

Language Is Power
How Language Is Used to Transmit the Values of African Authenticity

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Overview

"Everyone is able to achieve authenticity, obtain a historical place, and engage as a human subject and agent. Cultural essence, world- view and assumptions combine to form how each person assess and evaluates his reality". Wade Nobles. African people must sustain their continuity by "being", "doing", and "becoming", through culture, language and values. The legacy and connections have endured across time, space, and place through the culture, language and values. Symbols, words, proverbs, poem, songs and stories that are told, heard, written and read conceptualize language.

African American students should accept the responsibility to be seekers, speakers, listeners and translators of the values of their own unique historical culture that completes and cooperates for the well being of the world. They must "see", participate and demonstrate their connection to the "whole."

This curriculum unit will direct African American students to explore the meaning of their own human essence through language. They will create the criteria to answer the questions -Who are you? Are you really who you say you are? Are you all you ought to be? The curriculum unit will examine the values and practices that have maintained African heritage, traditions, attitudes and beliefs in spite of suppression and oppression.

The recurring theme of the year's course of study will be "Language is Power." The lessons will be woven into the existing twelfth grade English literature and language program. The students will examine, study, demonstrate and synthesize how history, culture and language are wrapped around each other. Each reflects

values and is everywhere. The unit will compel African American students to continue to reflect the values through the power of language. African American students must know they are part of a continuum from the beginning of time. By identifying with history, culture and language. African American students creative expression will manifest their authenticity - what it means to be human. They will be able to view, respect and use English and other language with their special rules, patterns and practices. African American students will understand it is their responsibility to continually "perfect" themselves to contribute to the world community for a new world that truly honors not exploits the authenticity of people.

Language is power. African American students must develop that power through their own sense of cultural and historical language and usage. They must apply the principle that "deep thought" equals "good speech". The energy and power of a thought, a symbol, a proverb, a joke, a riddle, a poem, a song, a dance, art, drama, a story, an essay, a speech, and even rap to be heard, read, written, and seen will generate the contents of the curriculum. Students must take the responsibility to make their language powerful.

The contents of the unit will include: the history and definitions of key terms, videos, discussions and activities about cultural diversity and experiences, language characteristics and Ebonics, the use of symbols, the wisdom and guidance of proverbs and elders, active and responsible listening, speaking for persuasion, reading, writing and speaking literature as examples, and other forms of language expression. The culminating activity will be a language festival, celebrating all forms of language in a powerful production. All of the lessons are connected and may be inserted into any part of the English course of study to ensure that language is power.

Rationale

What does "right" mean? Who controls the standards for language? Does diversity include acceptance of different language patterns and practices? How have the different cultural groups, whose culture has been suppressed, resisted domination by the controlling society? Those are the questions that influenced motivation of this curriculum unit.

Language is to tool as color is to racism. Both consummate power. All of the institutions support the notion that "correct" English is the key to success or inclusion. This conception justifies oppression, subjugation, ridiculed, humiliation and dehumanization. All humans have a culture, language and history. "They must view their language development, contributions and potential from and in their own cultural space." - Asante, p. 8. Respecting diversity means that one is not superior to the other.

The dominant culture views the European/American culture as the center of social universe just as some believe the earth is the center of the universe. Universality forces a standard on those not European. Nor can one's humanity, culture, language and history be denied because of a dominant industrial military complex.

I wanted to examine the research and prepare lessons to authenticate and qualify the language of African Americans as powerful, redeeming and resistant of domination. African Americans have not lost their humanity, their culture, language or history. Most of the controlling institutions consistently remind African American students that they can't speak, listen, read or write. Consequently, Africans don't honor their own genius in articulating language in all forms. If Africans were the first humans on earth and the first to create a writing system, wouldn't the logical evolution lead to perfecting the language system? And isn't that what African Americans have done to all forms of communication, "Make somethin' outa nothin'?"

If a people don't have a language, they don't exist. People who can't communicate in their 'own' language don't know who they are and can't continue their historical mission. The horrors and stripping from enslavement, racism, oppression, and education took the original language of African Americans. Displaced Africans resisted by using ancestral memory and the new language imposed upon them to express their "inner soul, the inner core of their original being." The purpose of this unit is to connect history and culture to the responsible use of language as a source of power.

