Borders and Doorways:

Using Poetry of Constraint to Explore Boundaries and Possibilities

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Content Objectives

I teach at a comprehensive neighborhood middle school (6-8) in northeast Philadelphia, PA, an area of the city that for many years could be characterized primarily as a middle/working-class white community. In the past decades, the demographics have shifted, as middle class families have left for suburbs and new immigrants and longtime Black/Latinx Philadelphia residents have moved into the area. About half of the students in my English and Social Studies classrooms are immigrants or the children of immigrants, and their families come from all over the world - over thirty languages are spoken in my school. Other families have been in the area for generations, and others still cannot trace their heritage, for it has been blurred, fractured, erased.

I teach 8th-Grade English and United States history to some children who know more about Revolutionary War battles than I do, and to other children who have been in the country for less than two weeks. Some of my students read at a 12th grade reading level, and others are learning English for the first time (though they may speak multiple other languages). The diverse forms of knowledge and perspectives these students bring are the strongest assets to our community and allow for the greatest learning opportunities. At the same time, this diversity means that my students share no single narrative of United States history (however one-sided) or what it means to be an American. In making curricular and pedagogical choices, I cannot assume certain familiarity or background, and must instead determine what to prioritize and how I want my classes to interact with language, with history, and with their developing sense of identity in the world. In determining my curriculum, this of course poses challenges: How can I provide learning experiences that are rigorous but achievable to all? Do I choose texts based on my more advanced readers, and then spend my time scaffolding and working with the students who struggle? Do I follow suggested district learning plans that have been laid out by specialists who may or may not be familiar with the complexities of my classroom? Do I focus on highly-engaging, accessible texts that get students excited to read? It it better that students can identify literary devices, or practice deeper analysis? How can I help students develop the tools to succeed academically, while also cultivating the strategies to prepare them for the "real world?" Often it seems that no matter what approach I take, I am making trade-offs that I am not comfortable making.

Part of the impetus behind taking this poetry-focused seminar was that I *have* witnessed the power of poetry to engage and activate students in ways that prose did not. Many students who often expressed frustration over the demands of fiction or informational texts seem attracted to the creative potential associated with poetry, both in writing and analyzing poetry. Notably, many English Language Learners and those students identified by the school as "focus students" (students who perform low on standardized district and state exams) enthusiastically offered interpretations and demonstrated self-direction in delving into the texts and crafting their own. From an instructional perspective, poetry offers an opportunity to draw in students who may not yet be able to grapple with a novel or may not see the relevance of trudging through the Victorian vocabulary of a short story. Moreover, poems uniquely lend themselves to differentiation, as there is no single "correct" theme or plot diagram to identify. Some students may hone in on a specific symbol, while others may find meaning in sound devices or punctuation.

Moreover, the genre of poetry lends itself powerfully to exploring the multiple borders and crossings that shape my students lives. So many of my students move through multiple cultures and languages during the course of a day, code-switching unthinkingly, putting aside one part of their identity and taking up another. Even those students born and raised in Philadelphia navigate the nuances of school, home, neighborhood, and adolescent culture, performing various roles as they are still determining for themselves who they want to be. Poetry, in simultaneously maintaining its rules and constraints alongside its openness to creativity and freedom, mirrors this continual process of modifying and adapting, all while maintaining what makes one unique.

This seminar has significantly emphasized poetry that "does what it's saying:" poetry whose form mirrors or deepens its content. In developing a unit that explores the boundaries and crossings (geographic, socio-economic, linguistic, cultural) students encounter each day, I hope to utilize poems that both employ and defy constraints, revealing the possibilities for creativity and resistance even within the borders that structure our lives and direct our paths. Recognizing that many students grapple with these boundaries, abstract and literal, I hope to develop a curriculum that not only exposes them to poems that reflect these struggles, but also empowers them to write their own poetry tackling these complex crossings.

Specific Learning Objectives

Parts A, B, and C below detail the specific learning goals for the unit.

Part A - Reading & Discussion
- Students will identify various literary techniques and types of figurative language, as well as analyze why a writer employed these devices.

