

**Response to Drama:
Using Readers Theater to Explore the Harlem Renaissance**

Annette Bogany-Williams

INTRODUCTION

“Response to Drama: Using Readers Theater to Explore the Harlem Renaissance” can be used in any language arts content area. It can be adapted for all grades and levels of ability. During this 12-week exploration, the learner will gain knowledge of many skills and concepts. The unit will allow the learners to aesthetically experience the Harlem Renaissance (the period in which there was a rebirth of artistic activity and self-actualization) through drama. Learners will be introduced to major writers and a few musicians and artists from the era. Some of the literary “greats” that contributed to the rich culture of that period were Arna Bontemps, Sterling Brown, Countee Cullen, W.E.B. DuBois, Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, Helene Johnson, James Weldon Johnson and Claude McKay. I would be remiss if I did not mention the renowned jazz musicians such as Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington whose work also embodied the sentiments of the period. This period represents a celebration and a rebirth of African Americans as they embarked upon a major cultural movement. The Harlem Renaissance epitomizes the resounding cries for equality for African Americans as they sought after the American Dream. This era marks the awakening of a genre of literature that carefully dissects racism, inequality, disenfranchisement and an overabundance of other disparities. During this time, it was thought that Harlem, being the center of the “New Negro” movement, would lend itself to social and economic opportunities for African Americans as they envisioned a better way of life.

This notable movement was preceded by the Great Migration, which was the relocation of blacks from the South to the North between 1915 and 1930. Before the migration, Harlem, a section in New York City, was an almost all-white neighborhood. Over a million African Americans abandoned the South to live in industrial cities of the North and Midwest. As African Americans poured into Harlem, spacious apartment buildings became overcrowded and congested. Unfortunately, the landlords neglected the tenants and the dilapidated buildings. Nevertheless, there were elegant homes in Harlem where prominent African Americans lived. Secondly, learners will be provided opportunities to pursue integrated learning experiences from resources in different subject areas. Thirdly, learners will become active participants in the learning process. Meaning exists in the interaction between reader and the text and the construction of meaning is continuous (Rosenblatt 1978). Finally, learners will recognize the value of abstract and analytical thinking and aesthetics in reading. In Rosenblatt’s article titled “Literature-S.O.S!,” she contends that our schools are neglecting to emphasize aesthetic reading

which causes learners to “live through reading,” evoking “what the words are stirring up-associations, ideas, attitudes, sensations, or feelings” (445).

The unit’s intent is to examine the notion of double-consciousness (a perception that emerged from the philosophy of Hegel and formulated by W.E.B. DuBois) in a group who sought to improve their social conditions so that they could experience the American Dream while reaffirming their cultural identity and self-consciousness. Again, this unit is not solely developed for language arts classes, but can also be adapted for use in a history class for a historical perspective. In developing this unit, I will raise the level of consciousness (by recognizing themes in African American literature) and pique the interest of the learner in a way that will leave a permanent impression. I will usher the learners into a mode of discovery that will assist them in developing an understanding and appreciation of their own culture and identity as it relates to race, class and gender.

NARRATIVE

Generally, the secondary school learners that I serve have a learning disability in the areas of oral and written expression. Their vocabulary is limited and they are apprehensive about writing words that they have difficulty spelling. I often challenge learners with non-threatening and engaging oral activities so that they are not so anxious when they are called upon to speak in front of an audience. It has been my experience that when learners are participating in something that interests them, they become more vocal and animated. So, rather than focus on the weaknesses, I chose to focus on their strengths.

Also, as a secondary school teacher, I am often plagued with the thought of how little learners know about their cultural background and rich heritage. Most of the information they have gathered, with regard to “who they are,” comes directly from the controversial portrayals in the media. Learners constantly search for a sense of identity. They struggle with assimilation and acculturation. I observe the daily covert and overt struggles. Musical artists and lyricists, sports figures, actors and actresses and television make lasting impressions on adolescents. Learners have an overwhelming desire to “fit in.” The words and images that learners encounter in film, music, video, the media, and in their homes tell them that race is a powerful issue in the United States society (Cortes 1995).

Once again, learners explore a host of ideas throughout their formative years hoping to discover the “real me.” When asked basic questions about their culture, their responses are vague, limited or extraneous. As a result of my disappointment and disillusionment, I have accepted the responsibility of addressing the matter. Awareness of the rich histories and cultures of our society should be explored in depth in the classroom. Oftentimes learners do not consider or relish the obstacles that their ancestors hurdled over for them (the learner and descendant) to freely exercise their inalienable rights. My goal is to bridge this gap of ignorance one thematic (multicultural) unit at a time.

