

Newsbreaks: Speaking Truth to Power

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INTRODUCTION

Secondary students in eleventh and twelfth grades at a racially-isolated, African-American urban community high school in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania have shown an abiding interest in the "search for truth." This unit of curriculum will explore the search for truth through a variety of perspectives; cultural, historical, literary, and journalistic as students develop, refine, and strengthen their reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. The search for "truth" through reading, writing, and interviewing will guide the day-to-day design of this curriculum unit as with an underlying thematic approach which focuses critical analysis on the Who, What, Why, When, Where, and How of the journalistic technique. Currently, our neighborhood high school does not have a school newspaper or indeed, any vehicle for the publication of students' words and works. "*Newsbreaks: Speaking Truth to Power*" will become the source for student and community connection and communication via a student published newspaper.

This unit will provide the background and foreground for ferreting out the truth from a journalistic perspective. The basic Who, What, Why, When, Where, and How format of the news reporter, which was experienced by students in tenth grade will be extended to encompass not only "the facts," "current events," and other content-specific issues that come forth in the daily evolution of our lives, but will extend to connect with the themes of literature being studied in the district's approved, adopted and mandated curriculum anthology. At the eleventh grade level, one such theme is "*Taking a Stand*," and at the twelfth grade level "*The Source of Truth*" and "*Defining Responsibility*" are themes which will deepen understandings of selected readings for students through the development of written and spoken products that reflect journalistic principles. Through a carefully developed and sequenced curriculum framework, students will be engaged in challenging activities correlated to Communications Standards that demonstrate the reading, writing, speaking, listening, thinking, researching, and interviewing skills that will establish student competency levels as "proficient" under the District's rubrics and in coordination with each of the specified content area standards.

"*Newsbreaks: Speaking Truth to Power*", as a curriculum unit, will prepare students to be effective and productive communicators in future endeavors whether that be at college or in careers. The inherent interdisciplinary nature of this unit will allow students to refine skills in other content areas, produce a student newspaper, increase academic achievement in reading and writing, and contribute significantly to graduation requirements and individual student portfolios.

Since the student population for whom this curriculum has been designed is 99.8% African-American, there will be a corresponding inclusion and emphasis on Black writers, journalists, reporters, and current events, local and national, highlighting the

African-American community. It is my belief that human beings cannot be simply separated from the contexts that have produced them and therefore we must reshape curricula in ways that life and its multi-dimensional connectedness for students rests at the center of our educational programs. By centering the curriculum on the ideological inheritance of students' origins and culture and the corresponding relationship to their own beliefs, value structures, and interests, students will begin to uncover the truth for themselves. When students begin to understand the connecting patterns and relationships that undergird the work in which they live, they can then begin to cultivate new ways of reading the world and the word in an attempt to make sense of themselves and contemporary society. Through an understanding of the forces that have shaped them, the contributions of their race in this instance, in the areas of journalism, literature, and writing, African-American students will see themselves in new and empowered perspectives.

A subscription to the *New Pittsburgh Courier* and *Pittsburgh Renaissance News* will provide bi-weekly reporting and writing from the African American perspective in addition to frequent and alternating editions of the *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review* and *The New York Times*. Students will read, discuss, and critique the "writings" (of African-Americans in particular) and use them as modes and/or impetus for further exploration of the topics reviewed and analyzed.

Students will interview, observe, read discuss and write, write, write. Their collectivism, their individualism, their cultural uniqueness, their context of community will do much to create a publication that appeals most specifically to our student population, but will also offer another view of the word and the world to readers of a different culture. "Unfortunately," as Edna McKenzie tells us, "the American society created the special need for the *Courier*. There is a critical role for similar publications." There is also a critical and corresponding need for a publication produced by African-American youth.

The unit will also include quotations for discussion, reflection and written response. The quotes will be derived from the works of black journalists and reporters as well as others of some prominence. The observations of Pete Hamill will add the dimensions of truth, trust, quality and help to create "maps of the city's consciousness."

"Truth could move multitudes with untutored language."

Carter G. Woodson

These words of Carter G. Woodson, renowned African-American educator and thinker, provides a starting point for our unit *Newsbreaks: Speaking Truth to Power*. As indicated previously, the guiding theme and underlying premise for this unit will be TRUTH, more specifically, Speaking Truth to Power. The question has been asked, "Whose power?" The question gives pause for the thought for the teacher as well as the students. It has been suggested that 1) speaking makes one powerful, 2) journalism speaks to the powerful, and 3) speaking through journalism puts a powerful tool in the hands of students. This question, "Whose power?" and the range of possible answers can

serve to stretch student thinking about words, issues, and the many perspectives from which they can be approached. The unit will frequently incorporate thought-provoking quotations for interpretation and discussion by teacher and students.

