

TEACHING UNITS TO LOWER LANGUAGE ANXIETY  
FOR 8<sup>th</sup> AND 9<sup>th</sup> GRADE ESL STUDENTS IN PUERTO RICO

by

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## **Abstract**

This thesis includes three teaching units to lower language anxiety in the ESL classroom using innovative teaching strategies and techniques that are relevant to teenagers' interests at the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade secondary levels in Puerto Rico.

The thesis offers a number of creative dramatics techniques such as role-playing, improvisation, drama in the classroom and characterization exercises that deal with real life situations. It also includes a video game unit promoting the use of English in the classroom by motivating student participation, thus creating an effective learning environment. The thesis concludes with a thematic reading unit dealing with bullying in schools and reinforcing the values of students' social awareness of how to cope with this situation. With units such as these three, the student is motivated to learn English as a second language.

## **Resumen**

Esta tesis contiene tres unidades de enseñanza para bajar la ansiedad al hablar el inglés como segundo idioma las cuales proveen estrategias y técnicas que son relevantes a los intereses del adolescente que cursa el octavo y noveno grado del nivel secundario.

La tesis ofrece variadas técnicas dramáticas creativas como lo es el “role-play,” la improvisación, la dramatización en el salón de clases, y ejercicios que envuelve la caracterización de personajes comunes en la vida diaria. Incluye además, una unidad de juegos de vídeo que promueve el uso del idioma inglés en el salón de clases motivando al estudiante a participar creando un ambiente de enseñanza efectivo. La tesis concluye con una selección de estrategias de lecturas sobre los llamados “bullies” o buscones reforzando los valores y la concienciación de cómo lidiar con esta situación. Con unidades como éstas, los estudiantes estarán motivados a aprender inglés como segundo idioma.

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this thesis to my professor Dr. Betsy Morales Caro because of the dedication and prestige she gives to the teaching profession, and to all of the English teachers in Puerto Rico who believe in their profession and are looking for fresh new ways to teach English in the classroom.

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# **Chapter 1**

## **Introduction**

Teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) to teenagers in a public school in Puerto Rico (PR) is a demanding task. Among the many problems teachers face in the classroom are the result of adolescent issues such as poor student performance, peer pressure and acceptance, social and emotional anxiety, negative attitudes, and disruptive family structures. All of these play a critical role in the development of social skills and feelings of personal competence that are essential for adult functioning (Ingersoll, 1989). Moreover, peer relationships appear to be instrumental in facilitating adolescents' sense of personal identity and increasing their independence from family influences (Dusek, 1991; Ingersoll, 1989). With this in mind, one can not help but ask if these factors will impede language learning.

ESL teachers who teach teenagers face a greater challenge than teachers who teach other age groups simply because adolescents are struggling to find their identity and their own place in the world. Teenagers must deal with physiological, as well as emotional changes that shift their focus to other personal and stressful situations ultimately affecting their performance in class. Thus, ESL teachers face a special set of difficulties and multiple challenges in the classroom.

The struggles adolescents encounter as they take ESL also have to do with language anxiety. Learning a second language (L2) can be an exciting challenge for some, but it can be a dreaded experience for others who feel that anxiety threatens and confuses them about whether or not to learn the target language in the first place. Horwitz and Cope (1986) found that anxiety inhibits a student's aptitude for learning a foreign language for a variety of reasons, which include fear of negative evaluation, communication apprehension, and low self-concept. In

addition, they define this specific type of anxiety as Language Anxiety, a phenomenon that is unique in second language learning.

Anxiety is the “subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness with an arousal of the nervous system” (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope, 1986). Language Anxiety (LA) is defined as a distinct complex of self-perception, beliefs, feelings and behaviors related to using a foreign or second language for communication in the language classroom (Young, 1991). LA is similar to Communication Apprehension (CA) which is defined as an “individual level of fear or anxiety, associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons” (McCroskey, 1977, p.78). Glasier (1981) defines CA as the Negative Cognitive Appraisal Model. This model finds that the quiet and shy student is criticized for his or her language performance. As a result, the student learns to expect negative reactions and learns to avoid them by keeping quiet. Even if teachers, parents, or other students appear to react negatively to a student’s utterance, the child will perform poorly and avoid oral communication situations (Bond, 1984). It is clear that learning another language may increase LA which will be a demanding task for a second language student. Since LA includes CA (i.e. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope, 1986) and they both deal with fear and anxiety in a similar fashion, both concepts will be used interchangeably.

One commonly reported aspect causing anxiety in learning a second language is the act of speaking a second language. One of the most anxiety-inducing parts of second language learning requires students to apply orally what they have learned in order to produce results in the presence of others. The cognitive processes involved in listening, writing, and reading are not equally evaluated with regard to anxiety because they do not require the same performance aspect as speaking does; thus they do not cause as much anxiety (Horner and Redmond, 2002).

To add to the problem of adolescence and LA is the fact that teaching English on the island is seen as an imposition that may threaten cultural identity. The pressure associated with interactions with native speakers (NS) of English in the classroom also makes the situation difficult (Pappamihiel, 2001). Students who return from the mainland are seen as intruders by their Spanish peers due to their pronunciation skills, cultural beliefs, and attitudes. This fosters LA to develop since it deals with CA, test evaluation, and low self concept (Horwitz & Cope, 1986). These realities become overwhelming to both ESL teachers and students. Moreover, the Puerto Rican socio-political and historical reality only adds more questions about anxiety.

Puerto Rican ESL students face constant struggles in school while attempting to learn their second language (L2). Chances are they will experience rejection and negative sneers from their mocking peers. Students may deal with frustration due to lack of understanding, and feel a sense of helplessness because of their hopeless efforts to learn a new language. This should not surprise anyone since the environment outside school does not require them to produce English.

Cates (1991) argues that English is actually a Foreign Language (EFL) on the island and that it is used for specific purposes in formal settings, while language experts may contradict this belief. Moag (1982) suggests that English using societies include both English as a Foreign Language (EFL), as well as English as a Second Language (ESL). These societies use English in formal domains which include the government, media such as cable, radio, movies, as well as the educational system. Therefore, using Moag's taxonomy would place PR in between an EFL and an ESL society. Still, Puerto Rican students believe English is their second language, and that it is not a foreign tongue. On the other side of the spectrum, Walsh (1991) states that Puerto Rican students are proud to speak the English language particularly those who have lived in the United States.

However, Blau and Dayton (1997) found that Puerto Rico is more like an ESL society in the formal domains where English is used in tourism, higher education, business, and technology. PR is also considered an ESL society for media in the written mode, but similar to an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) society for media in the spoken mode. Furthermore, English is indispensable for both formal and informal domains on the island.

According to the Department of Education's (DE) 2003 Curricular Framework English Program Guide, English is considered a second language (ESL) on the island. As an Intermediate public school teacher, I believe PR is more of a foreign language society due to the fact that students are exposed to fifty-minute daily class periods in most secondary public schools in PR. Students barely use the language outside school, nor understand the language easily, yet the DE continues to classify the island as an ESL society. Fortunate students may have some exposure to cable TV, listen to English music, and see some English movies; this does not guarantee they will totally comprehend what they have listened to or seen. Nevertheless, for the purpose of this study, the teaching of English will be referred to as the teaching of ESL.

Even though the ESL logo seems to sell well within the DE in Puerto Rico, the reality is that English continues to be frustrating and stressful for adolescent ESL students on the island (Cuadrado, 1993; Pausada, 1996; Resnick, 1993). These students, whose ages range from 13 to 17 years, do not believe English is necessary to learn at all. It is a situation that converts into high levels of frustration and anxiety.

Having taught for nine years as an ESL teacher in the DE, I have noticed that there is a need to develop appropriate teaching units to lower LA. With this purpose in mind, I conducted an adapted version of a Foreign Language Anxiety Scale (FLAS) created by Horwitz (1983) (See

Appendix A) to 86 ESL low income, middle urban school students from Hatillo whose ages ranged from 13-15 years old. The students were enrolled in my ESL class and they willingly completed the scale on April 24, 2004. I discovered that 87% of a total of 86 students surveyed felt embarrassed when conducting themselves in English. The skill areas which caused the highest levels of anxiety were: speaking 48%, writing 23%, reading 17%, and listening 12% (The summary of these results are available in Appendix B).

Speaking skills revealed twice the levels of anxiety than writing skills did, and were four times higher than listening skills overall. These findings suggest LA exists in the intermediate levels of schools in PR. This is why it is worthwhile to develop teaching units designed to lower that anxiety. Therefore, I will develop three teaching units that will help lower LA in the ESL classroom.

1. Creative Dramatics to use role-play and improvisation in English.
2. The use of Video Games to promote English in the classroom.
3. Reading Comprehension Unit to discuss values and create social awareness issues with a topic of great debate among teenagers: "Bullying in Schools."

The areas of the following units were chosen because after using them in the classroom, students identified with them and thus, their anxiety was lowered. Since students enjoy different learning activities that deal with real-life issues in which they can actively participate, the strategies may assist in successfully lowering LA.

Creative Dramatics, promotes active student participation in class. This will enable students to role-play situations and improvise unrehearsed scenes from plays such as *Romeo and Juliet* after having read an adapted version of the play completely in English. Students may incorporate the use of English in a non-threatening way by using story dramatization as well as

improvisation by role-playing characters who have secretly fallen in love with each other without their parents' consent. They can relate to this story's plot since it deals with real-life issues familiar to them. Therefore, students become active participants in the learning process, by visualizing what they have read and bringing the text to life.

Another innovative and fun strategy is Video Games to promote the use of English in the classroom. Students become actively involved with electronic games allowing anxiety levels to lower considerably thus, enabling them to utter words, phrases, and sentences in English without them realizing it. Teenagers love playing video games, so students will surely be captured immediately. The illusion students experience of outscoring an opponent, deciphering a mystery, or rescuing someone creates a sense of competition that lowers LA and allows them to unconsciously utter English naturally.

Finally, an effective strategy to consider is a Reading Unit designed to integrate student values and create student's awareness of important issues that appeal to them such as bullying in schools. The DE's Curricular Framework for the English Program content standard No.3 (p.34) (See Appendix C) seeks for students to desire to read and express emotions and experiences pertinent and meaningful to their lives. So this unit will reach that goal because it focuses on the students' ability to relate to problem solution exercises. It will include excerpts from *TIME* magazine articles that cover the tragedy at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado where two students were treated as outcasts by their peers thus, building the shooters' inevitable fury against an entire student body as well as faculty members. The unit will also include comprehension exercises from other story excerpts such as *The Chocolate War* by Robert Cormier, and a poem titled *Barbie Doll* by Margie Piercy. All of the readings have been selected

with a purpose of having students connect with the text based on what their own life experiences have been with regard to these controversial issues.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

This chapter presents various issues which adolescents face, as well as the anxieties and struggles they deal with which impedes them from learning a second language. These motives trigger LA and CA in the classroom and create situations that promote negative consequences which will eventually affect students. Nevertheless, the findings in the literature offer ways to prevent and reduce these anxieties from occurring. Following the different types of anxieties is a brief history of the imposition of teaching English in PR according to the published literature and its significance for the island. Also, findings given by students will help to identify the factors that promote LA in the classroom, and ways on how to avoid them altogether. This will eventually help create an appropriate ESL classroom environment.

#### **Adolescents and Anxiety**

Most adolescents deal with stressful issues while they are young. Among the most common are their relationships with friends, peer pressure, peer acceptance, social anxiety, negative attitudes, and self perception. As teenagers begin their rapid physical, emotional, and social changes, they begin to question adult standards and the need for parental guidance (Lingren, 1995). With change comes erratic behavior which in turn affects students' performance at school. Students begin to question basically everything including the need to study another language which is not their own.

One possible way to motivate students to learn a second language is by lowering their "affective filter" (Krashen, 1982). If students' levels of anxiety are lowered, then they will be able to receive the proper input necessary in order to acquire their L2. This may be achieved

using the humanistic approach which the DE (2000) defines as “the development of the students affective, moral, ethical and aesthetic attributes in their social interaction” (p.i).

### **Types of Language Anxiety**

Different types of language anxiety exist in different circumstances. In the realm of psychology, Richmond and McCroskey as cited in Runey, (2001) define trait-like anxiety as “a relatively enduring personality type” (p. 2). In other words, anxiety and fear in a person may be triggered according to their personality. Yet, language researchers have placed great emphasis on the role anxiety plays during listening comprehension. Vogely (1998) conducted a study with foreign language students and discovered possible solutions to listening comprehension anxiety. She found that teachers expect students to have oral communication anxiety, so they use tasks to counteract which include role-playing and interviews. Teachers forget that some students do not have effective comprehension of the oral message before they attempt to speak the language. Therefore, by integrating the use of role-play and interviews suggests that listening comprehension as well as speaking ability may lower LA.

Other language anxieties include reading and writing in an L2, yet researchers have not clearly addressed how language anxiety, communication apprehension, or high levels of stress directly affect students’ L2 performance in these areas. Hassan (2001) found that students who experience language anxiety during oral communication may not experience the same level of anxiety when writing. In fact, he found that poor skills in both the native language as well as the second language interfere with speaking and writing skills in an L2. In terms of reading comprehension skills, he discovered that reading orally in a second language also causes students to be more anxious. Saito, Horwitz, and Garza (1999) have theorized that anxiety is caused by the fact that the writing system and cultural material are unfamiliar. Aebersold and

Field (1997) argue that cultural awareness affects the way an L2 learner reads and connects with the text. In fact, the learner will actively interact with the text if the learner can relate to it with his or her life experiences. If this does not take place, the probability of frustration and anxiety will increase and therefore limit language production in reading comprehension.

Language Anxiety (LA) has also been referred to as Situational Anxiety (Young, 1991) depending on the specific situation that triggers anxiety. Daly and McCroskey (1984), refer to language anxiety as Communication Apprehension (CA). This is defined as an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with real or anticipated communication with another person or persons (Daly and McCroskey, 1984). McCroskey, Fayer, and Richmond (1982) argue that their primary concern with the so called phenomenon of CA results from its close association with communication avoidance. In other words, people who fear communication generally will avoid communicating altogether. Therefore, if a student is highly apprehensive about communicating in his or her L2, research indicates that he or she will avoid communication in that language. The learner will fail to experience the practice so necessary for the development of true competence in the language (McCroskey, 1982). In fact, this type of behavior may arise from the student's lack of confidence about his/her ability with the second language and from his/her CA. While the former has been identified as a major problem by ESL teachers, the communication apprehension factor or language anxiety have not been clearly recognized at the high school or intermediate school levels in Puerto Rico's public schools.

Clearly, language anxiety exists and few studies have dealt with how to alleviate it. Both Hassan (2001) and Vogely (1998) found that there are approaches to lessening anxiety. Some suggestions include teaching writing skills, increase students' confidence by allowing students to select their own reading tasks, have the Internet available for writing assignments, have students

write more frequently by choosing real-life personal experiences, use clearly structured tasks, and be sensitive to students' fears. Among these suggestions, additional approaches should be studied.

Sometimes negative factors are noticed in personality traits such as quietness, shyness, and fear, and these can precipitate CA. According to Friedman (1980), when the ability and desire to participate in discussion are present, but the process of verbalizing is inhibited, shyness or reticence occurs. The degree of shyness, or range of situations that it affects, varies greatly from individual to individual.

Seven factors which define the quiet and shy student were identified by McCroskey and Bond (1984). The factors defining the shy student include low intellectual skills. Students were found to learn more slowly than their peers. Speech skill deficiencies held students back from communicating with one another due to their shyness. Voluntary social introversion was a factor which provoked students to withdraw from classmates and not socialize with others. Social alienation, communication anxiety, and low self-esteem were also factors that impeded the verbalization of the shy student. Finally, ethnic/cultural divergence was found to limit the socialization needed in order to engage in active participation with other students from different ethnic backgrounds.

The consequences of CA are emotional, educational, and social. Shy students tend to confine their career aspirations to vocations that require little oral communication. While the teacher may regard quiet students as "perfect" because they have no disciplinary problems, the lack of participation may have a negative, spiraling-effect because they tend to be perceived as less capable and are also less frequently active in class discussions (Eric, 1987). Therefore, shy students should be integrated in classroom activities that will allow them to gain self-confidence

and self-esteem in order to counteract the so-called “negative spiraling-effect”. This will embrace students’ emotional, educational, and social qualities and enable them to become actively engaging participants inside and outside of the classroom.

Pappamihel (2001), conducted a study of ESL language anxiety among Mexican girls, and found that girls were more anxious than boys about using English in their mainstream classes. The study used an English Language Anxiety Scale (ELAS) based on Horwitz (1983) original version on Foreign Language Anxiety Scale (FLAS), to examine the fears and intimidation ESL students felt while in an English class. She discovered that these students were extremely self-conscious and nervous using English in the classroom.

The emotional discomfort of worry, feelings of being overwhelmed, and the unpleasant physical sensations of anxiety distract attention from subtle cognitive tasks (Rubenzer, 1988). Therefore, ESL students cannot perform well under pressure. Both LA and CA deal with issues that trigger fear, anxiety, avoidance, reticence, shyness, and withdrawal. Apart from a severe feeling of discomfort, a student with high levels of LA may experience certain physiological effects like rapid beating of the heart, some shakiness, a dry mouth, and increased perspiration (Drinkwater and Vreken, 1997). These factors are but some which should be taken into account when teaching ESL.

### **The Imposition of the Teaching of English in Puerto Rico**

The teaching of English in Puerto Rico dates back to the American invasion in July, 1898. Since then, there has been an evolution of the Rhetorical Movement towards the opposition of teaching English in PR. Puerto Rico has undergone many policies subject to continuous maneuvers with every political change throughout the years. In all, PR had seven official language policies between the years 1898-1949, according to every Commissioner

heading the DE (Bilingual Citizens Project, 1998; and as cited by Gutiérrez, 1987). The first incumbent was Eaton Clark from 1898-1900. His policy was to enforce English only in schools. Brumbaugh in 1900-1903, implemented Spanish as the medium of instruction in the elementary grades. Faulkner and Dexter were incumbents during 1903-1917, and both initiated once again the policy of English as the medium of instruction in all grades, while Spanish was taught only as a subject. Then Miller-Huyke, 1917-1934, integrated Spanish and English by requiring Spanish instruction in the first four grades; grade five was transitional with half of the subjects taught in Spanish and the other half taught in English. Later on, Pain, 1934-1937, reverted to the Braumbaugh policy using Spanish in the elementary levels and English as the medium of instruction in high school. Gallardo, 1937-1945, changed the policy by implementing Spanish as the medium of instruction in first and second grades with English as a subject. In grades three to eight, both languages were used as the medium of instruction. In high school, English became the medium of instruction with Spanish taught as a subject. Finally, Villaronga, in 1949, changed the language policy once again and implemented Spanish as the medium of instruction at all levels of the public school system with English taught as a separate subject. Today, this policy is still in effect.

The teaching of English has definitely been imposed on the island. It is also clear that the past history of ESL in PR has been politically charged and continues to be so to this day. As Morales (1999) states: “This is not the end of the struggle; the pendulum continues to swing” (pp.2-3). This history emphasizes the constant shifting of policy regarding language education on the island throughout the years, allowing the language issue to persist after one hundred years of American colonization. Therefore, it is not surprising that anxiety about learning English exists since there was an imposition of English on the island where Spanish is the vernacular.

## **Studies of the Situation of English in Puerto Rico**

Although the 2000 Census reports that over 70% of the Puerto Rican population spoke English less than very well (Shin and Bruno, 2003), the 1990 Census was more clear in reporting that there are some 55,000 monolingual speakers of English on the island, among them military personnel and their families, North Americans who are life-long residents, Puerto Rican returned migrants raised and educated in the States, immigrants from the British West Indies, and foreigners who use English as a lingua franca. However, only about 50% of the total island population of nearly 3 million claims to speak any English, and less than 20% feel they can communicate effectively. In 1990, the College Board reported that Puerto Rican high school students obtained a median score of 390 (out of 800) on the English test, evidence of significant problems in managing the language.

Torruellas (1990) investigated three different private schools, supposed bastions of English teaching, and found that the level of mastery of English depended upon the social rank of the clientele of the particular private school. Only students in schools catering to the elite were actively striving to succeed in oral and written English. Students in middle class private schools had developed a sort of "counterculture" of resistance toward the language and its teachers. Attitudes ranged from apathetic to openly hostile, and ridicule and mockery were used to censure students who attempted to excel (Pousada, 1999). As Schweers and Velez (1992) comment with regard to these findings, it seems that Puerto Rican youths are being infected by the public ambivalence and confusion that surrounds language and culture issues on the island. They suggest reaching the children at an earlier age before such attitudes are fixed and providing sufficient information to counteract the confusing information found in the press.

Between October 1 and November 8 of 1992, the Ateneo Puertorriqueño carried out a survey of language use in Puerto Rico using the same rigorous sampling framework as the federal Census. One hundred six respondents were asked oral questions in their preferred language, Spanish or English. The results of the study (which was not circulated widely) indicated that 97% of the sample preferred that the government communicate with them in Spanish; 96% preferred that street names be in Spanish; and 95% favored Spanish for instructions on official forms. Only 20.6% of the respondents considered themselves to be bilingual, and only 25% rated their English as good or excellent. Interestingly enough, only 15% of the respondents considered that making English an official Puerto Rican language would bring economic progress to the island, and only 11% reported using English at work frequently (Pousada, 1999). Another interesting finding was the item which asked if they would ever give up the Spanish language even if the island became a state or if English were established as the sole official language. From a total of 106 participants, 93% responded they would never give up the Spanish language; 91% considered themselves to be Puerto Ricans first and Americans second; 87% claimed to feel strong patriotic attachment to the Puerto Rican flag; and 95% felt a strong attachment to the island.

It should be noted that these results were released to the press in January of 1993 by the president of the Ateneo, Eduardo Morales Coll, who felt that it would be useful in the official language debate then raging. It was given quite a bit of press at the time; however, *El Nuevo Día* also came out with a survey which claimed that the majority of Puerto Ricans supported a bilingual language policy. This served to squelch the earlier results, yet nothing further was made of them.

