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Rationale for Conceptual Unit on Greed

- “Greed, for lack of a better word, is good! Greed is right! Greed works! Greed clarifies, cuts through, and captures the essence of the evolutionary spirit.”

-Gordon Gekko, *Wall Street*, 1987

- “Because all the gold that is beneath the moon, or ever was, would not give rest to a single one of these weary souls.”

-Dante Alighieri, *The Inferno*

- “Poverty wants much; but avarice, everything.”

-Publius Syrus, *Maxims*

Greed (n.)- an excessive desire for more than one needs or deserves.

Success (n.)- the achievement of something attempted; the gaining of fame or prosperity; one that succeeds (*The American Heritage Dictionary*, 3rd edition).

Why are some human beings so greedy? Is greediness disguised as capitalism and success? Why is avarice one of Dante’s Seven Deadly Sins? What is being done to help those in need, if anything? Can greed actually be a form of motivation? What do some of our finest authors, poets, and leaders have to say about it? Why study it? Tom Lickona, an educator at the State University of New York at Cortland “cites the bad examples set by chief executives and

other officers of major corporations such as Enron. *'Greed and corruption at the top tend to foster greed and corruption at all levels,'* he says" (*Insight on the News*, 2003). Is the drive for success responsible for this? It is necessary to address issues such as greed and success in school because inevitably every person will be involved in a situation that concerns materialism and different types of success. Adolescents need to learn the value of being caring and generous because without those two notions, the world would be a much worse place in which to live.

I anticipate that some people might think that my unit is the antithesis of ambition and capitalism. I am providing texts and lessons that show what can become of materialism if it is taken too far. I will conduct the lessons and we will have discussions that center around the question of ambition vs. avarice. The speech I have included in the unit from Theodore Roosevelt exemplifies what I am essentially attempting to do. Roosevelt would agree that "self-interest" is a healthy notion that supports businesses. However, he emphasizes "high ideals" as being above "gain and greed". I also believe that Roosevelt is a good example to study because he was very involved with corporations and "trust-busting". What is good about his speech is that it recognizes and applauds "material prosperity" while also keeping it in check by reminding us of the power of compassion. Therefore, in my conceptual unit, I will discuss how the texts I have selected illustrate different and varying degrees of avarice and why it is important to study it. My plan contains an interesting array of characters and situations which will demonstrate the points I am making.

I have designed the unit to be taught in a 10th grade general or college prep class. The texts consist of authors, poets, and leaders from five different countries in America, Europe, and China. I feel that these texts are representative of what I am trying to express when I think of the word "avarice" and "success".

Here is what will constitute the unit on greed:

Novels:

- *The Hobbit* (English)
- *The Pearl* (American)

Poems:

- from *The Inferno* (canto VII, lines 24-66), Dante (Italian)
- “This is Just to Say”, William Carlos Williams (American)
- “Nothing Gold Can Stay”, Robert Frost (American)
- “Greed”, Lao Tzu (Chinese)

Speech:

- from “The Strenuous Life”, Theodore Roosevelt (American)

Movies:

- *The Count of Monte Cristo* (French book by Alexandre Dumas, American movie)
- scene from *Wall Street* (American)

I will now explain each item and how it exemplifies what I am attempting to convey:

Tolkien’s *The Hobbit* is a tale about mythic beings (not too far removed from modern day humans) living in an age long since passed. It consists of dwarves, hobbits, wizards, dragons, humans, elves, goblins, and a creature named Gollum. The dwarves, led by Thorin, are on a mission to steal gold from Smaug, the dragon. Gandalf (the wizard) and Bilbo (the hobbit) accompany the dwarves on their journey. There are several instances where you can witness the many influences success has on the characters. For starters, Smaug is the embodiment of greed. He sits around all day in the mountain on his huge pile of gold, refusing to give any away to the poor people who need it. He will kill to defend it. Here we see an instance of greed as an

incentive for back-breaking labor. The dwarves mine constantly in their mountains for treasure and are driven only by the thought of owning more and more gold. Furthermore, they put themselves in harm's way by making the long and perilous quest through the mountains and into Smaug's lair solely because of their voracity for his treasure.

One of the major themes in Steinbeck's *The Pearl* is greed. One of the morals of the story is that materialism is not everything in life and that it oftentimes brings out the worst in people. When Kino finds the giant pearl while he is diving one day, he and his family believe that it will alleviate all of their problems. The pearl is priceless and everyone in their small village wants a cut of the money. Kino delights in celebrating what some would define as "The American Dream". He says that he wants an education for his son, Coyotito, and a church wedding. They think that they will be secure since they have acquired such an object of great wealth. But after finding the pearl, all of the problems Kino and his family face are in direct proportion to the villagers' jealousy of them. The novel ends on a tragic note and Kino's family is forever negatively affected. Here we learn of what happens when good intentions become twisted. The story is only 42 pages long, so it is more like a novella, not a full blown novel. Thus, I do not think that it will be too overwhelming to do it along with another book (i.e., *The Hobbit*).

The Inferno by Dante Alighieri features the avaricious and the prodigal in circle four. There are priests, popes, and cardinals in it and they are in a constant battle in which they roll heavy weights back and forth between groups and are clashed together. Meanwhile they shout at each other "Why do you hoard?" and "Why do you squander?". The torment comes in the form of the sinners who aren't able to hold onto the weights (i.e., possessions). Thus, the greedy want the prodigal to give them all of their weights so they will have more, while the misers want to hold onto every last bit of the weights. Who is more successful, those who are stingy or those

who are wasteful? While the tightfisted have money, they do not show it off as much as the lavish, who flaunt it. *The Inferno* makes for a good discussion because we will find out what happens when somebody's idea of avarice is taken to the extreme.

