

The Art of Literature: Visual Stimuli that Constructs Communication

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Problem Statement

Communication is paramount to the institution of culture. Communication is not just the transference of information, language, and knowledge; it is the cornerstone of how individuals are brought together to form traditions, beliefs, and a way of life. Students that attend public schools in large metropolitan cities within urban areas usually bring their own form of traditions and beliefs to these institutions that have been customarily embedded in them due to the culture they have been exposed to. These views and beliefs usually differ from more fundamental traditionalist positions that are upheld by the American education system these students are going to have to conform to for twelve years while they are in school.

The application of communicative practices students in urban areas may be accustomed to is usually not what they receive when they are in a formal school situation within public education. This has challenged educators to try to incorporate strategies to connect personally as well as culturally with their students. Educators who teach in schools in urban areas are highly likely to work with students who have different cultural and racial backgrounds from their own (Mahiri, 1998). Even educators who are the same races as their students may still face a cultural hurdle in understanding their students' contemporary perspectives due to generational differences.

Students that attend schools in urban areas need to be exposed to educational practices that are not only rooted in the traditional sense of education, but also relevant to them as individuals. One of the main reasons for the existence of public education, or education in general is to produce productive citizens in society. How can students who attend school in urban areas feel they are becoming productive citizens in society when the education they are receiving does not reflect their cultural, ethnic, or racial values? How is that a reflection of society as a whole?

Educators of all ethnic backgrounds should feel the need to understand and value the behaviors and culture that students from urban areas bring into the classroom. In other words, as public schools in American society continue to become institutions where the educator population is increasingly homogeneous (i.e., mostly white, middle class, and female), the student population is becoming increasingly heterogeneous (i.e., students of color from significantly low socio-economic positions). This has put public education into the position that it needs to address two major concerns: (a) applying culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) that eventually becomes sustaining practices to help students from urban areas attain academic achievement in and out of the classroom, and (b) preparing novice and experienced educators with the necessary tools and knowledge to be

able to meet this challenge (Howard, 2003). This can be accomplished by providing them with new and innovative cross-curricula academic applications in the classroom that can allow students to become more actively engaged, especially in urban school settings.

A lack of cultural synchronization can result in low teacher expectations for student achievement, cultural misunderstandings and student academic failure (Paul, 2000). That is why it is imperative to establish a form of cultural and communicative continuity through CRP within the classroom, allowing educators to personally connect with their students, which can yield academic success. When educators just apply traditional standards and methods of teaching in the classroom, they usually experience a sense of resistance from students that attend schools in urban areas; but when personal cultural knowledge and communicative customs are incorporated in curricula, urban students can become more receptive to the instruction of their teachers (Paul, 2000). The engagement of CRP with traditional academic curricula has the potential to construct a “third space” paradigm (Gutierrez, 2008).

The third space paradigm or concept merges the “first space” of the individual’s home, community, cultural, or peer experiences with the “second space” of traditional or formalized institutions like school or work to formulate a “third space” as an alternative space of knowledge that allows marginalized individuals to become empowered in that space (Gutierrez, 2008; Gutierrez & Rogoff, 2003; Moje, Ciechanowski, Kramer, Ellis, Carrillo, & Collazo, 2004). The third space results from educators applying CRP accurately and responsibly in their classrooms to encourage transformative learning.

For educators to incorporate CRP within their instruction and value the behavior and culture that urban students bring into the classroom, they need to understand that the attitudes and ideology these students exhibit are exemplified in the clothing, language, character, and communicative traits they possess. These can be attributed to the popular youth culture known as hip-hop (Mahiri, 1998). Educators should not view using alternative pedagogical practices like hip-hop programming through a narrow lens. They have to begin looking at hip-hop as more than a music genre but rather as a vehicle that represents a distinct view of the world with related theories and philosophies that can inform curricula and pedagogy (Petchauer, 2011). It is a culture that can provide both formal and informal educational practices to adolescents that can extend beyond the boundaries of the classroom and into the sphere of cultural communities (Powell, 1991).

When urban students can combine alternative pedagogical practices like using hip-hop elements with more traditional practices such as poetry or poetic narratives to create a “third space” application in the classroom, it has the potential to becoming a winning situation for educators to suggest a more transformative progressive curricula that can become installed through an integrated cross-curricula format like THAL (Technology, History, The Arts, and Literacy). The installing of THAL has the potential to allow educators to apply culturally relevant literacy practices in the classroom through

a “third space” paradigm using an art and history perspective while integrating the use of modern technology. Just as with STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), students can use THAL as an anchor or foundation to progressive learning. The pedagogical application of THAL would be from a qualitative approach, as opposed to STEM which seems to be more quantitative driven (Honey, Pearson, & Schweingruber, 2014).

