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Dramatic Monologues and the C3 Framework: An Oscar-Winning Pair

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Radical changes in the instructional practices of social studies teachers have taken place over the last decade. Students in modern social studies classes are more likely to be observed analyzing and discussing primary sources rather than learning a plethora of dates and people. The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) has been instrumental to these changes in teaching practices with its C3 Framework (NCSS, 2013). One of the goals of the C3 Framework is to prepare students not only for college and career but also for life in a democracy. Social studies teachers need to use classroom activities that align their teaching practices to those in the C3 Framework. One way to accomplish this is by using dramatic monologues. The researching and analyzing in preparation for writing dramatic monologues builds students' social studies literacy skills (Turner, 2015). Dramatic monologues incorporate the basic research skills advocated for in the C3 Framework while helping to bring social studies alive for students (NCSS, 2013).

This article describes one way to use dramatic monologues in the social studies classroom. Dramatic monologues are short writing activities written from the perspective of historical figures. The purpose of using dramatic monologues is to incorporate the research and analysis skills promoted in the C3 Framework (NCSS, 2013). The activity described in the article is designed for the middle school social studies classroom. Like the C3 Framework, the Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE) believes that successful middle level learning includes a curriculum that is “challenging, exploratory, integrative, and relevant” (AMLE, 2010, p. 14). Dramatic monologues help achieve those objectives. After a brief overview on writing dramatic monologues, the author offers an activity using leaders of the early 20th century civil rights movement: Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois. The steps and resources to implement this activity are provided.

Using Dramatic Monologues in the Social Studies Classroom

Dramatic monologues are creative writing pieces constructed by students to capture and articulate an historical figure's values, biases, and beliefs about issues and events in his or her time (Clabough, Turner, & Carano, 2017). Students conduct research by using primary sources to determine why a historical figure made certain arguments and took certain actions based on the context of the time period. Then, they synthesize this information to write, edit, and then perform a dramatic monologue from a historical figure's perspective. The activity described in the article is a variation of a character monologue using both historical brags and whines. In this form of dramatic monologue, students use first person voice to brag about a historical figure's accomplishments or to whine about his or her failures and shortcomings. Historical brags and whines help to humanize history

by having students view the world through the eyes of the historical figure (Turner, 2015).

Reading and writing dramatic monologues benefit students in many ways. According to Russell, Waters, and Turner (2014), drama cultivates student engagement and interest in the social studies curriculum. Reading and writing dramatic monologues encourage students to use primary sources from their investigations as the basis for dialogue in their monologue (Clabough, Turner, Russell, & Waters, 2016). The many benefits of using dramatic monologues reflects an emphasis on implementing the Inquiry Arc of the C3 Framework (NCSS, 2013).

Dramatic Monologues in Action

The first of several steps is to introduce the activity. An easy way to engage students is by mentioning pop culture references. In this instance, the movie trailer of the recently released *Black Panther* (Feige & Coogler, 2018) paired with a comment regarding Booker T. Washington's Atlanta Compromise speech should spark students' interest. The statement reflects the prevalence of segregation in 1897 when the speech was written. It references Washington as soothing his listeners' concerns about "uppity" blacks by claiming that his race would content itself with living "by the productions of our hands." This source can be accessed at the following link: <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/39/>. Washington's suggestions of accommodation were quite controversial for the day. Even more controversial were the views of W.E.B. DuBois, a fellow civil rights activist of the day. DuBois argued that African Americans should start the fight for civil rights immediately and push for much more than what Washington suggested. The idea is to have students examine changes in racial attitudes from the days of segregation to modern day. The movie *Black Panther* (Feige & Coogler, 2018) was revolutionary for many reasons, including how the movie depicted African Americans in positions of strength and power. Encourage students to make comparisons between the examples. Why was it revolutionary to have an African American superhero? How do people's reactions to the movie compare to how you imagine people reacted to Washington's statement? After debriefing the students, explain to them that they will be investigating leaders of the early 20th century civil rights movement: Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois.