Teaching students that their language is power and that they must use language to be powerful and actually exist could be modified for any grade level and applied to any subject. Students must be developing communication (reading, writing, listening, and speaking), research, thinking, and interpersonal skills. The lessons and activities in the curriculum unit will use the Pittsburgh Public Schools Content Standards in communication, citizenship, arts and humanities to drive the students to rise above the standards to foster language that is powerful.

Strategies

Although the vehicle through which the unit will be driven is the twelfth grade English curriculum, the units' lessons will be interdisciplinary. Students will be encouraged to develop and use all forms of communication. Established models will be provided for the reading process, the writing process, discussion, listening and speaking and viewing discriminately.

Students will use cooperative learning as a learning – teaching tool and responsibility. They will be engaging panel discussions, group discussions, role- playing, peer editing and evaluating. Students will listen to related audio and visual tapes and compact disks.

The library and computer lab will be required for research and technology for Word Processing, presentations, the digital camera, the camcorder, movie editing and the electronic media.

My teaching strategies will implement KWL, multiple intelligences, technology, cooperative teaching and learning, and modeling expectations and standards. The class will be circular to demonstrate that learning and teaching communication maintain harmony. They will all share our work. We can't do one without the other. We can't do either without each other.

Classroom Activities

Lesson One: What is language? What is Power?

Activity 1:

Students should have working definitions and understanding of key concepts. The first day write the sentence "Language is power" on the bulletin boards and the chalkboard. Students will brainstorm and free write their reaction to the sentence, telling with examples, how, why, what, when, where, and who makes (made) language powerful? Students will share their writing and add to the discussion, "Do you have powerful language?"

Activity 2:

Divide the class in half. One half will research "language" and the other half will research "power." In teams of two students will research to find a descriptive dictionary definition, the historical route of language or power, using the etymological dictionary, and historical examples of language or power (advertisements, famous speeches, disc jockeys, etc.). Each team will share its information to teach the other half of the class.

Activity 3:

Project a picture of the Ancient Egyptian God Djchewty or Djehuti from www.virtual-egypt.com or scanned from the cover of MDW NTR Divine Speech, Jacob Carruthers. Explain to students that the bird represents the god of "good speech", intelligence and wisdom. Ask what do these characteristics have to do with language is power"? Have students read silently. "A Dogon Creation Story" from Symbols of Africa, Osusu, p 71. Students will retell the story in chronological order. Ask why would the Dogon people of Mali, Africa make up this story? Students will brainstorm as to how language did begin. To compare creation stories, have students read in the Bible Genesis – Chapter I – Verses 3,5,6,8,9,10,11,14 to deduce that each creation was called by God; therefore creating the power of saying makes it happen. Be careful of what you say. Guide students to John – Chapter I – Verse 1. Ask the implication of "In the beginning was the word."

Activity 4:

Use PowerPoint to present research entitled "Language is power":

Language is a fundamental facet of a people's culture.

- ☐Language is a powerful instrument of identification and classification.
- ☐Language can be manipulated for participation or exclusion.
- ☐Language is a resource.
- ☐Language is family, community, culture, and experience.
- ☐Language helps defend one's sense of identity.
- ☐Language used as unifying.
- ☐Language is a tool for social transformation.
- ☐Language is an instrument of social change reflection.
- ☐Language is the total system of words, usage and conventions.
- ☐Language is defined as a body of words and the systems for their use which is common to a people of the same community or nation, the same geographical area, or the same cultural traditional.

Language is voice sounds in combinations and patterns to express and communicate thoughts and feelings.

Have students read, interpret, and comment as to how each bullet addresses "Language is power" and how each statement applies to their experiences. For homework have students find and

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Lesson 2:

Language is Power.

History of Language

Students should answer the questions: where, when, how and why did written symbols begin? Why is English the language in power? How did the symbols evolve to the Roman script we use today?

Activity 1:

Display on the chalkboard the quote "As long as a conquered people has not lost its language, it can have hope." - Monlesquieu, a French writer and thinker in the 16th century. Direct students to recall the quote as they watch the video: [A Place At the Table](#), Teaching Tolerance. Eight teenagers from African, Chinese, Native American, South American and Jewish, who relate the experience and struggles of their families, narrate the video. Before viewing the movie give the brief description and ask students what they know about the experiences and struggles of each group. Remind them to refer to the quote on the chalkboard while watching the video. While viewing, the students must note in writing seven historical and cultural facts and seven of their reactions. After the video discuss: If language is power, how does the quote fit any of the groups in the video? As a homework assignment students will write an essay. The first paragraph must summarize one of the participant's family's stories and reaction. The second paragraph must state students own opinion reaction, feelings, supported with reasons. The third paragraph must tell how that group has kept own language and hope. Students must be prepared to share essays the next day.

