**Concept Lesson Plan**

**Author:** Emily Perez

**Date Created:** Sunday, February 12, 2012

**Subject(s):** English III American Literature

**Topic or Unit of Study (Title):**  Unit 4: Regionalism and Realism/Concentration on dialect

**Grade Level:** 11

***Materials:*** Glencoe American Literature English III textbook to read and analyze the short story *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County* by Mark Twain

**Summary (*and Rationale*):** Understanding American Literature from different time periods is important in a historical context so that students can make connections to present day life and literature. The cultural and regional dialects expose students to various customs and ways of life, as well as different writing styles. It is also important to be aware that Clemens was one of the first American writers to incorporate such humor and dialect into literature and to analyze the process he may have undergone to achieve that. Additionally, dialect is a strong aspect of the local color movement which is important to know for historical knowledge about our country, and the ability to read the word misspellings and colloquialisms strengthens their reading skills.

**I. Focus and Review (Establish Prior Knowledge):** [5 min] Which of your friends or family members is the best storyteller? What makes this person’s stories so effective? Briefly discuss these questions with a partner. Now, is it funnier when story tellers recount the region, character, and customs as they really are, or as a standard mold? In the late 1800s when this story was written, life out west on the remote mining camps was hard and entertainment was scarce. For fun, people and writers like Mark Twain invented tall tales – stories filled with humorous exaggerations often depicting the local region and community.

**II. Statement of Instructional Objective(s) *and Assessments*:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Objectives** | **Assessments** |
| Given examples and attributes of different regional dialects, students will construct a concise definition of the term “dialect” to be assessed by the class and teacher. | After students create their own definition of dialect, share them, and then compare them to other various definitions of dialect, proximity to the actual definition will show level of mastery. |
| After understanding the definition of dialect, students will act and read aloud passages with strong dialect in Mark Twain’s *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County*, then replace the colloquialisms with standard English words, then compare which version was more humorous to a reader and state three reasons why. | After identifying the correct elements of dialect within passages of the story, the students will provide standard English synonyms to the colloquialisms. Then, students should provide two reasons as to why the dialect differs from standard English (use of contractions, exaggeration, etc), and makes the story more humorous. This will be done on a separate sheet of notebook paper to be turned in for a classwork grade. |

State the objective: [25 min]

Assessment: [10 min]

**III. Teacher Input (Present tasks, information and guidance):**  [30 minutes total]

After examining present day storytelling techniques from friends and family members, I will introduce the concept of dialect as used by Mark Twain in *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County* and how dialect enhances humorous storytelling techniques.

First, students will walk up to the board and write words, phrases, or descriptions associated with dialect. This can include certain regions they are familiar with, such as Southern dialect versus Northern dialect, common phrases, or even stereotypes associated with different dialects.

Then, I will ask a few students who did not participate in contributing terms to the board already (if applicable) to group certain terms together that are alike. Now, the board should be grouped with like terms describing or attributing dialect. Once the terms are grouped, labels or categories will be given to each group, further classifying them as different attributes of dialect.

Finally, students will be asked to work in partners to create a proper definition of the dialect. The definition does not have to include the words given on the board, but their creation of their definition should come from the deeper understanding of groups of terms listed on the board. Any students that feel they have a particularly accurate definition of dialect will be asked to share.

After sharing a few definitions constructed by the students, I will read the definition given by the book: “Dialect is a variation of a language spoken by a particular group, often within a specific region and time. Dialects may differ from the standard form of a language in vocabulary, pronunciation, or grammatical form,” and then the definition from dictionary.com: “a variety of a language that is distinguished from other varieties of the same language by features of phonology, [grammar](http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/grammar), and [vocabulary](http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/vocabulary), and by its use by a group of speakers who are [set](http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/set) off from others geographically or socially.” The class will then compare their definitions to the ones given and I will read their definitions to assess their level of understanding and mastery of the concept.

After understanding the definition of dialect, students will act and read aloud passages with strong dialect in Mark Twain’s *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County*, then replace the colloquialisms with standard English words, then compare which version was more humorous to a reader and why. This will be done quietly and independently on a separate sheet of notebook paper. After identifying the correct elements of dialect within passages of the story, the students should provide two reasons as to why the dialect differs from Standard English and why it makes the story more humorous. This will be done on the same sheet of paper and turned in for a classwork grade.

**IV. Guided Practice (Elicit performance):** [5 min]

Walk around the classroom asking students for help while assessing their work mentally to see if they need extra assistance with the assignment.

***V.* Closure (Plan for maintenance):** [5 min]

Ask how the students liked working with themes of dialect and if they thought it really enhanced the story for them. Also ask if speaking the dialect out loud helped them with their understanding and comprehension of what the characters were saying. Briefly introduce other authors that are known for using dialect, (such as Charles Chesnutt, and show a passage from *The Goophered Grapevine)* to explain that while Mark Twain is often known for his use of dialect, several other authors use the literary tool, as well, especially in the 1800s.

***VI.* Independent Practice:**

If needed, students can finish their reasons for why dialect differs from Standard English for homework and turn it in at the beginning of next class. Also, if they are interested in Charles Chesnutt or other famous authors known for using dialect, they can read some of their works and apply what they learned in class to their literary stories.

**STANDARDS:**

**RL 5:** Analyze structure of a text created by the author and how it adds to the story.  
**RL 6:** Distinguish sarcasm, satire, irony, and dialect

**Plans for Individual Differences:**

For students who have previously read “The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County,” allow them to offer their initial reading experience with the dialect compared to when they read it in class after analyzing the dialect techniques and state the differences.

For students having difficulty with the assignments, facilitate their progress and offer additional assistance when needed. If they are having particular difficulty identifying the dialect and synonyms, I will point out that the character, Mr. Wheeler, is telling a story to a foreigner to his region and that Mr. Wheeler’s sentences go on and on as if he is thinking aloud. His dialect would have been very common among the people in the region of the story, but it sounds very distinctive and strange to a modern reader. Offer additional assistance to struggling students by helping them identify dialect words such as “feller” instead of “fellow,” “curiosest” instead of “most curious,” and “bannaner” instead of “banana.” Also emphasize the use of contractions used in this story and how the apostrophes may “throw off” an inexperienced reader, but when spoken aloud, the words and phrases flow more easily because it is meant to spoken out loud.

**References (APA style):**

Dictionary.com. Retrieved February 12, 2012 from: <http://dictionary.com>

Wilhelm, J. D., & Fisher, D.(2009). *Teacher edition literature: American literature.* Ohio: McGraw Hill  
 Glencoe.