Rationale

This curriculum unit will explore how using hip-hop culture with poetry through cross-curricula applications like THAL can be used as an educational tool in urban schools to help increase student engagement which could lead to students performing better academically in the classroom. An enhanced vocabulary, creative and expressive skills, and knowledge of historical application can increase traditional academic content competency. The unit will also examine how educators can utilize cross-curricula pedagogy to provide sound art, social studies, and literacy teaching strategies to all students, especially those in urban areas who have been traditionally marginalized by educational systems.

The implementation of current national education policies has fostered increased efforts to standardize and narrow curriculum, and this has handcuffed educators from using creative and intellectual methods of teaching in the classroom and capsulized students, which invariably has a profound effect on students in urban areas who already feel marginalized in school (Baszile, 2009; Crocco & Costigan, 2007). Based on this evidence, the limitations that have been put on curriculum has had a negative effect on the way educators feel about being able to develop satisfactory teaching practices in the classroom (Crocco & Costigan, 2007).

Using poetic forms in hip-hop culture through cross-curricula applications can potentially narrow the curriculum gap for educators and provide cultural contexts through progressive pedagogical implementation that can help shape identity, motivation, academic development, and pro-social behaviors in students of public education in urban areas (Brown, 2006; Petchauer, 2009). The musical element of hip-hop culture can have a powerful and stimulating effect on the mental and emotional state of the listener. It can be a form of therapy that can fill both psychological and physical needs (Brown, 2006). Although the musical application of the culture can be intoxicating to adolescents, many adults feel that music received directly from pop culture can have detrimental effects on a child’s mental state and behavioral patterns because of lyrics from popular artists that project a negative vision of society (Alexander-Smith, 2004; Brown, 2006).

Hip-hop culture has emerged as a powerful discourse that is able to effectively critique other dominant discourses. Using it as an educational tool can allow students to participate in academic dialogue with confidence (Mahiri, 2000/2001). It also permits

students to engage in constructive social intercourse. If educators conducted research regarding using hip-hop culture in the classroom and took a close examination of the content of several artists within the genre, they would be able to use many elements of the culture in their classroom regardless of the subject matter. Hip-hop culture can be used as a supplemental tool as well as main conduit to help students perform better in the classroom. It is a culture that has been able to communicate the ideas and issues of the individuals that embrace the culture through worldwide media. This is the reason why the aspects of the culture combined with more traditional verification of educational standards like poetry and poetical analysis could be beneficial for students in urban areas to communicate who they are as individuals through artistic and historical means.

The use of comics can help educators teach dialogue within writing, but more importantly, they have the ability to help students become engaged with the concept of self-identity and awareness through the use of visual characterization. If students have the ability to create their own comic book or comic strip, more times than not, they will craft dialogue and characters that resemble themselves or ones they are familiar or fascinated with. This use of comics coincides with the “third space” module explained earlier that potentially allows students to use a traditional form of storytelling combined with cultural norms that are relevant to them. While hip-hop can use words to tell a story, the application of comics can use imagery to highlight those words to enhance the story.

Overview

The curriculum unit will consist of students using elements of hip-hop culture in their creative writing to create original poems, raps, and/or fictional stories. The unit will be dissected into different categories due to various grade levels in the school where it will be implemented. Students from kindergarten to second grade will have the option to use the writing prompt “Where I’m From” to write about themselves and the environment in which they live. Students at this grade level will be able to give a detailed analysis about themselves, their loved ones, the neighborhood in which they live, and other social aspects they deem important to write about.

Students that are at the third grade to fifth grade level will also be able to use the prompt “Where I’m From” or write poems that are consistent with their age. They can write a poem that can consist of one line about an important event for each year of their life. This technique is exemplified through the work of many poets. The students at this grade level can write a rap about each year or just give a narrative analysis in regards to the subject matter as well.

Students that are between sixth and eighth grade will have the option of writing a ten to sixteen bar rap about themselves using the “Where I’m From” directive or a narrative they feel is necessary to describe who they are as individuals. They will have

the option of creating a rap that can either use traditional elements of rhyme alliteration in their work or non-traditional off-beat rhymes that do not necessarily have to rhyme at the end of each bar.

