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| Unit Title | A Moment of Connection |
| Unit Length | Five class periods |
| Grade Level(s)/Subject(s) | 12th and 11th grade English |
| Unit Overview | <p>One of the reasons that I was inspired to use “a moment of connection” as my theme and topic is because I wanted us to explore <i>that moment</i> of connection. Everyone has a favorite: A book, a movie, a show. Whether we feel <i>that moment</i> in literature, journalism or a film—or any other platform—there is a moment where we feel nearly instantly connected to the life of another—a life of what sometimes is a total stranger. This person could be a stranger to our own culture, or values, or geography—yet we feel this instant connection emerge, and that sort of blooms into something of its own. Perhaps it blooms into inspiration. Impact. Innovation. Whatever becomes of it, I am fascinated by the metacognition involved in attempting to identify <i>why</i>. <i>Why this moment?</i> Where—or what—is that moment of connection that makes us feel something that instantly connects us to engage with material at a higher level?</p> <p>The essential question that I want my students to explore in great depth, is, <i>How can underreported stories inspire students to reflect on their own lives and histories, cultivate curiosity, and evaluate how their lives connect to the lives of others?</i></p> <p>In this unit, students do this by following gradual release (<i>I do, We do, You do</i>), so that students have a firm grasp of the material before they have to complete the culminating task, which is a photojournalism essay.</p> <p>Students will practice critical thinking and analysis skills as they evaluate several journalistic texts. They will note trends in what most draws them to a story, they will work with their classmates to compare and contrast moments of connection, and then they will evaluate skills used by authors to facilitate moments of connection. In the end, they will create a photojournalism essay that captures an issue or story they feel very connected to and that they compose using strategies that they hope will connect with a broader audience.</p> |

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| Objectives & Outcomes | <p>Students will be able to...(SWBAT):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Annotate and use metacognitive markers to find the moment of connection in their article. 2. Evaluate the author's choice in establishing and achieving the purpose. 3. Create a photojournalist essay with 10 photos that they capture of their local community in order to build connections with those outside of their community. |
| Standards | <p><u>Florida's B.E.S.T (Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELA.12.R.2.3: Evaluate an author's choices in establishing and achieving purpose(s). <p><u>College Board AP English Language and Composition:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RHS-1 Individuals write within a particular situation and make strategic writing choices based on that situation. • RHS-1.C The purpose of a text is what the writer hopes to accomplish with it. Writers may have more than one purpose in a text. • RHS-1.G To achieve a purpose, writers make choices in an attempt to relate to an intended audience's emotions and values. |
| Unit Resources | <p><u>Pulitzer Center-supported news articles:</u></p> <p><u>"Reconciliation in Cyprus Through Religious Peacebuilding" by Elene Chkhaidze for publication on the Pulitzer Center website</u></p> <p><u>Afghanistan in a New Light: Windows into Life by Rodrigo Abd for Associated Press</u></p> <p><u>"The Black Box" for Arijit Sen and Derêka K. Bennett for The Dallas Morning News</u></p> <p><u>"Suing the World To Save It. Children Pioneer a Right to a Secure Future." by Stephanie Hanes for The Christian Science Monitor</u></p> <p><u>"Cyprus: Bridging the Divide Through Interreligious Dialogue" by Elene Chkhaidze for publication on the Pulitzer Center website</u></p> <p><u>https://report.pulitzercenter.org/annual-reports/2024-year-in-photos</u></p> <p><u>Teaching Materials:</u></p> <p><u>Day 1 powerpoint introducing the Pulitzer Center mission and fellowship</u></p> |

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| | <p>Annotation example for the article "Cyprus: Bridging the Divide Through Interreligious Dialogue" by Elene Chkhaidze [.pdf][.docx]</p> <p>Text to self reflection worksheet [.pdf][.docx]</p> <p>Stations worksheet with four articles already outlined, and two open articles for the educator to choose. [.pdf][.docx]</p> <p>Photojournalism project description [.pdf][.docx]</p> <p>Photojournalism Project rubric.</p> |
| Performance Task(s) | <p>As their summative assessment, students create a photojournalistic experience with 10 photos that visualize moments of connection to their local community. Some prompt questions that students can consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are some positives in Hardee county? • Where are moments of connection able to be made? How might others connect to these moments? • What makes the USA home to you? <p>Students will use all five senses to help demonstrate their connections to their own communities and to evoke feelings in the reader/viewers. Students will create a caption for each picture that they display.</p> <p><i>Option: Students will write an artist statement introducing their project and outlining what they hope their audience will learn/consider/feel/question as they review the images.</i></p> <p>Goal: This is about the AUDIENCE connecting with what students are connecting with—the photos they capture and the captions they write. (ex: If basketball is something the student really connects with, how can the student compose a photo that would connect to an audience outside of their community to basketball about why is basketball important to them?)</p> <p>Their goal is to appeal to the storytelling aspect of journalism and tell a story through the photos they display.</p> |
| Assessment/Evaluation | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Formative task: Students will fill out a worksheet while completing the stations activity capturing details and connections for all of the articles they will read and analyze. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Stations worksheet with four articles already outlined, and two open articles for the educator to choose. [.pdf][.docx] |

