

Catch-your Playlist II

TIME

This lesson is to be implemented in one 50-minute period on Friday, February 18, 2011.

SETTING

11th grade English classroom with 25 students

THEORY INTO PRACTICE BACKGROUND

1. Although this is mostly a day set aside for students to share their songs, there are a few strategies I wanted to employ as a way to make this potentially sensitive and personal activity more comfortable and collaborative. For one, I have always been impressed by teachers who made it a point to share something personal first, if the students were also asked to share something personal. It seems unfair that oftentimes teachers merely get to assign and request, while students oblige, even though they may be reluctant to share things about them that they don't always feel comfortable sharing. This is especially true when teaching a unit on identity—something that not many adolescent might want to discuss openly in front of their peers. Jim Burke encourages the same thing when assigning any oral presentation or speech. He suggests, 'do the assignment yourself and model for students how to give such a speech. Take some risks with it so that they can see that you, too, are reaching to learn something new' (Burke 236). This is why I volunteer myself to share my song (and also my poem in the "Where I'm From" lesson) before asking for volunteers to share their songs. In doing so, I hope that students will be more willing to open up to the class, as I have done. Another thing that I allow students to do is self-select their partners. The purpose of sharing the songs is to be able to articulate how you identify yourself as well as learn how others identify themselves. I envision this sharing process more meaningful if students can really be in their element when sharing—after all, they're sharing about themselves. I think forcing any kind of partnership when it requires disclosing personal information many induce anxiety and feelings of insecurity.
2. Prior to this lesson, students will have completed the "What's in Holden's iPod?" activity, through which they listened to a few songs inspired by artists who read *The Catcher in the Rye*. As they listened to the song, they analyzed the song lyrics and made connections to how the song relates to Holden's life and identity. For homework, they completed the "If I Were A Song..." assignment, where they were asked to choose two songs—one that they identify with, and another that represents how others identify them. Please refer to the "*Catch-your* Playlist" LPA for more details.

3. Because this is a day for students to share their songs, there are no content materials that I will provide for this lesson. However, students will bring songs and song lyrics to class, and these will serve to be the crux of our presentation / conversation. Using the song lyrics as a literary text, students will be asked to perform a semi-literary analysis and defend their song choice. In doing so, they will be articulating some features or characteristics about their identity to their partner.
4. After this lesson, students will wrap-up their reading of *The Catcher in the Rye* and segue into Sherman Alexie's *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*. Before beginning this next novel, students' ability to articulate important characteristics of their identity will be helpful as they begin reading, writing and viewing supplemental materials that also prompt them to reflect and articulate attributes of their identity.

OBJECTIVES

After this class, students will be able to (1) articulate important facets/characteristics of their identity and also get an opportunity to learn how their classmates identify themselves; (2) approach the song lyrics as a literary text and defend their song choice in terms of word choice, style, genre, and etc.

MATERIALS

- *The Catcher in the Rye* by J. D. Salinger
- At least 10 working laptops with wireless connection
- Elmo Document Camera / Projector System
- Extra sets of ear phones (around 10)
- "If I Were A Song..." Rubric / ELL Alternative (Worksheet #1)
- Lyrics to "Unwritten" by Natasha Bedingfield (Worksheet #2)

PREPARATION

- Check out laptops cart (minimum of 10).
- Print out a copy of the lyrics to "Unwritten" by Natasha Bedingfield.

PROCEDURE

Before class

- Put the lyrics to "Unwritten" by Natasha Bedingfield under the Elmo camera.
- Have the Youtube clip of the song ready to go.

Introduction of Lesson: 13 min.

- *5 min* Model the activity for the day by playing the song “Unwritten” Natasha Bedingfield and displaying the lyrics on the projector. Turn the music off when the song continues to repeat the chorus until the end.
- *3 min* Explain to students my own rationale for choosing this as a song that I identify with currently (As a first-year teacher, “I am unwritten,” I try to “break tradition” in my instruction and think that “Today is where [my] book begins”—in a literal sense a book can signify a gradebook, or a chapter of my life; talk about the optimistic melody of the song that is consistent with my mindset, and etc.).
- *3 min* Explain to students that they will be doing something similar to I’ve just done—with a partner. If they have their iPods, they may take it out and use them, but only to listen to the song for this assignment. If they don’t have their iPods, they may get a laptop and Youtube the song. In either case, students should be using their ear phones to listen to the song so that there aren’t 13 different songs playing out loud at once. Also, students are to only listen to *one* song of the two they’ve prepared, although they are more than welcome to talk about both of their songs. After listening to their song, they should also share their rationale—why they chose the song, which part of the song they identify with, etc.
- *2 min* Allow students to work in self-selected pairs, with one group of 3 (refer to SPED accommodations for this), since this is a rather personal assignment and students should feel comfortable when sharing. Distribute extra ear phones to any pairs that don’t have at least one set.

