Blended Learning: *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

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Abstract

This action research study describes the design and implementation of a unit of blended instruction in a vocational-technical comprehensive high school English classroom. Twenty high school students in an 11th grade traditional English class engage in a variety of internet-based activities in conjunction with traditional learning activities while studying Zora Neale Hurston's class novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God.*

Introduction

Their Eyes Were Watching God is a novel about love, fulfillment, and independence. Hurston teaches her readers about the power of language, gender roles, and race relations in the early 20th century American south. The setting of this novel allows readers to consider the effects of race relations in our country's past, during an especially poignant time in our country's racial present. After having spent an entire year, and in some cases two, developing a relationship with these students, I was eager to begin reading this novel with them.

When the time came to design the unit, I realized that because of our state standardized test schedule, I would be out of our classroom for a significant amount of time. In fact, as I developed the reading timeline for students, I realized that I would be out of the room—in the testing computer lab—for chapters 4-16 of the 20-chapter novel. This was devastating. How could I facilitate the important discussions that this novel would allow if I weren't even going to be in the classroom?

After brainstorming with other teachers and our principal, we decided that we could work out a coverage schedule and take a blended learning approach. At our vocational-technical high school, many teachers have ventured into the realm of blended learning. Taking their lead, we decided to recreate each of our courses online, so that whenever we needed to be out of the room, our students could continue to work at their own place. In order to document this attempt, I wanted to study the progress of one of my classes. I found an existing action research study (Waldron, 2014) with striking

resemblance to my own classroom and curriculum, so I decided to model my study after this one.

As McKinstry illustrates, blended learning helps students "to be prepared to learn, apply for college and jobs, take industry and college entrance exams, access digital content and work virtually (2012). Since I teach at a vocational-technical school, these attributes are particularly important to my and my students' Following in other teachers' digital footsteps, I decided to create a blended learning experience for my students in their reading of *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.

My principal agreed to provide coverage for me in the testing center, so that I could have a small block of time with students in the classroom each period. Students would spend the rest of the 90-minute block with a substitute, completing all of their work via the online learning management platform Schoology.

In the predominantly female class that is the subject of this study, I was eager to begin discussing the protagonist of the novel Janie, "heroically attempting to assert [her] own individuality in contexts that continue to resent and fear any consciousness that is not male" (Bloom, 2008). I was excited to create an inquisitive community about how this novel could teach lessons about aspects of life especially relevant to this class. I knew the complex issues of love, gender, and race presented in this novel would intrigue my students, and I was intrigued to learn what the blended learning model had to offer us.

Literature Review

In a climate of standardization, blended learning can provide a much needed individualized learning experience. More and more teachers are experimenting with technology in their classroom to create authentic and challenging environments for students.

Horn & Stacker (2011) define Blended Learning as:

Any time a student learns at least in part at a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home *and* at least in part through online delivery with some element of student control over time, place, path, and/or pace.

According to Horn and Staker, "blended learning has the potential to revolutionize K-12 education [and]…allows for a fundamental redesign of the educational model" (2011). Allowing students to explore and discover knowledge for themselves in a guided and safe way could change the structure of our schools. A change in the structure, so that students have access to more content, could provide endless opportunities for students.

Further supporting the claim that blended learning facilitates individualization, Horn and Staker insist that blended learning offers "a more consistent and personalized pedagogy that allows each student to work at her own pace and helps each child feel and be successful at school" (2011). Each student has different needs, especially when it comes to 21st century skills—they come to their teacher in all digital shapes and sizes. Through varying degrees of control and scaffold, teachers can teach their students the important digital literacy skills that will be necessary for their post high school experiences.

Blended Learning: *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

There are various blended learning models for various needs. Horn and Staker describe 6 different models depending on the availability of resources, the needs of the learners, and the expertise of the teachers. The six models include: Face-to-Face Driver, Rotation, Flex, Online Lab, Self-Blend, and Online Driver (Horn & Staker, 2011).

The Face-to-Face Driver model allows the teacher to lead students in the physical classroom, but offer online materials to some students. The Rotation model gives students the flexibility to switch back and forth between online and face-to-face learning, on a scheduled basis. The Flex model utilizes an online learning platform, but is managed by a teacher physically in the classroom. The Online Lab is very similar to the Flex model, except that there is typically no physical teacher in the classroom, only a supervisor. The Self-Blend Model allows for more student control, offering online course remotely, to supplement traditional curricula. The Online Driver model includes both an online platform and teacher, with optional meetings sometimes available (Horn & Staker, 2011)

Within each of these types of blended learning, teachers and students can utilize different strategies and tools to fit their various needs. One such strategy is the use of discussion boards. According to Meyer, "an online discussion function is a critical component of any learning management system" (2012). Discussion boards are critical because they offer a chance for teachers and students to create a collaborative learning environment from anywhere. Furthermore, discussions allow students to learn how to discuss academic issues and hold a conversation in a constructive way.

