

- Story as History student texts
- Observation of student involvement/participation

Homework:

Choose a moral (e.g., “Those who work hard will receive a reward.”) that you feel a younger family member might need to learn. Write a short story, connected to the land/nature in some way, that you could use to teach a younger family member that moral lesson.

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 13 – Story as Teaching Tool (cont.) – Writing/Conference Day

Objectives: Students will connect with a younger family member by creating a story to teach a moral lesson to for him/her to teach a moral lesson.
 Students will compose a text that demonstrates their understanding of the use of story as a moral teaching tool.

Iowa CCSS (11-12):

Materials Needed: Student computers

Process: Students will compose their texts in class, conferencing with instructor as needed.

Assessment: Observation of student involvement/participation.

Homework: Work on moral story.
 Read LC text.

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 14 – Story as Teaching Tool (cont.) – Writing/Conference Day

Objectives:

- Students will connect with a younger family member by creating a story to teach a moral lesson to for him/her to teach a moral lesson.
- Students will compose a text that demonstrates their understanding of the use of story as a moral teaching tool.
- Students will participate in their literature circles, discussing the third reading goal.

Iowa CCSS (11-12):

Materials Needed: Student computers

Process:

1. Students will compose their texts in class, conferencing with instructor as needed.
2. LC3 – Students divide into their literature circles and discuss the third reading selection, focusing on Indigenous traditions, history, ceremony, and story and making connections with Effigy Mounds.

Assessment: Observation of student involvement/participation
LC log from record keeper

Homework: Work on moral story (due next class).
Read LC text.

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 15 – How is story used to resolve conflict and restore relationship?

Objectives:

- Students will explore and discuss examples of story used to resolve conflict and restore relationship.
- Students will connect with a friend or family member with whom they are currently having or have had a conflict.
- Students will compose a text that demonstrates their understanding of story as a means of resolving conflict and restoring relationship.

Iowa CCSS (11-12):

Materials Needed:

- Atanarjuat* (DVD)
- The Lesser Blessed* (DVD)
- Excerpts of other texts (tbd)
- Instructions and rubric for Story as Conflict Resolution assignment

Process:

1. Students submit Story as Teaching Tool assignment to class basket.
2. View excerpts from *Atanarjuat* and *The Lesser Blessed* that depict story being used to resolve conflict and restore relationship.
3. Read excerpt from [*selected texts*] showing story used to resolve conflict and restore relationship.
4. Connect texts to Effigy Mounds field trip experience.
5. Assign and explain Story as Conflict Resolution writing assignment.

Assessment:

- Story as Teaching Tool student texts.
- Observation of student involvement/participation

Homework:

- Think of a conflict you've recently had with a family member or friend. Write a story that resolves the conflict by respectfully expressing your feelings and offering a reasonable solution.

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 16 – Story as Conflict Resolution (cont.) – Writing/Conference Day

Objectives: Students will connect with a friend or family member with whom they are currently having or have had a conflict.
Students will compose a text that demonstrates their understanding of story as a means of resolving conflict and restoring relationship.

Iowa CCSS (11-12):

Materials Needed: Student computers

Process: Students will compose their texts in class, conferencing with instructor as needed.

Assessment: Observation of student involvement/participation.

Homework: Work on conflict resolution story.
Read LC text.

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 17 – Story as Conflict Resolution (cont.) – Writing/Conference Day

Objectives:

- Students will connect with a friend or family member with whom they are currently having or have had a conflict.
- Students will compose a text that demonstrates their understanding of story as a means of resolving conflict and restoring relationship.
- Students will participate in their literature circles, discussing the fourth reading goal.

Iowa CCSS (11-12):

Materials Needed: Student computers

Process:

1. Students will compose their texts in class, conferencing with instructor as needed.
2. LC4 – Students divide into their literature circles and discuss the fourth reading selection, focusing on Indigenous traditions, history, ceremony, and story and making connections with Effigy Mounds.

Assessment: Observation of student involvement/participation
LC log from record keeper

Homework: Work on conflict resolution story (due next class).
Read LC text.

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 18-20 – How is connection to the land expressed in story? How is this reflected at Effigy Mounds? Why are the Sky Woman stories slightly different? What is your connection to the land?

Objectives: Students will explore and discuss examples connection to the land expressed in story.
 Students will connect relationship to the land to differences in the Sky Woman stories between various tribes.
 Students will have an opportunity to connect with the land in their own space.

Iowa CCSS (11-12):

Materials Needed: Christi Belcourt’s explanation of “My Heart is Beautiful.”
 Origin myths from English III textbook
 Sky Woman stories from various tribes (tbd)
 Post-it easel pad paper
 Flip chart markers
 Instruction sheet for Connection to the Land Reflection writing assignment

Process:

1. Students submit Story as Conflict Resolution assignment to class basket.
2. View video of Christi Belcourt explaining her painting “My Heart is Beautiful.”
3. QW: Noting how each image in Belcourt’s painting is steeped in meaning and deeply connected to the land, from the plant roots and insects to the birds and flowers, describe in detail how you would depict your connection to the land? What would your painting look like?
4. Read origin myths from English III textbook.
5. Read additional Sky Woman stories from various tribes.
6. In small groups, create Venn diagrams or T-charts to compare/contrast Sky Woman stories on Post-it easel pad paper, noting location of tribe.
7. Based on comparison, reflect on the connection between versions of the Sky Woman story and the land from which those versions arose. Note on diagram/chart.
8. Post diagrams/charts on white board. As a class, discuss connections observed.

- Assessment: Story as Conflict Resolution student texts.
Observation of student involvement/participation
Review of diagrams/charts created in small groups.
- Homework: Spend some time outside reflecting on your connection to the land.
Walk around your yard, your family's property, the space where you dwell. What is that space like? How do you feel when you're there? How do you feel when you're not there? Write a brief (2-3 paragraph) reflection.
- Read LC text.

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 21-22 – How is story used as decolonial practice?

Objectives:	<p>Students will explore and discuss examples of story used as decolonial practice.</p> <p>Students will compose a brief text that demonstrates their understanding of story as a decolonial practice.</p> <p>Students will participate in their literature circles, discussing the fifth reading goal.</p>
Iowa CCSS (11-12):	
Materials Needed:	<p><i>Atanarjuat</i> (DVD)</p> <p><i>The Lesser Blessed</i> (DVD)</p> <p>1491s’ “The Indian Store” and other videos</p> <p>Christi Belcourt’s interview for <i>Walking with our Sisters</i></p> <p>“Don’t Believe the Hype: Beyond Poverty Porn, Pain, and Drunk Indians” by Gyasi Ross</p>
Process:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students submit Connection to Land Reflection assignment to class basket. 2. Review excerpts from <i>Atanarjuat</i> and <i>The Lesser Blessed</i>. How are these examples of decolonial practice? 3. Watch “The Indian Store” and one additional video that highlights stereotypes of Indigenous Peoples. Discuss. 4. Read/watch Gyasi Ross article using projector. Note stereotypes addressed. 5. Connect texts to Effigy Mounds field trip experience. 6. QW: Reflect on the three texts we have explored in class. Have you been guilty of holding some of the stereotypes addressed in these texts? How will these texts impact you personally? 7. LC5 – Students divide into their literature circles and discuss the fifth reading selection, focusing on Indigenous traditions, history, ceremony, and story and making connections with Effigy Mounds. 8. Watch additional 1491s videos (because they’re impactful AND fun) and discuss, as time allows.
Assessment:	<p>Connection to Land Reflection student texts.</p> <p>Observation of student involvement/participation</p> <p>Quick write on Belcourt, 1491s, and Ross texts</p> <p>LC log from record keeper</p>
Homework:	Read LC Text.