Speaking of self-indulgence, William Carlos Williams's "This is Just to Say" is a short, 12 line poem written in 1934 by one of the best 20th century American poets. The poem is about a person who eats the plums that someone else was saving for breakfast. Not only does the speaker eat the plums on purpose, but he or she brags about it too. Here we see a different form of greed- gluttony, an irrepressible appetite that is awarded an almost God-like status by the person participating in it.

"Nothing Gold Can Stay" by Robert Frost is also quite short (8 lines). In it, the speaker describes the most valuable things in nature: a gold leaf and a flower. He or she says that a gold leaf is the "hardest hue to hold" onto (line 2) and that a flower only blossoms for an hour. I think the title of this poem is fitting since we are studying greed and also because the moral of the poem goes way beyond Mother Nature into the areas of desire and greediness.

Lao Tzu is next with "Greed". Tzu lived around 600 B.C. in China and is considered the Father of Taoism. This poem is about mercenary rulers who let their people die of starvation. The rulers overtax the people and the people rebel as a result. Tzu is clear about how he feels about politicians gaining too much power.

President Theodore Roosevelt's speech "The Strenuous Life" given before The Hamilton Club in Chicago, 1899 equates hard work with greatness and success. One could look at the dwarves' gold and say that they are successful, but are they really prosperous if they did it for their own gain, even though they did it diligently? Going by this speech, I think that Roosevelt would say that the dwarves were on their way to being noble citizens, but that they still had a

long way to go. He honors hard work, but reveres “righteousness by deed and by word” more. He would say that “material prosperity” is a sign of national greatness, though it’s not the only sign.

The Count of Monte Cristo is a wonderful story of betrayal, revenge, lust, and (of course) greed. The movie is directed by Kevin Reynolds, rated PG-13, was released in 2002, and stars Jim Caviezel, Guy Pearce, and Richard Harris. It is very well done and comparable to the book, which is one of my favorites. It has no profanity, no sex, and fight sequences that are tastefully done, and in which blood is minimal. The chief antagonist, Fernand, betrays his best friend, Edmond, in order to get his fiancée, Mercedes. Edmond is banished to the island prison of the Chateau d’If for 14 years and escapes only to learn that his beloved Mercedes is now married to Fernand, the man who deceived him. The thirst for success plays into this movie by the fact that Fernand is so envious of Edmond that he betrays his trust and greedily helps himself to what is left of Edmond’s tattered life, namely Mercedes. Later, Fernand tires of Mercedes and begins cheating on her and gambling away his money. He, like Gatsby, earns most of his money through illegal endeavors and it comes back to haunt him.

Finally, I would like to show a clip from *Wall Street*, which stars Michael Douglas and Charlie Sheen and is directed by Oliver Stone. It was released in 1987 during the height of the materialistic 1980s and chronicles the ups and downs of a Wall Street tycoon (Douglas) and his eager protégé (Sheen) who is willing to do anything to earn a dollar for his mentor. We see the downward spiral the pair takes as a result of their insider trading and Sheen must ultimately choose between doing what his hero commands him to do and what his moral instincts remind him to do. The film is rated R, but the clip I want to show doesn’t have any of the elements that

constitutes an R rated movie. I will send a permission slip home with the students for the parents to sign.

It is my plan that my students will learn more about the many different faces of greed and success. I hope that they will be able to identify avarice when they see it and be able to deal with it appropriately. I think that this unit and these texts will be able to show my students how to do this because it is an entertaining, well-organized, and relatable lesson plan.

Works Cited

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Unit Goals and Rubrics

For *The Hobbit*, the unit goal will be for students to create a guide book. They will organize into six groups and produce one guide book per group. I decided to have the students put a guide book together because the story has many characters and locations and a guide book will help them understand the situations better. It will also allow them to demonstrate their knowledge of the journey and all of the ups and downs the group has to take in order to get the treasure. Tolkien has already provided maps and other pictures in the book, so that will provide a good stepping-off place for the students to create their own interpretations. The students are encouraged to provide more in the guide book than what I have stated, in which case they will be eligible to earn extra points.

The guide book should contain the following elements, at a minimum:

- Historical information about the book (e.g. the history of Lonely Mountain, how Smaug came to live there, how he stole the dwarves' gold, etc.).
- Map of the journey the dwarves and Bilbo take, including a short (2-3 sentences) description of each place (e.g. Hobbiton, Rivendell, Misty Mountains, Mirkwood, Esgaroth, Lonely Mountain, etc.).
- Descriptions of the “bad” guys and the “good” guys, with color pictures of how each type of character looks.

*“Bad guys” include: trolls, wolves, goblins, spiders, Smaug, Gollum

*“Good guys” include: hobbits, wizards, men, dwarves, elves, eagles

- Descriptions of the various treasures featured throughout the book (e.g. gold, the ring of power, the Arkenstone, etc.), along with a minimum of 5-6 sentences summarizing their significance to the story and how greed determines the value of each.

Students will have time during class to work on the guide book, although outside work will probably be needed to finish it. If the groups exemplify outstanding work, I will award extra credit to them.