- Students will identify different forms and constraints of poetry and analyze the author's purpose in using these forms and restrictions.
- Students will analyze how a writer's form can connect to the subject or ideas of their poem - how a poem can "do what it's saying."
- Students will "jigsaw" a poem:
    1. Teacher or students leader will split the poem into individual words/short phrases and assign these sections to students or pairs.
    2. Students, without research or preparation time, will be responsible for explaining to the group their unique interpretation of just their assigned section, including possible meanings, interpretations, connotations, and associations.
    3. The whole group collaboratively synthesizes each students' interpretation into a cumulative interpretation of the poem.
- Students will lead small-group (4-6 students) discussions of teacher-chosen poems, using the jigsaw strategy and practicing respectful and professional discussion norms.
- With advanced preparation, students will lead small-group discussions of poems of their own choosing, demonstrating collaboration skills and their understanding of literary techniques, as well as their unique interpretations and meaning-making.
- After viewing video-recorded modeled discussions on a poem, students will choose a poem and film themselves discussing this poem (as a discussion-based assessment).

Part B - Participation, Construction, and Writing
- Students will be able to identify different formal constraints, both traditional and modern.
- Using model texts, students will be able to practice a range of techniques and constraints themselves (teachers may choose a selection). Some of these techniques are tactile, or involve students physically altering poems, while some can be approached using online generators, depending on internet accessibility or teacher preference.
    - n+7 procedure: replacing each noun in a pre-existing text with the seventh one following it in a dictionary
    - Blackout poetry: the poet takes a found document, traditionally a newspaper, and crosses out a majority of the existing text, leaving visible only the words that comprise a new poem, thereby revealing an new work of literature constructed from an existing one
    - Mesostic or diastic poetry: similar to acrostic poetry; poems are arranged so that a vertical phrase intersects lines of horizontal text. The vertical phrase intersects somewhere in the middle of the line, as opposed to the beginning of each line as in acrostic poetry.

- ○ Translation: students will "translate" poems or source texts from another language (that they do not know) into English based on how the poem *sounds*. Instead of focusing on what the words way mean, students are "translating" based on the types of emotions or associations they from the aural experience of the poem.
  - ○ Additionally, the teacher may choose a selection from Bernadette Mayer's Writing Experiments: a comprehensive list of ideas and prompts for journals and poetry experiments.
- Students will revise their drafts derived from the techniques and procedures above and produce a writing portfolio.
- Students will write an explanation of how the forms of each of their poems contribute to the meaning or effects of their poem, or they will analyze their experience of using certain experimental techniques.
- Students will share their portfolios in small groups and discuss each other's poems using the "jigsaw" discussion model.

Part C - Language and Multivocality
- Students will interrogate how language is a source of power and exclusion as well as possibility and potential.
- Students will analyze how poetry can reflect, question, and play with the "rules" of language.
- Students will explore how manipulating language can be a form of resistance.
- Students will question what it means to be "original" when it comes to language and form.
- Students will determine the role of language(s) in their own lives, and explore their own active role in constructing meaning through language.

Teaching Strategies

In this unit, I aim for two interlinking goals. The more "abstract" objective is to develop an understanding of the large and small scale borders and boundaries that students operate within and cross as they move through their lives. Students will gain awareness of their shared and different experiences of negotiating the various cultures, languages, spaces, and mindsets that they must exist within, as well as how they carve out their own, inviolable sense of self despite these many limits and demands. In embracing, rather than attempting to resolve the uncertainty and multivocality of this unit's poems, students will be able to develop empathy for the experience of uncertainty, discomfort, and exclusion that language creates for so many.

