

#TeenProblems – ***Romeo & Juliet***

How the Lives of Today's Youth are found in Shakespeare

Sarah Antonuccio
LLED 7408
University of Georgia

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Rationale

We read to know that we are not alone.
- C.S. Lewis

In choosing the topic for my six week 9th grade unit of study, I first asked myself a few questions to narrow down the topic and texts: What do the ELACC-9 standards say I should be teaching? How can I move beyond the standards and lay the foundations for deeper meaning of the literature and of the self? And finally, what texts make both of my previous questions feasible? That is when the idea of #TeenProblems¹ came to my mind. Building a unit of study around the idea of issues that affect teenaged students automatically creates an opportunity to make connections to the texts.

This rationale is here to ease the nerves of my students and answer any questions that they or other critics—parents, administrators, etc.—have about this unit of study. I stand behind all of my decisions that were carefully and intricately chosen to fulfill this unit’s topic, text selection, and goals. Keeping the topic in mind throughout the unit, my students will read William Shakespeare’s classic *Romeo and Juliet*, as well as Shakespearean Sonnets, poems by W.H. Auden and Thomas Hardy, news articles focusing on various topics relating to themes of *Romeo and Juliet*, and song lyrics by the popular artists Ellie Goulding and L.L. Cool-J. The following is the rationale for the unit’s topic of teen issues, the goals of the unit, and the texts that supplement the theme.

THE TOPIC – TEEN ISSUES

¹ For all of the non-Twitter or Facebook users out there, the “#” is called a “hashtag,” which, according to the Twitter Help Center, is defined as the following: “People use the hashtag symbol # before a relevant keyword or phrase (no spaces) in their Tweet to categorize those Tweets and help them show more easily in Twitter Search.” (<https://support.twitter.com/articles/49309-what-are-hashtags-symbols>)

At first glance, Shakespeare, including *Romeo and Juliet*, seems anything but relevant for teenaged students. Written in the early to mid 1590s, this 500-year-old play has withstood the tests of time because of its study in classrooms across the United States and the world for generations. Even today the play is considered a staple in American English Language Arts (ELA) classrooms. I was taught *Romeo and Juliet* when I was in 9th grade ELA, and I have to admit that it was taught very poorly. The way my teacher “taught” the play not only left me with a poor understanding of Shakespeare and of *Romeo and Juliet*, but also with a disdain for Shakespeare that lasted until my senior year of college. Rather than simply accepting my own early experience with Shakespeare as the norm, I seek to offer my students something more relatable, tangible, and interesting through the usage of an overarching theme. By having the theme of teen issues at the core of the unit, it allows the offering of relatable, tangible and interesting information to be easily found in the text and in my classroom.

Disengaged teenaged students are all too common in American classrooms today. Therefore, the process of choosing a theme to hook and captivate students is a crucial one. The topic I have chosen of teen issues is relevant and appealing to the audience of 9th grade students it is serving because every student in my class is most likely going through some sort of trial in his or her life. These trials and issues can either be ignored, covered by academics, or they can be embraced and used as a tool of investment and interest in my classroom. Because teens are going through enormous struggles, life crises, and times of questioning, what better way to discuss these issues than through the context of literature? As their teacher, I will be building off of what they already know, allowing them to explore what they do not, and using their key interests, such as love, relationships—both familial and intimate—friendships, violence, etc. to captivate and make connections to the text.

The topic of teen issues also allows for cultural, social, and self-exploration.

Through the usage of both small and large/whole group discussions, as well as discussions within the individual self, students can observe their world through the critical eyes of Shakespeare, their peers, and their own questioning teenaged minds. The focus on discussions is important in the development of ideas, both textually and self related. Lois Stover, author of “‘Mind the Gap’: Building Bridges between Adolescent Readers and Texts” (2003), quotes author Harold Foster, saying that “Discussions are held so that individuals can sharpen and focus their responses and in honest reader-response discussion, the teacher relinquishes the role of authority’ (16)” (p. 80). Student-led discussions are great tools for students to learn about each other, about the text, and about themselves through authentic dialogue. It allows them to bring personal experiences, opinions, and interests into the conversation without the pressure of developing a formal academic argument as they would in an essay. Ideas flow freely, and discussion becomes extremely instructive.

Stover goes on to say that “developmental psychologists such as Erikson and Piaget help teachers appreciate the need to move students away from themselves, out of their lived world of adolescence” (p. 80). Discussions have the potential to move beyond the egocentric world of a teenager and to the issues of the culture and society as a whole. Students can use their own experiences, as well as the experiences of the text, and talk about teen issues on a grander scale. (Why are things the way that they are in the lives of teenagers in the United States? What about around the world?) By having Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* as a representation of the theme, students can also discuss whether or not culture, society, and teenagers have *really* changed over the course of 500+ years since it was written.

Discussion also leads to something much more unique to an ELA classroom: the creation of a community of teenaged learners who bond over similar issues. Too often today, students are in cliques with the goal of standing out and excluding other students. The cliquey atmosphere can then carry into the classroom and create a disengaged community of learners. As stated before, because students are going through enormous struggles, life crises, and critical times of questioning, the creation of a tightly bonded community of students allows them to discuss and work through these issues together. It is these issues that form the common bond between them—a bond that they may never stop and seek without proper encouragement. Students, especially at this age, need to know that they matter—the students’ opinions matter, their issues are relevant, and they are not alone. Keeping students’ issues and opinions in mind and focusing on them in the classroom as a part of a unit of study can have a freeing effect on student voices, both in the classroom during discussion and on paper in writing (Gemmell, 2008, p. 68). This focus can also lead to the community of learners so desperately pined after by ELA teachers.

Though the topic of teen issues has an endless list of possibilities in the classroom, I understand that some of the issues we will be looking at are difficult. Because of the sensitive nature of some of the issues experienced by both my students and those in *Romeo and Juliet* (as well as the supplemental texts), I also understand any concern that may arise from talking about and exploring these issues. The point of this unit of study is not to force a student to question who he or she is, what he or she believes in, and the like; nor is it to force students to question who they have been raised to become. The purpose is to use the feelings, questions, experiences, and beliefs that the students already have and are feeling to make a difficult text (*Romeo and Juliet*) more attainable. If more questions and opinions develop because of these discussions, I urge you to talk about them with your student so

the conversation may continue even outside of the classroom. Students are at the age where, like it or not, they are trying to figure out who they are, why they are here, and where they fit into the world. My classroom will be a safe place for them to explore these questions and use them as the foundation for literary study.

THE TEXT—*ROMEO & JULIET* AND SUPPLEMENTARY WORKS

Shakespeare is one of the lucky ones. His literature has withstood the tests of time. He is just as relevant and alluded to in the literature written today as he was generations ago. Teaching Shakespeare's classic *Romeo and Juliet* is not a tradition done for tradition's sake, but rather because of the endless possibilities it offers in the classroom. Besides being in the ELACC-9 standards, "*Romeo and Juliet* is part of our cultural heritage; even Bugs Bunny makes allusions to the balcony scene" (Stover, p. 78). The play is a great literary representation of the theme of teen issues. It is also a way for students to experience the power of literature, a way to introduce students to the complex vernacular and language of Shakespeare, and a way to incorporate the seemingly endless list of supplemental readings.

As Lapp and Fisher note in their article "It's All about the Book: Motivating Teens to Read" (2009), "getting students engaged enough to want to stick with a text is often a daunting task for teachers, especially those who teach adolescents" (p. 557). Taking Lapp and Fisher's statement into consideration when I chose *Romeo and Juliet* as the main unit text, I thought about how and why the text is so relevant to my students. Romeo and Juliet were the teenaged students of the 1590s. They struggled with the same things my students face everyday of their lives. Stover suggests: "The themes of identity, rebellion against convention and parental authority, and passions are at the heart of adolescence today. The

characters are similar in age to our younger secondary school students, and the plot can be riveting, with its altercation of humorous banter, dance scenes, lovers' trysts, duels, and other conflicts" (Stover, p. 78). Thankfully (at least in this instance) teenaged hormones, thoughts, and actions have, like Shakespeare, withstood the test of time making the play relevant even 500 years later. It is these similarities (mentioned by Stover) that make *Romeo and Juliet* accessible for this age group and for ELA classrooms.

It could even be argued that *Romeo and Juliet* is the Young Adult (YA) literature of the Renaissance. If the play can, in fact, be considered YA literature, it is important to consider why adolescent students enjoy this type of literature. For starters, it is suited specifically for them—the characters are accessible representations of the lives my students live everyday. YA literature harnesses a sort of power within the reader that allows them to identify with, live vicariously through, and grow alongside the characters they read. Stover goes on to say that “the power of literature [opens] us to new worlds and experience, new perspectives, new ideas, and new understandings of other people, places, and times” (p. 79). Because of *Romeo and Juliet's* power of language, theme, characters, perspective, etc., it can serve as an accessible piece of “fake” YA literature within the canon. The literary power of *Romeo and Juliet* can also lead to a better understanding of the self through the connections made while reading, watching, and discussing the play. Furthermore, it can lead to a greater understanding of the literature, which, combined with personal voice found through the connections to the literature, can lead to better academic writing as well.

Understanding *Romeo and Juliet* as thoroughly as possible is key to successfully harnessing all the power the literature has to offer. “With some knowledge of the characters, plot events, themes, and issues in hand, students have a clearer sense of

purpose and a level of comfort that help them go back in time to Verona and the events that transpire there” (p. 82). If I want my students to truly be consumed by the power of literature, the transactions between the student and *Romeo and Juliet* have to be as genuine as possible (Lapp and Fisher, p. 561), which can only be formed through being comfortable. The more comfortable my students become with the text, the more comfortable they will be with the theme of the unit. Conversely, and perhaps simultaneously, the more comfortable my students become with the unit’s theme, the more comfortable they will be with the text. Because Shakespeare has influenced literature and pop culture since he began his career, a greater understanding of one of his most classic texts—*Romeo and Juliet*—will create a more learned population of entertainment consumers (aka teenagers). After all, Shakespeare’s relationship with my students will, and should, extend beyond our classroom.

Continuing from the idea that understanding *Romeo and Juliet* as thoroughly as possible is key to successfully harnessing the power of the text, I must move my students to a greater understanding of the vernacular and language used by Shakespeare in the play. “Because the words we toss about come primarily from the rich, classical texts of writers such as Shakespeare,” my students will gain “a more vibrant vocabulary with which to discuss and illuminate such life issues as sex, violence, love, suicide, and loss” (Paquette, 2007, p. 40). My students are already coming in with experiences to guide them and connect them to the play. Learning the vocabulary and language of Shakespeare will help them gain “not only a large lexicon of words in general but also—and more importantly—a wide range of imagined experience to help them better solve the crises that arise in their lives” (p. 41). Thus, we have a continuation of the unit’s theme, a greater appreciation for

the text, and a growing vocabulary for my students to use when exploring and describing the issues of the play, as well as the issues of their lives.

In order to further extend this understanding and exploration of text, of theme, and of self, my students will employ a list of supplemental texts.² According to Stover (2003), “reading another piece of literature—a young adult novel, a poem, or a short story—can serve as a bridge, and various kinds of media can be put to use as bridges” (p. 80). The bridges that Stover mentions are the connections between the text and the lives of the reader that can be created by the students themselves, the teacher, experiences, supplementary texts, etc. Stover further explains the need for building bridges here: “For many students there is a gap between the world of the play and their own experience—on many levels—that may cause them to have problems as they try to read” (p. 77). If I do not want problems to occur, bridges must be built. The theme of the unit is one bridge that joins the text with the student, and supplementary texts will serve in the same way.

In this unit of study, my students will read, analyze, discuss, etc. various poems, images, a film adaptation, news articles, and songs, which will “bridge the gap” between the students, the main text of *Romeo and Juliet*, and the theme. By bridging the gap, *Romeo and Juliet* will be easier to understand and easier to expand for further meaning. Some of the poems we will be using include Shakespearean Sonnets, which will also help put the main text into context with other (and shorter) Shakespearean pieces of work. The usage of film and songs introduces popular culture into the unit, which creates a more current bridge among the themes of the text, the unit, and my students. Including pop culture in the classroom has many positive effects, some of which are observed here by Dale Allender, the

² A list of supplemental texts can be found on page 20, located after the rationale References and before Goals and Rubrics.