All of the students will examine the historical narrative of comic books and the purpose of why they were created, as well as listen to the song “Secret Wars” by rap artist The Last Emperor so they can imagine first-hand how the idea of content within a comic book can be brought to life through the narration of a rap song. Once the students have an idea on what they are going to write for their poetic compositions they will spend time in their homeroom classes working out the details to complete their projects.

Once the students have finished their compositions they will illustrate their work in their own comic books. They will be able to create an eight-page paper book and write their poems, raps and stories within the eight-page frame. Each page will then be illustrated to creatively exemplify their writing. They will visually illustrate their work with color and hopefully be able to recite their work through an audible technological application so others can view what they accomplished with the creation of their comic books.

Teaching Strategies

Learning happens when individuals interact with one another, especially within a particular culture; and a knowledgeable member of that culture could have a direct impact on the learning that occurs (Laman, Jewett, Jennings, Wilson, & Souto-Manning, 2012; McCarthy, 1994). Learning is also mediated through dialogue. According to Puro and Bloome (1987), “Teaching and learning in classrooms is a communicative process. Teachers communicate with students; students communicate with their peers and with the teacher” (p. 26). Dialogue can be taken in through the external mental process then internalized because of the interaction with the knowledgeable member of the culture. In the paradigm of acquiring knowledge in a classroom, the educator serves as the knowledgeable member of a culture. This is the reason that dialogue between educator and student is crucial in constructing knowledge (Wimmer, Skramstad, & Khan, 2012). Educators need to be able to communicate to their students in dialogue with which the students are comfortable. This form of social interaction is critical to students guiding their own thinking and enhancing academic prowess.

The dialogue that happens between an educator and students is vital in encouraging those students to become critical readers and transfer that knowledge into fundamental writing practices (McCarthy, 1994). The process of writing can allow one to dissect concepts and formulate ideas on various topics and present them using various literary formats. Research that has been conducted on human cognitive development suggests it is imperative for dialogue to take place in social contexts to enhance the

development of literacy (Flower, 1989; Puro & Bloome, 1987; Wimmer, Skramstad, & Khan, 2012).

In order for educators to be able to communicate with their students effectively, they need to consider their different cultures and experiences. Specifically, dialogue that is used in the “third space” paradigm that combines more traditional or formal speech with that of cultural linguistics or street vernacular may be appropriate to use in the classroom. Some students can adapt to formal writing and reading practices, while others benefit from writing about their own experiences and reading material they can relate to personally (Weinstein, 2009). Accepting students to express themselves through poetry of their choice or poetry that is relatable to them allows for a possible exploration of word identification or vocabulary growth. This might take some of the control out of an educator’s hand when engaging with students, but this process can allow students to become empowered individuals (McCarthy, 1994).

This social interaction of learning through communication is the foundation for the curriculum unit. The language the students use in creating their narratives will help them visually communicate their ideas and explorations. The educators will help the students navigate how they want to approach telling their stories by giving them the opportunity to explore their own personal discoveries that are relevant to them. This idea of allowing students to express themselves freely comes out of the John Dewey school of thought.

John Dewey

John Dewey is considered to be one of the foremost American educational philosophers (Simpson, 2006). He is a pragmatist, and his approach to curriculum in education is very different than that of more traditional curriculum models that are used in public education today. Dewey believed that one of the goals of education was to develop intellectual freedom. This goal could be accomplished by teachers getting to know their students intimately and allowing them to stimulate their entire educational capacity to stimulate growth (Simpson, 2006). A more traditional approach to curriculum places emphasis on students learning specific subject matter. This approach is very logical and objective and is rooted in modernist rationale.

Dewey also argued that if one instilled curriculum from a pragmatist or postpositivist methodology, it could create democratic citizens that would not approach democracy as just another form of government. These citizens would look at democracy from a critical position as a form of society that would engage in widespread communication amongst its citizens to develop and understanding that all diverse populations interests should be valued (Simpson, 2006). This idea is not consistent with a technical scientific approach to education. From this perspective, democratic citizenry is rooted in the ability of individuals to be prepared to enter the labor force. Emphasis is

grounded in hierarchal standards that positions individuals into different subjugated categories. The concept of this curriculum unit is based on many of Dewey's philosophies in regards to education.

Curriculum Unit Design Concept

The design concept for the curriculum unit will be broken into several different categories. This concept will be the format the educators will use to implement the curriculum unit so the students will have chance to succeed in creating their visual analysis of communication. The duration of the entire curriculum unit will depend on how many class sessions the educators have each week with the students, since the curriculum unit is divided into two separate lessons and will be taught by two different teachers. If educators have at least two sessions a week with their students, the curriculum unit should be complete in approximately three to four weeks.