The more measurable goal is to increase engagement in the exploration of poetry through the analysis and writing of poems of "constraint:" poems that have determined requirements and limits - poems whose form reflect, manipulate, and play with the complex boundaries that we encounter each day. They will also explore translation (even

those who do not speak another language) and how the act of translating is about both precision and innovation. Students will learn about the requirements of certain forms, analyze the figurative language and poetic devices of these poems, and analyze how the form fits the content, as well as eventually write their own poems within certain forms or restraint. As students explore different forms, they will determine the significance of each form in reflecting its content, which supports Common Core Standard *CC.1.3.8.E Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.*

One process that has been a fundamental method of the TIP seminar has been a specific discussion format. This involves the sequence of reading a poem, viewing a video of a discussion of the poem, and then discussing the poem ourselves in seminar. This process models for us (and can model for the students) the norms and expectations of analyzing a poem, and also shows us how no two discussions about a poem are alike. There is no singular meaning to decipher from a poem, but rather meaning is constructed through a collaborative and subjunctive process. While in seminar, the poem is broken apart and we as individuals or pairs are assigned a word or phrase of a poem. Without any advanced preparation, participants are tasked with explaining their word or phrase based on personal understandings or associations with the selection, as well as any prior knowledge of literary devices, etc. After each person is invited to share their response to their selection, we as a class synthesize those possible meanings into our understanding of the entire poem. This requires students to engage deeply with specifics of the text, which supports Common Core Standard *CC.1.3.8.B Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly, as well as inferences, conclusions, and/or generalizations drawn from the text* as well as *CC.1.3.8.F Analyze the influence of the words and phrases in a text including figurative and connotative meanings; and how they shape meaning and tone.*

This process combines a reader response interpretation with a less intimidating yet perhaps more thorough application of content area skills. Instead of searching for all figurative language in the poem, a student may be assigned one metaphor. However, in focusing their attention only on that metaphor, students will have more space to examine its multiple possible meanings and analyze its literary purpose with more depth. Moreover, they are able to bring their own subjective interpretations into the discussion, which is particularly valuable considering that students may have a range of personal connections to the content of each poem. When the intent is not to "correctly" figure out the puzzle of language but to approach poetry as a possibility, students can take more ownership over the direction of our shared exploration.

Although this type of discussion-based, in-depth textual analysis is particularly well-suited to poetry because of its more manageable length, the skills and awareness students will develop in this practice have wider application. As students become comfortable leading their own discussions around a text, we move from a less teacher-

driven questioning model to a sense of student ownership around the content as well as its significance. Students are making meaning out of literature based on their own subjective interpretations as well as the input from others. As students practice synthesizing their understandings of complex content with others, they construct meaning out of the literature, instead of trying to deduce what the author or the teacher intends them to discover. Students develop a greater understanding of the many different backgrounds and current crossings students make, which promotes empathy without spotlighting individuals.

Striving toward the final project of a student-written portfolio of poems, I aim to expose students to a number of various forms and styles of poetry in order to provide numerous models. While we will read poems that loosely relate to the themes of immigration, borders, crossings, and translation, we will also pay attention to form. Throughout the unit, we will focus on various "constraints:" formal limits that writers have ascribed to for a range of reasons. In exploring the ways in which these poets have conformed to, played with, and deliberately violated these constraints, students will explore the potential for creativity within the borders that we write and live within. Furthermore, students will be able to examine how poetry serves as a method for questioning language and its associated power and gate-keeping. By focusing on poetry that manipulates syntax and form and at times seems indecipherable, students will be called upon to interrogate the function of language, its possibilities for participation and exclusion.

With the goal of developing a writing portfolio, writing should be a part of the unit from the beginning. Instead of saving the writing for a summative assessment after they have read and analyzed a selection of poems, students will write regularly as they are exposed to different forms and techniques. For example, after reading a poem in which the poet rewrites the United States Pledge of Allegiance using similar-sounding words in place of the actual ones, students will have to analyze the effect of this poem, and also write their own mondegreen poems based on a well-known text.

One strategy I will utilize to encourage student writing is to expand the scope of their writing process to include experimental and procedural poetic forms. Drawing from poets encountered in seminar such as Rosmarie Waldrop and Erica Baum, students will create poems out of preexisting texts by following a series of steps (more details in Classroom Activities). This will allow us to explore both the random senselessness of certain rules and regulations as they pertain to language, as well as the creative potential we can generate within these constraints. This reflects the objective of interrogating how the regime of language can be at once limiting and a space for originality and resistance.

