

Surfaces and Depths

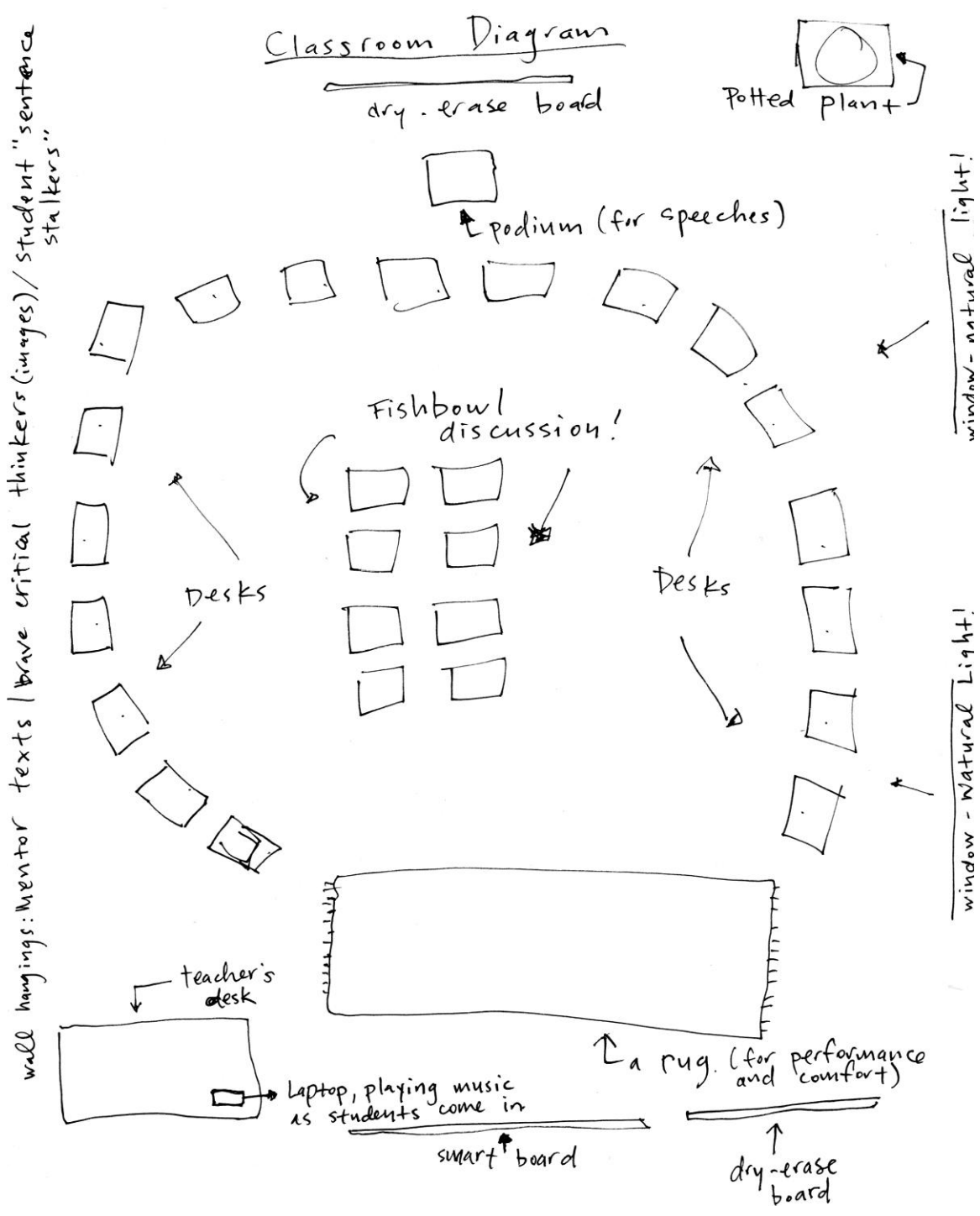


**Tenth Grade English
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In completing this project, I have not given, received, or used any unauthorized assistance (including materials created by myself or others from a previous class).

I. Introduction:



***“It’s not what you look at that matters,
it’s what you see.”***

—Henry David Thoreau

Notes about the Classroom Diagram:

- **Student-interactive design:** I am interested in creating an optimal learning environment in which students interact together and learn to ask their own questions of and make their own connections to the texts that we are encountering. For this reason, I plan to arrange desks in an oval shape, so that students are facing each other — and not just me exclusively. The student-led fishbowl discussion desk-formation (sketched on the opposite page) is representative of the inquiry-based atmosphere to which I aspire.
- **Physical environment:** I believe that it is important for students to feel comfortable, relaxed, and ready to think critically in my class. I hope to make good use of natural light from the windows with my desk arrangement. I also believe rugs and potted plants give a sophisticated yet homey feel for the budding intellectual.
- **Language and visual environment:** I want students to become fans of language in my classroom. This will mean a lot of reading, speaking and viewing. Also, it will mean a lot of language on the walls, including mentor sentences from professional writers and student writers. Image-wise, I would like to include photos that represent possibility, creativity, and imagination to the students. Some photos could be of social justice heroes like Martin Luther King and Cesar Chaves, others images could be of musicians, poets, artists, and athletes.
- **Speeches and performances:** The rug, at the front of the class can also serve a dual purpose in addition to comfort: it can act as a stage where, say, Shakespearian performances are acted out. I am also including a podium at the back of the class, so that students are shifting their attention to the student or teacher-speaker over the course of the year. I believe two locations — rug at the front, podium at the back — can take a bit of the pressure off reading or speaking aloud (that, and plenty of opportunities for students to speak and listen).
- **Technology:** The classroom will be equipped with a SmartBoard. I will use the SmartBoard and my laptop to expose students, in a purposed manner, to several different kinds of texts available through new technologies.

A. Context:

Tenth Grade Regular Track English Class at Rocky Mountain High School

• **School:** Rocky Mountain High School, founded in 1973, is the largest high school in Fort Collins, enrollment-wise, at 2212 students¹. Rocky has a history of embracing progressive educational ideas. A ten-minute introductory video on Rocky’s website states that the school was one of the first in the nation to adopt block scheduling for the “academic needs” of the students. The school’s mission statement²—which I believe matches the goals and intentions of my yearlong plan—is below:

Rocky Mountain High School inspires, guides, and supports our students, faculty and staff to reach their maximum potential in a caring, challenging and safe environment.

