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## Problem-based learning: meeting the common core state standards for grade 9/10 english language arts

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PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING: MEETING THE COMMON CORE STATE  
STANDARDS FOR GRADE 9/10 ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the Honors in Major Program in Education  
in the College of Education  
and in the Burnett Honors College  
at the University of Central Florida  
Orlando, Florida

Spring Term 2013

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this project design Problem- Based Learning (PBL) Units that would meet the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for a 9/10 grade English Language Arts (ELA) classroom. The CCSS, newly adopted into Florida public schools, were created to provide students with the skills necessary to be successful in both higher education and ultimately, the global economy. PBL has been practiced in some of the country's leading medical schools for decades, and recently, has begun to play a leading role in designing math and science curricula. Until now, few attempts have been made incorporating the structures of Problem- Based Learning into the secondary English Language Arts classroom.

My intention in tapping PBL was to utilize a tool that would foster critical thinking skills and create real world relevance in the curriculum for my future ELA students. With the ever increasing shift into a more inquiry- based teaching approach in today's schools, these units will not only meet the CCSS, but they will provide real world application in both research and collaborative learning.

PBL utilizes an "ill-structured scenario" that provides the student with a role that gives them ownership into solving a problem (Lambros, 2004). In order to create these scenarios, I examined the 9/10 Grade exemplars offered throughout the CCSS. I then used the CCSS to identify which standards would be met by each unit. I also evaluated the Brevard County District calendar to identify the constraints on time that a teacher might typically encounter in the classroom.

The result is four PBL units that meet the CCSS for Grade 9/10 English Language Arts. I developed these units with the idea that they would be the main methods of instruction in an ELA classroom and therefore provided time frames for each unit to be completed. The timeframes account for research, project completion and presentation. Each of these four units use the exemplar texts outlined by CCSS and highlight four different genres in Literature: Fiction, Nonfiction, Poetry, and Drama.

## **Dedications**

I would like to dedicate this paper to my boys Mason, Alexander, Morgan, Christopher, and my future students. It is my deepest desire that you find something that you truly love. Let it ignite the fire in your heart and drive the pursuit of your dreams. I hope you know that every one of you has the potential to be anything and do anything you want, even when you think the odds are against you. Life is full of choices and obstacles; your job in life is to use your heart and brain to achieve that which you desire most.

## **Acknowledgements**

To my Thesis Committee, Dr. Roberts, Dr. Kaplan, and Dr. Hewitt; thank you from the bottom of my heart for cheering me on. I learned so much from all of the valuable advice and input you gave me over the course of this project. I will always be grateful for your support throughout this process.

To my UCF friends, Paulette, Sarah, Michaela, Megan, and Karla; thank you for being the sounding board for my insanity. You listened, offered help, and shared opinions with me. All of you will make great teachers and I am proud to be among your ranks.

To my family, you pushed me when I wanted to quit and celebrated all of my successes. You put up with me even when I drove myself crazy. I love you all.

Marc, my love, without you I would not have been able to reach out and grab my dreams by the horn. You gave me the courage and the strength to go after this project and show the world what I am passionate about: teaching.

And finally, to my sister Rachel, you convinced me to take this opportunity and run with it.  
Thank you.

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## **Introduction**

I first became interested in this topic, as I read an article for one of the classes I took in the spring of 2012. This article was focused on the need to develop 21<sup>st</sup> century skills in students and to prepare them for a place in the global market. I began to think about how strategies like Problem-Based Learning could be applied to the subject of Language Arts and to end the persistent student questions querying “Why do I need to know this?”. The current topic on most students’ minds is how the books and essays they are forced to read in school could ever apply to them in the real world. Relevance seems to be the one thing students are missing as they prepare to graduate.

Currently all curricula are driven by standards; this does not mean that learning has to be void of opportunities for strengthening skills that students will need for the future: critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, and the ability to be self-directed. Throughout my time in higher education, one of my observations is that many students manage to graduate from high school who are not yet prepared to be self-directed students in the college arena. First year college students are often disoriented by the lack of step-by-step instruction professors provide during a semester.

Problem-Based Learning has the potential to fulfill several student needs in preparing for their futures whether in a higher learning environment or in the work place. This is also the end goal of Common Core State Standards as measured by the Professional Assessment for Readiness for College and Career (PARCC). The future student needs to develop the skill of

problem solving and hopefully, learn the skills necessary to be life- long learners. These skills once learned and applied will never be forgotten unlike many of the facts and figures they are forced to remember during their K-12 education.

By creating a series of units for an English Language Arts classroom using PBL and the Common Core State Standards, I hope to answer the following questions: What exactly is Problem-Based Learning? How can PBL be applied to a 9/10 grade Language Arts curriculum? Can PBL units be created in such a way as to meet the new Common Core State Standards and prepare for the 21<sup>st</sup> century?



## **Problem-Based Learning: What is it?**

### **History**

PBL has deep roots in constructivist history. It is an approach to learning that has been debated and developed during the 1900s, when the Progressive Era of modern education was in its beginnings. John Dewey in 1916, argued that using problems, significant to area of study, was the ultimate way to engage learners (Torp & Sage, 1998, p. 30). Constructivist theory comes largely from the theories of John Dewey and Jean Piaget (Torp & Sage, 1998, p. 30).

While Piaget (1978) and Dewey (1910) may largely be responsible for the research that helped to shape Problem-Based Learning into what it is in today's educational world; the core skill of critical thinking can be traced even farther back to Plato and Aristotle (Burris & Garton, 2007). The need to develop critical thinking skills in education led to the creation of PBL by E.L. Thorndike (1913) and John Dewey (1910). Both of these educational thinkers placed an emphasis on the scientific method as a mode of inquiry when researching the subject of teaching. Because of this emphasis, science and scientific applications would stand side by side with philosophy in determining educational process (Januszewski & Pearson, 1999). The thought was that by using the scientific method, learners would investigate and self-direct their own learning. By stirring their own natural curiosities, this method of investigation would then further motivate and sustain student learning.

### **Evolution of PBL**

Between the years of 1908 to 1910, the term "project" had become synonymous with professional school programs such as: medicine, engineering, agriculture, and journalism (Januszewski & Pearson, 1999). The first known use of projects in education courses were in the

disciplines of agriculture, home economics, industrial arts, and science. Instructors of these subjects viewed “projects” as a manual activity which is aimed at a pre-specified result. The belief was that the “doer” would acquire additional knowledge and/or training from performing the activity (Januszewski & Pearson, 1999). Both Thorndike (1913) and Dewey (1910) sought to incorporate “learner outcomes, student evaluation, choice in design and organization of instruction into the science of teaching” (Januszewski & Pearson, 1999). Project-Based learning relied, though, solely on the acquisition of knowledge and applying that knowledge to complete a final outcome in the form of a project. The addition of a real-life scenario and inquiry began the evolution from learning based on projects to problem-based learning.

In 1960, McMaster’s University in Ontario adapted the first PBL curricula because they felt that their med students needed to be more prepared for “real-world” medical situations than traditional memorization and recall could ever prepare them. The typical medical course sequences were basic science classes proceeded by clinical experiences. In the 1960s through the 1970s, medical schools denounced traditional curricula because they were too “pre-clinical” (Maxwell, 2001). In 1980, Harvard developed a PBL curriculum for their medical program which shadowed the more traditional curriculum. By 1990, medical schools such as: Southern Illinois University, Rush, Bowman Gray, Tufts, Michigan State, and University of Hawaii all moved to adopt a PBL curriculum (Torp & Sage, 1998, p. 28).

PBL origins emphasized the connections between doing, thinking, and learning (Goodnough, 2006). PBL makes learning relevant to the real -world, promotes higher order

thinking, encourages learning how to learn, and requires authenticity (Torp & Sage, 1998, pp. 21-23). PBL also has developed a very distinct structure.