Realizing the two dilemmas I presently face with the learners (residual effects from portrayals in the media and lack of cultural awareness), I decided to use drama as a vehicle by which to focus on these concerns. I thought it would be fitting to explore the African American experience at a particular time in history (Harlem Renaissance era) when identity, pride and self-worth blossomed in the arts. Some of the cultural themes found throughout African American literature during this time are the pathos and existence of double-consciousness, belief in existentialism, alienation and the search for the American Dream. The literary pieces produced during this time speak of the black experience. Though this particular unit will concentrate on the African American, I am committed to writing other units that will speak to other cultural experiences in our vast society.

Before beginning the unit, learners must be able to identify the major epochs in African American history (ranging from slavery to the Civil Rights Movement) along with the various underlining themes. It is essential for learners to put major events into a historical perspective. This will lead to a comprehensive understanding of and an appreciation for the period. The Harlem Renaissance and the New Negro Movement coincided. The “New Negro” movement of the 1920s celebrated pride in a distinct cultural heritage (Sundquist, 335). The Harlem Renaissance era spanned from the middle of World War I through the mid-1930s. It profited from a spirit of self-determination which was widespread after World War I (Huggins, 50). Even as early as 1917, before the Harlem Renaissance movement was formally named, writers, artist musicians, and poets were using their talents as a medium to change the consciousness of the country.

I have always been fascinated with the great pieces of literature, art, and music that was born and developed out of the Harlem Renaissance era. It represents the long-suffering spirit and pride within the African American race, hence, the creation of the “New Negro.” The “New Negro” philosophy saw art and literature as a pragmatic way to affect racial progress and improve race relations (Lewis 1981).

TEACHING STRATEGY

Before I began writing this curriculum unit, I sought after an extensive understanding of the Harlem Renaissance, multicultural literature, culture, double-consciousness, existentialism and readers theater. My quest for this understanding led me to working definitions.

Multicultural literature is for all students; it is a literature of liberation from the tyranny of the attitudes and expectations that the world thrusts upon us. It is not only liberation, but also inclusive (Fox 1993). I agree with this inclusive survey. With this notion in mind, I realized that if I wanted learners to respect, accept and appreciate diversity, my curriculum should be inclusive of other ethnic groups.

Banks argues that the multicultural curriculum should enable students to derive valid generalizations and theories about the characteristics of ethnic groups and to learn how they are similar and different in both their past and present experiences. Through encountering children from other cultures and those with different lives, students learn to value similarities and differences among people (Ford 1998; Stoodt, Amspaugh, and Hunt 1996).

Culture, as defined by Banks, consists of the behavior patterns, symbols, institutions, values and other human-made components of society (62).

W.E.B. DuBois defines double-consciousness as “a sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity” (17).

Adell asserts that the aforementioned notion of double-consciousness is what the black writers of the Harlem Renaissance movement (and even to the present) have attempted to reconcile through their literary texts and criticisms (8). I assert that this dichotomy explains the problems of young adults as they search for their place in society. I believe that once this reconciliation has taken place, then one can begin to live more fully. In Langston Hughes’ essay titled “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain,” he argues for African Americans “to express our individual dark-skinned selves” (692-94).

Webster defines existentialism as a philosophy that stresses self-determination and a sense of responsibility for one’s own action (246). In most cases, it seems as if self-determination and responsibility are concepts that have been somewhat diminished within the value system of our youth. It is this lack of self-determination that allows young learners to become complacent and slothful in their duty to society, which is to become a viable contributor. I assert that this basic philosophy should be expressed to learners to lessen the possibility of disenfranchisement. Learners should honor and value their culture and acknowledge that valuable lessons can be learned from their history and applied to their individual lives.

Moreover, I am convinced that educators are responsible, in part, for ensuring that the learners move toward this realization. In their works, the contributors to the Harlem Renaissance literally and figuratively demonstrated (through their mediums) their self-determination. They were determined to right the wrongs in society and they felt a responsibility to themselves as well as other African Americans to be the loud voice amongst the silent screams. When juxtaposed, one might view double-consciousness and existentialism as antithetical concepts. I would suggest that the two are linked in that it is difficult to practice one without the other.