In accordance with the tradition of the "Lobo Way," we, the Rocky Mountain High School community, believe:

- in the value and dignity of each individual
- in the development of intellectual and creative skills
- in the importance of self-discovery
- in equal opportunity for learning
- in preparation for life's work and lifelong learning
- in a safe environment
- in opportunities for service to society
- that all members are empowered through participation
- that education thrives in a democratic environment

WE ARE COMMITTED TO EXCELLENCE FOR ALL.

In thinking about intentions for this class, I am heartened by several phrases in the mission statement, including “the importance of self discovery,” “preparation for life’s work and lifelong learning,” and the “development of intellectual and creative skills.” The mission statement gives me confidence to push my students with imagination and rigor, and to work to provide them with thinking skills that they can use for a lifetime.

¹ www.schooldigger.com

² RMHS website: <http://eweb.psdschools.org/schools/rockymountain/>

Complementing the school's official goals, I want to share some personal experiences with RMHS that also encourages me to be inventive and progressive with my yearlong plan.

In 2008, I participated on a panel as a local music journalist for Scott VanTattenhove's Rock and Roll History course. Mr. VanTattenhove, a Social Studies teacher, was allowed by the administration to develop the course himself. While on the panel, I saw firsthand how he engaged students in larger questions of social history in an exciting way through a historically "teen" medium. VanTattenhove's example gives me the confidence to incorporate pop cultural elements to my units when appropriate.

Additionally, in 2011, I attended a NCTE meeting at CSU where the guest speaker was RMHS principal Tom Lopez. My central takeaway from the night was that Lopez believes that his teachers needed to be interesting and interested people in order to engage students. Teachers, Lopez emphasized, should incorporate their real passions into the classroom through storytelling and charisma. As a former music journalist and writer published in over a dozen local and national publications, I feel that my yearlong plan incorporates a journalist's curiosity about the world; I hope that this enthusiasm and creative engagement with the world rubs off on my students.

Both the Rock and Roll class and Mr. Lopez's presentation lead me to believe that RMHS puts a high value on progressive educational thinking. While test scores are important—Rocky's test scores are comparable to other major high schools in the district, like Fort Collins, Poudre, and Fossil Ridge. A graph of the 2010 CSAP for 10th Grade Reading reported 64% of Rocky students "proficient," 11% "advanced," 19% "partially proficient," and 3% "unsatisfactory"³—the TCAP is neither the first thing that comes from the principal's presentation nor the is it listed specifically in the mission statement.

For my class, this means that I have designed a course that will both teach the standards vigorously, but also engage the students in an innovative way that incorporates 21st Century skills purposefully and reflects my personal passions—self-questioning, critical literacy, personalizing classic texts like *Hamlet*, and summoning the courage to be imaginative, creative, and critical.

• **Students:** My class of Tenth Graders, ages 15-16, will be roughly split between male and female. There will be 30 students in the class, with 5 ELLs. The student demographics reflect the demographics of the larger Fort Collins area, with a large majority of white students (82%) and a strong Hispanic presence (12%) in the non-white student population.

³ www.schooldigger.com

20% of the students at Rocky are on free and reduced lunch. Like many other schools in Fort Collins, the number of free and reduced lunch students is trending upward, likely due to the recession in recent years. Because of the state of the economy and young peoples' place in it, I believe that talking about poverty and wealth disparity in America to be important to students as future thinkers and citizens.

• **Community:** Fort Collins is a majority-Caucasian community that is relatively affluent compared to other Colorado school districts in Denver, Greeley, and Pueblo, for example. Fort Collins often finishes in the top ten in *Money Magazine's* "America's Best Place to Live" issue (and has won first place more than once in the past decade)⁴.

Arguably, one could deconstruct *Money Magazine's* claim about Fort Collins being the "Best Place To Live" in America by looking at the city's relative affluence and majority-white population. The community is an interesting mix between progressive and conservative politics. Progressive families in Fort Collins are often interested in the environment and world travel; conservative families are often deeply involved in mega-churches that teach very fundamentalist interpretations of Christianity. Taking this into account, I want to challenge majority student's worldviews, while valuing and engaging the worldviews of minority students' cultures (and challenging their worldviews as well).

⁴ <http://money.cnn.com/magazines/moneymag/bplive/2010/>

B. Overarching Concept: “Surfaces and Depths”

“Surfaces and Depths” is a yearlong thinking strategy that carries over themed units. The strategy — the negotiation and awareness of surfaces and depths in texts and everyday life — will be recursively practiced throughout each unit and on the culminating assessment.

I like “Surfaces and Depths” for its multiple and dynamic applications Language Arts classroom. Here are three key ways I see “Surfaces and Depths” working for my yearlong plan:

- **Metacognition and the Learning Journey:** Every time we learn something (teachers included!) we travel a path from a surface-level understanding of a subject (be it a novel, a friend, a website, a film, a yearlong plan) to a more in-depth understanding. This course is designed to help students chart their learning journey from a “surface” understanding to a “deep” understanding both over the course of each unit, and over the scope of the class. This means that at the beginning of each unit, students will discuss and record their surface understanding (e.g. prior knowledge) of a thematic unit like “War,” and at the end of the unit, students will reflect on how their learning has transformed their initial understanding. The culminating assessment, a process portfolio, requires students to consider their learning over the entire year, and present “exhibits” to display key moments of insight. I believe that a year spent recursively reviewing this “surfaces and depths” thinking process will positively impact each student as a life-long learner by ingraining healthy habits of mind.

- **Critical Literacy:** With “surfaces and depths,” I am able to keep consistent, yearlong awareness on critical literacy. Students in this class will begin and end with the notion that there are meanings to find behind surface appearances. Critical literacy is a way of “reading the world,” according to literacy theorist Paulo Freire⁵. “Reading the world” has to do not just with reading traditional texts (novels, plays, newspapers), but reading texts easily disseminated through 21st Century technology (websites, film, audio), as well as reading the “texts” of everyday life. “Reading the world,” means questioning big concepts like power hierarchies, stereotypes, and rhetoric, and not accepting the world at face value (or on the “surface” level).