### **Structure**

As previously mentioned, PBL began as project-based learning and evolved into what is currently known as problem-based learning today. The difference between the two is solely in the focus. In project-based learning, the focus is on the outcome (Kain, 2003). A student is given criteria and instructions to complete a manual activity. The teacher does not grade for learning but merely on the result of their work. In problem-based learning, the focus is placed on the process of inquiry (Kain, 2003).

Traditional lecture based instruction follows a “stair case model” wherein students are taught simple ideas first and then, gradually learn more complex skills building on the previous skill or idea. PBL often resembles more of a “spider web:” where- in a question or problem is given and the student then becomes responsible for determining the direction the learning will go in order to provide one of the many possible solutions to the problem (Ward & Lee, 2004).

In PBL, students are given an ill-structured problem (Torp & Sage, 1998). Ill-structured problems contain little to no details that students are able to use as direct clues for solving the issue. Students must analyze, synthesize and evaluate to gain the sense of whole problem and to formulate a viable solution to the scenario (Torp & Sage, 1998, p. 18). Ill-structured problems offer greater opportunity for students to identify their own present knowledge and to explore new information they may need in order to develop a possible solution. An example of a possible PBL scenario for a math class might be: You have been given \$500 to redecorate your room

(Lambros, 2004). In contrast, offering a well-structured problem can lead the student to only identify what the instructor feels they need to know and often only one solution exists.

Experiential learning, such as PBL, is a “minds-on, hands-on” approach organized around the investigation and resolution of messy, ill -structured problems (Torp & Sage, 1998, p. 14). In PBL, no right or wrong answers exists. The only focus is on how thoroughly a student follows the scientific method to investigate and formulate a solution. This helps encourage creativity, problem solving skills, and critical thinking in our students (Ward & Lee, 2004).

The guiding principles or essential elements for PBL are: 1) Problem or purpose should be introduced before any knowledge is to be learned. Introducing information before the scenario or problem then changes the process from Problem-Based to Project-Based. 2) Skills needed to solve the problem should be addressed during the process. 3) The scenario must hold student interest and resemble real life. This keeps students motivated to investigate the problem. 4) Students will learn how to think, how to solve the problem and how to complete the work. 5) PBL can either be organized for individual or small group investigation based PBL can also fluctuate between the two during any process (Januszewski & Pearson, 1999).

As we move further into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the belief of Gasser (2011) , a high school math teacher, is that students need to acquire skills that cannot be outsourced. Students need to be able to perform intellectual tasks beyond the capabilities of a computer. This means that as teachers we need to change our role as dispenser of information to the role of facilitator or coach. The role of the teacher becomes that of a coach, questioning and steering students in the directions they need to go so as to navigate successfully through investigation (Ward & Lee, 2004).



In order for PBL to be successful in the classroom, teachers must improve their teaching skills in Socratic inquiry, conflict resolution and classroom management. (Ward & Lee, 2004). Teachers also need to be aware of how students are adapting to this process. Depending on skill level students may or may not have acquired the skill necessary to make decisions regarding their research (Belland, 2010). For example, a middle school student may not have the skills necessary to make evidence-based arguments successfully. In this case, the teacher should have tools available to model and scaffold students through the process until they are capable of performing the task unaided.

Student roles will need to adapt as well. PBL confronts students with messy ill-structured scenarios so that they might assume “ownership” roles. They will be asked to assume the role of the stakeholder in any given situation. Students will need to identify the real problem and learn whatever is necessary to arrive at a viable solution (Torp & Sage, 1998, p. 14). Through the teacher’s facilitation of PBL, students will develop and use valuable literacy skills such as: concept mapping, elaborating on previous knowledge, resource identification and managing, paraphrasing, and journaling. (Cartier, Plante, & Tardif, 2001).

As I stated before, the purpose of this paper was to develop Problem-Based units that meet the Common Core State Standards for grades 9/10 English Language Arts. I believe it would be helpful for us to understand the CCSS before we examine the PBL units I developed.

## **Common Core Standards**

### **Common Core Creation**

The Common Core State Standards were created by the National Governors Association (NGA) and The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) beginning in 2009. The members of the NGA consist of governors from each of the fifty states and the highest public officials from three territories and two commonwealths. Likewise, the CCSSO is a non-partisan, non-profit organization comprised of public officials, serving as heads of departments in Elementary and Secondary schools. Also participating in the creation of the Common Core State Standards were various stakeholders, such as content experts, teachers, school administrators, and parents (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2013). In creating the CCSS, all parties took into consideration over 10,000 public comments. The standards of other top- performing countries were also examined to create learning objectives in order to prepare all students to be successful in our global economy (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2013).

The Common Core began as an extension of a prior initiative in 2009 to develop College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) in Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language as well as Math (Giouroukakis & Conolly, 2012). Today, the CCRS serve as the backbone for the present Common Core State Standards, and provide a vision for what it means to be literate in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (Giouroukakis & Conolly, 2012). The CCSS are meant to ensure that all students are ready for college or career by graduation from high school. The NGA and CCSSO only include a standard when mastery of indicated skill would be essential for college and/or career readiness in a 21<sup>st</sup> century globally competitive society. The standards were intended to be a living, evolving document and will be revised as new skills and or best practices determine needed revision (Giouroukakis & Conolly, 2012).

## **Implementation**

The CCSS were approved in 2010 and currently 45 states have adopted the Common Core State Standards. For the sake of this project, I am focusing solely on the state of Florida, whose implementation plan was divided into four phases.

Phase One began in the 2011-2012 school year. In Phase One, full implementation was introduced in kindergarten classrooms. For grade 6-12, school districts began introducing Literacy Standards in all content areas. In K-12 grades, they also began implementing rich and complex text and informational texts requirements.

Phase Two began in the 2012-2013 school year. Schools saw full implementation of CCSS in K-1. All content areas also had full implementation of Literacy Standards in grades 6-12. Schools also continued to meet the requirement of rich and complex texts and informational texts in all grades K-12.

In the following school year, 2013-2014, schools will see Phase Three implemented. Grades K-2 will be fully using CCSS. In grades 3-12, schools will begin using a blended curriculum; this is the combination of Common Core State Standards and continued use of Next Generation Sunshine State Standards. The blended curriculum is aligned to FCAT 2.0 and the new End of Course (EOC) exams designed to provide accountability data related to the NGSSS.

The last and final Phase will occur during the 2014-2015 school year, where all grades k-12 will have full implementation of CCSS. In Florida, the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessments are aligned to Common Core State Standards (Education, 2013)

## **What are the Common Core State Standards?**

The CCSS are based on the CCRS and also take into consideration the alignment with the NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress), where 70% of reading is based on informational text rather than literature. The NAEP Writing Standards also indicate that 40% of all writing in school should be persuasive and expository. The final 20% of writing should convey experiences (Giouroukakis & Conolly, 2012). The standards draw upon research and input from: state departments of education, scholars, assessment developers, professional organizations, educators from kindergarten to college, parents, students and other members of the public. The CCSS are research and evidenced based. They align with college and work expectations that students will confront upon graduation from high school. They intentionally include rigorous content and application of knowledge through higher order thinking skills (Giouroukakis & Conolly, 2012).

The CCSS were not just designed exclusively for English Language Arts; they were actually designed to develop literacy skills in all content areas (Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects, 2013). The CCSS are divided into four strands or areas of literacy: Reading, Writing, Speaking/ Listening, and Language. Under each strand, four clusters identify the CCR anchors and vary depending on the strand.

The Reading Strand is divided into two subsections: Literature and Informational texts. Informational texts have been defined in the standards as literary nonfiction. The final standard in the Reading strand states that the student will read a variety of high quality texts in a range of genres for complexity. The Writing strand is arranged to align with the major focus of the NAEP.