Following this introduction, students move on to the next step of the activity. To begin their investigation of Washington's and DuBois's beliefs about segregation and civil rights at the turn of the 20th century, the teacher shows a brief video clip (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOrsno4UYBQ>). The video clip introduces students to the different perspectives of the two civil rights

leaders. It shows a history teacher using rap to introduce students to the backgrounds and beliefs of Washington and DuBois. Following the video, the teacher debriefs students about the video clip. She prompts students to share their observations and discuss the differences between the two figures highlighted in the video. The teacher uses the debriefing to segue into telling students that they will be writing dramatic monologues from the perspectives of Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois. These two historical figures were controversial in their own time because of their differing beliefs on segregation. Students write the dramatic monologues in the form of an historical brag or whine. This writing activity allows students to synthesize their understanding of the figure's perspectives on civil rights. For example, the rivalry between the two civil rights leaders should be reflected in the writing piece. Additionally, the students make the determination of whether the historical figure's actions and words merit a brag or whine.

Students are then placed into pairs for the next step, which engages them in a gallery walk. A gallery walk is a technique where the teacher places primary sources around the room at different work stations (Appendix A gives the links to primary sources used in the activity). The purpose of the gallery walk is to provide students with sources regarding the figures' perspectives about civil rights. At each station, students use the primary sources provided to gain an understanding of the two men's perspectives. They also use the materials to work together to construct knowledge of Washington's and DuBois's views of the best approach to gaining civil rights for all African Americans. After a given period of time, the students rotate to the next station. The process of completing the graphic organizer is repeated by students at each station. The teacher provides a graphic organizer to help students organize the information at each station and circulates around the room assisting students as questions arise. An abbreviated example of the graphic organizer is provided in the next section. A full copy of the graphic organizer is provided in Appendix B.

Figure 1: Gallery Walk Handout

This handout was used during the gallery walk to record findings from each station.

Washington and DuBois Gallery Walk Report Sheet

Directions: At each station, you will find text from the primary sources of Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois. Work with your partners to answer the following questions: What did you read that was something to brag about? What did you read that was something to whine about? Answer the questions and

provide text evidence from the station in each box where it says “brag” and “whine.”

	Booker T. Washington	W.E.B. DuBois
Station #1	<p><i>Brag:</i></p> <p><i>Whine:</i></p> <p><i>Text evidence:</i></p>	<p><i>Brag:</i></p> <p><i>Whine:</i></p> <p><i>Text evidence:</i></p>
Station #2	<p><i>Brag:</i></p> <p><i>Whine:</i></p> <p><i>Text evidence:</i></p>	<p><i>Brag:</i></p> <p><i>Whine:</i></p> <p><i>Text evidence:</i></p>
Station #3	<p><i>Brag:</i></p> <p><i>Whine:</i></p> <p><i>Text evidence:</i></p>	<p><i>Brag:</i></p> <p><i>Whine:</i></p> <p><i>Text evidence:</i></p>
Station #4	<p><i>Brag:</i></p> <p><i>Whine:</i></p> <p><i>Text evidence:</i></p>	<p><i>Brag:</i></p> <p><i>Whine:</i></p> <p><i>Text evidence:</i></p>
Station #5	<p><i>Brag:</i></p> <p><i>Whine:</i></p> <p><i>Text evidence:</i></p>	<p><i>Brag:</i></p> <p><i>Whine:</i></p> <p><i>Text evidence:</i></p>

Students benefit from completing the graphic organizer by becoming familiar with the perspectives of Washington and DuBois regarding civil rights issues. The

graphic organizer serves as a bridge to writing the historical brag or whine by helping students organize the information needed for the writing assignment.

After students complete the graphic organizer, the teacher follows up with questions to extend students' understanding. For instance, she would ask questions such as

1. How did reading and analyzing the primary sources on Washington and DuBois help you understand what the men were thinking?
2. How did the primary sources provide insight into the men's perspectives about the early civil rights movement?
3. What motivations do you think were behind their words and actions?

Questions like these help students start thinking about what it may have been like to see the problems that African Americans faced during this time period (Clabough et al., 2016). It also helps students understand why the disagreement between the two men was controversial. The debriefing strengthens students' foundational knowledge of the life and works of both civil rights leaders.