Cuadrado (1993) carried out an investigation of bilingualism among professionals in the eastern region of Puerto Rico. One hundred and forty-five professionals in the areas of business administration, education, health, industry, and social services were asked to respond to self-rating questionnaires. The goal of the study was to determine if Puerto Rico was a bilingual country; what percentage of the professionals were receptive bilinguals; which language skills were mastered most; if learning English was regarded as important; and which languages should be official in Puerto Rico. Results indicated that although 69% of the respondents never lived or lived for less than a year in an English-speaking country, 72% claimed to speak English, with skills self-rated from excellent to poor. In every professional area, a correlation was found between the percentage of English speakers and the salary earned. Therefore, those who had higher salaries were Bilingual English/Spanish speakers. For example, in the field of health, 100% of the doctors spoke English while only 53% of the nurses did; in social services, 80% of the federal workers spoke English as opposed to only 37% of the local social workers; and in education, 87% of the administrators spoke English, in contrast to only 53% of the teachers (Pousada, 1999).

Overall 26% of the subjects claimed to have command of all four language skills. The greatest percentage of respondents commanding all four languages skills was in industry (45%), where being bilingual is generally a pre-requisite to employment. As might be expected, the skill most often mastered was reading (69% of the sample reported being proficient at reading in English). The least mastered was speaking (30%). Listening and writing scored 42% and 40%, respectively. This points once again to the prevalence of receptive rather than productive skills. The majority of respondents felt that their oral English was poor. Only 30% considered their oral abilities to be excellent or good.

Cuadrado (1993) found that 98% of his sample considered English to be important and necessary in Puerto Rico. Among the most common reasons given were: job opportunities, professional and personal improvement, the political relationship between Puerto Rico and the U.S., the role of English as the world's commercial and technical language, the utility of English in the tourist industry, and general cultural enrichment.

Despite their relatively high self-ranking, only 65% felt that most professionals in the eastern region were bilingual, with the highest individual assessment going to industry and the lowest to education. In terms of language policy, 65% favored the use of both languages in schools and government. More than three-quarters preferred that their children learn English over any other foreign language.

Also in 1993, an interfaculty project at the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras campus, titled *Desarrollo de competencias lingüísticas del estudiantado de la UPR, Río Piedras*, investigated the development of English skills among undergraduate students who were finishing their two-year English requirement. These students re-took the English as a Second Language Achievement Test (ESLAT) of the College Board in Puerto Rico, and their post-test scores were compared to their college entrance scores. The results indicated that while students finishing their second year of English improved their original ESLAT scores, those who were placed into the two lowest level courses during their first year (ESLAT scores lower than 440 or 580) did not attain the level of achievement that the lowest of the upper three courses began with (ESLAT score of 580 or higher). In other words, those who started out behind, were still behind at the finish line; in fact, they did not even catch up to where the high scorers had started. Despite two years of English study at the university level, the lowest level students were graduating with extremely limited English proficiency (Pousada, 1999).

This finding was attributed to the negative experiences and fossilized errors in English brought from elementary and secondary levels to the college learning experience. Typically, students with low levels of English proficiency put off their second year of English to the bitter end, thus eroding any gains they may have made during the first year of study. This is significant because low proficient ESL high school seniors who do not master English skills are expected to perform better once they have been at the university level.

Another study that dealt with ESL students was issued by McCroskey, Fayer, and Richmond (1982), who conducted a qualitative study that consisted of two phases at the University of Puerto Rico (UPR). This study included CA factors which had not been considered before. The study consisted of a 24-item questionnaire of the “Personal Report of Communication Apprehension” (PRCA) created by McCroskey (1982). The questions the researchers sought to answer were:

1. Are CA norms for Puerto Rican college students speaking in Spanish similar to those for US students speaking in English?
2. Are CA norms for Puerto Rican college students speaking English similar to those US students speaking in English?

The first question referred to whether or not both native Spanish and native English speakers experienced CA when speaking their own language. The second question was intended to determine whether or not both groups of students experienced similar levels of CA when speaking English.

The initial phase included a total of 357 students at the UPR Río Piedras of which 341 students reported Spanish to be their native language, 14 reported English, and 2 indicated another language. The study revealed negative responses to both of the questions. Puerto Rican

students generated lower stress levels when compared to the U.S. students while they communicated in Spanish, but produced much higher stress levels when they communicated in English.

Two additional questions focused on the relationships between students who perceived their English competence in an L2 and CA, and those who perceived English as their first language with CA. The two questions were:

1. To what extent is self-perceived competence in English predictive of CA in English?
2. To what extent is comprehension in Spanish predictive of CA in English?

The second phase of this research was conducted one year after the first phase. Of a total of 683 students included in this study, 661 reported Spanish as their native language, 19 reported English, and 3 indicated another language. The subjects generated higher levels of CA for English speaking and lower levels of CA for Spanish speaking. These findings indicate that L2 speakers are much more apprehensive uttering their second language than their first (L1) language.

### **Students' opinions- Factors which contribute to anxiety**

Van Worde (2003) discovered that ESL students identified various sources for their anxiety, such as non-comprehension, speaking activities, classroom environment, fear of negative evaluation, and the teachers themselves. The sources of anxiety often were intertwined, causing difficulty in teasing out a discrete factor or source. The following discusses the most frequently anxiety-generating factors. The inability to comprehend what is being said in the classroom provokes considerable anxiety. Students complained that the teacher spoke much too

fast, or refused to use any English at all which resulted in an inability to keep up during class, and consequently carried over into the homework assignments. Young (1992) also noted that listening might generate anxiety if it were "incomprehensible" (p.68). The inability to comprehend the taped exercises or the instructional videos was also cited as anxiety-provoking by several students. One student reported nervousness by just looking at the machine even before the taped dictation.

Students also identified an anxiety-provoking factor generated by various speaking activities normally encountered in a language class. The fear of communicating orally in public and speaking anxiety has long been accepted as a psychological phenomenon. Daly (1991) noted that the fear of giving a speech in public exceeded even such phobias as fear of snakes, elevators, and heights. Whereas those with public speaking concerns have only to perform, language learners have a dual task. One student of Spanish complained, "I don't want to be the focus of attention so that my errors are put on display" (Von Worde, 2003, p. 9). Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) reported that students are extremely self-conscious when they are required to engage in speaking activities that expose their inadequacies, and these feelings often lead to "fear, or even panic" (p. 128). As expected, students were sensitive to both peer and teacher evaluation of their speaking. Additionally, a few seemed to project negative thoughts on to the teacher. One highly anxious student reported feelings of frustration that the teacher thought she did not know anything when she really did.

Students also report feeling overwhelmed and anxious when speaking, perhaps due to immature vocabulary or limited grammatical knowledge. One frequently anxiety-provoking factor is simply being called on in class, whether prepared to speak or not.

A relaxed classroom environment is essential in reducing anxiety. It appears that a relaxed environment or atmosphere is likely related to how the teacher conducts the class. Students notice the connection between anxiety and teacher behavior stating that having a more "personal relationship" with the teacher is helpful. The teacher's attitude toward the language itself also appears to play a role in reducing anxiety. For example, one student in the class reported that "personality is what makes a class."

Von Worde (2003) identified factors that lower anxiety levels in the classroom. Students reported that they are less anxious with teachers who "make the class fun," and "make it fun to like learning," or "make the class more animated," and with "teachers who make it interesting by using interesting situations" (p.11). They do not like being "put on the spot" in class because this makes them feel more anxious. When asked to explain, one student said, "Um, I guess not just abruptly calling on someone." Another responded, that being "put on the spot" would "let everyone stare, which makes everything worse." As several students pointed out, gentle error correction or modeling the correct response "helps to relieve anxiety."

Students have identified classroom activities as anxiety-reducing such as skits, plays, and games. However, some students are uncomfortable in these kinds of activities. Several students mentioned that they might feel more comfortable if the instructional material were more relevant to their life or goals. Many students offered suggestions to help lower LA: 1) speak slowly, 2) use English to clarify key points and for homework assignments, 3) to make sure that everyone understands by a continuous layering and reinforcing of the material. Other than the use of videos, error correction, excessive homework assignments, and immersion techniques, only two

students articulated clear references to instructional materials and methodology (Von Worde, 2003).

The role of the teacher is crucial in alleviating anxiety, more vital perhaps than a particular methodology. Teachers who provide a supportive and understanding environment, who employ non-threatening teaching methods, and who use appealing and relevant topics seem to enhance the foreign language experience. Price (1991) reported that "instructors had played a significant role in the amount of anxiety each student had experienced in particular classes" (p.106). Young (1990) also noted that anxiety decreased when instructors "create a warm social environment" (p.550).

Pousada's (1992) paper *Tangled Tongues* addresses the language dilemma in Puerto Rico. The social and psychological pressure is all too common on the island since some persons from the Spanish speaking community feel there is no need to learn English in order to survive in Puerto Rico. They feel their identity is threatened with another language, not their own.

Language is generally believed to be the essential instrument of ethnic expression, a viaduct for the beliefs, customs, rituals, and behaviors which constitute cultural identity. It is seen as the embodiment of human thought and the shaper of human action. For most, language is inextricably linked to the very essence of being human and of belonging to a specific cultural group (p.1).

These findings set the stage for material development to lower anxiety levels in the ESL classroom that will allow ESL teachers to delve into the multiple challenges for using innovative and active teaching strategies in order to achieve a successful "Low Anxiety" environment.

## **Teaching Units**

Creative Dramatics deals with the use of theatrical techniques in the field of education. It includes role play, improvised drama and story dramatization. It also includes pantomime, characterization exercises, and other dramatic exercises and games used by performers to bring a play to life (Ortiz, 2004). This strategy allows students to actively participate through role play, the improvisation of characters from a story, and create different story resolutions. The fact that students are actually engaged in their own learning, allows the reduction of LA.

Creative Dramatics deals with many theatrical techniques that also appeal to adolescents that include role-playing, improvisation, story dramatization, characterization exercises, as well as games. These techniques help ESL students because they allow them to speak and hear what they have read. The positive side of using creative dramatics is that it requires no special training and can easily be introduced into normal course work (Maley & Duff, 2001). This will benefit the teacher as well as the student because both can focus primarily on the communication process not on the acting. There is a small number of people who take part of the drama, so no crowd looks on – another positive aspect for lowering LA in the ESL classroom. In fact, drama in the classroom is often referred to as creative dramatics to distinguish it from theater arts because it is informal and focuses on the process of enactment for the sake of the learner, not the audience. Classroom drama is not learning about drama, but learning through drama. Combs (1988) explains:

While drama is informed by many of the ideas and practices of theater art, it is principally valued as a learning medium rather than as an art form, and is governed and validated through criteria other than aesthetics. Informal drama's goals are based in pedagogical, developmental and learning theory as much or more than they are arts based; its objectives are manifold, but they are all directed toward the growth and development of the participant rather than the entertainment or stimulation of the observer (p.9).

Since creative dramatics is useful to lower LA and is based in pedagogical theory, it is important to briefly mention and define the terms used in the lesson plans created for this unit. These terms are considered learning methodologies according to Smith (p. 194-195, 2004):

1. Role-playing – attempts to help students discover personal meanings within their social worlds. It allows students to develop an understanding of others' perspectives and encourages students to work with others in analyzing situations and developing workable solutions. It also provides students an opportunity to apply concepts they have learned in a rich and realistic environment.
2. Improvisation – allows students to act and break out of old patterns of thoughts and behavior by composing acts without previous preparation. Improvisation also deals with risk-taking, experimental performance, reflecting and giving, as well as receiving feedback in a safe setting.
3. Dramatization – This is a dynamic and innovative strategy that lets students bring to life characters found in texts in order to express or represent something vividly. Students react and respond to their personal interpretation of who and what the character will be like.

4. Characterization – Students focus on the physical and emotional description of a character by describing and acting the characters they portray.

These terms are essential when using creative dramatics in the classroom as they will facilitate the teacher's task when referring to them.

Another effective teaching strategy to lower LA is by using video games in the classroom because it is another exciting and competitive way of involving students into their own learning process. In fact, video games are viewed as an effective learning tool (Lewis, 2000). Students such as Erick and Jonathan from the ninth grade are aware of instructions, players, and movements presented in English. They speak freely, uninterruptedly, producing words, phrases, and complete sentences automatically as reported by a study conducted by Vargas & Irizarry (2004).

The purpose of material development is to lower LA, therefore the use of video games in the ESL classroom allows students to actively interact with each other thus lowering their “affective filter” and promoting the use of English in the classroom. Activities may include competition between classmates by utilizing English vocabulary, connecting phrases, and completing sentences in order to define the winner among the participants.

Video games are fun because they relieve stress as well as cause emotions to rise and fall. Curiosity, fantasy, interaction, and challenges are probably the four top reasons people enjoy playing computer and video games. All of these characteristics are good because they can be aligned with content to teach in a fun and interactive medium (Malone, 1981). Games also provide the player with encouragement through frequent feedback by reaching a particular level or by simply capturing an item. As a result, the player's self-esteem rises and they are left with a feeling of satisfaction after conquering a level, or solving a mission.

So how can video games help learning? Since learners have changed considerably over the years due to the exposure many of them have toward technology, students in today's classrooms demand more of the teacher to keep them motivated and focused. Learning therefore involves more than exploring and imitating. If students easily assimilate and accommodate knowledge and skills from a video game, it would certainly make sense to use that process to help educate them in the classroom. Video games can assist players to learn cognitive skills through problem-solving strategies such as observation, hypothesis, and trial and error by trying to figure out the rules of the game. Other cognitive skills include organizational strategies such as paying attention, self-evaluating, and self-monitoring. Affective strategies such as anxiety reduction and self-encouragement will definitely help students stay focused in games. They will also develop memory strategies like grouping, imagery, structured reviews and compensatory strategies such as guessing meaning intelligently (Hogle, 1996, p.11).

Surely video games are considered by many of us as an excellent teaching tool because computers can adjust to the levels of difficulty of the game according to the user's preference or need. Not only do video games ensure the player to obtain higher scores after every try, thus creating infinite opportunities to learn and be challenged, but they allow students to load games, save, quit, use the mouse, and develop hand and eye coordination as well. Therefore, the brain speeds up decisions and may help a person achieve a higher intelligence quotient (IQ) (Gunter, 1998).

The thematic reading unit that deals with bullying in schools will be the third unit of material development. As stated previously, adolescents can relate to school bullies because they have experienced them personally at their own schools. Among the activities that students may participate include activities such as defining a bully, predicting story outcomes, comparing

characteristics of a bully to a non bully, writing letters to bullies and their family members, reacting to a story outcomes in their journal, and debating about bullies between their peers.

Reading comprehension exercises are effective strategies to use in the ESL classroom because they deal with the topic of “Bullying in Schools” and the consequences that this entails. This is a very pertinent issue for teenagers because many are exposed to this type of pressure. Since teenage students deal with bullying as well as peer pressure, sneers, and mocking, they may relate to these topics immediately. Students can relate to tragedies painfully as most of us can. Sadly, many students have experienced multiple tragedies such as the case of a 17 year old high school classmate murdered by an ex-boyfriend in Hatillo in 2002, as well as the case of a math teacher who was killed by his student at a school in Quebradillas in 2003. Another art teacher in Yauco was also killed by a police officer in school that same year. These tragedies are very similar to what occurred at Columbine in Littleton, Colorado in 1999 where one teacher was murdered by two rebellious students who decided to end the lives of 13 students including their teacher as well as themselves. Recently, on March 21, 2005 another school tragedy was relived in Red Lake City, Minnesota where 10 students were murdered by a classmate and more than 23 were injured. It is worth mentioning that all students who died in these cases were teenagers, had been bullied in school, and were object of ridicule by their peers.

As these harsh realities are uncovered, I believe it is possible to foster students’ awareness of this very real problem in our classroom by allowing them to voice their opinions and fears about the subject. While voicing their opinions, they are also learning language skills because they are using ESL to produce their opinions. By asking students to discuss how they feel about bulling in schools, and discover ways they can confront certain issues tells students the teacher cares and wants to help them. This is why a reading unit covering the topic on bullying

in schools may be useful because it has been designed for students with specific needs in mind. Teenagers will be able to relate their own experiences with students who have experimented similar fears and have been ridiculed. They will evolve around factual events such as the tragedies previously mentioned, and events they have bared witness to including abuse and mockery. Students will learn how to respect others, discuss the social connotations of living up to what young women should be like, instead of being compared to Barbie dolls. They will also learn how to appreciate and analyze stories such as *The Chocolate War* by Robert Cormier, and discuss the characters as well as identify plotline development. These important skills are required for all English teachers to produce in their ESL classroom as stipulated by the DE Curricular Framework English Program (2003) in Content Standard 3 which deals with reading comprehension skills and Content Standard 4; Literary Appreciation skills (See Appendix C).

Reading units allow other ways for teachers to foster social awareness issues, and develop moral values for significant content learning to take place. This is why it is essential to provide meaningful learning materials and activities for our students. But in order to bring meaningful issues to students, they should be able to voice them. Therefore, it is important for adults to listen to our students because most of the time students need our guidance and our support. Let us consider the following case. Rob is 16 and studies in a suburban California school. He discussed some of the dilemmas he and other students experience in school on a daily basis. When he was asked: “Do you think the adults know what is going on in your school?” His answer was an adamant “No!” The rest of the report follows.

Most of the time teachers are in their classrooms, so they are not in the halls or in the bathrooms – and that’s where everything takes place.  
So they don’t find out.

**What happens in the hallways and in the bathrooms?**

Sometimes, you have people who hate each other, or people who accidentally bump into each other in the halls and stuff. In the bathrooms people try to touch you.

**Are you saying something could happen?**

Yes.

**How do you feel about it?**

It feels weird because kids notice these things but the teachers don't.

**How would it help if the adults noticed?**

You wouldn't have to worry about somebody jumping on your back.

**Do you think you can count on teachers and other adults to intervene if something happens to you?**

Probably not. It would take them sometime to get there and then figure out what was going on. It could take anywhere from 30 seconds to a minute to get to where I am, if they get there (Garbarino and de Lara, 2002, p. 35 ).

This brief interview was taken from a ground breaking book titled *And Words Can Hurt Forever: How to Protect Adolescents from Bullying, Harassment, and Emotional Violence* by Garbarino and de Lara (2002). It demonstrates that students like Rob are aware of the bullying and harassment taking place in schools. It also expresses his frustration towards the lack of supervision and security at his school. If a student does not trust teachers, chances are there is a slim probability that effective learning will take place.

Puerto Rico's case is not all that different. Since no study could be found regarding bullying in PR's public schools, I have informally asked some of my students how they feel in school, and the majority of them responded they felt either upset, uptight, stressed, pressured, or

scared. When questioned why, most responded that no one understood them or that they had problems with other peers. Taking this into account, it is possible that using a reading unit that addresses bullying in schools may actually help many students relieve some of the built up tension they acknowledged. Students may also express how they feel and be listened to while stressing language learning.

The literature review demonstrates there is a need to lower LA among the Puerto Rican students who are learning ESL. I believe the strategies and the teaching materials I create, will allow the teacher to reach this goal in the classroom.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Drama Unit**

There are many ways to learn English as a Second Language (ESL) and one of them is through drama. Drama in the classroom also known as Creative Dramatics, helps students focus and concentrate their energies in a productive manner, while it also helps improve their writing and communication skills. Drama or creative dramatics enhances self-esteem, problem solving, interaction, cooperation, and strengthens listening skills. Drama in the classroom or Creative Dramatics focuses on the elements used to explore our emotions, our thinking; promotes teamwork, discipline, pride and it allows other ways to teach a language, particularly ESL (Ortiz, 2004).

When we refer to using drama in the traditional classroom setting we are not talking about creating a play for a performance; rather the emphasis is on the communication process. When using drama in the classroom, the environment and setting play a critical role for students, participants, and the teachers. Drama introduces the story through materials and ideas versus a play script which is for a theatre presentation. It includes practice, experimentation, and exploration options versus rehearsals as a norm for theatre. To share, show, play out, improvise, and to dramatize is expected in drama, while theatre continues to focus mainly on performance (Maley & Duff, 2001). Drama may also be geared towards observers and peers where each may assess, discuss, and reflect, while in a theatre performance this does not necessarily have to take place. The most important part of drama is the entire communication process, while the final objective of theatre is the final product.

Traditional educators have questioned the value of using drama, other than as an art form. In order to understand how drama relates to and enhances the growth and development of

students, a relationship between classroom drama and theories of development should be addressed. One must address the two current learning theories and how drama education utilizes them to maximize developmental growth in the student.

Vygotsky (1978) describes intelligence as dependent upon the values held in a culture; therefore development and learning are also dependent upon a specific sociocultural context. He stresses the importance of society and culture in cognitive development. Drama, which blends in music, visual art, and vocal speech is a direct expression of culture, and it allows students the opportunities to demonstrate the context in which they learn.

Vygotsky's focus was not on biological factors – though he acknowledges them – but rather on the role of nurturing in children (McDevitt and Ormrod, 2002). Nurturing includes the classroom environment, which encourages positive growth for the student, thus creating a process of internalization. This method of internalization suggested by Vygotsky involving social speech transferring to private speech, transferring to internal speech is one of the methods used to create and understand characters in literature, develop understanding in an improvisation, and analyze emotional content in drama.

Classroom drama begins at the level of the student, what Vygotsky termed the actual development level. The teacher, in the role of the facilitator, begins to build the session in such a way that students become challenged by what they see around them. The student begins to construct new information with what he/she already knows, identifying this level as the developmental level, also known as the *Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)*. This level bridges the gap between what is known, with what can be discovered. Finally, the teacher defines the level of potential development; the highest level students can perform with assistance. Drama further allows a teacher to address all of the students at one time. In an

improvisation, more complex characters can be given to more advanced students while group work or easier roles will help less advanced students remain challenged but not frustrated. The teacher is able to plan ahead for each student as an individual, learning and evaluating their skills as each session progresses. Within a well planned lesson every student will be operating between their actual development level and potential level.