Thus, quotations that reflect or provide relevant impetus for the lesson of the day will be posted on chart or blackboard. Lessons will begin with an activity that requires analysis and response by students in the form of an entry in their Daily Journal. The responses will lead us to some discussion with students sharing their Journal responses to the quotation.

“The newspaper that is true to its highest mission will concern itself with the things that ought to happen tomorrow, or next month, or next year, and will seek to make what ought to be.”
Joseph Pulitzer

Other examples of such quotations which are selected from books listed in the bibliography include the following:

“We wish to plead our own cause. Too long have others spoken for us. Too long has the public been deceived by misrepresentations, in things which concern us dearly.”
from Freedom's Journal (March 16, 1827)

“Instead of being led and defended by others, as in the past, American Negroes are gaining their own voices, their own ideals. Self realization is thus coming... to just another of the world's great races.”
W. E. B. DuBois, 1915

“The Negro leader of today is not free.... he has to use a lot of his energy trying to think white. What the Negroes need is leaders who can and will think black.”
H. L. Mencken, 1929

“Black folks must undergo a radical change in the way we think about ourselves as a race - no longer as the victims of 130 years ago who are owed something, but rather as extraordinary survivors who take life's lemons and make the tastiest lemonade in the neighborhood.”
DeWayne Wickham

The preceding quotations and others that will follow are taken from Thinking Black: Some of the Nation's Best Black Columnists Speak Their Mind edited by De Wayne Wickham, a treasury of journalistic writing by contemporary black writers. These gems will be used to illustrate the varied forms of newswriting.

“A writer's problem, does not change ... it is always how to write truly and, having found what is true, to project it in such a way that it becomes a part of the experience of the person who reads it.”
Ernest Hemingway

Again , the thematic emphasis of our curriculum unit will be presented and easily accessible, when posted on the blackboard, for a subliminal, if not blatant reinforcement

of how we will continue to view and analyze our reading and writing activities. Other quotations are intended to have a similar effect.

"Put it to them briefly so they will read it clearly, so they will appreciate it picturesquely, so they will remember it, and above all accurately so they will be guided by its light."

Joseph Pulitzer

"News is a verb"

"... every story must have a dramatic point."

"The point of all this work is not to dish dirt, but to make intelligent connections between life and the art."

Pete Hamill

"News is a rough draft of history."

Benjamin Bradley

Daily warm-up activity:

Each student will have a Journal which will be use to record reactions, responses, questions, ideas for the unit. Each day as a warm-up activity students will write in response to the posted quotations including but not limited to those that immediately precede this activity, as well as other newswritings or pieces of literary journalism.

The stage has been set for the second type of activity which will be the reading designated selections with subsequent analysis and response. The Mari Evans poem *Speak the Truth To The People* which follows opens the door to critical analysis and discussion.

SPEAK THE TRUTH TO THE PEOPLE

*By
Mari Evans*

"Hearing the truth can free the mind so people can concentrate on constructive work.

This

poem admonishes blacks to be truthful in speech so audiences can "identify the enemy," distance themselves from conventions that enslave African-Americans, and build a strong black nation with its own ideals."

Speak the truth to the people
Talk sense to the people
Free them with reason
Free them with honesty
Free the people with Love and Courage and Care for their-Being
Spare them the fantasy
Fantasy enslaves
A slave is enslaved
Can be enslaved by unwisdom
Can be re-enslaved while in flight from the enemy
Can be enslaved by his brother whom he loves
His brother whom he trusts whom he loves
His brother whom he trusts
His brother with the loud voice
And the unwisdom
Speak the truth to the people
It is not necessary to green the heart
Only to identify the enemy
It is not necessary to blow the mind
Only to free the mind
To identify the enemy is to free the mind
A free mind has no need to scream

A free mind is ready for other things

To BUILD black schools
To BUILD black children
To BUILD black minds
To BUILD black love
To BUILD black impregnability
To BUILD a strong black nation
To BUILD.

Speak the truth to the people
Spare them the opium of devil-hate
They need no trips on honky-chants.

Move them instead to a BLACK ONENESS.

A black strength which will defend its own
Needing no cacophony of screams for activation
A black strength which will attack the laws
exposes the lies, disassembles the structure
and ravages the very foundation of evil.

Speak the truth to the people
To identify the enemy is to free the mind
Free the mind of the people
Speak to the mind of the people
Speak Truth."

The poem and certain of the quotations were extracted- from a volume entitled the *African American Book of Values: Classic Moral Stories* edited with commentary by Steven Barboza. (This impressive volume is a treasury of stories, folk tales, slave narratives, hymns, letter &, essays, poems, etc. which illustrate moral and ethical conduct and create a new recipe for a life full of wisdom and personal power written by noted African Americans authors.) Steven Barboza, a professional journalist, has written for many magazines and newspapers, including the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Smithsonian*.