- **Traditional Language Arts concerns:** “Surfaces and depths” also maps well onto key skills necessary in the Language Arts classroom. Students are asked to negotiate surfaces and depths when they are introduced to a new form or genre (surfaces) and then are asked to unpack the content of the piece (depths). Here are some examples of some “surface and depths” as they pertain to the literacy skills I am teaching: (1) Learning grammar rules and genre conventions (surfaces) so that

⁵ Luke, Allan and Woods, Annette. “Critical Literacies in Schools: A Primer.” Voices From the Middle 17 (2009): 9-18.

one may compose a meaningful piece of writing (depths); (2) Reading through a scene in *Hamlet* by reading the at-first difficult language (surface) and then coming to a personalized meaning of the text (depth); and (3) Watching a speech and analyzing rhetoric and non-verbal cues of the speaker (surface) and the ultimate persuasiveness of the speech (depth).

Reflecting back on context: I believe that tenth graders in my context are well suited to start negotiating between “Surfaces and Depths.” After the often-stormy transition year of ninth grade, tenth graders are prepared to go deeper into their own critical thought. I believe that the majority population of Rocky must wrestle with the issues I plan to bring up in my units because students from the primarily mono-cultural environment of Fort Collins need to inhabit other viewpoints. Rocky Mountain High School is also, I believe, a progressive educational environment that my plan will fit into. Additionally, because this is a regular track English course and I will have kids of varying needs, abilities and cultural backgrounds, a main concern of mine is to create a classroom environment where students feel safe to explore challenging topics, and where every student feels comfortable asking questions. Indeed, there is no traveling from the surface to the depth of an intellectual problem without asking good questions.

C. Units:

Goals of each unit, relationships to “Surfaces and Depths,” and step-by-step explanation of sequence

1. Self (4 weeks)

For the opening unit of the year, students are asked to explore the self. Introductory activities will be geared at creating an accepting and challenging classroom environment where students feel safe to take risks and explore their surfaces and depths. After the classroom community is formed, we will explore the personal essay and the fulcrum text “Self-Reliance” by Ralph Waldo Emerson, as well as some context text essays from teens. We will ask how the self is presented in the essays we are exploring, and then students will be asked to present themselves in both essay and visual form for the unit assessment.

Guiding unit questions relating to surfaces and depths: *What are our surfaces and depths? What connects us? What sets us apart? What are our fears? What are our confidences? What is self-reliance? What is voice in an essay? How do we find our voices? How do we represent ourselves visually?*

2. Community (4 weeks)

Once we have a working understanding of the self in Unit One, we will expand our view to the community in Unit Two. Students will explore stereotypes and “surface rules” of the community, as well as conformity and non-conformity. Students will consider what it means to be an outcast while

reading *Of Mice and Men*, and will get to “deeply” know John Steinbeck’s context through exploring the extensive Steinbeck Center website. Students will further explore community vs. self with some excerpts of Sandra Cisneros’ *House on Mango Street*. Finally, after listening to a podcast on “small towns” from “This American Life” radio program, students will produce, in small groups, their own multimedia “Community Documentaries” about aspects of life in Fort Collins.

Guiding unit questions relating to surfaces and depths: *How do the main characters in these texts break the “surface rules” of the community? How do the characters follow the surface rules of the community? How does a community represent itself? To itself? To other communities? Who is most visible in a community? Who is least visible in a community?*

3. Power (6 weeks)

After the concept of community has been explored, I am asking students to investigate how power relationships operate inside communities. Using *Hamlet* as a fulcrum text, students will begin to ask how one comes to power, and how that power is maintained. With the “Seeing *Hamlet*” assignment, students will be asked to choose a scene in the play and produce a comic strip, a video reenactment, or a photo essay, and explain what role our class’s working definition of power plays in the scene. Also during the unit, students will be introduced to the film and speech genres. Students will analyze and write a journalistic review on a TED Talk by Sir Ken Robinson titled, “Schools Killing Creativity.” With this, students will apply what they’ve learned about power, and turn that lens on their education: who is making what decisions about their schooling and why?

Guiding unit questions relating to surfaces and depths: *What is power? How does one come to a position of power? What does power look like under the surface (e.g., is power an act?) What are the hierarchies of power in your life, school, and education?*

4. War (6 weeks)

Having completed a unit on power, students will now explore war, which is historically waged by those in power, and fought by persons with much less power. Students will read *A Separate Peace*, while considering the novel’s main theme (which fits nicely into “surfaces and depths”): the question of whether there can be a “war” below the surface in a seemingly peaceful place, like 1940s New England. Students will write and discuss issues of war and peace during the unit, reading and listening to speeches by JFK and MLK, and the protest folk song, “Masters of War” by Bob Dylan. Students will demonstrate their knowledge and application of unit material during two class debates. One debate’s theme will be the inevitability, or not, of war, and the other about how we do (or should) visually represent war as a society. The class, as a whole, will write a Letter to the Editor to the *Coloradoan* after the debates, seeking an authentic audience with the class-chosen best argumentation from the debates.

Guiding unit questions relating to surfaces and depths: *How is war presented or represented to a community? Can there be “war” in a peaceful community? Are humans naturally violent? Is there a difference between a “surface” reason for war and a “deeper” reason for war?*

5. American Dream (6 weeks)

We will shift gears a bit after the War Unit. The American Dream Unit will guide us towards the end of the year. Students will encounter the fulcrum text *Death of Salesman*. There will be poetry and non-fiction texts surrounding *Salesman*, which will ask students to ask questions about poverty, the working poor, and who has access to the American Dream, or even the ability to call themselves “American.” Students will write a compare/contrast essay synthesizing their knowledge of the Miller’s play and our working definition of the American Dream from all the texts and class discussions. Students will also construct new knowledge at the end of the unit during Fishbowl Discussions on poverty.

Guiding unit questions relating to surfaces and depths: *What is the American Dream? Who is an “American”? Do these definitions change over time? Does everyone have access to the American Dream? What is it presented (surfaces) and what are its realities (depths)? Is poverty visible? How is it represented in the media?*

6. Media (6 weeks)

Having discussed the realities behind the American Dream, students will now take an intensive look at Media. After reading the fulcrum text *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury, which looks at censorship and explores how governments and media institutions dumb down our civic dialogue, students will construct new meaning with a Persuasive Essay and Speech: “Television or Literature?” The essay and speech will build off of what we’ve learned about both genre’s throughout the year, as well as what we’ve considered about visual presentations (surfaces) and less flashy realities (depths). Students will also consider how media works in their own lives, and will produce a pop art artifact (making art, or self-expression, out of the barrage of images and advertisements we see everyday) after considering the 1960s pop art explosion.