Readers theater is an interpretive oral reading activity. Learners are encouraged to use their voices, facial expressions and hand gestures to interpret characters in scripts and

stories. Novels may be adapted for readers theater through a concerted effort of script writing by the learner and teacher. Through readers theater, learners enrich oral and reading vocabularies, communicate stories, develop characterization skills through dialogue, learn expressive voice and gestures and enhance their personal interpretations of, and responses to, literature (Tierney and Readance, 251).

In readers theater, full memorization, stage sets and costumes are not requirements. The learners mainly focus on interpreting the writers dialogue and communicating the meaning. Before a script can be written, the learners must understand the characters. Becoming familiar with the setting is essential, too. Furthermore, the plot must be simple.

Constructing a character analysis would be helpful. The use of Venn diagram would be an appropriate teaching strategy to use. Also, there must be ample dialogue for the characters.

Now, in developing the script, the learners must consider information and events related to the literary piece. The adaptation must be authentic. The script and scenes should be read, re-read and discussed. Suggestions should be incorporated to ensure authenticity. Once the learners are familiar with the script format, they should be encouraged to prepare for staging, performance procedures and gathering equipment.

In addition, learners work collaboratively with others during the entire process. I hope to assist the learner in developing an awareness and appreciation for scripted plays as a form of literature.

Once I felt comfortable with my understanding of the aforementioned terms, I began to gather pieces of literature that were published during the Harlem Renaissance period. To make this curriculum unit a successful one, it was necessary for me to carefully choose literature that would be appealing to the learners and that would also relay the sentiments of the time. Because the cultural portrayals within the pieces of literature should to be authentic, caricatures must be avoided. The purpose of introducing multicultural literature is to dispel stereotypes. By offering various works from this era, learners are afforded several opportunities (through observation, group discussion and discovery) to identify the themes in African American literature. On the other hand, we must realize the difference between being stereotypical and including cultural traits. This helps to avoid what Reimer (1992) terms a “watering down” of the curriculum in which we include only literature that gives a positive portrayal of every aspect of the cultures with which it deals.

This unit is one in a series that I plan to develop. It is important to adapt this curriculum to various other periods in history and other ethnic groups (American Indian, Jewish Americans, Mexicans, Cuban Americans, Asian Americans, Arab Americans, etc.). Multicultural literature should be incorporated into the current curriculum and not taught in isolation. Because the attention given to ethnic studies in school is minuscule (mainly

addressing low-level facts rather than higher levels of mastery), Banks argues that students are “ethnically illiterate” (13). Education should be enhanced with the comprehensive experience of humankind. I aspire to bring and present a greater awareness of our society’s ethnic compilation and uniqueness to the classroom. The exposure to a myriad of ethnic groups will assist the learners in embracing their traditional culture rather than being alienated or eradicated from it. Finally, learners need to understand that regardless of the cultural differences, we all have feelings, hopes and dreams.

LEARNER OBJECTIVES

I chose to use readers theater because it is designed to be used with learners of all ages regardless of their abilities. Using drama in the classroom will also serve as an alternative to a book report. This strategy allows each learner to become actively involved in the learning process without any inhibitions (which are frequently experienced in writing assignments). Readers theater is minimal theater in support of literature and reading.

Before assigning the tasks included in this unit it is essential to tap into the learners’ storehouse of knowledge or schemata to see how much they know about the Harlem Renaissance. Through facilitation, the learners will discover the importance of valuing diversity. The literature selected will guide learners through a deeper realization of the African American experience. Likewise, learners will have opportunities to polish existing language arts skills and demonstrate mastery of various other skills such as oral reading, interpretation, composition, reading comprehension and oral expression. These skills along with other abstract elements will be intertwined into this unit.

Finally, most learners with learning disabilities avoid reading at all cost. The readers theater is a way to get learners reading without feeling threatened. Working in collaborative groups is one of the most important aspects of the whole process. Again, learners are working in a conducive environment and demonstrating tolerance with their group members.

Setting the Stage

This twelve-week unit begins with an activity called the Culture Stroll. This activity is aimed at stimulating discussions that allow learners to look at mythical, ill-conceived and bigoted stereotypes formed about individuals. At the onset of the activity, all the learners are positioned on one side of the classroom. I will make general statements targeted at a particular class, race, culture, gender or physical attributes. If the learner identifies with the statement, he or she will stroll to the opposite side of the classroom. The targeted learners will be asked a series of questions pertaining to class, race, culture, gender or physical attributes which will force them to reveal inner feelings and thoughts about how society views them individually and as part of a group.