Director of the NCTE-West: “Popular culture has affective and academic value. It should be used in a variety of ways as one would use texts generally in a constructivist...classroom concerned with student achievement and transformative learning” (2004, pp. 12-13). A focus on student achievement and transformative learning is very possible with the inclusion of a film version of the play and music that is on-theme with the unit because both can highlight different parts of the play and the theme that may not have been recognized in their absence.

While the portions of this unit of study all come together to form a cohesive lesson on the self, Shakespeare, and the coexistence of the two, I understand the concerns that still may arise. As Stover notices, “No matter how motivated the students, and regardless of their levels of reading sophistication, asking them to read a text such as *Romeo and Juliet* without adequate preparation is likely to create in them a certain level of frustration and possibly even indifference” (p. 78). Such was the case when I was a 9th grade student. But I can say with confidence that the incorporation of a relevant and interesting theme, as well as the introductory assignment and the goals of the unit³ will serve as adequate preparation for my students to study this difficult text.

The language of the play also raises some concern, including my own. “One obvious reason why even good readers struggle with any Shakespearean text is because, as speakers of modern English, it is hard for us to make sense of the Bard’s vocabulary and syntax” (p. 78). That being said, I have anticipated the possible difficulty with the language of the play and therefore have included time in the first few days of the unit to clear up confusions. Any further confusion that exists after these few days will be addressed on a more one-on-one and case-by-case basis. My students will work through the language

³ The Introductory Assignment can be found on page 31 and the Goals and Rubrics can be found on page 21.

difficulties together during the first few days of unit instruction. The language of the play is a necessary challenge for my students because of how much Shakespeare’s language has influenced how we speak today.

Understanding the language is important because my students will have the opportunity to “find potent language and images with which to express the emotions, apprehensions, and anxieties that are triggered by the texts and themes we encounter” (Paquette, p. 40). Sometimes an occurrence in Shakespeare can only be described via Shakespearean language. The language of the text has the ability to make the students “become aware of, name, and embody emotions that [they] could not otherwise manage without the help of Shakespeare” (p. 42). Shakespeare’s plays—because they *are* plays, and plays are to be acted, not just read—have a unique ability to give adolescent students a way to “express their whole selves (mind, body, spirit) real, deep emotion,” which is what Shakespeare is all about (p. 44). Therefore, the language barrier between my students and Shakespeare will be something we will embrace and defy rather than ignore and keep moving.

I also understand that concerns exist outside of the difficulty of the text. As mentioned in the Topic section of this rationale, many of the topics of the unit and the play are of a difficult and sensitive nature, and may be deemed inappropriate for a classroom by some. The topics in question include love and sex, suicide, violence and gangs, disobeying authority (parents, in particular), and different types of relationships (intimate, familial, friendship, etc.).

In order to begin easing any tension or questions that may arise from these topics, I must say that these topics will be discussed in class in an appropriate and safe manner and in context with the play and supplemental texts. No discriminatory language,

inappropriate language, and the like will be accepted in the discussions we have in class, whether in large or small groups. However, students will be given journals as a part of unit Goal #2,⁴ and within these journals students can talk about whatever they want to (keeping in mind that I am required BY LAW to report anything related to self-harm, harm to others, and abuse). The best interest of all of my students is at the center of my lessons and discussions, and anything that moves past the confines of my definition of appropriateness and respect will be stopped immediately.

Talking about these issues is still important for the growth of my students and their understanding of the texts we will be reading. It has been established that *Romeo and Juliet* is a tough text. But it must be noted that “tough texts enable readers to have the *doubly dialogic* experience of measuring their own take on the controversial issues against others’ perspectives, both those of the book’s characters and those of their peers” (italics in original, O’Donnell-Allen, 2011, p. 26). What O’Donnell-Allen describes here is, I assure you, a good thing. Students are talking about issues that affect them everyday in a safe environment within the context of a work of literature that has withstood 500 years of criticism.

Paquette makes a valid argument about how media today inflates and romanticizes the issues mentioned above, and how Shakespeare is a perfect way to bring the issues into context:

Today’s media (particularly movies and video games) encourage overt sexual and violent behavior in young people who need help making appropriate decisions. Shakespeare not only helps them imagine positive and negative

⁴ Goal #2: Persuasive Essay Project—*The goal of this essay is to allow students to effectively argue whether a film version of the play or the written text better represents a “teenaged problem” (such as love, family, the search for identity, friends, etc.) most effectively.* (Goal can be found on page 25.)

effects of such rash behavior but also gives them a language with which to talk about their scary new emotions around the issues of sex and violence. (p. 41)

We, as in authority figures, are often very protective of what students talk about in the classroom, yet we ignore the messages that the media and today's culture are sending our students anyway. Media and culture are two forces that we cannot stop no matter how strict we make parental controls or how much we try and control what is talked about in person and online. Shakespeare offers a new way of observing the potential risks and consequences of teen behavior. This is not to say we should use *Romeo and Juliet* as a warning of what could happen if teenagers disobey their parents, fall in love, and commit suicide. Rather, Shakespeare's works allow students to observe behaviors and issues in a new light, which gives literary context and relevance to what they are already talking about, questioning, and experiencing.

Returning to O'Donnell Allen, she rightly backs up her own decisions of using tough texts in the classroom. Tough texts like *Romeo and Juliet* are worth the trouble because:

If students are able to use civil discourse to engage in the 'imaginative rehearsals' that literature provides, they will reap a host of academic, emotional, social, and cultural benefits. At the same time that they are becoming more motivated, proficient, and critical readers, they are also learning to view both the characters they read and the classmates with whom they interact more compassionately. (p. 31)

Romeo and Juliet and the other supplemental texts of the unit present "imaginative rehearsals" for readers to see the effects of love, lust, violence, disobeying authority, and making rash decisions. Using the themes presented by the literature, which play into the

theme of the unit, my students will learn more from themselves, their peers, and the characters than I could ever imagine teaching them by simply (and ineffectively) lecturing the entire time.

THE GOALS OF THE UNIT

Goal #1 – Student Activities Project

The goal of this project is to give students an opportunity to use multiple aspects of the play (such as characterizations, vocabulary, lines, etc.) to create a multi-media project that is interesting, creative, and analytical.

For this goal, I will list out an individual rationale for each project. The project's rationale as a whole can be found on page 21 in the "Purpose" section. These projects are meant to be fun and engaging, all while combining critical analysis, research, and creativity.

- Memorizing Lines: The purpose of having my students memorize lines of the play is to get them interacting with the words. As stated in the rationale above, Shakespeare's words are very deliberate and different, and very influential in forming the modern language we speak today. Because Shakespeare is referenced or alluded to in other pieces of literature and forms of media, learning lines from the play will allow my students to make connections with the text even after the unit is over. Finally, it is not a particularly difficult portion of the project, and therefore can help students get to the 50-point goal easily.
- Romeo and Juliet Crossword Puzzle: The purpose of having a crossword puzzle option in the project is to get students thinking and making connections to the text that can easily be transformed into clue form. The process of gathering information to form clues forces students to think critically about how the language of Shakespeare fits together, as well as how the person doing their puzzle will translate the clues into answers. This critical thinking will allow for a greater understanding of the play's language and construction.
- Act Webbing: Act webbing allows students to critically deconstruct an act of the play. They must take into consideration themes, symbols, characters, etc. in order to successfully map out the course of the act, which can lead to a greater understanding and appreciation of the act.
- Character Webbing: The purpose of character webbing is to closely analyze the relationships within the play—who interacts with whom and why. Often times understanding the characters in a work of literature allows for a deep understanding of the action of the play.
- Act It Out! This activity will allow students to interpret a scene of the play in a more complex way. They will have to take more of the "theatrical" portions and elements of the play into consideration, but also use their own creative liberties to create a personal interpretation of a scene. Students can also have the opportunity to have fun with different elements of the play (such as setting and costuming), and use technology not typically used in the classroom.

- Blog or Social Media: Another character driven activity, this activity allows students to follow the life of a character of their choosing throughout the play. Blogging can allow creativity and analytical skills to be used, and can also “foster the skill of anticipating how the reader might understand or perceive the message embedded in that writing’ (Murray, 2003)” (Lapp, et al., 2012, p. 14).
- Create a Movie Poster: Continuing with the trend of combining creativity with close analysis, this activity will allow students to think critically about the decision they would make if they were in the director’s chair—or even Shakespeare’s chair.

Goal #2 – Persuasive Essay Project

The goal of this essay is to allow students to effectively argue whether a film version of the play or the written text better represents a “teenaged problem” (such as love, family, the search for identity, friends, etc.) most effectively.

The purpose of choosing a persuasive essay rests in two parts. First, it is the main focus of the ELACC-9 standards as well as most standardized writing tests (both state and college prerequisite exams). The second reason is to allow my students to use what they have learned about the theme of teen issues, the texts, the film, and themselves in a passionate and authorial and voice-full essay. Students tend to write much more passionate and convincing essays when they connect themselves to a theme (Gemmell, p. 64). The decision to have my students choose between the film and the text version of *Romeo and Juliet* comes from the idea that media (i.e. film and literature) forms a bridge to connect the student with the theme at hand (Stover, p. 82). Thus, students have an authentic exploration of the self, of the issues, and of the form of media when creating their papers. I want to hear my students’ voices, and persuasive writing is an effective way to begin students’ exploration for their authorial identities.

Using a video alongside the text is done in order to see the play in action. Film can be taken “through the same process of analysis” as a text, “noting historic, personal, and inter/intracultural influences on expressions of love, romance, and relationships” (Allender, p. 13), all of which are present in the textual and film versions of the play. One is

not meant to outshine the other, but rather speak to students differently and allow them to figure out why they find one more effective than the other.

The peer editing/workshopping component is included in the project because of its necessity in the writing process. “Writers gain inspiration from those who have met the same problems and vanquished them” (Watts, 2007, p. 20), and therefore students need to converse with one another to work through writing issues together. During the workshopping project, not only will students work through similar issues in writing that they may have, but they can also have an opportunity to further explore the issues at hand, their own authorial voices, and how to more effectively put these into their essays. Peer editing, if done correctly, can lead to a greater understanding of the writing process as a whole, as well as a greater analysis inside of my students’ writing. Furthermore, a community of writers then forms around the idea that writing is to be shared and worked through together.

Goal #3 – Reflective Response Journal

The goal of this journal is to allow students to freely reflect on what they are reading, watching, and doing in class, as well as to respond to daily journal prompts. Students will take their own experiences, feelings, opinions, etc. and openly respond to whatever comes to mind.

For this goal, please reference the project’s rationale as a whole can be found on page 28 in the “Purpose” section. Some support for journaling and why I chose to mix fixed prompts and free responses can be found here:

- Journals allow writers “to be precise, to stand back and examine what [they] have thought, to see what [their] words really mean, to see if [the words] stand up to [the] critical eye, make sense, [and] will be understood by someone else’ (Murray, 1987, p. 3)” (Watts, p. 20).
- “Writing experts in the 1970’s told us to allow students to choose their own topics, their own ideas (Graves, 1995). Yet, many of our students have difficulty coming up with topics - free write sounds like punishment to them” (Watts, p. 22).
- “Of course, sometimes our students need to write to a specific assignment - not all assignments can be from the idea file. And all of our students will be expected to write to a standardized prompt for assessment” (Watts, p. 23).

CONCLUSION

I have accurately and to the best of my ability given a rationale as to why the unit of study, #TeenProblems with an emphasis on Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, is fit for an ELA 9th grade classroom. If any more concerns follow this rationale, the student will be given an alternative assignment during the portions of the unit deemed questionable. However, the removal of a student from the unit, whether in part or in whole, will do the student a grave disservice in that he or she will miss the exploration of issues that affect his or her age group, will miss the opportunity to authentically engage with the texts, will miss the important peer editing and workshopping process, and will miss out on the community of learners being formed by his or her classmates.