Activity:

Students will be given copies of the poem for reading, interpreting in the margins, for discussion, and for response in their journals. This activity will be a lead in or preparation for a literary journalistic piece or an editorial that will be developed and written by each student for publication and inclusion in their PORTFOLIOS, fulfilling the requirements for Writing Exhibit: Entry Nos. 6 or 7 of Communication Standard No. 4.

It is important to note that this unit will also be integrated with the previously developed 'Institute' units for 11th and 12th grade students at Westinghouse High School in Homewood, a racially isolated school and community. These units have centered on "*Reclaiming the American Dream: An Odyssey - through Literature and Art in the African-American Tradition*" and "*Black Genius from Homewood*." The pervading theme of celebrating the literate genius of and in the indigenous population of the Homewood community will continue to provide the context and impetus for achieving District Standards. In this unit, the focus will include but also extend beyond the Homewood and Pittsburgh communities to the work of African-American journalists, locally and nationally.

It has been my observation and experience that the African-American youth who live and learn in this community have exhibited the same "genius" that marks preceding generations of graduates who have gone on to establish themselves in a wide range of professions, but most specifically, for our purposes here, in the world of literature,

writing, and journalism. By exploring that "genius" and developing curriculum that analyzes, explicates, and respects the content and context of the works of accomplished writers (authors and reporters), an educational opportunity will be created for the African-American population of Westinghouse High School to study and learn the truth and the power of the word and the world through a lens unique to their culture.

The theory that guides this particular educational perspective draws from the *post-formal thinking* theory of cognition which postulates the importance of *etymology*, *process*, *pattern*, and *contextualization* as essential elements to acquiring knowledge and understanding. This conceptual framework in concert with the Standards-based curriculum philosophy of the Pittsburgh Public Schools and Portfolio Assessment framework that is being implemented are integral, while frequently subliminal parts of this curriculum unit.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives, explicit and implicit, that have been woven into the unit are multiple and intended to facilitate growth in critical thinking skills, academic (reading, writing, listening, speaking) skills, cultural, sociological, philosophical and psychological perspectives, as well as deeper understandings of the possibility and potential for success at communicating the *word* and the *truth* in the world.

The *OBJECTIVES*, more specifically delineated will include, but not be limited to the following:

The *first* objective is to develop student's reading skills in a contextually relevant process designed to improve literal, interpretive, and analytical comprehension of the written word.

The *second* objective is to prepare students to demonstrate the acquisition of increased reading skills as measurable by standards-based assessment.

The *third* objective is create learning situations through which students will be intrinsically motivated to achieve performance standards as required by portfolio guidelines and rubrics set forth by the district as well as the state.

The *fourth* objective is to provide challenging opportunities for students to demonstrate accomplishment in reading informational materials by restating from the text, summarizing, considering its effectiveness, analyzing by drawing inferences, asking questions or identifying the influence of the writer's point of view, and extending ideas based on the information read.

The *fifth* objective is to have students read public documents and demonstrate understanding of the issue being presented and evaluate the argument used to support the issue.

The *sixth* objective is to have students produce pieces of writing that will fulfill the district's *Portfolio Writing Exhibit* requirements for the following entries:

Entry No. 3: A NARRATIVE ACCOUNT - This piece of student writing will demonstrate the ability to write a narrative, in the form of a news story, or feature article which 1) engages the reader by establishing a context, creating a point of view, and using other journalistic techniques to develop reader interest, 2) shows the significance of the events and the conclusions that can be drawn from these events, 3) creates an organizing structure that balances and unifies all aspects of the story, 4) includes sensory details and concrete language to develop the story, and 5) excludes extraneous details and inconsistencies

Entry No. 4: A REPORT - This piece of writing will contain evidence that the student 1) engages the reader by establishing a context, creating a point of view or persona, and uses other appropriate techniques to develop reader interest, 2) develops a controlling idea that unifies the report and conveys an attitude toward the subject, 3) creates an organizing structure appropriate to purpose, audience and content, 4) includes appropriate facts and details to support your controlling ideas, and 5) uses a range of appropriate strategies, such as: describing and differentiating parts; narrating a relevant anecdote; comparing and contrasting; explaining benefits or limitations; demonstrating claims or assertions; providing a scenario to illustrate.

Entry No. 6: A PERSUASIVE ESSAY - This piece of writing will show the student's ability to write persuasively, in the form of an editorial containing evidence that he/she 1) engages the reader by establishing a context, creates a point of view, etc., 2) includes a controlling idea that organizes the writing and makes a clear and logical judgment, 3) organizes writing in a way that is appropriate to the needs and interests of a specified audience (high school community), 4) uses a range of strategies to elaborate and persuade, such as definitions, descriptions illustrations, examples, anecdotes, 5) arranges details, reasons, examples, and/or anecdotes effectively and persuasively, 6) includes appropriate information and arguments; excludes those that are irrelevant, 7) supports arguments with detailed evidence, citing sources of information.