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 23 – What is the real story behind Christopher Columbus?

Objectives: Students will explore and discuss videos depicting accurate history of Columbus that begs the question, “Why do we celebrate and honor a despot?”
Students will apply critical thinking skills and the knowledge made during the course of this unit to date, creating a new name for Columbus Day that is more appropriate for celebration.

Iowa CCSS (11-12):

Materials Needed: David and Remus Bad Crayfish video “Christopher Columbus: What Really Happened?”
Nu Heightz Cinema video “Reconsider Columbus Day”

Process:

1. View and discuss Columbus videos.
2. Break students up into small groups. Each group discusses possible alternative names for the Columbus Day holiday and an honored guest we should invite to our celebration. The group must come to consensus by the end of class and be prepared to present their suggestions next class.

Assessment: Observation of student involvement/participation

Homework: Read LC text.

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 24-27 – What is our new holiday name? How will we celebrate this newly named holiday? What shall we include in our celebration? In what ways can our celebration be categorized as ceremony?

Objectives: Students will apply 21st century skills to planning a ??? Day celebration, including researching and choosing Indigenous foods to prepare, creating an “agenda” for the celebration, and preparing presentations and reflections to share.

Iowa CCSS (11-12):

Materials Needed: TBD

Process:

1. Student groups present their holiday name and honored guest suggestions to the class. The class votes as a whole using secret ballot. The name and honored guest receiving the most votes wins.
2. Divide students into 3-4 small groups. Each group commits to research, choose, and prepare an Indigenous food or dish that is connected to the land which will be shared with the class and honored guest (e.g., apple slices, fresh vegetables, other fruit, venison jerky, soups, breads, etc.)
3. Small groups also decide on decorations and what supplies will be needed (e.g., plates, forks, napkins, etc.)
4. Each LC group prepares a presentation on their book, which should be completed by this point.
5. Each student prepares a one- to two-sentence reflection on what s/he learned and what impact that new knowledge has had and/or will have on her/his life.
6. Students who wish may sign up to share one of their stories of which they are most proud.

Assessment: Observation of student involvement/participation

Homework: Prepare reflection, LC presentation, and Indigenous foods.

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 28 – CELEBRATION DAY!

Objectives: Students will apply communication skills to set up and clean up celebration in a limited amount of time.
Students will celebrate what they have learned and the Peoples who populated this country before European colonization, honoring their traditions, their connection to the land, their history, and their stories.

Iowa CCSS (11-12):

Materials Needed: TBD

Process:

1. Set up room as much in advance as possible with assistance from students.
2. Student delegation meets and escorts honored guest to the celebration.
3. Celebrate according to student-planned program.

Assessment: Observation of student involvement/participation

Homework: None

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 29 – What a party! How did it feel to celebrate something that deserves celebration? How can we continue this tradition in our own lives? How can we have an impact on behalf of those whose voice is not heard as loudly as our own? How can we tie this all up into a nice, neat bow?

Objectives:

- Students will evaluate the contributions of their LC partners and celebration teammates, as well as their own, using the Team Project Evaluation Form.
- Students will reflect on the Indigenous Literature Unit, revisiting the initial KWL activity and analyzing what has been learned.
- Students will compile writings into a portfolio suitable for presentation, synthesizing their work with an introductory narrative.

Iowa CCSS (11-12):

Materials Needed:

- Team Project Evaluation Forms (2 per student)
- KWL Charts from Day 1
- Portfolio instruction sheet

Process:

1. QW: Write a brief reflection on the ??? Day Celebration. What went well? What could have gone better? Was what we did a decolonial practice? Did we honor Indigenous Peoples in our activities, our behavior, our conversation? Did we honor our special guest by offering respect, stories, and food?
2. Distribute Team Project Evaluation Forms to students. Have students complete one form for their LC partners (analyzing contributions to LC groups and final presentation) and one form for their celebration preparation group.
3. Review KWL charts from Day 1. What have we learned? What misconceptions did we have before that have been dispelled? How should this impact our lives?
4. Explain portfolio project.

5. Students begin working on portfolio project, which will include all writings from the unit, to include quick writes, stories, and reflections, along with a one- to two-page introductory narrative which reflects on the unit.

Assessment: Observation of student involvement/participation
Quick write reflecting on celebration
Team Project Evaluation Forms

Homework: Work on final portfolio project

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 30 – Writing/Conference Day

Objectives: Students will compose an introductory narrative to synthesize their experiences with this unit as an opening to their portfolio.
Students will compile their writings from this unit into a neat, organized portfolio suitable for presentation.

Iowa CCSS (11-12):

Materials Needed: three-prong folders (for students who need them)
printer paper

Process: Students will work on their narratives and portfolios in class, conferencing with instructor as needed.

Assessment: Observation of student involvement/participation.

Homework: Complete portfolio. Due BOC next class.

Indigenous Literature Unit

Day 31 – Culmination

Objectives: Students will submit completed portfolios as per the deadline.
Students will participate actively in discussion and evaluation of the unit as a whole and in its parts.

Iowa CCSS (11-12):

Materials Needed: None

Process:

1. Students will submit completed, presentation-ready portfolios to the class basket at the beginning of class.
2. Class discussion of unit, addressing the following questions:
 - a. What did you think of this unit?
 - b. What should we have done differently?
 - c. What would have liked to see included that wasn't?
 - d. Do you feel you learned something you didn't know before?
 - e. How will this unit impact your view of Indigenous issues that come up in the news, like offensive sports mascot names/logos and tribal lands being taken for oil pipelines?
 - f. How will what you've learned from this unit impact your own behavior and word choices?

Assessment: Observation of student involvement/participation.
Student portfolios

Homework: None

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ENG 6800 – Decolonial Theory and Methods

10 November 2014

Shaping Earth—Shaping Theory

Rarely in academia are students encouraged to participate in experiences and asked to reflect on them. More commonly, students are required to research a topic and write lengthy treatises, complete with footnotes, works cited, appendices, and proper MLA or APA formatting and citations. An almost clinical detachment is required to successfully remove oneself from the research topic and the completed text. This project is a rare opportunity to step out of the academic mold of isolation from one's topic, to take steps into the space one is exploring, and to build a relationship with that space and the others who occupy it. Rather than researching and making knowledge from a "safe" distance that will allow me to remain disconnected and sanitized from what I might learn, this excursion of inquiry into an indigenous past that finds recognition in the colonial present promises a paradigm shift from my formerly comfortable colonial mindset. It is also a rare opportunity to use story to build theory, because it is through story that experiences are absorbed, reflected upon, and shared.

This is the testimony of my decolonial practice.

⁵¹My search for decolonial practice took me a mere 20 miles from my home to a beautiful spot along the



⁵¹ All images incorporated in this paper are photographs taken by the author on 11 and 12 October 2014.

Mississippi River. Effigy Mounds National Monument is located in the northeast corner of Iowa along the Mississippi River just north of the village of Marquette and the bridge that connects Iowa with Wisconsin at Prairie du Chien.⁵² I pass within three miles of the monument every weekend when I cross the river to do my grocery shopping, a trip that usually takes just under thirty minutes. In addition, I have visited the monument a few times over the course of the last six years, since my family and I moved to Northeast Iowa. As a result, my preparation was limited because I wanted to experience the space with as fresh a pair of eyes as possible, approaching my time at Effigy Mounds from a perspective and purpose different than I have before. I contacted my friend, Kristie, and asked her to join me for a day of hiking; I contacted Merle Frommelt, one of the park rangers who has worked with one of my teaching colleagues in the past, and subsequently arranged to meet with Albert LeBeau (Lakota Sioux), who is a park ranger and archaeologist; and I packed a day pack with water, tissues (temperatures expected to be chilly during the early part of the day), trail mix, and my fully charged camera.