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Text and Supplemental Texts

Main Text:

Romeo and Juliet

Supplementary Texts:

ARTICLES:

- “Teenagers—Inside the Teenaged Brain” (Marty Wolner, *Ezine Articles*, 2008)
- “Why Teens are Such Impulsive Risk Takers” (No author, *Science Daily*, 2007)
- “Why Your Brain Can’t Always Make Good Decisions” (Elizabeth Landau, CNN.com, 2009)
- “Why Do We Make Bad Choices?” (Tom Scheve, TLC.com, no date)
- “Six Wounded in Fla. ‘Romeo and Juliet’ Firefight” (No author, *Associated Press* via Fox News, 2005)
- “Italian Tragedy Echoes Romeo and Juliet” (Richard Owen, *Times Online*, 2005)
- “Teen Couple Executed by their Parents for Daring to Fall in Love” (Helen Rowe, *Sunday Mirror*, 2001)
- “A Fatal Passion: Their Romance Denied, Two Teens Die Together” (Thomas Fields-Meyer, *People Magazine*, 1995)
- “Lovesick Teens Leap to Death” (Helen Kennedy, *New York Daily News*, 1995)
- “Afghanistan’s Romeo and Juliet: Teenage couple jailed and face being stoned for falling in Love” (Ted Thornhill, *Mail Online*, 2011)

POETRY:

- “The Convergence of the Twain” (Thomas Hardy)
- “Too Dear, Too Vague” (W.H. Auden, March 1929)
- “The Riddle” (W.H. Auden, June 1939)
- Shakespearean Sonnets:
 - Sonnet 4
 - Sonnet 18
 - Sonnet 29
 - Sonnet 116

SONG LYRICS:

- “Figure 8” (Ellie Goulding, 2012)
- “I Need Love” (L.L. Cool-J, 1987)

**Online and textual references for all supplemental readings can be found on page 58, Appendix D

Goals and Rubrics

GOAL #1:

Student Activities Project (50 points)

The goal of this project is to give students an opportunity to use multiple aspects of the play (such as characterizations, vocabulary, lines, etc.) to create a multi-media project that is interesting, creative, and analytical.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this project is to allow my students to explore different parts of the play (lines, Shakespearean vocabulary, characters, etc.) in a multi-media fashion. *Though this particular project does not directly “force” students to stick with our over-arching theme (teen problems), students may choose to use this theme as a starting point for his or her individual choices of projects.* Students will be challenged to analyze lines, characters and relationships, themes, and adaptations in the form of various projects. By doing this, students will gain a greater understanding of *Romeo and Juliet*, as well as Shakespearean vernacular and themes. By choosing activities that best suit students’ strengths and interests, students will also be able to act and think creatively and analytically simultaneously—a task not normally done in assignments.

ASSIGNMENT: Below is a list of student activities to do throughout the study of *Romeo and Juliet*.

Each activity is worth a certain amount of points taking into consideration the difficulty and amount of time to complete the individual project. Your job is to complete as many activities as it takes to reach 50 points. You will need to complete these activities by the final day of the unit and will have the entire 6-week unit to complete it. The activities will be graded individually out of their respective point total. You may choose to do more than 50 points worth of activities in order to try and earn all 50 points at the end, but no extra credit will be given for work exceeding over 50 points. If you choose to do more than 50 points worth of activities, your grade will not exceed 50 out of 50. All late projects will have 5 points deducted each day it is late. All projects more than 5 days late will be given a zero.

** Thank you to Gretchen Thomas, one of UGA's EDIT 2000 teachers, for a few of these project ideas. During the Spring 2012 semester, Gretchen created a project called Creativity Contract, and it is where many of these projects were inspired. I also used this idea in my project for ENGL 4320, “Oh, Hello Othello” and adapted it for this project.

ACTIVITIES:

Memorizing Lines: 4 x 5pts = 20 points

You will be given a list of lines to memorize. Each set of lines is worth five points each, so in order to receive all 20 points for this activity, you must successfully say four sets of lines. If you know the lines, you will get full credit. You can attempt to say each set of lines as many times as you need to get full credit (all 5 points), and you do not have to say all four sets at the same time. After each completion, I will check off and initial that you have completed that set and received full credit. You may also choose to just do one or two sets of lines along with another activity to get you to 50 points. Use these points wherever you need them.

***Romeo and Juliet* Crossword Puzzle:** 10 points

Create a crossword puzzle using different vocabulary, character names, places, etc. from *Romeo and Juliet*. Be creative with your clues. You can have no less than 20 clues and answers. You may do this on graph paper or on a crossword puzzle online generator. If the clues logically match the answers and all answers are present in the puzzle, you will receive full credit (10/10). Each clue/answer combo is worth a half of a point (0.5 x 20 total clues=10 total points).

Act Webbing: 10 points

Choose ONE act of *Romeo and Juliet* and create a web showcasing and organizing scenes, important characters, important events, key terms, things to notice, etc. It should be in sequential order (by scene and event). Your goal is to organize an entire act in a web format to make it easier to study the play. You may only do this activity one time. If the act is well documented and easily understood, you will receive the full 10 points.

Character Webbing: 10 points

Organize all of the characters from the play by his or her relationship to the other characters. Be sure to include small characterizations or facts about each character (just enough to know who the character is), as well as what his or her relationship is to the other characters he or she is linked to. A list of characters can be found on the first page of the play in your textbook. An example can be via Appendix A, found on page 54.

Act It Out! 30 points (see AIO Rubric)

Here's your chance to show off those acting skills! Create a movie (using iMovie or another program) of a scene in *Romeo and Juliet*. This can be done using drawings, slowmotion, with real people, filmed, etc. The lines must stay the same, but the setting, costuming, etc. can be whatever you want it to be. This can be done by yourself or with other people (they do not have to be classmates). If you choose to work with a classmate (or a few), you will all earn the full 30 points as long the amount of work accurately showcases the amount of people working on the movie. I must approve all scenes beforehand.

Blog or Social Media: 20 points (see BSM Rubric)

Create a blog or some other social media that showcases the journey of one character throughout the play. It does not necessarily have to be a main character like Romeo or Juliet. You could choose to do a blog through the perspective of a servant not mentioned in the play: what he or she sees, the information they overhear, etc. (in diary blog format, for example). Be appropriate. Remember, I will be grading these. Be sure to include characterizations of the character you are exploring/analyzing, as well as what they see or perceive from or about other characters, their surroundings, etc. Also include trials and events, and possibly even background information. You do not have to use an online blog

for this assignment; though if you do choose to do so, make sure I have the link to your blog when you turn in your project. You may write or type your blog if you so wish. A rubric can be found below.

Create a Movie Poster: 15 points (see MP Rubric)

Here, you're the director! Create a movie poster that you feel best represents *Romeo and Juliet*. On a separate sheet of paper, include who you would choose to star in your movie (roughly 7-9 characters); where you would film your movie (i.e. the setting); scenes and or lines you would cut; what themes, motifs, problems, etc. you choose to highlight and how; etc. Finally, write a synopsis of your movie (like the one you would find on the back of a DVD). This synopsis is meant to "sell me" on your movie (as in, convince me to pick it up, bring it home, and watch it). It should be roughly one to two paragraphs. Your movie poster should be poster board-sized. A rubric can be found below.

INDIVIDUAL RUBRICS:

(AIO) Act It Out Rubric

Standard	Points	Comments
The scene is filmed (or some sort of technology was used in the making of the movie).	___/5	
The lines of the scene were verbatim (or as close to it as possible) the chosen scene from the play.	___/5	
The lines were delivered clearly/cleanly (either by memorization or reading from a cue card or note cards).	___/5	
The scene was performed in a creative or innovative way via the choice of costumes, setting, etc.	___/5	
*The movie was turned in completed and working by the due date of the final project.	___/5	
*The teacher approved the scene beforehand.	___/5	
TOTAL	___/30	

*The final two standards are all or nothing (0 or 5 points) standards. These two should be "give-me" points, meaning if you do them, you automatically have 10 points.

(BSM) Blog/Social Media Rubric

Standard	Points	Comments
The student completes at least 6 short blog entries (1-2 paragraphs) or 3 long entries (3 or more paragraphs).	___/4	
The student effectively/convincingly writes as or from the perspective of his or her chosen character.	___/4	
The student includes information about other characters, events/occurrences, surroundings, etc. in each entry.	___/4	
The student includes a 2 to 3 sentence explanation stating whose perspective he or she is writing from, as well as why he or she chose this character.	___/2	
*The blog was turned in completed by the due date of the final project.	___/2	
TOTAL	___/20	

*This standard is an all or nothing (0 or 5 points) standard. These should be "give-me" points, meaning if you do it, you automatically have 5 points.

(MP) Create a Movie Poster Rubric

Standards	Points	Comments
The movie poster is clean and neat.	___/3	
The student includes 7 to 9 characters and corresponding actors/actresses he or she has chosen to be in the movie.	___/3	
The student includes valuable “director’s choice” information about the film, such as: the setting, scenes/lines that he or she wishes to cut (if any), motifs, etc.	___/3	
The student includes a “DVD back” synopsis of the movie. The synopsis is 1-2 paragraphs. (You may include information from the above standard in your synopsis as well if you so choose).	___/3	
*The movie poster is turned in completed by the due date of the final project.	___/3	
TOTAL	___/15	

*This standard is an all or nothing (0 or 5 points) standard. These should be “give-me” points, meaning if you do it, you automatically have 5 points.

FINAL RUBRIC:

***Romeo and Juliet* Student Activities Project Rubric**

Name of Student _____ Class Period _____

Did It	Activity	Comments	Points
Yes / No	Memorizing Lines	Number Attempted: Number Complete:	___ / ___
Yes / No	Crossword Puzzle		___ / 10
Yes / No	Act Webbing		___ / 10
Yes / No	Character Webbing		___ / 10
Yes / No	Act It Out!	[See Individual Rubric]	___ / 30
Yes / No	Blog or Social Media	[See Individual Rubric]	___ / 20
Yes / No	Create a Movie Poster	[See Individual Rubric]	___ / 15
	TOTAL		___ / 50

What My Point Total Means

Judging from the point total you received above, you can assume the following (unless I have spoken to you otherwise):

44-50 Total Points	36-43 Total Points	28-35 Total Points	20-27 Total Points	0-19 Total Points
The student	The student	The student	The student	The student did

effectively and outstandingly carried out the requirements of each activity.	adequately carried out the requirements of each activity.	moderately carried out the requirements of each activity.	ineffectively and insufficiently carried out the requirements of each activity.	few to none of the activities, nor did the student do them sufficiently.
Errors (both mechanical and organizational) were minimal to nonexistent.	Errors (both mechanical and organizational) were minimal.	There were moderately frequent errors (both mechanical and organizational).	There were frequent errors (both mechanical and organizational).	There were very frequent errors (both mechanical and organizational).
The student turned the completed (50+ points) project in on time.	The student may or may not have turned the completed project in on time.	The student may or may not have turned the completed project in on time, or did not complete the project.	The student may or may not have turned the completed project in on time, or did not complete the project.	The students may or may not have turned an incomplete project in on time.

GOAL #2:**Film Persuasive Essay Project (50 points)**

The goal of this essay is to allow students to effectively argue whether a film version of the play or the written text better represents a “teenaged problem” (such as love, family, the search for identity, friends, etc.) most effectively.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this essay is to allow my students to see Shakespeare in action. Students often lose interest in Shakespeare plays because the plays are typically only read. Plays are meant to be seen, not only read. We will watch the 1996 film *Romeo + Juliet* (Baz Luhrmann) film adaptation in class. I chose this version because it is the most recent version of the play on film and is easily relatable to high school students. By watching the film adaptation, students will be able to analyze the different portrayals of a “teenaged problem” of their choice in the form of an argumentative essay. Because many of the problems in play affect my students today, this analysis will allow students to dig deeper into issues, as well as how those same issues were portrayed by the film and in a play written over 400 years ago. This essay also adheres to goals of the CCSS.

ASSIGNMENT: You will watch the 1996 film *Romeo + Juliet* (Baz Luhrmann) film adaptation in class after we complete the play (about half way through week 4). After watching the movie, you

will be asked to write an essay arguing whether the film or the text version of the play portray your chosen teenaged problem most effectively. Bring in your own experiences and knowledge for this paper—it is very relevant. We will construct pre-writing and rough drafts in class, workshop and peer edit those drafts, and then you will be in charge of completing your final draft. You may want to consider the following questions while watching the film and during your pre-write:

- What themes and problems do the film and or the text focus on?
- What are the differences and similarities between the portrayal of these themes and problems in the text and the film?
- What did the film do that the text did not, or vice versa?
- Did the film enhance your reading and or understanding of the text?
- Etc.

Remember to include the following in your paper:

- You must take notes on the film as you watch it. These will be turned in with your essays as part of your grade. You may type them after if you wish, but this is not a requirement.
- Your essays will be 3 to 4 full pages double-spaced, 12 point font, and have 1-inch margins all the way around.
- Feel free to bring in personal feelings, expectation of the film and text, opinions, and the use of first person “I.”
- I want to hear your voice—I do not want to feel like I’m reading the side effects on the side of a medicine bottle.
- Use appropriate language. Your journals will give you an opportunity use slang, text talk, etc. This paper needs to be more formal.
- Remember to include a thesis statement that explains to me what you will be comparing and contrasting in your paper.