Rubric:

There will be two rubrics for the group work projects. One will be decided by me and the other will be decided by the students within the same group. My rubric will count 75% of the project grade and the students' will count as the remaining 25%. The following is my rubric for *The Hobbit*:

Category	A	B	C	D	F
Information	Contains <i>all 4 elements</i> of the information I specified in the directions (i.e. historical info, map, descriptions of characters and treasures).	Contains <i>3 elements</i> of the information I specified in the directions (i.e. historical info, map, descriptions of characters and treasures).	Contains <i>2 elements</i> of the information I specified in the directions (i.e. historical info, map, descriptions of characters and treasures).	Contains <i>1 element</i> of the information I specified in the directions (i.e. historical info, map, descriptions of characters and treasures).	Contains <i>none of the elements</i> of the information I specified in the directions (i.e. historical info, map, descriptions of characters and treasures).
Quality of work	Provides work of the <i>highest quality</i> . Groups <i>are prepared</i> and project <i>is genuinely</i> constructed and well-thought out.	Provides work of <i>good quality</i> . Groups <i>are mostly prepared</i> and project <i>is mostly genuinely</i> constructed and well-thought out.	Provides work of <i>adequate quality</i> . Groups <i>are somewhat prepared</i> and project is <i>somewhat genuinely</i> constructed and thought out.	Provides work of <i>poor quality</i> . Groups <i>are not really prepared</i> and project is <i>poorly</i> constructed and thought out.	Provides <i>no work</i> .
Effort/participation	Work <i>reflects</i> the group's best efforts.	Work <i>mostly reflects</i> the group's best efforts.	Work <i>somewhat reflects</i> the group's best efforts.	Work <i>poorly reflects</i> the group's best efforts.	Shows <i>no effort or participation</i> .

Students' rubric for *The Hobbit*:

Students will give a grade to each of the other group members in which they are a part of.

Category	A	B	C	D	F
Effort	Student always puts forth their best effort.	Student usually puts forth their best effort.	Student sometimes puts forth their best effort.	Student rarely puts forth their best effort.	Student never puts forth their best effort.
Participation	Student always participates in the group work.	Student usually participates in the group work.	Student sometimes participates in the group work.	Student rarely participates in the group work.	Student never participates in the group work.
Innovation	Student often shows originality in ideas.	Student usually shows originality in ideas.	Student sometimes shows originality in ideas.	Student rarely shows originality in ideas.	Student never shows originality in ideas.
Cooperation	Student always helps and gets along with other group members.	Student usually helps and usually gets along with other group members.	Student sometimes helps and sometimes gets along with other group members.	Student rarely helps and rarely gets along with other group members.	Student never helps and never gets along with other group members.

Extra credit will consist of the following:

5 extra points- Guide book is *outstanding* and goes well beyond the requirements (e.g.

additional characters are added to the descriptions, more historical info is added, the map is more detailed, everything is colorful and attractive, etc.)

3 extra points- Guide book is *very well done* and goes somewhat beyond the requirements (e.g.

additional characters are added to the descriptions, more historical info is added, the map is more detailed, everything is colorful and attractive, etc.)

The unit goal for *The Pearl* is a multimedia project. An interesting fact I learned about Steinbeck's novella is that it actually started out as a motion picture, then was edited for a magazine, and finally became a book (Jackson, 1953, p. xii). Thinking about *The Pearl* being produced in this way caused me to decide that a multimedia project would be best for it. This will be their "big" project for the unit. Students should create their projects based on their understanding of the text and should include things such as these specifications:

- The characters themselves or their relationships with others.
- The effect that greed has on the village or on individual characters.
- Real life examples comparable to the situations in *The Pearl*.
- What the students have discovered about themselves or about the world by reading the text.

The students will be broken up into groups will create one or a combination of the following:

- Video production
- Live skit
- A dance routine
- Music
- A piece of art

In order to ensure that the project is, indeed, about what I have specified, students will write an argument that consists of at least 250 words (one page typed) to turn in when the project is due. The argument will outline what exactly the group is doing, why they chose to do it, and what significance it has to the book and to greed specifically. I will allow the students time to complete the majority of the project during class, but they should also work on it outside of school. My rubric will count for 75% of the project's grade and the students' rubric will make

up the additional 25%. The argument paper will be weighted less than the other three elements in my rubric. Groups are eligible for extra points if their project is outstanding or very well done. Here is my rubric for *The Pearl*:

Category	A	B	C	D	F
Information (in actual project)	Contains <i>1 or more</i> of the specifications I noted in the directions (i.e. character relationships, effect of greed, real life examples, what students discovered about the world, etc.)	Contains <i>1 or more</i> of the specifications I noted in the directions (i.e. character relationships, effect of greed, real life examples, what students discovered about the world, etc.)	Contains <i>1 or more</i> of the specifications I noted in the directions (i.e. character relationships, effect of greed, real life examples, what students discovered about the world, etc.)	Contains <i>1 or more</i> of the specifications I noted in the directions (i.e. character relationships, effect of greed, real life examples, what students discovered about the world, etc.)	Contains <i>none of the</i> specifications I noted in the directions (i.e. character relationships, effect of greed, real life examples, what students discovered about the world, etc.)
Information (in argument paper)	<i>Clearly</i> explains what group is trying to accomplish with its project and is the required length.	<i>Mostly</i> explains what group is trying to accomplish with its project and is the required length.	<i>Adequately</i> explains what group is trying to accomplish with its project and is not the required length.	<i>Poorly</i> explains what group is trying to accomplish with its project and is not the required length.	<i>Does not</i> turn in argument paper.
Quality of work	Provides work of the <i>highest quality</i> . Groups <i>are prepared</i> and project <i>is genuinely</i> constructed and well-thought out.	Provides work of <i>good quality</i> . Groups <i>are mostly prepared</i> and project <i>is mostly genuinely</i> constructed and well-thought out.	Provides work of <i>adequate quality</i> . Groups <i>are somewhat prepared</i> and project is <i>somewhat genuinely</i> constructed and thought out.	Provides work of <i>poor quality</i> . Groups <i>are not really prepared</i> and project is <i>poorly</i> constructed and thought out.	Provides <i>no work</i> .
Effort/participation	Work <i>reflects</i> the group's best efforts.	Work <i>mostly reflects</i> the group's best efforts.	Work <i>somewhat reflects</i> the group's best efforts.	Work <i>poorly reflects</i> the group's best efforts.	Shows <i>no effort or participation</i> .