The strand is divided among three purposes for writing: argumentative, explanatory, and narrative. The Speaking and Listening are each broken into two sections: Comprehension and Collaboration. The final strand, Language, focuses on the conventions of the English language and English in formal writing (Giouroukakis & Conolly, 2012).

The strengths of the CCSS are that teachers are free to provide students with whatever tools and knowledge they feel is necessary based on their professional judgment and experience. This means that the practice of teaching memorization and drills will no longer be necessary in the classroom. This allows teachers more flexibility to identify tools and information most helpful for meeting goals set out in the standards (Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects, 2013). Embedded throughout the standards are research and media skills. Rather than treat them separately, these skills are embedded within the standards, this makes them a near perfect fit for Problem-Based Learning.

The CCSS is not without limitations. The CCSS does not include all that can or should be taught. The CCSS does not define advanced work or below grade level interventions. This is where the teacher must rely on his or her professional experience to develop strategies for students above and below grade level. The CCSS also does not define the full range of support for ELLs. Because those strategies are not embedded, the teacher should resort to his or her best practices to enable their students identified as ELL in the classroom (Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects, 2013).

In order to ensure that all CCSS standards were being met by the PBL units we need to examine how the standards are listed. Using the Coding Schema, teachers are able to identify which standard is being met by the activities being performed in the classroom.

### **Coding Schema**

The CCSS is broken down into strands, clusters, benchmarks. In grades K-8, they are arranged by individual grade levels for specificity. For grades 9 through 12, they are arranged in two year bands. This allows for more flexibility in high school course design (Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects, 2013).

Each standard is coded for easy reference and identification. For example, a Reading strand standard will look like this: LACC.910.RL.1.1. In order to identify the standard, it can be broken down into individual parts. The LACC means Language Arts Common Core. In between each period is the following: Grade Level, strand, cluster, and benchmark. So the standard above reads in the following manner: Language Arts Common Core Grade 9/10 Reading Literature Cluster 1 benchmark 1. When this standard is then referenced in the Common Core State Standards, we find that the student will “cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as inferences drawn from the text” (Education, 2013).

## **Methodology**

### **Using a District Academic Calendar**

One of the first consultations before developing Problem-Based Learning units was identifying any and all time constraints. I sought to develop units that would be the primary method of instruction for the entire school year. I needed to know how much time was available to the students in the form of full days of instruction. I based my research on the Brevard County School district; however it provides only a representative district. The same calculations can be translated to any district in any state.

Starting with the official calendar pages from August through May and the academic calendar from the Brevard County School District website, I marked off all of the full days and half days that the students did not have class. I also marked out the testing schedules because those days tend to disrupt the normal class time schedules for teachers and students.

After mapping out the various days that affect class time, I was left with 21 full five-day weeks and 13 four-day weeks. This time allotment let me plan how many units could be taught in the course of a full school year; my result being four. I decided to plan four units to accommodate four different writing genres: drama, poetry, nonfiction, and fiction. Each of the units can be spread out over a period of four weeks or 20 full class periods, with the exception of one. The nonfiction and fiction units were combined to create a term project using a variety of texts, such as: speeches, poetry and novels all centering around a central theme. See Appendix A for a full breakdown of the calendar and time periods of each unit.

## **Common Core State Standards**

After plotting out the time necessary to complete each unit, I then began organizing the CCSS that each unit would be designed to meet. I began looking at the standards that could be taught through every unit. These were standards in Speaking and Listening and Writing. As I read through all of the CCSS standards, I began thinking about the exemplar texts listed in the CCSS.

The exemplar texts are examples of the types of reading material that students in target grade levels will read. They are not meant to be an exhaustive list of literature used in the classroom. I created the PBL units utilizing the texts from the list of exemplars to narrow the sources used in creating the units.

I grouped the exemplar texts into categories based on the content looking for common themes and/or structures: science fiction, drama, rhetorical nonfiction, world literature, and poetry. After looking at the groupings and the Common Core State Standards, I began trying to fit these texts into real world scenarios. The major questions: “What would drive the students to read these texts?” “How would I as a teacher catch their interest in these texts?” These questions led me to the development of each problem or discrepant event scenario.

## **PBL Scenarios**

As I explained before, each PBL unit was developed from a group of texts that had common themes and/or structures. For example, *Unit Four: Curtains up!*, a unit I developed based on the plays in the drama category. I selected three plays Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* (1611), Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House* (1879) and Williams’s *Glass Menagerie* (1944). I then created a mind map to uncover all the possible content that students could learn from reading these plays, such



as character development, themes, language, structure, treatment of past texts, etc. See Appendix B for the mind maps I used to create unit 2, unit 4, and the stakeholder positions for each scenario.

Taking all of this information into account, I sought to first create a position for students to take ownership, the role as a member of a theater troupe. Without telling students what they were supposed to research, I then posed a problem that would direct them to the reading of the plays. As stated before, the scenario should be ill-structured, in other words not giving the students too much information. It should leave them with questions that further research would answer.

In *Unit Four: Curtains Up!*, the scenario gives the students the following role and the related problem.

You are a part of an acting troupe for a local community theater. The upcoming season will include three plays: *Macbeth*, *A Doll's House* and *Glass Menagerie*. Each troupe will be performing one act of their play for the showcase.

The scenario contains the role of the students as a part of a troupe and gives them the problem of performing one act of a play. The ill-structure does not provide them with any more information. After they deliberate and collaborate on what they need to know, the students will be given instructions on how they will present their findings.

In any planning process the use of organizers and planners are extremely helpful because they create visuals for the teacher or student. The next section will describe the two tools I found

extremely helpful in this process. The first an adaptation of the KWL Chart and the second is a project planner used by the Buck Institute.

## Tools

### The KWL Chart

In the teaching world, we find many tools that can be used and adapted to suit our needs. In this case I have decided to adapt a tool known to teachers as the KWL chart. In its original form it is designed to help students determine what they know about a topic, want to know and then what they have learned about a specific topic. This helps the teacher identify and activate the prior knowledge of a student. Prior knowledge is extremely important to introducing a new topic in current teaching practices because it adds an element of relevance and provides an anchor for new information.

In PBL, prior knowledge is also extremely important because the student will need to engage in group collaboration. Given that each student has different experiences it will lead the group in choosing a direction for their investigation. Using a KWL or any graphic organizer gives students a visual representation of their thinking. It also provides organization for their thinking as the name graphic organizer implies.

In an effort not to recreate the wheel, I adapted the KWL to represent the questions that students should be asking themselves throughout the process: What do I know, what do I need or want to know, and Where can I go to find the information? The adapted KWL chart can be found in Appendix C. In *Problem-Based Learning in Middle and High School Classrooms* (2004) book, the author describes a chart that is more detailed. The categories in her chart are as follows: Facts Need to know, Learning Issues, Possible Solutions, New Learning Issues, and Defendable Solutions (Lambros, 2004).”This particular chart is designed to capture and blueprint the learning objectives that are pursued and how they relate to the possible solutions” (Lambros, 2004).

In my research I have found that the process of identifying new learning objectives is a repetitive process. Because of this repetition, I chose to narrow the chart to enable students to focus on their knowledge and its acquisition.

The first column incorporates the same information as in Lambros's chart as does the second column. The third column was changed to help students to identify where they can go to learn the new information they need. This gives them a place to identify possible resources necessary for their investigation. The resource section can also serve as a "plan of action" for students (Lambros, 2004). As they identify new information necessary and the resources they can gather this information they essentially create a plan for their investigation. See Appendix A for Problem Chart.

For teachers, adding the Problem Chart can be a resource as well. It can enable the teacher to see the direction the students are taking in their investigations. These can be valuable to assess the learning and serve as alerts to possible issues a student or group may be having in the process. Teachers may choose to incorporate these charts into portfolios for more formal assessment of students.