Activity 2:

Ask students of their knowledge and opinion is of Ebonics. Show the video, Ebonics, by Dr. Ernie Smith. Make a worksheet asking questions. Students should answer the questions during and after watching the video. Class will articulate a definition of Ebonics with examples and characteristics. Class will practice pronunciation examples. Example: "j u w i c o j E j l o" translates "Did you eat your Jell-O?" Students should compare and refer to previous video of the oppression of African Americans and conclude the following:

Ebonics is a form of resistance - not losing language; therefore not losing hope

Languages have rules and patterns - Ebonics follows West African language rules and patterns. Example "dat" Most West African languages don't have "th" sound. "He tall." The verb to be isn't obligatory.

Ebonics is African linguistic patterns and practices developed from African's enslavement and the traumatic coercion of a foreign tongue.

Ebonics is a combination of African languages and elements of European speech as a way of communicating with each other and enslaver.

The word Ebonics derives from ebony and phonics.

Activity 3:

Students will answer the question how and where did written language begin. Direct students to: <http://www.ankonlin.com/ecriture.htm>, <http://www.cerboook.com/timeline.htm> and <http://www.crystalinks.com/egypteducation.html>. Students will visit and read these sites on the Internet. Using the drawing tool on Microsoft students in groups of two will create a timeline, showing the chronological order of major writing systems.

Activity 4:

With the assumption that all languages have rules and practices, review English grammar rules – sentence structure, subject – verb agreement, and verb tenses. Compare the rules with the usage. Have students complete and discuss grammar exercises from any English grammar book.

Lesson 3:

Language is power.

Symbols

"Symbols are material objects representing thoughts sounds." Obeng. Symbols have deep meanings.

Activity 1:

Have students look up the etymology of the word "symbol" to write and discuss the many meanings, changes and uses of the word.

Activity 2:

Design a web quest to direct each student to find, select or create a symbol that affirms and represents him or her. Students will search the Internet for Adinkra symbols and their meaning from Ghana and hieroglyphics from Egypt at: <http://hcc.nd.edu/mwp/adinkra/index.html>,

http://users.erols.com/kemet/sankofa_educuHural_publication, <http://www.members.aol.com/egyptart/design.html>, www.gryphart.com/8egypt.htm. Direct students to read over symbols and their meanings. Students should make a list of symbols that represents self, the class, school or the community. Select an image and copy it on to the Floppy a drive. Use the drawing tool in Microsoft Word or Paint in Accessories to create a symbol. Type the meaning in Word Art. Students must take each other's picture with the digital camera on each floppy disk. Pictures, symbol and meaning should be positioned proportionally. Print on 8 x 11 canvass. Decorate room

Lesson 4:

Language is Power.

Proverbs

"Proverbs are used to summarize and preserve ancestral wisdom." - Bunseki Fu-Kiau

Activity 1:

Students will look up the etymology of word "proverb" to write and discuss the many meanings, changes, and uses of the word. In groups of 4 students will make a list of familiar wise sayings. Students will read and discuss the meaning of the proverbs in the African American Literature Book pages 94-96.

Activity 2:

Use PowerPoint to present research entitled "Proverbs are:"

- ☐Mirrors to the world
- ☐Expressions of deep thought
- ☐Summaries to preserve ancestral wisdom and experiences that are part of the shared knowledge of the community
- ☐Short succinct statements of wisdom and power
- ☐Daughters of experience
- ☐The palm oil with which words are eaten
- ☐Central to mental development and abstract thinking and reasoning
- ☐Useful in persuasion and manipulation devices
- ☐Significant in the socialization process
- ☐The workhorse of conversation – Yoruba
- ☐Keys to understanding the way of life
- ☐Tools of the past and present for cultural assimilation, continuity and interaction used to:
 - ☐educate children
 - ☐argue legal matters
 - ☐embellish oratory
 - ☐give ordinary advice
 - ☐shame one into compliance
 - ☐indicate irony and sarcasm
 - ☐instruct initiates in secret societies
 - ☐serve as oral and written literary devices
 - ☐represent a people philosophy
 - ☐suggest widely held truths
 - ☐accomplish indirect suggestions

- ☐ Proverbs are mothers to children about life and living – Achebe
- ☐ A wise man knows proverbs

Have students read, interpret, and react to each characteristic of a proverb. Ask students to compare how proverbs that were read in the African American Literature Book demonstrate the characteristics of proverbs that were presented on the screen. Ask them to fit some of the proverbs into the characteristics. Discuss the conclusions.

