

“Global Youth in the Digital Age”

2013 Yale - PIER Summer Institute

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Perspective Matters: Stories Told by Our Digital Texts

Sydney Valerio, North Rockland High School, English Language Arts, Tenth Grade, Allow for a three to five days project time frame.

Introduction: This unit focuses on the stories images are able to communicate in different media. The lesson compels students to look closely at several visual and literary texts in order to examine the story that is told via different genres and media.

Geographic Connections: Related to Summer Institute Themes—Global Youth, Awareness, Digital Access and Production-Use of Storify, TED talks focusing on digital life, [NYT](#) interactive map focusing on USA geography and data about social ladder, Twitter and Newsela.

Vocabulary: Digital ethnography, perspective, identity, culture, theme & narrative.

Stage 1 – Desired Results

Common Core Content Standard(s):

- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.2](#) Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.6](#) Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.
- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.4](#) Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).
- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.5](#) Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1–3 up to and including grades 9–10 [here](#).)
- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.6](#) Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology’s capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.
- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.10](#) Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.
- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1](#) Initiate and participate effectively in a range of

collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.2](#) Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source.
- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.3](#) Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, identifying any fallacious reasoning or exaggerated or distorted evidence.
- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.5](#) Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

Understanding (s)/Goals:
Students will understand that:

- images have the power to tell stories.
- our perspective towards digital texts is shaped by our own environment/geography, identity and culture.

Essential Question(s) Related to Theme(s):

- How can an image create a story?
- What images do stories create?

Student Objectives (Outcomes):
Students will be able to:

- Discuss the essential questions and use supportive details accessed from multiple sources.
- Work cooperatively and collaboratively in order to present their ideas in a coherent manner.

Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence

Performance Task(s):

- Students will take on the role of “digital ethnographer”, closely considering and exploring how real-life stories are represented through digital texts, as individuals and as a collective class.

Other Evidence:
Formative:

- Tweet about the factor that influences their perspective.
- Discussion board posts on our class page about Storify images and videos.
- Discussion talking points about the power of images and their article from Newsela
- Fish bowl discussions and/or ‘Think, Pair, Share’ handouts about “The Power of Images” essay, “The Danger of Single Story”, “Your Online Life Permanent as a Tattoo”, The NYT interactive map about Social Ladder & Rumi’s poem in its

entirety.

Summative:

- “News to Me” assignment about a story accessed through Newsela website

Stage 3 – Learning Plan

Learning Activities:

1. This unit uses multiple sources to guide instruction of the essential questions. The Storify found on the following link: <http://storify.com/ineffableness/perspective-matters> features the digital texts that are used as a springboard for discussion and exploration. Students will also need to access the Newsela website in order to get a news article at their expected lexile level. They will need to create an account. Also, students will need to use Twitter for one of the activities. It is also recommended students create a twitter for academic purposes separate from their social username, if applicable.

Teacher’s Note: This unit is set up so that students can learn about proper usage of internet websites and social media. Your school, depending on the Internet filters that are created by your individual school district, may block the websites. You may have to submit them to your district’s Technology department to be unblocked.

2. Begin the unit by accessing the [Storify accessible through this hyperlink](http://storify.com/ineffableness/perspective-matters) and through this address: <http://storify.com/ineffableness/perspective-matters>. Explain to students that the entire unit has them position themselves as ‘digital ethnographers’ who are exploring and documenting the stories of society through the images and stories that are told via media.
 - a. Have students read aloud Rumi’s quote: “Don’t be satisfied with stories how things have gone with others. Unfold your own myth...”-Rumi, 13th century Persian poet.
 - b. Students will then turn and talk with a classmate about what Rumi meant by these words, how it applies to the stories they hear and read about, and how does it apply to themselves. Select at least four pairs to share with the class their thoughts about the quote. Create a brainstorm web to represent the collective thoughts of the class and for reflection at the end of the lesson.
 - c. Discuss with students the role identity, culture and environment/geography play in shaping a person’s perspective. Scroll through the Storify and look over the different still shots about identity, culture and environment/geography. What was the intended message by each of the posts? Have students form groups of three and determine as a group which of the three factors shapes perspective the most. Have them compose as group, a 140-count statement to tweet. The tweet has to feature one of the images from the Storify as part of their tweet. The tweet should also have the hash tag #perspectivematterschat.
3. Ask students to share their thoughts aloud in class about the tweets that were most interesting and about the process of creating it as a group since tweeting is normally an individual task not a collective one. Discuss with students their thoughts about creating a statement that aligned itself with their thoughts and with the image they selected. What did

they have to leave out of their statement and what did the image not communicate that they wanted to say about perspective. Have students fill out a 3-2-1 'exit' slip about three things they learned, two things they found intriguing, and one thing they would change about the assignment.