The next segment in the lesson helps students practice the skill of corroboration. Corroboration works in tandem with primary source analysis. Students compare the sources to one another to see if the information within is similar or different. If the information is different, then additional analysis is needed (Nokes, 2013; Vansledright, 2014). An excellent resource used for this step of the lesson is a dramatic monologue from the Vulcan Park and Museum's Birmingham History on the Road (<http://visitvulcan.com/education/outreach/>). This program extends opportunities to bring Birmingham's unique stories into the classroom including connections to national events. Using this video clip serves two purposes. The first is to provide authentic sources to compare with the primary sources studied earlier in the lesson (NCSS, 2016). The second is to show students an example of dramatic monologues in action. Students view the video clip in ten-minute segments. At the end of each ten-minute segment, they use prompts on the supplementary handout to discuss the clips. The prompts encourage them to discuss the information within the video clip while comparing it to information they learned in previous steps of the lesson. This activity demonstrates using activities involving complex skills like corroboration for intricate problem solving (AMLE, 2010). This step of the activity prepares students to write their own dramatic monologue. A representation of the handout used in the activity has been provided in Figure 2 below. A copy of the complete handout has been provided in Appendix C. After viewing the video and completing the graphic organizer, the teacher debriefs the students through questioning: what do you think Washington meant when he said one as a hand but separate as the fingers? Do you think he really meant it, or do you think he was pandering to the crowd? What text evidence supports your answer? Why do you think DuBois was so angry with Washington? What text evidence did DuBois use

when criticizing Washington? Was it effective? Such questions help students synthesize the information needed for the next stage of the activity.

Figure 2: Graphic Organizer for Film Clips

Who influenced civil rights the most: Booker T. Washington or W.E.B. DuBois?	
Video Segment #1	<i>Discuss with partner: What did we learn about the conflict between Washington + DuBois? Why was it a big deal? Summarize your partner's response here:</i>
Video Segment #2	<i>Discuss with partner: What additional details were added about the conflict between the two leaders? How does the information compare to previous information? Summarize your partner's response here:</i>
Video Segment #3	<i>Discuss with partner: What was the conclusion? Did you agree or not agree? Explain. Summarize your partner's response here:</i>

The teacher models both historical brags and whines. Using her own example, she shows students the format of the historical brag and whine. Then, a demonstration is provided for how the monologues are designed to be read out loud in dramatic fashion. After dramatically reading the historical brag or whine, the teacher displays it using a projector or providing copies for students. The document is analyzed for ways that the example provided text evidence from primary sources, and it is examined for instances where the writer demonstrated their understanding of the historical figure's beliefs and perspective regarding the issue. Students use annotation techniques like underlining and highlighting to identify text evidence. After a question and answer session about the presentation of the historical brag or whine, students start writing their own dramatic monologue. The length of the historical brag or whine is from one-half to a full page.

Writing the historical brag or whine is how students synthesize their ideas from the lesson. Students use evidence from the graphic organizers in the gallery walk and the analysis of the teacher example to create their own historical brag or whine. They should use the evidence to decide whether the dramatic monologue

should be an historical brag or whine before constructing the dramatic monologue from the perspective of either Booker T. Washington or W.E.B. DuBois. A possible example has been provided in the next section. The decision should be based on information collected during the gallery walk and analysis of the video clips. To assist students as they create their own historical brag or whine, the teacher gives them a copy of an historical brag and whine for comparison. The teacher's role at this stage is to clarify any student misunderstandings with the expectations for this assignment.

Figure 3: Example of W.E.B. DuBois Historical Brag

I've been asleep behind the veil for 55 long years! I was awakened by my forebears throwing my name around as a great civil rights leader. It's about time! What a legacy I left behind! I was a founding member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). I was the founding editor for the Crisis, the flagship journal of the NAACP. As editor, my voice was a leading one for African American agitation for civil and political rights. I joined with the NAACP to fight for anti-lynching legislation. I called out fellow activist, Mr. Booker T. Washington, for his accommodationist views. Can you believe that he encouraged others of our race to accept the segregationist policies of the South in exchange for industrial progress? As separate as fingers but on one hand, indeed! Humph! It's a good thing that I sounded the alarm when I said, "For this much all men know: despite compromise, war, and struggle, the Negro is not free. In the backwoods of the Gulf States, for miles and miles, he may not leave the plantation of his birth; in well-nigh the whole rural South the black farmers are peons, bound by law and custom to an economic slavery, from which the only escape is death or the penitentiary." It was my leadership that laid the foundation for the Civil Rights Movement that took place later in the century! I was definitely a great civil rights leader!