Driving to the monument early on a mid-October morning was its own experience. I was meeting Kristie, who had agreed to accompany me on the hiking trails (both of us firm believers in the buddy system), and we were scheduled to meet Albert LeBeau for an interview. I had no idea how having someone else along was going to impact my

⁵² The Upper Mississippi Valley, and specifically the region surrounding the monument, boasts a long history of indigenous settlement. The area is rich in natural resources, including fish, turtles, and edible plants. According to Dennis Lenzendorf, park ranger and author of *Effigy Mounds: A Guide to Effigy Mounds National Monument*, evidence of Paleoindian activity was discovered a little over 100 years ago in Boaz, Wisconsin (10-11), less than an hour from Marquette. Archeologists believe these nomadic tribes of 10,000 years ago traversed the valley in search of mastodons, elk, bison, and mammoths, and were the ancestors of the Iowa, Fox, Sac, Winnebago, Sioux, and Oneota tribes. The towns of Waukon and Decorah are named in honor of a Winnebago chief, as is Winneshiek county.

experience, but I knew I did not want to hike the steep trails on my own. As I left my home and traveled east on US Highway 18/52 toward the Mississippi, fog had settled heavily in the valleys and on the river. Traveling through the fog gave me a sense of passing through the mists of time because I knew from previous visits that the mounds were ancient, and my goal was to move through time as I was moving through the space I would be visiting, recognizing that truly experiencing pre-contact space was an impossibility.

Established in 1949, Effigy Mounds is comprised of over 2,500 acres of limestone bluffs, woodlands, and prairie, crisscrossed by 14 miles of hiking trails (National Park Service, “Plan”). Just past a particularly long bluff that runs parallel to the Mississippi River and just across the mouth of the Yellow River, one of its many tributaries, a National Parks Service sign informed me that I had arrived at my destination. Kristie and I met in the parking lot and walked into the visitor’s center. We were warmly welcomed by the park staff, but sadly informed that Albert was delayed in Wyoming by a family emergency. Such being the case, we decided to absorb as much as we could, and I would return at a later date to talk with him. We were encouraged to watch *Earth Shapers*, a 15-minute film about the monument’s history, before heading out on our hike.

I expected the film to romanticize the indigenous experience and European incursion into the area, but I was mistaken. Rather, the film focused on indigenous cultures, archaeological findings, and the true history of Indian subjugation at the hands of white, European settlers. I gained fascinating insight into the discovery and subsequent research performed in an attempt to understand the mounds. Early sixteenth- and seventeenth-century explorers discovered these earthen mounds all over the eastern

United States, close to villages along rivers (*Earth*). Animal-shaped mounds have been found in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, and, of course, Iowa, but their purpose for many years was unknown (*Earth*). The earliest mounds in the eastern United States were built before 1,000 BC, and construction of these mounds continued until around 1,300 AD in the Upper Mississippi Valley, at which time, for unknown reasons, mound construction ended (*Earth*). At one time, more than 10,000 mounds existed in Iowa alone; sadly, less than one-fourth of the mounds in Iowa and Wisconsin survive, many of the rest being destroyed by agriculture and expansion of towns (*Earth*).⁵³ Ellison Orr, a man from nearby Waukon who loved hiking the bluffs, and T. H. Lewis mapped the mounds, and later archaeologists discovered human remains in some of them (*Earth*). Ranger Sheila Oberreuter explained, following the film, that most human remains were interred in the cone-shaped mounds and in the head, heart, and flank of the bear-shaped mounds. The purpose behind the other mound shapes (linear, peregrine, and eagle) remains unclear.

Before Kristie and I headed out on our hike and while she perused the selection of books available in the gift shop, I spent some time talking to others who had come to visit the monument.⁵⁴ I was curious as to their reasons for spending what turned out to be a gorgeous fall day at a national monument dedicated to preserving ancient Indian mounds and artifacts. I had hoped that most of the responses would have to do with the history and sacredness of the space, but most said they had stopped at the park because they were

⁵³ In our later interview, Albert LeBeau pointed out that there were 72 mounds located on the terrace between the monument's maintenance building and the railroad tracks along the river alone. These mounds were destroyed as a result of agricultural activity prior to the establishment of the park.

⁵⁴ I interviewed visitors with the permission of park staff, making sure I explained to them that I was working on a class project toward my master's degree. I did not ask for names of any visitors to the monument who were willing to speak with me briefly, but I did take notes as they responded to my questions.

cruising around, looking at the fall foliage, and had heard that the park offered some great hiking trails and spectacular views of the Mississippi River. One couple visiting while taking part in a wedding weekend said the park had been recommended by the groom, and they welcomed the opportunity to get outside and to build their knowledge. I found this response encouraging because they were both connecting with the land, at the very least on a surface level, and they were open to learning something that differed from what they were taught in school. Several visitors remembered visiting Effigy Mounds when they were in grade school. One middle-aged man said this was his first time back since elementary school, while another has been coming to the monument a couple of times a year since he was a little boy. Yet another remembered visiting the mounds with his family when he was a boy. He and his wife have Indian friends, and they hoped their visit would enlighten them on some of their friends' traditions and history so they could build a stronger relationship. A woman of retirement age was visiting with a women's hiking group from Illinois; she expressed amazement at the level of care given to the mounds and was impressed by the professionalism of the staff. During our brief conversation, she made the comment that it was "awesome to think about what went on here all those years ago."

My friend and I drove together to the trailhead for the Marching Bear Group in the South Unit of the monument. Of course, I missed the entrance to the parking area, so we headed on south to the next turn-off, which had a sign indicating a historical marker. A quick drive down a two-track road next to the railroad tracks dead ended at the



marker, which indicated the beginning of the military road between Ft. Crawford in Wisconsin and Ft. Atkinson, on the Iowa side of the Mississippi River.⁵⁵ Although I wasn't surprised given the history of the area, I found ironic the juxtaposition of these two memorials (a large rock with a plaque marking the trail⁵⁶ and a 2,500-acre national monument marking Effigy Mounds).

The trail leading up to the top of the bluff was short (about two-tenths of a mile) but steep. I could only imagine the shape in which the builders of these mounds must have been. National Park Service literature mildly warns visitors that, while "persons of all walking and hiking abilities are encouraged to visit the monument,...the hike to the top of the bluff is limiting" ("Plan"). After finding it necessary to stop and rest two or three times on my way up, I think the term "limiting" might be an understatement, but that could be the result of my disgust in my lack of physical stamina rather than a true issue with semantics. Once one reaches the top of the bluff, the hiking is fairly easy and the trails well marked.

The farther away Kristie and I hiked from US Highway 76, the road that bisects the park, the quieter the woods became and the more we could hear the sounds of the forest. We were able to identify several birdcalls, the hammering of redheaded woodpeckers, squirrels and other ground rodents scampering through the groundcover,

⁵⁵ Old residents of this area still call Old US Highway 52 the military road (White), a route I regularly take into the next town three miles east of my home. Ft. Atkinson, Iowa, is about an hour's drive west. Soldiers would stop in the small towns along this road, like Monona, Luana, and Postville, to slake their thirst in the local taverns as they made the arduous journey between the two military forts (White). At one time, two competing taverns near Monona burned down within weeks of each other; they were called Sodom and Gommorah (White).