One extremely popular learning management system that teachers can use to facilitate online discussions is Schoology. Schoology is a learning platform that uses a similar interface to Facebook, the popular social networking site. "As teachers, we have

the opportunity to use this popular phenomenon of social networking to the advantage of learning in our classrooms" (Manning, Brooks, Crotteau, Diedrich, Moser, & Zwiefelhofer, 2011). Because students are familiar with Facebook, many of them find Schoology easy to navigate and naturally intuitive.

When students see a connection to their lives and to what they are doing in class, the learning becomes more authentic, even if the connection is solely based on the platform. Because students are familiar with social networking, "What better way to have students interpret, formulate, compare, construct, explain, or investigate than in their own realm of technological comfort?" (Manning, Brooks, Crotteau, Diedrich, Moser, & Zwiefelhofer, 2011) Not only does this help students be successful in school, but it also helps change their mindsets about the purpose of the Internet.

Method

Participants

I teach and conducted this action research study in a vocational-technical high school located in the city of Wilmington, Delaware. At the time of this study, there were 940 students enrolled at our school. Out of that number, 43% were marked as low income, due to their eligibility for our free or reduced lunch program. Our school profile indicates the following ethnic backgrounds: 69% African American, 16% Caucasian, & 14% Hispanic. Our American Indian, Asian, Hawaiian, and multi-racial students make up less than 1% of our student body (Howard High School, 2015).

For this action research study, I focused on 1 of my 6 eleventh grade classes. Of the 20 students participating in this study, 17 were female and 3 were male. 17 of my

students in this class describe themselves as African American, 2 Caucasian, and 1 Hispanic. During the time of this study, in addition to their schoolwork, 16 students worked at least one part time job after school, 10 students participated in extra-curricular activities regularly, 2 students had babies of their own, and 1 student was pregnant with a baby on the way.

Every student in our school was assigned an iPad that they can take home and use for the entire school year. The majority of teachers at our school post many of their classroom materials online, so my students were already familiar with organizing their materials electronically and submitting their schoolwork either via email, Schoology, GoogleDocs, or Dropbox.

Each student in this study had access to the Internet at school via his or her iPad; 18 out of 20 students reported having consistent access to the Internet at home. 17 out of 20 students possessed a smart phone at the time of this study, from which they could fully access our course materials on Schoology.

Procedure

Designing the blended instructional unit

In designing this blended learning unit, I expected the students to work more independently than ever before. I adopted what Horn and Staker call the Flex Model (2011). This meant that even though most class materials, content, and assessments would be online, I would physically be in the room to monitor and help students. I gave each student a hard copy of the novel, but many of them preferred to read or listen to the novel online.

In our district, we have decided that if a teacher wants to use an online learning platform in her class, she must use Schoology. After engaging with Schoology, that decision was fine by me. Compared with some of the other online platforms, Schoology boasts a more aesthetically pleasing and user friendly interface. Additionally, Schoology reps have come to our school to research our progress, which helps to make teachers feel supported in their efforts.   Since I already had my students enrolled in a Schoology course with me, I used this course to host my unit. Within the unit, I created a folder for each chapter or set of chapters, depending on the length, for all 20 chapters of *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (Hurston, 1990). I chose topics for each chapter that went with concepts related to our unit essential question: How can texts reflect or reject the ideas of the time period in which it was written? This unit topic was assigned by our district, and derived from the Common Core standards.   In order to help students learn about this topic, I created folders on Schoology with related content.

For each chapter, we included a power point with key concepts and topics, a YouTube link to the audio version of the book, a link to the dictionary, a discussion board with rubric, a reading quiz, and a homework assignment comprised of both comprehension and analysis questions. Figure 1 shows a students view inside the
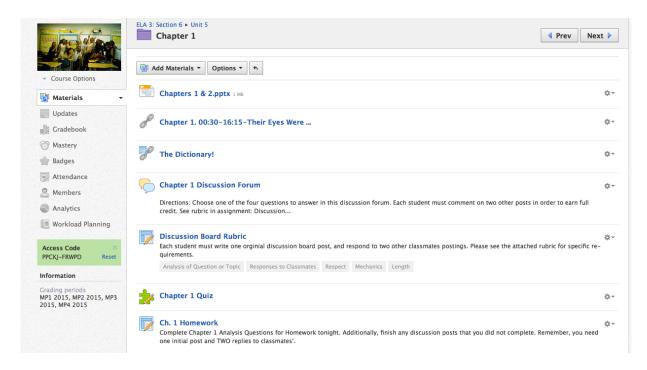
chapter one folder.