4. Show students the TED talk by Juan Enriquez "Your Online Life, Permanent as a Tattoo". This talk is a six minutes talk that will generate a discussion about social media and online use and the stories created through these digital texts. Ask students what the central message of this video was and how did the presenter use ethos, pathos and logos to communicate it. This TED talk also allows for a discussion about the use of media for social purposes versus academic. It is a great segway for the discussion of the essay "The Power of Images: Creating the Myths of Our Time" by J.F. Davis. This essay will lead the discussion board topics about the myths presented in media. Direct the students' attention to the publication date (1992) of this essay and have them consider this date as they venture into their 'ethnographic study' of these myths in our current media. Students will have to post to the discussion board a response to Davis' myths. They will have to select one of the myths and access an image from the media that proves or disproves the myth. The post should include the title of the article, a brief summary of the major points and then their defense for or against Davis' myth.
5. After all of these activities, students are now ready to venture into the culminating activity that will serve as a summative assessment of the unit. Show students the 18 minutes TED talk by Chimamanda Adichie "The Danger of a Single Story". Have students consider:
 - a. the central theme identified in her talk's title,
 - b. the power of storytelling
 - c. how a reader identifies with the story
 - d. their perspective about her story and
 - e. how can they write a fuller version of a story that is singular

Create a fish bowl and have students discuss these items about the TED talk. Bring forth the brainstorm web about Rumi's quote. Have students consider Rumi's words at this moment after having all of these discussions. At this point, students are ready to begin their "News to Me" project. Students will have to select an article news story from Newsela. Suggest that they select a subject matter they are not well-versed in or familiar with at all. Then, have students create a speech in which they present the class with a series of three to five images that communicate the subject of the article. They will have to tell the story about the subject of the article as if they were a member of the news story itself, using details for the article about the 'who, what, where, why, how' aspects of news reporting their narrative; in addition, they have to select images that enhance the story from being a singular story to a more full and developed view on the event. (For example, if students had selected the story of the recent Bangladesh factory disaster, they would create a narrative about the event as if they were a factory worker or owner, a member of a neighboring community, a worker at a neighboring factory, etc.) Students will have to submit a list of the sources they have used for both their images and for the news article they accessed through Newsela. The images should be compiled in a slide presentation via PowerPoint or a Prezi. Their presentation should conclude with a reflection about Rumi's quote and the power they felt in telling the story.

Modifications:

This unit is built robustly so that the teacher may be able to create a teacher-centered or student-centered version of the unit. There are parts of the unit that can be done without the use of technology and there are many opportunities for grouping students according to language proficiency and ability.

- The Newsela website allows the students to increase or decrease the lexile level of the reading. In addition, I encourage teachers to create their own Storify for this unit for younger grade levels, student abilities or to adapt this unit to other topics.
- In an upper level high school course, this unit can generate research-based projects that have students critically analyze how the same news stories are reported via different news sources. The students can then engage in looking closely at the photography involved in reporting in one news source versus another. For example, in New York, an article and its photos can be evaluated from the New York Post and an article on the same news story but from a newspaper like the New York Times can be compared to it. This could lead students to note the different audiences and purposes both news outlets cater to and how the stories are communicated differently, etc.
- Another modification to this unit could include the use of audio news reports or stories from sources like NPR. Teachers can use stories from StoryCorp or the hourly news report to have students generate stories from the perspective of the subject matter.
- Modifications for students who are English language learners can be tailored according to their proficiency in English and their abilities in their native language. Teachers can provide a glossary of vocabulary as a visual aid, in both English and their native language. ELLs can also be grouped with students with high level abilities in English so that they can be immersed in a group setting that models proper language usage. Teachers can also suggest that these students focus their 'News to Me' learning activity, or any of the others, on their own specific country's news. They can also be asked to share their thoughts and insight about how our country's media stories compare to their native country's media stories.

Extensions:

This unit, or part of it, could create a great opportunity to engage in a discussion with students from another country through an iEarn project. The learning activities could also be extended to discussions about literary works that are being studied throughout the school year. The unit also can extend itself to a leadership club workshop about perspective or digital literacy.

1. **Resource List/Bibliography:**

- Adichie, C. (2009). "The Danger of a Single Story". *TED: Ideas Worth Spreading*. Retrieved July 18, 2013, from http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story.html
- Davis, J. F. (2011). Power of Images: Creating the Myths of Our Time. *Center for Media Literacy*. Retrieved July 18, 2013, from <http://www.medialit.org/reading-room/power-images-creating-myths-our-time>

Enriquez, J. (2013). "Your Online Life, Permanent as a Tattoo". *TED: Ideas Worth Spreading*. Retrieved July 18, 2013, from http://www.ted.com/talks/juan_enriquez_how_to_think_about_digital_tattoos.html

Ineffableness. (2013, July 27). "Perspective Matters: Stories Told by Our Digital Texts". *Storify*. Retrieved July 27, 2013 from <http://storify.com/ineffableness/perspective-matters>

How Are You Going to Use This Unit?

I plan to use this unit this upcoming school year as part of a unit for our Common Core tenth grade curriculum this winter. I plan to extend this project by connecting with one of the institute participants who is from Mexico by creating a discussion via Skype between our students. I also plan to share the unit with my district via our blog. This unit is also serving as part of my continuing research about literacy development of youth in the digital age.