Hidden Identity: Finding Yourself in Romeo and Juliet

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ELAN 7408

Dr. Smagorinsky

September 22, 2008

The date is out of such prolixity.

We'll have no Cupid hoodwinked with a scarf,

Bearing a Tartar's painted bow of lath,

Scaring the ladies like a crowkeeper,

Nor no without-book prologue, faintly spoke

After the prompter, for our entrance;

But, let them measure us by what they will,

We'll measure them a measure and be gone.

Benvolio, Romeo and Juliet, Act I Scene iv.

Rationale:

Why a unit plan on identity as based on the Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet?

Every year, the ninth grade students in DeKalb County read The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet, which serves as an introduction to dramatic literature as well as the works of William Shakespeare, which they will encounter again in the upper grades. This unit plan developed as a means of connecting significant themes and concepts within the text to issues of relevance to ninth grade readers, for the purpose of making the text more accessible to students.

This unit has been designed to be used in the ninth grade classroom, which is largely composed of urban and suburban at-risk students of African American or Hispanic backgrounds. A large percentage of students have been retained or are in upper grades, but are making up credits. Gang activity is pervasive. All students have been expelled from their home school for a charge of misconduct, violence, or breach of the contract made in the Student Handbook, for which they have been sentenced, through formal school hearing, to one to two semesters at the Alternative School. Students over the age of sixteen have the choice to attend class or remain at home for their expulsion.

Students are also frequently returning to the school system from time in Juvenile Hall. Class attendance is usually an opportunity to redeem credits lost or fulfill the requirements of Probation Officers or court orders. The objective of the Alternative school is to meet county curricular standards while providing needed structure to students who have struggled within the regular school setting. One of the major issues that we encounter in teaching and developing relationships with our students is the lack of self-awareness or self-identity. Students quite frequently demonstrate a complete lack of confidence in ideas, thoughts, feelings, and self-concepts. There is a certain disconnect between a student and his or her emotions, as reported by our active counseling program. On a cognitive level, it is the purpose of our program to support the healthy development of self-awareness and recognition of value and self-worth, even through our academic subjects. The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet offers a safe arena for students to examine personal high-stress situations inherent in teenage life: the balance between friends and family, the separation between private self and social self, the conflict of expressing unpopular or accepted opinions in the face of group mentality. All of these subgroups found within the framework of self-awareness and expression of identity have an enormous impact on the developing persona of the at-risk teen.

How does this text, viewed in this light, an acceptable model, especially considering the high emotional range of the students in our demographics? It is necessary that the approach in reading literature involving violence and group segregation be approached carefully. For example, the comparison sometimes made between the Montague/Capulet war and the gang activity in United States may be highly effective in other school settings, but it is not, typically, appropriate in working with our students. This depends, somewhat on maturity levels. It is not an approach I would feel comfortable using.

Concerning, identity, we have found from past experiences that having a developed sense of self contributes to the ability to refrain from negative social behaviors. As a part of the punitive measures from the school board decision, students

who come to our school are not allowed to participate in group activities, such as sports teams or clubs. Because this influence is absent in our school, the over arching group influences are usually negative, whether gang led or merely group mentality. It is invaluable, therefore, to help student resist peer pressure and assert personal value systems.

Through the context of *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*, students will appraise the habits of the characters in the play. Romeo is described as being a sensitive, rational character. While the other members of his family participate in violent behaviors, he shuns and criticizes their behavior to his cousin, Benvolio. We feel the validity of this assumption when the head of the Capulet family praises him for these characteristics. As the play develops, however, Romeo becomes entangled in deceit. After he has wooed and won Juliet as his wife, he disguises his new relation, rather than disclose it. Because of his deceit, Romeo's friend and Juliet's cousin both die.

Following the banishment of Romeo, Juliet's parents decide to marry Juliet to a suitable match. Juliet does not disclose her identity in relation to her new husband. Instead, she uses deceit and, under the disguise of death, hides from the wishes of her family. When her new husband is fooled by this disguise as well, he commits suicide. On waking, Juliet discovers what has happened and kills herself also. As the heads of the two warring households discover the result of their war, they are awakened to the evils of division between their two households.

