**“A Closer Look at Mother to Son”**

**Module Description**

This module has been written with the intent of implementation mid school year.  This informational module has been designed with four purposes in mind:

1. Deepen the students’ ability to analyze meanings of metaphors in poetry.
2. Develop a better understanding of how an author develops a theme through word choice.
3. Allow students to demonstrate their learning through an informational essay.
4. Address ELA grade level specific standards.

During this module, students will focus on RL5.2, determining the theme of a poem using details in the text, including how characters respond to challenges and how the narrator reflects upon a topic. It should be noted that prior to this module, students will have had several instructional opportunities to learn about theme.  Reference will be made to this prior instruction.  In addition, RL5.4 will be taught by reading informational text about metaphors and actively participating in the close reading of Langston Hughes’ poem *Mother to Son*, focusing on the use of metaphors in this poem*.*  Both standards will be intentionally taught, discussed and practiced in this module.  Additional lessons will follow this module to allow students to continue to practice and deepen their understanding of theme and figurative language.  A post-assessment will be given after this additional instruction.

During this module, students should have available a wide variety of poems and poetry anthologies for self-selected reading times.

After note-taking and conversing with peers, students will write an informational essay discussing the author’s use of metaphors as it relates to the comprehension of the theme of this poem.  The teaching task and rubrics will be reviewed daily to set a context/purpose for the day’s instruction.  Scoring suggestions are offered in Section 3 of this plan and could easily be translated into rubrics for formative assessment and/or grading purposes.

**Suggestions:**

If Language Arts is taught within a block schedule, the Clusters of Preparing for the Task, Reading Process and Transitioning to Writing could be taught during 5 periods of the Reading Block.  The Writing Process Cluster could be taught in 4 periods of the Writing Block.

**Considerations about Text Complexity:**

Metaphors Text – (Text was adapted by consolidating information from the following sources):

* http://library.thinkquest.org/CR0210124/figlandef.html and
* http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/687/05/
  + *Lexile Level = 990L, 4th-5th grade band, text structure and language demands makes this a less complex text (qualitative feature)*

Langston Hughes’ poem *Mother to Son*

* + *Lexile Level = 790, 4th-5th grade band, figurative language demands increase complexity level*

Teaching Task

*Task Template UE9 - Informational or Explanatory*

What is the theme of the poem Mother to Son? After reading Mother to Son (and an informational text on metaphors), write a/n essay for our class literary magazine in which you discuss how Langston Hughes’ use of metaphors contributes to an understanding of the theme of this poem. Give several example/s fromthe poem to support your discussion.

**Background for Students**

In this unit of study, you will closely read Langston Hughes’ poem, Mother to Son.   You will focus on his use of metaphors and analyze how it contributes to your understanding of the poem’s theme.  You will take notes and have plenty of opportunities to discuss the topic with your classmates.  You will demonstrate your understanding in an informational essay in which you discuss Hugh’s use of metaphors and how it contributes to your comprehension of the poem’s theme.

**Extension**

If additional time is needed on instruction and/or practice with metaphors, students could analyze metaphors in popular music.  Below are some possible teacher-created powerpoints which could be utilized:

* http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jN104uji--Y  - metaphors in pop music
* http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G1c6zF9aJxs – metaphors and similes in current music
* http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lqnwNyvY3zk – metaphors and similes in current music

Students could rewrite the poem into a Reader’s Theater version to dramatize the theme of the poem.  Students would be encouraged to add dialogue between the mother and the son.  They could then act out the new version.

If desired, students could use a story or video creator software to develop a play around the poem.  Students could create the characters with animation and sound.

In addition, more advanced learners could use the internet to research other poems with similar themes.  A comparison/contrast could be made about how the different authors developed the same theme.  A focus on author’s word choice and the use of figurative language could be addressed.