Activity 3:

Students will listen on tape to the story "The Frog Who Wanted to be a Singer" by Ysaye Barnwell. While listening they will note the events in the story and the lesson to be learned. Direct the discussion after the tape to enable students to choose an appropriate proverb in the African American Literature Book on pages 94, 95 and 96 that fits the lesson of the story. Students will recall similar experiences.

Activity 4:

Students will read, "Olode the Hunter Becomes an Aba" by Courlander and Eshugbayi, to determine the lesson or moral. Students will evaluate the outcome and explain their chosen proverbs. Students will compare and contrast modern cause and effect experiences.

Activity 5:

Divide the class in groups of four. Have each member of the groups select roles within the group (convener/timekeeper, recorder, narrator/editor, and materials monitor). Each group will pick one of the three tasks to present to the class. Let the class select the best performances to demonstrate at the school day care center.

Students will choose a proverb and write a story that leads to the lesson to be learned. Students will select images that strengthen the story line. Students will put the story parts with pictures in slides from Power Point.

Students will select any story from East African Folktales to read and retell to the class. Students will add music (drumming), costumes and props to compliment the story.

Students will choose a proverb and translate it into a visual metaphor by creating a symbol, braiding, dance, art, architecture, money, a song or a poem. Students will write a narrative explanation.

Lesson 5

Listening

Language is Power

" May your servant be authorized to use the status that old age affords to teach to the hearers, so as to tell them the ways of our ancestors, and of those who have listened to the gods." Ptahhotep- Ancient Egyptian Teachings

Activity 1:

Have students define the etymology of *listen* and *hear* to write and discuss the many meanings, changes, and uses.

Activity 2:

Present PowerPoint to the class:

The Divine Ancestral Sayings of Ptahotep:

- Useful is hearing to one who hears.
- If hearing enters the hearers, then the hearer becomes a listener.
- Hearing well is speaking well.
- Hearing is better than everything else.
- Hearing is a matter of conscience (heart, ability for practicing truth, justice, balance, harmony, propriety, reciprocity and order.
- The hearer is one who hears what is said.
- He who loves to hear is one who acts on what is said.
- The ears are made to hear.
- Listening is seeing and hearing what will profit the offspring.
- To listen is to learn.
- The learner, hearer, listener is to become a model for the children of the great.

Have students read, interpret and react to each slide. Ask how any of the points relate to them or their experiences.

Activity 3:

Ask this riddle dramatically: How many ears do you have? (Two) Increase them to three and listen to this " true" story. Ask the purpose of gossip. Could gossip be to give the day's event or to solve society's problems? For homework students must become listeners/ seers/ learners. Students must listen and describe conversations and sounds in a restaurant, an office, a barbershop, a beauty parlor, a bus, a bus stop, the hallways, a public bathroom, a household, and on a street corner. Students should include: What wisdom was passed? What was

the main idea? What was learned? Direct students to write in dialog, describe the setting, tell what was interesting and explain the speech patterns? Encourage students to role- play what they heard.

Activity 4:

Prepare students to see the value of asking questions and learning from elders. Have them ask for and bring in words of wisdom and a picture of an elder of the family or community. In Microsoft Word- Word Art, students will write words of wisdom in quotation marks. Each elder picture must be scanned on the students Floppy a disk. Students will position picture and quote effectively. Student will choose a symbol that represents the quote. This will be the cover sheet for the interview with the elder.

Activity 5:

Students must write an introductory page to describe, or show an experience, feelings or thoughts about the elder. This may be a narrative, poem, or essay.

