Speak Unit Plan

Unit Objectives

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

Reading and Literature Studies
- read and demonstrate an understanding of a variety of literary and informational texts;
- identify and explain the effect of specific elements of style in a variety of literary and informational texts.

Writing
- identify the literary and informational forms suited to specific purposes and audiences and use the forms appropriately in their own writing, with an emphasis on communicating information accurately;
- use a variety of forms of writing to express themselves, clarify their ideas, and engage the audience’s attention, imagination, and interest;
- revise their written work, collaboratively and independently, with a focus on support for ideas, accuracy, clarity, and unity;
- edit and proofread to produce final drafts, using correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation, according to the conventions of standard Canadian English specified for this course, with the support of print and electronic resources when appropriate.

Language
- use knowledge of vocabulary and language conventions to speak, write, and read clearly and correctly;
- use listening techniques and oral communication skills to participate in classroom discussions and more formal activities, such as storytelling, role playing, and reporting/presenting, for specific purposes and audiences

Media Studies
- identify and describe the elements, intended audiences, and production practices of a variety of media forms;
- use knowledge of a variety of media forms, purposes, and audiences to create media works.

Calendar

May

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**Rationale**

I decided to tailor the novel *Speak* to the grade 9 applied level because it is suggested on the list of novels to be taught at this level. The chapters are short and it is a relatively easy read, which would help reluctant readers. In addition, it makes sense to teach it at this grade because the main character is around the same age and they could easily relate to her. They will also be newly coming in high school and they would understand the transition that Melinda is undergoing in this novel.

This unit would be best situated at the beginning of the school year because the novel takes place at that time of year. The students would be able to relate to Melinda’s skepticism about high school and finding ways to adjust to a new setting. This novel would be foundational to introducing other units such as poetry or other novel studies. Some expectations of a poetry unit would be to depict stylistic devices as a voice and tone to contribute to themes. They would
also learn about the purpose and audience of certain poems. In terms of writing, they would learn how to use poetry as a form of literature. For the media component, they could look at slam poetry, which is briefly shown in one of the lessons in the novel study unit.

I chose to give them options in their summative assignments because it allows them to make unique projects and use the outlet that they think is most effective in expressing themselves. In terms of curriculum, it touches on the reading and writing categories primarily, but it also has a media component with the technologies and videos shown in the lessons. It also looks at the language component because the students have to build communication skills, particularly listening skills through discussions, both in small and class ones.

Its contemporary existence in literature is one of the main reasons why I wanted to write a unit plan on this text. It is not a traditional text and it is more accessible to students because there is not a language barrier and it is in their time era. According to Nicol, in reference to canon texts, “the opportunity to introduce fresh literature in the classroom may encourage both teachers and students to expand their understanding of authors’ messages in a collaborative manner, thereby expanding our view of humanity” (Nicol 24). I agree that they would be readily able to discuss newer texts than a text such as Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* because they would not have to deconstruct the language and the history behind the work.

I would like to create a student-centered learning environment by engaging students in discussions and build a sense of community where they feel safe contributing their opinions. I feel that the teaching and learning should be an exchange between the teacher and student, as well as student to student. Strickland & Strickland talk about a type of teacher that focuses on incorporating student-centered learning and stresses the importance of “[establishing] trust and a sense of community and purpose.” The authors say that “it also requires that students become
more responsible and involved. The idea of conversation is “based on genuine respect – respect for other’s ideas, feelings and reactions – and humility – understanding that the speaker is one person in the conversation, someone with opinions but willing and eager to learn from the ideas of others including students” (Strickland & Strickland 22). The reasoning behind providing the students with a variety of activities and engaging in collaborative learning are making them accountable for their contributions.

Themes that are relevant to this unit are identity, alienation, bullying and silence. Identity is an important issue, especially in adolescence. In the novel, it depicts Melinda’s growth and students can relate to a coming-of-age story. It also deconstructs Melinda’s self-expression through art. It shows the psychological and social aspects of finding oneself. It is effective to be discussing such a theme when the students will be going through the same issue of identity. Alienation is a universal theme in literature and society. In this novel is shows the progression of the individual moving into society. The students might relate to alienation because they are at a new school and may have to make new friends. Another theme that is relevant to students is bullying. Bullying is a critical social issue and using examples in the media is a good way to engage the students. If they are experiencing being bullied, they can find comfort in the fact that others have had similar experiences. Self-worth is also another significant piece in this unit because it is hard in young adulthood to validate oneself. It is easy to make the text-to-world connections with these themes because they are prevalent in society and also the culture of high school.

