Samantha Kohrt

Adol. Lit.

Dr. Spicer

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**Introduction to final project:**

For my final project I would like to explore the first text we read in class titled [*Every Body Looking*](https://learn.stfrancis.edu/courses/1167006/assignments/6388216) by Candice Iloh. I am a future educator of middle school ELA and this project is a glimpse into some ideas for discussions, themes, and activities that I have for teaching the text. I chose this specific text for several reasons. I think it is a powerful and relatable text. I also think it is necessary to represent the people, events, etc. in the text to my students. By reading, analyzing, and taking the time to understand this text, my students will have a better understanding of themselves and life in general through reading about Ada’s story and how her relationships and events in her life have led to to where she is.

**Pre reading/Context:**

For context, we will have already gone over poetry in class and recognize that poetry can look different and this could be for several reasons. We have already dived into poetry devices, so my students will be able to point them out as we read and analyze the text. It is important for me to choose poems to focus on that are relevant to the age group I am teaching (8th grade ELA) with appropriate subject matters as well. I plan to have class discussions about the text and allow students to have the space to talk about their own experiences with others if they want to do so. As the text is introduced, I will allow students to look at the front and back of it including the covers and first and/or last pages and make predictions solely based on the images and the given pages. I will introduce the ideas of several different themes and the class will have discussions about what we think this could mean, why, etc.

**During reading:**

Look for themes such as:

Self awareness

Understanding

Growing up

Facing reality

Change versus tradition

Empowerment

Overcoming fear and/or misconceptions

**During reading:**

We may read some parts of the text aloud in class and some of the text will be read on their own. There are two ideas I had from my first student experience at Gomeprs Junior High to incorporate here. After reading a “chapter” or two I might have students write a TQE to tell me that they read and understood the text in place of or in addition to any in class discussions we may have.

* **TQE:**

**Thoughts**

Students will typically write 2-3 thoughts that they had while reading. This could be about a character, event, etc. that happened in the particular section of text they were to read.

**Questions**

Students will write 2-3 questions about the particular chapter. Questions could be something like, “Why did this character do that to the other character?”

**Epiphanies**

I typically explain an epiphany as an “aha moment” and will ask for at least 1 or 2 depending on how long the chapter was. This could be an epiphany that the student had about the text or that a character had about something in the text.

* **From my discussion post:**

Page 22 of the PDF talks about her experience as they pull into the parking lot of the school for high school graduation. This is a very real and personal scene as she speaks about her mother. She talked about past trauma relating to her mother and how she remembered her as she grew up. The line "I'm not angry" is repeated four times in this piece. She is most likely trying to convince herself that she isn't angry at her mother but is glad that they are both alive and there now. I can somewhat relate to this through growing up with an alcoholic parent that was absent for many things in my life. Once that parent was able to start to get it together, they were able to attend important events in my life and I was honestly happy that they were finally physically and mentally all there to support me. Many of these memories that are mentioned in the piece as a whole are very personal and relatable like this part.

Pages 23 and 24 of the PDF are also interesting to me. She finally tells us her name, Ada, and how it is what people call her. I love the part on page 23 that says "They tell me there's a big world out there and they tell me there's so much I can do and I know nothing but this city" which is a scary thought to a young adult. Ada talked about the differences in school and how life is different.

I also think that the title of the main piece is "Every Body Looking" with "everybody" as two words instead of one. The title is also very fitting because while growing up and going to school, a young girl might think that every body is looking at her. Many of the other short poems mention this when she talks about first grade, sixth grade, and so on even until college sometimes.

**Source**: Samantha Kohrt - Week 1 Discussion Board on Cadice Iloh’s Every Body Looking on January 10, 2022.

I would want my students and I to talk these and other ideas through in order to understand the text in a more personal way. I think the best lessons are the ones that the teacher can really relate to themselves and to their class. I think that it is important to remember that we are all individuals and we all have a story to tell. This is explored through each portion of the text as Ada tells parts of her story from just about every age and grade level. This helps us get the idea of who she was, what she wanted, her relationships with her family, and more.

**Discussion questions relating to the structure, plot, and techniques of the text:**

* We can see that the text in written in verse and switches between different ages and grade levels in Ada’s story. Does this structure help us understand her story? If so, how?
* How does Ada’s point of view help us better understand the story Ada is telling?
* How would a different perspective change the storyline?
* The literary element of flashbacks are used in this story to understand some relevant relationships in the story. What do these flashbacks show the reader specifically? (Use page numbers, chapter, characters, etc.)