Rather than privileging the aftereffect of peace that comes out of this horrific end, we will discuss this play as it is titled, a tragedy. From the perspective of the severed lineage resultant from Romeo and Juliet's tragic demise, the end of the feud becomes inane, for whom is this peace established? The families are destroyed. If we are to interpret this complex play on a didactic level, the lesson formed from this reading is not of violence, but of the futility of disguise and deceit. Students will discuss and examine within this text how they can avoid the pitfalls of the deception.

As students read the text of *Romeo and Juliet*, they will be encouraged to view and recognize themselves through the lenses of private self, social self, and moral self, and to explore the different disguises worn by people which keep those identities separate and hidden. As well as creating a deeper selfawareness in students, the theme of identity is meant to create a link between the characters in Shakespeare's play and modern readers.

Though high school students rarely have the opportunity to attend masked balls, they are continually participating in activities that hide and disguise their true selves. Sometimes the multiple identities, or roles students play, work in natural and healthy ways. However, when students lack selfawareness or the ability to express their values in the face of adversity, they become a part of a self-defeating process with a potentially negative outcome. Examples of the negative result of hidden identities are mass violence (as seen in gang activity), lack of self-esteem, and failure to assert personal beliefs in the midst of controversy.

Opening Project:

Students will begin to explore this idea in a project based on the masked ball at Romeo and Juliet. In order to make modern connections to the story, students are encouraged to have a group discussion on the different kinds of modern day masks that people wear (i.e. internet, gang or clique affiliations, clothing styles, relationships, facades put on for others). Following the discussion of modern masks, students are asked to read the poem, "I Feed a Flame Within," by John Dryden (and possibly others). Students then discuss in groups or whole group, the possible reasons for wearing masks.

Following discussion, the class participates in creating their own mask, using various materials provided by the teacher. Students are asked to creatively represent the masks of the modern teenager, using color, images, symbols, etc. (There is one restriction here, because gang signs are now illegal in the classroom, as they are considered gang promotion, even numbers must be scrutinized. Also, this project sometimes extends over a few days.) Following the creation of his or her mask, the student is asked to write a poem or paragraph to share with the class that describes/explains the meaning of his or her mask and how it represents a real mask that might be worn by teenagers today.

Opening Project:

We have just read the beginning of *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare. As we have discussed, teens today do not frequently wear physical masks. However, the complex nature of a human being sometimes requires that we present different sides of ourselves under certain circumstances and for different reasons. Your task is to create a mask that depicts or represents some of the many roles teens must play today. You may view this as a personal mask or general to teenagers today. Following this task, you will be asked to describe what caused you to make the choices you made in creating this mask in a poem or paragraph. As you work, keep in mind:

- Your mask should represent some aspect of modern life: a metaphor for an abstract mask worn by teens today or a pressure that is exerted on teens which might cause a young person to dissemble
- You must describe and explain the significance of your mask in a poem or paragraph to present to the class.
- Please keep in mind that we must follow school rules concerning the display of gang symbols and other inappropriate artwork. Please see me or the Student Handbook for clarification of inappropriate subject matter.

Reading the Text:

As we continue to read, search for more subtle examples of disguises of self as the relationships develop in the play. For example, Romeo hides his relationship to Tybalt. Following the death of Mercutio, Romeo castigates himself as wearing the guise of a woman (or acting like a girl). Juliet hides from her parents her identity as a wife. Ultimately, Juliet disguises her life with death, bringing on her own demise, as well as Romeo's. Through journaling and class discussion, students are asked to examine modern-day instances – personal or otherwise – in which teenagers still practice disguises (e.g. with parents, friends, teachers, etc).

At the end of the unit, it will be your responsibility to produce a piece of creative fiction, modernizing one or more of the themes of Romeo and Juliet, connecting one of the ideas of disguises or dissembling developed in class discussion. This work of fiction may be a poem, short story, one act play, a personal narrative, or other media, approved of by the teacher. Through this creative writing, you will develop a personal understanding or connection with the concept of multiple selves existing within one complex character.