Piaget (1958) also believed that interaction with the physical environment and interaction with other people were both critical in cognitive development. Traditional classrooms lack this type of environment. Students who do not interact with their counterparts but just listen to their teacher will not be able to develop the interaction needed to become involved in the learning process. Development and learning take place when drama brings them into an interactive situation, led by the teacher with whom they are also interacting. Drama offered at young ages not only acknowledges the basic developmental needs but facilitates them. It also ties experiences from the past and creates meaning and more complex understandings of the world around them. As students work in an improvisational setting, the teacher exposes them to larger vocabulary and labels for new schemes, more opportunities for communication with peers, and the beginnings of symbolic language.

Classroom drama is very much a part of the class therefore, management is just as important as it is during a more traditional method. Students should know and rehearse procedures for this type of work. This is why the role of the teacher as a facilitator is so important. For example, if the teacher raises his/her hand and says, “freeze” students should respond to stop moving and listen to what the teacher has to say (Maley & Duff, 2001). It is also useful to have procedures as well as instructions, in addition to stopping activities in case things get out of hand. When dealing with role-play, there is a tendency for content to be at distracting.

Therefore, it is recommended to begin the class session with three rules: school rules and policies are still in effect; remember to always be respectful; and please follow directions.

Taking all of the previous elements in consideration, the drama unit may integrate creative dramatics to the teaching of an adapted version of *Romeo and Juliet*. This unit has been designed to provide the groundwork for ESL teachers who are looking to intensify the educational experience in their classroom. The unit will also help them use new ways to reach their students. This may provide an understanding of classroom drama and of how to apply it to the ESL classroom in its social context.

For the purpose of this unit, the story of *Romeo and Juliet* has been selected because the events that take place in the plot appeal to the students' interests. Since students in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade levels are adolescents, who are constantly falling in and out of love, they are able to connect immediately with the characters from the story who also fall in and out of love. The unit has multiple activities, pre-reading, during, and after reading exercises which include both traditional techniques such as new vocabulary, reading comprehension exercises, comparison and contrast techniques, assessment measures, semantic maps, clustering, and Venn diagrams as well as innovative techniques such as creative dramatics, role-playing, and improvisation. It also includes exploration plans, the learning conceptualization phase, and the application phase which specifies what students have learned and how it may be measured through different assessment plans.

Each of the activities has been aligned according to the DE's Curricular Framework English Program, which includes Content Standard #1 for Oral Communication and Listening Skills, Content Standard #2 Written Communication Skills, Content Standard #3 Reading Comprehension Skills, and Content #4 Literary Appreciation Skills (See Appendix C).

The fundamental purpose for creating this unit is to promote the use of English in the classroom through active student participation and by using innovative teaching techniques and strategies. Integrating drama in the classroom as a teaching strategy provides multiple ways to engage students in active conversations by introducing topics that evolve around students' interests. This learning experience becomes meaningful for students because it allows effective ways to capture students' imagination while participating in role-playing, improvisation, and dramatization. In addition, these innovative techniques promote student participation, cooperative group work, responsibility, and critical thinking analysis.

Teachers' objectives may be accomplished when teaching a story, a play, or the analyses of a reading selection. Discussion becomes pertinent to students as they learn how to deal with critical, social, and personal issues as they actively participate in their own learning process. By integrating a love story such as *Romeo and Juliet*, concepts of love and hidden or unwanted relationships become appealing to students because of their age group. Students also learn how to identify important story elements, characterizations, cause and effect skills as well as work with comparison and contrast exercises. They will have the opportunity to develop critical thinking skills such as predicting story outcomes, problem solution situations, rewriting story plot, as well as interpreting different social and moral views on pertinent real-life events.

Furthermore, teachers will be able to measure student performance with multiple written tasks, speaking activities, reading exercises, and group work that will allow formative assessing of student growth. This way teaching objectives may be reached and assessed integrating formidable tasks, taking into consideration our ESL students who so desperately need varied and non-threatening ways to produce English in the classroom.

## Drama Unit

Unit 1

Time: 1 or 2 days

Level: 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> grades

Phase: Exploration

Topic: What is love?

Standard#2: Written Communication

Objective: By the end of the class period the student will be able to:

1. explore the concept of love
2. respond by answering the guide question from the board in the notebook
3. write a list of characteristics of love
4. express and share personal feelings about love with peers

I. Procedure:

1. Ask students to answer the guide questions which are to be placed on the board.
2. The student should define what the word “love” means to them.
3. How would students maintain a romantic relationship if their parents did not approve of it, or were opposed to their partner? Explain.
4. Have students make a list of things people do when they are in love.
5. Express students’ feelings with peers.

II. Activity 1.1. Write a list of characteristics that love has.

What do people do when they are in love?
1.
2.
3.
4.

## Drama Unit

Unit 1

Time: 1 day

Level: 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> grade

Phase: Exploration

Topic: What is Love?

Standard#1: Oral Communication

Objective: By the end of the class the student will be able to:

1. improvise a role with an impromptu situation
2. play out the role according to the character chosen
3. discuss the acting experience with peers

### I. Procedure:

1. Divide class into small groups. Instruct students that each must play out a role in their groups, one as a parent and the other as the son or daughter. The parent has discovered that the teenager is in a hidden relationship and questions how long this has been taking place. The parent is outraged with the discovery.
2. The teenager has been hiding the relationship for some time, but must respond to the parent without showing disrespect.
3. All groups may improvise this situation, while other group members take note of their reactions. This activity may be repeated if there is sufficient time during the class period.
4. Students will discuss the improvisation scenes with other groups.

### II. Activity 1.2.

1. Ask students what things they would do differently if they were pushed into an unwanted marriage but could not avoid it. What would they do under these circumstances? Explain.

## Drama Unit

Unit 1

Time: 1 day

Level: 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> grade

Phase: Conceptualization

Topic: Hidden Relationships

Standard #1 and #2: Oral & Written Communication

Objective: By the end of the class the student will be able to:

1. dramatize different situations according to personal experiences
2. discuss the causes and effects between hidden relationships and distinguish their consequences
3. identify the implications of hidden relationships
4. write a list of implications and consequences for being in an unwanted relationship

### I. Procedure:

1. Allow students who want to dramatize their reactions to hidden relationships and see how they would react under the circumstances.
2. While students are participating in role-play, the rest of the classmates will be taking notes to be discussed at the end of the class.
3. Allow time for the discussion of improvisations.
4. Give additional time for students to work in groups of three or four students each in order for them to identify the implications of an unwanted relationship.

II. Activity 1.3. Write a list of consequences for being in a hidden relationship in student's notebook.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

## Drama Unit

Unit 1

Time: 1 day

Level: 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> grade

Phase: Application

Topic: Truthful Relationships

Standard#2: Written Communication

Objective: By the end of the class the student will be able to:

1. analyze the implications of unwanted relationships
2. write an essay explaining the importance of truthful relationships
3. discuss unwanted relationships

I. Procedure:

1. Students will analyze the implications of unwanted relationships.
2. Ask students to write a two page essay in which students should analyze the importance of truthful relationships.
3. Have students include examples and specific details in their essays.
4. Students will orally discuss the implications of unwanted relationships in groups.

II. Activity 1.4.

1. Ask volunteers to discuss and share their writing with other classmates.
2. If more time is needed, the discussion of the subject may continue in the next class period.

## Drama Unit

### *Romeo and Juliet*

Unit 1

Time: 1 or 2 days

Level: 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> grade

Phase: Exploration

Topic: What's in a name?

Standard #2: Written Communication

Objective: By the end of the class period the student will be able to:

1. answer and explain guide questions in the notebooks
2. define unknown vocabulary
3. complete a multiple choice exercise from the board
4. begin reading the story of *Romeo and Juliet*
5. explain how and why the story is significant to each one

#### I. Procedure:

1. Students will answer guide questions in their notebooks.
2. They should define unknown vocabulary.
3. Have students complete a multiple choice exercise from the board.
3. Students who have concluded prior exercise will begin reading *Romeo and Juliet*.
4. Explain how and why the story was significant to them by writing in their journals.

#### II. Activity 1.5 (Pre-reading).

1. Can love exist between members of two fighting families?
2. How is it possible to fall in love with an enemy?
3. What should loving relationships be based on? Explain.

III. Activity 1.6. Read the following statements and try to identify the definition of the underlined word by selecting the correct answers.

1. Both families strike a pose for the portrait.  
a. particular position      b. bat      c. attitude
2. The fighting between the enemies included hurling comments.  
a. greater      b. lighting      c. shouting
3. You will be invited to a masked ball at the Capulets.  
a. mysterious      b. concealed      c. disguised
4. “Fetch me my sword at once, dare I say”!  
a. dangerous knife      b. small gun      c. sharp knife
5. As fate would have it, Romeo and Juliet saw each other from across the room.  
a. destiny      b. luck      c. death
6. “Good night, good night, parting is such sweet sorrow”!  
a. happiness      b. carelessness      c. sadness
7. Paris is to seek Juliet’s love at once!  
a. cherish      b. go after      c. abandon
8. Both of them turned their fighting families into love.  
a. a strong team      b. divided opinion      c. at war
9. The wedding took place inside a small and hidden chapel.  
a. basement      b. cave      c. church
10. “You should take this vial and drink its content, and all life will leave you.”  
a. small glass      b. poison      c. juice

11. She lay inside of the tomb motionless.
- a. frigid                      b. without movement    c. sleeping
12. She takes a dagger from Romeo quickly before someone approaches.
- a. scissors                      b. rifle                      c. short blade

IV. Activity 1.7 (Additional).

1. Students will begin to read the adapted version of *Romeo and Juliet* and complete the reading for homework.

## Drama Unit

Unit 1

Time: 2 days

Level: 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> grade

Phase: Conceptualization

Topic: Adapted Version of – *Romeo and Juliet*

Standard #1 and #3: Oral & Reading Communication

Objective: By the end of the class the student will be able to:

1. perform the first two scenes of *Romeo and Juliet*
2. select a preferred character to act out
3. improvise a determined scene of the play

I. Procedure:

1. The students may choose one character they would like to portray in class.
2. Student will try to improvise and dramatize their role as best as they can.
3. Students may take turns with the role-play.
4. Students will discuss the improvisation.
5. There may be discussion from students' journal writing at the end of class.

II. Activity 1.8 (During Reading). Read the excerpts from the first two scenes of *Romeo and Juliet* aloud (See Appendix D).

## Drama Unit

Unit 1

Time: 2 days

Level: 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup>

Phase: Conceptualization

Topic: Characterization

Standard #3: Reading Communication

Objective: By the end of the class the student will be able to:

1. predict the outcome of the story's plot
2. infer answers from the story
3. describe character traits by completing a Venn diagram

### I. Procedure:

1. Allow at least ten minutes for the first two questions in activity 1.9.
2. Since students have already read the plot, they will predict and discuss the outcome of the story.
3. For activity 1.10, allow fifteen minutes for students to complete Venn diagram.
4. The differences should be written in the spaces that do not overlap each other.
5. The similarities are to be written in the spaces where the circles join.
6. This graph is to be completed in class by the student.
7. The student may use a dictionary if necessary.
8. Students will discuss the similarities and differences they identified from the story.

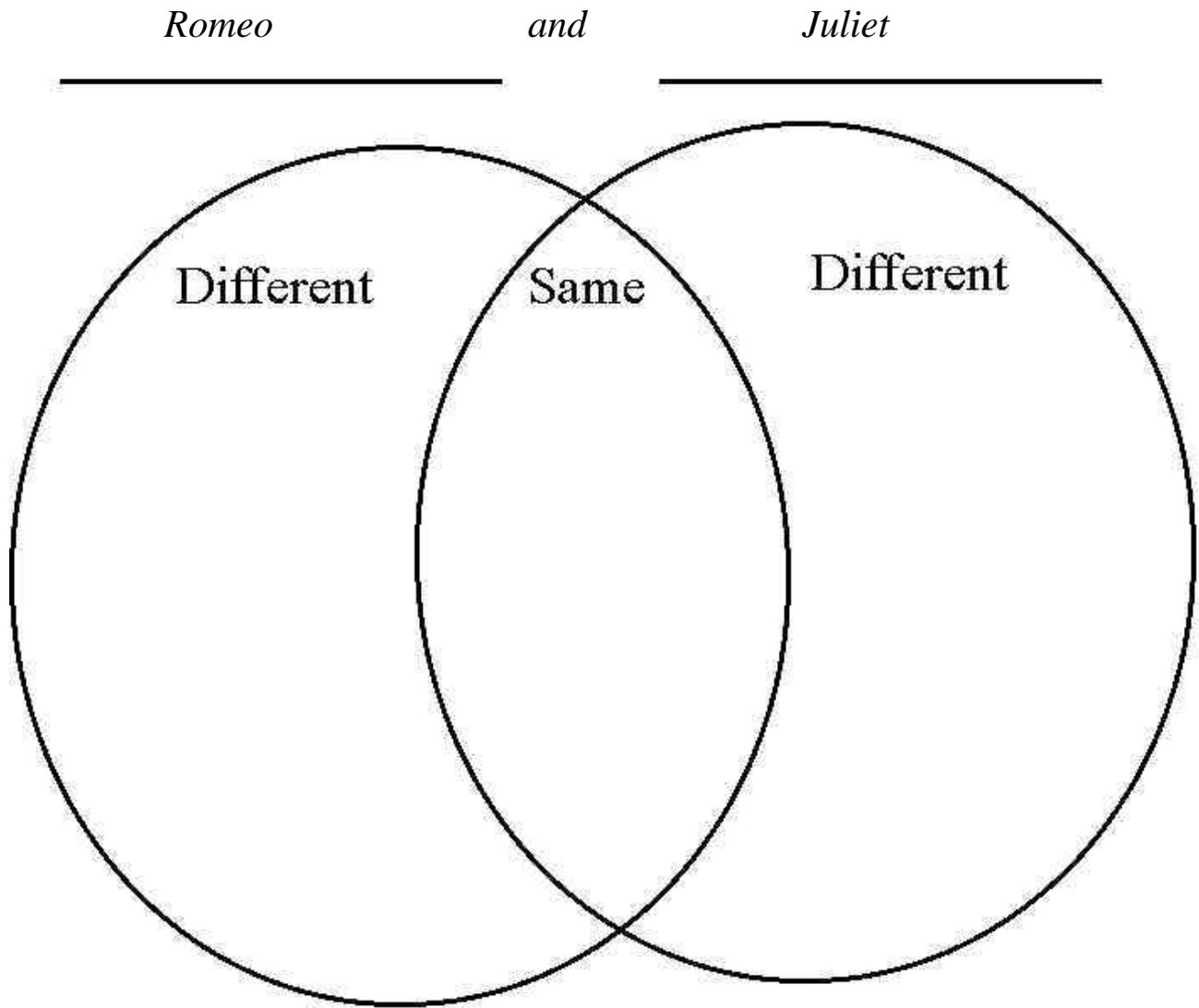
### II. Activity 1.9 (During Reading). Predict the outcome in the plotline of the story.

Answer the following questions in their notebooks and prepare for discussion.

1. What do you think will happen to the main characters in the story? Why?
2. How can the feuding between both families cease?

### III. Activity 1.10. Describe *Romeo and Juliet's* character traits by completing a Venn-gram (see next page) establishing the similarities and the differences between the two.

IV. Activity 1.10 – Worksheet



## Drama Unit

Unit 1

Time: 2 days

Level 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade

Phase: Application

Topic: Story Plotline

Standards #3 and #2: Reading & Written Communication

Objective: By the end of the class the student will be able to:

1. identify true and false statements from the story of *Romeo and Juliet*
2. infer links and connections between different events from the story by completing a story map
3. identify cultural differences from the story compared to the student's cultural customs by writing them in their journals

I. Procedure:

1. Have students answer true and false exercises on the board. Students need to provide page numbers of the text as evidence of why it is correct or not.
2. Students should complete a story map by identifying the story's plotline, setting, characters, problem, solution, and theme.
3. As an additional activity, ask students to complete a story pyramid (see worksheet below).
4. Students will compare the story's culture with their own and write their findings in their journals.
5. Provide extra time for the discussion of students' story maps, and pyramids.
6. Finally, allow time for group discussion on cultural differences and similarities.
7. More than one class period may be needed.

## II. Activity 1.11(After Reading) - Comprehension check.

Identify the statements that are T – True or F – False. Find evidence in the text by including page numbers to support your answer.

- \_\_\_ 1. Romeo left Rosaline for Juliet
- \_\_\_ 2. Benvolio and Mercutio are Romeo's cousins.
- \_\_\_ 3. Tybalt is Romeo's dearest friend.
- \_\_\_ 4. Mercutio kills Romeo.
- \_\_\_ 5. The Prince of Verona's town is upset between the two families.
- \_\_\_ 6. Friar Laurence marries Romeo and Juliet after Juliet marries Paris.
- \_\_\_ 7. Lord Capulet throws a masked ball party for everyone in town.
- \_\_\_ 8. Nurse alerts Juliet that Romeo is the son of his best friend.
- \_\_\_ 9. Friar Laurence invents a plan to unite both families.
- \_\_\_ 10. Romeo finds Juliet who is dead in the tomb.
- \_\_\_ 11. Juliet decides to kill herself with poison once she finds Romeo beside her.
- \_\_\_ 12. Both of the fighting families forgave each other.

## III. Activity: 1.12 (After Reading )- Worksheet

Complete the following story map provided with what you have learned from the story's content and plotline.

The student will write the story's plotline, setting, characters, problem, solution, and theme on the lines provided.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Story Map

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Author: \_\_\_\_\_

#### The Setting

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#### The Characters

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#### The Problem

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---

#### The Solution

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#### Main theme of the story

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IV. Additional Activity 1.13 - Worksheet

Complete the following Story Pyramid

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Story Pyramid**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of main character**

2. \_\_\_\_\_

**Two words describing main character**

3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Three words describing the setting.**

4. \_\_\_\_\_

**Four words stating the problem.**

5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Five words describing one event.**

6. \_\_\_\_\_

**Six words describing second event.**

7. \_\_\_\_\_

**Seven words describing the third event.**

8. \_\_\_\_\_

**Eight words describing the solution.**

## Drama Unit

Unit 1

Time: 1 day

Level: 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> grade

Phase: Application

Topic: KWL Chart  
(What I Know, What do I want to find out,  
What did I learn?)

Standards #2, #1, and #4: Written & Oral  
Communication and Literary Appreciation

Objective: By the end of the class the student will be able to:

1. interpret cultural differences from the story of *Romeo and Juliet* with their culture by selecting a specific scene
2. role-play the chosen scenes with a partner to practice pronunciation
3. rewrite the chosen scene differently from the original version and explain why
4. complete a KWL Chart by giving specific details from the story

I. Procedure:

1. Have students identify cultural differences from the story with their own cultural beliefs by selecting a scene.
2. Students will role-play the particular scene with a partner.
3. Students may rewrite the scene differently and explain reasons why they changed it.
4. Now that the students have improvised and studied different scenes from the story, they can now analyze and synthesize information to complete KWL chart.
5. Instruct students to recall relevant details from the reading.
6. Students may write using phrases and complete statements to complete the table.
7. Peer discussion- This chart will promote critical thinking skills.
8. All of the activities should be handed in since they serve as assessment tools.
9. The teacher may award points to every document students hand in as a means of formative evaluation.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### II Activity 1.14 (After Reading) Worksheet

A. Look for your favorite scenes from the story of *Romeo and Juliet* and re-write them according to how you would have preferred the events of the story to unfold. Then role-play them with your partners.

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B. Re-write the scenes and role-play with peers.

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### III Activity 1.15 ( After Reading) Worksheet

Complete the KWL Chart with what you already knew before reading the story, what you wanted to find out, and finally mention what you learned after reading *Romeo and Juliet*.



## Conclusion

Creative dramatics in the ESL classroom involves techniques that will contribute to lowering LA. The numerous activities presented allows for students to learn in a non-threatening environment and where they are the initiators of communication. With the use of role-playing, which focuses on acting out roles relevant to real-life situations, students have a hands-on opportunity to bring to life a character that has come from text. Students' interests are captured instantly with the use of improvisation because it gives them the element of surprise and interest, promoting teamwork and responsibility. Story dramatization involves student participation in an amazing fashion allowing students to imagine how they will act in an informal setting without a formal audience, thus eliminating the notion of having spectators criticize them unnecessarily. The useful techniques provided by creative dramatics through the development of characterization exercises presents a fresh way of teaching the importance of characters in a story's plotline, thus enabling students to accomplish more meaningful interpretations than merely looking for answers in a text.

Overall, using creative dramatics in the ESL classroom will be an advantage to the teacher because it will make language learning more fun and entertaining. Creating a non-threatening learning environment is an important goal in the teaching profession. Having the opportunity to combine all of these effective techniques together will definitely help teachers obtain such a formidable task. In return, this allows for growth and success in student learning.

## Chapter 4

### Video Game Unit

Video games offer the opportunity to experience interactive participation in a non-intimidating way. Its simplicity allows learners of all ages to become part of an entertaining and challenging way of learning. Video games are an excellent learning tool because computers can adjust its level of difficulty according to the player's preference or need. These innovative learning tools are also useful to teach deductive reasoning, memory strategies, and eye-hand coordination. Video games can facilitate students to learn the required content for their level as well as make learning fun and applicable to the current generation who are known as game children. As a result, educators must be willing to learn how to use educational games as a part of constructivist learning in education allowing students to build new knowledge and construct their own understanding (Clemens, 2002). Teachers should consider fun ways to teach inside of their classroom, particularly when using effective learning strategies and exciting tools such as video games that will spark student's interest immediately. The Department of Education in PR has included this strategy by purchasing video games under the Title V- Innovative Projects. Not all schools have these programs, yet they are available if the school submits a written proposal.