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| | <div><div>2. Formative task: Students write 500 words that describe a text-to-self connection and cite evidence from the news article they analyzed.<div>a. Task description [.pdf][.docx]</div></div><div>3. Summative task: Photojournalism: Students compose 10 photos that demonstrate their local community with an intent for a broad audience to connect with the story presented in the photo project on a global scale.<div>a. Project description [.pdf][.docx]</div><div>b. Project rubric.</div></div></div> |
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Daily Lesson Plans

Day 1-2

| Lesson Objective(s) or Essential Question(s) |
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| <p>Essential Question: How can underreported stories inspire students to reflect on their own lives and histories, cultivate curiosity, and evaluate how their lives connect to the lives of others?</p> <p>Objective: You will be able to use metacognitive devices when you read an article to invoke higher level critical thinking and analysis skills.</p> |
| Focus text(s) / resource(s) for today's lesson |
| <p>Turkey Cyprus Article: “Cyprus: Bridging the Divide Through Interreligious Dialogue” by Elene Chkhaidze for publication on the Pulitzer Center website</p> |
| Lesson Materials |
| <p>Day 1 powerpoint introducing the Pulitzer Center mission and fellowship Annotation example for the article “Cyprus: Bridging the Divide Through Interreligious Dialogue” by Elene Chkhaidze [.pdf][.docx]</p> |
| Lesson / Activities |
| <p>Bellwork: Brain dump writing: Are we able to feel connected to someone we don't know or have not met? <i>Brain dumps are normally three minutes in length. I play a timer for three minutes and the students write and don't stop writing until the timer goes off.</i></p> <p>Cognitive Engagement:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Invite a few students to volunteer their responses to the bellwork (ex: Yes, through books/celebrities/tik tok/social media/even fictional characters, etc.) 2. Next, pivot the conversation to the following question: “Can you feel connected to someone who has a shared history with you/your family/your heritage even if you do not know them individually? What if you do not have a shared history of the same location? Discuss.” 3. Next, introduce the mission of the Pulitzer Center, the teaching fellowship, and how this project was developed as part of the fellowship. 4. Introduce students to the anchor text, “Cyprus: Bridging the Divide Through Interreligious Dialogue” by Elene Chkhaidze— about Turkey and Cyprus and my own personal connections to the article. (This could be done with any article the teacher identifies from the Pulitzer Center website.) |

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5. Read and annotate the article. I will show them where I connected by highlighting my moment of connection in pink.
 6. Discuss how the main ideas from the text connect to our world, our society and perhaps our own lives (re-establishing those *text to self*, *text to world* connections.)
 7. Students will then be introduced to their assignment where they will have to pick an article from the Pulitzer Center website and use it as a source of connection - and by extension - inspiration for themselves, their lives and introspection.

Day 3

| Lesson Objective(s) or Essential Question(s) |
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| Objective: You will be able to explore <i>how</i> to tell stories that help us really get to know someone. |
| Focus text(s) / resource(s) for today's lesson |
| <p>Reporting for students to explore, such as the following:</p> <p>“Reconciliation in Cyprus Through Religious Peacebuilding” by Elene Chkhaidze for publication on the Pulitzer Center website</p> <p>Afghanistan in a New Light: Windows into Life by Rodrigo Abd for Associated Press</p> <p>“The Black Box” for Arijit Sen and Derêka K. Bennett for The Dallas Morning News</p> <p>“Suing the World To Save It. Children Pioneer a Right to a Secure Future.” by Stephanie Hanes for The Christian Science Monitor</p> <p>Two additional articles. The following resource could be useful to identify photos with strong visuals: https://report.pulitzercenter.org/annual-reports/2024-year-in-photos</p> |
| Lesson Materials |
| <p>Stations worksheet with four articles already outlined, and two open articles for the educator to choose. [.pdf][.docx]</p> <p>Six texts that students will explore (see examples above)</p> |
| Lesson / Activities |
| <p>Bellwork: Students will write on a Padlet link answering the following question, ‘How would you describe your personality to someone who has never met you? What are different elements of your personality that a person would need to know to understand ‘the real you?’</p> <p>Introduce the lesson objective: You will be able to explore how to tell stories that help us really get to know someone.</p> <p>Cognitive Engagement:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students will ‘turn and talk’ sharing out their response to the bellwork. 2. Invite a few students to share who they are - what makes them, them. 3. Write their responses on the board with the main topics of their response (ex: Personality,, family, culture, place, country, heritage, etc.) 4. Use the following questions to engage students in a discussion about the bellwork: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What makes up your personality? Your interests? Is it comfort? Familiarity? b. What about when families migrate? Are you still who you once were despite the geographic location? Do you change depending on the region? 5. As a class we will create our definition of ‘personality.’ |