Ending Project:

We have now finished reading William Shakespeare's The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet. As we have read, we have analyzed and explored the multiple identities of the teenagers in Shakespeare's play. We have also discussed how the circumstances of the modern teenager can still create situations in which youth feel the need to wear figurative masks (or not). In one of the following projects, present your position on how identity has an impact on teens today.

-1- Create a multi-media expression of your interpretation of the concept of hidden selves in modern life. Your project may include a one-act play, painting, poem, lyrics, performance art, or a combination of more than one medium. Please see teacher for approval of presentation ideas. You may work independently or in groups under four for this type of response to the literature. In your presentation, I am looking to see that you:

- Have developed and explored the idea or an aspect of the idea of self
- Have explained through writing or presentation the significance/ connection your project makes with self identity
- Have worked to creatively express your idea

-2- Write about an experience you have had I which you feel you were keeping a part of your identity hidden from the world. You account should include:

• From whom you were hiding your identity

- Why you felt it was necessary to hide this aspect of yourself
- The details of the event that created this experience and complications that evolved due to the dissembling of self*
- The resolution or what you learned about yourself from this experience

Rubric for Multi-media Project -1-

	4	3	2	1
Effort	Shows great effort	Shows some effort	Shows little effort	Incomplete project
Creativity	Tries new and innovative ways to express the theme of identity in society	Tries a new medium to develop theme of identity in society	Little effort to explore the theme	Little effort to present an idea
Connection to Class Discussions in Development of Identities	Develops the theme of identity in a modern setting, incorporates ideas from class discussions	Discusses the theme of identity, class discussions, or journaling process	Does not reflect thoughtful consideration of the theme; shows little connection to class discussions or journaling process	Is not written on the topic of identity
Proper Grammatical Conventions, Demonstrating Revision	Revision evident, minimum grammatical or conventional errors excepting dialectal writing appropriate to the medium	Revision evident, grammatical or conventional errors present, but do not interfere with the understanding of the text	No revision apparent, grammatical mistakes confuse some of the ideas in the text	No revision apparent, grammatical mistakes confuse the meaning of the text

Rubric for Narrative Writing -2-

	4	3	2	1
Effort	Shows great effort	Shows some effort	Shows little effort	Incomplete project
Creativity	Tries new and innovative interactions with the theme of identity in society	Tries to develop theme of identity in society	Little effort to explore the theme	Little effort to present an idea
Connection to Class Discussions in Development of Identities	Develops the theme of identity in a modern setting, incorporates ideas from class discussions	Discusses the theme of identity, class discussions, or journaling process	Does not reflect thoughtful consideration of the theme; shows little connection to class discussions or journaling process	Is not written on the topic of identity
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* Rising action and significant detail will be discussed as we read the text.

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Introductory Activity:

Strongly agree Agree

Romeo and Juliet Survey:

In the following survey, there are no wrong answers. Be prepared to discuss your answers.

1. It is okay to go against your family, religion, cultural standards when you are dating.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
2. It is okay to go against your family, religion, cultural standards when you are marrying someone.				
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
3. It is okay to be in a relationship with someone who lies to his/her friends and family about your relationship.				
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
4. It is sometime	es appropriat	e to lie to protect pe	eople.	
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
5. It is also appropriate to lie to avoid conflict.				
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
6. You become attracted to a person first through conversation.				
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
7. Family is more important than relationships.				
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
8. Arranged marriages are sometimes a good idea.				

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Week One Lesson Plans: Connecting to the World of Romeo and Juliet

Georgia Performance Standards:

ELA9RL1 The student identifies, analyzes, and applies knowledge of the themes, structures, and elements of dramatic literature and provides evidence from the text to support understanding; the student: b. Analyzes the characters, structures, and themes of dramatic literature. ELA9RC2 The student participates in discussions related to curricular learning in all subject areas. The student a. Identifies messages and themes from books in all subject areas. b. Responds to a variety of texts in multiple modes of discourse.