Activity 6:

Brainstorm with students what information might be important or interesting to communicate to an audience about a special elder in the family or community. Provide the following information about the benefits of listening to an elder:

Elders give:

- Words and wisdom that elders give
- Accounts of family and group origin
- Related precedents to the present day
- Beliefs, actions and codes of behavior
- A story tale that becomes parable
- Knowledge of the past
- Educational stories that are memories of the family or group for their continuity
- The deeds of great men and women- their defeats and victories
- Experiences which have led to individual and group success and failure

Have students construct questions to extract interesting answers for interesting and engaging narratives. Students will use the drawing tool in Microsoft Word to make a graphic organizer- a circle for the main idea and lines for the supporting sub topics and details. Direct students to organize all related answers together. As students review the answers, the main idea about the elders should reveal itself. Students will type the

interview into a narrative with introductory and concluding paragraphs. Each sub topic with its answers from details represents a paragraph. Students will peer edit each other's papers in groups of four, using a class generated rubric. The narrative should instruct and transmit values, ideas, experiences and knowledge from the elders. Students will choose an adinkra symbol that justifies the elder's story. Have students bind the words of wisdom, the descriptive narrative, and the interview narrative into a book.

Lesson 6

Oracy- Speaking

Language is Power

"A person reflects, becomes, and creates as she or he acts. Behavior itself is speaking, not just words." - Phahhotep

Activity 1:

Students will define the etymology of oracy and speaking to write and discuss the many meanings, changes and uses.

Activity 2:

Present PowerPoint to class:

- Having "nommo" is the productive power of the spoken word.
- Speech is to stimulate audience to cooperative action.
- "Good speech" is the creative of what is "called to be" because the speaker is mirroring the values of society.
- Speech is an attitude.
- The speaker is a poet, not a lecturer.
- The speaker has a mastery of proverbs and historical myths to provide powerful images.
- A natural leader is one with exceptional oratorical skills, rhythmic gestures, allusive pitch, rate volume, duration message, and timing.
- Speaking is like creating music.
- Language is being made as the speaker speaks.
- The responsibility of the speaker is to bring harmony and balance.
- Rhythm is the measure of a successful speech.

- ☐There is an intimate and empathic relationship between the speaker and the audience. (Audience has unity with speaker's message).
- ☐The audience's interest is aroused.
- ☐Speaking can be pompous or conversational, impromptu or manuscript, extemporaneous or memorized.
- ☐Speaking is a functional art to argue, contend, affirm, or entertain.

Asante p. 60,75

Students will read, interpret and discuss each slide as they evaluate known speakers according to the listed characteristics.

Activity 3:

- a) Have students draw any symbol secretly. In pairs, one student will tell the other how to draw the symbol. After 5 minutes, the pair will switch roles.
- b) Next, students must write the directions for drawing the symbol, then pass the written directions to another partner to read and construct. After 5 minutes they will switch roles.
- c) Facilitate the discussion as to: What were the communication skills used and needed? Which task was easiest and why? Which task was most difficult and why?

Activity 4:

Play the tape " Africa is many things" by Opolanga. Students must list the characteristics of a griot.

Activity 5:

Invite a member from Toastmasters to lecture about speaking effectively to an audience for different purposes. Have students prepare questions in advance.

Activity 6:

Flash the PowerPoint presentation on the characteristics of oracy as you play the speeches of Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, Nelson Mandela, Kwame Toure and Marcus Garvey. Students will compare and apply the characterizations of good speech with the delivery of each speaker. Students will evaluate each speaker to determine the best model.

Activity 7:

Students will choose a speaker from African Intellectual Heritage; Asante ed. Students will research the biography of the speaker and the historical events that led to the speech. Students will prepare an organized essay with works cited. Students will memorize excerpts of the speech along with researched information to recite articulately and effectively in class, using the oracy characteristics.

Activity 8:

Students must write a persuasive speech to change a school or society rule. Students will follow the writing process, practice speaking effectively and persuasively by using the oracy standards. Have students convince the class of fitness of rule. Class will create rubric from oracy characteristics and models in order to evaluate each speaker.

Lesson 7

Other Expressions of Language

Language is Power

Activity 1:

Praise Poems- to honor individuals, groups, families, community, and nature. Review the poetry terms. Read "Sonnet 18" by William Shakespeare together. Discuss the praise and comparison to summer. Read "For My People" by Margaret Walker, "George" by Dudley Randall, and "Women" by Alice Walker. Ask students to compare the different choices the poets make to create the imagery of praise. Review poetic terms such as: metaphor, simile, onomatopoeia, alliteration, and rhythm. Write a class poem, praising the school. Have students interview each other and write a free verse poem praising the partner. Allow students to take each other's picture with the digital camera to position on the page effectively.

Activity 2:

Puzzles and Dilemma Tales- a prose narrative that ends in an open question for the audience to resolve in a lively discussion. Distribute a newspaper headline for each student. Direct each student to turn the headline into a dilemma tale. Have them read in groups of four to stimulate discussion. Have each group select one representative to present to the class.