Classroom Activities

Provided is a daily overview for a 4-week unit for an 8th grade mixed-level ELA class with 90 minute block periods. All activities can be modified to challenge students or provide additional supports. Additionally, two two detailed lesson plans are highlighted.

Day 1 - Introduction: What separates poetry and prose?; students construct definitions for poetry; whip-around for students responses/attitudes toward poetry.

Day 2 - Directly teach and model the discussion framework for breaking apart poems and assigning students different parts to analyze and interpret. As a class, view an example analysis of a poem on the ModPo website. Discuss what students notice about this type of discussion, what makes it challenging, productive, etc.

Day 3 - As a whole class, read excerpt from Richard Hugo's "The Triggering Town" and analyze how poetry shifts the reader's relationship to words and form. Pair with excerpt from Nate Marshall's "A Code Switch Memoir" and discuss how form can used both to reinforce existing structures of power but also to subvert and assert oneself creatively, particularly for those identifying with communities for whom language has been used as an excluder or oppressor. Introduce the centrality of form to the unit - emphasizing that in our unit's readings, the poem's form "does" what the poem is "saying."

Days 4-7 - Conventional Forms made Unconventional

Day 4: Read Alicia Ostriker's "Ghazal: America the Beautiful" and practice the discussion framework. Analyze the literary devices and their impact, but focus particularly on form and how it is be used to reflect the content or the meanings of the poem. Discuss Ostriker's message and how the form contributes to this message.

Day 5: Read Claude McKay's "If We Must Die" and discuss context and the resistance embedded within the poem. Again, interrogate how form is being used to "do" what the poem is saying and why McKay chose a sonnet form.

Day 6: Read and discuss Albert Rios' "The Border: A Double Sonnet," analyzing the form and techniques Rios uses, and particularly paying attention to how titling the poem a sonnet sets up expectations for content as well as form. Compare Ostriker, Rios and McKay's poems, discussing what messages they may have about American society and how their forms contribute to these messages.

Day 7: Formative Assessment: Students will write a short essay (can be 1-5 paragraphs depending on student writing skills) examining *one* of these poems, analyzing the connection between the form and the meaning. They must explain how the poem "does" what its saying, as well as what the messages of the poems may be. Students should use academic content-specific vocabulary (particularly pertaining to figurative language and poetic devices).

Day 8-12: Unoriginality & The Use of Preexisting Texts

Day 8: Students will read Rosmarie Waldrop's "Shorter American Memory of the Declaration of Independence" and discuss the n+7 technique. Students will analyze how the form, while "restricted," nonetheless can produce new meanings. Students will choose a historical or "important" document and perform their own n+7 experiments to create new poems. In small groups, students will share and discuss meanings that emerge.

Days 9-10: Introduce students to two techniques that enable them to modify existing texts to create new literature: Blackout poetry and Erica Baum's technique of "dog-earing" - neatly folding the corners of pages - in order to create new rectangular sections of words: new poems. Students will complete either their own blackout poem using a pre-existing text, or they will systematically fold pages of provided text in order to create and document new poems. In small groups, students will share and discuss meanings that emerge.

Day 11: Students will explore the mesostic form, poems arranged so that a chosen vertical phrase intersects lines of horizontal text. Students will thoughtfully choose their own source texts and vertical phrase and create their own mesostic poems.

Day 12: As a class, we will reflect on how these poetic techniques complicate ideas of originality and author's purpose in poetry. In small groups, students will choose one of techniques we have explored in the unit that they would like to discuss further and select an undiscussed poem that uses their chosen technique.

Day 13: In small, student-led groups, students will discuss a poem or set of poems that they have chosen from the options. The teacher will circulate and sit in on each discussion group, evaluating their success in following discussion norms and collaboratively building their interpretation. Students will each have assigned roles within the groups (discussion leader, writer, manager, and reader - more information in appendix) that they must also fulfill.

Day 14-17: Sound & Translation

Days 14-15: **See Lesson Plan Below** - Students will read the "Pledge of Allegiance" as well as a selection from Mike Magee's "Pledge," examining the effect of repetition, recitation, and memory. With Magee's rewriting of the pledge, students will explore the importance of how words *sound*, and how that connects to the meaning they construct.