## **Unit Planning**

For the sake of Unit Planning, I utilized a set of tools I found at The Buck Institute for Education: [www.bie.org](http://www.bie.org). The Buck Institute was founded as a not-for profit organization that provided services to local schools and districts in Marin County, California for program evaluation and other research. In the late 1990s, the BIE focused much of its work in Project – Based learning which was a feature in instructional reform (The Buck Institute for Education, 2013).

I found the project planners to be very useful in organizing the content and activities that are incorporated into each unit. The planners also helped me to outline the standards each unit would meet as well as the final presentation of the students' research. Because there is also a project component incorporated into the individual units it made these planners relevant to the design of the PBL units.

The BIE Project planners utilize an overview page, which allows the instructor to evaluate all the components necessary for a successful PBL unit. In the planner there is also an incorporation of scaffolding materials. I found this to be extremely helpful since it is not likely nor recommended that the teacher forgoes any instruction when using PBL. The PBL units I designed are meant to be a combination of student centered learning and teacher- centered to ensure content knowledge for students. The completed units in these planners can be found in Appendix D.

The next section contains the four PBL units. Students would be introduced to these units in the same fashion by Power Point and hardcopy. After each I included a personal reflection highlighting the objectives and considerations for the units.

## Unit 1: Bright Futures

English Language Arts Grade 9/10

**TIME:** 3 Weeks/ 15 full class periods

**CCSS:** LACC.910.RL.1.1, LACC.910.W.1.2 a-f, LACC.910.W.2.4, LACC.910.W.2.5, LACC.W.2.6, LACC.910.W.3.7, LACC.910.W.3.8, LACC.910.W.4.10, LACC.910.SL.1.1

### Scenario:

Congratulations! You are now entering your Senior Year of High School. Graduation is fast approaching, what are your plans for after graduation?

### Scaffolding:

Skills Students will Need to Know	Lessons Provided
Using the Need To Know Process	Whole class discussion modeling the types of questions and facts that might be used in their investigation.
Identifying Resources	Using the internet and Resource activity groups will find viable resources.
Using Citations	Students will practice using citations and writing Bibliographies in 2 formats: MLA and APA
Working Collaboratively	Students will perform activities that help them work together in groups.
Rewriting, Peer Editing	Students will practice giving constructive feedback and Peer Editing in groups
What are my choices?	Group discussion revolving around what their choices are after graduation: Work, military, family, college, etc.  Also included in this discussion: determining goals

### Final Product:

The student will create a 500 word essay describing their plans after graduation. They will also create a 10 min presentation performed in front of the class.

**Assessment:**

Aside from the final products students will complete, they will also use a journal to track their thinking and self-reflection. They will also be performing activities seen in the scaffolding process which provides the teacher ongoing opportunities to assess the students.

**Unit Reflection:**

The purpose of this unit was to simply familiarize the students with the process and procedures they would be using in class. I felt like this lesson was necessary because many students may not currently have the skills necessary to be successful in a PBL classroom.

I believe that using a real world scenario like the decision making process students will engage in throughout their life would not only generate interest but would also provide great opportunities for the students to begin to master the necessary skills.

The scaffolding I included in this lesson is not meant to be a comprehensive list of every lesson that would occur during this time frame. I found that including the basic lessons would demonstrate the types of lessons that might be needed to build students' skills. I also chose not to provide specific lesson plans as teachers who would use this guide might adapt these to fit their own teaching style. The idea is that the scaffolding is more important than the manner it is provided.

The final product is a presentation and an essay. I believe that including an opportunity to be creative in presenting their thoughts is also important to keep students bought into the process. It gives them time to demonstrate the talents they possess while it also helps to build a team dynamic in the classroom.

The essay in this unit is included to help students with the process of rewriting and peer editing. It is also meant to build the writing skills of the students as the writing component is included in all units in various formats, from journaling to formal essay.

The final products are individual tasks, which I identified earlier that PBL can fluctuate between group and collaboration as necessary. I chose to use individual tasks, in this case, because I envisioned this as a beginning of the year assignment. Students do not easily work well in groups until they have built trust in their peers. Because of this, I would seek to make group collaboration a part of all scaffolding activities in an effort to help them build trust in each other and foster a whole class group environment.



## Unit 2: Power of Words

English Language Arts Grade 9/10

**Time:** 9 Weeks/45 full class periods.

**CCSS:** LACC.910.L.1.1a-b, LACC.910.L.1.2, LACC.910.L.2.3, LACC.L.3.4, LACC.L.3.5a-b, LACC.910.RI.1.1, LACC.910.RI.1.2, LACC.910.RI.1.3, LACC.910.RI.2.4, LACC.910.RI.2.6, LACC.910.RI.3.7, LACC.910.RI.3.8, LACC.910.RI.4.10, LACC.910.RL.1.1, LACC.910.RL.1.2, LACC.910.RL.1.3, LACC.910.RL.2.4, LACC.910.RL.2.5, LACC.910.RL.2.6, LACC.RL.4.10, LACC.910.SL.1.1a-d, LACC.910.SL.1.2, LACC.910.SL.1.2, LACC.910.SL.1.3, LACC.910.SL.2.4, LACC.910.SL.2.6, LACC.910.W.1.1a-e, LACC.910.W.1.2a-f, LACC.910.W.2.4, LACC.910.W.2.5, LACC.910.W.2.6, LACC.910.W.3.7, LACC.910.W.3.8, LACC.910.W.3.9b, LACC.910.W.4.10

### Scenario:

You are an author submitting a chapter for a book focused on the Power of Words. Your chapter will focus on the effect of language in speeches, poetry, and fiction centered on a common theme: freedom.

### Scaffolding:

Skills Students will Need to Know	Lessons Provided
Freedom	Activities investigating freedom from different perspectives.(i.e. discrimination, American rights , human rights)
Connotation and Denotation	Activities investigating the figurative and literal meanings of words.
War	Deeper investigation of WWII and the Holocaust as themes for <i>Book Thief</i> and “Hope , Despair and Memory”
Rhetoric	Finding the rhetoric and fallacious reasoning.
Language	Activities on how word choices set meaning and tone
Themes	Discussions of central themes and ideas in the chosen texts.
Characters, plots, settings, points of view	Activities focused around each text and their relationship to other texts.

### Final Product:

**Group:** Group will prepare a 15 min presentation demonstrating how two texts work together to convey a central theme.

**Individual:** Students will write an analysis of the rhetoric and an argument for or against one of the speeches chosen for the unit.

**Assessments:**

This unit is rich with opportunities for assessment both informal and formal. The unit's final products are a spoken presentation and a written paper. Because it is a longer unit and rich with texts and scaffolding activities, a teacher can choose to assess reading comprehension as well as the other content related skills.

**Unit Reflection:**

As I was trying to develop the PBL units contained in this paper. I stumbled upon this idea that there was a relationship between the texts on the exemplar list. I found that the non-fiction texts mostly speeches from presidents and the familiar civil rights leaders also connected with some of the books in the fiction lists and these connected to some of the poets.

As I was trying to decide which books I would use as a teacher in my own class, the idea to create a much longer unit of study came into my head. I envisioned this to be a unit that would take an entire term to complete. This may be considered to be overly ambitious and if necessary a teacher could break this unit into much smaller pieces.

As it is currently designed, the entire class would work together and in smaller groups to dissect three novels: *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (Angelou, 1970), *Fahrenheit 451* (Bradbury, 1953), and *The Book Thief*. (Zusak, 2006) The other texts included in this unit are: Washington's "Farewell Address"(1796), FDR's "State of the Union" (1941) , Elie Wiesel's (1986) Nobel acceptance speech "Hope, Despair and Memory" and "Women" a poem by Alice Walker(1970). The ideas central to these texts were the reasons that I considered using them in a

unit together. The speeches and poetry being much shorter in length and easy to add in the lessons as the class read through the three novels.