Guiding unit questions relating to surfaces and depths: *How does advertising and media play a role in how we see ourselves and live our lives? What are the messages we receive from advertisers and what truths can we find behind the messages?*

7. Environment and Culminating Assessment (6 weeks)

For the final unit on Environment, students will consider what they’ve learned, especially during the American Dream and Media units, but other units also apply. Students will view the short film and accompanying website “The Story of Stuff,” which works to trace the environmental effects of our consumerist society. Constructing their own knowledge, students will then

conduct a research project on their own stuff: they will choose a gadget or piece of clothing that they use often, find out where it is made and what it is made with, find out how it is advertised and what it means to the community group the student is in, and finally, find out how the product is disposed of.

Guiding unit questions relating to surfaces and depths: *How do our choices as consumers, individuals, and citizens have an impact on the natural world? What invisible consequences do we ignore as we go about our lives as Americans?*

Culminating Assessment: The final weeks of class will be dedicated to the production of the Process Portfolio. See below for further description.

D. Standards Used:

Throughout my yearlong plan, I am using the Tenth Grade Colorado Academic Standards (CAS) for Reading, Writing, and Communicating as constructed by the Colorado Department of Education⁶.

Reading, Writing, and Communicating Grade Level Expectations at a Glance

Standard Grade Level Expectation

Tenth Grade	
1. Oral Expression and Listening	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Content that is gathered carefully and organized well successfully influences an audience Effectively operating in small and large groups to accomplish a goal requires active listening
2. Reading for All Purposes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Literary and historical influences determine the meaning of traditional and contemporary literary texts The development of new ideas and concepts within informational and persuasive manuscripts Context, parts of speech, grammar, and word choice influence the understanding of literary, persuasive, and informational texts
3. Writing and Composition	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Literary or narrative genres feature a variety of stylistic devices to engage or entertain an audience Organizational writing patterns inform or persuade an audience Grammar, language usage, mechanics, and clarity are the basis of ongoing refinements and revisions within the writing process
4. Research and Reasoning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Collect, analyze, and evaluate information obtained from multiple sources to answer a question, propose solutions, or share findings and conclusions An author's reasoning is the essence of legitimate writing and requires evaluating text for validity and accuracy

⁶ Source: CDE website: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/scripts/allstandards/COSTandards.asp>

E. How I'm Using the Standards:

Students will have the opportunity to become proficient in all four Colorado standards for Reading, Writing, and Communicating for Tenth Grade in my yearlong plan. Here is an overview:

1. **Oral Expression and Listening:** Students will “gather carefully and organize well” content and material for one major speech, the “Television or Reading? Persuasive Speech” (Media Unit). Students will also learn to participate (speak and listen) in civil debates and fishbowl discussions about controversial topics (War Unit and American Dream Unit)

Students will work in small and in large groups throughout the year. Students will collaborate on research projects like the “Community Documentary” (Community Unit) and “The Story of Stuff” (Environment Unit).

2. **Reading for All Purposes:** For every fulcrum text except one (“The Story of Stuff,” Environment Unit), students will be required to learn the literary and historical context and “influences” that inform major works like *Of Mice and Men*, *Hamlet*, *A Separate Peace*, etc.

Several units contain components of developing “new ideas and concepts within informational and persuasive manuscripts.” For example, in the Power Unit, students are asked to evaluate a TED talk by Sir Ken Robinson. Also, in the War Unit, students are to write, reflect, and debate with citations from iconic speeches by Martin Luther King Jr. and John F. Kennedy.

Especially with difficult texts like *Hamlet*, students will work to understand how “context, parts of speech, grammar, and word choice influence the understanding of literary, persuasive, and informational texts.” Several units also incorporate the learning of multimodal approaches to persuasion and information, such as film, podcasts, speeches, photo essays, songs, and more.

3. **Writing and Composition:** Students will have the opportunity to write in several different kinds of genres, including Personal Narrative (Self Unit), Poetry (Self Unit and Media Unit), Comic strips/video reenactments/photo essay (Power Unit), Compare/Contrast Essay (American Dream Unit), Persuasive Essay (Media Unit), and Research Paper/Project (Environment Unit).

Students will also “Write to Learn” in their Writer’s Notebooks. A major aspect keeping track of metacognition a la “Surfaces and Depths,” the Writer’s Notebook is designed to be the foundation of thought for students. Students may use excerpts from the Writer’s Notebook for their Culminating Assessment.

Students will pay close attention to “grammar, language usage, mechanics, and clarity,” and will have several chances to peer-review and peer-revise each essay and formal piece of writing before it hits my desk.

- 4. Research and Reasoning:** Students will collaborate on research projects like the “Community Documentary” (Community Unit) and “The Story of Stuff” (Environment Unit). “The Story of Stuff” Project, in particular, will require students to “collect, analyze, and evaluate information obtained from multiple sources.”

Working in collaborative groups on these research projects, students will make sure reasoning is “sound,” and the information presented is “valid” and “accurate.”

D. Notes on ELL Instruction:

As will be most apparent while reading over my “Descriptions of Units” section, I have worked to include several recursive ELL-friendly strategies in my Yearlong Plan. Here are three main ELL-friendly strategies I have included:

- Writer’s Notebooks give ELLs a chance to gather their thoughts about a topic (in their home language, if necessary), before speaking with the larger group.
- The “Surfaces” portion at the beginning of each Unit (in which the class discusses together and investigates their understandings, or their “surface knowledge,” of a context or Unit theme) will help me gauge prior knowledge of all my students, and especially ELLs.
- Images, images, images: Each unit incorporates myriad images into it, allowing students to question how we visually represent topics to ourselves and to each other.

II. Descriptions of Seven Units

(Note: Unit goals have already been elaborated in the above section).