Entry No. 8: CONTROL OF WRITING CONVENTIONS - The pieces of writing submitted for the newspaper unit will demonstrate appropriate command of spelling, sentence construction, paragraph structure, punctuation, grammar, usage, and mechanics.

Entry No. 9: USE OF PROCESSES AND STRATEGIES FOR WRITING - The writing entries will show evidence that the student can 1) improve his/her writing by adding details, examples, and explanations, 2) rearrange words, sentences or parts of your piece so that the meaning is clearer 3) change some of the words used so that writing contains language that is livelier and more concrete, 4) change and rewrite some sentences so that the sentences are varied, 5) improve the organizational structure of the writing or sharpen the focus.

The *seventh* objective is to provide students with relevant opportunities to fulfill the district's *PORTFOLIO* requirements for accomplishment in *Speaking and Listening* through the development of *interviewing skills*.

Entry No. 2: SPEAKING ACCOMPLISHMENT: Information

Students who meet this standard will have demonstrated that they can 1) ask appropriate questions, 2) respond to other people's questions, 3) paraphrase and summarize to increase understanding, 4) listen responsively to others' points of view, 5) use language that's simple and appropriate for communicating, 6) speak audibly.

The *eighth* objective is to achieve *Communications Standard No. 2*: All students read and use a variety of methods to make sense of various kinds of complex texts.

The *ninth* objective is to achieve *Communications Standard No. 3*: All students respond orally and in writing to information and ideas gained by reading narrative and informational texts and use the information and ideas to make decisions and solve problems.

The *tenth* objective is to work toward the achievement of *Communications Standard No. 4*: All students write for a variety of purposes, including to narrate, inform and persuade in all subject areas.

The *eleventh* objective is to achieve *Communications Standard No. 5*: students analyze and make critical judgments about all forms of communication, separating fact from opinion, recognizing propaganda, stereotypes and statements of bias, recognizing inconsistencies and judging the validity of evidence.

The *twelfth* objective is to work towards *Communications Standard No. 6*: All students exchange information orally, including understanding and giving spoken instructions, asking and answering questions appropriately and promoting effective group communications.

My final, but most encompassing objective, is to create a curriculum with content that is meaningful and relevant, that explicitly connects to the daily lives of students, that provides understanding about how it relates to their future adult lives, that sustains a sense of identity, purpose, and personal worth, that gives students a connectedness to people like themselves, and that presents a positive representation of their cultural heritage.

STRATEGIES

The journey toward these objectives began this past year when we studied the works of John Edgar Wideman, August Wilson, Romare Bearden, Turhan Shebazz, Billy Strayhorn and others who lived the early part of their lives in the local area. As we read, analyzed, and internalized the substance of these works, there were a plethora of 'newsbreaks' in local (as well as national) newspapers and magazines.

Responding with spontaneity to these “teaching moments”, we had the good fortune to collect a variety of newsworthy articles that elaborated and extended the works being studied in ways that enhanced relevancy and context.

“*Newsbreaks. Speaking Truth to Power*” will continue that emphasis on Black insights, models, and ways of knowing. This unit of curriculum will add a new dimension to the one written and implemented during the past year. Believing that *etymology, process, patterns, and context* are essential elements to thinking and learning, the inclusion of a Who, What, Why, When, Where, and How lens will facilitate the acquisition and refinement of reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills for students. The acquisition of these skills will evolve through a carefully planned series of lessons which while continuing to be open to the spontaneous, the unforeseen, the unexpected flow of current events, will utilize selected works from the PPS curriculum, the adopted literature anthology, news articles from all accessible newspapers and many of the relevant readings from the Pittsburgh Teachers Institute Newspaper seminar with Jim Davidson at Carnegie Mellon University.

Subscriptions to local and national newspapers and publications, particularly those with African-American reporters and writers will give students access to Communications experts who have not only survived but succeeded in their field (a field which, by the way, holds promise for future employment). Local writers such as Sonya Toler, Carmen Lee, Mike Seate, Lou Ransom, LaMont Jones, Hop Kendricks, Treshea Wade, Tawanda Johnson, Monica Haynes, Ervin Dyer, Richard Adams, Chris Moore, Lynn Hayes Freeland, Harold Hayes, Dennis Shatzman, etc. At a national level we will include the perspectives of writers such as Leonard Pitts, Jr., Brent Staples, Henry Louis Gates, Jill Nelson, Wil Haygood, Leon Dash, Margo Jefferson, Tananarive Due, Thomas Sowell, Don Terry, Hickman Powell, Lawrence Otis Graham, and Frank Harris III of the New Haven Register.