**Daily Lesson Plans**

**Lesson Plan Day 1**

**Identity**
Hook: show a clip of Mean Girls
- compare how the stereotypes are introduced differently than in “Speak”
- discussion of how media portrays stereotypes

Class Activity: Make an identity tree (collage) out of magazine trees that represent the student’s identity. Have them explain to a partner why they included certain images in their collage.

Materials: magazines, scissors, glue, construction paper, ‘Speak’, Mean Girls DVD

Homework: Read the first half of the “First Marking Period”

Lesson Plan Day 2
Bullying and Alienation

Hook: show the poem by Emily Dickinson called “I’m nobody! Who are you?”
- Connection to the theme of alienation and identity

Class Activity: Think, pair, share about friendship
- Lead to a group discussion about themes: bullying and alienation

Media Examples:
- slam poetry story “To this Day Project: Shane Koyczan”
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Itun92DfnPY
- bullying documentary trailer http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W1g9RV9OKhg

Questions after viewing:
- How does media portray bullying?
- What is the message?
- Who is the intended audience?
- How did you react to this? How do you think others would react to it?
- How can this be connected to the novel?

Homework: Read the rest of “First Marking Period” and write a journal entry of their “10 Lies about High School”

Lesson Plan Day 3
Silence and Self-Worth

Bell work: Write in their journals their reactions to the “First Marking Period” and any questions they have (15 mins)

Discussion: themes in the novel: silence, “nothing” – lack of self-worth that Melinda feels. This is related to an incidence that happened at the party. Break off the class into small groups and have them find examples in the text so far in these themes. Ask them to put themselves in
Melinda’s shoes: what would they do? Would they reach out for help? Who would they ask? Have them return with a whole class discussion.

**Homework:** Read first half of “Second Marking Period” and write journal entry about their reactions to these pages

**Lesson Plan Day 4**
**Symbolism**

*Assign the Unit Project*

**Hook:** Play Green Day’s “Boulevard of Broken Dreams” and show how this serves as a soundtrack to how Melinda is feeling.

**Discussion:**
- Symbolism in the novel
- introduce what symbolism is
- discuss how trees and mirrors are represented in the book

**Homework:** Read the rest of “Second Marking Period” and find a quotation that relates to one of the themes in the book, it can be from a newspaper article, song or in literature. Write a journal entry about how it is connected to a theme in the novel. Get them to draw themes out of a hat, evenly distribute them. Tell them they have to present them to the class the next day.

**Lesson Plan Day 5**
**Intertextuality**

**Bell Work:** free write on their reactions to the Second Marking Period

**Activity:** brief presentation of quotations that they found from a newspaper, song or in literature, their rationale for choosing the quotation. give them each a minute and a half to present.

**Discussion:** debriefing the quotations found.

**Homework:** Read “Third Marking Period”

**Lesson Plan Day 6**
**Characters**

**Bell Work:** write in their journals their reactions to the Third Marking Period

**Discussion:** talk about characterization, what they represent and how they interact with each other

**Activity:** do a graffiti wall on each of the characters, in groups of 3-4 they have to write as many things as they know about the character. Debrief on the details they were able to provide. Comment on author chooses to leave out certain things about a character. Minor vs. major characters.
Homework: Read a third of Fourth Marking Period and assign the “Dear Abby” letter which contains advice that they would give to Melinda about her issues.

Lesson Plan Day 7
The Hockey Sweater and Alienation

Bell Work: Give them 15 mins to work on the letter

Activity: read the short story out loud: Roch Carrier’s “The Hockey Sweater”
- compare how the main character is alienated in the book
- reasons why they are alienated
- how is the message conveyed?
- how they react to being bullied differently
- female vs. male protagonist

Homework: Read second third of Fourth Marking Period and find an image from a magazine that they think would affect someone’s body image or self-worth

Lesson Plan Day 8
Body Image Destruction

Bell work: give them 15 mins to work on the letter

Activity:
- break the class off into groups of 3, then have them show their image to the group, agree on the best image they want to show the class and explain their rationale
- have them present back to the class

Discussion: the theme of self-worth is prevalent in the novel, Melinda’s self-worth decreases after she was sexually assaulted.