Day 16: Students will read Richard Blanco's "Translation for Mamá" and in small groups students will conduct discussion of how the formal aspects and use of Spanish affects the meaning of the poem.

Day 17: **See Lesson Plan Below** - Students will each "translate" poems or source texts from another language (that they do not know) into English based on how the poem or the words sounds. Instead of focusing on what the words may truly mean, students are "translating" based on the types of emotions or associations they from the aural experience of the poem. Students will then read/preview Caroline Bergvall's "Via: 48 Dante Variations," discussing the possibilities of translation and analyzing whether there can truly be a "correct" translation.

Day 18-20: Portfolio & Discussion Recording

1. Day 18-19: During these days, students will split their time.
   a. Students will revise the poetic experiments they have been working on and develop their portfolio (must contain at least 3 poems as well as a reflection on form in each poem).
   b. Student groups will select a poem to discuss for a video recording, using the models on the ModPo course website as examples. Students will each have determined roles and will preview the poems and gather information prior to recording their discussion.
2. Day 20: Students will have the opportunity to present, share, or perform their own poetry for the class. In small groups, students will be able to perform more in-depth discussions of each other's poems.

English Language Arts, 8th Grade   Two 90 minute Blocks

OVERVIEW/ RATIONALE
This two-day lesson follows the section of the unit questioning originality and begins an exploration of the role sound plays in producing meaning or effect in poetry. This lesson allows students to interrogate the significance of certain words and repeated texts. They will further practice discussion skills and experimenting with form - only now the constraint is aural.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS
What is the role of sound in producing meaning and effect?
What is the effect of repetition and memorization?
What does it mean to be an American?

GOALS/OBJECTIVES
SWBAT identify and analyze the effects of sound and the aural experience of language.
SWBAT define line breaks/stanzas and identify how line breaks and stanzas affect or develop the meaning of a poem.
SWBAT define repetition and analyze its effect on readers and listeners.

STANDARDS
CC.1.3.8.F - Analyze the influence of the words and phrases in a text including figurative and connotative meanings; and how they shape meaning and tone.

CC.1.3.8.B - Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly, as well as inferences, conclusions, and/or generalizations drawn from the text.

MATERIALS
-Mike Magee, "Pledge"excerpt handouts   -student guided notes
-copies of the "Pledge of Allegiance"   -slides presentation
-projector/Smartboard access

PROCEDURES - Day One

   OPENER (15 min): Do Now: Students will be given a paper with "The Pledge of Allegiance" written with no line breaks or punctuation. In pairs, students will be instructed to:
   1) Add punctuation to the pledge where they think it belongs.
   2) Cut the paper and arrange the pledge where they think there should be breaks.
Once students have finished, they will be invited to share and discuss similarities and differences (most will likely be similar). The teacher will inquire about why students made the choices they did and how they knew to make these choices (discuss repetition/memorization). Project a version very different than the original breaks and punctuation. Students will discuss how this would change how they read aloud the poem or understood its meaning.

   BODY OF THE LESSON
(5 min.) Students will complete guided notes on "line break" and "stanza." Discuss reasons poets include these (emphasize rhyme, form, breath, pause, emphasis).
(30 min.) Perform a close read of "The Pledge of Allegiance," underlining words that students are unfamiliar with and discussing possible meanings. Using the discussion-model learned in the TIP seminar, assign students short words or phrases of the pledge to explain, bringing their own subjective interpretation to the pledge. For unknown words, students should come up with meanings based on context/sound. Discuss line breaks/stanzas symbolism of the flag, "under God" and "freedom and liberty for all." In all likelihood, students will pose questions/challenges to these parts.
(15 min.) Have students think-pair-share in response to these questions, then share out.
   -Why was it strange to analyze the "Pledge of Allegiance" as a poem?
   -Did discussing the meaning change your interpretation of the pledge or consider its meaning differently?
   -Why do *you* recite the pledge? How will this discussion affect your participation in reciting the pledge?
(10 min.) Students are instructed to take a pen and circle the two most important words/short phrases of the pledge that convey the main idea that *they* can pledge to. Whip-around to share their responses. Students will make observations about popular choices and

   CLOSURE
(15 min.) Exit ticket: Students will independently respond to the prompt: If you were going to edit or add one line to the "Pledge of Allegiance," what would it be? Explain why you would make this change. Why is it important to you that Americans pledge to this?