The Who, What, Why, When, Why, Where, and How framework will be applied to sections of our readings with John Wideman's Brothers and Keepers, All Stories Are True and Hiding Place, as well as a series of local newspaper articles that deal with recent developments in the Robert Wideman case and subsequent litigation regarding a new trial and related matters. Similarly, after studying the works of August Wilson, such as Seven Guitars, we will analyze the corresponding news coverage of this local author who has become nationally acclaimed for his works. The opening of his latest play, King Hedley III is set for the fall of 1999 in Pittsburgh and is an extension of a character introduced in Seven Guitar. A field trip will be planned to see the play or perhaps one of the rehearsal sessions which would give student a the opportunity to talk with the playwright (Wilson) and actors with. the purpose of writing news, features, or reviews. Having acquired a sense of the author and his works from classroom readings, students will be in a position to review and interview, drawing upon an inquiry oriented paradigm supported by sufficient background knowledge. (In this context, knowledge is something to be produced by the interaction of teacher, student, and subject matter, not something to be imposed by outside experts.)

August Wilson, John Wideman, and the Black journalists heretofore mentioned are models of local genius who have risen to the top of their professions, and will provide the impetus and context for a wealth of *reading, writing, listening, and speaking* activities for African American students who come to know, intimately, their backgrounds and their works.

An understanding of the connecting patterns in the process of education that evolves from recognizable *origins* and relevant *contexts* has the effect of grounding students in the world and in the words which they, individually and collectively, have constructed. Connected consciousness increases significantly the true acquisition of knowledge and skills for the learner. Thus, it is the purpose of the teacher to promote participation in the culture of the classroom and one of the ways to accomplish this is to situate the class in the words, concerns, and the experience of its students, African American students in this instance.

The unit will also weave themes related to and interconnected with truth in several of the literature units that are a part of the District approved anthology. As indicated in the essay, these will include, at the eleventh grade level, "Taking a Stand" with literature selections from the works of Anne Moody, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Martin Gansberg and "Triumphs of Spirit" with the works of Maya Angelou, Langston Hughes, and Lorraine Hansberry. Additionally, we will use Two by Royko and Glaspells Trifles in the unit The Double Edge of Deception. At the twelfth grade level, the unit theme "The Source of Truth" will include Chief Seattle's Our People Are Ebbing Away and Protecting Individual Dignity with works of Brent Staples and Wole Soyinka. These themes and others will be used, to generate newsworthy topics by students as they develop written and spoken products that reflect journalistic principles. Several other works from the literary journalism genre will be included in the larger curriculum.

Some class time (probably a week or two) will be spent initially on the rules of Journalism, Style, Libel, the Right of Fair Comment, the Right of Privacy; a summary of the *First Amendment*, and synopses of a few pertinent Supreme Court decisions. These readings and discussions will facilitate opportunities for students to fulfill some of their *PORTFOLIO* requirements that deal with reading and responding to Public Documents and demonstrating the ability to meet several specified *Communications Standards* (such as Reading Exhibits Nos. 2 and 3: Writing Exhibits Nos. 1, 3, 4, 6, and 7) while simultaneously becoming more informed and proficient at (news)writing.

Lessons for the *Newsbreaks: Speaking Truth to Power* unit will integrate and sequentially construct opportunities for students to develop reading, writing, listening and speaking skills that evolve from a context and a content that recognize, reinforce, and respect students' background, culture, contemporary issues and interests, with related locations in time and space. Each lesson will explicitly address the acquisition of a specific *Content Standard* and implicitly provide the means by which that *Content Standard* might be achieved.

The Who What, Why, When, Where, and How framework will provide students with one very concrete method of analyzing written works, their own as well as others.

Reading the Newspaper (Communication- Standard No. 11)

Activities:

1. Students will read, as a warm-up activity, a selected (highly interest) news story from a local newspaper and demonstrate understanding of its meaning by answering WHO, WHAT, WHY, WHEN, WHEN, WHERE, and HOW questions.
2. Students will explore the front page of a newspaper with the purpose of realizing the content and importance of the front page i.e., the (masthead) title of the paper, the 'big' news- printed on the front page, the headline and its correspondence in size to the importance of the story, the datelines, by-lines, wire services, cutlines, the index, and the TOP STORY. Stories that have no dateline are LOCAL NEWS STORIES.

HOMEWORK: Take the front page of any newspaper and answer- the following questions:

1. How many news stories on page one contain by-lines?
2. Does the top story on page one contain a by-line?
3. What dateline does the top story on page one carry?
4. What dateline does the top story on page one carry?
5. Does your newspaper seem to carry more news stories from the Associated Press (AP) or the New York Times, Washington Post, etc.?
6. How many stories on page one carry a dateline, but no wire service symbols?
7. How many stories in page one carry a by-line, a dateline; and a wire service symbol?
8. How many wire service stories on page one also carry a photograph?
9. How many local photographs appear on page one?
10. What is the masthead on the paper that you used to answer the questions?