After writing their dramatic monologue, students proofread their monologues and prepare them for presentation. They practice by reading their brag or whine multiple times. The practice plays a vital role in improving reading fluency and comprehension (Turner, 2015). To present effectively, students should include the beliefs, biases, and perspectives when in character (Russell et al., 2014). It is important for them to have researched the language structure, speaking style, and gestures the historical person was known for using. Information such as this is found in primary sources about the individual as well as the historical figure's own writing (Clabough et al., 2016). Familiarity with the beliefs and personalities of the historical figure helps students to take on his or her role (Heathcote & Bolton, 1995). The teacher facilitates the process by circulating

around the room and listening to students practice their monologues. She offers feedback and encourages students to make changes where needed.

The final part of the lesson is the presentation. Students present their historical brags and whines in character for the class. Clabough and colleagues (2017) called the process of editing and refining the script as “smoothing” (p. 162). Once the students have finished “smoothing” the historical brag or whine, they are ready for presentation. The reasons for having students present are two-fold. First, presenting the brag or whine helps develop reading fluency, expression, and comprehension (Turner, 2015). Second, presentations foster an inviting and collaborative atmosphere in the classroom (AMLE, 2010). Students’ presentations should reflect the personalities, beliefs, and biases of the subject of the historical brag or whine and be presented as authentically as possible.

Dramatic monologues, like historical brags and whines, help students practice the skills of research and analysis that improve their critical thinking. The skills and dimensions of the C3 Framework are reflected throughout the steps detailed in this article (NCSS, 2013). Students analyze primary sources, corroborate sources, and engage in problem-solving throughout the steps of this activity (Turner, 2015). Using dramatic monologues like historical brags and whines engages students and makes them want to learn more about the topic (Heathcote & Bolton, 1995; Russell et al., 2014). Dramatic monologues can be a valuable tool for engaging students in the social studies classroom.

Conclusion

In this article, the author described the steps to implement historical brags and whines. Historical brags and whines provide opportunities for students to explore the beliefs and personalities of two early 20th century civil rights leaders: Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois. Students investigate the two leaders using primary sources, which allows them to develop an understanding of both men’s perspectives. The student’s historical brag or whine demonstrates how he or she synthesized the information about the two civil rights leaders. Historical brags and whines are two activities that can be used to explore historical figures’ perspectives.

Using dramatic monologues helps develop several learning skills. For instance, reading fluency, expression, and comprehension are improved as students rehearse their monologues in preparation for presentation (Clabough et al., 2017). Skills such as these are vital for learning in social studies. However, in this new era of instant information, students need to learn how to sift through information and get at historical figures’ perspectives and beliefs. Dramatic monologues create opportunities for inquiry that mirror the best intentions of teaching practices advocated for in the C3 Framework (Russell et al., 2014). Students engage in their own investigations of historical individuals through primary sources and reach conclusions based on evidence collected and analyzed.

Dramatic monologues give students meaningful opportunities to analyze primary sources and articulate their understanding of historical values, biases, and beliefs. This creates the potential for historical figures' values, biases, and beliefs to be three dimensional in our middle school students' minds.

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Appendix A: Primary Sources on Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois

Primary Sources Discussed in the Article:

1. <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/39/> This website provides the statement used in the introduction part of the lesson and the transcript of Washington's Atlanta Compromise speech. It also provides excellent background information on the controversy between Washington and DuBois.
2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOrsno4UYBQ>: This is the YouTube video clip used in the introduction. It provides a good synopsis of the controversy between Washington and DuBois.
3. <http://visitvulcan.com/education/outreach/>: This is the website for the video of the actors presenting a dialogue between Washington and DuBois. It provides rich background information. It can also be used as an example of a dramatic monologue.

Primary Sources from the Lesson:

1. <https://cnu.libguides.com/c.php?g=23087&p=2455064>. This website offers an array of different works by Booker T. Washington. Having students read the author's works is a great way to empathize with the historical figure.
2. <https://sheg.stanford.edu/history-lessons/booker-t-washington-v-w-e-b-du-bois>: This website offers an activity for exploring the dispute between DuBois and Washington. It requires email registration, but the materials are free.
3. <http://www.webdubois.org/wdb-sources.html>: This website offers many of DuBois's works. However, be wary of biases for DuBois.
4. <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/the-talented-tenth/>: This work by W.E.B. DuBois is reflective of the core differences between DuBois and Washington.
5. <https://primarysourcenus.org/2012/09/today-in-history-booker-t-washington/>: This website offers a variety of different primary sources on both Washington and DuBois.