Unit 1	Texts	Assessments	Standards Met	Weekly Focus
<p>Self (4 Weeks)</p> <p>Guiding Questions:</p> <p>What are our surfaces and depths? What connects us? What sets us apart? What are our fears? What are our confidences? What is self-reliance? What is voice in an essay? How do we find our voices?</p>	<p>Essay: “Self-Reliance” by Ralph Waldo Emerson. (FT)</p> <p>Poems: “The Soul Selects Her Own Society” and “There is a Solitude of space.” by Emily Dickinson. (CT)</p> <p>Teen Essay: “Broken Ground” by Eunju Namkung (NYC High School Student) (TT)</p> <p>Podcast/Radio Journalism: “Winning Essay Translates Teen’s Story,” from Npr.org (TT)</p> <p>Images: Photos of the self in society.</p> <p>Poem: “What If” by Shel Silverstein. (TT)</p>	<p>Writer’s Notebook:</p> <p>Initial impressions (beginning of the unit) and reflective impressions (unit’s end).</p> <p>Writing poetry: Students will write concise and imagistic poetry emulating Emily Dickinson.</p> <p>Personal Narrative Essay and Visual Representation of the Self: After learning about the essay genre, and reading several examples, students will compose their own Personal Narrative Essay, accompanied by a visual representation of themselves.</p>	<p>1. Oral Expression (2) “Effectively communicating in small and large groups...”</p> <p>2. Reading for All Purposes (1) “Literary and historical influences...,” (2) “Development of new ideas and concepts” (3) “Context, grammar, parts of speech...”</p> <p>3. Writing and Composition (1) “Literary or narrative genres...stylistic devices.” (2) “inform audience” (3) “Grammar, language usage...”</p>	<p>Week 1: Investigating our understandings of ourselves and each other. Building Classroom community. “What if” by Silverstein, Dickinson Poems.</p> <p>Week 2: What is the essay? What is voice? What was Emerson’s context? Begin “Self Reliance.” Introduce Personal Narrative Essay.</p> <p>Week 3: Finish “Self-Reliance.” Introduce and finish “Broken Ground,” and discuss news story in small groups.</p> <p>Week 4: Work on and finish Personal Narrative Essays. Reflection discussion.</p>

Unit 2	Texts	Assessments	Standards Met	Weekly Focus
<p>Community (4 weeks)</p> <p>Guiding Questions:</p> <p>How do the main characters in these texts break the “surface rules” of the community?</p> <p>How do the characters follow the surface rules of the community?</p> <p>How does a community represent itself? To itself? To other communities?</p> <p>Who is most visible in a community?</p> <p>Who is least visible in a community?</p>	<p>Novel: <i>Of Mice and Men</i> by John Steinbeck. (FT)</p> <p>Website: Steinbeck Center: Center for Steinbeck Studies (CT)</p> <p>Poetic Novel (excerpt): <i>House on Mango Street</i> by Sandra Cisneros (TT)</p> <p>Podcast/Radio Documentary Narrative: <i>This American Life</i>, “Small Towns” Episode. (TT)</p> <p>Images: Photos of Community.</p>	<p>Writer’s Notebook: Initial impressions (beginning of the unit) and reflective impressions (unit’s end).</p> <p>Community Documentary: In small groups, students will produce a multimedia community research project.</p>	<p>1. Oral Expression (1) “Content that is gathered carefully and organized well successfully influences and audience...”</p> <p>4. Research and Reasoning. (1) “Collect, analyze, and evaluate information obtained from multiple sources...”</p>	<p>Week One: Investigating our understandings of community. Introducing Steinbeck. Considering Setting, Place, and Community Expectations. Begin: <i>Of Mice and Men</i>.</p> <p>Week Two: Continue <i>Of Mice and Men</i>. Excerpt form <i>House on Mango Street</i>.</p> <p>Week Three: Documenting Community: <i>This American Life</i>.</p> <p>Week Four: Documenting Community Assignment. Writer’s Notebook Unit Reflections.</p>

Unit 3	Texts	Assessments	Standards Met	Weekly Focus
<p>Power (6 weeks)</p> <p>Guiding Questions:</p> <p>What is power? How does one come to a position of power? What does power look like under the surface (e.g., when is power a facade?) What are the hierarchies of power in your life, school, education?</p>	<p>Drama: “Hamlet” by William Shakespeare (FT)</p> <p>Film (excerpt): “Hamlet” (from BBC) (TT)</p> <p>Film (excerpt) “Hamlet” (“Mel Gibson” version) (TT)</p> <p>Photo-essay: Looking at Images of powerful dictators (from the photo-essay <i>New Yorker</i>, 2009). (CT)</p> <p>Speech: Sir Ken Robinson TED talk on “Schools Killing Creativity” (CT)</p>	<p>Writer’s Notebook: Initial impressions (beginning of the unit) and reflective impressions (unit’s end).</p> <p>“Seeing <i>Hamlet</i>”: Students will choose a scene in <i>Hamlet</i> and produce a comic strip, a video reenactment, or a photo essay.</p> <p>Be a Journalist: Students will write a review of Sir Ken Robinson’s TED talk.</p>	<p>4. Research and Reasoning. (2) “An author’s reasoning is the essence of legitimate writing and requires evaluating text for validity and accuracy.”</p>	<p>Week One: Investigating our understandings of power. Contextualizing Shakespeare and “Hamlet.” Intro to “Power” from a Critical Literacy Standpoint.</p> <p>Week Two: Continuing “Hamlet.” Acting out key scenes.</p> <p>Week Three: Approaching Hamlet onscreen. Intro to Film Literacy. Comparing two “Hamlet” productions.</p> <p>Week Four: Power and “Hamlet”: Fishbowl Discussions.</p> <p>Week Five: Power and The World: <i>New Yorker</i> Images. Introduce speech genre. Sir Ken Robinson TED talk. Review assignment.</p> <p>Week Six: Writer’s Notebook Unit Reflections. Present “Seeing Hamlet” projects.</p>