⁵⁶ Ironically, this stone marker used to sit up on the bluff in the area of the Marching Bear Group (LeBeau)

and grasshoppers landing on dry leaves. The smell of leaves beginning to decay permeated the air as we put distance between the vehicle exhaust from the highway and us. The mist of the morning had dissipated, and the rest of the day promised to be sunny. Springy loam made the trail soft to the foot, and it became obvious that our feet were not the only ones that had traveled the trail when we came upon a track that was far too big to be a human hand and did not look quite like a large human foot. We took pictures of the track, one with Kristie's hand next to it for comparison, then conjectured about what it could possibly be, concluding it might be the hind paw of a bear. (The track was too elongated to be the front paw.)⁵⁷



The trails leading up to the Marching Bear Group were well groomed, passing through areas of forest and prairie randomly arranged on the bluff top. One conical mound stood alone surrounded by a circle of trees, reminiscent of a fairy circle in the British Isles. The largest formation, a compound mound situated close to the east edge of the bluff, ran slightly downhill for more than the length of a football field and consisted of seven conical mounds connected by linear mounds. We were amazed by the park-like “feel” of the space: nature seemed to be held in check and the mounds, while not pristine, were devoid of tree seedlings, brambles, and tall grasses. With the variety of tree species surrounding the mounds, we wondered if maintenance was done routinely on the mounds to avoid damage from saplings and full-grown trees. Several questions were

⁵⁷ Robert Palmer, head ranger at Effigy Mounds, requested a copy of the picture, which I subsequently e-mailed to him. Another ranger, Jeannette Muller, e-mailed back and said it was not a bear paw, but she wasn't sure what it could be. She also mentioned that a deer track was in the middle of the print.

raised in our minds: Is the sacredness of the mounds disrupted when upkeep requires a type of weeding, if you will? Do the Indian tribes view upkeep of burial sites as a way of showing respect for those who have passed, or is allowing nature to take over more respectful?⁵⁸

A return trip up the side trail to the main trail, followed by a turn to the south and another half-mile or so walk led us to the Marching Bear Group. Along with the bear effigies were several eagle and peregrine effigies. Some were quite settled, rising slightly over a foot from the level of the ground. Others, both in this group and in several other locations, were as much as four feet tall. Length and width are difficult for me to estimate, but the bears had to be at least 20 feet or more from head to tail, while the bird effigies were at least that long in body, with wing spans as long as 30 feet or more. The final peregrine was just feet from a cultivated field blocked off from the park by a gate, an almost jarring barrier after being surrounded by organic substances and walking through relatively untamed space.

During our hike, Kristie and I talked at length about what I was learning. I shared with her the emotional journey I have traveled to this point in my study: guilt, frustration, sorrow, intrigue, curiosity. Sadly, as we talked, she made comments, somewhat echoed by my husband later, that indicated to me she was still steeped in a colonial mindset, statements like, “Well, they massacred us and all we did was pass through on our way west,” “They were savages that needed to be tamed,” and “Just look at how they were

⁵⁸ Upon our return to the visitor’s center, Ranger Oberreuter informed us that the area we had been exploring was once an oak savannah with prairie grasses and few trees. When the Europeans came with their great fear of fires, they planted other species of trees (maple, elm, poplar, walnut, hickory, red cedar, basswood, and sumac), which reduced the prairie’s acreage, in an effort to avoid prairie fires.

living. Isn't it awful? We helped them become more civilized" (Roeder). It is unfortunate that she was unable to accompany me a week later when I visited with Ranger Albert LeBeau—I imagine he would have calmly and respectfully provided her with a concise history of his own people in the form of a story, followed by asking her questions designed to stimulate her thought processes—but I will have opportunity to “work on her” in the future.

We returned to the car in time to drive into the villages of Marquette and McGregor in search of something more substantial than the snacks we had packed. We both experienced a bit of culture shock: a flea market was in full swing under the bridge in Marquette, while a big craft fair was going on in McGregor, leading to wall-to-wall people and cars. We ended up getting sandwiches from a local convenience store (once a parking place opened up) and eating in the car at a scenic overlook by the river. I couldn't help but think that, if this was the civilization we brought to the Indians, I'm not so sure it was a good thing! I much preferred the solitude of the wooded bluff.

One day at the Mounds was simply not enough for me. After sharing my experiences from the day before with my husband, he and I decided to go back to the park after church on Sunday. We took our dog, Daisy, with us,⁵⁹ along with water, snacks, and the necessary tools for cleaning up any mess she



⁵⁹ Daisy was the perfect lady, avoiding the mounds entirely. It was as if she understood at some level that the mounds were sacred and not to be walked upon or disturbed in any other way.

might make.⁶⁰ We hiked the Marching Bear Trail, but we took different side trails that Kristie and I had chosen to skip. We did attempt to find the bear track we had found the previous day, but waffle-soled hiking boots had obliterated it. We also hiked to two of the overlooks missed the day before, enjoying stunning views of the Mississippi at one and a serene view of two ponds with a flock of Canada geese at another. The highlight of my day, however, was glancing off into the woods on our way back to the car and catching sight of two beautiful does. I stopped Dan with a touch on his arm and quietly indicated the direction he was to look. The does were so well camouflaged that it took several seconds for him to be able to pick them out from the surrounding woods, unusual



for my observant husband. We stood perfectly still—and Daisy was absolutely quiet, good girl that she is—and simply watched them for about 30 seconds, holding our breath to make the moment last just as long as possible. I

carefully reached into my jacket pocket to pull out my camera, then slowly lifted it until I had the two deer in the view finder. I was able to get a single snapshot of the two, when I saw a white flag fly from behind a fallen tree: a third doe we had not seen raised the alarm, and within seconds all three were leaping through the woods away from us.

One final visit to the monument, at least related to this project, was for the express purpose of visiting with Albert LeBeau, the Cultural Resource Programs Manager at Effigy Mounds responsible for managing the archaeological and archival museum and

⁶⁰ Unlike many national parks and monuments, Effigy Mounds welcomes dogs as long as they are accompanied by a responsible human who will take care of any droppings produced during the visit.

the collection of artifacts. LeBeau also happens to be an enrolled member of the Cheyenne River Lakota Sioux Tribe in South Dakota. The descendent of a French fur trader, an immigrant to this country from Bordeaux, France, in the early 1800s, and his Sioux wife, Lebeau considers himself an oxymoron: he is an Indian working for the United States government. Even as he takes vacation to celebrate the anniversary of Custer's death, he also sees his work at Effigy Mounds as a decolonial practice providing an opportunity to make a greater impact for the benefit of all Indian groups but especially those affiliated with the Upper Mississippi River region and the mounds.⁶¹ During our almost two-and-a-half-hour conversation, Albert schooled me in Indian history (especially that related to his own family), archaeology, monument history, and his vision for the future of Effigy Mounds.

LeBeau claimed to know only “*some* Native American history and *some* Native American laws;” I was humbled and chagrined by how little I know. His great-grandfather fought for the United States in World War I. At that time, any Indian fighting on behalf of the United States was not considered a citizen until he was killed in

⁶¹ Through careful research, nineteen tribes have been identified as being affiliated with the mounds: Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska, Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma, Otoe-Missouria Tribe of Oklahoma, Ho-Chunk Nation of Wisconsin, Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska, Upper Sioux Community of Minnesota, Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community in the State of Minnesota, Lower Sioux Indian Community of Mdewakanton Sioux Indians of Minnesota, Prairie Island Indian Community in the State of Minnesota, Sac and Fox Tribe of the Mississippi in Iowa, Sac and Fox Nation of Missouri in Kansas and Nebraska, Sac and Fox Nation of Oklahoma, Crow Creek Sioux of South Dakota, Omaha Tribe of Nebraska, Santee Sioux of Nebraska, Standing Rock Sioux of North Dakota, Yankton Sioux of South Dakota, Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate, and Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe.

action.⁶² Citizenship was finally bestowed on Indians by act of Congress in 1924. Two of LeBeau's grandparents also served during World War II: his grandfather served in Africa and his grandmother transported bombs to a depot in the Black Hills of South Dakota. She had to obtain special permission to leave the reservation despite the fact that she was doing dangerous work on behalf of the United States. Both LeBeau's grandmother and his father experienced the nightmare that was the Indian boarding school. Tribes received the right to make their own constitutions with ratification of the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, but they did not gain the right to practice their traditional religion until 1978.⁶³ To this day, while Native Americans hold dual citizenship (United States and their sovereign nation), they are considered and treated as wards of the United States government. They remain the only people group who need an act of Congress, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990, to protect their dead (LeBeau). I find it sadly ironic that many of the dead protected by this legislation were killed while fighting on behalf of the citizens of this country and should

⁶² In the course of our conversation, Mr. LeBeau told me about a young Native man from his home who had signed up to fight in Afghanistan. When LeBeau asked him why he would fight for a country that wouldn't fight on his behalf, the young man said, "Because it's who I am." That young man was killed in Afghanistan in 2006 by an IED. (And my heart weeps.)