Students' rubric for *The Pearl*:

Category	A	B	C	D	F
Effort	Student always puts forth their best effort.	Student usually puts forth their best effort.	Student sometimes puts forth their best effort.	Student rarely puts forth their best effort.	Student never puts forth their best effort.
Participation	Student always participates in the group work.	Student usually participates in the group work.	Student sometimes participates in the group work.	Student rarely participates in the group work.	Student never participates in the group work.
Innovation	Student often shows originality in ideas.	Student usually shows originality in ideas.	Student sometimes shows originality in ideas.	Student rarely shows originality in ideas.	Student never shows originality in ideas.
Cooperation	Student always helps and gets along with other group members.	Student usually helps and usually gets along with other group members.	Student sometimes helps and sometimes gets along with other group members.	Student rarely helps and rarely gets along with other group members.	Student never helps and never gets along with other group members.

Extra credit will consist of the following:

5 extra points- Multimedia project that is *outstanding* and goes well beyond the requirements (e.g. a project that reflects *all* of the specifications I stated, extraordinary production of the video, art piece, dance, etc.)

3 extra points- Multimedia project that is *very well done* and goes somewhat beyond the requirements (e.g. a project that reflects *most* of the specifications I stated, high-quality production of the video, art piece, dance, etc.)

I will use exploratory thinking and writing for the third unit goal. Students will keep a dialogue journal in which they will record their thoughts about the readings and examples of whether or not they can be related to the topics we discuss in class. Students will write in their journals throughout the duration of the lesson plan unit. They will exchange the journal with 2-3 other students and respond to what each has written. They can either write in an actual journal or they may do it through e-mail. I will give students time to write in their journals during class sometimes and other times I will ask that they complete it outside of class.

The journal will do more than just summarize what we just read. It should prompt more reflective type thinking and how the texts seem when compared to the “real world”. A big reason I want to use a journal as a goal is because I want my students to be writing all the time. I can use the journal as a tool to get students to write everyday. Doing so should yield at least two results: (1) improving their writing (ideas and grammar) and (2) being able to explain how they feel about the texts and cultivate ideas they may have for the other two unit goals. While I will not grade for grammar and usage, I will look over the kind of errors the students are making and use these as a model for minilessons in grammar. A secondary reason I want students to keep journals is because the texts we are not doing unit goals on (i.e. *The Inferno*, the poems, and Roosevelt’s speech) still need to be addressed. While we will have discussions in class about them, it is still a good idea to have them actually write about the texts in a way so that I can discover how they feel about the more minor readings.

Here are the guidelines for the dialogue journals:

- Use a journal or e-mail to communicate with your partner(s).
- Address the issues raised in class discussions and/or your own personal thoughts about them.

- Each response will consist of at least $\frac{3}{4}$ page hand-written, or $\frac{1}{2}$ page typed.
- I require four entries per week, and I will collect the journals (or e-mails) on Fridays.
- If you hand-write your dialogue, please write neatly so others can read your sentences.
- Grammar will not count against you because I would rather you focus on communicating your ideas to your partner(s) and to me.
- Write more than a simple summary of the texts. Reflect and analyze the readings in a meaningful way.
- Don't forget to address *all* of the texts that are assigned.
- Remember that I am required to share any thoughts or suggestions of violence, suicide, substance abuse, family abuse, or other harmful behavior with the school counselors.

Rubric:

A simple system of check marks will determine the students' grades on the dialogue journals. I will use the following:

-Check plus:

- * Entries are more than a summary; they discuss *active reflection* on the issues raised in the texts and/or in class discussions.
- *Discusses material that is *relevant* to our class meetings.
- *At least $\frac{3}{4}$ page hand-written or $\frac{1}{2}$ page typed.
- *If hand-written, it is *legible* for me and others to read.
- * Journal entries (all 4) are *complete* by Fridays.

-Check:

- * Entries are mostly more than a summary; they mostly discuss *active reflection* on the issues raised in the texts and/or in class discussions.
- * Discusses material that is almost always *relevant* to our class meetings.
- * At least $\frac{3}{4}$ page hand-written or $\frac{1}{2}$ page typed.
- * If hand-written, it is *legible* for me and others to read.
- * Journal entries (all 4) are *complete* by Fridays.

-Check minus:

- * Entries are sometimes more than a summary; they sometimes discuss *active reflection* on the issues raised in the texts and/or in class discussions.
- * Discusses material that is sometimes *relevant* to our class meetings.
- * At least $\frac{3}{4}$ page hand-written or $\frac{1}{2}$ page typed.
- * If hand-written, it is *legible* for me and others to read.
- * Journal entries (all 4) are usually *complete* by Fridays.

-Minus:

- * Entries are simply a summary; they do not discuss *active reflection* on the issues raised in the texts and/or in class discussions.
- * Discusses material that is not *relevant* to our class meetings.
- * Less than the required $\frac{3}{4}$ page hand-written or $\frac{1}{2}$ page typed.
- * If hand-written, it is *not legible* for me and others to read.
- * Journal entries are not usually *not complete* by Fridays.

-Zero:

- * Entries are not turned in at all.