Lesson Instruction: 37 min.

- *15 min* Circulate around the room during partner work to ensure that students are on task and using laptops to listen to their song. Each student should share for around 8 minutes, which allows ample time for them to listen to the song (4-5 min) and discuss the lyrics and rationale (2-3 min). Encourage students to treat the song lyrics as a literary text; analyze word choice, style, and genre to defend their decision to use this song to represent themselves.
- *20 min* Regroup as a class. Ask for a few volunteers to come up to the class and share their song and rationale. Play their songs on Youtube and put their lyrics under the Elmo camera for everyone to see. Plan for about 2-3 students to share their songs and briefly talk about how they identify with them. After students have shared their songs, briefly discuss these questions: Was it a difficult task for you to look for a song that captures your identity? Why? Was it difficult for you to look for a song that represents how others perceive you? Why? What is the main difference between how you identify yourself and how others identify you? If it wasn’t a difficult task, what do you think it is about music that makes it easy for people to identify with? What is the purpose of song-writing?

Closure/Wrap-Up

- *I min* Ask students to return the laptops to the cart. Collect their song lyrics and rationales. Remind students of their reading assignment for Monday (Ch. 22-24). Dismiss students.

DISCUSSION IDEAS

- What is it about this song that you identify with?
- Why do you think this song represents how others perceive you?
- Was it a difficult task for you to look for a song that captures your identity? Why?
- Was it difficult for you to look for a song that represents how others perceive you? Why?
- What is the main difference between how you identify yourself and how others identify you?
- If it wasn't a difficult task, what do you think it is about music that makes it easy for people to identify with?
- What is the purpose of song-writing?

BILINGUAL/ESL AND ENGLISHES ACCOMMODATIONS

Spanish

- The ELL whose L1 is Spanish will be accommodated in these following ways:
 - ✓ Spanish-English and English-Spanish dictionaries will be provided in the classroom as his L1 resource. He may refer to these whenever necessary—especially as he listens to the songs and read through the lyrics.
 - ✓ If this student chooses a song in his native language, I can speak with him about sending me the title and artist of his song in advance so that I can make a translated copy for his partner.
 - ✓ I will provide a translated copy of Natasha Bedingfield's "Unwritten" lyrics (http://www.lyricsfreak.com/n/natasha+bedingfield/spa:unwritten_10189966.html).
 - ✓ His rationale will be assessed with a different rubric to accommodate his developing grammar/mechanics. If he needs the weekend to complete it, I can talk to him about extending his deadline. But this will be arranged prior to the lesson.
 - ✓ I will circulate around the room during partner work to assist this ELL student to see if he might need extra assistance.

African American English

- Students who speak African American English will be accommodated in these following ways:
 - ✓ Students will be free to participate in discussion in whichever dialect that is comfortable for them.

- ✓ There is no requirement to write in Standard English for the homework assignment, and so there will be no “audience” component on the rubric. They will not be penalized for the grammar/mechanics component of the rationale (in fact, students who speak AAE are never penalized in this domain—only for “audience”).

SPECIAL EDUCATION ACCOMMODATIONS

“*Asperger’s disorder* is characterized by severe, sustained, and often lifelong impairments in social interactions and the development of restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests, and activities” (Rosenberg et al 263).

- The student with Asperger’s disorder will be accommodated in these following ways:
 - ✓ This student will be placed in a group of 3, and with at least one person with whom he feels comfortable with. This arrangement will be made on the previous day, prior to this lesson.
 - ✓ On the previous day, I will have asked this student if he is willing to present his song, so that if he is, he can practice what he would say at home.
 - ✓ Student will be provided with an agenda of the day’s lesson, which outlines the instructional activities, so that they know what to anticipate when they come to class.
 - ✓ Student will receive all of the discussion questions in advance so they can prepare in what the class will discuss for this particular lesson.
 - ✓ Student will be given enough time to prepare when changing routine in class.
 - ✓ When giving instructions and/or leading discussions, I will use language that is direct and literal, avoiding unnecessary idioms and irony, which may cause confusion.