The indigenous population of this country has the highest rate of joining the military of any other people group, according to LeBeau. At least in relation to the Sioux, it is who they are—a warrior culture. He explained it this way: when they are fighting for the United States, they are also fighting for family and for the guy next to them. It's not about the country; it's about family and relationships.

⁶³ This fact still shocks me. I graduated from high school in 1978, so this occurred well within my lifetime. What shocks me more is that this and other information about Native American history was never taught in any classroom I know of. The desire to insert a plethora of parenthetical "Really?!?"s, "You have *got* to be kidding!"s, and "Surely, you jest!"s is almost overwhelming.

themselves be honored with a burial mound instead of a regimented colonial-style gravesite.

Historically, the European view of Native Americans has been condescending at best. LeBeau explained that, when the mounds were first “discovered” by white settlers, all kinds of theories developed to explain how they were not made by Indians. Thomas Jefferson and other antiquarians believed the Indians could not possibly have created the mounds (LeBeau). Others thought the mounds might have been constructed by the lost tribes of Israel (LeBeau). Although decolonialism was active during the park’s creation in 1949, the critical assertion was that the mounds had to have been made by *anyone except* Indians, and this was the accepted theory for the monument into the 1960s to 1980s, when in actuality descendants of the mound builders were (and are) still living in the area (LeBeau). By the mid-1980s and early 1990s, park personnel began re-examining their interpretation of the space because, up until this point, cultural history—always one-sided and always requiring an interpreter—was all they had available to them (LeBeau). Park personnel determined that the voice of the tribes...in the form of archaeological study...needed to be brought in to the analysis of the mounds; however, the powers that be neglected to consult the eighteen affiliated tribes,⁶⁴ which proved to be a breach of what little trust existed between the United States government and the tribes (LeBeau). Nevertheless, park personnel continued research (primarily archaeological), taking advantage of new technologies that allowed for non-disturbing examination of the mounds to document their contents, a process called geophysical prospecting (LeBeau).

⁶⁴ The nineteen tribes affiliated with Effigy Mounds were identified through oral tradition, cultural background checks, and a review of the 1825 Treaty of Prairie du Chien, which named all the tribes in the area (LeBeau). Up until 2012, only eleven tribes had been positively identified; seven others were added in 2013 and another since (LeBeau).

The park has begun going through a paradigm shift in the last two to three years, especially after a recent incident involving a former superintendent who gave authorization for structures to be built on potential burial sites without permission from the affiliated tribes (Foley, Love). Two major projects—a Cultural Landscape Report to assess environmental concerns and a Traditional Culture Property Survey to collect additional stories from affiliated tribes—are in process. While the park is still archaeology heavy in its activities, current personnel are moving to incorporate more oral tradition. One of LeBeau's main responsibilities, to gain back the trust that has been so badly broken, is a challenge given the ten to twenty years in which park personnel did not follow the law and communicate with the eighteen affiliated tribes. The goal now for Effigy Mounds is to bring in the whole story, the achievement of which will require help from the affiliated tribes. As LeBeau points out, "We don't know the whole story, and we need help finding it out so we can tell the truth, for good or for bad." In addition, he is contemplating implementation of an internship program to encourage a reconnection with the land and to spur interest in the younger generations of Indians to ask parents and grandparents about their history and culture. The program would involve "boots on the ground," young Indians working at the park in both maintenance and interpretation, reconnecting with their history and with the land from which their ancestors gathered food and supplies in the summer months to enable them to survive the winter. Such a program highlights the contrast between Indigenous people's view of space and that of the white settlers. Indigenous youth will connect with their ancestors by connecting with the space their ancestors occupied; the descendants of white settlers view the land as a commodity to be collected without regard to connection.

Despite the fact that this is a US Government installation, I believe Effigy Mounds National Monument is a decolonial practice and promises to become more so in the future, especially with people like Albert LeBeau working there, re-establishing trust with the affiliated tribes, making efforts to reconnect the younger generations with the land, and focusing on their story at the mounds instead of the story of colonialism. Indigenous voices are being sought, which in itself is a major shift in the United States. I find myself questioning only one aspect of the monument: as much as I enjoyed having my dog along when I hiked the second day, I am troubled by a comment made by “one tribal leader” in one of the news reports cited earlier. In reaction to the boardwalks that were illegally constructed, this leader said the boardwalks “imply that ‘ancient cemeteries should be treated as places to walk your dog’” (Love). While I understand the concern, attracting visitors to the monument is of primary importance to allow for the dissemination of the decolonial message that is more clearly expressed with each passing year, and the trails and “pets welcome” policy effectively attract hikers and history buffs, the curious and the inquisitive alike. Somehow, a balance must be struck.

When I set out to complete my decolonial practice, I recognized and welcomed the possibilities inherent in a connected form of inquiry, anticipating an experience that would leave me feeling at the very least uncomfortable, if not a combination of guilty and angry. Through this experience, I have developed a closer relationship to the land where I now dwell,⁶⁵ a deeper understanding of decolonial practice and the sensitivity and

⁶⁵ Because I was raised in the military and moved frequently for many years, establishing a sense of place, a sense of home, has eluded me into my adult years. Now that my husband and I have returned to his home, a place for which he has always felt a strong connection, I am slowly learning to put down my own roots and make my own connection to Northeast Iowa’s rolling hills and towering bluffs.

thoughtfulness with which it should be approached, and a greater appreciation for the Indigenous Peoples whose ancestral lands I am now privileged to call home. Returning to a pre-contact state is impossible; however, by respecting, caring for, and connecting with the land, and by supporting LeBeau's efforts and utilizing the monument as an educational tool for my students, I can move toward "making things better" (Oberreuter).

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Instructor Comments

Essay #4 - Rhetorical Fieldwork Project

Hi Valeria! I enjoyed your fieldwork narrative! It's really lovely. It's clear that this experience was meaningful to you. Oh my, when you apologized for the length, I had assumed that it was only going to be a couple of extra pages. At the same time, I think that the length allowed you to address the complexity of the visit and engage with my questions. There is so many good things happening in this narrative: making sure to bring in your friend and husband and their understandings of the mounds while listening deeply and thinking about those ideas and how they serve as tensions, the embodied aspects of your narrative, how you leave us with further thinking and making visible that you still have things to think about; all of this is just really excellent. In fact, I think you could use this piece in your portfolio if you would like. Lastly, I am thankful for the images that you provided. I was especially taken by the one with hands on the soil. When I visited the earthworks, I found myself compelled to put my hands to the earth as well. Very nice work here. You should feel extremely proud of this piece of writing. :)

Andrea Riley-Mukavetz, Nov 12 at 1:23pm

Valeria A. White

Dr. Andrea Riley-Mukavetz

ENG 6800 – Decolonial Theory and Methods

10 November 2014

Shaping Earth—Shaping Theory

Rarely in academia are students encouraged to participate in experiences and asked to reflect on them. More commonly, students are required to research a topic and write lengthy treatises, complete with footnotes, works cited, appendices, and proper MLA or APA formatting and citations. An almost clinical detachment is required to successfully remove oneself from the research topic and the completed text. This project is a rare opportunity to step out of the academic mold of isolation from one's topic, to take steps into the space one is exploring and build a relationship with that space and the others who occupy it. It is also a rare opportunity to use story to build theory, because it is through story that experiences are absorbed, reflected upon, and shared. This is the testimony of my decolonial experience.