6. Students will then discuss the bellwork prompt and predict: How have challenges outside of your control influenced your personality and purpose? Predict: As we look at a few reporting projects from the Pulitzer Center, evaluate what moments you are connecting to AND where you see evidence of the people featured in these articles impacted by systemic issues.
7. Students will work in stations. As a group they will read news stories from the Pulitzer Center website. There will be six Pulitzer articles on a range of topics (environment, AI, etc.) Students will annotate the articles as they read. At the bottom of their worksheet, students will document the moment(s) they felt most connected to the article and WHY THOSE PARTICULAR MOMENTS were their 'moments of connection.' What drew them in? What are the moments that resonate in a COMPLETELY RANDOM article—why are they documenting their stories? Students will have the opportunity to think about and address the questions: *Did you connect to the situation the person was in? Their personality or emotions? How was the person in this article impacted by a systemic global issue? How does that issue connect to you and your life? Why do you think the journalist who reported this story selected this topic, and why do you think the people featured in this story spoke to the journalist and told their stories?*
8. Students will discuss their connections to each article with their group before volunteers share out loud with the rest of the class.
9. **Exit Ticket:** To what degree did you feel connected to the article you read? What techniques did the journalist use to connect this story to you and your story?

Day 4

| Lesson Objective(s) or Essential Question(s) |
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| Essential Question: How can underreported stories inspire students to reflect on their own lives and histories, cultivate curiosity, and evaluate how their lives connect to the lives of others? |
| Focus text(s) / resource(s) for today's lesson |
| Students will be searching for THEIR OWN article. They will pick from the Pulitzer Center website . |
| Lesson Materials |
| Text to self reflection worksheet - this will have their text-to-self reflection prompt. Students will include 3-5 details from the article that they related to in their reflection. [.pdf][.docx] |
| Lesson / Activities |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Students will be searching for an article on the Pulitzer Center website.</u> The criteria is that they will be browsing for an article that connects with their personality/family/home/family history/culture. It can be an article they can relate to and/or relates to who they are as a person. Students will have time to browse today. Once they find their article, they will do the same thing they did with the articles from the day prior in annotating, using metacognitive markers and ultimately finding that moment of connection that they have with the article. <i>OPTION: Students can choose to find an article that completely does not relate to their family/home/culture/geography, however they still felt such a strong moment of connection to the article itself.</i> 2. Students will continue working on their article - annotating the article. Students will have time to annotate their articles and write a text-to-self connection paragraph. |

Day 5-6

| Lesson Objective(s) or Essential Question(s) |
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| <p>Objective: You will be able to notice the pattern in the thread of connections with all the articles you read in order to evaluate different ways that you personally connect with others' stories and what elements in storytelling can effectively connect a reader to the subject(s) of the story.</p> <p>Essential Question: How can underreported stories inspire students to reflect on their own lives and histories, cultivate curiosity, and evaluate how their lives connect to the lives of others?</p> |
| Focus text(s) / resource(s) for today's lesson |
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| Lesson Materials |
| <p>Project description [.pdf][.docx] Project rubric.</p> |
| Lesson / Activities |
| <p>Bellwork: Examine the thread of connections that you have made thus far in each of the articles you have read. What was the connection? Was it a region? Nature? Landscape? A social issue? A person? A symbol? What moment did you connect with the most and why?</p> <p>Cognitive Engagement: Students will create a photojournalist essay to describe their 'moments of connection' to their local community.</p> <p>Introduce students to their final photojournalism assignment: Create a series of images that capture what matters to you and makes you feel connected. Compose those images, and write captions to accompany them, with the intention to help others in your community feel connections to the things you care about.</p> <p>Day 5 will be spent brainstorming: What did that moment of connection physically look like to you? What does it smell like? Sound like? Feel like? Students will use all five senses in their culminating activity to show us. Students will also begin working on the culminating activity! (Culminating activity = a photojournalism unit showcasing 'moments of connection' to their own local community.)</p> <p>Day 6</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students will utilize their time in class to begin their project. 2. They will start by writing down (brain dumping) a list of ideas in their notebooks of connections they have in relationships, their communities, their society. |

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3. Students will have access to the rubric and the project checklist on Google Classroom and will utilize the articles they read as inspiration toward their own project.
 4. **Exit Ticket:** What did you pick to showcase from your community and why?