ASSESSMENT

- Students will be formally assessed on their thoughtful completion and grammar/mechanics of the rationale (Worksheet #1).
- I will circulate around the room and informally assess students’ engagement and participation during partner work and during the class-wide presentation discussion.

EXTENSION IDEAS

- The homework assignment could potentially be expanded to an option of a larger project, where students write their own songs and record it. If time permits, this can be expanded further and students can create their own music video.
- As an alternative to the 1-page rationale, students can create a Glogster or a Wordle to describe their choice of song and how they identify with it.

SOURCE OF ACTIVITY

I would like to thank the contributors of English Companion Ning again for inspiring the idea of incorporating music into this lesson.

RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

Burke, Jim. *The English Teacher's Companion: a Complete Guide to Classroom, Curriculum, and the Profession*. 3 ed. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2008. Print.

“English Companion: Where English teachers go help each other.”
Englishcompanion.ning.com. English Companion Ning, 2010. Web. 5 Dec, 2010.

“Illinois State Board of Education: Illinois Learning Standards.” *ISBE.com*. Illinois State Board of Education, 2009. Web. 5 Dec, 2010.

Natasha Bedingfield. “Unwritten.” *Unwritten*. Sony, 2005.

Rosenberg, M.S., *Special Education for Today's Teachers: An Introduction*. NJ: Pearson, 2010. Print.

Salinger, J.D. *The Catcher in the Rye*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1951. 277. Print.

“Unwritten Lyrics.” *Lyricsfreak.com*. LyricsFreak, 2010. Web. 6 Dec, 2010.

ILLINOIS STATE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS GOALS

• Goal 1: Apply word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections

1.A.5b Analyze the meaning of abstract concepts and the effects of particular word and phrase choices.

- ✓ This goal is accomplished as students work in pairs to listen to each other's songs and read the song lyrics. Students will share how certain word and phrase choices of the song are representative of their identities, and use them to analyze abstract concepts that the song might capture (goals, emotions, beliefs, morals, etc.). Essentially, students approach the song lyrics as a literary text and analyze themes, word choices, style and genre to defend their song choice.

• Goal 4: Speak effectively using language appropriate to the situation and audience.

4.B.5a Deliver planned and impromptu oral presentations, as individuals and members of a group, conveying results of research, projects or literature studies to a variety of audiences (e.g., peers, community, business/industry, local organizations) using appropriate visual aids and available technology

- ✓ Some students will get an opportunity to fulfill this goal as they do an informal presentation to the class sharing their song and rationale using appropriate technology (Youtube and Elmo camera).

4.A.4a Apply listening skills as individuals and members of a group in a variety of settings (e.g., lectures, discussions, conversations, team projects, presentations, interviews).

- ✓ All students will accomplish this goal as they converse in pairs (or in a group of 3) and share their assignment. As the nature of this assignment is rather personal, students will be encouraged to use listening skills that are active and empathetic.

“If I Were A Song...” Rubric

Worksheet #1

| Requirements/ Points | 5 points | 3 points | 0 points |
|------------------------------------|---|--|--|
| Song requirement | Provides two song choices (if only one, explains why in the rationale). | Provide only one song without any explanation in the rationale. | No song chosen. |
| Thoughtful completion of rationale | Rationale is at least 1 page and demonstrates thoughtful completion; carefully explains song choice and personal connections to lyrics. | Rationale does not meet the minimum page requirement and/or does not provide adequate explanation and personal connection to lyrics. | No rationale provided. |
| Grammar/mechanics | No more than 2 errors in mechanics and grammar. | More than 3 errors in mechanics and grammar. | More than 4 errors in mechanics and grammar. |

“If I Were A Song...” Rubric (ELL Alternative)

| Requirements/ Points | 5 points | 3 points | 0 points |
|------------------------------------|---|--|--|
| Song requirement | Provides two song choices (if only one, explains why in the rationale). | Provide only one song without any explanation in the rationale. | No song chosen. |
| Thoughtful completion of rationale | Rationale is at least 1 page and demonstrates thoughtful completion; carefully explains song choice and personal connections to lyrics. | Rationale does not meet the minimum page requirement and/or does not provide adequate explanation and personal connection to lyrics. | No rationale provided. |
| Grammar/mechanics | Article has a few errors in mechanics and grammar but does not affect understanding of rationale. | Article has a few errors in mechanics and grammar and hinders understanding of rationale. | Rationale is incomprehensible due to errors in mechanics and grammar |