Unit 4	Texts	Assessments	Standards Met	Weekly Focus
<p>War (4 weeks)</p> <p>Guiding Questions:</p> <p>How is war presented or represented to a community? Can there be “war” in a peaceful community? Are humans naturally violent? Is there a difference between a “surface” reason for war and a “deeper” reason for war?</p>	<p>Novel: <i>A Separate Peace</i>, by John Knowles (FT)</p> <p>Speech (on the page): “Letter from A Birmingham Country Jail” by Dr. Martin Luther King. (CT)</p> <p>Speech (Audio): “Commencement address at American University, June 10, 1963,” by John F. Kennedy (CT)</p> <p>Images: Iconic and recent war photography, How is war visually represented? What are the rules of representation? (TT)</p> <p>Song: “Masters of War” by Bob Dylan (CT)</p>	<p>Writer’s Notebook: Initial impressions (beginning of the unit) and reflective impressions (unit’s end).</p> <p>Weeklong Oral Debate: Debate One Theme: Students will debate the themes of war and peace brought up throughout the unit, citing from <i>A Separate Peace</i>, MLK and JFK speeches, and other unit material.</p> <p>Debate Theme Two: How should we represent war (visually and verbally)? How do we represent war (visually and verbally)?</p> <p>Class Letter to Editor: Collectively compose a Letter to the Editor to the <i>Coloradoan</i> and the <i>Denver Post</i> from material developed from Debates.</p>	<p>1. Oral Expression (1) “Content that is gathered carefully and organized well successfully influences and audience...”</p> <p>2. Reading for All Purposes (1) “Literary and historical influences...,” (2) “Development of new ideas and concepts”</p>	<p>Week One: Investigating our understandings of war. Introduce 1960s context, John Knowles and begin <i>Separate Peace</i>.</p> <p>Week Two: Introduce Speeches from MLK and JFK. Continue <i>A Separate Peace</i>.</p> <p>Week Three: “Masters of War” by Bob Dylan. Context of protest through folk music. Finish <i>A Separate Peace</i>.</p> <p>Week Four: Debates on war. Class Letter to the Editor. Writer’s Notebook Unit reflections.</p>

Unit 5	Texts	Assessments	Standards Met	Weekly Focus
<p>American Dream (6 weeks)</p> <p>Guiding Questions:</p> <p>What is the American Dream? Does it change over time? Does everyone have access to it? What is it presented (surfaces) and what are its realities (depths)?</p>	<p>Drama: <i>Death of A Salesman</i> by Arthur Miller (FT)</p> <p>Non-Fiction (Excerpt): <i>Nickled and Dimed</i> by Barbara Ehrenreich (TT)</p> <p>Poems: “I, Too, Sing America” by Langston Hughes and “I Hear America Singing” by Walt Whitman. (TT)</p> <p>YouTube Video: “War on Poverty Tour 2011” by Dr. Cornell West and Tavis Smiley. (TT)</p> <p>Online Essay: “The Recession Hits Home” by Jennifer Gonzalez Romero. From <i>Teen Voices of Democracy</i> website. (TT)</p> <p>Images: Photographs of Wealth and Poverty in America. (TT)</p>	<p>Writer’s Notebook: Initial impressions (beginning of the unit) and reflective impressions (unit’s end).</p> <p>Writing Poetry: Students will write poetry about America, and what it means to be an American, after reading Hughes and Whitman</p> <p>Compare/Contrast Essay: Students will compare and contrast the American Dream as it is presented in <i>Death of A Salesman</i> to the American Dream as it is presented in another text we read/view.</p> <p>Fishbowl Discussions on Poverty: Is Poverty visible in America/Our Community? How is it visually represented? What do we see? What don’t we see? Why?</p>	<p>1. Oral Expression (1) “Content that is gathered carefully and organized well successfully influences and audience...”</p> <p>3. Writing and Composition (1) “Literary or narrative genres...stylistic devices.” (2) “inform audience” (3) “Grammar, language usage...”</p>	<p>Week One: Investigating our understandings of the American Dream. Begin <i>Death of A Salesman</i>.</p> <p>Week Two: Continue <i>Death of A Salesman</i>.</p> <p>Week Three: Finish <i>Death of A Salesman</i>.</p> <p>Week Four: Considering the Depths of the American Dream. Poems and “Poverty Tour” Video.</p> <p>Week Five: How is the Recession affecting us? <i>Nickled and Dimed</i> and the Online teen essay.</p> <p>Week Six: Fishbowl Discussions. Writer’s Notebook Unit Reflections.</p>

Unit 6	Texts	Assessments	Standards Met	Weekly Focus
<p>Media (6 Weeks)</p> <p>Guiding Questions:</p> <p>How does advertising and media play a role in how we see ourselves and live our lives? What are the messages we receive from advertisers and what truths can we find behind the messages?</p>	<p>Novel: <i>Fahrenheit 451</i> by Ray Bradbury (FT)</p> <p>Video: “The Merchants of Cool” PBS Frontline Documentary (TT)</p> <p>Non-Fiction (Excerpt): <i>Branded: The Buying and Selling of Teenagers</i> by Allisa Quart (TT)</p> <p>Spoken Word Poem/Song: “The Revolution Will Not Be Televised” by Gill Scott-Heron</p> <p>Visual Art: Pop Art by Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, etc. (TT)</p>	<p>Writer’s Notebook: Initial impressions (beginning of the unit) and reflective impressions (unit’s end).</p> <p>Writing Poetry: Students will write poetry in the Spoken Word/Slam style</p> <p>Persuasive Essay and Speech: Television or Literature? After reading <i>Fahrenheit 451</i>, are you convinced with Bradbury’s inference that television is killing reading? Which is a more effective medium in our society?</p> <p>Pop Art project: After a lesson ⁷on ‘60s Pop Art, students will produce their own Pop Art, using advertisements from their everyday lives.</p>	<p>1. Oral Expression (2) “Effectively communicating in small and large groups...”</p> <p>2. Reading for All Purposes (1) “Literary and historical influences...,” (2) “Development of new ideas and concepts” (3) “Context, grammar, parts of speech...”</p>	<p>Week One: Investigating our understandings of the Advertising and the media. Contextualizing <i>Fahrenheit 451</i>.</p> <p>Week Two: Continuing <i>Fahrenheit 451</i>. Introduce Persuasive Essay.</p> <p>Week Three: Continuing <i>Fahrenheit 451</i>.</p> <p>Week Four: Finishing <i>Fahrenheit 451</i>. Beginning a look at media in our lives today. “Merchants of Cool” and <i>Branded</i> excerpt.</p> <p>Week Five: Taking the power back? Pop Art: Advertising as Art. Introduce Pop Art Projects.</p> <p>Week Six: Present Pop Art projects. Writer’s Notebook Unit Reflections.</p>

⁷ Pop Art Lesson plan from: <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/exploring-consumerism-where-intersect-1114.html>