So what are video games and how do they assist teachers as an optimal teaching tool? According to Webster's New World College Dictionary (2001), the definition of game is a type of play that can involve an amusement, sport, contest, or computer simulation (p.215). Play is normal and good for children because it enables them to learn about themselves and the world around them while using their imagination and creativity (Stutz,1996). Hogle (1996) summed up the meaning of a game as "a contest of physical or mental skills and strengths, requiring the participant(s) to follow a specific set of rules in order to attain a goal" (p.4). To be considered

play, an activity must be chosen by choice, fun, challenging, symbolic, and governed or restricted by rules that are easily differentiated from the “real world” (Weiser & McCall, 1976).

Video games began to be marketed in the 1960’s and they were usually adventure games with no graphics. These games required the user to move the character by typing in text. One of the first major video games released was called *Pong*. Ten thousand copies of this game were sold at the beginning of the 1970’s. By 1976, *Atari* produced the first game system to be able to handle different game cartridges. Billions of dollars were spent on creating games and game systems. In the 1980’s, the Japanese company *Nintendo* subjugated the market because of its superior multimedia. As a result, video games dominated the game industry. Sixteen out of every twenty games sold in 1989 were video games (Gunter, 1998). Lawrence, 2002 (as cited in Deutsch, 2002) stated that one in three households played video games. Females constitute 43% of the game playing population. On average, American teens spend 1.5 hours per day playing video games. Think about what all these teens have accomplished. They would have solved mysteries, built cities, flown airplanes, conquered adventures, raced cars, etc. (Prensky, 2001).

Considering the amount of time spent on playing games, it is logical to assume that teens’ minds are cognitively affected. William D. Winn, director of the Learning Center at the University of Washington’s Human Interface Technology Laboratory (as cited in Prensky, 2001) believes that this generation of children “thinks differently from the rest of us. They develop hypertext minds, and they leap around. It is as though their cognitive structures were parallel, not sequential” (p.67)

Another interesting cognitive skill is that game generation children examine graphics first to learn about material and then read the text to add on to their understanding. This is the direct result of playing games in which the player is trained to get clues and learn from graphics.

Previous generations were trained to read text first and then use the graphics as an add-on feature to enhance the text. “Young children have shown better memory for pictures displayed during a video game than when presented in a lesson format” (Oyen, & Bebko, 1996, p. 176).

Several discoveries of how exposure to video games affects cognitive skills differ from those of previous generations. First, the game generation is more comfortable with visual-spatial skills, mental maps, and refers to the computer as a learning tool. For instance, a child can picture folding a shape in their mind without actually doing it. They are accustomed to a third dimensional (3D) world. Video games help children with spatial visualization. Students in grades 5, 7, and 9 were tested and it was found that those who played video games were significantly better at mentally rotating and visualizing 3D shapes (Gunter, 1998).

Video games require the player to learn the rules through trial and error, observation, and hypothesis testing. These cognitive skills are essential skills in science called inductive discovery. Induction is also important to certain writing skills. In addition, video games instruct students in decoding what symbols and graphics represent similarities to learning math or science symbols. Let us imagine what students can discover while learning a second language. Vargas and Irizarry (2004) conducted a study in two public schools of PR and found that video games promote a wide range of words and sentence structures as well as they promote informal language use. Exposure is so important for students in order to maintain them motivated with learning. If it attracts students outside of the classroom most surely they will be interested inside of the classroom as well. Finally, today’s game generation students are very apt in multi-tasking because games require the player to be aware of their surroundings and do many tasks at a quick pace. The more difficult levels require quicker responses as well as more concentration on the game (Greenfield, 1984).

There are ten cognitive traits or mental abilities that video game generation students have compared to the cognitive traits of previous generations. These help in understanding the differences between the video game generations and previous generations, and may give a clue as to how and why video games need to be part of education. The game generation is better at the first of each of the following pairs versus the second part reflecting previous generation findings.

1. twitch speed vs. conventional speed
2. parallel processing vs. linear processing
3. graphics first vs. text first
4. random access vs. step-by-step
5. connected vs. standalone
6. active vs. passive
7. play vs. work
8. payoff vs. patience
9. fantasy vs. reality
10. technology as friend vs. technology as foe (Prensky, 2001, p.52)

These traits and abilities also allow the teacher to understand how they can integrate technology in the required teaching skills. For example, the DE's Curriculum Framework for the English Program, Content Standard #4; Literary Appreciation Skills (p.35), require students to develop the concept of reality versus fantasy and video games serve as a link to this skill.

The fundamental purpose for integrating video games in the following unit has multiple pedagogical objectives. Video games are fun ways to introduce unknown material in the ESL

classroom. It allows teachers to present a varied number of skills and exercises in an entertaining way. It is a wonderful way to promote the use of language learning in the classroom as well as teaching tasks that require close attention and concentration. Teachers also benefit by having these video games because they become learning tools for students who need to build strong vocabulary skills, learn how to pronounce new words, create phrases, and utter new sentences in English. By engaging students to participate with video games, they become very involved in the content of the game thus forgetting to focus on language content.

Students learn how to follow directions, orders, and identify sequence of events in a story, or a particular event or situation. They will be able to listen carefully for specific instructions before and during play. Students also learn how to coordinate specific tasks, movements, plays, and hand/eye coordination – skills needed for test taking, as well as other important activities. Allowing students to become actively involved in a particular video game such as *ESPN-Sports* game enables students to take charge of the game, select the characters, and decipher a video game's objective which is a rewarding task for the student as well as the teacher. As students continue to master these games, they may bring other video games to be played in class (with prior consent of the teacher). Both males and females learn the importance of following rules, how to work individually and together as a team. They may develop a sense of competition obtaining scores as rewards by completing tasks on time.

Integrating interactive video games in the ESL classroom also creates an entertaining and non-threatening, learning environment. By using *ESPN – Sports*, *Need for Speed*, and *Vice – City*, *Grand Theft Auto*, video games become valuable learning tools. These or other video games are available at schools which have obtained Title V Innovative Program funding through written proposals which must be submitted by the school to the DE Federal Division. Selecting

three varied video games for the ESL classroom offers educational experiences for young learners who must acquire multiple learning tasks. Video games help students acquire English language skills which include reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. The use of the three video games *ESPN – Sports*, *Need for Speed*, and *Vice City – Grand Theft Auto* present the language skills in an appealing format allowing language learning to take place. *ESPN – Sports* may be pertinent in the English classroom because the majority of students can relate to a sport of their choice. Once the student selects a particular sport, he/she may begin to discover new vocabulary, phrases, and expressions. In addition, this video game is an excellent educational tool because it integrates cause and effect exercises, comparison and contrast, as well as problem solution situations, all of which students must have exposure to in order to comply with the Puerto Rican Standardized Tests according the law 107-110 of “No Child Left Behind Act” (NCLB). *ESPN – Sports* deploys rich visual and spatial graphs that draw students into fantasy worlds that are exciting, challenging, and interactive.

*Need for Speed* is another video game which students connect to easily and also complies with the all of the mentioned skills. This video game allows students to visually as well as mentally create stories with diverse outcomes according to the level of the learner. Students learn the skills mentioned in the DE’s Curricular Framework distinguishing relevant and irrelevant details, as well as drawing conclusions to the games while they are exposed to the English language. Teachers may find this video game promotes discussion issues by using multiple means of transportation and its significance to adolescents.

The third video, *Vice City – Grand Theft Auto* is seen as controversial because it is considered highly offensive for some people, yet it may serve the purpose of critical group discussion in English about moral and social ethical behavior by censoring violent acts such as

racism, robberies, and sexism. Teachers are strongly encouraged to use this particular video game wisely as if they were a parent supervising access to specific internet sites for their children.

Video games also serve educational purposes of guiding students to discover moral and social values that are important in their intellectual development as students. Teachers have the opportunity to help students identify issues addressed in this video game that are racist, sexist, and harmful as well as promote group discussions in English. Furthermore, by using *Vice – City Grand Theft Auto* teachers may discuss with students what should or should not be considered morally and ethically accepted in our society. Students may identify ways to avoid negative acts found in this video from actually occurring. To better understand the different games together with their usefulness in the ESL classroom a description follows.

#### *1. ESPN – Sports*

This game delivers the intensity and realism of a hard-played professional tennis match completely in English. *ESPN-Sports* offer students excitement, fun, and an entertaining way to learn a second language. This video game helps them develop competitive learning skills that deal with problem-solution exercises, cognitive critical thinking skills such as predicting outcomes and inferences as well as motor skills which include hand-eye coordination and movement. Students are exposed to sports vocabulary such as defense, out of bound, foul play and hit the ball, as well as phrases and commands that are part of the problem-solution skills they must master. The majority of the students can follow the video game through with minor questions because it offers clear and precise instructions from the beginning to the end of the game. Students have the opportunity to listen to the questions being asked and comply with each of them by selecting players and teammates. They are also exposed to a popular sport all within

the reach of their fingertips. Teachers may discuss with students the pertinence of the video game in their lives and how it has helped them integrate English in their every day life conversations.

## 2. *Need for Speed*

This video game is a comprehensive and highly enjoyable racing game that is suited for just about any driving enthusiast of any age. *Need for Speed* offers multiple educational options to learn and discover clues in the game and techniques which will help students complete different levels of difficulty in order to advance to the next steps. Students may select different means of transportation in order to move from one place to another. Many decide to select cars, boats, scooters, and motorcycles. Exposure to graphs, sounds and movements allow students to immerse themselves into a fantasy world and utter words, phrases, and complete sentences in English. Students discover clues, decipher multiple messages by selecting correct word order in sentences, and there is a sense of suspense and excitement for all players alike. English text messages such as instructions, clues, and information are presented in a clear fashion so students may interpret, analyze, and answer questions with little difficulty.

## 3. *Vice City – Grand Theft Auto*

Unlike the first two video games that offer an overall positive message after interactively playing them, *Vice City – Grand Theft Auto* presents a different setting. The video game dates back to the 1980's in Florida where a group of policemen sought out to resolve problems. Vice City video game is ruled by drug dealers, corrupt business people, and other gang members. The gangs fight each other regularly on the streets of Vice City. The city gets its money from tourist and the black market. There is a lot of wealth, but also dirty slums and a lot of poverty. Over 1.8 million people live in Vice City including immigrants such as Cubans, Haitians, and Afro-Americans. The video game also includes a place called Ocean Drive, near hotels, and bars. It

imitates Miami clearly because there is a place called Down Town: Little Havana Cuba. All travel systems are by means of cars, motorcycles, boats, by air, walking, and by running.

The main purpose for having selected this particular video game is because it allows the teacher to have students critically think about the scenes they are seeing and hearing, as well as identify the types of negative behaviors that should be censored and criticized. This is considered important because students may discover ways in the video game not to commit such crimes, as well as avoid them altogether. Students will also engage in conversations about ways to avoid gangs, fights, robberies, discrimination against minority groups and women, and reasons why they should censor such behavior.

Finally, the video game unit concludes with comic strip exercises directly linked with the use of video games. Comic strips are attractive assessment techniques which students enjoy and can easily relate to. Writing English becomes both challenging and entertaining because students create their own dialogs according to what they interpret after looking at each of the pictures. The comic strips also allow the student to reflect about the messages and discuss and explain the content and implications of each of them.

## Video Game Unit

Unit 2

Time 1 or 2 days

Level: 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup>

Phase: Exploration

Topic: Electronic Vocabulary

Standard #1: Oral & Listening  
Communication

Objective: By the end of the class the student will be able to:

1. listen to English words, phrases, and sentences from the video game  
*Need For Speed* manufactured by Playstation 2
2. explore graphics, and character movements from the program
3. discover electronic vocabulary
4. discuss and share experiences about the video game.

### I. Procedure:

1. Have students sit in individual computer stations.
2. Instruct students to load the program and wait for instructions.
3. Have students click the *Need For Speed* icon.
4. Students will begin playing the game exploring graphics, sounds, and character movement.
5. Students should focus on the new words, phrases, and sentences by following the commands given to them by the program.
6. Have students discuss their personal experiences with each other.

### II. Activity 2.1 – Follow the instructions from the *Need For Speed* video game.

1. Look and listen to words, phrases, and sentences from the game.
2. Focus on the commands given by the computer and follow them.
3. Discover new electronic vocabulary.
4. Discuss and share experiences with peers.

## Video Game Unit

Unit: 2

Time: 2 days

Level: 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup>

Phase: Conceptualization

Topic: Electronic Vocabulary

Standards: #3 and #2:  
Reading & Written Communication

Objective: By the end of the class the student will be able to:

1. read the first three levels of the game *Need For Speed*
2. play the initial part of the video game by following the instructions.
3. find and write the new words, phrases, and commands by completing a worksheet.

I. Procedure:

1. Students must read the first three levels of the video game *Need For Speed*.
2. While playing, students will write the words, phrases, and commands under each of the corresponding columns given on the worksheet below.
3. Students will look for the differences between phrases and commands in the dictionary if necessary since they will be constantly referring to this vocabulary.

II. Activity 2.2 Read the instructions for the first three levels of the video game *Need For Speed*.

Begin playing the video game and identify the new words, phrases, and commands found in the game by writing them in the spaces provided.

Words	Phrases	Commands

## Video Game Unit

Unit 2

Time: 1 or 2 days

Level: 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup>

Phase: Application

Topic: Video Game

Standard #3 and #1:  
Reading & Oral Communication

Objective: By the end of the class the student will be able to:

1. read the words, phrases, and commands from the *Need For Speed* video game from the worksheet
2. produce the highest amount of unknown words, phrases, and commands
3. complete the video game in class
4. write the instructions of the game in chronological order
5. describe the object of the game in notebook

### I. Procedure:

1. Have students read all of the words, phrases, and commands from the video game.
2. As an incentive, the students that produce the highest amount of these words written on the worksheet will obtain 2 bonus points towards their next test.
3. All students will try to complete the video game.
4. Also to motivate, students who complete the game in the least amount of time will also obtain 2 points for their next test.

### II. Activity 2.3

1. Write the instructions on how to play the game in the correct order.
2. Students will describe the objective of the game in their notebooks.

## Video Game Unit

Unit: 2

Time: 1 day

Level: 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup>

Phase: Application

Topic: Video Description

Standards # 2 and 1: Written & Oral Communication

Objective: By the end of the class the student will be able to:

1. write a complete description of the video game *Need For Speed*
2. incorporate the learned vocabulary from the video into writing
3. define the objective of the video game

### I. Procedure:

1. Instruct students to write, in their notebooks, a complete description of the video game played in class.
2. Students should be specific about the details of the game particularly the student's favorite part by using learned vocabulary from the video game.
3. Students should define the game's objective by spontaneously describing it.
4. Students may be divided into cooperative work groups of four members each to allow for oral discussions in English between classmates.

II. Activity 2.4- Write a description of the objective of the game *Need For Speed*. Include your favorite part of the game in your writing.

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## Video Unit

Unit 2

Time: 1 or 2 days

Level: 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup>

Phase: Exploration

Topic: Why do you like Video Games?

Standards #1 and #2: Oral & Written Communication

Objective: By the end of the class the student will be able to:

1. acknowledge why he/she enjoys video games
2. be aware of how video games may or may not teach him/her
3. complete a cause and effect map (see following page)
4. demonstrate the differences between instructional videos and violent videos by looking up video articles from magazines or the internet and discuss them

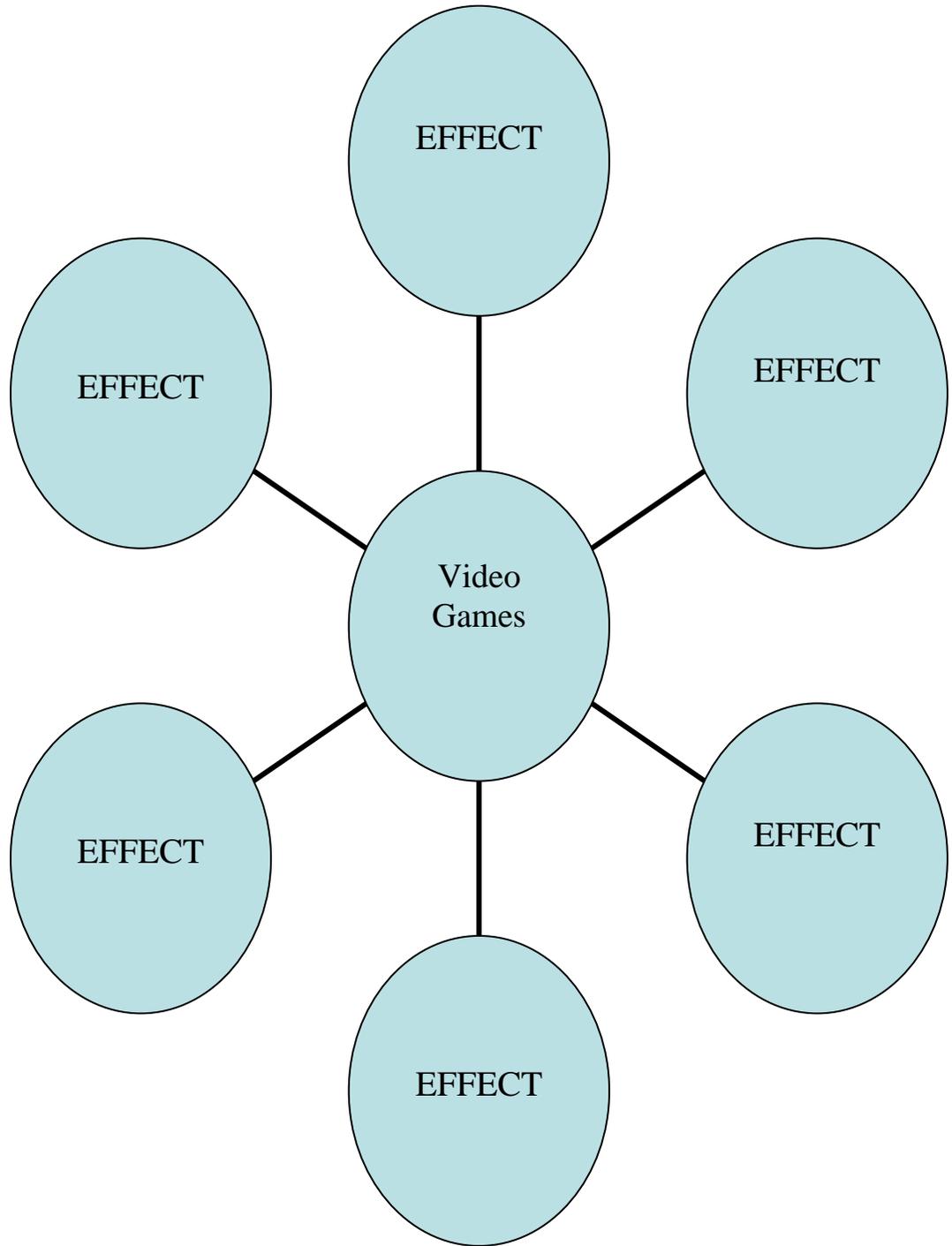
### I. Procedure:

1. Ask students why they like video games and how they may teach them.
2. Have students express the reasons for liking or disliking video games.
3. Instruct students to complete a cause and effect map that will define what causes videos to be effective and what effects they have.
4. Students may work with partners and use a dictionary if needed.
5. For homework, students will look for articles about video games that demonstrate the differences between educational video games versus violent ones.
6. Students may find these articles from the school library, the internet, or bring them from their home.
7. Students may discuss the cause and effect map in class.

II. Activity 2.5- Fill the cause and effect web by writing the word video games in the center of the map and all of the effects they produce in the outer circles.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Activity 2.5 - Worksheet



## Video Unit

Unit: 2

Time: 2 or 3 days

Level: 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup>

Phase: Conceptualization

Topic: Vice City Vocabulary

Standards #3 and #2:  
Reading & Written  
Communication

Objective: By the end of the class the student will be able to:

1. identify new vocabulary from the video game *Vice City-Grand Theft Auto* manufactured by Play Station 2
2. read instructions and play the video game
3. compare English words similar to Spanish words
4. complete a chart of words found both in English and Spanish

I. Procedure:

1. Have students identify new vocabulary from the video game *Vice City-Grand Theft Auto*.
2. Students should read the instructions on their own and play the video game.
3. Instruct students to discuss the similarities between both languages.
4. Students will complete a chart of words both in English and Spanish.

II. Activity 2.6- Find words and commands in English that are very similar in Spanish and

write them down next to each other.

ENGLISH WORDS/COMMANDS	SPANISH WORDS/COMMANDS

## Video Unit

Unit 2

Time: 1 day

Level: 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup>

Phase: Conceptualization

Topic: Vice City video game

Standard #1: Listening & Oral  
Communication

Objective: By the end of the class the student will be able to:

1. compete between classmates playing the video game
2. identify specific clues from the game in order to obtain a good score
3. choose a specific character from the game and achieve the game's objective of saving a beautiful young lady
4. complete the statements from the video game in order to continue to the next level

### I. Procedure:

1. Have students compete playing the video game with a partner/s.
2. Students will identify clues from the video game to obtain a good score.
3. The students may choose a character of their choice in order to accomplish the goal of the game which is to save a young lady.
4. In order for students to advance from one level to the next, they must fill in vocabulary words and/or statements presented to them.

### II. Activity 2.7- Complete some of the statements below from the video game *Vice City*.

1. Get him \_\_\_\_\_ getting away!
2. Look at \_\_\_\_\_ Viper – it's so fast!
3. That girl must be \_\_\_\_\_ over at me.
4. Those guards are right \_\_\_\_\_ you.
5. Man, I like these cars \_\_\_\_\_ so cool.