Activity 3:

Tongue Twisters are forms of alliteration. Use examples like "Peter Piper Picked a Peck of Pickled Peppers". Have students make banners directing the student body to be responsible for the maintenance of the school, using alliteration. Conduct a class contest as to which ones are worthy to be displayed.

Activity 4:

Riddles reinforce reasoning power and problem solving skills. Example: Two paths lead up a mountain. Answer: nostrils. Have students make up a riddle to ask each other about a character or an event after reading Beowulf.

Activity 5:

"Drumming satisfied communication because it carried the message swiftly and the range was far. The drummers and the village sage were the repositories of all the historical data." Asante pg. 71.

Have students write the meaning of allegory. Have students read "How Humankind Came to Have the Talking Drum", East African Folktales, p. 9. Students must point out the allegorical elements and discuss the answer to the dilemma.

Show the video Free to Dance, PBS. Invite community drummers and dancers to speak and play showing the history, importance and the language of the drum. Students will participate and ask questions as to how drumming can make language powerful.

Activity 6:

Read the short story "Everyday Use *for your grandmama*" by Alice Walker. This is a story of the significance of symbols and quilting. Have students identify the symbols.

Invite a community quilter visit the class to exhibit quilts to show how enslaved Africans used quilts to tell stories, provide family history and to send messages.

Activity 7:

"Rap music is rooted in the African oral tradition of optional semantics, narrativizing, signification, signifying braggadocio." Smitherman p. 219. Have students research the etymology of the word rap and to write the many different meanings now for rap. Have students compare the characteristics of a good rapper to that of a griot, using a table in Microsoft Word. Share with students researched information on rap:

- Rap is an art form.
- Rap is a black, expressive, cultural, and phenomenal text of resistance.
- Rap is an artistic, continual connection to black cultural roots, as in sampling.
- Rap extends the African tradition with its own imprint that triggers cultural memory.
- Rap is a blend of reality and fiction responding to joblessness, disempowerment and poverty.
- Rap's mission is to disturb the peace.
- Rap does have moral lessons.
- Rap is screaming with vibrant images.
- Rap is lyrical and inventive " Flipping the scripts" taking words and concepts and reversing the meanings. Example: phat, fresh, tight, dope.
- Rap is the principle medium for black youth to understand the connection between their own language and cultural experiences- Smitherman pg. 169, 176.

Have students read, interpret discuss and relate to concepts. Play the rapper Tupac Shakur's " Dear Mama" to evaluate whether any of the concepts apply. Play the gospel song, "Still Waters Run Deep", by Aretha Franklin and "Transformation" by Lonnie Liston Smith. Have students note the theme and significance of the titles. Ask students to compare and explain the connections, the meanings, and the lessons. Using the criteria above, have students bring in a rap song to explain, in a panel discussion of five, concepts on the criteria of rap. Have students make up a dictionary of slang words.

Reading

Language is Power

"All cultures have creation myths that relate humans to nature, explain beginnings and the future. Myths are traditional stories that have functional value for a society as a way of dealing with life's mysteries."

Smitherman pg. 107

Activity 1:

Present PowerPoint to class:

Fables, myths and legends:

- Provide the history of a people.
- Reflect values and beliefs.
- Explain the group's origin.
- Give life long lessons.
- Connect precedents to the present day.
- Standardize codes of behavior

Have students read, interpret and discuss the characteristics.

Activity 2:

Students will read the introduction of World Mythology. Divide the five sections among the students in the class so that they work in teams. Each team must add three more points from each section to the PowerPoint presentation of the characteristics of fables, myths and legends.

Activity 3:

Play Ysaye Barnwell's taped reading of "The Creation" by James Weldon Johnson. Ask students if other cultures may have explained the beginning of the world differently than the Adam and Eve story? Appoint a creation myth from World Mythology to each team of four. Have students read, discuss and retell the team's myth, analyzing what characteristics apply to the myth. Each team will create and organize a mime presentation, telling the story of their myth. Students may add music or any other prop.