RUBRIC:

The following is the rubric for your Film Persuasive Essay. Each category is worth up to 6 points. Therefore, a perfect score on the essay component of this project would be 24 points. Because this is a 50-point project, the remaining 26 points will be divided as follows:

Movie Notes	___ / 6 points
Pre-Writing	___ / 6 points
Rough Draft	___ / 6 points
Peer Editing	___ / 6 points
Signed Contract	___ / 1 point (“Give Me” point)
TOTAL	___ / 10 points

Component	6	5	4	3	2	1
Focus	Takes a clear position and supports it consistently with well-chosen reasons and/or examples; may use persuasive strategy to convey an argument.	Takes a clear position and supports it with relevant reasons and/or examples through much of the essay.	Takes a clear position and supports it with some relevant reasons and/or examples; there is some development of the essay.	Takes a position and provides uneven support; may lack development in parts or be repetitive OR essay is no more than a well-written beginning.	Takes a position, but essay is undeveloped.	Attempts to take a position (addresses topic), but position is very unclear OR takes a position, but provides minimal or no support; may only paraphrase the prompt.
Organization	Is focused and well organized, with effective use of transitions.	Is well organized, but may lack some transitions.	Is generally organized, but has few to no transitions among sections.	Is organized in parts of the essay; other parts are disjointed and/or lack transitions.	Is disorganized or unfocused in much of the essay OR is clear, but too brief.	Exhibits little to no apparent organization.
Sentence Fluency and Word Choice	Consistently exhibits variety in sentence structure and word choice.	Exhibits some variety in sentence structure and uses good word choice; occasionally, words may be used inaccurately.	Most sentences are well constructed but have similar structure; word choice lacks variety or flair.	Sentence structure may be simple and unvaried; word choice is mostly accurate.	Sentences lack formal structure; word choice may often be inaccurate.	Sentences run-on and appear incomplete or rambling; word choice may be inaccurate in much or the entire essay.
Conventions	Errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation are few and do not interfere with understanding.	Errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation do not interfere with understanding.	More frequent errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation, but they do not interfere with understanding.	Errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation sometimes interfere with understanding.	Errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation interfere with understanding in much of the essay.	Errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation prevent reader from fully understanding essay.

*Rubric used from ReadWriteThink (2004) NCTE/IRA.

http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson405/PersuasiveWritingScoringGuide.pdf

PEER RESPECT CONTRACT:

**#TeenProblems—Romeo and Juliet
Peer Respect Contract**

I, _____ hereby promise to not laugh, make fun of, judge (whether openly or silently) any of my peers' work or comments before, during, or after the project is complete. I understand that my criticism can hurt my peers both personally and academically. I also understand that it is my responsibility to be respectful to my peers and my peers' work while we are peer reviewing and work shopping our essays.

I promise to be respectful, to help, and have my peers' best interest at heart just as I would wish they would for my essay and for me.

I understand that if, for any reason, I do not adhere to this contract, I am subject to a lower grade and an additional essay on respecting those around me. I also understand that Ms. Antonuccio is not making me sign this to make my life miserable, but rather because this is a serious process that can help me and my peers grow as writers and as people.

X _____ Date _____

[**Idea for permission slip borrowed and reworked from Kelly Galloway]

GOAL #3:

Reflective Response Journal (60 points)

The goal of this journal is to allow students to freely reflect on what they are reading, watching, and doing in class, as well as to respond to daily journal prompts. Students will take their own experiences, feelings, opinions, etc. and openly respond to whatever comes to mind.

PURPOSE: The purpose of requiring the students to respond to daily journal prompts as well as their nightly/in-class reading and discussions is to continue the dialogue of the text and the student. Students should feel free and comfortable to express their thoughts in these journals. Grammar, colloquialisms, etc. will not be graded. The purpose of this is solely for the student to find more about themselves and the text in conjunction with one another. If a discussion in class or a reading sparks an idea or a connection within the students' minds, I want to know about it. The daily journal prompts are there as a *suggested* prompt just to get the students writing. If a student has something else on his or her mind or heart, he or she is free to explore it. They and myself will only see this journal. This journal will start and continue discussions and thoughts that the students have in and outside of class.

ASSIGNMENT: You will keep a journal to be used both inside and outside of class. This journal will

be used every day to respond to readings and or discussions, and journal prompts. You will be required to do at least 3 of each (so 6 in total) every week. There will be daily journal prompts as well as time in class or at home to respond to discussions and readings. If you do not like the journal prompt of the day, write about something else. This is your journal for you to write down your own thoughts, questions, opinions, connections, etc. There is a great deal of connections to teen life in *Romeo and Juliet* that can easily serve as inspiration to write. Grammar and mechanics will never be graded for this assignment. Feel free to use slang, text talk, etc.—whatever you wish. Only you (the student) and me (the teacher) will ever read this journal, with one exception: **If you write anything about you hurting yourself, you hurting anyone else, or anyone hurting you, I am required BY LAW to report it.** This is not meant to scare you or deter you—if you see this journal as an outlet for deep feelings, please share them. This is solely meant to protect you and me. I want you to make me cry. I want you to make me laugh. I want you to make me think things I have never thought of before, either about a discussion, the text, yourself, or even life. I want you to question. I want you to feel free. But most importantly, I want you to write and explore yourself in the process.

Sample Daily Journal Prompts:

- Tell me about a time when you had to make a tough decision, an easy decision, the wrong decision, etc. What happened? What were the consequences? I encourage you to reference the texts we have read, but this is not a requirement. Write what you feel.
- Tell me about a time when you let your feelings get away from you. What happened? I encourage you to reference the texts we have read, but this is not a requirement. Write what you feel.
- Tell me your opinion on love. Is it a feeling? Is it real? What about love at first sight? Can a teenager truly be in love? I encourage you to reference the texts we have read, but this is not a requirement. Write what you feel.
- Tell me about the most meaningful relationship you have. Is it a best friend? A parent? A sibling? Is it a coach or even a pet? I encourage you to reference the texts we have read, but this is not a requirement. Write what you feel.

RUBRIC:

The following is your rubric for the Reflective Response Journal. Remember: you must have at least 6 journal entries per week—at least 3 addressing what you read and/or what we discussed in class, and at least 3 responding to the given journal prompt of the day (or one you come up with yourself). Grammar and mechanics will never be counted against you in this project.

If your journal is done and apparent thought has been into your responses, you will receive full

credit. At the end of the unit, your final Reflective Response Journal grade will be compiled via the following process:

of Journal entries X 5 total weeks = **RAW POINT TOTAL**

Raw Point Total X 2 = **Grade / 60 possible points**

WEEKLY RUBRIC:

Student Name _____ Week _____

Reading and Discussion Responses:

3+ 2 1 0

Comments: _____

Journal Prompt Responses:

3+ 2 1 0

Comments: _____

TOTAL _____ / 6

FINAL JOURNAL RUBRIC:

Student Name _____

Week	Reading/ Discussion	Prompt	Week Total
1	___ / 3	___ / 3	___ / 6
2	___ / 3	___ / 3	___ / 6
3	___ / 3	___ / 3	___ / 6
4	___ / 3	___ / 3	___ / 6
5	___ / 3	___ / 3	___ / 6
Raw Point TOTAL	___ / 15	___ / 15	___ / 30
FINAL TOTAL: ____ / 30 x 2 = ____ / 60			

Comments:

Introductory Activity

General 9th Grade ELA Class, 50 minutes every day

By this time of the year, the students know to come in to class, sit down, and prepare to work by the final bell. I take attendance at my door as my students file in order to reserve as much time as I can for instruction. I also have a class blog page set up and the students know to check it for class announcements, assignments, and project descriptions that they may have missed or needed more clarification on during class time.

MONDAY:

Daily Objective: This introductory activity will allow students to make connections to the unity theme of teen issues and to Shakespeare’s themes in *Romeo and Juliet*.

Common Core Standards: ELACC9-10RL9, ELACC9-10RL6, ELACC9-10SL1c, ELACC9-10SL1d

2 minutes – class announcements and housekeeping

5 minutes – Introduction to new unit of study (including a little bit of background on the play and Shakespeare (very minimal), and an intro to “chalk talks.”

5-7 minutes – Chalk talk with the center topic being “Shakespeare.”

[The assumption with this activity—and I do know the danger with assumptions—is that the students will have a difficult time finding things to say about Shakespeare. My hope is that there will be more questions and concerns on the board than facts and knowledge.]

2-3 minutes—Discuss what is on the board. Assure the students that their lack of knowledge and concerns about Shakespeare will soon be diminished.

[I will take a picture of the board and type of the questions and topics that came up for further reference.]

5-7 minutes – Chalk talk with the center topic being “Teen Issues.”

[The assumption is that the students will have no problem chalk talking this topic.]

2-3 minutes – Discuss what is on the board and how, if students know this much about issues that affect teenaged students, they know more about Shakespeare and *Romeo and Juliet* than they originally thought.

[I will take a picture of the board and type of the questions and topics that came up for further reference.]

6-10 minutes – Have students get into groups of 4 or 5 and discuss the topics on the board. If they need guiding questions, the following will be posted on the board for reference:

- What questions do you have about teen issues?
- What on the board catches your attention most about teen issues?
- What, if anything, did you put on the board?
- What topics would you like to discuss and explore further?
- Did anything on the board surprise you? Anger you? Concern you?

3-5 minutes – Discuss as a large group what the individual groups discussed.

Remaining class time – Pass out the unit assignments and discuss the expectations, texts, and projects of the unit. Also, answer any questions that the students may have. **

Homework – Have students write their first journal entry as a reflection on the chalk talks. This entry can include concerns they have about the unit topic or texts, any questions that they have, feelings, opinions, etc.

** If discussion runs over, the next class will begin with the unit and assignment explanations. There will also be more information posted on the class blog. Tuesday’s class will start with the viewing of the *Romeo + Juliet* film (Baz Luhrmann), so there is time to talk about the unit and the project and to answer any questions that the students have.

Lesson Plans

WEEK 1

TUESDAY-THURSDAY –

Daily Objective:

Students will view the film as a “living text” upon which they will make connections between the themes of the film and teen issues.

Common Core Standards:

ELACC9-10RL1
ELACC9-10RL2
ELACC9-10RL6
** Film as text
ELACC9-10SL5

Plans:

2 minutes – Class announcements and housekeeping.

3-5 minutes – Answer any questions about the project. Introduce the movie.

5-7 minutes – Reflective Response Journal (RRJ)

Quick Response Prompt: What do you expect to or hope to learn from the movie? About Shakespeare? About yourself? Your response can be a bulleted list and does not have to be very long, BUT they do have to be real expectations and hopes as we will return to this list later on. OR you may write on whatever you wish, as long as it is unit related.

Remainder of Class – Watch as much as the film as possible.

Homework:

Keep in mind what you watched today in class. Take this opportunity to do a journal response about the movie, about what you are learning from the film or about yourself, any concerns about Shakespeare or the film, teen issues you are seeing in the film, etc. Remember, you have to have 6 total journal entries per week.

FRIDAY –

Daily Objective:

Students will use the class-driven discussion and their journals to talk about the film and the issues that they have found to be the most important, most compelling, and those they wish to explore further.

Common Core Standards:

ELACC9-10RL3
ELACC9-10SL1a
ELACC9-10SL1c
ELACC9-10SL1d
Various ELACC9-10W standards

Plans:

2 minutes – Class announcements and housekeeping.

5-10 minutes – Class discussion about the film. Did it clear up any fears about Shakespeare? What stood out to you about the film? What would you like to explore further?

Compile a list of issues brought up by the film on the board.

5 minutes – RRJ, then turn in journals.

Pick an issue on the board. What would you like to explore about this issue? Why did this issue stand out to you? Are you surprised to see this issue in a Shakespearean play? OR, response to the discussion. What stood out to you, what surprised you, etc. OR, free response.

Remainder of class – Students will create Body Biographies to use as a resource for the rest of the unit.

In groups of 3 to 4 students, each group will choose a main character from the play (or a character to represent a set of characters, such as Mr. Capulet to represent the Capulets as a whole). On a piece of butcher-block paper, each group will trace a group member to create their assigned character. On each character, each group will write or draw representations of that character's issues, characteristics, traits, etc.

*These will be hung in the classroom each "Reading Day" class period for reference and to add more information as students read.

Homework:

No student homework.