Ultimately, I thought the final products could easily incorporate a group presentation and an individual assignment to ensure content learning. The presentation completed as a group would demonstrate their understanding of the relationship between the texts as well as craft and structure of the different texts. Since each grouping of texts focus on different perspectives of freedom, each group would have an opportunity to choose which perspective they would like to use in their presentations. The individual assignment would be an essay where the student could analyze the rhetoric in a speech and form an argument for or against the points that the speaker makes in their text.

### Unit 3: On the Museum Wall

**Time:** 4 weeks/20 full class periods

English Language Arts 9/10 grade

**CCSS:** LACC.910.W.4.10, LACC.910.SL.2.5, LACC.910.W.3.7, LACC.910.RL.3.7, LACC.910.RL.2.4, LACC.910.RL.1.1, LACC.910.L.3.5a-b

**Scenario:**

You are a poet submitting a new collection of poems for publication. Your new collection has been inspired by a recent trip to the local art museum. (Ekphrasis) (Ekphrastic Writing Perspectives, 2013)

**Scaffolding:**

Skills Students will Need to Know	Lessons Provided
Writing Poetry inspired by Art (Ekphrastic Writing)	Class discussions using the texts chosen for the unit and the artwork each piece is about.
Point of View- writing from different perspectives	Writing Activities using different perspectives when writing about art. (I.e. the artist, describing the scene, a character in the painting, etc.).

**Final Product:**

Each student will write five poems choosing five different perspectives from which to write. The group will then submit a compilation of their poetry choosing one piece from each student and create a presentation of the artwork that inspired their poetry.

**Assessment:** In this unit the assessment opportunities are in the activities and final products of the unit.

**Unit Reflection:**

This unit was derived much in the same manner as unit two. I found that some of the poetry on the exemplar list had similar subject matter. One of the CCSS this unit supports asks students to “analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment (e.g. Auden’s “Musee des Beaux Arts” and Breughel’s *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus*)” (Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects, 2013).

The unit was designed to allow students to investigate art that inspires them, as well as, write about the scenes they chose using new techniques. My original idea was to use a more individual final product but decided that a better product would be for the group to compile their writings and choose those they felt demonstrated their best effort.

The presentation should not only include the students’ poetry, but should show the class the artwork they chose as well. The students would choose some of their best work and as they read their poems the artwork would be on the screen for the class to see.

## Unit 4: Curtains Up!

**Time:** 6 weeks/30 full class periods

English Language Arts 9/10 grade

**CCSS:** LACC.910.SL.2.5, LACC.910.SL.2.6, LACC.910.SL.2.4, LACC.910.SL.1.1b, LACC.910.L.1.1, LACC.910.L.3.4a-d, LACC.910.L.3.5, LACC.910.W.1.3a-d, LACC.910.W.2.4, LACC.910.W.2.5, LACC.910.W.2.6, LACC.910.W.3.7, LACC.910.W.3.7, LACC.910.W.3.8, LACC.910.W.4.10, LACC.910.RL.1.1, LACC.910.RL1.2, LACC.910.RL.1.3, LACC.910.RL.2.4, LACC.910.RL.2.5.

**Scenario:**

You are a member of a theatrical troupe for a local community theater. The upcoming season includes three plays: *Macbeth*(c1611), *A Doll's House*(1879), and *The Glass Menagerie*(1944). The theater has asked each troupe to create one act of their play for the Showcase.

**Scaffolding:**

Skills Students will Need to Know	Lessons Provided
Character Analysis	Discussions and activities around characters and their motivations.
Themes	Discussions and activities around themes in literature.
Craft/ Writing Structures	Activities and discussions about writing techniques used in the plays. A writing exercise to recreate techniques.
Group Selection	Roles and responsibilities of each member. Activities to encourage collaboration.
Plots/ structures at work in literature. (climax, conflict, resolution etc...)	Whole class discussions and activities
Treatment of past works.	Activities finding allusions to other works, the Bible, Ovid, other novels, etc. and the purpose of them in current works.

**Final Product:**

Students will either create one act that summarizes the play or one act that they believe is the most pivotal in the play they are assigned. The group will present their act to the class with an introduction to the characters and the act. The student groups will work together to create character analyses and a short script or introduction.

**Assessment:** The assessment opportunities in the unit are the same as in all other units. The scaffolding activities and final products provide both formal and informal assessment opportunities.

**Unit Reflection:**

This unit explores drama as a whole. I chose three diverse plays to examine: *Macbeth* (c1611), *The Glass Menagerie*(1944), and *A Doll's House*(1879). I wanted students to get a variety of themes, structures and time frames.

In this unit, the students are asked to create one act of a play. Each group will be assigned a different play to study however; I expect that as a class only one play will really be dissected. The reason for this is to give the students examples of how they might look at the play assigned to the group.

In the final product, I state that each group will be asked to create an act form their play. They may also choose to find a pivotal scene they feel sums up the play. Students may feel really creative and choose to create a summary act. In either case, students will have to dig into their play to be able to introduce and summarize what the play was all about.

## **Conclusion**

### **Challenges**

The purpose of my study was to create PBL units that would meet the CCSS in a 9/10 grade ELA classroom. There are very few studies out there linking experiential learning practices with English Language Arts. In my literature review, I found only one study utilizing pieces of PBL to teach English Literature at the college level. Professor Frank's study was focused primarily on the use of collaboration in a mixed mode, English Literature classroom (Frank, 2008).

Problem-Based Learning is more than collaboration. This "minds on; hands on" approach to learning (Torp & Sage, 1998) has no right or wrong answers. The focus is on how thoroughly the student investigates to formulate a solution (Ward & Lee, 2004). This becomes a challenge when dealing with open content and the expanse of resources within a content area.

First because of the limited number of studies, I had few models that I could follow in creating my units. This in itself was a challenge. Working with a narrowed number of texts and creating units that met the CCSS made the creation of the PBL units difficult because the scope of the problem scenarios also becomes limited.

A second challenge was in the scenarios themselves. The tendency for most inexperienced teachers with asking questions is to give some details to direct the student towards the answer. The hardest part of writing the scenarios was creating a role for students that have real world applications, not providing too much information, and creating a problem a student would be motivated to investigate.



Finally, the PBL units I created were not tested in a classroom and that became a challenge. I had to use an “imaginary” student body to predict how students would respond. In a “real world classroom” students would provide valuable feedback about the process, the scenarios and their learning that I cannot simulate.

### **Benefits**

During the course of this project, I had the pleasure of performing a mock interview with an Osceola County principal. During this interview, he asked me what I would do to create an environment of student centered learning. My response immediately included the use of PBL in the classroom. Throughout the course of our conversation, we talked about the movement in schools towards inquiry-based learning. It became obvious to me that these units could be the future in our classrooms. I know I will use each of these PBL units in my future classroom.

Because the curricular goals in schools are content driven the true nature of PBL becomes confined by narrowed learning objectives. For example, one of the CCSS standards asks that a student will be able to “analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work” (Education, 2013). However, that does not inhibit the use of PBL in an English Language Arts classroom, especially in secondary schools. I feel that by creating these units I clearly demonstrated that the use of inquiry, investigation, and collaboration are a viable method of instructional techniques when teaching literacy skills and literature.

After this research study examining and creating PBL units, I can speak to the potential benefits of using this method in the secondary ELA classroom. First, CCSS and PBL theories gave me a firm foundation to incorporate the 21<sup>st</sup> century critical thinking skills into English Language Arts instruction. My conversation with the principal validated my thoughts that for

students to be engaged in classroom instruction, we need to provide instruction that is student centered. To help high school students become successful, teachers need to provide real world opportunities to become lifelong learners.