¹My search for decolonial practice took me a mere 20 miles from my home to a beautiful spot along the Mississippi River. Effigy Mounds National Monument is located in the northeast corner of Iowa along the Mississippi River just north of the village of Marquette and the bridge that connects Iowa with Wisconsin at Prairie du Chien. I pass within three miles of the monument every weekend when I cross the river to do my grocery shopping, a trip that usually takes just under thirty minutes. In addition, I have visited the monument a few times over the course of the last six years, since my family and I moved to Northeast Iowa. As a result, my preparation was limited because I wanted to experience the

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Andrea Marie Riley-M..., 1/11/15 8:39 AM

Comment [1]: So, do you think that this project is a form of inquiry? I think it would be interesting to further flesh out this comparison that you are making. Yes, there is this issue of making knowledge in detachment and isolation. So, with this project, what does research and academic knowledge making look like? Maybe, one or two sentences here?

Andrea Marie Riley-M..., 1/11/15 8:40 AM

Comment [2]: Here you say "Decolonial experience" and then the next sentence you say "decolonial practice." I wonder if you should be more consistent with your language. I do think an experience can also be your practice but I think this consistency will help your secondary readers like Dr. Albertini

space with as fresh a pair of eyes as possible, approaching my time at Effigy Mounds from a perspective and purpose different than I have before. I contacted my friend, Kristie, and asked her to join me for a day of hiking; I contacted Merle Frommelt, one of the park rangers who has worked with one of my teaching colleagues in the past, and subsequently arranged to meet with Albert LeBeau (Lakota Sioux), who is a park ranger and archaeologist; and I packed a day pack with water, tissues (temperatures expected to be chilly during the early part of the day), trail mix, and my fully charged camera.

Driving to the monument early on a mid-October morning was its own experience. I was meeting Kristie, who had agreed to accompany me on the hiking trails (both of us firm believers in the buddy system), and we were scheduled to meet Albert LeBeau for an interview. I had no idea how having someone else along was going to impact my experience, but I knew I did not want to hike the steep trails on my own. As I left my home and traveled east on US Highway 18/52 toward the Mississippi, fog had settled heavily in the valleys and on the river. Traveling through the fog gave me a sense of passing through the mists of time because I knew from previous visits that the mounds were ancient, and my goal was to move through time as I was moving through the space I would be visiting.

Established in 1949, Effigy Mounds is comprised of over 2,500 acres of limestone bluffs, woodlands, and prairie, crisscrossed by 14 miles of hiking trails (National Park Service, "Plan"). Just past a particularly long bluff that runs parallel to the Mississippi River and just across the mouth of the Yellow River, one of its many tributaries, a National Parks Service sign informed me that I had arrived at my destination. Kristie and I met in the parking lot and walked into the visitor's center. We were warmly welcomed by the park staff, but sadly informed that Albert was delayed in Wyoming by a family emergency. Such being

Andrea Marie Riley-M..., 1/11/15 8:40 AM
Comment [3]: Good!

Andrea Marie Riley-M..., 1/11/15 8:42 AM
Comment [4]: I think this is an interesting statement because I wonder about this idea of "moving through time" and yet acknowledging that these mounds are very much in the present and you are examining them in the present day with the full effects of colonialism.

the case, we decided to absorb as much as we could, and I would return at a later date to talk with him. We were encouraged to watch *Earth Shapers*, a 15-minute film about the monument's history, before heading out on our hike.

I expected the film to romanticize the indigenous experience and European incursion into the area, but I was mistaken. Rather, the film focused on Indian cultures, archaeological findings, and the true history of Indian subjugation at the hands of white, European settlers. I gained fascinating insight into the discovery and subsequent research performed in an attempt to understand the mounds. Early sixteenth- and seventeenth-century explorers discovered these earthen mounds all over the eastern United States, close to villages along rivers (*Earth*). Animal-shaped mounds have been found in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, and, of course, Iowa, but their purpose for many years was unknown (*Earth*). The earliest mounds in the eastern United States were built before 1,000 BC, and construction of these mounds continued until around 1,300 AD in the Upper Mississippi Valley, at which time, for unknown reasons, mound construction ended (*Earth*). At one time, more than 10,000 mounds existed in Iowa alone; sadly, less than one-fourth of the mounds in Iowa and Wisconsin survive, many of the rest being destroyed by agriculture and expansion of towns.² Ellison Orr, a man from nearby Waukon who loved hiking the bluffs, and T. H. Lewis mapped the mounds, and later archaeologists discovered human remains in some of them (*Earth*). Ranger Sheila Oberreuter explained, following the film, that most human remains were interred in the cone-shaped mounds and in the head, heart, and flank of the bear-shaped

Andrea Marie Riley-M..., 1/11/15 8:47 AM

Comment [5]: What if we say indigenous here? Or American Indian? ☺

² In our later interview, Albert LeBeau pointed out that there were 72 mounds located on the terrace between the monument's maintenance building and the railroad tracks along the river alone. These mounds were destroyed as a result of agricultural activity prior to the establishment of the park.

mounds. The purpose behind the other mound shapes (linear, peregrine, and eagle) remains unclear.

Before Kristie and I headed out on our hike and while she perused the selection of books available in the gift shop, I spent some time talking to others who had come to visit the monument.³ I was curious as to their reasons for spending what turned out to be a gorgeous fall day at a national monument dedicated to preserving ancient Indian mounds and artifacts. I had hoped that most of the responses would have to do with the history and sacredness of the space, but most said they had stopped at the park because they were cruising around, looking at the fall foliage, and had heard that the park offered some great hiking trails and spectacular views of the Mississippi River. One couple visiting while taking part in a wedding weekend said the park had been recommended by the groom, and they welcomed the opportunity to get outside and to build their knowledge. I found this response encouraging because they were both connecting with the land, at the very least on a surface level, and they were open to learning something that differed from what they were taught in school. Several visitors remembered visiting Effigy Mounds when they were in grade school. One middle-aged man said this was his first time back since elementary school, while another has been coming to the monument a couple of times a year since he was a little boy. Yet another remembered visiting the mounds with his family when he was a boy. He and his wife have Indian friends, and they hoped their visit would enlighten them on some of their friends' traditions and history so they could build a stronger relationship. A woman of retirement age was visiting with a women's hiking group from Illinois; she expressed

³ I interviewed visitors with the permission of park staff, making sure I explained to them that I was working on a class project toward my master's degree. I did not ask for names of any visitors to the monument who were willing to speak with me briefly, but I did take notes as they responded to my questions.

Andrea Marie Riley-M..., 1/11/15 8:49 AM

Comment [6]: Reading at this point, I wonder if it might be helpful to your readers to talk a little about the indigenous cultures of where you are dwelling. Maybe the first paragraph? Give some brief history or just say "who" is indigenous to the land. This could even happen in a footnote, I think.

amazement at the level of care given to the mounds and was impressed by the professionalism of the staff. During our brief conversation, she made the comment that it was “awesome to think about what went on here all those years ago.”