Goals:

To acquaint students with the concepts we will be addressing Romeo and Juliet and to connect the conflicts of the play to modern life.

Day One:

Materials:

Crossword Puzzle of Elizabethan Language

Introductory Activity: Student Survey

Procedure:

10 minutes: Complete crossword puzzle of Elizabethan Language.

3 minutes: Attendance, housekeeping

7 minutes: Share journal responses.

10 minutes: Complete student survey.

60 minutes: Discuss student survey.

Day Two:

Materials:

Textbooks

Procedure:

10 minutes: Respond to journal prompt: "I only fight when..."

3 minutes: Attendance, housekeeping

7 minutes: Discuss journal response.

55 minutes: Read scenes one and two.

5 minutes: Identify conflicts in the first scene.

5 minutes: Describe personal narrative/ first person.

5 minutes: Assign homework, which is to write a one page narrative rough draft of a personal scenario involving one of the identified conflicts (fiction or nonfiction).

Day Three:

Materials:

No Fear Shakespeare – class set

Ball bucket and plastic balls

Procedure:

10 minutes: Turn in/ complete homework.

3 minutes: Housekeeping and attendance

7 minutes: Share homework.

60 minutes: Read scenes three, four, and five from No Fear Shakespeare.

10 minutes: Oral listening check of Act I: Ball Game (In this simple review game, I place a bucket full of small, plastic balls on a desk in the center of a classroom. When students answer review questions, I pass them a ball, until the bucket is empty. Students are then allowed to shoot the balls back into the bucket. I always count the balls as I bring them out, to make sure they are returned to me).

Day Four:

Materials:

Text books

Procedure:

10 minutes: Respond to journal prompt: "Identify six roles that you play (daughter or son, student, brother or sister, friend, boyfriend or girlfriend, etc) as well as a brief description of each of those roles."

3 minutes: Attendance, housekeeping

7 minutes: Discuss journal response.

30 minutes: Read Act II, scenes one and two.

5 minutes: Discuss Romeo' and Juliet's plan to marry the morning after they meet.

35 minutes: Writing assignment: "Working with a partner, write a modernization of the balcony scene. You may incorporate as many or as few the aspects of the original story as you like, except that the story must be about a girl and a boy meeting and deciding to marry the next morning. We will share the assignments at the end."

Day Five:

Materials:

Text books

Examples of masks or pictures of examples

Art supplies, including: paper, scissors, glue, paint, pencils, modeling clay, markers, feathers, etc

Newspaper to cover and protect desks

Procedure:

10 minutes: Complete balcony parodies and preparing to share.

3 minutes: Attendance and housekeeping

17 minutes: Share writing assignments.

30 minutes: Read the Act II scenes three through six.

5 minutes: Discuss the roles Romeo and Juliet have played thus far and introducing the mask activity.

25 minutes: Work on mask activity.

Week Two Lesson Plans: Rising Action in Romeo and Juliet

Georgia Performance Standards:

ELA9RL1 The student identifies, analyzes, and applies knowledge of the themes, structures, and elements of dramatic literature and provides evidence from the text to support understanding; the student: c. Identifies and analyzes dramatic elements, (i.e., exposition, rising action, climax, denouement, dialogue, monologue, soliloquy, aside, dramatic irony). d. Identifies and analyzes how dramatic elements support and enhance interpretation of dramatic literature. ELA9RC2 The student participates in discussions related to curricular learning in all subject areas. The student a. Identifies messages and themes from books in all subject areas. b. Responds to a variety of texts in multiple modes of discourse.

Day One:

Materials:

Text books

Chart paper or transparencies for overhead

Procedure:

10 minutes: Respond to journal prompt: "What do you do when people you love fight?"

3 minutes: Attendance and housekeeping

20 minutes: Read Act III scenes one and two.