Second, this project could benefit from the opinions of students as well as teacher reflections based on the observations of a 9/10 grade class. The project could also be adapted for ELLs and ESE students; however, without the benefit of prior research or of having students with varying levels to actually work through this process, one can only make assumptions about how they would perform in this process.

The figure below is a Power Point slide that bullets the obstacles and benefits I explained in the previous segment of this paper. It was used in the defense of this paper as a visual representation of my findings during my research.

## Findings

### Findings

Obstacles	Benefits
• Too few models to follow or reproduce	• Students are gaining real world experience in problem solving
• Creating units without input or feedback from students	• Creates a self-directed and collaborative environment
• Easy to assume that all students will be bought into process	• Makes connections to literature and its real world applications
• Have to make assumptions for timing not all students work at the same pace or maintain the same level of focus.	• Helps students use their creativity
• Future principals may or may not accept this new method	• Inquiry based teaching is becoming prevalent in schools.
	• Students and teachers can become lifelong learners.

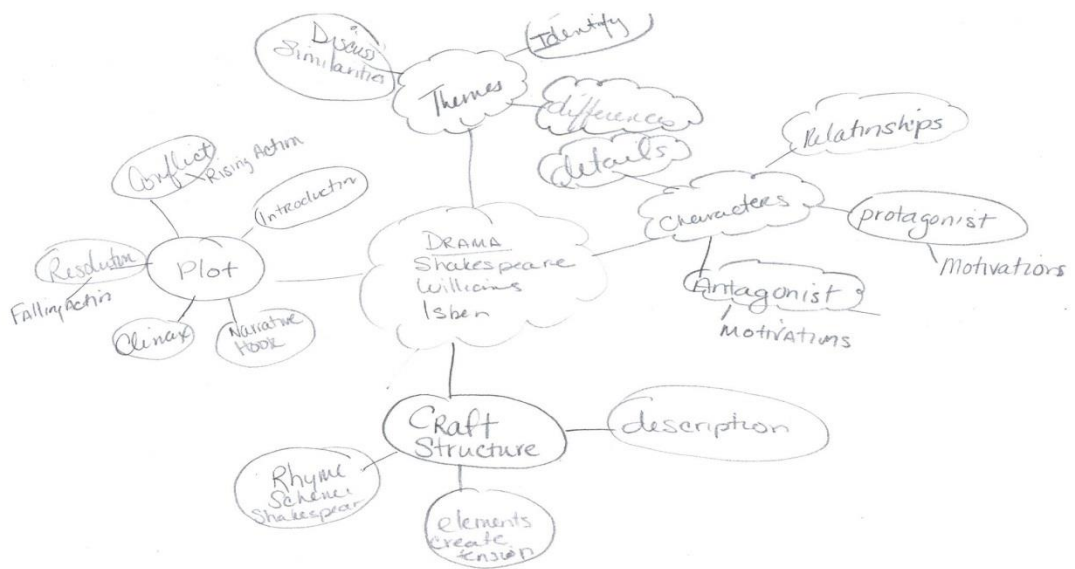
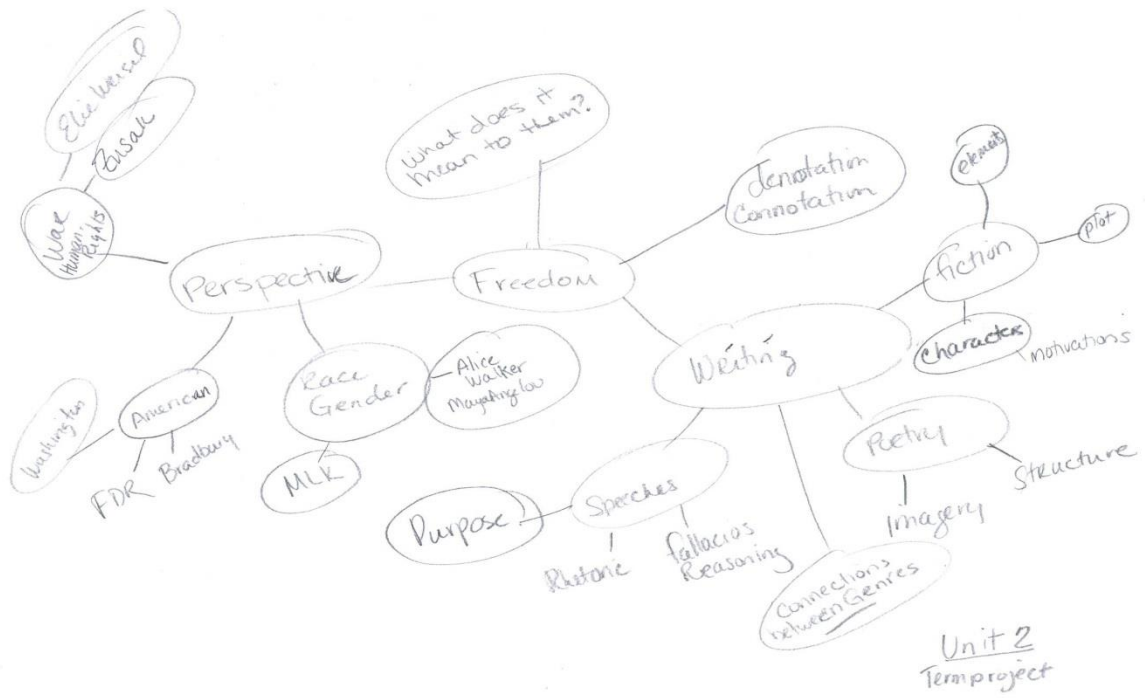
It has been identified in all my research that students need to know critical thinking skills to be competitive and with the creation of the Common Core State Standards those skills are making their way into the classroom. Problem-Based Learning is a useful tool to teach students those skills and prepare them as lifelong learners.

## **Appendix A: Calendar by Week**

## PBL Units by Week

Week	Weekending	Task Planned	Number of full days
1	8/10	<i>Setting Expectations</i>	3
2	8/17	<i>Unit 1Introduction/Research</i>	5
3	8/24	<i>Instruction/Production</i>	5
4	8/31	<i>Presentation Days</i>	4
5	9/7	<i>Group Reflection</i>	4
6	9/14	<i>Unit 4: Introduction/Research</i>	4
7	9/21	<i>Instruction/ Research</i>	5
8	9/28	<i>Research/ Instruction</i>	4
9	10/5	<i>Research/ Preparation</i>	5
10	10/12	<i>Final Product Prep days</i>	4
11	10/19	<i>Presentation Week</i>	5
12	10/26	<i>Reflection days/ Start of Unit 3</i>	5
13	11/2	<i>Research/ Instruction</i>	4
14	11/9	<i>Research/ Instruction</i>	5
15	11/16	<i>Research/ Final product preparation</i>	4
16	11/23	<i>Presentation Days</i>	2
17	11/30	<i>Presentation/ group reflection</i>	4
18	12/7	<i>Free days can be used to catch up</i>	5
19	12/14	<i>Free days for catch up</i>	5
20	12/21	<i>Exam Week</i>	4
23	1/11	<i>Students back from vacation/ class regroup</i>	4
24	1/18	<i>Start Unit 2: Full term project (American)</i>	5
25	1/25	<i>Instruction/ research</i>	4
26	2/1	<i>Instruction/ Research</i>	4
27	2/8	<i>Part 2: Race and Gender research</i>	5
28	2/15	<i>Research and Instruction</i>	5
29	2/22	<i>Research and Instruction</i>	4
30	3/1	<i>Part 3: Human Rights</i>	4
31	3/8	<i>Research/ Instruction</i>	5
32	3/15	<i>Research/ Instruction</i>	4
33	3/22	<i>Preparation of Final Products</i>	5
35	4/5	<i>Preparation of Final Products</i>	5
36	4/12	<i>Presentations</i>	5
37	4/19	<i>Reflection days</i>	5

## **Appendix B: Mind Maps**





Stakeholder Roles



## **Appendix C: Adapted KWL Chart**

What's The Problem?