Unit 7	Texts	Assessments	Standards Met	Weekly Focus
<p>Environment and Culminating Assessment (6 Weeks)</p> <p>Guiding Questions:</p> <p>How do our choices as consumers, individuals, and citizens have an impact on the natural world? What invisible consequences do we ignore as we go about our lives as Americans?</p>	<p>Short Film and Website: “The Story of Stuff” (FT)</p> <p>Images: Photographs of Nature (pristine states) and Human-affected sites (Landfills, Oil Spills, etc.). (CT)</p>	<p>Collaborative Research Project: “The Story of Stuff”</p> <p>Culminating Assessment: Process Portfolio.</p>	<p>4. Research and Reasoning. (1) “Collect, analyze, and evaluate information obtained from multiple sources...”</p>	<p>Week One: Investigating our understandings of the how American consumerism affects the planet. “The Story of Stuff.” Introduce Collaborative Research Projects.</p> <p>Week Two: Work on “The Story of Stuff” Collaborative Research Projects.</p> <p>Week Three: Present “The Story of Stuff” Collaborative Research Projects.</p> <p>Week Four: Process Portfolio Introduction.</p> <p>Week Five: Peer Review Process Portfolio</p> <p>Week Six: Culminating Assessment: Presentations of Process Portfolios.</p>

A. Culminating Assessment

Process Portfolio⁸

Description of the task:

All year you have encountered and responded to literature, video, drama, websites, podcasts, songs, advertisements, photography, pop art, and poems. In response to these texts, you have produced a variety of writing, video, art, collage, oration, and more. Hopefully, you have learned something about yourself, literature, writing, “reading the world,” and much more. (If not, the whole “Surfaces and Depths” thing has just remained “Surfaces!” Boo, Hiss!)

As I stated at the beginning of the year, *real learning* often has more to do with trying and failing than “knocking it out of the park” on the first try. True lifelong learners know that perseverance and practice has more to do with success than natural skill...but I’ll get off my Soapbox!

Your culminating project for the year is to prepare a **process portfolio** in which you present things you’ve produced that have resulted in your most valuable learning. Here is your chance to reflect on times when you tried, and it didn’t necessarily work, but you sure did learn something—you got your hands dirty, and lived to tell the tale. This is telling the tale! We will call these things *exhibits*. The exhibits you present do not need to be your best work. *You will not be graded on the quality of the exhibits that you include*. Rather, you will be graded on how carefully you reflect on what you learned from producing them.

Description of the Artifact: Your **process portfolio** should include the following:

- Title page with name and date.
- A minimum of seven items that serve as your exhibits. You must include a minimum of one exhibit for each of the seven units we studied. Your portfolio may include additional exhibits if you wish. Anything from the unit is fare game, from Writer’s Notebook entries, to bigger projects, to an Ah-Ha moment in a class debate or a fellow student’s speech, for example.
- A written statement that identifies and discusses the significant learning based on each exhibit, consisting of a minimum of two hundred words.
- A longer *synthesis paper*, 5-7 pages, in which you discuss how these artifacts as a whole reveal what you’ve learned this year about both yourself and the material we have studied.

⁸ Adapted from Smagorinsky, Peter. Teaching English By Design. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2008. (Pp. 55-56).

B. Description of Assessment Tool: Scoring Guide/Rubric⁹:

A-Range Process Portfolios:

- Are turned in on time
- Include the minimum components
- Meet the minimum expectations for each component (e.g. word counts, paper lengths)
- Clearly explain how each exhibit served as the source of significant learning about oneself, the materials, and/or the student's learning process
- Clearly explain in the synthesis paper how the individual exhibits contribute to an overall set of related learning experiences explained in terms of a related set of points
- Grammatical and convention errors are few and do not distract from meaning

B-Range Process Portfolios:

- Are turned in on time
- Include the minimum components
- Meet the minimum expectations for each component (e.g. word counts, paper lengths)
- Clearly explain how each exhibit served as the source of significant learning about oneself, the materials, and/or the student's learning process
- Do not clearly explain in the synthesis paper how the individual exhibits contribute to an overall set of related learning experiences explained in terms of a related set of points
- Grammatical and convention errors are few and do not distract from meaning

C-Range Process Portfolios:

- Are turned in on time
- Include the minimum components

⁹ Adapted from Smagorinsky, Peter. Teaching English By Design. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2008. (Pp. 55-56).

- Meet the minimum expectations for each component (e.g. word counts, paper lengths)
- Do not clearly explain how each exhibit served as the source of significant learning about oneself, the materials, and/or the student's learning process
- Do not clearly explain in the synthesis paper how the individual exhibits contribute to an overall set of related learning experiences explained in terms of a related set of points
- Grammatical and convention errors distract from meaning at points.

D-Range Process Portfolios:

- Are turned in on time
- Include the minimum components
- Do not meet the minimum expectations for each component (e.g. the synthesis paper does not provide a synthesis, the commentaries are less than a page long and do not indicate reflection on learning)
- Do not clearly explain how each exhibit served as the source of significant learning about oneself, the materials, and/or the student's learning process
- Do not clearly explain in the synthesis paper how the individual exhibits contribute to an overall set of related learning experiences explained in terms of a related set of points
- Grammatical and convention errors frequently distract from meaning

F-Range Process Portfolios:

- Are turned in after the due date
- Are turned in on time but do not include the minimum components (cover page, seven exhibits, seven commentaries, synthesis paper).
- Do not meet the minimum expectations for each component (e.g. the synthesis paper does not provide a synthesis, the commentaries are less than a page long and do not indicate reflection on learning)
- Do not clearly explain how each exhibit served as the source of significant learning about oneself, the materials, and/or the student's learning process

- Do not clearly explain in the synthesis paper how the individual exhibits contribute to an overall set of related learning experiences explained in terms of a related set of points
- Grammatical and convention errors frequently distract from meaning

III. Graphics and Grids

A. Language Arts Map

Language Arts: Literacy Components

	Unit 1: Self	Unit 2: Community	Unit 3: Power	Unit 4: War	Unit 5: American Dream	Unit 6: Media	Unit 7: Environment
Reading	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Writing	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Listening	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Speaking	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Viewing	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Visually Representing	X	X	X	X		X	X

B. Standards Map

Colorado Academic Standards: Tenth Grade Expectations

	Unit 1: Self	Unit 2: Community	Unit 3: Power	Unit 4: War	Unit 5: American Dream	Unit 6: Media	Unit 7: Environment
1.1		X	X	X		X	X
1.2	X	X		X	X		X
2.1	X	X	X	X	X	X	
2.2	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2.3	X	X	X	X	X	X	
3.1	X	X	X		X	X	X
3.2	X	X	X		X	X	X
3.3	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
4.1		X	X	X	X	X	X
4.2			X	X			X