* **Anticipatory Set:** All of the students will listen to "Secret Wars" by The Last Emperor. All students from K-8 will be able to visually see the "Where I'm From" prompt, and how it can be sequenced for them to write their poem. Students in grades 3-5 will be given a graphic organizer to write down their thoughts about how they want to express each year of their life. Students in grades 6-8 will also be given a graphic organizer to help them formulate their thoughts on how they want to write their poems or raps. These students will also be given a T-Chart that can help them use words that rhyme together.

* **Input:** The students will use the writing or literacy knowledge they have acquired through the instruction they will receive from their classroom teachers to help create meaningful pieces of literature using culture that is relevant to their daily lives. The educators that teach grades 6-8 can possibly introduce rhyming techniques such as allegory, alliteration and assonance that are used by artists in hip-hop culture to show the students how they can rhyme words together and use symbolic and metaphoric imagery in their work. The classroom teachers will be able to teach students about the concepts of alliteration and assonance by introducing a poem such as "My Puppy Punched Me in the Eye" by Kenn Nesbitt for the students in K-5. For students that are in grades 6-8, teachers can show a YouTube video to visually show an example of the alliteration and assonance concepts.

* **Modeling:** The classroom teachers will read poems from various artists to model for the students what a poem or story could sound like. The art teacher will show the students the illustration of the literature so they can comprehend how they should create their artwork.

* **Guided Practice:** The classroom teachers will ask the students in grades 3-5 to offer some ideas on themes for their poems using a writing web graphic organizer. The K-2 students will be help by their teachers to write about themselves as much as possible by

giving them certain prompts to write about. This will include ideas like the name of the street they live on, their favorite books to read, and the activities they enjoy doing. The classroom teachers for grades 6-8 can refer to the rhyming T-Chart and ask the students to take some time and try to come up with their own rhyming chart of words.

* **Checking For Understanding:** All teachers will continually check students work to make sure they have the correct usage of vocabulary for their poems and raps. The teachers will edit the students work periodically so they understand where they have made mistakes.

* **Independent Practice:** Once the students have finished their poems or raps, they will edit them for completion. Once this process is complete the students will begin illustrating their work to create their own comic book. This will be done during art class.

* **Assessment:** The students' poems or raps will be evaluated with a creative writing rubric (See Appendix A). This rubric will be used to determine the grade the students will receive for the writing portion of the curriculum unit. The final illustration of the comic book will be assessed by a rubric created by the art teacher (See Appendix B).

Classroom Activities

The two lesson plans that follow will be the basis for the curriculum unit. Any materials needed for the lessons can be accessed from the **Content Objectives** section or found in the appendices.

Lesson Plan#1

I. Goals:

- I want the students to complete a poem or rap about who they are as individuals using the writing prompt "Where I'm From".

- I want to expose the students to different elements of poetry and rap principles so they understand that they do not always have to follow the traditional way of writing text.

II. Objectives:

- The students will create a writing piece (either a poem or rap) that tells a story about themselves and/or the different people in their lives.

- The students will use the "third space" concept to create their written work by combining traditional form with cultural practices.

III. ELA Standards: (Pennsylvania Department of Education)

-1.3 Reading Literature

* Students read and respond to works of literature—with emphasis on comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and making connections among ideas and between texts with focus on textual evidence.

-1.4 Writing

* Students write for different purposes and audiences. Students write clear and focused text to convey a well-defined perspective and appropriate content.

IV. Teaching Procedures:

A. Anticipatory Set:

The classroom teachers will introduce the concept of poetry to the students by explaining the **Elements of Poetry** to them while using a power point presentation (See Content Objectives Section). The classroom teachers will also be able to provide students with graphic organizers and writing templates so they can have access to a formalized writing structure to help them start writing their poems or raps (See Content Objectives Section). Classroom teachers can also read a copy of the poem *Where I'm From* by Silvano Alexander so they can hear how they can present their work (See Appendix D). The classroom teachers in grades K-5 can introduce a “Where I'm From” poem by a student in their age range or Kenn Nesbitt’s poem “My Puppy Punched Me in the Eye” so they can get a sense of alliteration and assonance (See Content Objectives Section). The classroom teachers for grades 6-8 can show the students a visual screening of Jayne Cortez’s poem “He Got She Got” and a video on alliteration and assonance (YouTube) so they can get a rhythmic sense on how to write their poem or rap (See Content Objectives Section).