What do You Know?	What Would You Like to Know?	Where Can You Find Information?

(Lambros, 2004)

## **Appendix D: PBL Units in Project Organizer**

PROJECT OVERVIEW						
Name of Project:	Unit 1: Bright Futures				Duration: 15 full class periods	
Subject/Course:	English Language Arts	Teacher(s):			Grade Level: 9/10	
Other subject areas to be included, if any:						
Project Idea Summary of the issue, challenge, investigation, scenario, or problem:	Congratulations! You are now entering your Senior Year of High School. Graduation is fast approaching, what are your plans for after graduation?					
Content and Skills Standards to be addressed:	LACC.910.RL.1.1, LACC.910.W.1.2 a-f, LACC.910.W.2.4, LACC.910.W.2.5, LACC.W.2.6, LACC.910.W.3.7, LACC.910.W.3.8, LACC.910.W.4.10, LACC.910.SL.1.1					
21 <sup>st</sup> Century Skills to be explicitly taught and assessed (T+A) or that will be encouraged (E) by project work, but not taught or assessed:		T+A	E		T+A	E
	Collaboration		X	Other: Writing	X	
	Presentation	X				
	Critical Thinking:		X			
Culminating Products and	Group:	Research skills activities, Group Brainstorming, Peer Editing			Presentation Audience:	
					Class:	x
					School:	

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Performances	Individual:	Students will write a 500 word essay and deliver a 10 min Presentation. They will also write a self-reflection.	Community:		
			Experts:		
			Web:		
			Other:		
PROJECT OVERVIEW					
Introduction to Scenario:	The scenario will be displayed in a PowerPoint slide, as well as, a hard copy provided to each student for their portfolios.				
Assessments	Formative Assessments (During Project)	Quizzes/Tests		Practice Presentations	
		Journal/Learning Log	X	Notes	
		Preliminary Plans/Outlines/Prototypes		Checklists	X
		Rough Drafts	X	Concept Maps	
		Online Tests/Exams		Other:	
	Summative Assessments (End of Project)	Written Product(s), with rubric: 500 WORD ESSAY _____	X	Other Product(s) or Performance(s), with rubric: _____	
		Oral Presentation, with rubric	X	Peer Evaluation	
		Multiple Choice/Short Answer Test		Self-Evaluation	X
		Essay Test		Other:	
Resources Needed	On-site people, facilities:				
	Equipment:	Internet access			
	Materials:	Need to Know chart,			

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PROJECT TEACHING AND LEARNING GUIDE	
Project: Bright Futures	Course/Semester: 9/10 Language Arts
Knowledge and Skills Needed by Students to successfully complete culminating products and performances, and do well on summative assessments	Scaffolding / Materials / Lessons to be Provided by the project teacher, other teachers, experts, mentors, community members
Using the Need to Know process	→ Whole class discussion, using modeling to identify first round of facts and resources.
Identifying Resources	→ Using the internet and Resource activity groups will find viable resources.
Using Citations	→ Students will practice using citations and writing Bibliographies in 2 formats: MLA and APA
Working Collaboratively	→ Students will perform activities that help them work together in groups.
Rewriting, Peer Editing	→ Students will practice giving constructive feedback and Peer Editing in groups
What are my choices?	→ Group discussion revolving around what their choices are after graduation: Work, military, family, college, etc. Also included in this discussion: determining goals
	→

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PROJECT OVERVIEW						
Name of Project:		Unit 2: Power of Words			Duration: 9 weeks	
Subject/Course: English Language Arts			Teacher(s):		Grade Level: 9/10	
Other subject areas to be included, if any:		Social Studies				
Project Idea Summary of the issue, challenge, investigation, scenario, or problem:		You are an author submitting a chapter for a book focused on the Power of Words. Your chapter will focus on the effect of language in speeches, poetry and fiction centered on a common theme: freedom.				
Resources:		Washington, "Farewell Address", FDR, "State of the Union (1941)", Bradbury <i>Fahrenheit 451</i> , Weisel, "Hope, Despair and Memory", Zusak <i>The Book Thief</i> , Walker "Women", Angelou <i>I Know Why a Caged Bird Sings</i>				
Content and Skills Standards to be addressed:		LACC.910.L.1.1a-b, LACC.910.L.1.2, LACC.910.L.2.3, LACC.L.3.4, LACC.L.3.5a-b, LACC.910.RI.1.1, LACC.910.RI.1.2, LACC.910.RI.1.3, LACC.910.RI.2.4, LACC.910.RI.2.6, LACC.910.RI.3.7, LACC.910.RI.3.8, LACC.910.RI.4.10, LACC.910.RL.1.1, LACC.910.RL.1.2, LACC.910.RL.1.3, LACC.910.RL.2.4, LACC.910.RL.2.5, LACC.910.RL.2.6, LACC.RL.4.10, LACC.910.SL.1.1a-d, LACC.910.SL.1.2, LACC.910.SL.1.2, LACC.910.SL.1.3, LACC.910.SL.2.4, LACC.910.SL.2.6, LACC.910.W.1.1a-e, LACC.910.W.1.2a-f, LACC.910.W.2.4, LACC.910.W.2.5,LACC.910.W.2.6, LACC.910.W.3.7, LACC.910.W.3.8, LACC.910.W.3.9b, LACC.910.W.4.10				
		T+A	E			
21 <sup>st</sup> Century Skills to be explicitly taught and assessed (T+A) or that will be encouraged (E) by project work, but not taught or assessed:		Collaboration	X	Other: Writing	X	
		Presentation	X			
		Critical Thinking:	X			
					Presentation	
Culminating Products and Performances		Group:	Group will prepare a 15 min presentation demonstrating how two texts work together to convey a central theme.		Class:	X
					School:	
					Community:	
		Individual	Students will write an analysis of the rhetoric and an argument for or against one of the speeches chosen for the unit.		Experts:	
			Web:			

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				Other:	
<b>PROJECT OVERVIEW</b>					
Introduction to scenario:		PowerPoint slide with video clips from historical footage.			
Assessments	Formative Assessments (During Project)	Quizzes/Tests	X	Practice Presentations	
		Journal/Learning Log	X	Notes	
		Preliminary Plans/Outlines/Prototypes	X	Checklists	X
		Rough Drafts	X	Concept Maps	
		Online Tests/Exams		Other:	
	Summative Assessments (End of Project)	Written Product(s), with rubric:	X	Other Product(s) or Performance(s), with rubric:	
		Oral Presentation, with rubric	X	Peer Evaluation	X
		Multiple Choice/Short Answer Test		Self-Evaluation	X
		Essay Test		Other:	
Resources Needed	On-site people, facilities:				
	Equipment:	Video, internet, texts			
	Materials:				
	Community resources:				
Reflection Methods	(Individual, Group, and/or Whole Class)	Journal/Learning Log	X	Focus Group	
		Whole-Class Discussion	X	Fishbowl Discussion	
		Survey		Other:	

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PROJECT TEACHING AND LEARNING GUIDE	
Project: Power of Words	Course/Semester:
Knowledge and Skills Needed by Students to successfully complete culminating products and performances, and do well on summative assessments	Scaffolding / Materials / Lessons to be Provided by the project teacher, other teachers, experts, mentors, community members
Freedom	è Activities investigating freedom from different perspectives.
Connotation and Denotation	è Activities investigating the figurative and literal meanings of words.
War	è Deeper investigation of WWII and the Holocaust as themes for <i>Book Thief</i> and "Hope, Despair and Memory"
Rhetoric	è Finding the rhetoric and fallacious reasoning.
Language	è Activities on how word choices set meaning and tone
Themes	è Discussions of central themes and ideas in the chosen texts.

