

Yale 2017 PIER Summer Institute: Africa and the World

Title of Lesson: Literary Pinwheel Synthesizing Author and Critic Points of View in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, and Achebe's *Images of Africa: Racism in Conrad's Heart of Darkness*

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Subject Area: AP Literature or English 12

Grade Level: 12

Time Allotment: one 55-minute class session (after reading the texts and prepping discussion)

Lesson Description: *Include- why is this important for students to know?*

Adopting Author and Critic Points of View Through the Literary Pinwheel Discussion Model to Engage Deeply With Questions of Perception of Otherness in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, and Achebe's *Images of Africa: Racism in Conrad's Heart of Darkness*

Learning Context: *How does this lesson/unit fit within the context of the the larger unit or other units?*

This lesson works well as a concluding analysis activity at the end of a unit exploring these texts and the compelling question of how point of view and perception of otherness shape our analysis of a text.

Compelling Question(s): *What question(s) will guide student inquiry during the lesson/unit?*

privilege factor into this?
How do power relations factor into all of these questions?
Do we give our power away by allowing ourselves to be observed through the lens of otherness? How do we perceive otherness?
How do we perceive ourselves?
How do others perceive us?
What are our (as individuals) KNOWN stereotypes, assumptions, discomforts, and allure of a given culture?
Is objectivity possible when we observe as outsiders?
What cultural baggage do we bring to our perceptions of others?

How have these internal, personal concepts worked on a societal level in various historical contexts?

Is it possible to really see another culture through our own cultural gaze?

Content Standards: *What standards are addressed through the teaching of this lesson/unit?*

Arizona's English Language Arts Standards – 11-12th Grade Literature

Key Ideas and Details

11-12.RL.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain. 11-12.RL.2 Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.

11-12.RL.3 Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and connect elements of a story or drama.

Craft and Structure

11-12.RL.4 Determine the meaning(s) of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings, while analyzing the impact of specific choices on meaning and tone.

11-12.RL.5 Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text contribute to its overall structure and meaning, as well as its aesthetic impact.

11-12.RL.6 Using a variety of genres, analyze how the narrative point of view impacts the implicit and explicit meanings in a text

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

11-12.RL.9 Drawing on a wide range of time periods, analyze how two or more texts treat similar themes or topics. Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

11-12.RL.10 By the end of the year, proficiently and independently read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poetry, in a text complexity range determined by qualitative and quantitative measures appropriate to grade 12.

Arizona's English Language Arts Standards – 11-12th Grade Reading Standards for Informational Text

Key Ideas and Details

11-12.RI.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

11-12.RI.2 Determine and analyze the development and interaction of two or more central ideas over the course of a text to provide a complex analysis or objective summary.

11-12.RI.3 Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.

Craft and Structure

11-12.RI.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text.

11-12.RI.6 Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is

particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the effectiveness of the text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

11-12.RI.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in print in order to address a question or solve a problem.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

11-12.RI.10 By the end of the year, proficiently and independently read and comprehend informational text and nonfiction in a text complexity range determined by qualitative and quantitative measures appropriate to grade 12.

Lesson Objectives/Learning Intentions:

By the end of this lesson, students will have:

1. Adopted persona of author and critic points of view
2. Engaged in structured analysis discussion using the Literary Pinwheel Discussion Model (see below for details)
3. Deeply questioned perception of otherness in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, and Achebe's *Images of Africa: Racism in Conrad's Heart of Darkness*

Lesson Vocabulary:

Content Vocabulary	Skill/Process Vocabulary
(These are terms that students will have used in discussion of the texts previously and are expected to address in their discussion) Cultural baggage White gaze Intersectionality Post- and Neo-colonialism Hybridity and sovereignty Post-hybrid conjunctive consciousness Diaspora and "the third space" of home/not home Hegemony	Pinwheel Discussion Provocateur

Lesson Activities:

Preparation prior to this lesson:

**Students have read the three texts.*

**Students have been introduced to the discussion model in previous lessons, wherein they were read the following description, and shown a video*

(<https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/high-school-literature-lesson-plan>) that illustrates the process.

Sarah Gonzalez, in her blog [Cult of Pedagogy](#), gives a succinct description of the Pinwheel Discussion Format in her Post titled, “The Big List of Class discussion Strategies”:

***Basic Structure:** Students are divided into 4 groups. Three of these groups are assigned to represent specific points of view. Members of the fourth group are designated as “provocateurs,” tasked with making sure the discussion keeps going and stays challenging. One person from each group (the “speaker”) sits in a desk facing speakers from the other groups, so they form a square in the center of the room. Behind each speaker, the remaining group members are seated: two right behind the speaker, then three behind them, and so on, forming a kind of triangle. From above, this would look like a pinwheel. The four speakers introduce and discuss questions they prepared ahead of time (this preparation is done with their groups). After some time passes, new students rotate from the seats behind the speaker into the center seats and continue the conversation.*

***Variations:** When high school English teacher [Sarah Brown Wessling](#) introduced this strategy [. . .] she used it as a device for talking about literature, where each group represented a different author, plus one provocateur group. But in the comments that follow the video, Wessling adds that she also uses the strategy with non-fiction, where students represent authors of different non-fiction texts or are assigned to take on different perspectives about an issue.”*

**During this previous class session of introduction to the process, the students were assigned to four groups (Achebe the author, Achebe the critic, Conrad, and Provocateur) and given guidelines on appropriate and compelling questions they should generate for the discussion. The students are expected to arrive at this class session prepared with their written questions to use in discussion.*

- 1. Students are greeted and reminded of the day’s objective: to adopt the persona of Achebe the author, Achebe the critic, or Conrad, in order to use perspective to facilitate a conversation (focused on our compelling questions and key vocabulary and concepts, listed above) between the texts.*
- 2. Students are directed to move desks into a pinwheel pattern of four sets of two rows, facing the center of the room, with one “hot seat” at the head of each arm of the pinwheel. This is where the student who has adopted the persona of each group sits, and where the conversation among the personas happens.*
- 3. The previously assigned groups (Achebe as author, Achebe as critic, Conrad, and Provocateur) gather in their portion of the pinwheel formation and review their previously created questions. These questions will have been created to engage conversation between the assigned persona and the other personas. For example, Achebe the critic is engaging both Achebe the author and Conrad, based on the compelling questions and the featured vocabulary/concepts (above). At this point, the teacher reminds students that he/she will record tally marks under the question and comment categories of “text-based,” “extension,” “follow-up questions,” and “new ideas” for each group on the chalkboard so that the groups can monitor their performance in real time.*
- 4. Students begin discussion with the provocateur asking the initial question. As the provocateur has a special role of keeping conversation going and extending ideas, it is appropriate for this student to initiate conversation as a neutral conversant, making*

sure to touch on the key vocabulary/concepts and compelling questions to guide the direction of the conversation.

- 5. After 5-6 minutes of conversation, the student in each hot seat is replaced by a group member of that group. A new question is brought forward, with each group taking turns questioning with each round and the provocateur poised to ask a question, should conversation dwindle or diverge.*
- 6. The teacher's role, as the conversation proceeds, is to monitor the question and comments, tallying types on the board so that students can monitor their group's participation and performance, adjusting as needed.*
- 7. Ten minutes prior to the end of the class session, the teacher stops the conversation and passes out an exit card with the following questions: What are three new insights you gained today about the texts or the compelling questions through adopting the persona and shifting perspective? What was the most thought-provoking moment in today's conversation? What was your strongest moment in persona, either questioning or responding?*