Biographical Sketches

Again, I am suggesting that having multicultural literature in the classroom is imperative. If learners do not have a general knowledge or an understanding of their own cultural experiences, they risk not experiencing their true identity. The literary pieces written by African Americans during the Harlem Renaissance reflect their individual courage and pride regardless of what others thought. Essentially, these writers wanted to express themselves and be respected in their medium without reproach from the mass.

Arna Bontemps

Bontemps (1902-1973) contributed to the development of African American identity through his poetry, novels and plays. He was born in Alexandria, Louisiana, the son of a brick mason and a teacher. After graduating from college in 1923, Bontemps moved to Harlem, where he taught school and wrote. His first novel was *God Sends Sunday* (1931). He taught at Oakwood Junior College. He wrote two novels about slave revolt, *Black Thunder* (1936) and *Drums at Dusk* (1939). Bontemps earned another degree at the University of Chicago. After working as a librarian at Fisk University, he returned to the University of Chicago to teach in 1965.

Because I have so many aspiring “rappers” in my classes, I will ask a few of the learners to compose an original piece for Bontemps’ poem, *A Black Man Talks of Reaping*. The learners will discuss the underlining themes in this poem which are alienation and disenfranchisement. The learners will discuss Bontemps bitter tone along with his use of metaphors.

Sterling A. Brown

Brown (1901-1989) was born in Washington, D.C. He was one of the many writers who contributed to the Harlem Renaissance period. He received his master’s degree from Harvard University. He taught at Howard University until his retirement in 1969. Brown’s first collection of poetry, *Southern Road*, was published in 1952. This collection was influenced by spirituals, work songs, jazz, and the blues, and they spoke of racial concerns. Brown published his second and final book, *Last Ride of Wild Bill*, in 1975.

The learners will read Brown’s *Strong Men*. After reading and interpreting the poem, students will create tableaus. Each tableau will be accompanied with a caption that summarizes their creation’s theme. The poem’s underlining theme speaks of racial injustice and the unyielding spirit and determination of African Americans to persevere.

Countee Cullen

Cullen (1903-1946) had poems published in the *Crisis* and *Opportunity*, two major periodicals, while still an undergraduate at New York University. He was elected to the Phi Beta Kappa national honor society. Cullen earned a master's degree from Howard University. He argued that African American writers should model traditional English poetry rather than using cultural dialect. He married the daughter of black historian W.E.B DuBois. However, the marriage did not last. Cullen wrote *The Black Christ* (1929) and collaborated on a play with Arna Bontemps. He taught French at a junior high school until his death.

Cullen's *Tableau* will be transformed into a play via readers theater. Learners will interpret the poem and develop a script. The characters may include the two young boys, a few "on-lookers" and a line or two from the narrator. The learners will decide what will be needed.

W.E.B. DuBois

DuBois (1868-1963) is known as one of the most significant African American activists and intellectuals in the Twentieth Century. He is known for his belief in higher education (conflicting with the beliefs of Booker T. Washington). DuBois co-founded the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909. He also edited the NAACP's magazine *The Crisis* for 24 years.

Each learner will be assigned to a small group and be asked to complete a character analysis for DuBois. The analysis will allow each learner to become this great intellect! Rightly so, DuBois will be the narrator for every performance in this unit.

Langston Hughes

Hughes (1902-1967) was born in Joplin, Missouri. He was raised by his mother and grandmother. Hughes' father paid for him to attend Columbia University as an engineering student. He later left college and returned later to complete his education. Hughes became known as the Poet Laureate of Harlem.

Learners will listen to various musical selections from *Anthology of Art Songs by Black American Composers* that were penned by Langston Hughes. The campus music teacher will render two selections. The class will discuss the lyrics. Also, I will summarize Hughes' essay *When the Negroe Was in Vogue*, which can be found in his autobiography entitled *The Big Sea*. Then, the learners will read Hughes at the designated time in the unit. Group discussions will be held daily. Initially, the discussions will be held in small groups of four or five members and end with an inclusive class discussion. In this particular piece, learners will focus on Hughes' critical tone when describing Harlem, white people, the Cotton Club, celebrities and racism. Each group will design a tableau by using the vivid description offered by Hughes.

Zora Neale Hurston

Hurston (1891?-1960) was an accomplished African American woman writer during her time. She studied at Howard University and Barnard College. Hurston did graduate work in anthropology at Columbia University. She used anthropology to study African American culture. Hurston also collected Southern and Caribbean folklore. She published the folklore in *Mules and Men* (1935). *There Eyes Were Watching God* (1937) is her best known novel. At time of her death, she was practically forgotten by her fellow laborers in the literary arena. However, in recent decades there has been a resurgence in the popularity of her work.