PROCEDURES - Day Two

OPENER   (15 min): Do Now: Students will be randomly given different selections from Magee's "Pledge" to read aloud to the class. After listening to a few, students will respond to the prompt: What is your reaction to these poems? How would you describe the poet's tone? What do you think the poet's message is about the pledge and those who recite it?

BODY OF THE LESSON

(10 min.) Small Group Brainstorm: Students will come up with a list of things commonly recited but rarely absorbed (example: airplane safety warnings, radio station introductions, prescription warnings on commercials). Particularly they can focus on everday texts that contain words that they may not understand, but can recall due to the sheer number of times they have heard them repeated. They could also choose a well-known historical text, nursery rhyme, etc.

(40 min): In pairs, students will take a pre-existing text from the brainstormed list and rewrite it, using Magee's "Pledge" as a model. Students will swap out words with homophones, making sure to maintain the sound patterns of their new poem with the original text. Students will create at least two new "versions" of the original text.

(10 min): Share out in small groups, giving feedback on the revisions and reactions to the new possible meanings.

(15 min): Independent reflection: Students will independently answer the following question: Why did you choose your original text? What changes did you make and how did you decide what words to replace? How does the meaning of your text change with your new version? How does this change the meaning of the text?

ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION
- Cold-calling students: to share interpretations and reactions, particularly after I have already spoken with them independently
- Observation: to monitor whether students are actively involved, participating verbally or in written form
- Small-group focused questioning: teacher circulates and sits in with pairs, asking questions to guide their writing
- Student pair-share/turn and talk: Teacher can listen for how students understand the objective, their interpretations, their ability to cooperate, and whether they are able to identify the poet's purposes.
- Poems & Independent student reflection: Teacher will read through the poems the students created and their reflections in order to determine whether students understood the task, as well as what the effect of their revisions was on the poems.

English Language Arts, 8th Grade   One 90 minute Block

OVERVIEW/ RATIONALE

This lesson occurs at the end of the section of the unit devoted to sound and translation. This lesson allows students to further explore the ways in which the way language sounds impacts its effect or meaning. Moreover, students grapple with the limits and possibility inherent in translation - and analyze how it is both a procedure and an art.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

What barriers does language produce and how can these be crossed?
What is translation?
Is translation art or procedure?
What is the role of sound in producing meaning and effect?

GOALS/OBJECTIVES

SWBAT identify and analyze the effects of sound and the aural experience of language.
SWBAT define translation and analyze its multivocal possibilities.
SWBAT analyze how translation is both a constraint and a space of potential creativity.

STANDARDS

CC.1.3.8.F - Analyze the influence of the words and phrases in a text including figurative and connotative meanings; and how they shape meaning and tone.
CC.1.3.8.B - Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly, as well as inferences, conclusions, and/or generalizations drawn from the text.

MATERIALS

-copies of Caroline Bergvall's "Via: 48 Dante Variations"   -student guided notes
-copies of source poems in other languages   -laptop access
-slips of paper with "untranslatable" words   -projector/Smartboard access

PROCEDURES

OPENER

(15 min): Do Now: Distribute slips of paper with famously "untranslatable" poems on them to each table. Students will come up with a definition for each word based on the way it sounds. As a whole class, discuss how students determined their definitions. Explain that each is considered "untranslatable" and ask what students think this means. Provide approximate translations and introduce essential questions.

BODY OF THE LESSON

(10 min.) Students quick-write responding to the prompt: When writers translate, do they create an original or unoriginal piece of work? Students must explain their answers. Pair-share responses and discuss as a class.

(35 min.) Students will each be given a poem in a language they do not know (teachers should have 3-4 short poems in different languages depending on their population) and be tasked with translating it based on how the words sound, what type of feeling they generate. When students are finished, they will share in their groups. Then, students will be given *two* different copies of the "correct" translations and compare the differences between their own translations as well as the distinctions in the different versions. Record observations in a graphic organizer.