40 minutes: Divide into groups of three or four. Within groups, use a T-chart to compare the Nurse and Juliet. On another chart, compare Mercutio and Romeo. These characters are a dramatic foil to one another in the play. Create a working definition of dramatic foil. On a piece of chart paper, record your definition, which should cover purpose and effectiveness as illustrated in Shakespeare's play.

17 minutes: Present your definition to the class.

Day Two:

Materials:

Text books

What Would You Do? Worksheet

Procedure:

10 minutes: Respond to journal prompt: "Describe your favorite movie."

3 minutes: Attendance and housekeeping

15 minutes: Share journals. Record aspects of good story on the board as students describe it. Note similarities. Discuss rising action and possibly foreshadowing, flashback, character development, as arises in student observations. 40 minutes: Read Act III, scenes three to five.

20 minutes: Find a partner to debate scenarios on What Would You Do? worksheet. In debate, one person must argue for each side of the character situation.

7 minutes: Take class survey on character situations. Discuss points of interest from survey.

Day Three:

Materials:

Text books

Procedure:

10 minutes: Review: in groups of two or three, write down six events from the play so far.

3 minutes: Attendance and housekeeping

30 minutes: Read Act IV, scenes one through three.

10 minutes: Define monologue as a class.

10 minutes: Identify three fears Juliet has before taking the poison with a partner. Juliet has disguised herself before. How does she disguise herself now?

27 minutes: In groups of two or three, decide whether you believe Juliet is doing the right or wrong thing, by faking her own death to avoid a marriage. Then, as a group, create a found poem from Act III defending your position.

Day Four: Materials: Text books Chart Paper Procedure:

10 minutes: Respond to journal prompt: "Describe a time when you acted against a group (family or peers). What was it like? Did you find this hard to do?"

3 minutes: Attendance and housekeeping

45 minutes: Read Act IV, scenes four and five and Act V, scenes one and two.

2 minutes: Define Dramatic Irony as a class.

25 minutes: Work in groups of three or four to find three instances of dramatic irony. Create a class chart of dramatic irony found in the play.

5 minutes: Predict: What are the possible outcomes for Romeo and Juliet at this point?

Day Five:

Materials:

Text books

Power-point of Romeo and Juliet Review

Two buzzers

Procedure:

10 minutes: Respond to journal prompt: "What would you die for?"

3 minutes: Attendance and housekeeping

7 minutes: Share journal responses.

25 minutes: Read Act V, scene three.

5 minutes: Reflect.

40 minutes: Family Feud/Jeopardy Review Game: Montagues vs. the Capulets

Week Three Lesson Plans: The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet in Review: working with the text

Georgia Performance Standards:

ELA9LSV2 The student formulates reasoned judgments about written and oral communication in various media genres. The student delivers focused, coherent, and polished presentations that convey a clear and distinct perspective, demonstrate solid reasoning, and combine traditional rhetorical strategies of narration, exposition, persuasion, and description. When responding to written and oral texts and media (i.e., television, radio, film productions, and electronic media), the student: a. Assesses the ways language and delivery affect the mood and tone of the oral communication and impact the audience. b. Analyzes the types of arguments used by the speaker, including argument by authority, emotion, and logic. c. Formulates judgments about ideas under discussion and supports those judgments with convincing evidence.

ELA9W1 The student produces writing that establishes an appropriate organizational structure, sets a context and engages the reader, maintains a coherent focus throughout, and signals closure. The student a. Establishes a clear, distinctive, and coherent thesis or perspective and maintains a consistent tone and focus throughout. b. Selects a focus, structure, and point of view relevant to the purpose, genre expectations, audience, length, and format requirements. c. Constructs arguable topic sentences, when applicable, to guide unified paragraphs. d. Uses precise language, action verbs, sensory details, appropriate modifiers, and active rather than passive voice. e. Writes texts of a length appropriate to address the topic or tell the story.

Day One:

Materials:

Test

Rubric for Final Project

Samples of Final Project

Procedure:

10 minutes: Review for test.

3 minutes: Attendance and housekeeping

57 minutes: Test

20 minutes: Review rubric for final project.

