

Montessori Lesson Plan, Montessori Big Ideas

School: Clark Montessori High School	Teacher: Kris Rutter/Shannon Quay
Subject/Topic: English Language Arts	
Grade Level: 9/10	Theme: Growth

Standards:

SL.9-10.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively

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

W.9-10.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence

a. Establish a clear and thorough thesis to present an argument.

c. Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience’s knowledge level and concerns.

Materials: *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, “In Defense of a Loaded Word” by Ta-Nahesi Coates

Time/Date: 2/5/2020-2/6/2020

Prior Knowledge: Students are reading *To Kill a Mockingbird* as our central text during this cycle. We have read ten chapters at this point and have done several close readings of passages from the book. We have done lessons on annotating multiple times.

This lesson brings in another text, an op-ed from the NYTimes by Ta-Nahesi Coates about the use of the n-word. The students have encountered that word several times in the novel by now, and we have had brief class discussions about the use of the word. We are using this text in conjunction with *TKAM* to seminar about a difficult topic.

After the seminar, students will complete a timed writing about the use of the n-word in *TKAM*. This is the second timed writing that we have done this quarter. After the first timed writing we spent time giving “team feedback” and revising for a second draft.

Concepts/Big Ideas: justice, the power of language, history

Lesson Relates to Theme The seminar and writing about the use of “loaded words” connects to our growth as a society and as individuals (and need for further growth!)

Connection to Elementary Material or Lesson: The History of Language

Curriculum Components Included: ☐ Project ☐ Mini-Whole Group ☐ Lesson-Small Group ☐ Student engagement during lesson ☐ Shelfwork ☒ Rubric ☒ Self-Assessment ☒ Seminar/Questions ☐ Interdisciplinary ☐ Outside Opportunity

Seven Gateways for Adolescence addressed in this lesson: ☒ Deep Connection ☐ Silence & Solitude ☒ Meaning & Purpose ☐ Joy & Delight ☐ Creative ☐ Transcendence ☐ Initiation

Step-by-Step Procedures

1st Period Lesson -- Whole group: instructions about daily schedule, checking annotations for seminar, students write to first seminar question about whether they have encountered or used “loaded words.”

2nd Period Lesson -- Seminar about “In Defense of a Loaded Word” and <i>TKAM</i> . Seminar serves to help them think through their writing task.		
3rd Period Lesson -- Timed writing on the use of the n-word in <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> by Harper Lee		
Plan for Differentiation		
Teaching Small groups and one-on-one conferences to support students who need additional support before the seminar begins and before/during the timed writing.	Work Students have options in how to plan their essays with using the provided essay planning page or using a different one.	Assessment Some students were required to do three annotations/page instead of five/page. For the timed writing, certain students will be required to write three-four paragraphs on their timed writing versus five-six.
Outside Support --The intervention specialist pushes into class to support students in need of additional support. In this lesson, the intervention specialist worked with kids to do a close reading of “In Defense of a Loaded Word” and worked through annotations with them. We also developed a scaffolded essay planning page for students who need more support in constructing their writing response. They can also go to the writing center with their essay plan to get feedback.		
Formal Assessments		
Formal Assessment: Timed essay about the use of language in <i>TKAM</i>		
Summative Assessment: Revised timed essay about the use of language in <i>TKAM</i>		

OP-ED GUEST COLUMNIST

In Defense of a Loaded Word

By Ta-Nehisi Coates

- Nov. 23, 2013

MY father’s name is William Paul Coates. I, like my six brothers and sisters, have always addressed him as Dad. Strangers often call him

Mr. Coates. His friends call him Paul. If a stranger or one of my father’s friends called him Dad, my father might have a conversation. When I was a child, relatives



of my paternal grandmother would call my father Billy. Were I to ever call my father Billy, we would probably have a different conversation.

I have never called my father Billy. I understand, like most people, that words take on meaning within a context. It might be true that you refer to your spouse as Baby. But were I to take this as license to do the same, you would most likely protest. Right names depend on right relationships, a fact so basic to human speech that without it, human language might well collapse. But as with so much of what we take as human, we seem to be in need of an African-American exception.