(20 min.) As a whole class, read a part of Caroline Bergvall's "Via: 48 Dante Variations." Students will discuss why there are so many translations of the poem, as well as what each may reveal. Discuss as well whether Bergvall's poem can be considered an original piece of literature, and what may or may not make it so.

CLOSURE

(10 min.) Exit ticket: Students will respond to the question "Can a translation ever truly be correct? What can we learn about the translators or their context by examining different translations of the same source texts?"

ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION

- Cold-calling students: to share interpretations and reactions, particularly after I have already spoken with them independently.
- Observation: to monitor whether students are actively involved, participating verbally or in written form (particularly during quick-writes or exit ticket)
- Small-group focused questioning: teacher circulates and sits in with individuals, asking questions to guide their writing
- Student pair-share/turn and talk: Teacher can listen for how students understand the objective, their interpretations, their ability to cooperate, and whether they are able to identify the poet's purposes.
- Poems & Independent student reflection: Teacher will read through the poems the students created and their reflections in order to determine whether students understood the task, as well as what the effect of their revisions was on the poems.

Resources

This list includes texts for educators which provide methods, activity ideas, and classroom procedures to implement in order to develop the desired reading/writing environment and engagement.

Educator Reading List

Appleman, Deborah. *Critical Encounters in Secondary English : Teaching Literary Theory to Adolescents*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2015. Print.
This resource provides strategies for engaging students in approaching literature critically, particularly in terms of gender, race, and class. Moreover, Appleman shares

useful techniques for engaging students in reading and discussing both critical and literary theory.

Boyd, Ashley S. *Social Justice Literacies in the English Classroom: Teaching Practice in Action*. Teachers College Press, 2017.
Boyd's text offers frameworks for developing critical readers, as well as readers who are equipped to engage with critical texts (such as some of the poems in this unit).

Christensen, Linda. *Reading, Writing, and Rising up: Teaching about Social Justice and the Power of the Written Word*. Rethinking Schools, 2017.
This resource provides strategies for encouraging students to think about the social justice implications of literature, as well as their own role in creating meaning. Particularly this may be useful when examining the poems that offer a critique of certain aspects of society through their form.

Himmele, Pérsida, and William Himmele. *Total Participation Techniques: Making Every Student an Active Learner.* Alexandria, Va: ASCD, 2011. Print.
This useful guidebook offers a range of techniques to engage students in the classroom through many different strategies attuned to their learning styles. These strategies are adaptable to most classrooms and helpful in boosting participation in class activities.

Student Reading List
 These poems are selected thematically as they encounter broadly the ideas of borders and crossings, both formally and in subject matter. They vary in form, time period, and poetic movements, but all can be and during this unit are read in dialogue with each other. As we read each, students will be tasked with determining and analyzing the poets' use of figurative language and literary devices. Many texts will also serve as model poems as well, generating ideas for students' own portfolios.

Poems/Texts involving formal constraints, procedures or "translations":

Baum, Erica, et al. *Dog Ear*. Ugly Duckling Presse, 2016.
This book provides visual examples of a type of formal constraint Baum used involving folding pages of preexisting text to generate new literature.

Bergvall, Caroline. *Fig: Goan Atom 2*. "Via: 48 Dante Variations". Salt, 2005.
This poem indexes translations of Dante and allows for a student discussion of originality in its relation to translation.

Blanco, Richard. "Translation for Mamá." Poets.org, Academy of American Poets, 1968, www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/translation-mamá.
This bilingual poem allows students to analyze the use of multiple languages in poetry, and how language and translation involves both procedure and innovation.

Magee, Michael. *Morning Constitutional*. Handwritten Press/Spencer Books, 2001.
Students will a selection of these short poems, written to *sound* like the words in the
"Pledge of Allegiance" in order to explore the effects of sound and repetition.

