Brave Voices through Time and Space: Poetry Café for Young People

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Abstract:

This unit will provide students with tools to appreciate and critique African American poets and their distinctive voices that use figurative language, sound devices and reflect upon some collective experiences. This unit is designed to demystify poetry as a difficult genre. This unit is designed for middle school teachers (grades 6th -8th). It will cut across the curriculum by incorporating music, art, social studies, reading and writing. It will provide students with an opportunity to read, write, speak, and think about poetry; to research, write biographies and practice criticism of African American poetry; and understand the role voice has in presenting real youth issues. The unit will culminate in a Poetry Café performance that will allow students to show-case their own poems; dramatically recite traditional and contemporary poems; and create multi-media presentations of poetic voices and spoken word performances. Through providing an opportunity for students to talk about, respond, and read out loud African American poetry, students should better understand the pleasures and nuances found in works of African American poets.