**Discussion questions relating to the characters and the conflict(s):**

* What kind of relationship do Derek and Ada have?
* Who is Kendra and what role does she play in Ada’s life?
* Describe 2-3 different actions that show Ada’s growing independence.
* How are Ada’s mother’s and father’s behaviors different and similar? How has this affected Ada and her individual relationships with her parents?

**Imagery and language questions:**

* Is there a difference in the use of italics rather than quotation marks for dialogue? Why do you think the author chose this method?
* As mentioned before, think of the title of the text. What do you think this means for Ada literally and figuratively throughout her life stories?
* As we are reading, we have recognized dancing to be a significant image since it has been a recurring image. Think of Ada and her drawing of “magic” on page 293 when she was young and other similar imagery or langauge of dancing. How does this contribute to the overall message of the story that the author may have been trying to tell us?
* Remember your pre reading activity… once we are done with the text I want you to look back at the first poem versus the last poem. What does this show about Ada’s growth, development, and who she has overall become?

In general, I think it is important to stop and have conversations with my students during a lesson and while we are reading a text, especially with the form that this text was written. This text was written in prose and was chunked into parts of Ada’s story to show her journey.

**After reading activities:**

* **Interactive Storytelling**

After reading Ada’s beautiful story full of many twists, turns, ups and downs, it is your turn to show me your story. Ada showed us her passion of dance and when she accomplished graduating high school. Her story was full of imagery and lots of descriptive language so that we, the readers, were able to picture this story unfolding in our minds. It’s now your turn! I want you to use digital interactive medias to represent you.

1. First, pick something you are interested in or passionate about. Think of Ada’s passion of dance in this case. Your passion will be the main topic of how you tell your story.
2. Next, what has happened or got in the way of you pursuing your passion(s)? What positive parts of your journey are you proud of? All parts of your story matter.
3. Then, find 5-10 pictures, videos, etc. that help you tell your unique story. You may need some help from your family or friends to dig up some photos or videos here. Be sure to put your media in an order that makes sense in your story. In addition to your photos, videos, etc. make it interactive through adding (school appropriate) music and short captions to show the setting, year, name, event, etc.
4. Finally, start making your “Movie” by adding all of your media together including any captions with music. You may add transitions, effects, or anything else that may help show your journey to your passion.

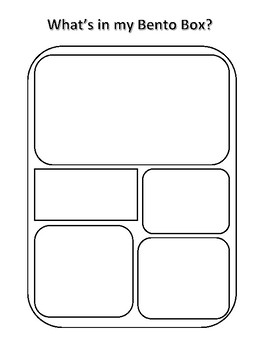
* **Found poem**

This is sort of like it sounds and is where you look for pieces of other sources and form it into a new poem. You may take words, phrases, or shor quotes from *Every Body Looking* in order to create your new poem. For example, Ada found out new things about herself through the experiences from 1st grade all the way through college including new ways to go about her problems at a given age or stage. You are taking words you “found” and forming them into a new poem for this activity.

1. Have an idea of which sections you may want to look at that you enjoyed or related to.
2. Look at the section and find anywhere between 15 and 20 words from that poem. These words do not necessarily have to go together, but can be words you found interesting or inspiring.
3. Start creating your poem using the words you picked out. You can look back at other poems in the text to see how the author pieced certain words together.

**Additional idea for during or after reading the text**

Another idea I have either during or after reading the text is a “Bento Box.” I found this activity from my mentor teacher while visiting the class I used to teach the semester prior in Fall of 2021. This is where they take an outline of a bento box, which includes sections that are different sizes, and add elements of the story in it to show that they read and understood what they read. The bento box outline will initially look as follows (image is linked):

[](https://ecdn.teacherspayteachers.com/thumbitem/What-s-Inside-my-Bento-Box--3006131-1500873478/original-3006131-1.jpg)

There will be different requirements for each box. If I choose to do this for multiple sectionns of the text, then I will make that clear during instruction and we will do an example together to show what I am looking for. I will also show am example if we choose to complete this activity at the very end of the text. I want students to focus on the style, patterns, symbolism, and more of the chosen texts. For example, in one box will be an example of symbolism, including an image and a caption with the page number and title of the section. Students may write about Ada’s different relationships with her family, friends, and peers and how all of these relationships affected her life in different ways, for the good, the bad, or the ugly. This will be done on paper and students will be put in small groups to present their bento boxes. Their presentations will show what each student thought was interesting, intriguing, and what they learned.