LIBEL

"Libel is injury to reputation. Words, pictures or cartoons that expose a person to public hatred, shame disgrace or ridicule, or induce an ill opinion of a person are libelous."

It will be important for students to understand, not only for journalistic purposes, but for living productively and successfully in the world, that their words have an impact. *TRUTH*, substantiated truth, is the only defense, in any civil actions that are likely to be initiated as a result of printed materials that defame a subject or otherwise deviate from a standard of *TRUTH*. Litigation for civil libel results mainly from news stories that allege crime, fraud, dishonesty, immoral or dishonorable conduct, or stories that defame the subject professionally, causing financial loss either personally or to a business.

The Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual (1987) states that there is only one complete and unconditional defense to a civil action for libel: that the facts stated are PROVABLY TRUE (Note the word PROVABLY.) Quoting someone is not enough to satisfy a jury that the libelous statement is substantially correct. What one writes must be "PROVABLY TRUE." The essential element or value of the thematic structure of this newspaper unit will be *TRUTH*, speaking truth in its literal and written context.

The sub-unit on libel will extend over a period of at least one week as students read, discuss, and respond in writing to the "information" and "documents" presented in class and for homework. This type of study will satisfy at least two of the *PORTFOLIO* requirements set forth by the PPS District (Entry Nos. 2 and 3 under Reading Accomplishment) while simultaneously developing personal and professional, legal and ethical awareness around standards of truth.

Some time will also be spent in reviewing the *RIGHT OF PRIVACY* doctrine and the *FIRST AMENDMENT* of the *CONSTITUTION* and a few of the U. S. Supreme Court rulings regarding freedom of expression and just how far our constitutional guarantees extend. The examples, the cases, the issues raised in this section of the unit will develop students' skills in thinking critically not only about the "word" which is conveyed in what they read and write but about the "world " and how we should live in it.

The lessons in this sub-unit will also deal peripherally with *PRIVILEGE*, *FAIR COMMENT* and *CRITICISM*. Students will be give handouts, condensed from several sources. We will read aloud and discuss the information. Students will then summarize essential points in an outline format and keep up their notebooks for future reference. A short quiz at the end of the session will reinforce retention of the information acquired.

JOURNALISM

A. Newspaper History and Tradition

In this sub-unit on Journalism students will briefly trace the history and the tradition of the Modern Newspaper (with possible collaborative interdisciplinary lessons that will elaborate more extensively from-an historical perspective.)

1. Pioneer American Press
2. The New York Sun
3. The Tribune (and Horace Greeley)
4. The New York Times
5. The New Journalism of Joseph Pulitzer
6. The History of African-American Newspapers in America

Activity:

- 1) Prepare to discuss and write about the features of a modern newspaper that are directly attributable to the penny papers, the new journalism of Joseph Pulitzer, and the first tabloid papers.
- 2) Bring the chosen examples to class and share with classmates making the connections to early papers
- 3) Choose one of the six topics and write a research report, using classroom materials and the internet. *Communication Standard No. 1, Portfolio Writing Exhibit Entry No. 4*

B. What is a Newspaper?

It will be important to develop a comprehensive conceptual framework so that students will be capable of not only tracing the history of newspapers in this country but to have sense of the process and connecting patterns involved in the publication of a newspaper. While the focus here is *writing* and *content*, students should be at least minimally-aware of the *context* for newswriting.

Thus, the unit will begin with an overview of the following:

1. Journalism Jargon, (Each sub-unit will be prefaced with a review of the jargon.)
2. What is News? (The purpose and function of covering the news will be explored.)
3. How a Newspaper Covers the News
4. The Contents of a Newspaper
5. The Organization of a Daily Newspaper
6. Newspaper Staff and Responsibilities
7. Legal and Social Responsibilities

Activity:

Students will read and discuss a handout that provides general information regarding these areas and will be asked to answer 10-20 questions regarding the same.

C. Gathering News

Students will explore and generate elements of news in the form of names of people, timeliness, novelty, conflict, importance, proximity, human interest, humor, and variety.

1. What is News?
2. Where to Get News
3. How to Get News

Activities:

- 1) Students will use our daily class subscription of newspapers to select and discuss examples of each of the elements listed. They will also identify a possible news story and explain where and how they will get the necessary information for the story. (Standard No. 1)
- 2) Each student will investigate and gather information for the story they will write. (Standard Nos. 4, 5; Portfolio Writing Entry No. 3 or 4)

D. Writing the Lead

Students will come to understand the importance of “the lead” for capturing reader interest and learn a variety of ways that "lead" people to read the news article. This will be accomplished by identifying examples, of the following and practicing writing similar leads.