After giving a brief synopsis, learners will read and perform selected scenes from the three act play *Mule Bone*, a Negro folk comedy written by both Langston Hughes and Zora Neale Hurston. The learners will select the scenes to be performed. The essence of this black folklore captures the “authentic” portrayal of black comedic characters and the rich uses of language and laughter southern black folk had invented as a way of creatively coping with the harshness of being black in America (Hughes and Hurston, 2). Learners will encounter class discrimination and division between “dark-skinned” and “light-skinned” African Americans. For this production, I will be assisted by a drama, music, history, wood work, and art teacher for props and other stage particulars. A parent volunteer will also assist in making simple costumes.

Helene Johnson

Johnson (1907-1995) was born in Boston. She came to New York in 1926. Johnson entered her poetry in contests frequently publicized by the *Opportunity*. She combines an expression of unquenchable desires with realistic description of ghetto life and a discovery of the roots of her people. In her confronting poem, *Sonnet to a Negro in Harlem*, Johnson eloquently illustrates the notion of racial pride. The theme “black is beautiful” reverberates in each stanza. She was considered one of the second echelon (minor poet) poets of the Harlem Renaissance.

The learners will produce a prime time newscast called “Foresight and 20/20 Hindsight.” A segment of the show will feature Helene Johnson in an interview. Learners will generate their own questions and answers. The questions will be centered on how she managed to change the connotations of words like pompous, hate, incompetent, barbaric, supercilious, and arrogant. The learners will also question the poet about her decision to focus on the black heritage, black pride and the “black is beautiful” themes.

James Weldon Johnson

Johnson (1871-1938) graduated from Atlanta University. He was a principal, lawyer, lyricist, diplomat, novelist, poet and an executive secretary in the NAACP. *God's Trombones*, Johnson's first collection for folk sermons, was published in 1927.

I will preface this unit by reading Johnson's *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man*. This novel draws a candid and poignant illustration of the injustices and discrimination suffered by African Americans in the United States. While reading this text, learners will be asked to keep a journal and write down any questions, comments and feelings that they may want to discuss. The learners will be asked to post these on a "discussion board" to be shared with the entire class.

Claude McKay

McKay (1890-1948) was born and raised on the Caribbean island of Jamaica. In 1912, he published his book, *Songs of Jamaica*, which won him a prestigious award. The proceeds from the award enabled him to move to America. McKay studied agriculture at Tuskegee Institute and Kansas State College. After a short while, he moved to Harlem to pursue a writing career. In 1922 McKay published *Harlem Shadows*. In prose and poetry, he protested the injustices of black life. McKay also believed that poets were responsible for enlightening the minds of the people. During his lifetime, he often spoke out against and wrote about the sanctioned racism of powerful governments in the world.

The learners will transform the poem "If We Must Die" into a choreopoem (a poem "acted out" with the accompaniment of music and the animation of actors). The learners will select background music from Patterson's *Anthology of Art Songs by Black American Composers* for the performance. The success of this performance will rely heavily on the heartfelt interpretations of the learners. Mime costumes and make-up will be used.

In addition, the learners will read and discuss McKay's *America*. Again, learners will discuss the poem, its metaphors and the meaning of the American Dream in their smaller groups and then move into the larger group for discussion. Later, the class will be divided into two groups (Harlem Renaissance contributors versus America). A prompt will be given and the learners will generate questions based on the prompt. The contributors of the Harlem Renaissance and America will be summoned into mediation to discuss the state of affairs of African Americans who existed in America during that period. An arbitrator, Blind Justice, will be assigned to the matter.

LESSON PLANS

Though the following lessons have been explained within the unit, I thought it would be necessary to elaborate on a few of them. These activities with the exception of the Culture Stroll and the class discussions are variations of readers theater. The activities can be modified to accommodate individual needs. Dramatics is the focal point. Not all

learners will perform in every activity. Each group will be responsible for an activity and given ample time to work with their respective group members. However, each learner will be exposed to every piece of literature represented in this unit.

Each learner will participate in the group and class discussions. A message board will be created and each learner will be able to leave questions or comments about the feelings they may be experiencing. Anonymity will be permitted.