Activity 4:

" There is nothing that there is not; whatever we have a name for, that is." Yoruba proverb. Naming is a creative act. Students will be reading Invisible Man by Ralph Ellison, correlating the power of language where it applies. Direct students to the fact that the main character is nameless. Ask: "What do you call yourself and why?" For homework instruct students to find and bring the meaning of their name, purpose of name and what historical event occurred when student was born. Have student trace the naming of African, nigger, Negro, colored, black, African American. Students will examine the grandfather's warning to his predecessors. pg. 70

Activity 5:

Students will be reading Manchild in the Promised Land by Claude Brown. During interpretation, instruction and discussion of the novel, provoke students to analyze naming and inventive use of words. Example: "baby" pg. 171, 172.

Activity 6:

Have students make up praise poetry about a character in the literature that has been read. Students can compare the characters and decide which character, based on the class evaluation of the poetry, should receive a "best practices" award.

Lesson 9

Language Festival

Language is Power

What would happen without the word? Since the word has power, every word is binding.

- ☐The word is productive and imperative, calling forth and commanding.
- ☐Every human thought, once expressed becomes reality.
- ☐If there were no word, all forces would be frozen. Buneski Fu- Kiau pg. 80, 81

Activity 1:

Play the "Don't Cry, Scream" tape by poet Don L. Lee, while students brainstorm what they will plan, organize and present as multimedia for the Language Festival under the theme " Language is Power". This is a celebration of the power of language.

1. Students must follow the Language Model in the Appendix.
2. Students must describe activity in a typed narrative, answering the following questions:

- ☐What is the persuasive intent?
- ☐What is the message?
- ☐What is the value?
- ☐What is the historical connection?
- ☐How is it connected to the audience?
- ☐How is it stylistic, creative, original?

- ☐How is it powerful?

3. Students may work with a partner.

4. Supply students with list of suggestions:

- ☐Design and create cards, a tee shirt, monetary systems with a meaningful symbol, proverb, short story, quote, riddle, tongue twister.

- ☐Design a T. shirt.

- ☐Create a monetary system

- ☐Paper with characteristics (from stories or historical) with events, feats, as proverbs with symbol.

- ☐Design a book marker with proverb, quote from book, matching symbol, poem, riddle, tongue twister

- ☐Tell a story in PowerPoint or Hyper studio (cartoon) with proverb or dilemma controlling characters and action. End story with a question.

- ☐Design an award to best character of values

- ☐Create mask that tells story or proverb.

- ☐Present a tattoo hair design that reflects symbol with positive meaning

- ☐Write a recipe with directions and share.

- ☐Sing a song or rap that symbolizes the power of language.

- ☐Give a speech or recite poetry.

- ☐Present pictures (digital camera) or video of symbols observed that reflect a proverb on clothing, body, jewelry, architecture, pottery or money.

- ☐Make up riddles, jokes or word puzzle.

- ☐Present your own speech on a school issue.

- ☐Dance to your own interpretation of a proverb or story.

- ☐Turn a folktale into a play to present or mime.

- ☐Create a multimedia collage.

- ☐Design your own Web page with proverb, symbol, and story.

- ☐Make a quilt of a story that explains a proverb. Use symbols.

- □ Turn a mathematical or scientific symbol into a story with a lesson.
5. Set aside a date for the display of the Language Festival to be presented to the class, department or the whole school.
 6. Have students, in groups of four, design and construct a web page of the activities, using Hyper studio.

Teacher Bibliography

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This is an excellent resource for establishing cultural efficiency and implementing oracy skills.

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This book is highly recommended to update the teacher and classroom to the historical development to the present day of expression.

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The book includes some helpful lessons with the folktales.

Gyekye, Kwame, African Cultural Values, Philadelphia, PA: Sankofa Publishing, 1996

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Hilliard, Asa III, SBA The Reawakening of the African Mind, Florida, USA: Makaare, 1997

This book provides a path for higher learning- listening and speaking.

Kign, Jill, Self-Healing Power and Therapy Old Teachings from Africa, New York, New York: Vantage Press; 1991

Jill Kign explains the power of self to language to community.

Mutwa, Vusamazulu Credo, Indaba, My Children, Kahn & Averill: London; 1966

This is a book about story telling and symbols.

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This is a pamphlet on the African importance of language.

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This is a pamphlet that charts the history of writing systems.

Smitherman, Geneva, talking that talk, London, England: Routledge; 2000

This is an excellent, excellent book of language from a Black perspective.

Sutherland, Marcia, Black Authenticity, Chicago, Illinois: Third World Press, 1993

Tedla, Elleno, Sankofa African Thought and Education, New York, New York: Peter Lang; 1995

The author has researched the elements, values, and commonalties of traditional African education and it can be applied today.