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PROJECT OVERVIEW						
Name of Project:	Unit 3: On the Museum Wall			Duration: 20 full class period		
Subject/Course: English Language Arts	Teacher(s):			Grade Level: 9/10		
Other subject areas to be included, if any:	Art, History					
Project Idea Summary of the issue, challenge, investigation, scenario, or problem:	You are a poet submitting a new collection of poems for publication. Your new collection has been inspired by a recent trip to the local art museum. (Ekphrasis)					
Resources:	"Ozymandias" Shelley, "Ode to a Grecian Urn" Keats, "Landscape with the Fall of Icarus" W.C.Williams, "Musée des Beaux Arts" Auden					
Content and Skills Standards to be addressed:	LACC.910.W.4.10, LACC.910.SL.2.5, LACC.910.W.3.7, LACC.910.RL.3.7, LACC.910.RL.2.4, LACC.910.RL.1.1, LACC.910.L.3.5a-b					
		T+A	E		T+A E	
21 <sup>st</sup> Century Skills to be explicitly taught and assessed (T+A) or that will be encouraged (E) by project work, but not taught or assessed:	Collaboration		X	Other: Writing	X	
	Presentation	X				
	Critical Thinking:					
Culminating Products and Performances	Group:	The group will present a compilation of their poetry and the artwork that inspired their poems. Each student will contribute one of the five poems they will write.			Presentation Audience:	
					Class:	X
					School:	
	Individual:	Students will complete five poems using different Ekphrastic techniques .			Community:	
					Experts:	
				Web:		

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PROJECT OVERVIEW					
Introduction to scenario:	PowerPoint Slide				
Assessments	Formative Assessments (During Project)	Quizzes/Tests		Practice Presentations	
		Journal/Learning Log	X	Notes	X
		Preliminary Plans/Outlines/Prototypes		Checklists	
		Rough Drafts	X	Concept Maps	
		Online Tests/Exams		Other:	
	Summative Assessments (End of Project)	Written Product(s), with rubric:	X	Other Product(s) or Performance(s), with rubric:	
		Oral Presentation, with rubric	X	Peer Evaluation	X
		Multiple Choice/Short Answer Test		Self-Evaluation	X
		Essay Test		Other:	
Resources Needed	On-site people, facilities:				
	Equipment:	Video, internet			
	Materials:	texts			
	Community resources:				
Reflection Methods	(Individual, Group, and/or Whole Class)	Journal/Learning Log	X	Focus Group	
		Whole-Class Discussion	X	Fishbowl Discussion	
		Survey		Other:	

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PROJECT TEACHING AND LEARNING GUIDE	
Project:	Course/Semester:
Knowledge and Skills Needed by Students to successfully complete culminating products and performances, and do well on summative assessments	Scaffolding / Materials / Lessons to be Provided by the project teacher, other teachers, experts, mentors, community members
Writing Poetry inspired by Art (Ekphrastic Writing)	→ Class discussions using the texts chosen for the unit and the artwork each piece is about.
Using different perspectives	→ Writing Activities using different perspectives when writing about art.(i.e the artist, describing the scene, a character in the painting..etc).
	→
	→
	→
	→
	→

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PROJECT OVERVIEW							
Name of Project:		Unit 4: Curtains Up!			Duration: 22 full class periods		
Subject/Course: English Language Arts			Teacher(s):		Grade Level: 9/10		
Other subject areas to be included, if any:							
Project Idea		You are a member if a theatrical troupe for a local community theater. The upcoming season includes three plays: <i>MacBeth</i> , <i>A Doll's House</i> , and <i>The Glass Menagerie</i> . The theater has asked each troupe to create one act of their play for the Showcase.					
Resources:		Shakespeare <i>MacBeth</i> , Isben's <i>A Doll's House</i> , Tennessee Williams <i>The Glass Menagerie</i>					
Content and Skills Standards to be addressed:		LACC.910.SL.2.5,LACC.910.SL.2.6,LACC.910.SL.2.4,LACC.910.SL.1.1b,LACC.910.L.1.1,LACC.910.L.3.4a-d, LACC.910.L.3.5,LACC.910.W.1.3a-d, LACC.910.W.2.4,LACC.910.W.2.5,LACC.910.W.2.6,LACC.910.W.3.7,LACC.910.W.3.7,LACC.910.W.3.8,LACC.910.W.4.10, LACC.910.RL.1.1,LACC.910.RL.1.2,LACC.910.RL.1.3, LACC.910.RL.2.4, LACC.910.RL.2.5.					
		T+A		E		T+A	E
21 <sup>st</sup> Century Skills to be explicitly taught and assessed (T+A) or that will be encouraged (E) by project work, but not taught or assessed:	Collaboration	X			Other: Writing	X	
	Presentation	X					
	Critical Thinking:			X			
						Presentation Audience:	
Culminating Products and Performances	Group:	Students will either create one act that summarizes the play or one act that they believe is the most pivotal in the play they are assigned. The group will present their act to the class with an introduction to the characters and the act. The student groups will work together to create character analyses and a short script				Class:	X
						School:	
	Individual:	Self- Reflection, Peer Evaluations				Community:	
						Experts:	
				Web:			

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			Other:		
<b>PROJECT OVERVIEW</b>					
Introduction to scenario:	Each group will be given a hard copy of the scenario along with the groups play (selected by the teacher).				
Assessments	Formative Assessments (During Project)	Quizzes/Tests	X	Practice Presentations	
		Journal/Learning Log	X	Notes	
		Preliminary Plans/Outlines/Prototypes	X	Checklists	X
		Rough Drafts		Concept Maps	
		Online Tests/Exams		Other: Character Analysis	
	Summative Assessments (End of Project)	Written Product(s), with rubric:	X	Other Product(s) or Performance(s), with rubric:	X
		Oral Presentation, with rubric		Peer Evaluation	X
		Multiple Choice/Short Answer Test	X	Self-Evaluation	X
		Essay Test		Other:	
Resources Needed	On-site people, facilities:				
	Equipment:	Video, computer,			
	Materials:	A copy of three plays			
	Community resources:				
Reflection Methods	(Individual, Group, and/or Whole Class)	Journal/Learning Log	X	Focus Group	
		Whole-Class Discussion	X	Fishbowl Discussion	
		Survey		Other:	

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<b>PROJECT TEACHING AND LEARNING GUIDE</b>	
Project: Curtains Up!	Course/Semester:
<b>Knowledge and Skills Needed by Students</b> to successfully complete culminating products and performances, and do well on summative assessments	<b>Scaffolding / Materials / Lessons to be Provided</b> by the project teacher, other teachers, experts, mentors, community members
Character Analysis	→ Discussions and activities around characters and their motivations.
Themes	→ Discussions and activities around themes in literature.
Craft/ Writing Structures	→ Activities and discussions about writing techniques used in the plays. A writing exercise to recreate techniques.
Group Selection	→ Roles and responsibilities of each member. Activities to encourage collaboration.
Plots/ structures at work in literature. (climax, conflict, resolution etc...)	→ Whole class discussions and activities
Treatment of past works.	→ Activities finding allusions to other works, the bible, Ovid, other novels etc. and the purpose of them in current works.
	→

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(The Buck Institute for Education, 2013)

## Resources

*Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects.* (2013, January 10). Retrieved from Common Core State Standards Initiative: [www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org)

*Council of Chief State School Officers.* (2013, 2 6). Retrieved from Council of Chief State School Officers: [www.ccsso.org](http://www.ccsso.org)

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