Works Cited

1. Jackson, Joseph Henry. (1953). *The short novels of John Steinbeck*. The Viking Press: New York.

Introductory Activities for Conceptual Unit on Greed

The first introductory activity I want to do is have the students complete an online survey that measures one's greediness. The URL is:

www.beliefnet.com/section/quiz/index.asp?sectionID=&surveyID=178. I have completed the survey and found nothing in it that would be offensive. It is just a quick, easy quiz to take that is fun and will offer concepts that we can discuss in class. The quiz should take no more than 7 minutes to complete. Depending on computer/internet access, I plan to have all of the students take it within the course of the class period, going in groups to take it. I will wrap-up the class discussion for the day by talking about the quiz questions, results (if they want to), and any recurring themes within the quiz, if any.

The second introductory activity I want to do is a questionnaire. I have written a 10 item survey that the students can complete in less than 10 minutes. I have attempted to base my items on topics we will be studying in my lesson plan on greed.

Rate the following items on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being totally disagree and 5 being totally agree.

1. Those who have more should share with those who have less.
2. Being wasteful is better than being stingy.
3. I am impressed by people who have a lot of money.
4. Ambition is a virtue.
5. It is important for me to own nice things.
6. If I won the lottery, I would donate a large portion of it to charity.
7. It is OK to compromise some of my morals if it means that I will get rich.
8. Motivation that is fueled by greed is acceptable.

9. If someone offered me something I wanted more than anything in the world, I would take it with no questions asked.
10. Wealth is more admirable than hard work.

I will put a transparency of the questionnaire on the overhead and have the students write their answers on their own sheets of paper. Afterwards, they will get into small groups and discuss their responses (10 minutes). Finally, we will reconvene in the large group and discuss group and individual answers (15 minutes). In the large group discussion, I will briefly describe the texts from which I got my ideas for the items. I think that these activities will spark students' interest in finding out more about the situations I described in the discussion.

Day by Day Schedule

I have designed my unit plan to be used for daily 90 minute sessions.

WEEK ONE

Day 1:

3 min.- Attendance and housekeeping

15 min.- Open discussion about unit, expectations, and goals.

5 min.- Opinionnaire:

I have written a 10 item survey that the students can complete in less than 5 minutes. I have attempted to base my items on topics we will be studying in my lesson plan on greed.

Rate the following items on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being totally disagree and 5 being totally agree.

11. Those who have more should share with those who have less.
12. Being wasteful is better than being stingy.
13. I am impressed by people who have a lot of money.
14. Ambition is a virtue.
15. It is important for me to own nice things.
16. If I won the lottery, I would donate a large portion of it to charity.
17. It is OK to ignore some of my morals if it means that I will get rich.
18. Motivation that is fueled by greed is acceptable.
19. If someone offered me an object of great value I would take it with no questions asked.
20. Wealth is more admirable than hard work.

10 min.- Break up into groups and discuss responses. Students should look for reasons as to why they rated certain items the way they did and how they compare with the other members' answers.

15 min.- Reconvene in large group and discuss individual and group answers. Discuss examples from real life that could be similar to the items. I will briefly discuss the texts from which I got my ideas for the items.

7 min.- Greed quiz online at:

www.beliefnet.com/section/quiz/index.asp?sectionID=&surveyID=178

10 min.- Discussion about results of quiz.

3 min.- Show clip from *Wall Street* when Michael Douglas/Gordon Gekko is sounding off about his view on greed:

“Greed, for lack of a better word, is good! Greed is right! Greed works! Greed clarifies, cuts through, and captures the essence of the evolutionary spirit.”

5 min.- Discussion of reactions to clip. Tell students that Douglas won the Best Actor Oscar for his role as Gordon Gekko- does that influence their thoughts about his character?

15 min.- Dialogue journal exchange and write.

2 min.- Preparation to leave.

Day 2:

3 min.- Attendance and housekeeping.

5 min.- Brief introduction to *The Hobbit* (author biography, short description of story).

20 min.- Read *The Hobbit* out loud with both students and me reading.

3 min.- Discussion of reactions to beginning of story.

7 min.- Break up into groups that will make up *The Hobbit* guide book designers. I will discuss and show previous models of what the assignment entails and provide each student with a hand-out of the instructions:

For *The Hobbit*, the unit goal will be for students to create a guide book. They will organize into six groups and produce one guide book per group. I decided to have the students put a guide book together because the story has many characters and locations and a guide book will help them understand the situations better. It will also allow them to demonstrate their knowledge of the journey and all of the ups and downs the group has to take in order to get the treasure. Tolkien has already provided maps and other pictures in the book, so that will provide a good stepping-off place for the students to create their own interpretations. The students are encouraged to provide more in the guide book than what I have stated, in which case they will be eligible to earn extra points.

The guide book should contain the following elements, at a minimum:

- Historical information about the book (e.g. the history of Lonely Mountain, how Smaug came to live there, how he stole the dwarves' gold, etc.).
- Map of the journey the dwarves and Bilbo take, including a short (2-3 sentences) description of each place (e.g. Hobbiton, Rivendell, Misty Mountains, Mirkwood, Esgaroth, Lonely Mountain, etc.).
- Descriptions of the “bad” guys and the “good” guys, with color pictures of how each type of character looks.
 - *“Bad guys” include: trolls, wolves, goblins, spiders, Smaug, Gollum
 - *“Good guys” include: hobbits, wizards, men, dwarves, elves, eagles
- Descriptions of the various treasures featured throughout the book (e.g. gold, the ring of power, the Arkenstone, etc.), along with a minimum of 5-6 sentences summarizing their significance to the story and how greed determines the value of each.

Students will have time during class to work on the guide book, although outside work will probably be needed to finish it. If the groups exemplify outstanding work, I will award extra credit to them.

10 min.- Group brainstorm about what general format they would like to create.