Day Two:

Materials:

Note cards

Film

Text books

Procedure:

10 minutes: Write project idea on a note card with name.

3 minutes: Attendance and housekeeping – pick up note cards.

7 minutes: Discuss drama and presentation of drama. Compare and contrast film to script.

60 minutes: Watch beginning of movie, comparing presentations of the play.

10 minutes: Return note cards with notes.

Day Three:

Materials:

Film

Text books

Procedure:

10 minutes: Attendance and housekeeping (discuss project ideas)

65 minutes: Finish film.

15 minutes: Compare film to script. Discuss plan for tomorrow.

Day Four:

Materials:

Art supplies, as applicable for student projects

Procedure:

10 minutes: Prepare for work on projects.

3 minutes: Attendance and housekeeping

77 minutes: Work on projects with teacher circulation for conference and review.

Day Five:

Materials:

Text books

Art supplies, as applicable to student projects

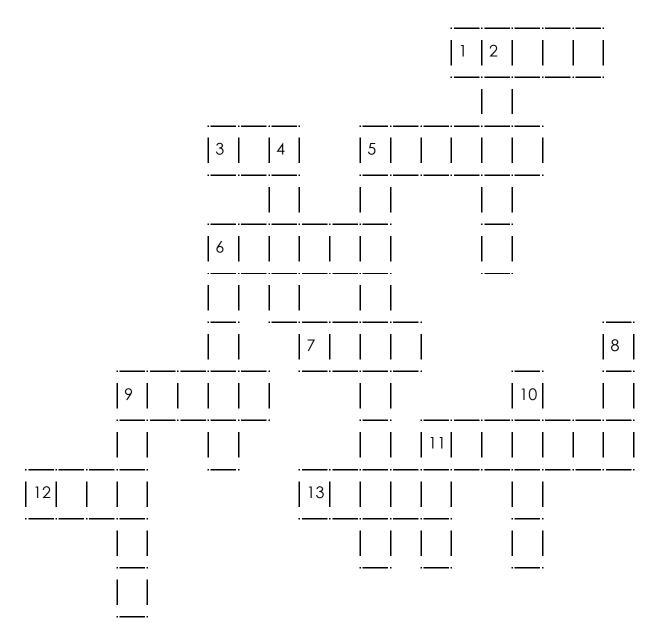
Procedure:

10 minutes: Respond to journal prompt: "How does Shakespeare's work change when it is performed, as opposed to read aloud?"

3 minutes: Attendance and housekeeping

- 37 minutes: Completing projects
- 40 minutes: Present projects as applicable.

Elizabethan Language



ACROSS

- 1 Fortunate
- 3 Hurry
- 5 In addition; notwithstanding
- 6 Where
- 7 Ever
- 9 Perhaps

DOWN

- 2 Alas (an exclamation of sorrow)
- 4 Even
- 5 Why
- 6 Wish
- 8 Only; except
- 9 Away; from here

11	For; in preparation for	10	Will
-			

12 Soon 13 Indeed 11 Yes

What Would You Do?

Scenario One:			
I, Romeo, just married Juliet.			
I will tell my best friends that I am	I will not tell my friends that I am		
married, because	married, because		
Scenario Two:			
I , Juliet's Nurse, have been asked to help Juliet and Romeo marry. I know the			
families will not be pleased about the marriage.			
I will help Juliet marry Romeo,	I will not help Juliet, because		
because			
Scenario Three:			
I, Romeo, just killed Tybalt. He is the cousin of my new bride, but he also killed my best friend, Mercutio.			
I will run away from the law, because	I will stay to find out what the prince will say, because		
Scenario Four:			
I, the Friar, have just married Romeo and Juliet. Now, Romeo has killed Tybalt, Juliet's cousin, in a street fight.			
I will help to hide Romeo from the law,	I will tell the Capulets that I have		
because	married Romeo to their daughter this morning, because		
Scenario Five:			
I, Juliet, am secretly married to Romeo, who has just been banished for killing my cousin.			
I will tell my parents and friends about	I will not tell anyone about my		