My Homework:

Grade journals while students are creating their Body Biographies, and finish the remaining ones over the weekend. If students want their journals to write in over the weekend, I will grade their journals first and try and hand them back that class. Also, take the issues that the students came up with and create a poster for class reference. This way, students can see the issues that other classes thought of as well as their own and reference them when needed.

WEEK 2

MONDAY –

Daily Objective:

Students will use and translate Shakespearean language in order to understand/begin to understand his iconic style, humor, and vocabulary.

Common Core Standards:

ELACC9-10RL4
ELACC9-10SL1
ELACC9-10SL4
ELACC9-10L4
ELACC9-10L5
Various ELACC9-10W standards

Plans: ACTIVITY DAY

2 minutes – Class announcements and housekeeping, hand back journals.

5 minutes – RRJ

What character do you find most compelling/interesting? Most like you? Most unlike you?
Etc. OR, free response.

3-5 minutes – Students will get into groups of 3 or 4 and use the Shakespearean Insult Kit (Appendix B) to explore and play with Shakespearean language.

2-3 minutes – Groups will share their favorite insults with the class.

5-7 minutes – As a class, we will take a passage from *Romeo and Juliet* and translate it into modern English.

We will read the lines and highlight the words or phrases that are confusing or irregular. We will then use context clues from surrounding lines to figure out what the line is saying. Finally, we will then translate it into another form together: texting language, colloquialisms or slang, Standard English, etc.

5-7 minutes – In the insult groups, students will be given a passage from *Romeo and Juliet* to translate into modern English using the same process we used as a class.

7-10 minutes – Groups will present their lines to the class.

Students will read the original line, share what words gave them trouble and the context clues they used to figure out the line, and finally share their new translated line.

7-10 minutes – I will talk about Shakespearean language and pass out a sheet of common Shakespearean words to help students read the text more efficiently.

Because Shakespeare made up many of his own words—many of which are common parts of our language today—his language is worth the time in explaining and teaching to my students.

Remainder of class – Introduction to play terminology (for example, asides, prologues, choruses, elements of tragedy, etc.). What do these terms mean, and why are they important to the play and for our own understanding of the play and characters?

**All handouts given in class will also be posted on the class blog for reference outside of the classroom if a student happens to forget or lose his or her handout.

Homework:

Students will read summaries of Act I online, using a book, etc. (If a student does not have internet access, I will have print outs available for them to take home.)
No Fear Shakespeare, Spark Notes, Shmoop (my preference), or another online source.

TUESDAY –

Daily Objective:

Students will read assigned passages in groups in order to familiarize themselves with the important elements of the text, such as language and characters. Most importantly, students will explore the unit theme within the Shakespearean text.

Common Core Standards:

ELACC9-10RL1
ELACC9-10RL2
ELACC9-10RL3
ELACC9-10RL4
ELACC9-10SL1
ELACC9-10SL3
ELACC9-10SL4
Various ELACC9-10W standards

Plans: READING DAY

2 minutes – Class announcements and housekeeping.

5 minutes – RRJ

Look through Act I and find a line(s) that confuses you. Go through the same process that we did in groups yesterday (Monday) and translate it. OR, free response.

30-35 minutes – Students will be put into reading groups. These groups will remain the same throughout the remainder of the unit (unless unsolvable problems arise). In each group, the students will assign parts to one another and read as much of Act I together as they can. On Thursday we will finish the act, so students should take their time, ask questions, and get into the meat of the text via the questions below.

Keep in mind these questions when reading:

1. What words stand out, phrases, or lines stand out to you? Why?
2. What is going on in the scene? (What is the main action?)
3. Is there conflict in the scene? If so, what is it?
4. What issues (teen issues, etc.) stick out to you?
5. How does the written scene compare to the film version (if any)?

Remainder of class – Reconvene as a large group. Class discussion about the reading questions and their reading experiences. What is it like to read Shakespeare? Did seeing the video first help your reading experience? Etc. Add to Body Biographies if necessary.

Homework:

No student homework.

WEDNESDAY –

Daily Objective:

Students will explore and discuss the art of decision-making, as well as make connections to their own lives and the text.

Common Core Standards:

ELACC9-10SL1
ELACC9-10SL2
ELACC9-10SL3
ELACC9-10SL4
ELACC9-10RI1
ELACC9-10RI2
ELACC9-10RI4
ELACC9-10RI5
ELACC9-10RI6
Various ELACC9-10W standards

Plans: ACTIVITY DAY

2 minutes – Class announcements and housekeeping.

5 minutes – RRJ

Tell me about a time when you had to make a tough decision, an easy decision, the wrong decision, etc. What happened? What were the consequences? I encourage you to reference the texts we have read, but doing so is not a requirement. Write what you feel. OR, free response.

10-12 minutes – Large group activity: I will read aloud a series of scenarios, each with a list of choices a person could make pertaining to each scenario. Students will write down their answers (A, B, C, or D) on a piece of scrap paper. We will then have a large group discussion about why they chose each decision, as well as the process that got them to that decision. The discussion is somewhat like a group opinionaire.

2 minutes – Small group activity: Pass out articles and explain the next activity.

Each article is about decision-making—the process of making decision, why we make poor decisions, how teenagers make decisions, etc. Students will be given one of the articles (I will pass them out randomly), then get into a group with the classmates that were given the same article. Each group will read the article (individually or as a group—they decide). After they read the article, they will discuss what it said. I will be walking around to make sure everyone is participating.

**The articles range in length and complexity, so if there are students with lower reading abilities that may not grasp the concepts of an article by just reading it, or are slower readers, they may be given a shorter or less complex article in order to participate better in discussion.

– ARTICLES:

- “Teenagers—Inside the Teenaged Brain” (Marty Wolner, *Ezine Articles*, 2008)
- “Why Teens are Such Impulsive Risk Takers” (No author, *Science Daily*, 2007)
- “Why Your Brain Can’t Always Make Good Decisions” (Elizabeth Landau, CNN.com, 2009)
- “Why Do We Make Bad Choices?” (Tom Scheve, TLC.com, no date)

7-10 minutes – Students will read and discuss their articles.

Questions to consider:

1. What do you think the article is saying?
2. What did you understand well about the article? What was confusing?
3. What thoughts, opinions, or examples did you think of while you were reading?

10 minutes – (2 minutes to get into new groups) Students will then create a new group of 4—each member having read a different article. Students will have 2 minutes each to talk about his or her article to their group members. The talk can be a summary of the article or something interesting that their group discussed about the article. I will keep time.

5-7 minutes – Large group discussion: How do these articles relate to the text? Who is making decisions so far in *Romeo and Juliet*, and what decisions are they making? What did you learn, if anything, about your own decision making process as a teen (for example, what are the things that factor in to your decision making)?

Remainder of Class – (Should be about 5 minutes) As a class, we will watch a few clips of the TV show “America’s Funniest Home Videos” in order to humorously show examples of people making poor decisions.

Homework:

Students will read summaries of Act I online, using a book, etc. (If a student does not have internet access, I will have print outs available for them to take home.)

No Fear Shakespeare, Spark Notes, Shmoop (my preference), or another online source.

THURSDAY –

Daily Objective:

Students will read assigned passages in groups in order to familiarize themselves with the important elements of the text, such as language and characters. Most importantly, students will explore the unit theme within the Shakespearean text.

Common Core Standards:

ELACC9-10RL1
ELACC9-10RL2
ELACC9-10RL3
ELACC9-10RL4
ELACC9-10SL1
ELACC9-10SL3
ELACC9-10SL4
Various ELACC9-10W standards

Plans: READING DAY

2 minutes – Class announcements and housekeeping.

5 minutes – RRJ

Tell me your opinion on love. Is it a feeling? Is it real? Can a teenager truly be in love? I encourage you to reference the texts we have read, but doing so is not a requirement. Write what you feel. OR, free response.

30-35 minutes – Students will get into their reading groups from Tuesday. In each group, the students will assign parts to one another and read the remainder of Act I together. Students should take their time, ask questions, and get into the meat of the text via the questions below.

Keep in mind these questions when reading:

1. What words stand out, phrases, or lines stand out to you? Why?
2. What is going on in the scene? (What is the main action?)
3. Is there conflict in the scene? If so, what is it?
4. What issues (teen issues, etc.) stick out to you?
5. How does the written scene compare to the film version (if any)?
6. What attributes of love do you see?

Remainder of class – Reconvene as a large group. Class discussion about the reading questions and their reading experiences. The theme of love is often the main focus of study when reading or viewing *Romeo and Juliet*. Although we know it is not the only theme of the play, it is worth exploring. What do you notice about Romeo and Juliet’s attraction to each other from the text? From the film? How do you feel about love? Etc. Add to Body Biographies if necessary.

Homework:

Journals will be due next class after the Bell Buster, so make sure you have your entries done.

FRIDAY –

Daily Objective:

Students will explore the theme of love, one of the most popular themes *Romeo and Juliet*, through modern and Shakespearean language.

Common Core Standards:

ELACC9-10SL1c
ELACC9-10SL1d
ELACC9-10SL4
Various ELACC9-10W standards

Plans: ACTIVITY DAY

2 minutes – Class announcements and housekeeping.

5 minutes – RRJ, then take up journals.

Does love at first sight exist? I encourage you to reference the texts we have read, but doing so is not a requirement. Write what you feel. OR, free response.

2-3 minutes – Students will get into their reading groups and write down their favorite (appropriate) pickup lines.

2-3 minutes – We will share the pickup lines as a large group.

5-7 minutes – Chalk talk with the central topic being “love.”

3-5 minutes – Large group discussion about what is on the board. What stands out the most? Are there any views that completely differ from your own? Etc.

5-7 minutes – In their reading groups, students will search through Act I and find some Shakespearean “pickup lines.”

2-3 minutes – Share these lines with the class.

17-20 minutes – Using Romeo’s famous pickup line, students will translate analyze it and translate it into a new and more modern pickup line. Computers will be available if students need to reference something in the line.

“If I profane with my unworhiest hand / This holy shrine, the gentle sin is this: / my lips,
too blushing pilgrims, ready stand / to smooth that rough tough with a tender kiss”
(1.5.104-107).

Remainder of Class – Discuss the line’s meaning, it is context in the play, and it’s context historically. Groups will then share their new pickup lines to the class.

Homework:

Students will read assigned Shakespearean Sonnet. (I will hand it out in class, and they will also be available on the class blog along with each group’s sonnet assignment.)

My Homework:

Grade journals.

WEEK 3

MONDAY –

Daily Objective:

Students will compare Shakespearean Sonnets to modern song lyrics in order to explore differing views of love. Both will be compared with *Romeo and Juliet*.

Common Core Standards:

ELACC9-10RL2
ELACC9-10RL7
ELACC9-10RL8
ELACC9-10SL1
ELACC9-10SL2
ELACC9-10SL3
ELACC9-10SL4
Various ELACC9-10W standards

Plans: ACTIVITY DAY

2 minutes – Class announcements and housekeeping. Hand back journals.

5 minutes – RRJ

Tell me how you got your opinion(s) about love. Was it from Disney movies or fairy tales? From a time you were in love and got hurt? From your parents? From TV or the media? I encourage you to reference the texts we have read, but doing so is not a requirement. Write what you feel. OR, free response.

10 minutes – Listen to L.L. Cool J’s song “I Need Love,” and Ellie Goulding’s song “Figure 8.” Lyrics will be provided via a handout.

7-10 minutes – In reading groups, students will discuss these two songs.

Consider the following questions:

1. What are the songs saying about love?
2. Do the songs differ or agree in their views about love? How?
3. Do you agree or disagree with the songs? Why?
4. Male vs. female perspective?
5. How do they relate to *Romeo and Juliet*? To the decision making articles we read?

5-7 minutes – Large group discussion about the songs and what each group talked about.

12-15 minutes – I will pass out a different Shakespearean Sonnet to each group. Each group will read the sonnet (together or individually, group choice) and try to break down the poem like they broke down the songs. I will be available for questions. The chosen poems are on-theme and do not need any excess knowledge of poetry to analyze them for this purpose.

Consider the following questions:

1. What is the author saying in the poem?
2. Is there any figurative language that you know of?
3. What is the narrator’s view of love?
4. Compare this poem to the songs. How do they differ? How are they similar?
5. Compare this poem to *Romeo and Juliet*. How do they relate?

Remainder of Class – Reconvene as a large group. How do Shakespeare’s views of love in the 1590s compare to Ellie Goulding’s view, L.L. Cool J’s view, and your view?

Homework:

Students will read summaries of Act II online, using a book, etc. (If a student does not have internet access, I will have print outs available for them to take home.)