Culture Stroll / Ice Breaker

This introductory lesson will serve as an “ice breaker” for the unit. Learners will experience and witness the pain, anger and frustration others feel when they are judged by their outward appearance rather than the content of their character. Each learner will be afforded an opportunity to let their peers know how they would like to be treated and how they would like to be thought of. Facilitators will generate statements and questions before the activity begins

All learners are assembled on one side of the classroom. A series of statements will be made. After each statement has been made, the learners who identify with the statement will stroll to the opposite side of the classroom. Once on the opposite side of the room, probing questions are asked.

Sample Statements

If you are shorter than 5 feet 5 inches, please stroll to the opposite side of the room.

If you are an African American, please stroll to the opposite side of the room.

If you have blue eyes, please stroll to the opposite side of the room.

If you have curly hair, please stroll to the opposite side of the room.

If you are the youngest sibling, please stroll to the opposite side of the room.

If you wear glasses, please stroll to the opposite side of the room.

The facilitator will then ask the learners (individually) about the advantages and disadvantages of the attribute. The facilitator will ask about some names the learner may have been called that embarrassed, frustrated or angered them. Each learner will be given a few seconds to answer the questions generated by the facilitator. The statements and questions may vary. The purpose of this activity is to get the learner to respect and appreciate diversity and to realize that living in a diverse society is great!

Blind Justice

Review the themes in African American literature and then divide the class into two groups. After discussing McKay’s *America*, the learners will create real-life issues and concerns from the Harlem Renaissance era that they will present to America. America and

the contributors of the Harlem Renaissance will enter into arbitration and discuss the current state of affairs (1920-1940). A classroom guest will portray Blind Justice, the arbitrator.

The learners must be familiar with the themes in African American literature in order for this activity to be successful. This lesson promotes critical thinking. The learners will need simple costumes, craft paper and paint (to draw the arbitration site) and a list of grievances (generated by the group).

Tableaus

Tableaus, frozen moments, will be performed for various literary pieces. Learners should be placed in quads, if possible. Each group will be assigned a literary piece and each individual group will be instructed to interpret the piece produce a tableau. While the interpretations are being made, the learners will consider the multicultural themes in the literature.

Before the activity, the learners must be given specific instructions. Learner must identify the authors' theme(s) and tone. Once identified, the learners will produce a tableau of their interpretation that represents the author's sentiments. Groups will be formed for the purpose of issuing and assigning stanzas in poems, scenes or acts in plays and chapters or excerpts from other literary pieces.

Once the learners have decided how the work will be depicted, they will take their places in the front of the classroom or on stage. The narrator, W.E.B. DuBois, plays a critical part in all the performances. He is responsible for creating an ambiance for the audience (which must be authentic) so the performance can be aesthetically experienced.

The narrator, W.E.B. DuBois, may say a few words. The group may provide a couple of lines on poster board if necessary. Oral expression should be limited. The learners will need a literary piece to interpret, poster board, markers, white make- up (optional) and black costumes(optional). The learners in my class enjoy dressing like mimes.

Dramatic Play

The learners will perform one act from the play *Mule Bone*. I will allow them to choose the act that they will perform. This performance will end the unit.

The learners will collaborate with the construction, drama, speech, cosmetology, music and art teachers for this production. The parent volunteer will also be need to help with costumes and other minute loose ends. With consultation from teachers, the learners will orchestrate the performance. Producers, directors, make-up artist, stage hands, and other positions will be issued. Auditions will be conducted. This activity should take about one month.

WORKS CITED

- Adell, Sandra. *Double-Consciousness/Double Blind: Theoretical Issues Twentieth Century Black Literature*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994.
This book discusses the theoretical issues embodied in the works of twentieth century African American literature.
- Banks, James A. *Teaching Strategies for Ethnic Studies*. 6th ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1994.
This book discusses the historical, conceptual and philosophical issues in the field of multicultural education. This is an important reference and resource book.
- Cortes, C.E. *Knowledge Construction and Popular Culture: The Media as Multicultural Educator*. In J.A. Banks & C.A.M. Banks (Eds.) *Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education*, 169-183. New York: MacMillian, 1994.
This handbook reports the results of research conducted on multicultural education.
- DuBois, William Edward Burghart. *The Souls of Black Folks*. New York: Fawcett Publications, 1964.
This book contains a collection of essays and a short story that defines the black experience in America and explores issues of black identity and culture.
- Ford, D.Y. *Preparing Children for a Diverse World*. *Parenting for High Potential*, 22-23. Sept 1998.
This article discusses ways to prepare children for diversity.
- Fox, M. *Politics and Literature: Chasing the 'ism' From Children's Books*. *The Reading Teacher*. 46(8), 654-658. 1993.
This book provides practices and paradigms for gifted black students.
- Huggins, Nathan I. *Harlem Renaissance*. London: Oxford University Press, 1971.
This book gives an overview of the Harlem Renaissance.
- Hughes, Langston, *The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain*. Vol. 122 of *The Nation*, 692-694. 1926.
This article describes Hughes' concerns about blacks masking their identity and heritage and embracing "whiteness."