My friend and I drove together to the trailhead for the Marching Bear Group in the South Unit of the monument. Of course, I missed the entrance to the parking area, so we headed on south to the next turn-off, which had a sign indicating a historical marker. A quick drive down a two-track road next to the railroad tracks dead ended at the marker, which indicated the beginning of the military road between Ft. Crawford in Wisconsin and Ft. Atkinson, on the Iowa side of the Mississippi River.⁴ Although I wasn’t surprised given the history of the area, I found ironic the juxtaposition of these two memorials (a large rock with a plaque marking the trail⁵ and a 2,500-acre national monument marking Effigy Mounds).

The trail leading up to the top of the bluff was short (about two-tenths of a mile) but steep. I could only imagine the shape in which the builders of these mounds must have been. National Park Service literature mildly warns visitors that, while “persons of all walking and hiking abilities are encouraged to visit the monument, . . . the hike to the top of the bluff is limiting” (“Plan”). After finding it necessary to stop and rest two or three times on my way up, I think the term “limiting” might be an understatement, but that could be the result of my

Andrea Marie Riley-M..., 1/11/15 8:50 AM
Comment [7]: Very nice here.

⁴ Old residents of this area still call Old US Highway 52 the military road (White), a route I regularly take into the next town three miles east of my home. Ft. Atkinson, Iowa, is about an hour’s drive west. Soldiers would stop in the small towns along this road, like Monona, Luana, and Postville, to slake their thirst in the local taverns as they made the arduous journey between the two military forts (White). At one time, two competing taverns near Monona burned down within weeks of each other; they were called Sodom and Gomorrah (White).

⁵ Ironically, this stone marker used to sit up on the bluff in the area of the Marching Bear Group (LeBeau).

disgust in my lack of physical stamina rather than a true issue with semantics. Once one reaches the top of the bluff, the hiking is fairly easy and the trails well marked.

The farther away Kristie and I hiked from US Highway 76, the road that bisects the park, the quieter the woods became and the more we could hear the sounds of the forest. We were able to identify several birdcalls, the hammering of redheaded woodpeckers, squirrels and other ground rodents scampering through the groundcover, and grasshoppers landing on dry leaves. The smell of leaves beginning to decay (How exactly does one describe that fall-marking aroma?) permeated the air as we put distance between the vehicle exhaust from the highway and us. The mist of the morning had dissipated, and the rest of the day promised to be sunny. Springy loam made the trail soft to the foot, and it became obvious that our feet were not the only ones that had traveled the trail when we came upon a track that was far too big to be a human hand and did not look quite like a large human foot. We took pictures of the track, one with Kristie's hand next to it for comparison, then conjectured about what it could possibly be, concluding it might be the hind paw of a bear. (The track was too elongated to be the front paw.)⁶

The trails leading up to the Marching Bear Group were well groomed, passing through areas of forest and prairie randomly arranged on the bluff top. One conical mound stood alone surrounded by a circle of trees, reminiscent of a fairy circle in the British Isles. The largest formation, a compound mound situated close to the east edge of the bluff, ran slightly downhill for more than the length of a football field and consisted of seven conical mounds connected by linear mounds. We were amazed by the park-like "feel" of the space:

⁶ Robert Palmer, head ranger at Effigy Mounds, requested a copy of the picture, which I subsequently e-mailed to him. Another ranger, Jeannette Muller, e-mailed back and said it was not a bear paw, but she wasn't sure what it could be. She also mentioned that a deer track was in the middle of the print.

Andrea Marie Riley-M..., 1/11/15 8:51 AM

Comment [8]: I think you are...you might want to omit this sentence because it undercuts you 😊

nature seemed to be held in check and the mounds, while not pristine, were devoid of tree seedlings, brambles, and tall grasses. With the variety of tree species surrounding the mounds, we wondered if maintenance was done routinely on the mounds to avoid damage from saplings and full-grown trees.⁷ Several questions were raised in our minds: Is the sacredness of the mounds disrupted when upkeep requires a type of weeding, if you will? Do the Indian tribes view upkeep of burial sites as a way of showing respect for those who have passed, or is allowing nature to take over more respectful?

A return trip up the side trail to the main trail, followed by a turn to the south and another half-mile or so walk led us to the Marching Bear Group. Along with the bear effigies were several eagle and peregrine effigies. Some were quite settled, rising slightly over a foot from the level of the ground. Others, both in this group and in several other locations, were as much as four feet tall. Length and width are difficult for me to estimate, but the bears had to be at least 20 feet or more from head to tail, while the bird effigies were at least that long in body, with wing spans as long as 30 feet or more. The final peregrine was just feet from a cultivated field blocked off from the park by a gate, an almost jarring barrier after being surrounded by organic substances and walking through relatively untamed space.

During our hike, Kristie and I talked at length about what I was learning. I shared with her the emotional journey I have traveled to this point in my study: guilt, frustration, sorrow, intrigue, curiosity. Sadly, as we talked, she made comments, somewhat echoed by my husband later, that indicated to me she was still steeped in a colonial mindset, statements

Andrea Marie Riley-M..., 1/11/15 8:52 AM

Comment [9]: Here for example would be a perfect place to mention the names of the actual tribes.

⁷ Upon our return to the visitor's center, Ranger Oberreuter informed us that the area we had been exploring was once an oak savannah with prairie grasses and few trees. When the Europeans came with their great fear of fires, they planted other species of trees (maple, elm, poplar, walnut, hickory, red cedar, basswood, and sumac), which reduced the prairie's acreage, in an effort to avoid prairie fires.

like, “Well, they massacred us and all we did was pass through on our way west,” “They were savages that needed to be tamed,” and “Just look at how they were living. Isn’t it awful? We helped them become more civilized” (Roeder). It is unfortunate that she was unable to accompany me a week later when I visited with Albert LeBeau, but I will have opportunity to “work on her” in the future.

We returned to the car in time to drive into the villages of Marquette and McGregor in search of something more substantial than the snacks we had packed. We both experienced a bit of culture shock: a flea market was in full swing under the bridge in Marquette, while a big craft fair was going on in McGregor, leading to wall-to-wall people and cars. We ended up getting sandwiches from a local convenience store (once a parking place opened up) and eating in the car at a scenic overlook by the river. I couldn’t help but think that, if this was the civilization we brought to the Indians, I’m not so sure it was a good thing! I much preferred the solitude of the wooded bluff.

One day at the Mounds was simply not enough for me. After sharing my experiences from the day before with my husband, he and I decided to go back to the park after church on Sunday. We took our dog, Daisie, with us, along with water, snacks, and the necessary tools for cleaning up any mess she might make.⁸ We hiked the Marching Bear Trail, but we took different side trails that Kristie and I had chosen to skip. We did attempt to find the bear track we had found the previous day, but waffle-soled hiking boots had obliterated it. We also hiked to two of the overlooks missed the day before, enjoying stunning views of the Mississippi at one and a serene view of two ponds with a flock of Canada geese at another.

⁸ Unlike many national parks and monuments, Effigy Mounds welcomes dogs as long as they are accompanied by a responsible human who will take care of any droppings produced during the visit.

Andrea Marie Riley-M..., 1/11/15 8:53 AM

Comment [10]: What do you think Mr. LeBeau could have said or done?

The highlight of my day, however, was glancing off into the woods on our way back to the car and catching sight of two beautiful does. I stopped Dan with a touch on his arm and quietly indicated the direction he was to look. The does were so well camouflaged that it took several seconds for him to be able to pick them out from the surrounding woods. We stood perfectly still—and Daisie was absolutely quiet, good girl that she is—and simply watched them for about 30 seconds. I carefully reached into my jacket pocket to pull out my camera, then slowly lifted it until I had the two deer in the view finder. I was able to get a single snapshot of the two, when I saw a white flag fly from behind a fallen tree: a third doe we had not seen raised the alarm, and within seconds all three were leaping through the woods away from **us**.