No Fear Shakespeare, Spark Notes, Shmoop (my preference), or another online source.

TUESDAY –

Daily Objective:

Students will read assigned passages in groups in order to familiarize themselves with the important elements of the text, such as language and characters. Most importantly, students will explore the unit theme within the Shakespearean text.

Common Core Standards:

ELACC9-10RL1
ELACC9-10RL2
ELACC9-10RL3
ELACC9-10RL4
ELACC9-10SL1
ELACC9-10SL3

ELACC9-10SL4

Various ELACC9-10W standards

Plans: READING DAY

2 minutes – Class announcements and housekeeping.

5 minutes – RRJ

Free Response.

30-35 minutes – Students will get into their reading groups. In each group, the students will assign parts to one another and read Act II together. Students should take their time, ask questions, and get into the meat of the text via the questions below.

Keep in mind these questions when reading:

1. What words stand out, phrases, or lines stand out to you? Why?
2. What is going on in the scene? (What is the main action?)
3. Is there conflict in the scene? If so, what is it?
4. What issues (teen issues, etc.) stick out to you?
5. How does the written scene compare to the film version (if any)?

3-5 minutes – Reconvene as a large group. Class discussion about the reading questions and their reading experiences. How did reading the scene compare to watching it? Add to Body Biographies if necessary.

2-3 minutes – Scene Presentation explanation: Each group will choose a scene out of a hat from Act II. Their chosen scene will be the one that they must translate and create into a “modern” scene to present to the class. The language can be texting the balcony scene, turning it into a reality show-esque feel, etc. This is a time for students to have fun and be creative. Students will be able to read their lines aloud when they present and costumes are not required (nor encouraged—if students want them, that is their choice and on their time).

Remainder of Class – Students can begin to prepare their scenes. They will have all day Wednesday for this project.

Homework:

Students can work on their scene translations if they would like (possibly each student translates his or her own character’s parts). They will have all class on Wednesday to finish, prepare, and practice their scenes.

WEDNESDAY –

Daily Objective:

Students will prepare to present their Act II scenes to the class. This translation of lines into creative and “modern” language will continue the unit’s theme, as well as the text.

Common Core Standards:

ELACC9-10SL (all)
Various ELACC9-10W standards

Plans: ACTIVITY DAY

2 minutes – Class announcements and housekeeping.

5 minutes – RRJ

Line analysis (passage to be chosen at a later date).

Remainder of Class – Students will break out into groups and begin work on their projects. They will have very little time on Thursday to work, so the bulk of the project must get done today. I will be walking around and monitoring the progress of each group, as well as answering any questions that may come about.

Homework:

Students will read summaries of Act III, Scene I online, using a book, etc. (If a student does not have internet access, I will have print outs available for them to take home.)

No Fear Shakespeare, Spark Notes, Shmoop (my preference), or another online source.

THURSDAY –

Daily Objective:

Students will read assigned passages in groups in order to familiarize themselves with the important elements of the text, such as language and characters. Most importantly, students will explore the unit theme within the Shakespearean text.

Common Core Standards:

ELACC9-10RL1
ELACC9-10RL2
ELACC9-10RL3
ELACC9-10RL4
ELACC9-10SL1
ELACC9-10SL3
ELACC9-10SL4
Various ELACC9-10W standards

Plans: READING DAY

2 minutes – Class announcements and housekeeping. Hand back journals.

5 minutes – RRJ

Tell me about the most meaningful relationship you have. Is it a best friend? A parent? A sibling? Is it a coach or even a pet? I encourage you to reference the texts we have read, but doing so is not a requirement. Write what you feel. OR, free response.

30-35 minutes – Students will get into their reading groups. In each group, the students will assign parts to one another and read Act III, Scene I together. Students should take their time, ask questions, and get into the meat of the text via the questions below.

Keep in mind these questions when reading:

1. What words stand out, phrases, or lines stand out to you? Why?
2. What is going on in the scene? (What is the main action?)
3. Is there conflict in the scene? If so, what is it?
4. What issues (teen issues, etc.) stick out to you?
5. How does the written scene compare to the film version (if any)?
6. There is a shift of mood/tone in the play from “love-dovey” to dark and violent. Talk about this shift of mood/tone.

3-5 minutes – Reconvene as a large group. Class discussion about the reading questions and their reading experiences. We will start to focus on the shifting of mood/tone in the play. We are now starting to see the elements of a *tragedy*. Add to Body Biographies if necessary.

Remainder of Class – Groups may work on their Scene Presentations if time permits.

Homework:

Journals will be due next class after the Bell Buster, so make sure you have your entries done. Finish up your Scene Presentations.

FRIDAY –

Daily Objective:

Students will present their scenes to the class. This will extend the feeling of a “living text” that we got from viewing the film. It will also create a connection to the scene by watching their peers recreate the scenes.

Common Core Standards:

ELACC9-10SL (all)
Various ELACC9-10W standards

Plans: PRESENTATION DAY

2 minutes – Class announcements and housekeeping.

5 minutes – RRJ, then take up journals.

Tell me about the most meaningful relationship you have. Is it a best friend? A parent? A sibling? Is it a coach or even a pet? I encourage you to reference the texts we have read, but doing so is not a requirement. Write what you feel. OR, free response.

Remainder of Class – Scene presentations (no more than 7 minutes per presentation).

*I will be very deliberate with time management.

Homework:

Students will read summaries of the rest of Act III online, using a book, etc. (If a student does not have internet access, I will have print outs available for them to take home.)

No Fear Shakespeare, Spark Notes, Shmoop (my preference), or another online source.

My Homework:

Grade journals.

WEEK 4

MONDAY –

Daily Objective:

Students will read assigned passages in groups in order to familiarize themselves with the important elements of the text, such as language and characters. Most importantly, students will explore the unit theme within the Shakespearean text.

Common Core Standards:

ELACC9-10RL1
ELACC9-10RL2
ELACC9-10RL3
ELACC9-10RL4
ELACC9-10SL1
ELACC9-10SL3
ELACC9-10SL4
Various ELACC9-10W standards

Plans: READING DAY

2 minutes – Class announcements and housekeeping. Hand back journals.

5 minutes – RRJ

How are people banished/shunned today? What does it mean to be banished/shunned? How do you feel if or when you are banished/shunned? Have you ever banished/shunned

someone? I encourage you to reference the texts we have read, but doing so is not a requirement. Write what you feel. OR, free response.

4-6 minutes – Quickly explain the Student Activities Project again. Tell the students that the information can be found on the class blog, and if anyone has lost their hard copy of the rubrics or activity explanations, I will give them a new copy. The project is due the last day of the unit (Friday of Week 6).

25-30 minutes – Students will get into their reading groups. In each group, the students will assign parts to one another and read Act III, Scenes 2-5 together. Students should take their time, ask questions, and get into the meat of the text via the questions below.

Keep in mind these questions when reading:

1. What words stand out, phrases, or lines stand out to you? Why?
2. What is going on in the scene? (What is the main action?)
3. Is there conflict in the scene? If so, what is it?
4. What issues (teen issues, etc.) stick out to you?
5. How does the written scene compare to the film version (if any)?
6. How is the mood of the play shifting?
7. Talk about the role of the nurse. How is she affecting Romeo and Juliet and their relationship?
8. Romeo is banished. Think about banishment.

3-5 minutes – Reconvene as a large group. Class discussion about the reading questions and their reading experiences. We are now starting to see the elements of a *tragedy*. How are the decisions of the nurse affecting Romeo and Juliet? How is a feeling of banishment/shunning affecting Romeo and Juliet? Add to Body Biographies if necessary.

Homework:

If they have not started already, students should be working on their Student Activities Project.

TUESDAY –

Daily Objective:

Students will use scenes from Act III to create a news article that addresses the possible outcomes of decisions made by the characters in the acts. The purpose of the activity is to have students decipher what information and issues are “important” enough to include in a news blurb, as well as which ones are important enough to lead characters down a

path either of their choosing or one that was created for them. (Decision making/freedom emphasis.)

Common Core Standards:

ELACC9-10RL2

ELACC9-10RL3

ELACC9-10W1

Various ELACC9-10W standards

Plans: ACTIVITY DAY

2 minutes – Class announcements and housekeeping.

5 minutes – RRJ

Do you ever feel like you cannot make your own decisions? As teenagers, do you have very much freedom? Is your life, *your* life? I encourage you to reference the texts we have read, but doing so is not a requirement. Write what you feel. OR, free response.

10-12 minutes – Students will get into their writing groups and choose a scene from Act 3 out of a hat. They will take this scene and complete a worksheet about the scene in preparation to write a news article about the scene on their own. The worksheet will answer the following questions:

1. What characters are in this scene?
2. What are the actions of these characters?
3. What issues are present in this scene?
4. What are the possible outcomes to these issues for the characters?

12-15 minutes – Students will go back to their seats and write a “Breaking News!” article about their scene set in present-day. Students will choose the setting, the information, issues, characters, etc. from the scene to include in the article. The emphasis of a possible ending for the characters the students choose will connect to how decision making, either by the character or by others around the character, can affect the outcome of their lives. Creating a fake/possible ending/outcome for the character also allows the students to be creative.

Homework:

Students will read summaries of Act IV online, using a book, etc. (If a student does not have internet access, I will have print outs available for them to take home.)

No Fear Shakespeare, Spark Notes, Shmoop (my preference), or another online source.

If they have not started already, students should be working on their Student Activities Project.

WEDNESDAY –

Daily Objective:

Students will read assigned passages in groups in order to familiarize themselves with the important elements of the text, such as language and characters. Most importantly, students will explore the unit theme within the Shakespearean text.

Common Core Standards:

ELACC9-10RL1
ELACC9-10RL2
ELACC9-10RL3
ELACC9-10RL4
ELACC9-10SL1
ELACC9-10SL3
ELACC9-10SL4
Various ELACC9-10W standards

Plans: READING DAY

2 minutes – Class announcements and housekeeping.

5 minutes – RRJ

Tell me about a time when you had to make a tough decision. Why was it tough to make? Was it the write decision? Did you have outside pressure from someone or something? Did you regret your decision? I encourage you to reference the texts we have read, but doing so is not a requirement. Write what you feel. OR, free response.

4-6 minutes – Explain the Film Persuasive Essay again. The essay will be due a week from today (so the Wednesday of Week 5). I will be holding film-viewing sessions before and after school for the rest of this week and the beginning of next week for students that sign up and wish to view the film again. I will have a sign up sheet every day for students to sign up for viewing times. Regardless, I will be at school early and stay late this week for paper conferencing and film viewing.

**I am tricking my students here. The essays that they turn into me in a week will NOT be their final essays, even though they have been told they are. The last week of this unit will

be devoted strictly to writing instruction, and I want to know where my students' strengths and weaknesses in their writing lie. In order to focus my instruction on elements of writing that they actually need to work on, I will quickly grade these "fake final" papers between the Wednesday of Week 5 and Monday of Week 6. This will give me a good idea of what they need to work on. I will use the rubric (found in Goal #2) to grade their "fake final" drafts, and then grade their actual paper via a comparison of improvement between the two papers. The actual final paper will not be due until the last day of the unit (Friday of Week 6). All instruction in Week 6 will focus on writing instruction that each class needs, as well as peer conferencing and conferencing with me, writing in class, and editing in class. **The Film Persuasive Essay is NOT the first paper my students have turned in, so it is assumed that they have some sort of basic writing instruction (such as what is a thesis and how do I write it, etc.). The purpose of Week 6 writing instruction is to focus more on specific writing problems that my students have. Earlier papers were more informal in content, and therefore the Film Persuasive Essay will introduce more "formal" writing.

25-30 minutes – Students will get into their reading groups. In each group, the students will assign parts to one another and read Act IV. Students should take their time, ask questions, and get into the meat of the text via the questions below.

Keep in mind these questions when reading:

1. What words stand out, phrases, or lines stand out to you? Why?
2. What is going on in the scene? (What is the main action?)
3. Is there conflict in the scene? If so, what is it?
4. What issues (teen issues, etc.) stick out to you?
5. How does the written scene compare to the film version (if any)?
6. Are Romeo and Juliet in control? Or are their parents in control?
7. What is the role of the friar? Talk about him as a character. Is he a positive or a negative influence?

3-5 minutes – Reconvene as a large group. Class discussion about the reading questions and their reading experiences. We are now starting to see the elements of a *tragedy*. How are the decisions of the friar affecting Romeo and Juliet? Add to Body Biographies if necessary.

