



## Unit Planning Template

Unit Designer: Kurt Wootton

Title: **Lost Postcards and Found Dreams**

Grade Level (s): 6-12

Discipline(s): ELA, Theater Arts

School: SmART Schools Institute, August 15-19, 2011

Time Frame: 2 ½ hours

<b>STAGE ONE: Identify Desired Results</b> What do we want students to know, understand, and be able to do?	
<p><b>Unit Overview</b>  <i>What will be studied and why?</i></p> <p><i>How does this study ask fundamental questions about the content or discipline(s) being studied?</i></p>	<p>“Finding the right words” is a phrase we use in our most profound moments of life: when we congratulate someone on an achievement, when we honor a person who has recently passed away, or when we are called upon to speak at a friends wedding. At times we do find the right words but at other times we struggle to express ourselves. In this workshop we’ll examine what it means to communicate the right words through performance and writing. We’ll also examine communication in general in our culture by reading a complex text by Franz Kafka and seeing how our ways of reaching out to each other can be lost in a world of confusion.</p>
<p><b>Enduring Understandings</b>  <i>What are the big ideas that give meaning and importance to the facts studied?</i></p> <p><i>What are the big understandings that reside at the heart of the study, that you want students to uncover and attempt to understand through this study?</i></p>	<p>Literacy is a subject area that is critical for student success in all disciplines, but we often fail to look at closely what literacy is and why it is important to be literate. This workshop will investigate the layers of communication and miscommunication through different mediums and examine how we use different symbol systems in the modern world to express ourselves. Although we communicate on a daily basis in a variety of ways, we are often unconscious and unreflective about how we do so. The workshop will uncover different ways of using words from the daily use of language “Finish your meal!” to the poetic and even surrealistic. We’ll also reveal ways that we obfuscate language accidentally and purposefully.</p> <p>To summarize:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Words carry power – whether intentionally or unintentionally</li> <li>• What we desire to express and what is actually expressed may be different</li> <li>• Communication is made up of layers and mediums that might get in the way of or might help to express ourselves clearly.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Essential Questions</b>  <i>What are the relevant, meaningful questions that will encourage deep exploration of ideas?</i></p> <p><i>What universal, compelling question(s) will focus the study and the final performance of student learning?</i></p>	<p><u>How do we discover the right words to express our feelings and ideas?</u>            How do we find words to express our regrets, our yearnings, our dreams, and our happiness?            What helps us to communicate more clearly and what confuses our ways of communicating?            How can we embrace the surrealistic and playful qualities of language?            What are the messages we wish we could send to the past?            What are the messages we hope to offer for the future?</p>

<p><b>Desired Outcomes for Student Learning/Standards</b></p> <p><i>What do I want students to know, understand, and be able to do?</i></p> <p><i>What skills or insights do I expect them to gain?</i></p> <p><i>How do these ideas align to state and/or national standards and/or graduation requirements? (Include all standards for all disciplines being assessed that align with desired outcomes)</i></p>	<p>I've chosen standards from the CCSS standards for reading and writing because they are critical for literacy development across all disciplines.</p> <p><b>Reading: Key Ideas and Details</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.</li> <li>2. Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.</li> <li>3. Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.</li> <li>4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful.</li> </ol> <p><b>Writing</b></p> <p>Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.</p> <p><b>Speaking and Listening</b></p> <p>The following standard parallels the process <i>Interpretation Circles</i> and can help participants by self-reflective in terms of how they are engaging with each other in dialogue.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.       <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.</li> <li>b. Follow rules for collegial discussions and decision-making, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.</li> <li>c. Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas.</li> <li>d. Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented.</li> </ol> </li> </ol> <p><b>Theater (from National Standards for Arts Education)</b></p> <p>In grades 9-12, students view and construct dramatic works as metaphorical visions of life that embrace connotative meanings, juxtaposition, ambiguity, and varied interpretations. (For this workshop we'll focus on the construction of a dramatic work).</p>
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## STAGE TWO: Determine Acceptable Evidence

How will we know if students have achieved the desired outcomes and met the standards?

What will we accept as evidence of student understanding and proficiency?

### Assessment

*How will I know if students have achieved the desired outcomes and met the standards?*

*What will I accept as evidence of student understanding and proficiency? How will I communicate this to students?*

*How will I evaluate student evidence of learning the desired outcomes?*

*How will I offer students the opportunity to expand on and apply what they've learned?*

*How will students have an opportunity for self-evaluation and/or revision?*

Although there will be several informal assessments as part of the process (textual discussions, theater activities, and free writing) the formal assessments will take the form of:

1. Several narrative postcards of "real and imagined" experiences.
2. Interpretive written responses exploring possible interpretations of the Kafka story
3. A culminating performance communicating profound meanings and varied interpretations featuring all workshop participants.