Three weeks ago the Miami Dolphins guard Richie Incognito, who is white, was reported to have addressed his fellow Dolphin as a “half-nigger.” About a week later, after being ejected from a game, the Los Angeles Clippers forward Matt Barnes, who is black, tweeted that he was “done standing up for these niggas” after being ejected for defending his teammate. This came after the Philadelphia Eagles wide receiver Riley Cooper, who is white, angrily called a black security guard a “nigger” in July.

What followed was a fairly regular ritual debate over who gets to say “nigger” and who does not. On his popular show “Pardon the Interruption,” Tony Kornheiser called on the commissioners of the National Football League, the National Basketball Association and Major League Baseball to ban their players from publicly using the word. The ESPN host Skip Bayless went further, calling “nigger” “the most despicable word in the English language — verbal evil” and wishing that it could “die the death it deserves.”

Mr. Bayless and Mr. Kornheiser are white, but many African-Americans have reached the same conclusion. On Thursday, the [Fritz Pollard Alliance Foundation](#), a group promoting diversity in coaching and in the front offices of the N.F.L., [called](#)

[on](#) players to stop using “the worst and most derogatory word ever spoken in our country” in the locker rooms. In 2007 the N.A.A.C.P. organized a [“funeral”](#) in Detroit for the word “nigger.” “Good riddance. Die, n-word,” said Kwame Kilpatrick, then the mayor. “We don’t want to see you around here no more.”

But “nigger” endures — in our most popular music, in our most provocative films and on the lips of more black people (like me) than would like to admit it. Black critics, not unjustly, note the specific trauma that accompanies the word. For some the mere mention of “nigger” conjures up memories of lynchings and bombings. But there’s more here — a deep fear of what our use of the word “nigger” communicates to white people. “If you call yourself the n-word,” said the Rev. Al Sharpton, “you can’t get mad when someone treats you like that.”

This is the politics of respectability — an attempt to raise black people to a superhuman standard. In this case it means exempting black people from a basic rule of communication — that words take on meaning from context and relationship. But as in all cases of respectability politics, what we are really saying to black people is, “Be less human.” This is not a fight over civil rights; it’s an attempt to raise a double standard. It is no different from charging “ladies” with being ornamental and prim while allowing for the great wisdom of boys being boys. To prevent enabling oppression, we demand that black people be twice as good. To prevent verifying stereotypes, we pledge to never eat a slice a watermelon in front of white people.

But white racism needs no verification from black people. And a scientific poll of right-thinking humans will always conclude that watermelon is awesome. That is

because its taste and texture appeal to certain attributes that humans tend to find pleasurable. Humans also tend to find community to be pleasurable, and within the boundaries of community relationships, words — often ironic and self-deprecating — are always spoken that take on other meanings when uttered by others.

A few summers ago one of my best friends invited me up to what he affectionately called his “white-trash cabin” in the Adirondacks. This was not how I described the outing to my family. Two of my Jewish acquaintances once joked that I’d “make a good Jew.” My retort was not, “Yeah, I certainly am good with money.” Gay men sometimes laughingly refer to one another as “faggots.” My wife and her friends sometimes, when having a good time, will refer to one another with the word “bitch.” I am certain that should I decide to join in, I would invite the same hard conversation that would greet me, should I ever call my father Billy.

A separate and unequal standard for black people is always wrong. And the desire to ban the word “nigger” is not anti-racism, it is finishing school. When Matt Barnes used the word “niggas” he was being inappropriate. When Richie Incognito and Riley Cooper used “nigger,” they were being violent and offensive. That we have trouble distinguishing the two evidences our discomfort with the great chasm between black and white America. If you could choose one word to represent the centuries of bondage, the decades of terrorism, the long days of mass rape, the totality of white violence that birthed the black race in America, it would be “nigger.”

But though we were born in violence, we did not die there. That such a seemingly hateful word should return as a marker of nationhood and community confounds our very notions of power. “Nigger” is different because it is attached to one of the

most vibrant cultures in the Western world. And yet the culture is inextricably linked to the violence that birthed us. “Nigger” is the border, the signpost that reminds us that the old crimes don’t disappear. It tells white people that, for all their guns and all their gold, there will always be places they can never go.

Ta-Nehisi Coates is a senior editor at The Atlantic and the author of the memoir “The Beautiful Struggle: A Father, Two Sons, and an Unlikely Road to Manhood.”