Homework:

Film Persuasive Essay is due a week from today. Students should begin to work on it. If they have not started already, students should be working on their Student Activities Project.

THURSDAY –

Daily Objective:

Students will relate what they have been reading and talking about in class to what issues affect them everyday. Doing so will get students thinking about issues that are close to them, as well as serve as a prewrite for their upcoming papers.

Common Core Standards:

ELACC9-10RL3
ELACC9-10SL1a
ELACC9-10SL1c
ELACC9-10SL1d
Various ELACC9-10W standards

Plans: ACTIVITY DAY

2 minutes – Class announcements and housekeeping.

Sign up for film-viewing times for anyone that wants it.

5 minutes – RRJ

Eulogy: a speech or piece of writing that praises someone or something highly, typically someone who has just died: "his good friend delivered a brief eulogy."

Think about someone close to you that you have lost. This person does not have to be dead, though they can be. It could be a lost relationship or friendship. Write a eulogy to this person letting them know how you feel. Write what you feel. OR, free response.

3-5 minutes – Group body biographies activity:

As we are getting into our paper writing, students need a review of what we have read as a class so far. Each group will create a body biography, but the character they are creating is a modern-day teenager. They will draw representations of struggles and issues, write quotes from the play or any other supplementary readings, give them body characteristics of a normal teenager, and pay close attention to the issues they wish to explore further for their papers. This will serve almost as a prewrite for their papers.

30 minutes – Groups create their body biographies.

10 minutes – Present body biographies to the class.

Homework:

Students will read summaries of Act V online, using a book, etc. (If a student does not have internet access, I will have print outs available for them to take home.)

No Fear Shakespeare, Spark Notes, Shmoop (my preference), or another online source.

Film Persuasive Essay is due Wednesday of Week 5. Students should begin to work on it.

If they have not started already, students should be working on their Student Activities Project.

FRIDAY –

Daily Objective:

Students will read assigned passages in groups in order to familiarize themselves with the important elements of the text, such as language and characters. Most importantly, students will explore the unit theme within the Shakespearean text.

Common Core Standards:

ELACC9-10RL1
ELACC9-10RL2
ELACC9-10RL3
ELACC9-10RL4
ELACC9-10SL1
ELACC9-10SL3
ELACC9-10SL4
Various ELACC9-10W standards

Plans: READING DAY

2 minutes – Class announcements and housekeeping.

Sign up for film-viewing times for anyone that wants it.

5 minutes – RRJ, then take up journals

Tell me what you are writing about in your paper. If you have not started your paper yet, what are you thinking about writing? You can use this journal as a brainstorming activity if you would like, or a way to explore your issue of choice. OR, free response.

30-35 minutes – Students will get into their reading groups. In each group, the students will assign parts to one another and read Act V. Students should take their time, ask questions, and get into the meat of the text via the questions below.

Keep in mind these questions when reading:

1. What words stand out, phrases, or lines stand out to you? Why?
2. What is going on in the scene? (What is the main action?)
3. Is there conflict in the scene? If so, what is it?
4. What issues (teen issues, etc.) stick out to you?
5. How does the written scene compare to the film version (if any)?
6. As we finish the play, what is shocking to you? What did you expect? How could this have happened?

3-5 minutes – Reconvene as a large group. Class discussion about the reading questions and their reading experiences. Why is this story so important to humanity? Why has it stood the test of time? Add to Body Biographies if necessary.

Homework:

Film Persuasive Essay is due Wednesday of Week 5. Students should begin to work on it. If they have not started already, students should be working on their Student Activities Project.

My Homework:

Grade journals.

WEEK 5

MONDAY –

Daily Objective:

Students will explore themes/issues from *Romeo and Juliet* through the reading of news articles. The articles are real life cases of issues that happen in the play. Students will see the relevance of *Romeo and Juliet* through the activity.

Common Core Standards:

ELACC9-10SL1
ELACC9-10SL2
ELACC9-10SL3
ELACC9-10SL4
ELACC9-10RI1
ELACC9-10RI2
ELACC9-10RI4
ELACC9-10RI5
ELACC9-10RI6
Various ELACC9-10W standards

Plans: ACTIVITY DAY

2 minutes – Class announcements and housekeeping. Pass back journals.

Last day to sign up for film-viewing times for anyone that wants it.

5 minutes – RRJ

Respond to the following quote: It is better to have loved and lost than to have never lost at all. Is this true? Write what you feel. OR, free Response.

2 minutes – Small group activity: Pass out articles and explain the next activity.

Each article is about some sort of issue brought up from the play—teens dying because they cannot be together, feuding families, etc. Students will be given one of the articles (I will pass them out randomly), then get into a group with the classmates that were given the same article. Each group will read the article (individually or as a group—they decide). After they read the article, they will discuss what it said. I will be walking around to make sure everyone is participating.

– ARTICLES:

- “Six Wounded in Fla. ‘Romeo and Juliet’ Firefight” (No author, *Associated Press* via Fox News, 2005)
- “Italian Tragedy Echoes Romeo and Juliet” (Richard Owen, *Times Online*, 2005)
- “Teen Couple Executed by their Parents for Daring to Fall in Love” (Helen Rowe, *Sunday Mirror*, 2001)
- “A Fatal Passion: Their Romance Denied, Two Teens Die Together” (Thomas Fields-Meyer, *People Magazine*, 1995)
- “Lovesick Teens Leap to Death” (Helen Kennedy, *New York Daily News*, 1995)
- “Afghanistan’s Romeo and Juliet: Teenage couple jailed and face being stoned for falling in Love” (Ted Thornhill, *Mail Online*, 2011)

7-10 minutes – Students will read and discuss their articles.

Questions to consider:

1. What do you think the article is saying?
2. What did you understand well about the article? What was confusing?
3. What thoughts, opinions, or examples did you think of while you were reading?

14 minutes – (2 minutes to get into new groups) Students will then create a new group of 6—each member having read a different article. Students will have 2 minutes each to talk about his or her article to their group members. This can be a summary of the article or something interesting that their group discussed about the article. I will keep time.

7-10 minutes – Large group discussion: How do these articles relate to the text? What issues did these articles raise? What if you were in the position of the people in the article—how would you react? Can you believe that this really happens in real life?

Remainder of Class – Question and answer time about Film Persuasive Essays and Student Activity Project.

Homework:

Film Persuasive Essay is due Wednesday of this week. Students should be working on it. If they have not started already, students should be working on their Student Activities Project.

TUESDAY –

Daily Objective:

Students will engage in debates in order to connect fun debating with creating an argument and a thesis with information to back up the topic/their opinions for their papers. The connection will (hopefully) make

the process of writing a paper more fun and less intimidating.

Common Core Standards:

ELACC9-10SL (all)

Plans: ACTIVITY DAY

2 minutes – Class announcements and housekeeping

5 minutes – RRJ

Pick an article from last class's activity and discussion—it can be the article that you read. Talk about it. How did it make you feel? What if this happened to you or someone that you knew? OR, free response.

5 minutes – “Pointless” Debates Directions, Group Breakup, and Set Up

Students will be broken up into 4 groups for this activity. Two out of the four groups will be given a topic and an assigned viewpoint (pro or con) to debate, and the other two will be there to judge. The two debating groups will have about 5 minutes to come up with their argument and choose their spokesman. While the two “debating groups” discuss, the other two “judging groups” will also discuss the question, but not as something to debate. They need to come up with a list of things they wish to hear from the groups that will debate. The two judging groups will also decide the winner of the debating two groups. Each debating groups will have 5 to 7 minutes to debate back and forth (depending on how heated/lively the debate is). Only one person from each group can talk at a time (they must sit on the “speaker desk” in order to do so), and they may “tag out” if another group member wishes to speak. The debating groups will then have 2 minutes to come up with their closing statement/final argument, and then one minute to deliver their argument. The two judging groups will listen and have 3 minutes to come up with a winner, as well as reasons why the groups won or lost. After the first debate, the groups will switch (debating judges, and the judging debates) and do it all again. The two winning groups will debate together tomorrow (Wednesday) at the beginning of class. Topics are listed below and will be on a PowerPoint Presentation (found in Appendix C).

30-40 minutes – “Pointless Debate”

The purpose of the activity is to show students that essays can often be like written debates.

Debate Topics:

1. Is breakfast truly the most important meal of the day?
2. Do nice guys truly finish last?
3. Can exes truly still be friends?
4. Can we, as humans, be considered aliens?
5. Brains/intelligence can get you farther in life than beauty.
6. Who would survive in Wal-Mart the longest: a high school student or a goat?
7. FINAL DEBATE QUESTION (for the winners): If dogs are mans' best friend and diamonds are a girl's best friend, what does that say about men and women?

Remainder of Class – Answer any final paper questions.

Homework:

Film Persuasive Essay is due TOMORROW (Wednesday). Students should finish it and turn it in at the beginning of next class.

If they have not started already, students should be working on their Student Activities Project.

WEDNESDAY –

Daily Objective:

Students will begin the processes of peer reviewing and revising their papers in order to improve their writing.

Common Core Standards:

ELACC9-10SL (all)
Various ELACC9-10W standards

Plans: PAPERS DUE!

2 minutes – Class announcements and housekeeping.

5 minutes – RRJ

Paper Reflection: How do you think this paper went? Was it easy to write? Did you like it? Are you confident in what you wrote? What did you struggle with? How could I have better prepared you for it? NO FREE RESPONSE

15-20 minutes – Winner Pointless Debate

Same drill as Tuesday's class. The debate topic is:

If dogs are man's best friend and diamonds are a girl's best friend, what does that say about men and women?

5 minutes – Paper Review Explanation

SURPRISE! These are not your final drafts!! Students will still turn in their papers at the end of the class to be "graded" (or, rather, reviewed by me), but we will do an activity with them first. Students will take out their papers and attach their journal response to their papers (that way I know their concerns). They will also have the opportunity to circle, write on, comment, etc. on their papers to show me their concern areas, their confident areas, etc. Doing so will help them reflect on their writing, as well as help me review them over the next few days. I will return their papers on Monday and begin specific writing instruction, peer conferencing, etc. during Week 6, which will lead up to their actual final drafts.

10-15 minutes – Paper Review Time

At then end, collect papers.

5 minutes – Peer Respect Contract (found on page 28)

Students will be given their Peer Respect Contracts to read silently to themselves. I will then read it aloud and answer any questions that students may have. They will then sign it and turn it in to me. I will hold on to them for the remainder of the semester as a reminder of what they promised their classmates and me.

Remainder of Class – Talk about tomorrow (Thursday)

While I am "grading"/reviewing their papers, students will have the next two days of class to work on their Student Activities Project, which will be due the final day of the unit (Friday of Week 6). Thursday and Friday of Week 5 are the only days students will have in-class to work on their projects.

Homework:

Students should be working on their Student Activities Project. STUDENTS WILL BRING THEIR MATERIALS TO CLASS THE REST OF THE WEEK.

My Homework:

"Grading"/Reviewing papers (due on Monday)

THURSDAY & FRIDAY –

Daily Objective:

Students will work on their Student Activities Project in class in order to use each other as inspiration and help.

Common Core Standards:

Various ELACC9-10 standards in accordance to the different project selections.

Plans: PROJECT DAYS

2 minutes – Class announcements and housekeeping.

5 minutes – RRJ

FREE RESPONSE

Journals will not be turned in on Friday (I will have too much to grade over the weekend).

**Friday is the last in-class day to work on journals. Because of all of the writing the students will be doing in Week 6, journals will not be required (only 5 completed weeks are graded). Because Week 5 is also packed with writing, the students will have Week 5 and Week 6 to finish their 30 required journals for the Reflective Response Journal Activity. The journals will be turned in the final day of the unit (Friday of Week 6) along with their Student Activities Project.

Remainder of Class – Work on Student Activities Project

Homework:

Students will keep working on their projects.

My Homework:

“Grading”/Reviewing papers (due on Monday)

WEEK 6

MONDAY –

Daily Objective:

Students will use their reviewed papers as a form of writing instruction, as well as peer conferencing and teacher-taught instruction.

Common Core Standards:

Various ELACC9-10W standards

Plans: THESIS STATEMENTS AND FINDING EVIDENCE DAY

2 minutes – Class announcements and housekeeping.

No specific plans for the day yet (depends on what students need), BUT I am anticipating needs on thesis statement writing and finding evidence to back up their theses. Today will be dedicated to thesis statements and evidence.

I will also be walking around conferencing with individual students about various parts of their papers while students are working.