- Hughes, Langston, *The Big Sea*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1963.
This is one Hughes' autobiographies. It contains essays and other literary works that describe his feelings about the Harlem Renaissance and the social in-justice that occurred during that time.
- Hughes, L. and Hurston, Zora Neale, *Mule Bone*. New York: Harper Perennial, 1991.
A black comedy play written by Hughes and Hurston. This folklore depicts black life in Eatonville, Florida.
- Hurston, Zora Neale, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. New York: Perennial Classics, 1998.
A fictionalized love story which focuses on an African American woman's self-realization.
- Reimer, K. *Multiethnic Literature: Holding Fast to Dreams*. No. 69 in *Language Arts*, 14-20.
- Lewis, David L. *When Harlem Was Vogue*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1981.
This book discusses the Harlem Renaissance period and the various concerns of African Americans during that period.
- Rosenblatt, Louisa, M. *The Reader, the Text, the Poem*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978.
This book provides a detailed description of the transactional model of reading and writing.
- Rosenblatt, Louisa, M. "*Literature—S.O.S.!*" No. 68 in *Language Arts*, 44-48. 1991.
This article defines efferent and aesthetic responses to literature. The article illustrates the purpose for each stance.
- Sloyer, S. *Readers Theatre: Story Dramatization in the Classroom*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English. 1982.
This article offers a description of readers theater.
- Stoodt, B.D., L.B. Amspaugh, and J. Hunt. *Children's Literature: Discovery For a Lifetime*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Gorsuch Scarisbrick. 1996.
The authors of this book review children's literature that discusses various differences and similarities in cultures.
- Sundquist, E. *To Wake the Nations: Race in the Making of American Literature*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1993.

This book briefly discusses the history of race relations, segregation and African Americans in literature.

Tierney, Robert and J., Readence, John E. *Reading Strategies and Practices: A Compendium*. 5th ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2000.

This book is a compendium of reading strategies and practices. A(n) purpose, rationale, intended audience, description of the procedures and cautions and comments are provided for each strategy and practice.

Webster's Random House Dictionary. New York: Ballantine Publishing Group, 1998.

This dictionary has more than 60,000 entries. It includes up-to-date business and computer terms.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Teacher Sources

Adell, Sandra. *Double-Consciousness/Double Blind: Theoretical Issues Twentieth Century Black Literature*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994.

This book discusses the theoretical issues embodied in the works of Twentieth Century African American literature.

Banks, James A. *Teaching Strategies for Ethnic Studies, 6th ed.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1994.

This book discusses the historical, conceptual and philosophical issues in the field of multicultural education. This is an important reference and resource book.

Bontemps, Arna. *The Harlem Renaissance Remembered*. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1972.

This book includes in depth studies and observations of the participants of the Harlem Renaissance. Notes and bibliographies are offered.

Cortes, C.E. *Knowledge Construction and Popular Culture: The Media as Multicultural Educator*. In J.A. Banks & C.A.M. Banks (Eds.), *Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education*, 169-183. New York: MacMillan, 1994.

This handbook reports the results of research conducted on multicultural education.

Cullen, Countee. *Color*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1953.

This is Cullen's first volume of poetry which reveals his concerns of racial injustices.

- DuBois, William Edward Burghart. *The Souls of Black Folks*. New York: Fawcett Publications, 1964.
This book contains a collection of essays and a short story that defines the black experience in America and explores issues of black identity and culture.
- Ford, D.Y. "Preparing Children for a Diverse World." *Parenting for High Potential*, 22-23. Sept 1998.
This book provides practices and paradigms for gifted black students.
- Fox, M. "Politics and Literature: Chasing the 'ism' From Children's Books." No. 46(8) of *The Reading Teacher*, 654-658. 1993.
This article discusses ways to prepare children for diversity.
- Holt, Rinehart and Winston. *African American Literature*. Austin: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1998.
This text is a compilation of African American literature. It includes literary works with an array themes and genres.
- Huggins, Nathan I. *Harlem Renaissance*. London: Oxford University Press, 1971.
This book gives an overview of the Harlem Renaissance.
- Hughes, Langston. *The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain*. Vol. 122 of *The Nation*, 692-94. 1926.
This article describes Hughes' concerns about blacks masking their identity and heritage and embracing "whiteness."
- Hughes, Langston. *The Big Sea*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1963.
This is one Hughes' autobiographies. It contains essays and other literary works that describe his feelings about the Harlem Renaissance and the social injustice that occurred during that time.
- Hughes, L. and Hurston, Zora Neale. *Mule Bone*. New York: Harper Perennial, 1991.
A black comedy play written by Hughes and Hurston. This folklore depicts black life in Eatonville, Florida.
- Hurston, Zora Neale. *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. New York: Perennial Classics, 1998.
A fictionalized love story which focuses on an African American woman's self-realization.
- Johnson, James Weldon. *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man*. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1995.