C. Evidence Outcomes

Standard 1: Oral Expression and Listening

	Unit 1: Self	Unit 2: Community	Unit 3: Power	Unit 4: War	Unit 5: American Dream	Unit 6: Media	Unit 7: Environment
1.a.			X	X	X	X	X
1.b.			X	X	X	X	X
1.c.				X	X	X	
1.d.						X	
1.e.						X	
2.a.i.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2.a.ii.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2.a.iii.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2.a.iv.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2.a.v.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2.a.vi.		X	X	X	X	X	X
2.a.vii.			X	X	X		
2.a.viii.			X	X	X		
2.b.	X		X	X	X	X	

Standard 2: Reading for All Purposes

	Unit 1: Self	Unit 2: Community	Unit 3: Power	Unit 4: War	Unit 5: American Dream	Unit 6: Media	Unit 7: Environment
1.a.	X	X	X	X	X	X	
1.b.	X	X	X	X	X	X	
1.c.	X	X	X	X	X	X	
1.d.	X	X	X	X	X	X	
1.e.	X	X	X	X	X	X	
1.f.	X	X	X	X	X	X	
1.g.	X	X	X	X	X	X	
1.h.	X	X	X	X	X	X	
2.a.	X	X	X	X	X	X	
2.b.	X	X	X	X	X	X	
2.c.		X	X				
2.d.	X	X	X	X	X	X	
2.e.	X	X	X	X	X	X	
2.f.	X			X			
2.g.	X			X	X	X	
3.a.i.	X		X		X		
3.a.ii.			X				
3.a.iii.			X				
3.a.iv.			X				

3.b.i	X	X	X	X	X	X	
3.b.ii.	X	X	X			X	
3.c.			X			X	X

Standard 3: Writing and Composition

	Unit 1: Self	Unit 2: Community	Unit 3: Power	Unit 4: War	Unit 5: American Dream	Unit 6: Media	Unit 7: Environment
1.a.i.	X	X					
1.a.ii.	X	X					
1.a.iii.	X	X					
1.b.	X	X			X	X	
1.c.	X		X		X	X	X
1.d.	X		X		X	X	X
2.a.i.		X	X		X	X	X
2.a.ii.	X	X	X		X	X	X
2.a.iii.		X				X	X
2.a.iv.		X	X	X	X	X	X
2.a.v.		X	X		X	X	X
2.a.vi.	X	X	X		X	X	X
2.a.vii.	X	X			X	X	X
2.a.viii.	X	X			X	X	X
2.a.ix.	X				X	X	X
2.a.x.	X				X	X	
2.a.xi.				X			
3.a.i.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
3.a.ii.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
3.a.iii.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
3.b.i.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
3.b.ii.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
3.c.i.	X				X	X	X
3.d.	X				X	X	X
3.e.	X				X	X	X
3.f.	X				X	X	X

Standard 4: Research and Reasoning

	Unit 1: Self	Unit 2: Community	Unit 3: Power	Unit 4: War	Unit 5: American Dream	Unit 6: Media	Unit 7: Environment
1.a.		X		X	X	X	X
1.b.			X				X
1.c.		X					X
1.d.		X				X	X

1.e.		X		X		X	X
1.e.		X		X		X	X
1.f.		X				X	X
1.g.i.			X				
1.g.ii.	X		X	X		X	
2.a.				X	X	X	
2.b.			X				

IV. Self-Evaluation

Wow. I learned a lot of new skills working on this project! Near the beginning of EDUC463, I drew a cartoon titled, “Teachers Playing Sports,” in which two under-exercised, stereotypical teachers were failing miserably (at least in the preliminary frame) at golf and tennis. I felt a similar frustrations and growing pains quite often during this assignment. Just from a technical standpoint, this project marked the first time I’d ever created a table or chart in a word doc, scanned an image onto a word doc, or charted the standards and evidence outcomes onto a conceptual framework of my own creation. But, now that it’s all put together, I am enjoying a fleeting moment of personal power in regards to this whole education thing.

I am proud of my overarching concept, and I feel that I’ve gone above and beyond the required level of description, especially in my introduction, where I work hard to explain the overarching concept (hopefully cogently) and lay out each unit, how it relates to the concept, and tell the story of how the class unfolds thematically. I also worked to incorporate ELL-friendly instruction into my units, and made a point to sum this up in my “Notes on ELLs.”

I think that the central strength of my project is my personal voice, how that translates through an ambitious, critical literacy-friendly overarching theme, and a curriculum that is exuberant and hopefully engaging to tenth graders in my setting. While personalized, I worked hard to make the texts relatively true to what is often taught in the district: most of the fulcrum texts that I chose for the units (see “Descriptions of Seven Units” section) come from the PSD reading list. From the multimodal context texts, to the creative assessments where students are constructing their own learning (“Seeing *Hamlet*,” Fishbowl on Poverty, Community Documentary, War and Peace Debate and Class Letter to the Editor, “Story of Stuff” Research Projects, and Process Portfolio), I feel that I was meeting standards, following guidelines, but also designing a course that I am passionate about; a course I would want to take myself.

Some weaknesses in my plan could be that I am not giving enough weight and time to the reading and comprehension of fulcrum texts and that I am moving on too fast during mid-unit weeks to other texts and other ways of interacting with the unit concept. Another weakness that I noticed when sifting through the standards, is that I don’t include a world literature perspective, which is required for grade ten (Does *Hamlet* count? Hmmm). The reason for this is primarily my lack of familiarity with the world literature on the PSD reading list. If I had more time, I would include more of a global literature perspective to my Yearlong Plan (the Environment Unit does open the door to a global vision of production, power hierarchies amongst countries, and resource and labor exploitation).

In all, though, I put in my best effort on this project, and I think it is a good first try at something I haven’t tried before. I was pleasantly surprised, when checking my yearlong plan against the standards, that most of what I had initially planned was matching pretty well. This is a testament to good mental and conceptual preparation on the part of Peter Smagorinsky, Sarah Wessling, and Cindy O’Donnell-Allen. Thanks gang!

The Letter Grade I believe I deserve: A.