TUESDAY –

Daily Objective:

Students will use their reviewed papers as a form of writing instruction, as well as peer conferencing and teacher-taught instruction.

Common Core Standards:

Various ELACC9-10W standards

Plans: ORGANIZATION DAY

2 minutes – Class announcements and housekeeping.

No specific plans for the day yet (depends on what students need), BUT I am anticipating needs on organizing essays. Today will be dedicated to organization.

I will also be walking around conferencing with individual students about various parts of their papers while students are working.

Homework:

Read papers from the members of your reading group to peer conference tomorrow (Wednesday). Students need to use the BEAP method (Appendix D) to make comments about all of the papers.

WEDNESDAY -

Daily Objective:

Students will use their reviewed papers as a form of writing instruction, as well as peer conferencing and teacher-taught instruction.

Common Core Standards:

Various ELACC9-10W standards

Plans: PEER CONFERENCING DAY 1

2 minutes – Class announcements and housekeeping.

No specific plans for the day yet (depends on what students need), BUT I am anticipating students getting into their reading groups and peer conferencing their papers. Students will use the BEAP method to peer conference (Appendix D). Students need to keep in mind their Peer Respect Contracts. Peer conferencing will continue into Thursday.

I will be walking around managing the conferencing and doing individual conferencing as well.

THURSDAY -

Daily Objective:

Students will use their reviewed papers as a form of writing instruction, as well as peer conferencing and teacher-taught instruction.

Common Core Standards:

Various ELACC9-10W standards

Plans: PEER CONFERENCING DAY 2

2 minutes – Class announcements and housekeeping.

No specific plans for the day yet (depends on what students need), BUT I am anticipating students getting into their reading groups and peer conferencing their papers. Students will use the BEAP method to peer conference (Appendix D). Students need to keep in mind their Peer Respect Contracts.

I will be walking around managing the conferencing and doing individual conferencing as well.

FRIDAY -

Daily Objective:

Students will use their reviewed papers as a form of writing instruction, as well as peer conferencing and teacher-taught instruction.

Common Core Standards:

Various ELACC9-10W standards

Plans: OTHER PROBLEMS DAY AND REWRITING

2 minutes – Class announcements and housekeeping.

Today will be the “catch all” days: the days to answer more questions, address more specific questions, and finish individual conferencing with my students.

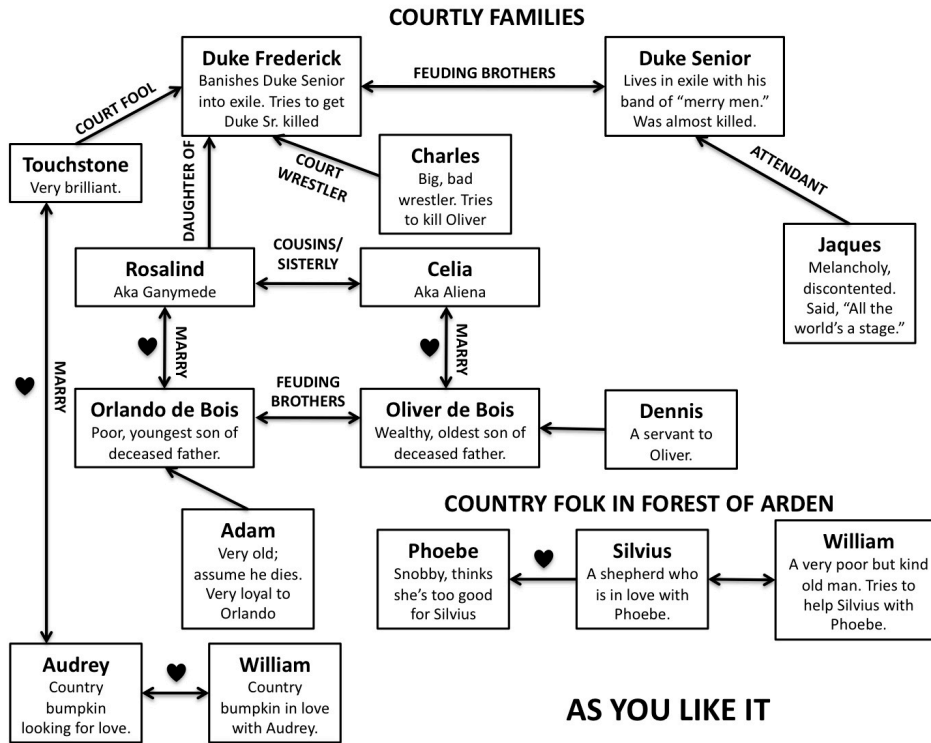
Student’s actual final drafts of their Film Persuasive Essays will be due MONDAY of the next week.

Student Activity Projects and Reflective Response Journals are due TODAY.

Appendices

Appendix A

Character Webbing Example



Appendix B

Shakespeare Insult Kit

To create a Shakespearean insult...

Combine one word from each of the three columns below,
prefaced with "Thou":

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
artless	base-court	apple-john
bawdy	bat-fowling	baggage
beslubbering	beef-witted	barnacle
bootless	beetle-headed	bladder
churlish	boil-brained	boar-pig
cockered	clapper-clawed	bugbear
clouted	clay-brained	bum-bailey
craven	common-kissing	canker-blossom
currish	crook-pated	clack-dish
dankish	dismal-dreaming	clotpole
dissembling	dizzy-eyed	coxcomb
droning	doghearted	codpiece
errant	dread-bolted	death-token
fawning	earth-vexing	dewberry
fobbing	elf-skinned	flap-dragon
froward	fat-kidneyed	flax-wench
frothy	fen-sucked	flirt-gill
gleeking	flap-mouthed	foot-licker
goatish	fly-bitten	fustilarian
gorbellied	folly-fallen	giglet
impertinent	fool-born	gudgeon
infectious	full-gorged	haggard
jarring	guts-gripping	harpy
loggerheaded	half-faced	hedge-pig
lumpish	hasty-witted	horn-beast
mammering	hedge-born	hugger-mugger
mangled	hell-hated	joithead
mewling	idle-headed	lewdster
paunchy	ill-breeding	lout
pribbling	ill-nurtured	maggot-pie
puking	knotty-pated	malt-worm
puny	milk-livered	mammet
qualling	motley-minded	measle
rank	onion-eyed	minnow
reeky	plume-plucked	miscreant
roguish	pottle-deep	oldwarp
ruttish	pox-marked	mumble-news
saucy	reeling-ripe	nut-hook
spleeny	rough-hewn	pigeon-egg
spongy	rude-growing	pignut
surly	rump-fed	puttock
tottering	shard-borne	pumpion
unmuzzled	sheep-biting	ratsbane
vain	spur-galled	scut
venomed	swag-bellied	skainsmate
villainous	tardy-gaited	strumpet
warped	tickle-brained	varlot
wayward	toad-spotted	vassal
weedy	unchin-snouted	whey-face
yeasty	weather-bitten	wagtail

Appendix C

Pointless Debates PowerPoint



Breakfast
Is breakfast *truly*
the most
important meal
of the day?

Nice Guys
Do nice guys
truly finish last?

Exes
Can exes *truly*
still be friends?

Alliens
Can we, as
humans, be
considered
aliens?

Brains or Beauty?
Brains/intelligence
can get you
farther in life than
beauty.

Wal-mart
Who would survive
in Wal-mart the
longest: a TIPster
or a goat?

FINAL DEBATE
QUESTION
If dogs are a man's best
friend and diamonds are
a girl's best friend, what
does that say about men
and women?

Appendix D

BEAP Method

BLESS

Bless is a request by writers to have their work praised. Responders give specific feedback on what they liked or thought was strong about the writing.

EXPRESS

Express is a request by writers to have the content of their work responded to. Responders have a dialogue with what is being said rather than how it was said.

ADDRESS

Address is a request by writers to have some aspect of their work brought into focus. Responders are asked to focus on things like detail, sentence structure, tone, etc. and they keep their comments directed to just the specified area(s) the writers have requested.

PRESS

Press is a request by writers to have their work brought into critique. Responders raise questions and cite passages where the writing is unclear, vague, or not focused. A “press” could include everything from word choice to larger issues such as voice, organization, and the like, as well as praise.

Thank you to Dr. Bob Fecho for creating and sharing BEAP. The credit can be found on his website. <https://sites.google.com/site/lled7420f12/home/resources/beap>

Appendix D**R&J Supplemental Texts****Articles:** (to be done in Lit. Circles)

- “Teenagers—Inside the Teenaged Brain” (2008)
 - Marty Wolner
 - *Ezine Articles*
 - <http://ezinearticles.com/?Teenagers---Inside-the-Teenage-Brain&id=1256530>
- “Why Teens are Such Impulsive Risk Takers” (2007)
 - No Author
 - APA Citation:
 - Society for Neuroscience (2007, November 8). Why Teens Are Such Impulsive Risk-takers. *ScienceDaily*. Retrieved October 11, 2012, from <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2007/11/071107210133.htm>
 - <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2007/11/071107210133.htm>
- “Why Your Brain Can’t Always Make Good Decisions” (2009)
 - Elizabeth Landau
 - CNN.com
 - http://articles.cnn.com/2009-01-12/health/decision.making_1_ball-costs-bad-decisions-reasoning-system?s=PM:HEALTH
- “Why Do We Make Bad Choices?” (no date)
 - Tom Scheve
 - TLC.com
 - <http://tlc.howstuffworks.com/family/bad-choices.htm>
- “Six Wounded in Fla. ‘Romeo and Juliet’ Firefight” (2005)
 - No Author (*Associated Press*)
 - Fox News
 - Received from Debra Navrati (English Companion NING)
 - <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,153094,00.html>
- “Italian Tragedy Echoes Romeo and Juliet” (2005)
 - Richard Owen
 - *Times Online*
 - Received from Debra Navrati (English Companion NING)
 - [R&J Article 2](#) (hyperlink to PDF)
- “Teen Couple Executed by their Parents for Daring to Fall in Love” (2001)
 - Helen Rowe
 - *Sunday Mirror*
 - Received from Debra Navrati (English Companion NING)
 - [R&J Article 3](#) (hyperlink to PDF)
- “A Fatal Passion: Their Romance Denied, Two Teens Die Together” (1995)
 - Thomas Fields-Meyer
 - *People Magazine*
 - Received from Kate Reynolds
 - <http://www.people.com/people/archive/article/0,,20102211,00.html>
- “Lovesick Teens Leap to Death” (1995)
 - Helen Kennedy
 - *New York Daily News*
 - Received from Kate Reynolds
 - http://articles.nydailynews.com/1995-11-09/news/17989396_1_suicide-notes-romeo-and-juliet-immortal-beloved

- “Afghanistan’s Romeo and Juliet: Teenage couple jailed and face being stoned for falling in Love” (2011)
 - Ted Thornhill
 - *Mail Online*
 - Received from Kate Reynolds
 - <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2021147/Teenage-couple-jailed-face-execution-falling-love.html>

Poetry:

- “The Convergence of the Twain”
 - Thomas Hardy
 - Poem about the Titanic
 - Themes: fate and destruction
 - <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/176678>
- SHAK Sonnet 18
 - Themes: love, cheating time through procreation (he will always exist), and beauty
 - Author compares the woman to a summer’s day
 - Summer, just like her beauty, will not last.
 - Connection to R&J:
 - Their love will not last.
 - *The Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Sonnets and Poems* (Publisher: Oxford University Press, p. 417, year: 2002)
- SHAK Sonnet 4
 - Themes: love, beauty, and death
 - Connection to R&J:
 - She will die along with her beauty
 - *The Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Sonnets and Poems* (Publisher: Oxford University Press, p. 389, year: 2002)
- SHAK Sonnet 29
 - Themes: fate and love
 - *The Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Sonnets and Poems* (Publisher: Oxford University Press, p. 439, year: 2002)
- SHAK Sonnet 116
 - Famous Sonnet
 - Themes: love, marriage, time, love lost
 - *The Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Sonnets and Poems* (Publisher: Oxford University Press, p. 613, year: 2002)
- W.H. Auden “Too Dear, Too Vague” (March 1929)
 - Themes: love, pain, losing love
 - W.H. Auden Collected Poems (Publisher: Modern Library, pp. 38-39, year: 2007)
- W.H. Auden “The Riddle” (June 1939)
 - Themes: love, humanity, sin, Biblical imagery (Adam and Eve, original love)
 - W.H. Auden Collected Poems (Publisher: Modern Library, pp. 255-257, year: 2007)