Thomas, Lorenza, Sing the Sun Up, New York, New York: Teachers and Writers Collaborative: 1998

This book gives writing suggestions for teaching literature.

Twiggs, Robert, Pan African Language in Western Hemisphere, North Quincy, Massachusetts: The Christopher Publishing, 1973

Student Bibliography

Achebe, Chinua, Things Fall Apart, Ibadan, Nigeria, Heinemann Educational Books: 1958

This novel is rife with proverbs. Set in Nigeria just at the European invasion, the story is about losing the power of language.

Molefi Kete Asante and Abu S. Abarry, ed. African Intellectual Heritage, Philadelphia, PA, Temple University Press: 1996

Brown, Claude, Manchild in the Promised Land, NY, NY, Simon & Schuster: 1976

This is a coming of age story of an African American male in Harlem, New York.

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This book provides a path for higher learning- preparation, listening, speaking

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This is a textbook of African literature from all over the world.

Hudson, Cheryl and Wade, Kids Books of Wisdom, East Orange, NY, Just Us Books: 1996

This book is divided into values where proverbs and quotes apply.

Classroom Materials

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A Feast of African American Stories, Songs and Poems, Told and Sung by Ysaye M. Barnwell, Sounds True/Windhouse Productions 2000

This is a wonderful set of audio with activity cards.

Batok Mira and Christine Ronan, Ancient Egypt and Nubia Stencils, Big World, Glenview, Ill., Scott Foresman: 1995

This is a book to trace hieroglyphics along with stories and explanation.

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This book can be used to trace Adinkra symbols along with stories and explanations.

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Students should read this book on the importance of African symbols and stories.

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This is a duplicating book of Adinkra Symbols.

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Zona, Guy T., The House of the Heart Is Never Full, NY, NY, Simon & Schuster: 1993

This is a book of African proverb

Appendix A

Pittsburgh Public Schools' Arts and Humanities Content Standards

1. All students describe the meanings they find in various works from the visual and performing arts and literature on the basis of aesthetic understanding of the art form.
2. All students relate various works from the visual and performing arts and literature to the historical and cultural context within which they were created.

Pittsburgh Public Schools' Communications Content Standards

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, to inform and to persuade in all subject areas.
5. All students analyze and make critical judgments about all forms of communication, separating fact from opinion, recognizing propaganda, stereotype 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 communicate appropriately in business, work and other applied situations.

Pittsburgh Public Schools' Citizenship Content Standards

1. All students demonstrate an understanding of major events, cultures, groups and individuals in the historical development of Pennsylvania, the United States and other nations, and describe the patterns of historical development.
2. All students examine and evaluate problems facing citizens in their communities, state, nation and world by incorporating concepts and methods of inquiry of the various social sciences.

3. All students develop and defend a position on current issues, confronting the United States and other nations, conducting research, analyzing alternatives and, organizing evidence and arguments, and making oral presentations.

4. All students demonstrate their skills of communicating, negotiating and cooperating with others.

5. All students demonstrate that they can work effectively with others.

6. All students demonstrate an understanding of the history and nature of prejudice and relate their knowledge to current issues facing communities, the United States and other nations.

7. All students demonstrate an understanding of the various roles they can play as citizens through participation in a community service project.

Appendix B

Reflection and Evaluation

"I am because you are; because we are; therefore I am." The class will develop each rubric needed based on the objectives but must follow the Language Model:

- Aware and connected to audience- a relationship
- Concrete image
- Powerful image
- Alive and moving
- Poetic with linguistic tools- metaphors, similes, alliteration, onomatopoeia
- Stylistically, creatively, dynamically, inventively, spontaneously, powerful
- Rhythmic pattern
- Substantial, functional
- Related concepts unified into a whole
- Indirect, inferential signifying
- An art form that is an action not a thing
- Call audience to respond
- Emphasis on content and message that move and unify audience
- Persuasively artistic

- Original
- Narration of word choice and sentence structure.
- Expressive of world views and analysis
- Brings order, harmony and peace
- Supporting details and examples
- Logical development and arrangement
- Evidence of language rules and usage

Appendix C

Answer the questions as you watch the Ebonics video.

What is language?
1.
2.



Who controls language?
1.
2.

Language Is Power



Who influences the learning of languages?
1.
2.



How are languages related?
1.
2.

What are the rules of the language?
1.
2.
3.