One final visit to the monument, at least related to this project, was for the express purpose of visiting with Albert LeBeau, the Cultural Resource Programs Manager at Effigy Mounds, responsible for managing the archaeological and archival museum and the collection of artifacts. Albert also happens to be an enrolled member of the Cheyenne River Lakota Sioux Tribe in South Dakota. The descendent of a French fur trader, an immigrant to this country from Bordeaux, France, in the early 1800s, and his Sioux wife, Albert considers himself an oxymoron: he is an Indian working for the United States **government**. Even as he takes vacation to celebrate the anniversary of Custer's death, he also sees his work at Effigy Mounds as a decolonial practice providing an opportunity to make a greater impact for the benefit of all Indian groups but especially those affiliated with the Upper Mississippi River region and the mounds. During our almost two-and-a-half-hour conversation, Albert schooled me in Indian history, archaeology, monument history, and his vision for the future of Effigy Mounds.

Andrea Marie Riley-M..., 1/11/15 8:54 AM

Comment [11]: I really love this section

Andrea Marie Riley-M..., 1/11/15 8:54 AM

Comment [12]: I still find this hilarious.

Albert claimed to know only “*some* Native American history and *some* Native American laws;” I was humbled and chagrined by how little I know. Albert’s great-grandfather fought for the United States in World War I. At that time, any Indian fighting on behalf of the United States was not considered a citizen until he was killed in action.⁹ Citizenship was finally bestowed on Indians by act of Congress in 1924. Two of Albert’s grandparents also served during World War II: his grandfather served in Africa and his grandmother transported bombs to a depot in the Black Hills of South Dakota. She had to obtain special permission to leave the reservation despite the fact that she was doing dangerous work on behalf of the United States. Both Albert’s grandmother and his father experienced the nightmare that was the Indian boarding school. Tribes received the right to make their own constitutions with ratification of the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, but they did not gain the right to practice their traditional religion until 1978.¹⁰ To this day, while Native Americans hold dual citizenship (United States and their sovereign nation), they are considered and treated as wards of the United States government. They remain the only people group who need an act of Congress, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990, to protect their dead (LeBeau).

⁹ In the course of our conversation, Albert told me about a young Native man from his home who had signed up to fight in Afghanistan. When Albert asked him why he would fight for a country that wouldn’t fight on his behalf, the young man said, “Because it’s who I am.” That young man was killed in Afghanistan in 2006 by an IED. (And my heart weeps.)

The indigenous population of this country has the highest rate of joining the military of any other people group, according to Albert. At least in relation to the Sioux, it is who they are—a warrior culture. Albert explained it this way: when they are fighting for the United States, they are also fighting for family and for the guy next to them. It’s not about the country; it’s about family and relationships.

¹⁰ This fact still shocks me. I graduated from high school in 1978, so this occurred well within my lifetime. What shocks me more is that this and other information about Native American history was never taught in any classroom I know of. The desire to insert a plethora of parenthetical “Really?!?”s, “You have *got* to be kidding!”s, and “Surely, you jest!”s is almost overwhelming.

Andrea Marie Riley-M..., 1/11/15 8:55 AM

Comment [13]: What does this section have to do with what you said or experienced at the mounds or during our class?

Historically, the European view of Native Americans has been condescending at best. Albert explained that, when the mounds were first “discovered” by white settlers, all kinds of theories developed to explain how they were not made by Indians. Thomas Jefferson and other antiquarians believed the Indians could not possibly have created the mounds (LeBeau). Others thought the mounds might have been constructed by the lost tribes of Israel (LeBeau). Although decolonialism was active during the park’s creation in 1949, the critical assertion was that the mounds had to have been made by *anyone except* Indians, and this was the accepted theory for the monument into the 1960s to 1980s, when in actuality descendants of the mound builders were (and are) still living in the area (LeBeau). By the mid-1980s and early 1990s, park personnel began re-examining their interpretation of the space because, up until this point, cultural history—always one-sided and always requiring an interpreter—was all they had available to them (LeBeau). Park personnel determined that the voice of the tribes...in the form of archaeological study...needed to be brought in to the analysis of the mounds; however, the powers that be neglected to consult the eighteen affiliated tribes,¹¹ which proved to be a breach of what little trust existed between the United States government and the tribes (LeBeau). Nevertheless, park personnel continued research (primarily archaeological), taking advantage of new technologies that allowed for non-disturbing examination of the mounds to document their contents, a process called geophysical prospecting (LeBeau).

The park has begun going through a paradigm shift in the last two to three years, especially after a recent incident involving a former superintendent who gave authorization

¹¹ The eighteen tribes affiliated with Effigy Mounds were identified through oral tradition, cultural background checks, and a review of the 1825 Treaty of Prairie du Chien, which named all the tribes in the area (LeBeau). Up until 2012, only eleven tribes had been positively identified; seven others were added in 2013 (LeBeau).

for structures to be built on potential burial sites without permission from the affiliated tribes (Foley, Love). Two major projects—a Cultural Landscape Report to assess environmental concerns and a Traditional Culture Property Survey to collect additional stories from affiliated tribes—are in process. While the park is still archaeology heavy in its activities, current personnel are moving to incorporate more oral tradition. One of Albert's main responsibilities, to gain back the trust that has been so badly broken, is a challenge given the ten to twenty years in which park personnel did not follow the law and communicate with the eighteen affiliated tribes. The goal now for Effigy Mounds is to bring in the whole story, the achievement of which will require help from the affiliated tribes. As Albert points out, “We don’t know the whole story, and we need help finding it out so we can tell the truth, for good or for bad.” In addition, Albert is contemplating implementation of an internship program to encourage a reconnection with the land and to spur interest in the younger generations of Indians to ask parents and grandparents about their history and culture. The program would involve “boots on the ground,” young Indians working at the park in both maintenance and interpretation, reconnecting with their history and with the land from which their ancestors gathered food and supplies in the summer months to enable them to survive the winter.

Despite the fact that this is a US Government installation, I believe Effigy Mounds National Monument is a decolonial practice and promises to become more so in the future, especially with people like Albert LeBeau working there, re-establishing trust with the Indian tribes, making efforts to reconnect the younger generations with the land, and focusing on their story at the mounds instead of the story of colonialism. Indigenous voices are being sought, which in itself is a major shift in the United States. I find myself questioning only one aspect of the monument: as much as I enjoyed having my dog along when I hiked the

Andrea Marie Riley-M..., 1/11/15 8:57 AM

Comment [14]: What if you refer to him as Mr. LeBeau?

Andrea Marie Riley-M..., 1/11/15 8:59 AM

Comment [15]: I would love to do this internship. I think these decolonial acts are so important. What does Mr. LeBeau's goals help you understand about how indigenous people interact with the space and how settlers interact with the space?

second day, I am troubled by a comment made by “one tribal leader” in one of the news reports cited earlier. In reaction to the boardwalks that were illegally constructed, this leader said the boardwalks “imply that ‘ancient cemeteries should be treated as places to walk your dog’” (Love).

Andrea Marie Riley-M..., 1/11/15 9:01 AM

Comment [16]: I think this is important to include. For me, this draft is still very strong and little changes need to be made. I find myself wondering if you should end on this note. Like, maybe you might want to say something else or return to the narrative and see if there is another way to end for the reader. Since we are opening the audience to Dr. Albertini as well, what might you want him to see as the final thoughts? Overall, nice work. Please let me know if you have any questions about my margin comments.

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