B. Body:

The teachers will present the graphic organizers and writing templates to the students and explain that they can write an 8-16 line poem or 8 bar rap (8 bar raps have 16 lines so they coincide with one another) using the directive “Where I'm From” as their guide or narrative. The students can use the templates to write one line at a time. This process should take 3-4 class sessions at 45 minutes for each session.

C. Closure:

Once the students have written their poems or raps they will re-write them to correct any spelling or punctuation errors. The students can also recite their work to their fellow classmates for a critique of their work.

V. Materials:

- Graphic Organizers and I am From Templates (Objectives Section)
- Access to different poems at the owlcation website: www.owlcation.com
- Paper
- Pencils
- Access to visual projector: www.youtube.com

VI. Assessment:

- Students will be assessed by a creative writing rubric (See Appendix A).

Lesson Plan#2

I. Goals:

- I want the students to be able to create their own comic strip or graphic novel using imagery and language that is relevant to their lives.
- I want the students to use their “Where I’m From” poems or raps to create a visual comic strip or graphic novel to illustrate what they have written.

II. Objectives:

- The students will create their own book or comic strip using the imagery they create in their poems or raps.
- The students will use this project to showcase how they can use traditional elements of education and practices they are familiar with culturally to present a finished artistic project that speaks to who they are as individuals.

III. Visual Standards: (Core Curriculum: Visual Arts K-12)

-9.1 Production, Performance and Exhibition of Visual Arts

- * Use a variety of media to make many kinds of art by oneself and with others.

-9.3 Critical Response

- * Recognize that reflection is important for understanding and improving their own artwork.

-9.4 Aesthetic Response

* Create art based on historical and cultural ideas.

IV. Teaching Procedures:

A. Anticipatory Set:

The instructor will show the students copies of “The Boondocks” comic strips by Aaron McGruder. Then, the instructor will show the students different examples of comic strips from the past and present from the **Library of Congress** website. The instructor will also show the students how they will be able to create their own 8-page paper book by demonstrating it for them, showing them a video on YouTube, and also giving them a graphic organizer about how to make one (See Content Objectives Section). The instructor will give the students an audio screening of the Last Emperor’s recording of “Secret Wars” to get a better understanding how a rhythmic piece of music could possibly be used to create a graphic novel or comic book.

B. Body:

Once the students have created their book they will choose the lines they want to use from their poems or raps and write them on each page. Once they have finished writing their narratives they will have to illustrate their work on each page. The illustration should coincide with the words that are on the page.

C. Closure:

The students will add color to their work to bring the illustration to life. This process should take approximately 3-4 class periods. Each class period should be 45 minutes in length. Once the students have finished with their project they will switch comic books with one of their classmates in order to get a critique about their work.

V. Materials:

- Crayons/Markers/Colored Pencils
- Drawing Paper
- Pencils
- Scissors
- Copies of “The Boondocks” by Aaron McGruder
- Visual illustrations of comic strips from The Library of Congress:

<https://www.loc.gov/resource/sn84024350/1897-01-10/ed-1/?sp=5> (New York Journal Article)

<https://www.loc.gov/item/acd1996006841/PP/> (Sleazy Snot Comics)

<https://www.loc.gov/item/2011647561/> (The Boondocks)

VI. Assessment:

- Students will be assessed by an art rubric (See Appendix B).

Content Objectives

The content objectives for the curriculum unit will follow along the guidelines of the K-12 Visual Arts core curriculum standards outlined by the School District of Philadelphia as well as the Pennsylvania Department of Education core standards for ELA (English Language Arts).

The K-12 Visual Arts core curriculum can be access at: <https://www.philasd.org/arts/wp-content/uploads/sites/144/2018/12/ART-Curriculum-17.pdf>.

The K-5 ELA Core Standards for the Pennsylvania Department of Education can be accessed at:
<http://static.pdesas.org/content/documents/PA%20Core%20Standards%20ELA%20PreK-5%20March%202014.pdf>.

The 6-12 ELA Core Standards for the Pennsylvania Department of Education can be accessed at:
<http://static.pdesas.org/content/documents/PA%20Core%20Standards%20ELA%206-12%20March%202014.pdf>.