Appendix B: Graphic Organizer on Washington and DuBois

The following handout was used during the gallery walk part of the lesson. Students used this handout to record their findings from each station.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

Washington and DuBois Gallery Walk Report Sheet

Directions: At each station, you will find text from the primary sources of Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois. At each station, work with your partners to answer the following questions: What did you read that was something to brag about? What did you read that was something to whine about? Answer the questions and provide text evidence from the station in each box where it says “brag” and “whine.”

	Booker T. Washington	W.E.B. DuBois
Station #1	<i>Brag:</i> <i>Whine:</i> <i>Text evidence:</i>	<i>Brag:</i> <i>Whine:</i> <i>Text evidence:</i>
Station #2	<i>Brag:</i> <i>Whine:</i> <i>Text evidence:</i>	<i>Brag:</i> <i>Whine:</i> <i>Text evidence:</i>
Station #3	<i>Brag:</i> <i>Whine:</i> <i>Text evidence:</i>	<i>Brag:</i> <i>Whine:</i> <i>Text evidence:</i>
Station #4	<i>Brag:</i> <i>Whine:</i> <i>Text evidence:</i>	<i>Brag:</i> <i>Whine:</i> <i>Text evidence:</i>

Station #5	<p><i>Brag:</i></p> <p><i>Whine:</i></p> <p><i>Text evidence:</i></p>	<p><i>Brag:</i></p> <p><i>Whine:</i></p> <p><i>Text evidence:</i></p>
Station #6	<p><i>Brag:</i></p> <p><i>Whine:</i></p> <p><i>Text evidence:</i></p>	<p><i>Brag:</i></p> <p><i>Whine:</i></p> <p><i>Text evidence:</i></p>
Station #7	<p><i>Brag:</i></p> <p><i>Whine:</i></p> <p><i>Text evidence:</i></p>	<p><i>Brag:</i></p> <p><i>Whine:</i></p> <p><i>Text evidence:</i></p>
Station #8	<p><i>Brag:</i></p> <p><i>Whine:</i></p> <p><i>Text evidence:</i></p>	<p><i>Brag:</i></p> <p><i>Whine:</i></p> <p><i>Text evidence:</i></p>
Station #9	<p><i>Brag:</i></p> <p><i>Whine:</i></p> <p><i>Text evidence:</i></p>	<p><i>Brag:</i></p> <p><i>Whine:</i></p> <p><i>Text evidence:</i></p>

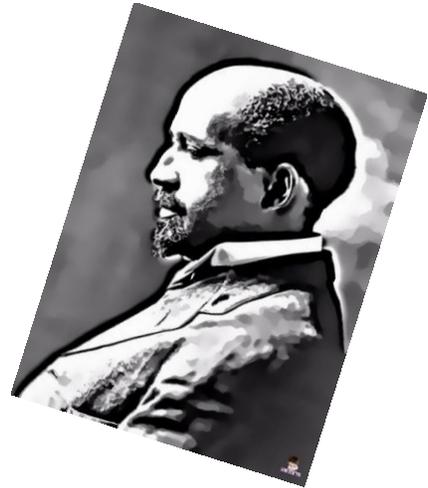
Appendix C: Student Handout on Washington and DuBois Video Clip

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

Directions: The video will pause three times. At the end of each 10 minutes, discuss the segment with your partner using the prompts provided in this handout.



OR



Who influenced civil rights the most?

<p>Video Segment #1</p>	<p>Discuss with partner: What did we learn about the conflict between Washington & DuBois? Why was it a big deal? Summarize your partner's response here:</p>
<p>Video Segment #2</p>	<p>Discuss with partner: What additional details were added about the conflict between the two leaders? How does the information compare to previous information? Summarize your partner's response here:</p>
<p>Video Segment #3</p>	<p>Discuss with partner: What was the conclusion? Did you agree or not agree? Explain. Summarize your partner's response here:</p>