Homework: Read the rest of “Speak” and write in their journals about their reactions to the book

Lesson Plan Day 9
Bullying and Media

Dear Abby Letter Due

Bell Work: Discuss with a partner their reactions to the book, what they wrote in their journal entry (10 mins)

Activity
- introduce technology they could use to make their PSA (Audacity, Windows Movie Maker) – short tutorial on the two.
- Give them examples of some PSAs on bullying, discuss them
- Give out PSA Activity and Questions Sheet
- Give them PSA Script Outline

**Homework:** work on unit assignment

**Lesson Plan Day 10**
**Depression**

*Guest Speaker on the topic of depression*
- Introduce the speaker
- Leave time for questions and discussion
- If time permits, work on unit projects

**Homework:** Work on Unit Project

**Lesson Plan Day 11**
**Review and Final Thoughts**

**Bell Work:** write in their journals on what they learned from the guest speaker, any questions they may still have. (15 mins)

**Activity:** Now that the book is complete, have them complete a snowball activity.
- Ask them questions about the theme and how they were supported in the novel
- Main symbols in the book
- Characters in the book

- Any final thoughts/questions would be covered at this time

**Closure:** fill out exit cards about what they like/did not like about the novel, what could be done differently next time.

**Homework:** Work on Unit Project

**Lesson Plan Day 12**
**Film**
- Introduce movie adaptation of “Speak”
- Show first hour of the movie

**Lesson Plan Day 13**
**Film and Comparison**

**Activity:** Show the rest of the movie

**Discussion:** Have a class discussion about how it is different from the novel in terms of characterization, which parts they decided to focus on. Casting choices, what they make explicit/implicit.
Homework: write in journal a brief comparison of the novel and the movie adaptation

Lesson Plan Day 14
- Work Period

Lesson Plan Day 15
- Work Period

Assessment

Diagnostic
- journals marked for completion and understanding

Formative
- Dear Abby Letter
  o Imagine that you are a counselor/advisor giving advice to Melinda
  o What kind of advice would you give her?
  o Marked for creativity
  o Must be half a page to a page
- presentation of quotations
  o how well they connect to a theme in the novel
  o the rationale given
- self-assessment of participation
- participation
  o small group and class discussion

Summative

1. PSA announcement about bullying, sexual assault, or mental health
   o 30 seconds clip
   o an audio or video clip using technology
   o must be focused and address one issue
   o rationale and script to be included
   o can find examples on MediaSmarts

2. Creating a soundtrack for the novel
   o select eight songs that relate to the novel
   o can draw from feelings that a character is experiencing, significant scenes in the novel or the symbolism
   o explain with a rationale for each song
3. Scrapbook Journal
   - throughout the course they wrote journal entries
   - this scrapbook must include images, newspaper article that are relevant to the issues in the book
   - could have creative writing that was inspired by reading the novel

Concluding Remarks

One of my biggest challenges was trying to integrate media into my lessons so that students could look at it through a critical lens. I realize that there were a variety of resources and ways to link themes to media. Another challenge I encountered was trying to find a song that could relate to the novel. I searched online and after looking through lyrics, discovered a song that fits well with the feelings of the protagonist. Incorporating a variety of activities was a challenge because I found towards the end difficult to generate new activities.

It was both a reward and challenge to imagine myself in the role of the student and how they would react to such activities and assignments. Also, the possible response that they would give in regards to questions and journal entries.

One of the rewards of creating this lesson was using a book I appreciated as a young adult and connecting with it on a different level. I enjoyed coming up with activity ideas and assignment ideas. Another reward of this unit plan was reading the novel again and selecting key ideas from it. I also watched the film adaptation for the first time and it was interesting to pick out the similarities and differences from the novel.

Overall, it was a good learning experience and the rewards outweighed the challenges. The more unit plans I create, the easier it should get and hopefully these activity ideas will be transferrable to other units of study.
Complementary Material

- Mean Girls DVD
- Film Adaptation of Speak
- I’m nobody! Who are you? by Emily Dickinson
- Boulevard of Broken Dreams by Green Day
- The Hockey Sweater by Roch Carrier
- Youtube clips:
  - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ltun92DfnPY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ltun92DfnPY) (slam poetry story)
  - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W1g9RV9OKhg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W1g9RV9OKhg) (bullying documentary trailer)
- PSA handouts from readwritethink.org

Works Cited


I'm nobody! Who are you? by Emily Dickinson

I'm nobody! Who are you?
Are you nobody, too?
Then there's a pair of us -- don't tell!
They'd banish -- you know!

How dreary to be somebody!
How public like a frog
To tell one's name the livelong day
To an admiring bog!