The Elements of Poetry power point presentation can be accessed at:

https://cc.philasd.org/service/home/~/?auth=co&loc=en_US&id=53108&part=2&view=html

The graphic organizers will be able to be accessed through these various links:

<https://www.dailyteachingtools.com/images/xIamPoem.jpg.pagespeed.ic.sfxmqnWGek.jpg>

https://shop.scholastic.com/content/dam/scholastic/tso/products/25/9780545014625/9780545014625_si01_588x745.jpg

http://www.newdesignfile.com/postpic/2013/12/bubble-web-graphic-organizer_142624.jpg

<https://www.dailyteachingtools.com/images/xWritingOrganizeWeb.jpg.pagespeed.ic.kpxXRD0p5s.jpg>

<http://networkuk.net/wp-content/uploads/00014h-i-am-from-poem-template-5.jpeg>

<https://i.pinimg.com/736x/23/12/5d/23125de418f70277cfa68dec9b93499e.jpg>

The lyrics for “Secret Wars” by The Last Emperor can be accessed by the following link:

<http://www.songlyrics.com/the-last-emperor/secret-wars-part-1-original-lyrics/>

The poem “My Puppy Punched Me in the Eye” by Kenn Nesbitt can be accessed here:

<https://www.poetry4kids.com/download/AlliterationAndAssonance.pdf>

Jayne Cortez’s poem “He Got She Got” can be accessed at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6h0qYZTXaiI>

The YouTube video on alliteration and assonance can be accessed at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yf3UWYGIVic>

How to make an 8 page book can accessed at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=21qi9ZcQVto>

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Appendix A

Creative Writing Rubric

Outcome	1	2	3	4
Students writing will be well organized	Incoherent and incomplete. Student did not write enough to judge.	Writing is awkward, uneven and weakly unified.	Response is strong. Ideas are starting to develop and writing begins to become structured.	The work functions well as a whole. The piece flows and has a sense of purpose.
Students will use appropriate voice and tone in writing	The piece has mechanical errors and the tone is basic.	The tone of the work is okay, but it is highly formal or informal.	The speaker's voice fades in and out and the piece is very passive.	The speaker's voice is confident, appropriate and is always engaging.
Students will demonstrate original, creative writing	Lack of motivation and poor understanding of assignment. Did not attempt to use words that rhyme. Cursory response.	Work is predictable and clichéd.	Work makes attempts of using alliteration, allegory and assonance in writing. Work begins to develop strong character.	Excellence use of imagery and rhyming techniques. Work is very detailed and descriptive.

Appendix B

Comic Book Rubric

Outcome	1	2	3	4
Elements of Design	The students did the minimum or the artwork was never completed.	The student did the work in a satisfactory manner.	The artwork shows that the student applied the art principles discussed in the class adequately.	The artwork shows that the student applied the art principles discussed in the class in a unique manner.
Creativity	The piece shows poor craftsmanship or little to no evidence of original thought.	The student's work lacks sincere originality or showed average craftsmanship.	The student's work demonstrated originality or shows above average craftsmanship.	The student's work is outstanding and demonstrates a unique level of originality.
Effort	The student did not finish the work in a satisfactory manner.	The student finished the project, but it lacks finishing touches or could be improved upon with more effort.	The student completed the project in an above average manner, yet more could have been done.	The student gave an effort far beyond the requirements of the project.

Appendix C

**Using Words that Rhyme
T-Chart**

Words	Words That Rhyme

Appendix D

Where I am From

I am from cultural boroughs known as the five deadly venoms that dwell in the rotten apple

Although the apple is rotten, I wouldn't want to be from any other place in the world

I am from the elegance of mahogany brown also known as the Boogie Down

I am from hangin out on the corners

Chasing girls who didn't love me

And dodging bullets that didn't have my name on them

I am from educational institutions where I felt powerless

Surrounded by adults that didn't look like me

I am from the era of Grandmaster Flash, The Cold Crush Brothers, and The Treacherous 3

This the era that raised me

And helped me to identify who I was in this world

I am from a place where I bonded with future lawyers and criminals

As I sat in homeroom class

I am from busy sidewalks

Incredible creativity

Rumbling subway systems

And 15 cent now-and-later candy

I am from the parks where we played basketball under the canopy of heaven

Until it got dark, or arguments couldn't be resolved

I am from the spot where adolescents played kick-the-can

Run catch and kiss

Spin the bottle

And out-maneuvered 2 to 3 year stretches in juvenile detention centers

I am from abandon tenement buildings

1980s crack fever

And functional addicts who loved their families

I am from a place inhabited by negotiable merchants

Aerosol terrorists

Latin B-Boys

And suede Pumas with the fat laces

Where I am from (pause)

Is the imaginative vortex that encapsulates how one approaches life

But, it is also where you're from as well