### STAGE THREE: Plan Learning Experiences and Instruction

What teaching and learning experiences will equip students to demonstrate the targeted understandings?

#### Develop the Instructional Plan

*What is the scope and sequence of activities that lead to student success on the assessment(s) and academic rigor?*

*Do activities require that students ask deep questions about their learning?*

*Are there opportunities for students to develop language and conceptual understandings related to content?*

*Are there opportunities for meaning-making and personal reflection on the part of students?*

*Are students encouraged to revise and produce quality work?*

*Do the activities provide multiple entry-points and accommodate for different learning styles?*

*Is the teacher spending her time coaching, conferencing, leading, participating, and sharing responsibility for learning with the students?*

- 1. Building Community and “Entering” the Concept.** At the beginning of the workshop we’ll explore the “lived worlds” (Maxine Greene) of the participants as it relates to the concept of messages and communication. The goal of the opening will be for participants to feel comfortable expressing themselves verbally with each other since later we will move into more rigorous forms of communication in terms of real and imagined narratives that relate directly to the lives of the participants.
- 2. Deep Reading of Text.** We’ll read the short story by Franz Kafka “The Imperial Message” repeatedly in a variety of ways emphasizing tools that can be useful to help students reach an understanding of complex texts. These tools will address the three key areas of reading: fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. By participating in a variety of reading approaches we will develop multiple interpretations of the text (see the activity [Interpretation Circles](#).) We’ll particularly focus on what we don’t understand about the text and how Kafka purposefully creates spaces in his work for our interpretations as readers.
- 3. Lost Postcards.** We’ll write a variety of our own narratives, real and imagined, by writing postcards to the past and to the future. These postcards will be our dreams of what might have been or what might be in the future. Through the medium of postcards we’ll express our regrets, our yearnings, our dreams, and our happiness. Prior to the Lost Postcard writing we’ll generate our ideas with four different types of brainstorming through different visual and textual mediums in order to create “thick air” (Rick Benjamin).
- 4. Metaphorical Visions of Life.** Using all the materials the participants create during the workshop we’ll create a collaborative performance that embraces meanings, juxtaposition, ambiguity, and varied interpretations. The performance, *Lost Postcards and Found Dreams* will take the form of a collage of words, phrases, and narratives fully expressing the surrealistic playfulness as well as the profound meanings that evolved during the session.

<p><b>Identify Materials and Resources</b></p> <p><i>What materials and resources—including student handouts, books, periodicals, media, software, URLs—are required to implement this unit?</i></p> <p><i>Are the materials and resources sufficient for exploring the topic and directly related to the essential question?</i></p>	<p>This workshop is purposefully crafted to use as few materials as possible in order to show participants how they might create a full-scale performance with only the “lived worlds” of the participants in the classroom.</p> <p>We’ll need only:</p> <p>pens, paper in the form of postcards, and the story “An Imperial Message”</p>
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**STAGE FOUR: ALIGNMENT and REFLECTION**

Do the various pieces of my Unit Plan align with and support each other?  
Upon completion of my unit: How did it go? What might I do differently next time to improve the unit and my practice?

<p><b>Implementation Alignment and Reflection</b></p> <p><i>How do the instructional activities support the achievement of the desired outcomes?</i></p> <p><i>How do the assessment methods demonstrate achievement of the desired outcomes?</i></p> <p><b>AFTER THE UNIT IS COMPLETE:</b></p> <p><i>What worked?</i></p> <p><i>What didn’t work?</i></p> <p><i>What would another teacher need to know in order to enact this curriculum?</i></p>	<p><b>Instructional Methods and Outcomes.</b> The workshop is organized into three clear stages paralleling the standards: reading, writing, and performance. Each stage will result in a concrete product that will meet nearly all sub-headings of each standard. The one standard that will be not be fully realized is the writing standard: developing a narrative. Given the complexity of narrative development expressed in the standard it will be impossible to write a narrative of those dimensions during the workshop. Teachers, though, will have a window into how the narrative might emerge from a rich artistic and literacy process in the classroom and how they might develop their own narrative with students given the semester</p> <p><b>Assessment methods.</b> Assessment for this workshop will be through informal conversations comparing our work to the vocabulary of the standards. For a more in-depth assessment (for instance using rubrics or participating in a critical conversation about our work) we would need the time for conversations about our work as well as time to go back and revise which can be accomplished with more time in the classroom.</p>
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