## Video Unit

Unit 2

Time: 1 day

Level: 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup>

Phase: Application

Topic: Writing in Journal

Standard #2 Written Communication

Objective: By the end of the class the student will be able to:

1. write about their experience playing the video games in class
2. express how they felt while playing and competing against each other
3. recommend other video games that may also be used
4. answer questions in their journal

### I. Procedure:

1. Ask students to reflect on their experience playing video games in class.
2. Instruct them to express, in writing their journals, how they felt when they played against each other and to describe how that made them feel.
3. Ask students to identify which of the two video games used in class they felt most comfortable with when speaking English.
4. Students may recommend the use of other video games for the classroom that will also promote the use of English.

### II. Activity 2.8

1. Write, in your journal, about your experience playing video games in class.
2. What did you learn about the game?
3. How did you feel while competing with other classmates? Why?
4. What video games appealed to you the most? Why?
5. Which video games enabled you to speak English freely? Why?

## Video Unit

Unit 2

Time: 1 or 2 days

Level: 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup>

Phase: Exploration

Topic: Electronic Sports

Standard #1: Listening & Oral  
Communication

Objective: By the end of the class the student will be able to:

1. listen to a brief summary of the electronic game *ESPN – Sports* manufactured by Playstation 2
2. discover new graphs, commands, and movements of the video game
3. distinguish different words, phrases, and commands, and write the number of times they are produced in a table (See next page)

I. Procedure:

1. Students should be ready to listen and to play before starting the video game.
2. Students must listen carefully to a brief summary of the electronic game *ESPN-Sports*.
3. All students will discover new graphs, commands, and movements of the video game.
4. Students will learn how to distinguish different words, phrases, and commands from the video game by listening carefully.
5. Students should be able to write the number of times the words, phrases, and commands are produced on a worksheet.
6. Once students begin they cannot start over.
7. Every student will have the opportunity to participate.
8. There must be complete silence in order for this activity to be effective.

## II. Activity 2.9

The following list contains words, phrases, and commands provided from the video game *ESPN – Sports*

1. Listen carefully to the computer in order to identify how many times the following words and commands are said. (See next page)
2. Write the amount of times each word, phrase, or command is produced.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Table 1

Words, Phrases, and Commands

WORDS/PHRASES	COMMANDS
foul play	block!
crossover	watch out!
air bound	pass the ball!
ball technique	shoot the ball!
that's a nudge	shoot it for 3!
defense	get out of the way!
rebound	shut up!
in your face	sit down now!
three seconds	get out of here!
offensive foul	you suck man!
out of bound	stay out of the way!

## Video Unit

Unit 2

Time: 1 or 2 days

Level: 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup>

Phase: Conceptualization

Topic: Sequence of Events

Standard #2 and #1: Written  
& Oral Communication

Objective: By the end of the class the student will be able to:

1. explain how to play the *ESPN Sports* video game by writing the correct order of events
2. describe how to outscore an opponent by following pertinent clues and commands
3. discuss the best part of the video game by writing it in their journals.

### I. Procedure:

1. Instruct students to think about the video game *ESPN Sports*.
2. Students should describe ways on how to outscore an opponent.
3. Ask students to write in their journals the part they enjoyed most from the video game played in class and to explain their reasons.
4. Students may need to use a dictionary.

### II. Activity 2.10

1. Write the correct order of events according to what you remembered from the video game *ESPN Sports*.

First: \_\_\_\_\_

Second: \_\_\_\_\_

Third: \_\_\_\_\_

Last: \_\_\_\_\_

## Video Unit

Unit 2

Time: 1 day

Level: 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup>

Phase: Application

Topic: Oral Presentation

Standard #1: Oral Communication

Objective: By the end of the class the student will be able to:

1. select a video game of choice to present to the class.
2. discuss why he/she selected the video game and in what ways it can help students practice English.
3. perform a brief demonstration of the selected video game so others will learn.

I. Procedure:

1. Ask students to prepare for an oral presentation in class.
2. Students will select a video game of their choice that appeals to them.
3. Have students describe ways their video game can motivate them to use English in the classroom.
4. Have students give a brief demonstration of the video game they selected.
5. Allow at least five minutes for discussion of all presentations at the end of class.
6. Every student will be graded on a small scale from 1 to 10.
7. The evaluation criteria are: (See Evaluation Scale)
  - a. physical performance
  - b. pronunciation and intonation
  - c. clarity and expression of voice projection
  - d. speed of delivery
  - e. grammatical accuracy

## Evaluation Sheet for Oral Presentations

Student's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Group: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Scores : 1 to 10 Highest Score 10 (circle appropriate numbers)

Physical Performance body language, eye contact	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Pronunciation and intonation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Clarity of expression and voice projection	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Speed of delivery	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Grammatical accuracy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Score out of 50 \_\_\_\_\_

Score: \_\_\_\_\_ / 50

## Video Unit

Unit 2

Time: 1 or 2 days

Level: 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup>

Phase: Application

Topic: Classifying Parts of Speech

Standard #1 and #2:  
Listening & Written Communication

Objective: By the end of the class the student will be able to:

1. classify nouns, verbs, adjectives, pronouns by listening to one of the three video games used in class by completing a list
2. write each part of speech below the corresponding column
3. work together in cooperative learning groups with peers

I. Procedure:

1. Have students listen to one of the three video games used in class.
2. Students may choose between *Need For Speed*, *Grand Theft Auto*, or *ESPN Sports*.
3. Students will classify a list of words provided by the game as nouns, verbs, adjectives, and pronouns in the corresponding column provided (See Activity 2.11).
4. Students may work in cooperative groups.
5. More than one class period may be needed for this activity.



## Video Unit

Unit 2

Time: 1 day

Level: 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup>

Phase: Application

Topic: Video Comic Strip

Standard # 2 & #1: Written & Oral  
Communication

Objective: By the end of the class the student will be able to:

1. write messages according to the pictures in the comic strips
2. create dialogues for some video comic strips
3. discuss the messages on the printed comic strips to their peers
4. color black and white comic strips with watercolor paints

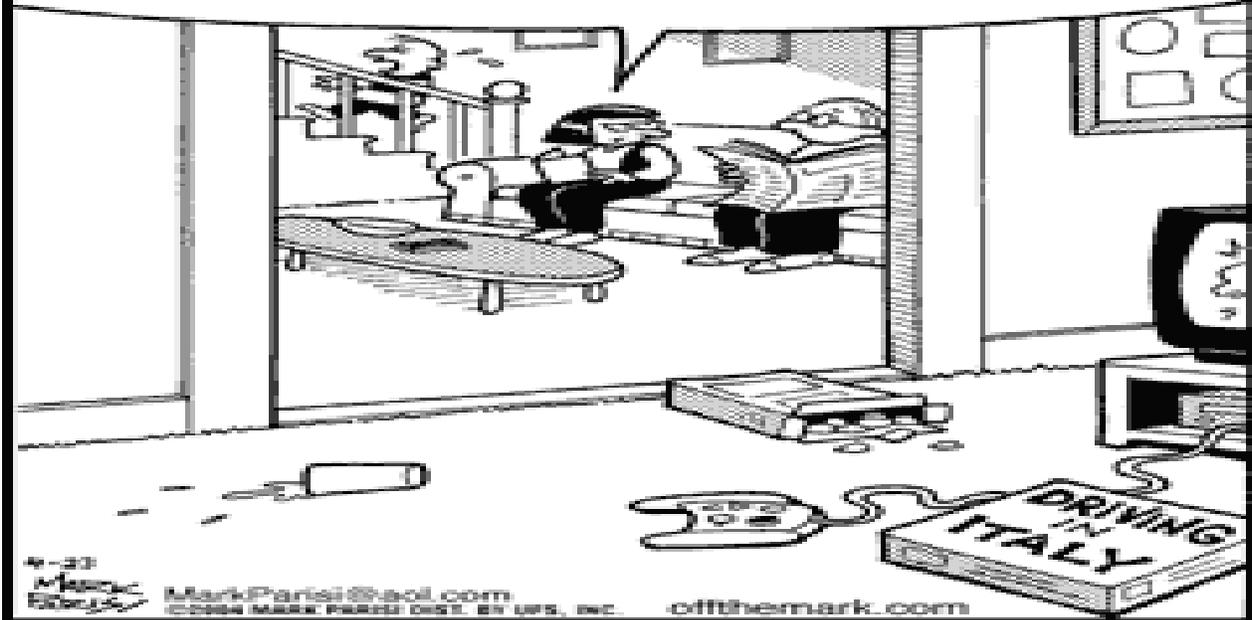
### I. Procedure:

1. Since students have already worked and discussed the different video games, they will receive different video comic strips (See the worksheets below).
2. Some comic strips will include messages, and some will not.
3. Students will write a message for each comic strip separately.
4. Students will discuss the printed comic strips to peers.
5. All students may create dialogues for their comic strips in class.
6. Allow students to discuss the messages created by them for each comic strip.
7. Students may color the black and white color strips with watercolor paints.
8. Teachers may erase the print on comic strips for students to write their own message.

### II. Activity 2.12.

1. Look at all of the comic strips and discuss the message for each one.
2. Write a message for each of the comic strips that are not printed.
3. Color black and white comic strip with watercolors.

I TOLD YOU THAT VIDEO GAME  
WOULD BE TOO SCARY FOR HIM...



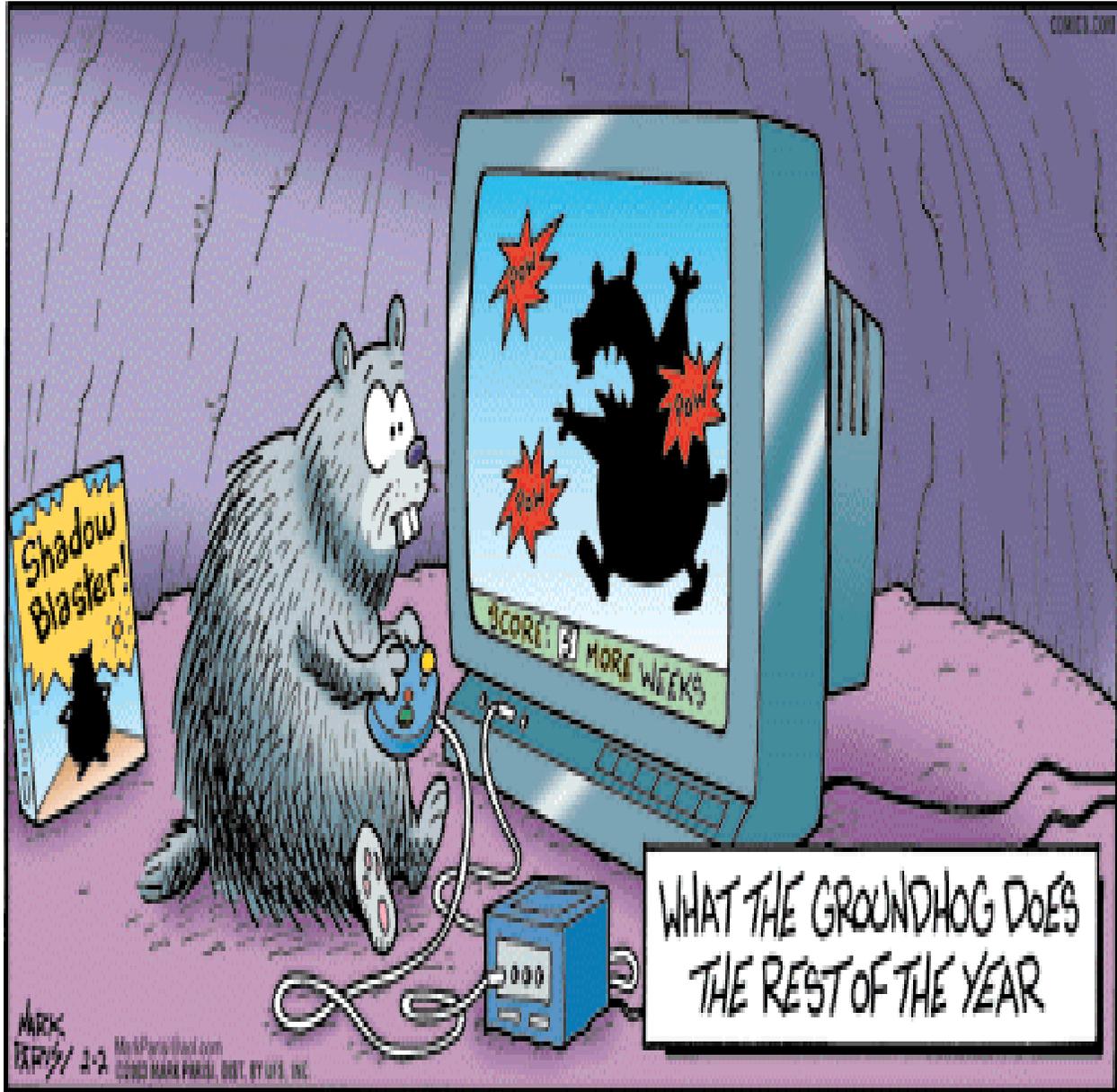
# off the mark

by Mark Parisi

w w w . o f f t h e m a r k . c o m







## Conclusion

Video games promote a wide range of words, phrases, and sentence structures that help promote the use of English in the ESL classroom. Video games also allow students to concentrate on the instructions, graphs, sounds, movements, and hand and eye coordination.

Students speak freely, uninterruptedly, producing words, phrases, and complete sentences automatically (Vargas, & Irizarry, 2004).

This is beneficial for the students because they do not feel intimidated while speaking the language, thus it is an effective strategy to lower LA in the classroom. Therefore, video games stimulate learning because students feel they are playing rather than learning. They stay motivated during the lessons and participate and help each other forming cooperative work groups completing tasks on time with minor setbacks.

We have seen how using video games as a learning strategy is an effective teaching tool in the language classroom because it includes multiples tasks, and assessment activities that promote critical thinking skills by using concept maps, webbing, as well as lists, and tables. The unlimited opportunities that students have to learn by using video games are endless. The majority of students are exposed to Playstations, Game Cubes, X-Box, and Game Boys anyway, so what better way to take advantage of this learning tool and grow together with our students.

Finally, by using comic strips students may develop written texts by creating simple dialogues according to the pictures they see in these strips and using the vocabulary they have already learned. Students may also analyze and discuss the comic strips with messages to promote the use of English discussion in the ESL classroom.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Thematic Reading Unit**

Unlike previous chapters that discuss strategies for lowering LA in the ESL classroom, this thematic reading unit discusses what turns children into killers and why it has been designed mainly for adolescent students. This thematic reading unit also allows for students to relate to and voice their everyday life situation leading eventually to lower anxiety while learning ESL. The unit's primary purpose is to allow students to become affective learners while learning English as their second language (L2). Affective learners are students who are sensitive towards certain subjects that promote specific attitudes, opinions, and preferences. Teenagers are torn between parents, friends, drugs, and partners, thus disrupting learning to take place inside the classroom. Since teenagers so often deal with bullying and peer pressure, this unit will enable them to become actively involved in making decisions which are pertinent to their lives. No one likes to be picked on or bullied, yet it seems to be present in schools all over the nation and Puerto Rico is no exception. Students will be able to develop a sense of responsibility and importance on difficult issues such as rejection, self-consciousness, pride, fear, and hate. This unit will also promote thinking to take place inside and outside of the classroom.

The reading unit will assist ESL teachers to become facilitators by presenting relevant guide questions to spark students' interests. Questions such as "How do you feel when someone picks on you?", and "How do you deal with peer pressure?" are some of the questions that all students can relate to. As a pre-reading activity, students will participate in active group discussions while identifying the characteristics of bullies. The discussion will set the foundation for the reading and discussion of the articles. Along with the definition of bullies this

discussion will help students react and respond to whether or not they believe a person is a born killer or whether or not a person may become one according to the lives they are living.

After reading the articles, the students will understand how Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris from Littleton, Colorado felt and learned how to deal with issues of rejection and negative sneers, as both teenagers plotted the slaughter of their teachers and classmates on April 20, 1999. These young students had been the object of ridicule and mockery by their classmates. They were seen as outcasts because they did not fit in to a specific group at school, though they wore black trench coats and others seemed to label them as the trench coat mafia. Both teens had had enough of the name calling, slurs, and humiliation and decided to take matters into their own hands. That is when they teamed up and carefully planned how they would go out on a shooting rampage killing all of those who had mocked them including teachers they disliked. They also strategically placed home-made bombs in their school on the days of the shooting. After killing 13 and wounding over 23 people, they turned the guns against themselves and died instantly.

Students may relate to this tragedy because they, too, have experienced similar situations where classmates as well as teachers have been killed. These troubling experiences will allow them to connect with the articles from *TIME* magazine titled *The Columbine Tapes* and the second titled *Warning*. These readings will promote conversation to start immediately into meaningful discussions about bullying, peer pressure, and name calling.

Students will address tougher issues after reading *The Chocolate War* by Robert Cormier because of the views on men's roles in society versus women's roles and compare their experiences with the characters from the story. Female students may voice their opinions on how they act to peer pressure as well as male students. Students may express their frustrations while competing with the social belief that girls should be like Barbie dolls after analyzing a

poem titled *Barbie Doll*, and comparing it with what they already know. Then they may compare their findings to their personal experience.

The following pages present lesson plans for the reading unit. The units identify Before Reading and After Reading activities. The Before Reading exercises are designed to be used as exploration activities. Some may be used for the conceptualization phase of the learning process as well. The After Reading activities pursue the application phases of learning to verify if the student's comprehension levels are accurate.

Overall, the assessment tools provided in this reading unit include a range of options such as observation of student's behavior in the classroom, authentic assessments of students' personal responses to the literature, and formal assessment activities.

The main objective for creating the thematic reading unit is to enable students to connect with real-life issues they deal with on a daily basis. Teachers may reach their teaching objectives by integrating reading comprehension exercises that address past occurrences with actual events. Bringing pertinent issues into the ESL classroom allows conversation to flow freely and uninterruptedly mainly because teenagers are actually struggling with other powerful issues within their age group that interfere with learning a language. Therefore, it is essential for teachers to consider relevant tasks that will appeal to students' interest, thus fostering a lower stress learning environment.

Teachers may promote language learning with useful vocabulary exercises that are tied to the text as well as discussing interesting reading selections. Other practice exercises promote oral production to occur by presenting social views about male and female roles. These activities involve immediate student reaction because it touches students on a personal level. They will learn how to compare and contrast various situations, value social differences, and learn how to

respect other people's perspectives. Students will develop an appreciation for a poem titled *Barbie doll* as well as analyze and infer messages from the text. In addition, students may learn how to deal with different classroom conflicts and learn how to compromise with others by discussing multiple points of views other than their own.

Furthermore, having created this unit will give teachers multiple reading, writing, speaking as well as literary appreciation tasks that are relevant to teaching a second language. All of the activities may not only be meaningful to teachers and students alike, but will ultimately lower LA in the second language classroom.

## Thematic Reading Unit:

Unit 3

Time: 1 or 2 days

Level: 8<sup>th</sup> -9<sup>th</sup>

Phase: Exploration

Topic: Tragedy at Columbine

Standard #1: Oral Communication

Objective: By the end of the class period the student will be able to:

1. orally respond to the guide questions most pertinent to him/her
2. explain reasons people pick on others
3. look for information related to the Columbine Tragedy

I. Procedure:

1. The teacher will ask the student to reflect upon the title and sub-title from the Columbine tragedy written on the board.
2. The student will orally respond to each question and write his/her personal response on a worksheet.
3. Students will discuss the possible reasons why the killers manifested so much hate.
4. Allow enough time for all students who wish to express themselves to have the time to do so.

Activity 3.1. Research the Columbine Tragedy and answer the following guide questions in your notebook.

1. What do you know about the Columbine Tragedy?
2. When did this Tragedy occur?
3. Why did this Tragedy occur?

Note: A dictionary and a thesaurus may be used to define unknown vocabulary.

### III. Activity 3.2 (Pre-reading) (See Appendix F)

Look at the following title: What turns children into killers? Then read the title and sub-title of the article:

*The Columbine Tapes- Sub-Title: In five secret videos they recorded before the massacre, the killers reveal their hatred – and their lust for fame.*

1. How do you feel if someone picks on you?
2. Write the possible reasons people pick on others.
3. Do you know what Columbine refers to? Explain.
4. What is a “natural born killer?” How is it possible for someone to be a natural born killer?

## Reading Unit

Unit 3

Time: 1 day

Level: 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>

Phase: Conceptualization

Topic: *The Columbine Tapes*

Standard #2: Reading Comprehension

Objective: By the end of the class period the student will be able to:

1. read *The Columbine Tapes* excerpt
2. discuss the contents of excerpt
3. complete a multiple choice activity

I. Procedure:

1. Give students a copy of the excerpt of *The Columbine Tapes* (See Appendix F).
2. Have students read the excerpt individually and discuss the reading.
3. Students will complete a multiple choice pre-reading activity.
4. Review answers from the multiple choice activity after students have completed the exercise.

II. Activity 3.3 (Pre-reading)- Complete the following multiple choice exercise.

*TIME* Article – *The Columbine Tapes* (See excerpt in Appendix F).

Read the following sentences and try to identify the definition of the underlined word by selecting the correct answers.

1. The first videotape is almost unbearable to watch.  
a. most unlikely            b. very unattractive    c. extremely unpleasant
2. Eric Harris adjusts his camera before he settles into his chair.  
a. sits down                b. puts on                c. adjusts something in
3. Every day they worked with their teachers and plotted their slaughter.  
a. dreamed of              b. planned                c. fought
4. Their motives were full of rage.  
a. anger                      b. despair                c. sadness
5. All of the athletes who taunted him were from the football team.  
a. disgusted                b. tormented              c. laughed at
6. They are infamous for what they did.  
a. not well known        b. insane                 c. famous in a bad way
7. They had laced a lot of foreshadowing and dramatic irony in their story.  
a. fastened                 b. excluded                c. put together
8. You have two people who want to immortalize themselves.  
a. be forgotten             b. be remembered        c. be chosen

## Reading Unit

Unit 3

Time: 1 or 2 days

Level: 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>

Phase: Application

Topic: Vocabulary

Standard #2: Written Communication

Objective: By the end of the class period the student will be able to:

1. look up synonyms in a thesaurus
2. write new vocabulary words on a list from the board
3. distinguish true or false statements from the article *The Columbine Tapes* read in the past class
4. discuss results from the reading comprehension exercise

### I. Procedure:

1. Students will look up two synonyms for the stated vocabulary in the thesaurus.
2. Write the new vocabulary on a list provided on the board.
3. Students will distinguish true or false statements by referring to the article *The Columbine Tapes* read in class.
4. Allow sufficient time to discuss both exercises.