1. Summary
2. Question
3. Quotation
4. Novelty

Students will also explore ways of varying and strengthening leads.

Activity:

Students will write possible leads for their stories using at least two of the four possibilities. (Ultimately, select the most effective, citing a reason for the choice.) (Standard No. 5)

E. Writing the Story

Students will read, analyze, and write news stories with a focus on the following elements:

1. The inverted pyramid
2. The newspaper paragraph
3. The chronological story
4. The composite story
5. Interpreting the news

Activities:

- 1) Students will begin to organize the information that each has gathered for his/her particular story. Using the examples and information presented they will organize the information appropriately following the format best suited to their story.
- 2) Share rough drafts of their stories with small groups (two or three) of classmates for peer review, critique and editing.
- 3) Write the final draft of your article.(Standard No. 4; Portfolio Writing Entry Nos. 4, 6, 7, 9)

F. Deadlines (and Team Reporting)

Students will read a relevant and timely prize-winning news article from the Pittsburgh Post Gazette, April 6, 1997. The article, "Face-off with Hatred", details in rich prose the events surrounding the march of the Ku Klux Klan in the streets of downtown Pittsburgh. The march was covered by a team of the paper's journalists, who were awarded first-place in Team Deadline Reporting by American Society of Newspaper Editors and the Jesse Leventhol Award for Best Newspaper Writing of 1998. The piece demonstrates a "strong sense of place; resonant voices from a range of locations and perspectives; and a clear unfolding narrative that weaves background information and spot news together so that the reader hardly knows where one ends and the other begins. It is 'Team Journalism' at its best.

This story will provide a context for analysis, discussion, and exploration of team writing. Each subsection of the article will be reviewed for content, approach and style. Students will gain a sense of each writer's contribution to the effectiveness of the whole. Since this article addresses issues of impact on students lives, and deals with familiar people and places, there will be implicit motivation to understand and ultimately assimilate the process and connections that were at work in creating this journalistic work. It is an excellent model for developing a team concept of reporting and writing.

Activities for this sub-unit will include the following: (Standards #'s follow each.)

- 1) Students will examine and discuss the first section of "Face-off with Hatred" summarizing the events of the Ku Klux Klan rally and the counter-rally and demonstrations that resulted. Students will focus on several questions: What picture does the summary portray? How is it supported in the rest of the story and in related stories? (Standard No. 2)
- 2) Subsequent to the introductory section, the story switches from past tense to present tense. Is this effective? Discuss possible reasons for the switch in voice. (Standard No. 2)
- 3) In "Unity Thrived at Market Square Peace Gathering," the reporter writes: "Market Square was the picture of serenity and as festive as a country fair." What details are use in the story to support this statement? (Standard Nos. 2, 5)

- 4) Objectivity is the goal of news stories. Are these stories neutral about the Klan? About the counter-rally? Can you detect biases or sympathies in the tone of the stories? (Standard Nos. 2, 5)

Activities:

- 1) Students will ask and answer “When is it necessary to identify someone's race or ethnic background?” Interview editors or reporters at local newspapers about their policy on racial identification.
- 2) Students will note the official sources as they are quoted in these stories. What range of other residents is included? Rewrite a version of these stories without using the voices of the residents, and another without including official sources. How are these stories affected by those changes: List ways to include the voices of everyday residents in your stories.

G. Copywriting and Proofreading

The students will engage in activities that will give them skill such as:

1. Copyreading
2. Editing copy
3. Preparing copy for the printer
4. Proofreading
5. Writing headlines

Activities:

- 1) Students will be given a story/article with obvious errors. They will be required to read, proof and edit the piece.
- 2) Students will be given articles without headlines and asked to write headlines for several different types of articles. They will then compare and contrast their headline with the original.

H. Writing Beyond the News Story

Students will be introduced to a variety of other newspaper writing such as:

1. Editorials
2. Features
3. Columns
4. Sports Stories
5. Special Stories
6. Cartoons
7. Photojournalism

Activities:

- 1) Students will use the daily classroom newspaper subscriptions to select stories that represent the following categories and share these with one another in small group discussions.

- 2) Analyze and critique the identifying characteristics of these articles.
- 3) Select one such type of newswriting and prepare a *'Newsbreak'* of a similar type.
- 4) Prepare piece for publication and Portfolio

Students will be encouraged to explore the various types of newswriting throughout the semester using a similar process.