Mayer, Bernadette. "Bernadette Mayer's List of Journal Ideas:" *CPCW: The Center for
Programs in Contemporary Writing*, www.writing.upenn.edu/library/Mayer-
Bernadette_Experiments.html.
This exhaustive list serves as rich resource of prompts and ideas to get students creatively
writing. Educators may assign certain prompts or allow students to choose. Educators
may also analyze this list as a poem itself.

McKay, Claude. "If We Must Die." *Poetry Foundation*, Poetry Foundation,
www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44694/if-we-must-die.
This sonnet serves as an example of a poem that uses form to "do what it is saying."
McKay uses a traditional, historically elite form while still communicating a message of
resistance to the status quo of his time. Pair with Ostriker or Ríos for comparison.

Waldrop, Rosmarie. *Shorter American Memory*. Paradigm Press, 1988.
This poem is an example of the n+7 procedure, using the Declaration of Independence as
its source text. This text allows for a discussion of the unintentional meanings that
procedural poetry like this may produce.
Ostriker, Alicia. "Ghazal: America the Beautiful." Poets.org, Academy of American
Poets, 2013, www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/ghazal-america-beautiful.
Ostriker's poem is an example of a ghazal, a traditional form whose formal limits
contribute to the meaning derived from the poem. Pair this ghazal with Ríos or McKay
for comparison.

Ríos, Alberto. "The Border: A Double Sonnet." Poets.org, Academy of American Poets,
2015, www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/border-double-sonnet.
Although Ríos titles this poem as a sonnet, he calls attention to the form by not following
the "rules." Pair with Ostriker or McKay for comparison.

Literary Criticism:

Hugo, Richard. *The Triggering Town: Lectures and Essays on Poetry and Writing*. "The
Triggering Town." W.W. Norton, 2010.
This essay distinguishes poetry from prose by focusing on form. You may choose to
begin the unit with a discussion of how Hugo situates the role of form.

Marshall, Nate. "A Code Switch Memoir by Nate Marshall." *Poetry Foundation*, Poetry
Foundation, 9 Oct. 2013, www.poetryfoundation.org/harriet/2013/10/a-code-switch-
memoir.

Marshall's essay provides an connection between code-switching, in which people speak or communicate differently in different contexts, and the possibilities of formal poetry.

Online poetry resources:
- To create diastic poetry: http://www.eddeaddad.net/ediastic/
- To create n+7 poetry: http://www.spoonbill.org/n+7/
- To create blackout poetry online: https://blackoutpoetry.glitch.me/

Other Materials:
- colored pencils
- Conversation Starters (cards)
- model recordings
- laptops
- student guided notes/worksheets
- projector/smartboard access

Appendix

This unit fulfills Pennsylvania/National Common Core standards in multiple domains.

Key Ideas and Details:
Text Analysis: These standards will be fulfilled by students citing the specific words/phrases that support their analysis of the poem.
PA: CC.1.3.8.B
Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly, as well as inferences, conclusions, and/or generalizations drawn from the text.
National:RL.8.1
Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Theme: These standards require students to identify a central idea of poem and how it is developed throughout the text.
PA: CC.1.3.8.A
Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.
National: RL.8.2
Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.

Craft and Structure:

Vocabulary: These standards align to students analyzing word choice and its impact on meaning and tone.
CC.1.3.8.F
Analyze the influence of the words and phrases in a text including figurative and connotative meanings; and how they shape meaning and tone.
RL.8.4
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

Writing:

Response to Literature: Students will perform a range of formative assessments requiring them to analyze in paragraphs, stop-and-jots, quick-writes, etc.
CC.1.4.8.S Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research, applying grade -level reading standards for literature and literary non-fiction.
W.8.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Range of Writing: Students will perform a variety of creative and argumentative writing activities: brainstorms, stop-and-jots, argumentative writing, quick-writes, poetic procedures and experiments, etc.
CC.1.4.8.X Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline -specific tasks, purposes and audiences.
W.8.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline- specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Speaking and Listening

Comprehension and Collaboration: Students will fulfill these standards through daily discussions of poems and supplementary texts, as well as their final assessment video-recording of a discussion.
CC.1.5.8.A Collaborative Discussion: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions, on grade level topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

SL.8.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.