II. Activity 3.4. Vocabulary Exercises - With a partner, check the thesaurus to find synonyms for each word.

1. unbearable \_\_\_\_\_
2. settles \_\_\_\_\_
3. plotted \_\_\_\_\_
4. rage \_\_\_\_\_
5. taunted \_\_\_\_\_
6. infamous \_\_\_\_\_
7. laced \_\_\_\_\_
8. immortalize \_\_\_\_\_

III. Activity 3.5- Comprehension Check. Identify the statements that are T- True or F – False.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Eric Harris calls his gun Marlene.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Harris and Klebold have an inventory of hatred.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Harris’s mother assumed his weapon was just a BB gun.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. There were more than 100,000 pieces of evidence.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Harris said that movie director would fight over their story.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Both killers wanted to kill few people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Dylan and Eric were considered natural born killers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Harris and Klebold have and inventory of hatred including niggers, spics, jews, and girls.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Every day both boys went to school and plotted their slaughter.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. “We’re going to kick-start a revolution,” Klebold says.

## Reading Unit

Unit 3

Time: 1 or 2 days

Grade: 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>

Phase: Exploration

Topic: How do you like to be treated?

Standards #3 and 2: Reading & Written Communication

Objective: By the end of the class period the student will be able to:

1. reflect and respond to guide questions
2. write a list describing the way he/she likes to be treated
3. explain the differences found between the way he/she likes to be treated versus the way he/she treats people

### I. Procedure:

1. Have students respond to guide questions on the board (see pre-reading exercise below).
2. Students should complete a list describing how they treat people and how others treat them.
3. All students should explain their reasons for their answers.
4. Students will work in groups, no more than four per group, to answer these questions.

### II. Activity 3.6 (Pre-reading) Read and answer the following questions as best as you can.

1. Are you a bully? Do you tease other kids? If so, why?
2. How do you deal with peer pressure? Explain.
3. Write a list of how you treat others, and another list of how others treat you.
4. Sit in groups of no more than four classmates.

III. Activity 3.6- Complete the following list of questions.

How do you treat people? Why?	How do others treat you? Why?
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.

## Reading Unit

Unit 3

Time: 2 days

Level: 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>

Phase: Conceptualization

Topic: *Warning!*

Standard #3: Reading  
Communication

Objective: By the end of the class the student will be able to:

1. read the article *Warning* from *TIME* magazine
2. interpret the guide questions by answering each in notebook
3. find evidence to support answers from the text
4. answer who, what, where, when, and why, the incidents happened
5. complete a five-W's chart after reading the article (See next page)
6. discuss answers from guide questions and the five-W's chart

I. Procedure:

1. Students will receive a copy of the *TIME* article to read in class (See Appendix G).
2. All students will read the article titled *Warning* in class.
3. Students must answer guide questions in their notebooks (See questions below).
4. Each student will find evidence from the text to support their responses.
5. Answer and complete a five-W's chart after reading the article (See Activity 3.8).
6. Discuss both the guide questions as well as the five-W's chart.

II. Activity 3.7. Non-Fiction Article: *Warning*. Read both the title and subtitles of the article titled *Warning* (See Appendix G).

Preview: *Warning: Andy Williams Here. Unhappy kid; tired of being picked on; ready to blow. We want to kill some people. Can anyone hear me? How did things get so bad?*

1. Describe both victims in this article. What were they like? What plans did they have? Explain.
2. Look for evidence in the story that explains what pushed Andy Williams to blow in this story.
3. What were the killer's parents like? What happened to them?

III. Activity 3.8- Five-W's chart – Worksheet. Fill in each row with the answers to the questions.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>WHAT HAPPENED IN THE STORY?</b>
<b>WHO WAS THERE?</b>
<b>WHY DID IT HAPPEN?</b>
<b>WHEN DID IT HAPPEN?</b>
<b>WHERE DID IT HAPPEN?</b>

## Reading Unit

Unit 3

Time: 1 or 2 days

Grade: 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>

Phase: Application

Topic: Vocabulary

Standards #3 and 1: Reading & Oral Communication

Objective: By the end of the class the student will be able to:

1. define unknown vocabulary
2. complete sentences with the correct vocabulary
3. select additional words to use as reference

I. Procedure:

1. Students will define new vocabulary (See Activity 3.9) from the boxes by using their dictionaries.
2. Have students select additional unknown vocabulary to define and include in the empty boxes provided.
3. Complete sentences by using the correct vocabulary for each case (See Activity 3.11).

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

I. Activity 3.9: Exploring Vocabulary

Anonymous	rampage	Boasted	trousers	reloaded
Smirking	sock	Ditching	dissolute	truancy

II. Activity 3.10 Complete a list of additional unknown vocabulary to define.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

III. Activity 3.11 Look at the words from the previous readings studied in class in the boxes.

Complete each sentence by selecting the correct word.

1. The students who were troubled led \_\_\_\_\_ lives.
2. There was a terrible shooting \_\_\_\_\_ in the school's library.
3. One of the students \_\_\_\_\_ about being smart all of the time.
4. The school expelled him earlier in the year for frequent \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The bully wanted to \_\_\_\_\_ Gordon in the face to knock him out cold.
6. The letter the boys found was apparently written by a/an \_\_\_\_\_ writer.
7. Everyone noticed how his \_\_\_\_\_ were torn because of the struggle.
8. The gunman had \_\_\_\_\_ his gun to continue shooting everywhere.
9. Both of the gunmen were \_\_\_\_\_ and laughing at the victims.
10. The troubled teens had been \_\_\_\_\_ their school for a long time.

## Reading Unit

Unit 3

Time: 1 or 2 days

Level: 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>

Phase: Exploration

Topic: Comparison and Contrast

Standard#2: Written Communication

Objective: By the end of the class the student will be able to:

1. write a list of characteristics that Barbie dolls have
2. compare and contrast Barbie dolls with other dolls
3. describe what makes these dolls special
4. answer what Barbie dolls means to each student in their notebooks
5. discuss responses to questions and fill out a compare and contrast chart

### I. Procedure:

1. Students will write a list of characteristics that Barbie dolls have.
2. Complete a comparison and contrast table about Barbie dolls with other dolls (See Activity 3.13).
3. Describe what makes these dolls special from other dolls.
4. Write in their notebooks what Barbie dolls mean to each student.
5. Have students discuss in small groups and later in the larger group.
6. Verify the differences between male and female responses.

II. Activity 3.12- Answer the following question by writing a list stating the characteristics that Barbie dolls have. What are they like?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

III. Activity 3.13- Compare and contrast Barbie dolls with other dolls. What makes Barbie dolls special?

Comparison – Similarities	Contrast – Differences

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

IV. Activity 3.14 - Guide Questions:

1. What does the title *Barbie Doll* mean to you? Write your response.

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Why do many girls identify themselves with Barbie dolls?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What do you think a poem with this title will be about? Why?

\_\_\_\_\_

## Reading Unit

Unit 3

Time: 1 day

Level: 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>

Phase: Conceptualization

Topic: Vocabulary

Standard#2: Written Communication

Objective: By the end of the class the student will be able to:

1. identify and select vocabulary with its definition
2. complete a vocabulary match-up exercise
3. describe the actions unhappy children may take

I. Procedure:

1. Students will read the poem *Barbie Doll* (See Appendix H).
2. Students will match the new vocabulary terms (See Activity 3.15).
3. After completing the initial exercises, students will reflect, in writing, the reasons why unhappy kids lure themselves into killing others or may even turn against themselves as a means of self-punishment (See Activity 3.16). Students will describe the actions unhappy children may take by writing possible answers in their notebooks.
4. Have students orally express their experiences with difficult situations and explain how they managed them.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

II. Activity 3.15 Vocabulary Exercise Poem – *Barbie Doll* (See Appendix H)

Try to match-up the following vocabulary with its correct definition by writing the letter next to each number without using the dictionary.

- |                             |                              |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| ___ 1. puberty              | a. completion                |
| ___ 2. dexterity            | b. ability to use your hands |
| ___ 3. box to bury the dead | c. adolescence               |
| ___ 4. abundant             | d. very small                |
| ___ 5. consummation         | e. large in quantity         |
| ___ 6. miniature            | f. casket/coffin             |

III. Activity 3.16 Sometimes children kill others, or they may turn their violence onto themselves.

1. What actions might unhappy children take? Why? Explain your answer.

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## Reading Unit

Unit 3

Time: 2 or 3 days

Level: 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>

Phase: Application

Topic: Poem

Standards #3 and # 2:  
Reading & Written  
Communication

Objective: By the end of the class period the student will be able to:

1. read and interpret the poem *Barbie Doll*
2. identify the new vocabulary from the poem by circling the new words found in the text
3. predict the meaning of the new phrases from the poem and circle each phrase
4. complete statements by using the vocabulary from the poem
5. identify the poem's main idea by completing a graphic organizer
6. discuss the meaning of the poem with others
7. write personal reflections in journals

### I. Procedure:

1. Students will re-read the poem *Barbie Doll* and identify new vocabulary by circling the new vocabulary from the text.
2. All students will predict the meaning of the phrases from the text and circle each one.
3. Students will answer the incomplete statements with vocabulary from the poem.
4. The students will also determine the main idea of the poem by completing a graphic organizer provided by the teacher (See Appendix I).
5. Have a discussion about the poem, its meaning, and the main idea.
6. Have students write a reflection about the poem in their journals for homework.

II. Activity 3.17 Exploring Vocabulary – (See Appendix H)

Think about the Poem – *Barbie Doll*.

Which target words and phrases are new to you?

Circle them below and in the reading as well. Then read the poem again. Look at the context of each word and phrase. Can you guess the meaning?

Target Words		
miniature	Puberty	abundant
manual dexterity	Casket	consummation

Target Phrases		
to and fro	play coy	come on hearty
Wore out	fan belt	turned-up

III. Activity 3.18- Using vocabulary from context (Use the poem).

These sentences are about the poem. Complete them with the words and phrases in the boxes above.

1. Her good nature \_\_\_\_\_ like a \_\_\_\_\_.
2. She possessed strong arms, back, and a/an \_\_\_\_\_ sexual drive, and \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The girl child played with \_\_\_\_\_ stoves and irons.
4. She went \_\_\_\_\_ apologizing for everything.
5. In the \_\_\_\_\_ displayed on satin she lay.
6. Doesn't she look pretty? \_\_\_\_\_ at last.
7. She had been advised to \_\_\_\_\_, and exhorted to \_\_\_\_\_.
8. With the cosmetics painted on, she had a/an \_\_\_\_\_ putty nose.
9. During the magic of \_\_\_\_\_, she became worried about her appearance.

## Reading Unit

Unit 3

Time: 1 or 2 days

Level: 8<sup>th</sup> y 9<sup>th</sup>

Phase: Application

Topic: Poem

Standards #3 and #2: Reading & Written Communication

Objective: By the end of the class the student will be able to:

1. describe a young girl's attributes from the poem *Barbie Doll*
2. find evidence from the text to validate responses
3. discuss guide questions between peers

I. Procedure:

1. Orally describe the young girl's attributes from the poem.
2. Look for and find evidence from the poem which validates the young girl's attributes.
3. Students will answer and discuss their responses to the comprehension questions among their peers.

II. Activity 3.19 (After Reading)- Comprehension Questions.

Answer the following questions with a partner.

1. What is this young girl's fantasy? Is it other girls' fantasy as well? Explain.
2. Describe the young girl's attributes and features: How did this make her feel?
3. What did her friends recommend that she do? Find evidence in the poem to support your answer.
4. Why was she displayed on satin? What happened to her at the end of the poem? Why? Give specific details for your response.
5. What would you do if you were the girl's shoes? What would you tell your friends and loved ones?

## Reading Unit

Unit 3

Time: 1 or 2 days

Level: 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>

Phase: Exploration

Topic: Poster – *Do I dare disturb the Universe?*

Standard #3: Written  
Communication

Objective: By the end of the class the student will be able to:

1. write a description, in their notebook, of the poster on the board
2. interpret what the quote on the board means
3. design a poster that describes how the student feels about his/her universe
4. present posters and discuss to the rest of the class

### I. Procedure:

1. Students will write a description of a poster placed on the board in their notebooks (See Appendix J).
2. Each student will reflect and interpret what the quote on the board means.
3. Students will design a poster that describes how the student feels about their own universe.
4. All students may present their posters and discuss their work with their peers.

### II. Activity 3.20 (See Appendix J)

1. Look at the poster from the story which should be posted on the board with a quotation that reads: *Do I dare disturb the universe?* From T.S. Elliot poem *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*.
2. What do you think this question means? Explain.
3. Reflect on how you may disturb your own universe, and whether it would be a good idea. You may work with a partner for this task.

### III. Activity 3.21

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Design a poster that describes how you feel about your universe. You may use water color paint, colored pencils, or crayons for your drawing. Be as creative as you like.

Share your poster and describe it to your peers.

## Reading Unit

Unit 3

Time: 1 day

Level: 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>

Phase: Conceptualization

Topic: Defining Vocabulary

Standard#3: Reading  
Communication

Objective: By the end of the class the student will be able to:

1. read excerpt from *The Chocolate War*
2. select the correct vocabulary definition from the text
3. complete a multiple choice exercise
4. look for true or false statements by finding evidence from the story

I. Procedure:

1. Read an excerpt from the *Chocolate War* (See Appendix K).
2. Students will select the correct vocabulary definition by completing a multiple choice exercise (Activity 3.21).
3. Answer true or false statements and supporting evidence from the story (Activity 3.22).

## II. Activity 3.21 - Vocabulary Exercise

1. Read each sentence and try to identify the correct definition of the underlined

words by selecting the best answer.

1. He was shattered by the news he received from his brother.  
a. surprised                      b. destroyed                      c. poisoned
2. Jerry wanted to hear the secret the coach had murmured to the players.  
a. spoke quietly                      b. shared with                      c. enjoyed
3. A horrifying stillness had pervaded him as he felt panic taking over him.  
a. sickness                      b. shock                      c. immobility
4. He opened his eyes flutteringly trying to focus his vision on the moving object.  
a. quickly                      b. carefully                      c. carelessly
5. He knew he had massacred the new player.  
a. out run                      b. beaten up                      c. helped

## II Activity 3.22 ( After Reading)- Group work and Discussion

Read the following statements and write T – True or F – False. Find evidence in the reading to support your answer.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The young player whirled rapidly toward Goober, to receive his pass.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Jerry murmured quietly as he tried to get up.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. He had to be careful not to displace any of his bones or sinews (tendons).
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. His pain was consistent but sharp, but his knowledge showed ingenuity.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Jerry's movements overwhelmed him after his breath came back again.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. The player's body refused to go any further as it mutinied against movement.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. He was unwilling to abandon his weariness and lassitude, but he had to.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Jerry spit on the coach after he protested, then he vomited.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. The football coach was extremely considerate with Jerry.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Jerry was dozing off because he was sleepy and wanted to rest.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. The coach wanted to meet for practice at three o'clock the next day.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Jerry called himself a dreamer because he wanted to reach stardom.

## Reading Unit

Unit 3

Time: 1 or 2 days

Level: 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>

Phase: Application

Topic: Sharpening Negotiating Skills

Standards #3 and 2:  
Reading & Written  
Communication

Objective: By the end of the class the student will be able to:

1. choose vocabulary to complete statements
2. complete an independent exercise on worksheet
3. answer and discuss critical questions that address negotiating skills  
from a worksheet

I. Procedure:

1. Students will select given vocabulary to complete statements (Activity 3.23).
2. All students will work in pairs in order to complete an independent exercise that addresses the importance of negotiating skills (See Appendix M).
3. Discuss the importance of negotiating skills.

II. Activity 3.22 (After Reading)- Worksheet (independent from prior readings

See Appendix M).

1. How do you deal with conflicts? Is it easy or difficult for you?

III. Activity 3.23. Complete each statement by selecting the correct words from below.

peer pressure	positive	peers	negotiate
compromise	negative	confrontation	

1. Try to work out a \_\_\_\_\_ that pleases both of you.
2. Your classmates or your \_\_\_\_\_ can assist you with homework.
3. The \_\_\_\_\_ between two students caused a disturbance during lunch.
4. The students made \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ statements about Joe's behavior in school.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ can cause a person to become disrespectful.
6. Students should learn to \_\_\_\_\_ their problems rather than fight.

## Reading Unit

Unit 3

Time: 1 or 2 days

Level: 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup>

Phase: Application

Topic: Resolve Classroom Conflicts

Standard: # 2 & # 3-Reading and Written Communication

Objective: By the end of the class the student will be able to:

1. read different classroom situations
2. analyze each case and make suggestions
3. write multiple solutions for the problems presented
4. complete a worksheet given by the teacher
5. discuss each case describe the reasons why for his/her answer

### I. Procedure:

1. Students will read different classroom situations (See Appendix N).
2. Students will analyze each case and make suggestions.
3. All students will write various solutions for the problems.
4. Students will complete a worksheet provided by the teacher.
5. Students will discuss and describe the reasons for their answers.
6. This activity will be collected and used as a formative assessment tool.

### II. Activity 3.24.

1. Read each of the situations on the worksheet (See Appendix N).
2. What advice would you give students to help them solve their problems?
3. Think about possible solutions for every problem.
4. Describe and discuss the reasons for your answers.
5. Make sure you write your name on this worksheet since it will be collected.

## Conclusion

This thematic reading unit has been designed to promote English in the classroom by dealing mainly with bullying in our schools. Our students deal with a broad array of problems and issues on a daily basis, but very few teachers talk about how to go about learning and dealing with these difficult situations. Students need to be heard and listened to. If students feel they are supported, they will have the courage to speak and to learn, therefore reaching the goal of lowering LA in the classroom. Integrating this reading unit that deals with specific teenage issues allows our students to open up to teachers and adults who can assist them.

The main focus of the reading unit has been to build stronger values and create social awareness on the severe effects of bullying in schools as well as peer pressure, mockery, and hate. This unit will offer teachers multiple learning activities, teaching techniques and formative tasks that not only promote English in a low LA classroom, but will assure trust and hope for the students enabling them to learn in an effective teaching environment.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Conclusions**

Teaching ESL to adolescents in Puerto Rico continues to be a challenge at the secondary level. Teachers must cope with students' struggle for identity as they encounter a very difficult time in their lives, thus contributing to stressful factors that lead them to high levels of anxiety, avoidance, and fear. Other factors that contribute to additional stress are peer pressure, slurs, and sneers, which evidently create language anxiety and communication apprehension in the ESL classroom (Young, 1991). Therefore, the role of an effective ESL teacher should be to create a low anxiety and stress free classroom environment by integrating effective teaching materials and innovative techniques that will foster a motivational atmosphere. In Puerto Rico there is a problem of motivation since our students believe that learning English as a second language is not a major priority.

There are various ways to promote English in an informal classroom setting to make language appealing and not intimidating, thus lowering students' "affective filter" allowing the use of English to take place. If teachers ultimately want to promote English in their classrooms, they must consider activities that will effectively promote a proper language climate. An effective way to do this is by using efficient teaching strategies that are meaningful for students.

Considering the previous idea, teachers need different teaching options. The three teaching units created for this thesis offers students the opportunity to learn English in an entertaining way, and offer teachers insight to fresh new ways of integrating the skills that must be covered according to the DE's Curricular Framework for the English Program. All three units include activities that cover the four major language arts for the Secondary Level: Content Standard #1: Oral & Listening Skills; Content Standard #2: Written Communication Skills;

Content Standard #3: Reading Comprehension Skills; Content Standard #4: Literary Appreciation Skills (p.32-35).

The drama unit offers many activities that both entertain and teach students how to analyze a play because it evolves around a tragic love story, *Romeo and Juliet*, about two characters who are teenagers it appeals to adolescents. The unit includes creative dramatics teaching strategies such as improvisation, role-playing, and characterization exercises, all effective techniques that incorporate cooperative team work, and responsibility, thus motivating students to use English as their second language which is the unit's main purpose. The unit also makes them reflect and learn about moral values, and real-life situations, some of which they may have also experienced as adolescents.

The video game unit offers students another entertaining way to learn English by creating a non-threatening environment. The use of video games promotes effective listening skills as well as reading and speaking skills. Students are captivated by video games since they provide appealing graphics, sounds, colors, and educational opportunities for students to develop hand and eye coordination, and process information in an effective way allowing language anxiety to practically disappear (Gunter, 1998). Students review sounds, analyze words and phrases, identify sentence structure, all by following a sequence in a video game that provides them a score while answering correctly, offering them positive reinforcement.

Finally, using a thematic reading unit provides multiple reading selections and comprehension exercises that deal with the topic of bullying in schools, and offers students the chance they need to learn how other students deal with harmful issues. Students learn how to evaluate social awareness issues that affect their behavior. The unit includes two excerpts from *TIME* magazine that deal with two bullied and rebellious teenagers who sought revenge from

their peers eventually killing over thirteen people. These stories will allow students to identify possible solutions in order to avoid tragedies like these from reoccurring. They will also relate to these stories and may open up to their teachers for guidance. The unit also includes the poem *Barbie Doll* about a young girl's struggle to maintain an image because of the social pressures that girls have to live up to. This poem also allows students to analyze the difference between fantasy and reality. The unit ends with an excerpt from *The Chocolate War*, allowing students to reflect upon issues that boys also face, standing up to an image determined by society. All of the readings allow students' reflection and discussion through critical thinking activities motivating students to respond in English in a meaningful atmosphere. Students, therefore, will learn how to deal with real-life issues and connect to the readings as well.