25 min.- Read *The Hobbit* silently.

15 min.- Dialogue journal exchange and write.

2 min.- Preparation to leave.

Day 3:

3 min.- Attendance and housekeeping.

5 min.- Minilesson:

Subject-verb agreement

5 min.- Ask students to sum up the material we have read from *The Hobbit* so far and answer any questions they may have about it.

20 min.- Read book out loud.

10 min.- Ask students if they think the dwarves in *The Hobbit* are ambitious or greedy in hunting down the treasure. Ask if they knew somebody or had any kind of experience in which they pursued some type of valuable artifact, perhaps when they were children. I will share an experience I had when I was young in which I would hunt for mica (shiny, silvery, brittle mineral) in my backyard and sometimes sneak into neighbors' yards to find it. Show them a piece of mica to illustrate the similarity it has to gold: shiny, attractive, bright.

15 min.- Read book silently.

15 min.- Go over the dialogue journals. Show students example on the overhead about how to compose an entry by using think aloud methods. Discuss the section in chapter 1 of *The Hobbit* when the dwarves keep showing up at Bilbo's house and he is getting irritated at their insistent and pushy ways. Write on overhead what I and the students think about Bilbo's dilemma- should he be upset about them barging into his house? Why or why not? What would you think if people different from yourself invited themselves into your home and helped themselves to your food and drink? Review how this method of thinking can help when writing.

15 min.- Dialogue journal exchange.

2 min.- Preparation to leave.

Homework: Read 15 pages of the book. Inform students about summary quiz on Friday.

Day 4:

3 min.- Attendance and housekeeping. Explain how summary quiz works.

3 min.- Ask if students have any questions about the reading so far.

4 min.- Explain how to do a freewrite. Students should write without being too concerned about grammar and organization. Just write about what you think about the prompt and don't get bogged down by the little details.

10 min.- Freewrite about the following prompt: In what you have read so far in *The Hobbit*, do you think the dwarves should reclaim their gold? Why or why not? Is it OK that people and creatures have to die in order for them to get the treasure?

15 min.- Form groups and discuss the answers. Students should ask each other about why they believe what they wrote about in their freewrite and what evidence, if any, inspired their responses.

10 min.- Reconvene and share answers with entire class. Have students briefly write recurring responses on board.

14 min.- Silent reading.

14 min.- Out loud reading.

15 min.- Dialogue journal exchange.

2 min.- Preparation to leave.

Remind students of summary quiz tomorrow.

Day 5:

3 min.- Attendance and housekeeping. Collect dialogue journals.

10 min.- Students write their summary quiz on the assigned 15 pages of *The Hobbit*.

45 min.- Have groups that are working on guide book get together and work on expanding their original ideas for the format of the book. Students should discuss what they know so far of the historical information about the background and what kinds of characters they've encountered along with their descriptions. They should appoint a secretary to take notes. Meanwhile, I will visit each group to find out what they are planning and approve of it, make suggestions, and answer questions.

15 min.- Silent reading.

15 min.- Out loud reading.

2 min.- Preparation to leave.

WEEK TWO

Day 6:

3 min.- Attendance and housekeeping.

7 min.- Explain how to develop open-ended questions. Examples of open-ended questions are: Why do you think Bilbo is so hesitant about travelling with the dwarves on their journey? Describe what happens to Bilbo on his first attempt at "burglaring".

10 min.- I will divide students up into groups and each group will come up with 3 open-ended questions about *The Hobbit* that they would like to discuss as a class.

25 min.- Students will pass in questions to me and we will have a whole class discussion answering the group questions. We will note any repeating questions and each group will contribute possible answers to the questions.

25 min.- Silent reading.

3 min.- Answer any questions students may have about book so far.

15 min.- Journals.

2 min.- Preparation to leave.

Day 7:

3 min.- Attendance and housekeeping.

5 min.- Explain how to write a haiku. Show examples of a haiku and have class clap along to the number of syllables in each line (5, 7, 5).

10 min.- Students work on their own haikus based on anything in the *The Hobbit* individually.

10 min.- Ask which students want to share their haikus and have them read them aloud.

Class will confirm that it is a true haiku by clapping along to the syllables during the second reading of the haiku.

20 min.- Read story out loud.

25 min.- Work on guide books in group.

15 min.- Journals.
2 min.- Preparation to leave.

Day 8:

3 min.- Attendance and housekeeping.
5 min.- Minilesson:
Slang- Ask students for examples of slang words that can take the place of standard English. Discuss with students when it is appropriate to use slang and when they should refrain from using it.
2 min.- Explain how the Fishbowl activity works.
25 min.- Have 4 students in middle of class begin Fishbowl. I will encourage students to generate their own open-ended questions, but I will also have questions of my own to help the discussion along:
-Characterize Gollum.
-How is a troll different from a dwarf or hobbit?
-How do Bilbo and the dwarves finally find the secret door?
-Describe the Arkenstone of Thrain. Why does Bilbo keep it? Does he have a right to?
20 min.- Silent reading.
18 min.- Out loud reading.
15 min.- Journals.
2 min.- Preparation to leave.
Homework: Work on guide books so that they're complete by Friday (day 10).

Day 9:

3 min.- Attendance and housekeeping.
15 min.- Silent reading.
15 min.- *Game*:
Divide class up into 2 groups. 1 person from each group will come to the board and wait for the clue I will give them about a certain character or location's description in *The Hobbit*. The first person to write the name on the board correctly will score 1 point for their team. The team that has the most points by the end of the game will earn 4 extra points on their guide books.
55 min.- Work on guide books in groups. Remind students that they are presenting them tomorrow.
No journals today, but turn in tomorrow anyway.
2 min.- Preparation to leave.