Interviewing:

Students will become proficient at interviewing for a purpose by generally following the three steps: 1) Planning your interview, 2) Conducting your initial interview, 3) Analyzing your interview. It will be emphasized that the quality of the interview will depend upon a) accurately receiving information, which depends upon skills in listening, observing, and remembering, b) critically evaluating the information received, which depends on skill in retaining the objectives clearly in mind and constantly assessing the gap between information received and that needed to fulfill the objectives, c) appropriately regulating one's own verbal and nonverbal behavior to direct the respondent toward needed information and to motivate the respondent to give needed information. (Gordon, 1987)

Planning your interview

1. Clarify the general purpose by breaking it down into objectives, topics, subtopics, and specific items of information needed.
2. Try to anticipate potential facilitators and inhibitors that might come into play when you discuss these kinds of interview topics with the type of respondent selected.
3. Plan the strategy of approach to your respondent
4. Design a tentative interview guide or schedule aimed at maximizing potential facilitators and minimizing potential inhibitors by using appropriate techniques and tactics.

Doing your initial interview

5. Pretest the interview situation
6. Use a tape recorder
7. Use an interview guide or schedule
8. Take probe notes

Analyzing your interview

9. Listen to the tape to evaluate the adequacy of the information. is it relevant, valid and complete in view of the interview objectives?

10. Critically analyze your strategy, techniques, and tactics as tools for communicating relevant questions and motivating the respondent to be willing and able to give relevant, complete, and valid responses.

Activities:

- 1) In pairs, students will set up and role-play an interview situation following the above listed guidelines. Students will then critique the interviews to analyze whether the purpose was achieved, the content and questions were relevant, and suggested strategies and tactics were used.
- 2) Students will select from a list of possible interview subjects or topics or in the alternative provide the rationale for an "interview" which he/she has chosen, then proceed to generate a list of proposed questions that relate specifically to the identified purpose of the interview.
- 3) Schedule a time and place for the interview.
- 4) Tape record the conversation(s) to be used to write the interview.
- 5) After the interview have been written, share it with a small group of student reporters for feedback, editing, and revision.
- 6) Write the final copy. (Keep all drafts for inclusion in portfolio. Writing Exhibits: Entry Nos. 2, 8 and 9)

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Materials:

Student Journals

Student Portfolios

Tape Recorder

Cassette Tapes

Newspaper Subscriptions

Camcorder

Videotape cassettes

CONTENT STANDARDS
COMMUNICATIONS
Pittsburgh Public Schools

1. All students use effective research and information management skills, including locating primary and secondary sources of Information with traditional and emerging library technologies.
2. All students read and use a variety of methods to make sense of various kinds of complex texts.
3. All students respond orally and in writing to information and ideas gained by, reading narrative and informational texts and use the information and ideas to make decisions and solve problems.
4. All students write for a variety of purposes, including to narrate, inform and persuade, in all subject areas.
5. All students analyze and make critical judgments about all forms of communication, separating fact from opinion, recognizing propaganda, stereotypes and statements of bias, recognizing inconsistencies and judging the validity of evidence.
6. All students exchange information orally, including understanding and giving spoken instructions, asking and answering questions appropriately and promoting effective group communications.
7. All students listen to and understand complex oral messages and identify their purpose, structure and use.
8. All students compose and make oral presentations for each academic area of study that are designed to persuade, inform or describe.
9. All students converse, at a minimum level of "intermediate low" as defined in the oral proficiency guidelines developed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, in at least one language other than English, including the native language if other than English, under Sec. 5.215 (c) relating to languages.
10. All students communicate appropriately in business, work and other applied situations.

High School PORTFOLIO Contents

Every high school student must keep a portfolio. The portfolio will be evaluated at the end of the year. The portfolio must contain the following evidence of work completed during the school year.

READING EXHIBIT:

Evidence of Reading Accomplishment

Entry 1: Literature (logs, journals, book reviews, response to literature)

Entry 2: Informational Texts (science, texts, ref. newspaper, mag.)

Entry 3: Public Documents (speeches, editorials, documents)

Entry 4: Functional Documents (manuals, contracts, applications, etc)

Entry 5: Evidence of Quantity (25 books), Range, and Depth

WRITING EXHIBIT:

Writing Accomplishment

Entry 1: Response to Literature

Entry 2: Demo of Proficiency In a Literary Genre (poem, play, story)

Entry 3: Narrative Account (story about something that happened)

Entry 4: Report (reporting information accurately and effectively)

Entry 5: Narrative Procedure (convey a set of directions)

Entry 6: Persuasive Essay (convince someone of something in writing)

Entry 7: Free pick

Entry 8: Evidence of Control of Writing Conventions

Entry 9: Evidence of the Use of Processes and Strategies for Writing (Drafts and revisions must be attached.)

SPEAKING and LISTENING EXHIBIT:

Informal Speaking and Listening

Entry 1: Teacher Certification

Speaking Accomplishment

Entry 2: Gathering and Reporting

Entry 3: Influencing the Opinion of Others

REFLECTIVE ESSAY: Prepare just one entry, a reflective essay