- A pre-renaissance novel reissued in 1924. This fictional novel captures the psychological concerns of a mulatto who decides to “pass.”
- Lewis, David L. *When Harlem Was Vogue*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1981.
This book discusses the Harlem Renaissance period and the various concerns of African Americans during that period.
- Reimer, K. *Multiethnic Literature: Holding Fast to Dreams*. No. 69 of *Language Arts*, 14-20.
- Rosenblatt, Louisa, M. *The Reader, the Text, the Poem*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978.
This book provides a detailed description of the transactional model of reading and writing.
- Rosenblatt, Louisa, M. “*Literature—S.O.S.!*” No. 68 of *Language Arts*, 44-48. 1991.
This article defines efferent and aesthetic responses to literature. The article illustrates the purpose for each stance.
- Sloyer, S. *Readers Theatre: Story Dramatization in the Classroom*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English. 1982.
This article offers a description of readers theater.
- Stoodt, B.D., Amspaugh, L.B., and Hunt, J. *Children’s Literature: Discovery For a Lifetime*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Gorsuch Scarisbrick. 1996.
The authors of this book review children’s literature that discuss various differences and similarities in cultures.
- Sundquist, E. *To Wake the Nations: Race in the Making of American Literature*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993.
This book briefly discusses the history of race relations, segregation and African Americans in literature.
- Tierney, Robert, J. Tierney and John E. Readence. *Reading Strategies and Practices: A Compendium*. 5th ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2000.
This book is a compendium of reading strategies and practices. A(n) purpose, rationale, intended audience, description of the procedures and cautions and comments are provided for each strategy and practice.
- Webster’s Random House Dictionary*. New York: Ballantine Publishing Group, 1998.
This dictionary has more than 60,000 entries. It includes up-to-date business and computer terms.

Student Sources

Cullen, Countee. *Color*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1953.

This is Cullen's first volume of poetry, which reveal his concerns of racial injustices.

DuBois, William Edward Burghart. *The Souls of Black Folks*. New York: Fawcett Publications, 1964.

This book contains a collection of essays and a short story that defines the black experience in America and explores issues of black identity and culture.

Holt, Rinehart and Winston Holt. *African American Literature*. Austin: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1998.

This text is a compilation of African American literature. It includes literary works with an array themes and genres.

Hughes, Langston. *The Big Sea*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1963.

This is one Hughes' autobiographies. It contains essays and other literary works that describe his feelings about the Harlem Renaissance and the social injustice that occurred during that time.

Johnson, James Weldon, *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man*. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1995.

A pre-renaissance novel reissued in 1924. This fictional novel captures the psychological concerns of a mulatto who decides to "pass."

Reader's theater is a highly engaging, collaborative literacy activity that has students practice and perform short scripts, which are often adapted from literature. Using minimalist props and costumes, students rely on expressive voices as they read directly from their scripts to convey meaning and emotion to the audience — no memorization of lines needed. Why Do Reader's Theater? Children love to use their imaginations in play, but rigorous standards have meant less time on the playground and more time in the classroom. Reader's theater allows my students to use their vivid im

The Harlem Renaissance was a time when people of all races helped to push African-American and Black American culture to the forefront. Your Task: Create a 75 stamp to honor a person who was influential and/or famous during the Harlem Renaissance. The stamp must include a picture of the person on the front and a detailed biography about the person on the back. Be sure to include information that answers the following questions:

- When and where was the person born?
- Meaning: The extent to which the response exhibits understanding and interpretation of the task and text(s)
- Development: The extent to which ideas are elaborated, using specific and relevant evidence from the text(s)
- Organization: The extent to which the response exhibits direction, shape, and coherence.