Day 10:

3 min.- Attendance and housekeeping. Collect journals.
45 min.- Presentation of guide books. Class and I will ask groups questions about why they chose to use certain formats, color schemes, language, etc.
7 min.- Tell students to pick a couple of lines from *The Hobbit* that were their favorite in order to share with the class.

20 min.- Discussion of favorite lines with class, including my own. Talk about why they picked certain lines, what attracted them to the lines, etc.

5 min.- *The Hobbit* wrap-up. Discuss any further issues with it.

10 min.- Preparation to leave.

WEEK THREE

Day 11:

3 min.- Attendance and housekeeping.

10 min.- Put a transparency of “This is Just to Say” by William Carlos Williams on overhead and read aloud to class. Then, students will jot down their initial thoughts about it, not being concerned with grammar.

“This is Just to Say”, William Carlos Williams

I have eaten
the plums
that were in
the icebox

and which
you were probably
saving
for breakfast

Forgive me
they were delicious
so sweet
and so cold

<http://www.poets.org/poems/poems.cfm?45442B7C000C07060173>

5 min.- Discussion of initial thoughts.

35 min.- Form groups and explain activity to class:

They are to write either a news “blurb” or a classified ad about the disappearance of the plums in the poem. Show class examples of this.

25 min.- Groups read blurbs or classifieds out loud and we discuss them all together. What has been gained and what has been lost by rewriting the poem in this way?

15 min.- Journals.

2 min.- Preparation to leave.

Day 12:

3 min.- Attendance and housekeeping.

3 min.- Introduce Frost.

5 min.- Read poem aloud and answer any questions students may have about it.

"Nothing Gold Can Stay", Robert Frost

Nature's first green is gold
 Her hardest hue to hold.
 Her early leaf's a flower;
 But only so an hour.
 Then leaf subsides to leaf.
 So Eden sank to grief,
 So dawn goes down to day.
 Nothing gold can stay.

<http://www.online-literature.com/frost/748/>

Ask students what they think Frost meant by "Nature's first green is gold" and why he would write that gold is the "hardest hue to hold".

3 min.- Introduce Lao Tzu. Include information such as his being considered the Father of Taoism.

5 min.- Read poem aloud.

"Greed", Lao Tzu

Why are people starving?
 Because the rulers eat up the money in taxes.
 Therefore the people are starving.

Why are the people rebellious?
 Because the rulers interfere too much.
 Therefore they are rebellious.

Why do people think so little of death?
 Because the rulers demand too much of life.
 Therefore the people take life lightly.

Having to live on, one knows better than to value life too much.

<http://www.chebucto.ns.ca/Philosophy/Taichi/lao.html>

Ask students if they think Tzu is being too harsh on the politicians and/or too negative about the situation. Ask students what they would do if they were one of the poor peasants. I will play devil's advocate by being in the position of one of the rich politicians who taxes the peasants too much.

54 min.- Explain that I want students to work individually on constructing collages of either poem. Half of the class should do Frost and the other Tzu (I will divide class up). Students can use newspapers, magazines, catalogs, etc. to make theirs. Collages should be representations of what student thinks about the poem. We will share collages tomorrow.

15 min.- Journals.
2 min.- Preparation to leave.

Day 13:

3 min.- Attendance and housekeeping.
5 min.- Minilesson:
Usage (who 's, whose; it 's, its)
20 min.- Share collages from previous day.
7 min.- Read "The Strenuous Life" by Theodore Roosevelt out loud with students taking turns.

<http://www.theodore-roosevelt.com/trstrenlife.html>

Find the online text of "The Strenuous Life" using this URL. I am only using sections of it in class because it is a bit too lengthy to cover the entire speech.

10 min.- Discussion with class about Roosevelt's opinion on what is hard work and what constitutes it. Ask if students agree or disagree with it and why. How would Roosevelt view the dwarves' purpose for going after their gold?
10 min.- Freewrite individually on the following prompt: Thinking back to the introductory activity when we completed the opinionnaire about greed, how do you think Roosevelt would answer question #10 (*Wealth is more admirable than hard work*)? What, if anything, does he value more than material prosperity? Based on his speech, freewrite a response.
10 min.- Form groups and discuss the responses. Students should ask each other about why they believe what they wrote about in their freewrite and what evidence inspired their responses.
8 min.- Reconvene and share answers with entire class. Have students briefly write recurring responses on board.
15 min.- Journals.
2 min.- Preparation to leave.

Day 14:

3 min.- Attendance and housekeeping.
10 min.- Introduce *The Inferno* and Dante explaining the general synopsis of the poem.
Discuss how he chose certain people to be in particular circles.
7 min.- Read Canto VII (lines 24-66) aloud.
5 min.- Answer any questions students may have. Explain what certain words students may find difficult to understand mean in this context.
4 min.- Explain how *The Inferno* activity is to work. Students will form groups and think of a way to present the scene of the avaricious and the prodigal when they are rolling heavy weights at each other and clashing together. Explain that students should develop a skit to describe the scenario to the class. Students will have additional time to work on skits at the beginning of class tomorrow. Skits will then be presented at the end of class tomorrow.

44 min.- Groups work on skits. I will monitor the groups' progress, answer any questions, and offer suggestions.

15 min.- Journals.

2 min.- Preparation to leave.

Day 15:

3 min.- Attendance and housekeeping. Collect journals.

30 min.- Groups continue to work on skits.

35 min.- Groups present skits.

15 min.- Feedback from class on skits. Class should analyze how groups presented their interpretations and ask them why they chose to portray it in the manner they did.

5 min.- *Inferno* wrap-up. Discuss any further issues with it.