As an ESL eighth and ninth grade teacher in Puerto Rico, I have shared significant activities with my students. Meaningful lessons that may also be fun are most beneficial for our students because they connect to relevant issues. Drama as well as video games are exceptional teaching strategies with overall positive participation from students. The feedback for the reading unit that addresses bullying in schools indicates that the unit has been received well among students, yet not so well among the school administration. Since this is a heated topic for all public schools, some directors may feel intimidated talking about the topic, or may prefer to avoid it altogether. In my case, I was told by my prior director I should exclude the subject of bullying in schools for the middle grade levels. Apparently, he was worried about the school's security reputation. Still, I believe this topic is extremely beneficial to students who deal with these harsh issues on a daily basis. Censoring a subject is not the proper way to deal with a serious problem.

Through my research, as well as my own experience, I have discovered that integrating meaningful learning tasks in the ESL classroom is an effective way for students to open up and speak English. Students appreciate meaningful activities because it is important for them to express themselves. If students are not given these opportunities they will probably miss out on the practice they need to eventually use the language.

I have presented multiple ways in which ESL teachers may use these strategies in their classroom in a simple and clear fashion. I have also included useful assessment techniques such as graphic organizers, conceptual maps, pyramid maps, journals, KWL charts, peer assessment sheets, rating scales, and comic strips that can be included in a portfolio system as a collection of students' work that shows growth over time. Teachers can integrate these effective tools as well as others to promote the use of English, yet the most powerful tool continues to be the facilitator because it is the teacher who will ultimately give the students the opportunity to discover the ability they have to speak English.

### **Pedagogical Implications**

As seen throughout this thesis, the creation of three teaching units using creative dramatics in the classroom, the use of video games, as well as a thematic reading unit offers teachers multiple options for teaching ESL in the language classroom. However, there continues to be a need for the development of additional teaching materials to effectively lower LA in Puerto Rican students.

Given the Puerto Rican socio-political situation on the island and after acknowledging that ESL students do feel anxiety learning an L2, the teaching units will contribute to lowering this anxiety in the ESL classroom. Therefore, money and time should be invested in training teachers to create teaching materials to lower LA successfully. Studies have shown that the use

of entertaining activities such as creative dramatics in the classroom (Maley, & Duff, 2001), and effective video games (Gunter, 1998; Presnky, 2001) will surely lower language anxiety. In addition, different kinds of video games available at the DE should be studied in detail to effectively incorporate them into all of the ESL classrooms on the island. Eventually, these activities will create an adequate learning environment and meet students' educational needs by making them more interested in ESL rather than resisting their second language.

Finally, creating a teaching portfolio rich with strategies and techniques like those presented in this thesis will strengthen teachers' ability to reach objectives that promote the use of English in the classroom through meaningful learning while lowering language anxiety. Therefore, these strategies strengthen the teaching of ESL in Puerto Rico allowing students' reflection, which is a significant process in examining and gaining new understanding when acquiring a new language.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

The three teaching units encourage active student participation and may reach most students, yet it is possible that students with limited physical abilities, or students who may have Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) may not be able to actively participate in these particular learning strategies therefore, it is recommended that additional activities be created in order to incorporate students with these limitations. Further recommendations should include the study of the work of other teachers who actually use these strategies and techniques in order to validate their effectiveness. Therefore, teachers should share successful techniques and strategies among themselves to enable more teachers to lower anxiety for more students.

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## Appendix A

### Adapted version of Foreign Language Anxiety Scale

(FLAS)<sup>1</sup>

#### Questionnaire #1

1. How do you feel in your English class? Why?
  - a. good
  - b. o.k.
  - c. bored
  - d. great
2. What is your major difficulty with the English Language?
  - a. understanding
  - b. expressing
  - c. thinking
  - d. don't know
3. What do you fear most when talking in English?
  - a. fear
  - b. anxiety
  - c. embarrassment
  - d. helplessness
4. What causes you most stress in English?
  - a. speaking
  - b. writing
  - c. reading
  - d. listening
5. Why would you like to learn English?
  - a. enjoyment
  - b. personal growth
  - c. obligation
  - d. good grades
6. What is your primary focus when speaking English?
  - a. pronunciation
  - b. understanding
  - c. surviving
  - d. communication

---

<sup>1</sup> Based on Horowitz (1983) version.

7. Which of the following activities causes you the most stress?
- a. English test
  - b. Quizzes
  - c. Dictation
  - d. oral presentations
  - e. writing assignments
8. How do you feel that Language Anxiety affects your performance in class?
- a. a little
  - b. a lot
  - c. don't know
  - d. don't care
9. When do you feel you have more anxiety in your English class?
- a. when you don't know anything
  - b. when you can't express yourself in English
  - c. when you can't think in English
  - d. when you're bored with the class
  - e. when you aren't willing to cooperate
10. Do you feel that you can't perform effectively in English because you do not :
- a. have ability to learn
  - b. want to lose your mind
  - c. have the courage to do a good job
  - d. care at all about English
11. How do you prefer to learn English, by:
- a. reading
  - b. writing
  - c. listening
  - d. speaking

## Appendix B

Results of the adapted FLAS instrument for the 2003-2004  
school year (N=86).

Statement	Yes	No
1. I never feel sure of myself when I am speaking English.	83%	17%
2. I worry about making mistakes in my English class.	96%	4%
3. I tremble or shake when I know that I'm going to be called on.	77%	23%
4. I am frightened when I don't understand what the teacher says.	92%	8%
5. I feel sick when I am in my English class.	23%	77%
6. I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with my English class.	38%	62%
7. I think that other students are better at English than I am.	88%	12%
8. I panic when I have to speak in my English class.	81%	19%
9. I worry about failing my English class.	56%	44%
10. I forget things that I know in English because am too nervous.	82%	12%

## Appendix C

### Department of Education of Puerto Rico

#### Curricular Framework for the

#### English Program Content Standards

2003

CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK				
COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO RICO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION				
SCOPE and SEQUENCE				
Grade Level 7-9				
Content Standard #1	Concepts	Skills	Attitudes and Values	Assessment
<b>Oral Communication</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The student listens to and uses language effectively to interact verbally / non-verbally in different academic and social environments, using different learning strategies and critical thinking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- communication</li> <li>- ideas</li> <li>- thoughts</li> <li>- thinking</li> <li>- oral language</li> <li>- expression</li> <li>- feelings</li> <li>- planning</li> <li>- details</li> <li>- sequence of events</li> <li>- main idea</li> <li>- questions</li> <li>- topic</li> <li>- free talk</li> </ul>	<p><b>Seventh Grade</b> Comprehends the main idea of a verbal discourse Asks and answers questions about at least two of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Time / distance</li> <li>- Past actions and events</li> <li>- Likes and dislikes</li> <li>- Cost of things</li> <li>- Health / weather</li> </ul> <p><b>Eight Grade</b> Comprehends the main idea of a verbal discourse Asks and answers questions about at least two of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Time / distance</li> <li>- Past actions and events</li> <li>- Likes and dislikes</li> <li>- Cost of things</li> <li>- Health / weather</li> </ul> <p><b>Ninth Grade</b> Comprehends the main idea of a verbal discourse Asks and answers questions about at least two of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Time / distance</li> <li>- Past actions and events</li> <li>- Likes and dislikes</li> <li>- Cost of things</li> <li>- Health / weather</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Desire to speak English</li> <li>- Awareness of the role of communication</li> <li>- Awareness of similarities and differences</li> <li>- Willingness to express ideas and feelings orally</li> <li>- Willingness to risk making errors</li> <li>- Willingness to speak English with the teacher, classmates and others in the community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Observation (rubric or checklist)</li> <li>- Recording of conversations and discussions (rubric or checklist)</li> <li>- Student / teacher interview (rubrics)</li> <li>- Retells stories (rubric)</li> <li>- Self – assessment (checklist)</li> <li>- Peer – assessment (checklist)</li> <li>- Oral presentation (rubrics, checklist)</li> <li>- Anecdotal records</li> </ul>

COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO RICO  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

## SCOPE and SEQUENCE

## Grade Level 7-9

Content Standard #2	Concepts	Skills	Attitudes and Values	Assessment
<b>Written Communication</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The student writes narrative, expository, persuasive and descriptive text demonstrating command of Standard English, using research and organizational strategies and the stages of the writing process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- reading - writing integration</li> <li>- thoughts</li> <li>- meaning</li> <li>- literal</li> <li>- imaginative abstract</li> <li>- figurative language</li> <li>- process</li> <li>- editing</li> <li>- revising</li> <li>- technology</li> <li>- rewriting</li> <li>- publishing</li> <li>- writing conventions</li> <li>- paragraph</li> <li>- topic sentence</li> <li>- Introductory paragraph</li> <li>- supporting paragraph</li> <li>- concluding paragraph</li> </ul>	<p><b>Seventh Grade</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Constructs a complete sentence using correct punctuation</li> <li>- Writes a simple descriptive paragraph about a picture or topic with a topic sentence, supporting details and a concluding sentence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Willingness to share and communicate ideas in writing</li> <li>- Desire to organize ideas so as to communicate clearly</li> <li>- Willingness to edit and rewrite to improve</li> <li>- Willingness to appreciate suggestions and comments from teachers and classmates about a piece of writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Comic Strips (checklist, rubric)</li> <li>- Writing Log</li> <li>- Journals</li> <li>- Compositions (rubric, checklist)</li> <li>- Short Stories (rubric, checklist)</li> <li>- Mapping or graphic organizers</li> <li>- Independent writing / conferences (journals)</li> <li>- Daily independent writing / Diary</li> <li>- Miscue analysis</li> </ul>
		<p><b>Eighth Grade</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Constructs a complete sentence using correct punctuation</li> <li>- Writes a 5 sentence paragraph about a picture or topic with a topic sentence, 3 supporting sentences, and concluding sentences</li> </ul>		
		<p><b>Ninth Grade</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Constructs a complete sentence using correct punctuation</li> <li>- Writes a composition about a given topic that includes an introductory paragraph, supporting paragraphs and a concluding paragraph</li> </ul>		

COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO RICO  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

## SCOPE and SEQUENCE

## Grade Level 7-9

Content Standard #3	Concepts	Skills	Attitudes and Values	Assessment
<b>Reading Comprehension</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The student demonstrates confidence, independence and flexibility in the strategic use of reading skills, critical thinking, and the conventions of language for reading a range of simple to complex texts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- reading</li> <li>- reading strategies</li> <li>- skimming</li> <li>- organizational structures</li> <li>- graphic features</li> <li>- word meaning (origin, derivations, analogies, idioms, affixes, etc.)</li> <li>- mood</li> <li>- semantics</li> <li>- main idea and supporting details</li> <li>- summarizing</li> <li>- inferences</li> <li>- prediction of outcomes</li> <li>- cause and effect relationship</li> <li>- fact and opinion</li> <li>- author's conclusion</li> <li>- sequence of events</li> <li>- facts that support a conclusion</li> <li>- glossary and dictionary as reference</li> </ul>	<b>Seventh Grade</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identifies details</li> <li>- Recalls sequence of events from a selection read</li> <li>- Identifies the main idea</li> <li>- Draws inferences</li> <li>- Predicts outcomes</li> <li>- Distinguishes between fact and opinion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Desire to read</li> <li>- Desire to express emotions and experiences</li> <li>- Willingness to identify with characters in the story and explain why</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reading Logs (checklist)</li> <li>- Individual recitations (rubric)</li> <li>- Comic Strips (checklist, rubric)</li> <li>- Graphic Organizers</li> <li>- Self assessment (checklist)</li> <li>- Teacher's observation (checklist)</li> </ul>
		<b>Eighth Grade</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identifies details</li> <li>- Recalls sequence of events</li> <li>- Identifies the main idea</li> <li>- Draws inferences</li> <li>- Predicts outcomes</li> <li>- Distinguishes between fact and opinion</li> <li>- Recognizes cause and effect relationship in text</li> </ul>		
		<b>Ninth Grade</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identifies facts that support an opinion</li> <li>- Recalls sequence of three events from a selection read</li> <li>- Identifies the main idea</li> <li>- Draws inferences</li> <li>- Predicts outcomes</li> <li>- Distinguishes between fact and opinion</li> </ul>		

COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO RICO  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

## SCOPE and SEQUENCE

Grade Level 7-9

Content Standard #4	Concepts	Skills	Attitudes and Values	Assessment
<b>Literary Appreciation</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The student uses the language arts to comprehend, interpret and criticize imaginative texts in every medium, drawing on personal experiences and knowledge to understand the text, recognizing the social, historical and cultural features of the text.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- meaning</li> <li>- imaginative</li> <li>- abstract</li> <li>- author's purpose</li> <li>- point of view</li> <li>- character traits</li> <li>- literary devices</li> <li>- problems</li> <li>- solutions</li> <li>- plot</li> <li>- compare and contrast</li> <li>- events</li> <li>- imagery</li> <li>- symbolism</li> </ul>	<p><b>Seventh Grade</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identifies the author's purpose</li> <li>- Differentiates between first and third person narration</li> </ul> <p><b>Eighth Grade</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identifies character traits from the dialogues in a given selection</li> <li>- Identifies literary devices such as imagery and symbolism</li> </ul> <p><b>Ninth Grade</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identifies the causes for a character's actions</li> <li>- Identifies the problem and the solution in the plot of a story</li> <li>- Compares and contrasts setting, characters, events and ideas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Willingness to analyze the story and support conclusions</li> <li>- Understand the challenge of living in a culturally diverse society</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reading inventories</li> <li>- Reader's response journals</li> <li>- Book talk (rubric)</li> <li>- Composition (rubric)</li> <li>- Writing Logs</li> <li>- Graphic Organizers</li> <li>- Story maps</li> </ul>

## Appendix D

### An Adapted Version of *Romeo & Juliet*

By: Craig Mason

Excerpt 1:

Scene 1 – Act 1

Romeo: “Benvolio is the day so young”.

Benvolio: “Why is Romeo so sad?”

Romeo: “I am not, not, not...”

Benvolio: “Not what, not in love?”

Romeo: “Not loved by the one I love.”

Mercutio: “Tell me in sadness, who is that you love?”

Romeo: I love a woman.”

Mercutio: “We know that.”

Romeo: “Her name is Rosaline.”

Mercutio: “Is she beautiful?”

Romeo: “The beautifulest.”

Benvolio: “Does she have a boyfriend?”

Romeo: “No, she is the singlest.”

Mercutio: “What is the problem?”

Romeo: “She says she will never marry anybody, not even (gulp) me.”

## Appendix E

### An Adapted Version of *Romeo & Juliet*

By: Craig Mason

Excerpt 2:

Scene 2 – Act 2

Juliet: “Ah me.”

Romeo: “She speaks! Oh speak again bright angel. For thou art as glorious unto this night being over my head as is a winged messenger from heaven.”

Juliet: “Oh Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo? Deny thy father and refuse thy name. Oh be some other name. Or if you won’t swear your love for me and I’ll no longer be a Capulet.”

Romeo: “Should I speak at this or listen for more?”

Juliet: “It is only your name that is my enemy. What is in a name? A rose by any other name would smell as sweet. Oh Romeo, be some other name.”

Romeo: “I will be Romeo no more!”

## Appendix F

### *The Columbine Tapes*

Excerpt from *TIME* Magazine

By: Nancy Gibbs and Timothy Roche

December 20, 1999

***The Columbine Tapes* – In five secret video they recorded before the massacre the killers reveal their hatred – and their lust for fame.**

THE NATURAL BORN KILLERS WAITED until the parents were asleep upstairs before heading down to the basement to put on their show. The first videotape is almost *unbearable* to watch. Dylan Klebold sits in the tan La-Z-Boy, chewing on a toothpick. Eric Harris adjusts his video camera a few feet away then *settles* into his chair with a bottle of Jack Daniels and a sawed-off shotgun in his lap. He calls it Arlene, after a favorite character in the gory Doom video games and books that he likes so much. He takes a small swig. The whiskey stings, but he tries to hide it, like a small child playing grownup. These videos, they predict, will be shown all around the world one day- once they have produced their masterpiece and everyone wants to know how, and why.

Above all, they want to be seen as originals. “Do not think we’re trying to copy anyone,” Harris warns, recalling the school shooting in Oregon and Kentucky. They had the ideal long ago, “before the first shooting every happened.” And their plan is better, “not like those f\_\_\_s in Kentucky with camouflage and .22’s. Those kids were only trying to be accepted by others.”

Harris and Klebold have an inventory of their ecumenical hatred: all “niggers, spics, jews, gays, and f\_\_\_ing whites,” the enemies who abused them and the friends who didn’t do

enough to defend them. But it will all be over soon. “I hope we kill 250 of you,” Klebold says. He thinks it will be the most “nerve-racking 15 minutes of my life, after the bombs are set and we’re waiting to charge through the school. Seconds will be like hours. I can’t wait. I’ll be shaking like a leaf.” “It’s going to be like f\_\_\_ing Doom.”

How easy it has been to fool everyone, as they staged their dress rehearsals, gathered their props – shotguns in their gym bags, the pipe bombs in the closet. Klebold recounts for the camera the time his parents walked in on him when he was trying on his black leather trench coat, with his sawed-off shotgun hidden underneath: “They didn’t even know it was there.” Once, Harris recalls, his mother saw him carrying a gym bag with a gun handle sticking out of the zipper. She assumed it was his BB gun. Every day Klebold and Harris went to school, sat in class, had lunch with their schoolmates, worked with their teachers, and *plotted* their slaughter. People fell for every lie. “I could convince that I’m going to climb Mount Everest, or I have a twin brother growing out of my back.” says Harris. “I can make you believe anything.” Even when it’s over, they promise, it will not be over. In memory and nightmare, they hope to live forever. “We’re going to kick-start a revolution,” Harris says - a revolution of the dispossessed. “We will drive them insane,” Harris promises.

Why, if their motive was *rage* at the athletes who taunted them, didn’t they take their guns and bombs to the locker room? Because retaliation against specific people was not the point. Because this may have been about celebrity as much as cruelty. “They wanted to be famous,” concludes FBI agent Mark Holstlaw. “And they are, they’re *infamous*.” They wanted movies made of their story, which they had carefully laced with “a lot of foreshadowing and dramatic irony,” as Harris put it. “These kids were part of the wrong crowd, getting into trouble, and *ditching* school” said Holstlaw.

## Appendix G

*Warning!*

Excerpt from *TIME* Magazine

By Terry McCarthy

March 19, 2001

**Warning: Andy Williams here. Unhappy kid, tired of being picked on, and ready to blow! Want to kill some people. Can anybody hear me? How did things get so bad?**

After Andy Williams, 15, was arrested for opening fire on his classmates in Santee, California, last week, his mother Linda Williams wept before a TV crew and said, “He’s lost. His future is gone.” No grownup in his life seems to have been looking out for that future before the shooting. Charles Andrew Williams had been a lost boy for some time – hopelessly adrift in a dysfunctional, *anonymous* suburban landscape, craving acceptance but too often meeting rejection instead.

His schoolmates bullied him. His mother rarely saw him. His father neglected him. Even his friends taunted him – and may well have goaded him into his shooting *rampage*. A Williams associate told *TIME* that more than two months before the attack, one of the boy’s closest friends *boasted* that Williams had taken one of his father’s guns and hidden it in bushes behind a park they frequented. The weekend before, when Williams began saying that he was going to “pull a Columbine” on Santana High, two of his friends called him a “pussy” and dared him to do it.

Others were sufficiently concerned to pat down his clothing in search of a gun on Monday morning before he entered the school. But nobody said anything to the school

authorities. At 9:20 a.m. on Monday, Williams took out a .22 revolver – secreted either in his trousers or in his yellow backpack – in the boy’s bathroom of the school and started firing, first into the room and then into an adjacent courtyard. Many students initially thought it was fireworks and moved toward the popping sounds until they saw others falling wounded to the ground.

San Diego County sheriff’s deputies, who responded rapidly to the first emergency calls, cornered Williams in the bathroom. He handed over his weapon, which had been *reloaded* and was cocked to fire again. Six minutes of shooting and 30 rounds left Bryan Zuckor, 14, and Randy Gordon, 17, fatally wounded and 13 others hit. It was the worst school shooting in the U.S. since the Columbine massacre two years ago.

As the town of Santee buried the two dead children last weekend, parents, teachers and counselors were struggling to understand what had turned the baby-faced Williams into a stoned, *smirking* gunman who had changed their life forever. Doctors said all 13 wounded victims were set to make full recoveries. But slowly Santee started to learn things about itself that it didn’t like to hear – that despite street names such as Peaceful Court and Carefree Drive, it was far from the idyllic, pacific suburb that many of the adults in Santee imagined. “There’s a lot of hate around here,” says Gentry Robler, 16, a sophomore at Santana High. He reels off the high school cliques: the gothics, the freaks, the dorks, the jocks, the Mexican gangsters, the white supremacists. “This is a school that was waiting for something like this to happen.” But who would have guessed that it would be the skinny, jug-eared, timid freshman wearing a silver necklace with the name MOUSE on it who would make this happen?

## Appendix H

Poem – *Barbie Doll*

By: Margie Piercy

### **Barbie doll**<sup>2</sup>

This girl child was born as usual  
and presented dolls that did pee-pee  
and *miniature* GE stoves and irons  
and we lipsticks the color of cherry candy.  
Then in the magic of *puberty*, a classmate said:  
You have a great big nose and fat legs.

She was healthy, tested intelligent,  
possessed strong arms and back,  
*abundant* sexual drive and manual *dexterity*.  
She went to and fro apologizing.  
Everyone saw a fat nose on thick legs.

She was advised to play coy,  
exhorted to come on hearty,  
exercise, diet, smile and wheedle.  
Her good nature wore out  
like a fan belt.  
So she cut off her nose and her legs  
and offered them up.

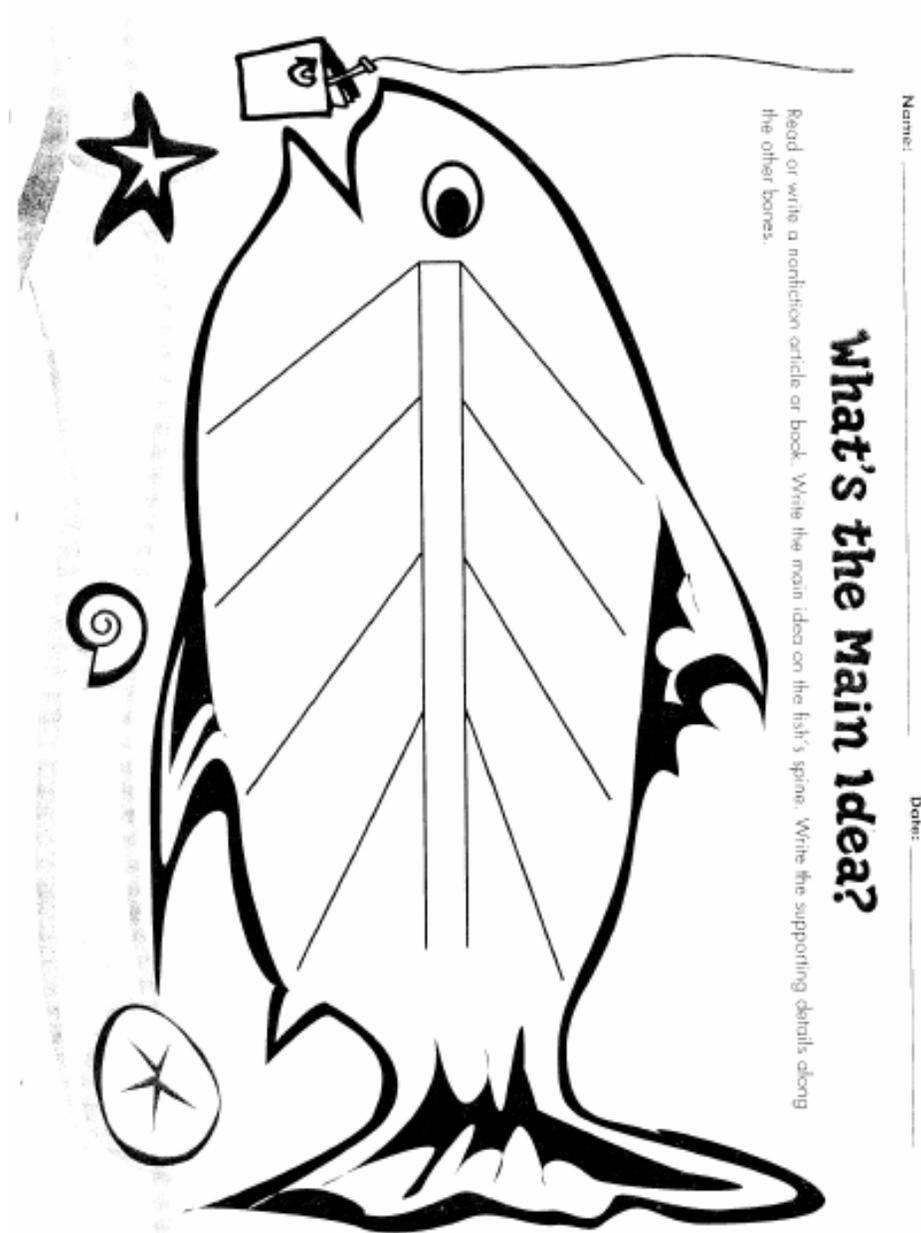
In the *casket* displayed on satin she lay  
with the undertaker's cosmetics painted on,  
a turned-up putty nose,  
dressed in a pink and white nightie.  
Doesn't she look pretty? everyone said.  
*consummation* at last.  
To every woman a happy ending.

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<sup>2</sup> Written in 1973 and published in *The Bedford introduction to literature* (1997). Boston: Bedford Books.

## Appendix I

### Reading Graphic Organizer: Identifying the main idea

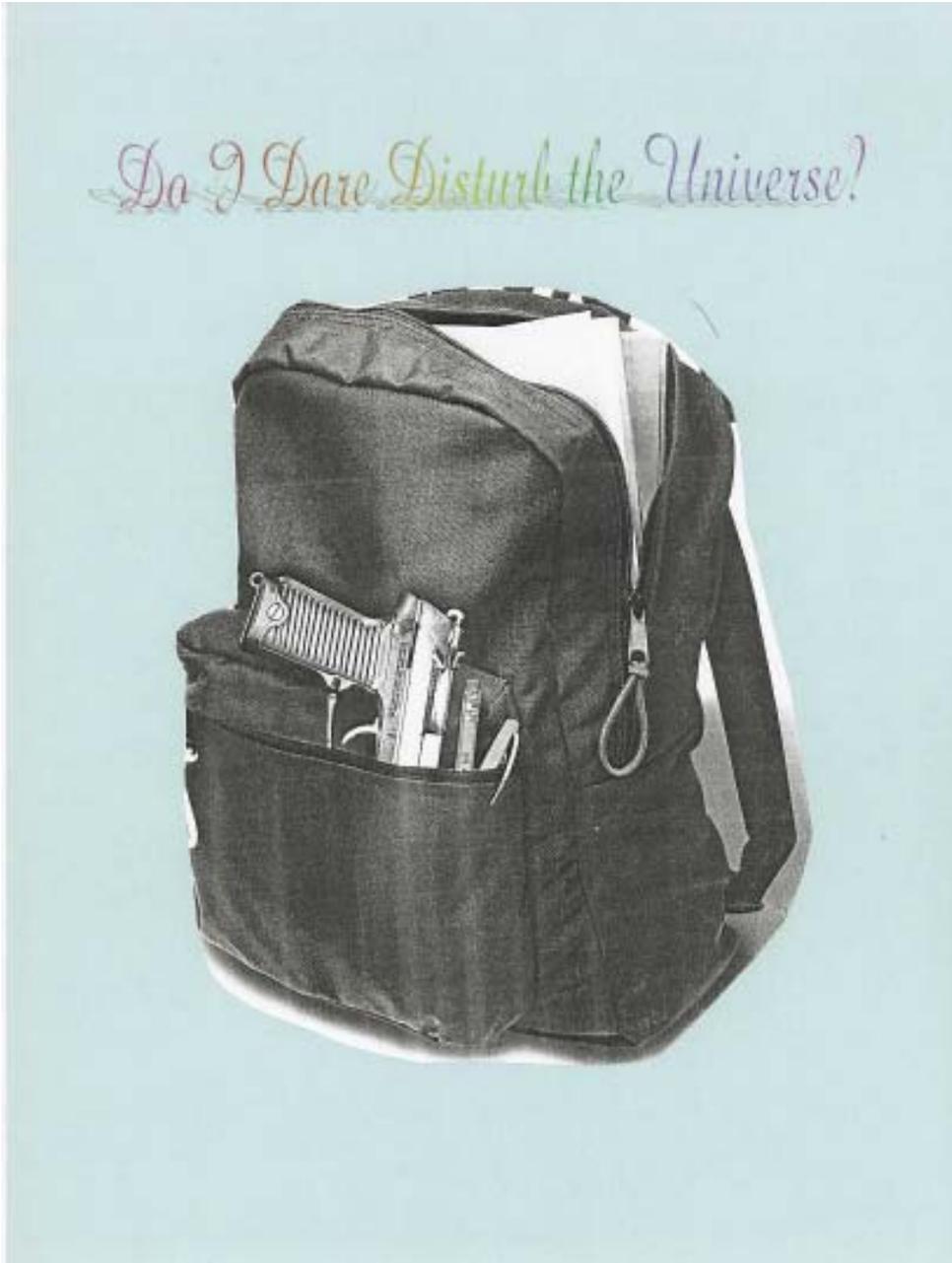


## Appendix J

### Poster: *Do I Dare Disturb the Universe?*

Verse from the Poem by T.S. Elliot

*The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*



## Appendix K

Excerpt from: *The Chocolate War*

By: Robert Cormier

1975

### THEY MURDERED HIM.

As he turned to take the ball, a dam burst against the side of his head and a hand grenade *shattered* his stomach. Engulfed by nausea, he pitched toward the grass. His mouth encountered gravel, and he spat frantically, afraid that some of his teeth had been knocked out. Rising to his feet, he saw the field through drifting gauze but held on until everything settled into place, like a lens focusing, making the world sharp again, with edges.

The second play called for a pass. Fading back, he picked up a decent block and cocked his arm, searching for a receiver — maybe the tall kid they called The Goober. Suddenly, he was caught from behind and *whirled* violently, a toy boat caught in a whirlpool. Landing on his knees, hugging the ball, he urged himself to ignore the pain that gripped his groin, knowing that it was important to betray no sign of distress, remembering The Goober's advice, "Coach is testing you, testing, and he's looking for guts."

I've got guts. Jerry *murmured*, getting up by degrees, careful not to displace any of his bones or *sinews*. A telephone rang in his ears. Hello, hello, I'm still here. When he moved his lips, he tasted the acid of dirt and grass and gravel. He was aware of the other players around him, helmeted and grotesque, creatures from an unknown world. He had never felt so lonely in his life, abandoned, defenseless.

On the third play, he was hit simultaneously by three of them: one, his knees; another, his stomach; a third, his head — the helmet no protection at all. His body seemed to telescope into itself but all the parts didn't fit, and he was stunned by the knowledge that pain isn't just one thing — it is *cunning* and various, sharp here and sickening there, burning here and clawing there. He clutched himself as he hit the ground. The ball squirted away. His breath went away, like the ball — a terrible stillness *pervaded* him — and then, at the onset of panic, his breath came back again. His lips sprayed wetness and he was grateful for the sweet cool air that filled his lungs. But when he tried to get up, his body *mutinied* against movement. He decided the hell with it. He'd go to sleep right here, right out on the fifty yard line, the hell with trying out for the team, screw everything, he was going to sleep, he didn't care anymore—

"Renault!"

Ridiculous, someone calling his name.

"Renault!"

The coach's voice scraped like sandpaper against his ears. He opened his eyes *flutteringly*. "I'm all right," he said to nobody in particular, or to his father maybe. Or the coach. He was unwilling to abandon this lovely *lassitude* but he had to, of course. He was sorry to leave the earth, and he was vaguely curious about how he was going to get up, with both legs smashed and his skull battered in. He was astonished to find himself on his feet, intact, bobbing like one of those toy *novelties* dangling from car windows, but erect.

"For Christ's sake," the coach *bellowed*, his voice juicy with contempt. A spurt of saliva hit Jerry's cheek.

Hey, coach, you spit on me, Jerry protested. Stop the spitting, coach. What he said aloud was, "I'm all right, coach," because he was a *coward* about stuff like that, thinking one thing and saying another, planning one thing and doing another — he had been Peter a thousand times and a thousand cocks had crowed in his lifetime.

"How tall are you, Renault?"

"Five nine," he *gasp*ed, still fighting for breath.

"Weight?"

"One forty-five," he said, looking the coach straight in the eye.

"Soaking wet, I'll bet," the coach said sourly. "What the hell you want to play football for? You need more meat on those bones. What the hell you trying to play quarterback for? You'd make a better end. Maybe."

The coach looked like an old gangster: broken nose, a scar on his cheek like a stitched shoestring. He needed a shave, his stubble like slivers of ice. He growled and swore and was merciless. But a helluva coach, they said. The coach stared at him now, the dark eyes probing, *pondering*. Jerry hung in there, trying not to sway, trying not to faint.

"All right," the coach said in disgust. "Show up tomorrow. Three o'clock sharp or you're through before you start."

Inhaling the sweet sharp apple air through his nostrils — he was afraid to open his mouth wide, wary of any movement that was not absolutely essential — he walked tentatively toward the sidelines, listening to the coach barking at the other guys. Suddenly, he loved that voice, "Show up tomorrow."

He trudged away from the field, blinking against the afternoon sun, toward the locker room at the gym. His knees were liquid and his body light as air, suddenly.

Know what? He asked himself, a game he played sometimes.

What?

I'm going to make the team.

Dreamer, dreamer.

Not a dream: it's the truth.

As Jerry took another deep breath, a pain appeared, distant, small — a radar signal of distress. Bleep, I'm here. Pain. His feet scuffled through crazy cornflake leaves. A strange happiness invaded him. He knew he'd been massacred by the oncoming players, capsized and dumped humiliatingly on the ground. But he'd survived — he'd gotten to his feet. "You'd make a better end." Was the coach thinking he might try him at end? Any position, as long as he made the team. The bleep grew larger, localized now, between his ribs on the right side. He thought of his mother and how drugged she was at the end, not recognizing anyone, neither Jerry nor his father. The exhilaration of the moment vanished and he sought it in vain, like seeking ecstasy's memory an instant after jacking off and encountering only shame and guilt.

Nausea began to spread through his stomach, warm and oozy and evil.

"Hey," he called weakly. To nobody. Nobody there to listen.

He managed to make it back to the school. By the time he had *sprawled* himself on the floor of the lavatory, his head hanging over the lip of the toilet bowl and the smell of disinfectant stinging his eyeballs, the nausea had passed and the bleep of pain had faded. Sweat moved like small moist bugs on his forehead.

And then, without warning, he vomited.

## Appendix L

Vocabulary from Excerpt on:

*The Chocolate War*

By: Robert Cormier

Glossing:

1. shattered – (vb) – broken or burst into pieces
2. whirled – (vb) to move or drive in a circle with force or speed.
3. murmured – (vb) Speak in low indistinct sound like a whisper.
4. sinew – (n) tendon; what holds muscles and bones together.
5. cunning – (adj) skillfull, dexterous; great ability.
6. pervaded – (vb) to be in all parts of something.
7. mutinied – (vb) refuse to obey authority, revolted.
8. flutteringly – (adv) to move quickly with irregular movements.
9. lassitude – (n) fatigue; weariness.
10. novelties – (plural noun) a new occurrence or experience.
11. bellowed – (vb) to emit the loud cry typical of a bull.
12. coward – (n) a person who lacks courage.
13. gasped – (vb) to struggle for breath with the mouth open.
14. pondering – ( vb) to consider something carefully.
15. sprawled - (vb) to sit or lie with legs spread out.

## Appendix M

### Sharpen Your Negotiating Skills

#### Independent After Reading Activity

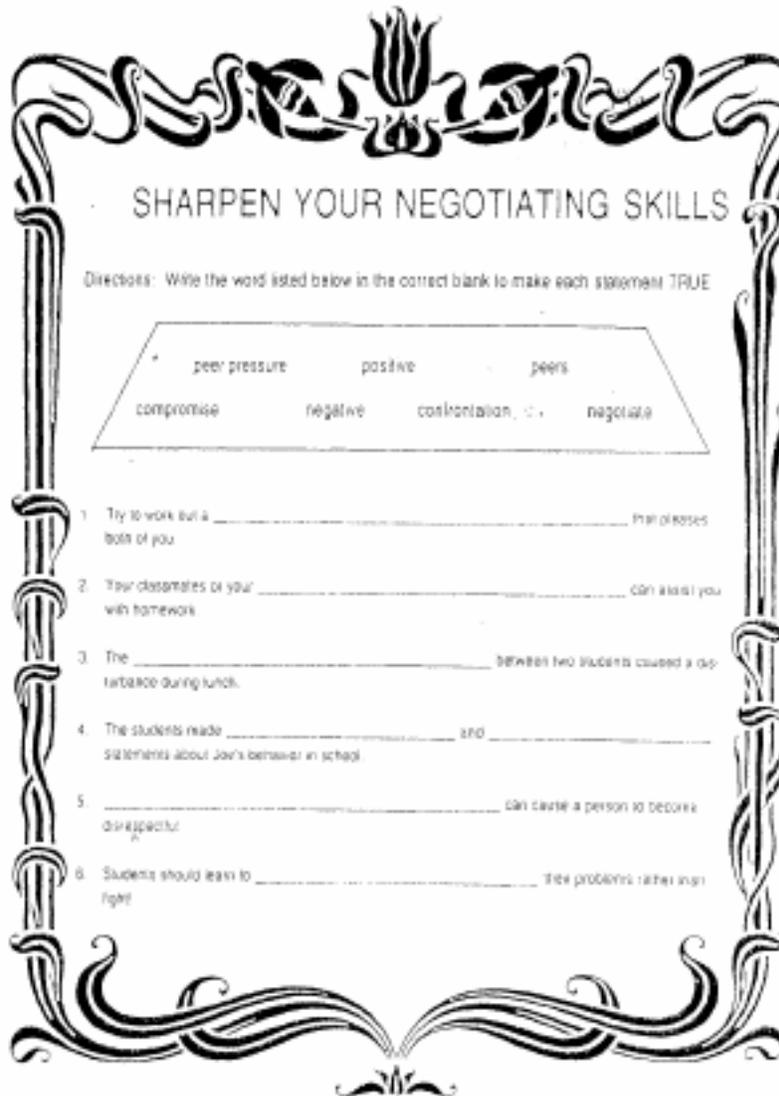
##### After Reading Activity

I. How do you deal with conflicts? Is it easy or difficult for you?

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II. Complete each statement by selecting the correct words from the box.



**SHARPEN YOUR NEGOTIATING SKILLS**

Directions: Write the word listed below in the correct blank to make each statement TRUE

peer pressure	positive	peers	
compromise	negative	confrontation	negotiate

1. Try to work out a \_\_\_\_\_ that pleases both of you.
2. Your classmates or your \_\_\_\_\_ can assist you with homework.
3. The \_\_\_\_\_ between two students caused a disturbance during lunch.
4. The students made \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ statements about John's behavior in school.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ can cause a person to become disrespectful.
6. Students should learn to \_\_\_\_\_ the problems rather than fight.

## Appendix N

### Solving Classroom Conflicts

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



## RESOLVE THOSE CLASSROOM CONFLICTS!

Read the situations below. What advice would you give these kids to help them solve their problems? Write your ideas on the lines below.

1. Roger, Hector and Jack are working on a class project together. They can't decide on a topic or how to divide up the work. What is one solution to this problem?

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2. Edson and Juan both want to take care of the class fish for the week. Edson starts to argue with Juan. Edson says he knows more about how to care for fish than Juan does. What is one solution to this problem?

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3. Elizabeth is upset because two girls in her class are calling her names. The class rules say that name-calling is not acceptable classroom behavior. What is one solution to this problem?

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4. In the school hallway, Sarah accuses Lisa of spreading a rumor about her. Lisa begins to explain but Sarah walks away. What is one solution to this problem?

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5. Dominique and Paul are in an afterschool club working on a mural when a bottle of paint is spilled. They start shouting and accusing each other of causing the spill. What is one solution to this problem?

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6. Josh pushes Denise as they are leaving school. He says she pushed him earlier in the day. What is one solution to this problem?

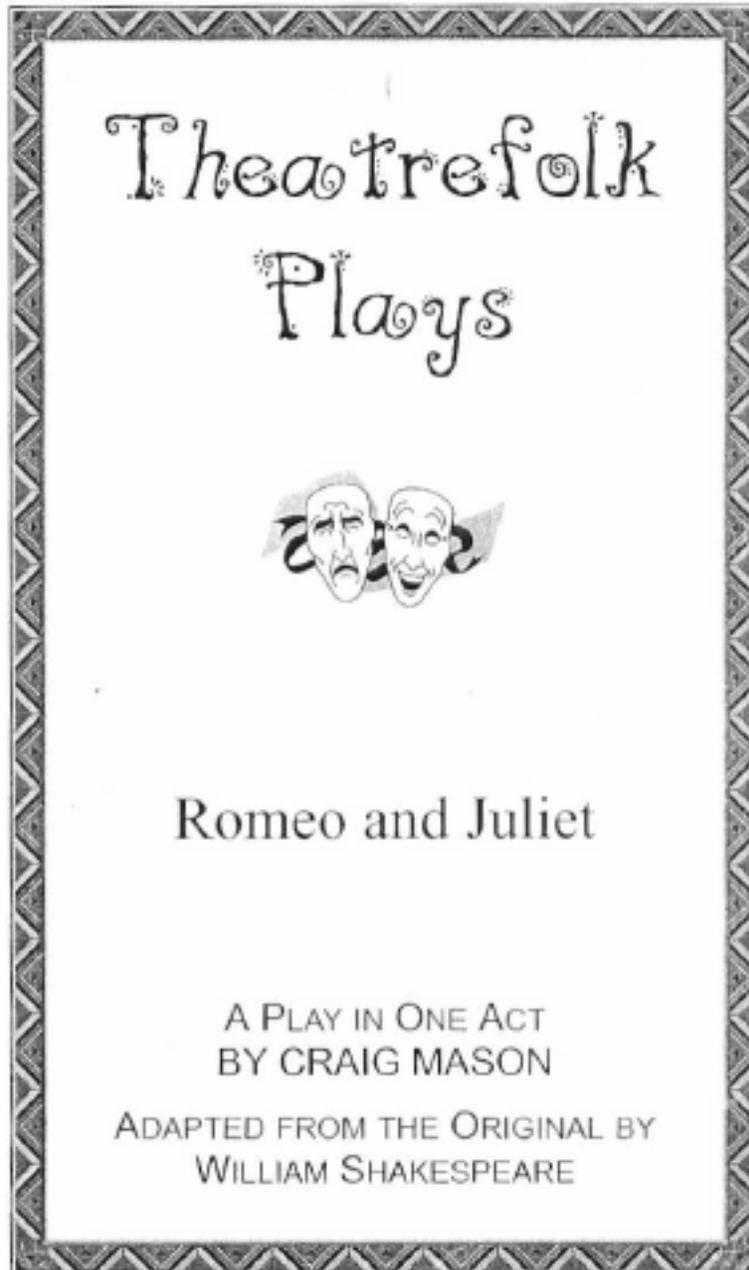
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**BONUS** How do you think kids should treat each other in school? Write your ideas on the back of this page.

**Appendix O**

Theater Folk Plays



*Ms. Gladys Vargas - English*