2 min.- Preparation to leave.

WEEK FOUR

Day 16:

3 min.- Attendance and housekeeping.

5 min.- Introduce Steinbeck's background. Ask if anyone has read any other of his works.

10 min.- Describe the multimedia project and give each student a copy of the directions:

The unit goal for *The Pearl* is a multimedia project. An interesting fact I learned about Steinbeck's novella is that it actually started out as a motion picture, then was edited for a magazine, and finally became a book (Jackson, 1953, p. xii). Thinking about *The Pearl* being produced in this way caused me to decide that a multimedia project would be best for it. This will be their "big" project for the unit. Students should create their projects based on their understanding of the text and should include things such as these specifications:

- The characters themselves or their relationships with others.
- The effect that greed has on the village or on individual characters.
- Real life examples comparable to the situations in *The Pearl*.
- What the students have discovered about themselves or about the world by reading the text.

The students will be broken up into groups will create one or a combination of the following:

- Video production
- Live skit
- A dance routine
- Music
- A piece of art

In order to ensure that the project is, indeed, about what I have specified, students will write an argument that consists of at least 250 words (one page typed) to turn in when the project is due. The argument will outline what exactly the group is doing, why they chose to do it, and what significance it has to the book and to greed specifically. I will allow the students time to complete the majority of the project during class, but they should also work on it outside of school. Students will have time during class to work on the majority of the project,

although outside work will probably be needed to finish it. If groups exemplify outstanding work, I will award extra credit to them.

15 min.- Read *The Pearl* silently.

10 min.- Group brainstorm about what general format they would like to create for the project.

15 min.- Journals.

2 min.- Preparation to leave.

Homework: Read 10 pages of The Pearl. Tell students about summary quiz on Wednesday (day 18).

Day 17:

3 min.- Attendance and housekeeping.

3 min.- Answer any questions students may have about *The Pearl* so far.

20 min.- Discuss how the story has started out on a positive note- Kino has found the giant pearl and his vision of a better life for his family is close at hand. Ask students to write 2-3 sentences on what they foreshadow will happen to Kino and his family. Share responses with the class.

47 min.- Work in groups on multimedia project. Groups should focus on expanding their original ideas for the format of the project. Students should discuss what aspects of the story they find most compelling so far and how to fit it in with the assigned project. They should appoint a secretary to take notes. Meanwhile, I will visit each group to find out what they are planning and approve of it, make suggestions, and answer questions.

15 min.- Journals.

2 min.- Preparation to leave.

Remind students of summary quiz tomorrow.

Day 18:

3 min.- Attendance and housekeeping.

10 min.- Summary quiz.

5 min.- Minilesson:

Homonyms (meet, meat; where, wear, ware)

15 min.- Read *The Pearl* out loud.

10 min.- Discussion about Kino's devotion to the pearl and all the opportunities it represents. In what ways is he beginning to act erratically about it? Where is it evidenced that Juana is becoming disillusioned with the whole idea of keeping the pearl? How is everyone's greediness being portrayed?

30 min.- Work on multimedia project.

15 min.- Journals.

2 min.- Preparation to leave.

Homework: Work on project after school if they need additional time to finish it up in time for Monday's presentations.

Day 19:

3 min.- Attendance and housekeeping.

20 min.- Discussion about story's conclusion. How did everyone's foreshadowing pan out? Were you surprised if it did not turn out the way you expected? How does greed contribute to the protagonist's downfall? Why does Kino begin to think that surrendering the pearl would equate with giving up his soul? How is Juana's role as Kino's wife defined?

50 min.- Work on multimedia project.

15 min.- Journals.

2 min.- Preparation to leave.

Day 20:

3 min.- Attendance and housekeeping. Turn in journals.

5 min.- Discussion about how projects are coming along. Students may ask questions about *The Pearl* and/or about the project.

72 min.- Work on multimedia project.

10 min.- Preparation to leave.

Homework: Complete project over the weekend if it is not already finished.

WEEK FIVE

Day 21:

3 min.- Attendance and housekeeping. There will not be dialogue journals to write this week because we are doing things a little differently than usual.

65 min.- Presentations of multimedia projects. Students should also turn in the 1 page typed argument they have written about their projects before the presentations. Class will discuss what they thought of the project, why groups chose to do what they did, what they learned from doing it, etc.

7 min.- Tell students to pick a couple of lines from *The Pearl* that were their favorite in order to share with the class.

10 min.- Discussion of favorite lines with class, including my own. Talk about why they picked certain lines, what attracted them to the lines, etc.

5 min.- Preparation to leave.

Day 22:

3 min.- Attendance and housekeeping.

7 min.- Introduction to *The Count of Monte Cristo*. Briefly introduce the author, Alexandre Dumas and ask if anyone has seen or read *The Three Musketeers*. Explain that *Monte Cristo* is a story about betrayal, power, and greed. Tell students to take notes during the movie whenever they see an instance in which greed or ambition is at work.

60 min.- Watch first half of the movie.

15 min.- Feedback on reactions to the first half, including any notes they took about greed during it.

5 min.- Preparation to leave.

Day 23:

3 min.- Attendance and housekeeping.

70 min.- Watch second half of the movie.

15 min.- Discussion about reactions to the movie. What, if anything, surprised you about the story? Did Fernand get what he deserved? Why or why not? Does Edmond really care about his riches or is he just using it as a means to get back at Fernand?

2 min.- Preparation to leave.

References

1. Smagorinsky, Peter. (2002). *Teaching English through principled practice*. New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc.
2. <http://www.killenglish.homestead.com/hobbit.html>
3. <http://www.readinggroupguides.com/guides3/pearl1.asp>