In my class, collaboration is a consistent expectation. I expected the same in our online class venue.   In order to promote healthy conversation among students, even if I weren't around to remind them, I chose discussion topics carefully. I was always sure to give at least 4 discussion prompts to choose from, and work with a partner to create the most engaging discussion starters possible.   Students were expected to post one 100-word post for each chapter or chapter section and comment on two other people's posts in 50 words or more. In order to assess students in the discussion forum, I used the rubric in the Waldron study (2014). Figure two shows the rubric used for discussion posts.

The last piece of designing this blended learning unit was to create a post-unit survey. I designed this survey after the Waldron study (2014) on which this study is based. I modified a few questions on the survey in order to match the few things I

Blended Learning: *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

modified in the original study. The survey questions and responses are included in the

"Results" section of this paper.

Criteria	Grading Scale			
Analysis of Question or Topic	4 Advanced Initial discussion board posts is written accurately and with detail.	3 Proficient Initial discussion board post lacks some accuracy or detail.	2 Competent Initial discussion board post lacks accuracy and detail.	1 Novice Posting is inaccurate or does not address the question or topic.
Responses to Classmates	4 Advanced Responses (2 or more) are thoughtful, on topic, and advance the discussion.	3 Proficient Responses (2 or more) are thoughtful and on topic, but do not advance the discussion.	2 Competent Responds thoughtfully to 1 classmate.	1 Novice Responds to 1 classmate; demonstrates little awareness of initial post.
Respect	4 Advanced All postings and responses are respectful in tone.	3 Proficient Most postings and responses are respectful in tone.	2 Competent Postings and responses are somewhat disrespectful or sarcastic.	1 Novice Postings and responses are disrespectful in tone.
Mechanics	4 Advanced All postings are mechanically and grammatically correct.	3 Proficient Postings contain 1–3 spelling, punctuation, or grammar errors.	2 Competent Postings contain 4–6 spelling, punctuation, or grammar errors.	1 Novice Postings contain more than 6 spelling, punctuation, or grammar errors.
Length	4 Advanced Initial postings are at least 100 words in length and responses are at least 50 words in length.	3 Proficient Initial postings are at least 100 words in length and responses are fewer than 50 but at least 30 words in length.	2 Competent Initial postings are fewer than 100 but more than 75 words in length and responses are fewer than 50 but at least 30 words in length.	1 Novice Initial postings are fewer than 75 words and responses are fewer than 30 words.

Total pts: 20

Figure 2 Discussion Post Rubric

Implementing the blended instructional unit

Unlike the Waldron study (2014), we did not need to rely on booking a computer lab or obtaining netbooks in order for students to complete their course work. Each student had an iPad that they were expected to bring to class each day, charged. Of course, occasionally we ran into issues: iPads not being fully charged, malfunctioning, or even left at home. Usually, students were able to use their smart phone to complete their course work if they were unable to use their iPad. Unlike the original study, my students seemed to have no problem viewing or completing work using their smart phones. In fact, a considerable few preferred doing schoolwork on their smartphone instead of iPad.

Because we used Schoology all year in some capacity, students were comfortable with the site. Most students could navigate our site with ease, but some students struggled to follow the organization of the course content. Whether this was because of deficient digital literacy skills or an inability to follow directions was unclear.

As students began chapter one, they immediately loved the audio recording of the novel. The reader uses a convincing southern dialect. Our school is in the heart of Wilmington, DE, where many students have not had frequent exposure to southern accents. The audio text allowed students to learn an important aspect of the language and setting, through a dialect that would likely be impossible to produce in their minds. The audio text was the first aspect of the blended learning course that grabbed students' attention.

Right from the start, however, there were technology issues. One of the biggest issues was that the students had the same iPad 2s for three years, since they were freshmen, and many of them malfunctioned frequently. Some times the screens went

black, the keyboard typed extremely delayed or sometimes not at all, or they mysteriously wouldn't charge. Luckily, in our school media center, we had an instructional technology coach. She and her tech team of two solved these issues as quickly as they could, and sent the students and their functioning iPads back to class.

Another issue related to the iPads in this study was their inherent ability to distract. For many students at first, they did not display a sense of urgency in completing their course work and reading assignments. It seemed to me that if I weren't standing over their shoulder, many students would pretend to do their work, but instead be doing something unrelated on the Internet. It wasn't until about chapter three that I noticed students becoming more focused about their classwork on Schoology.

Once we got past these issues, students seemed to enjoy the novel, interact well in the discussion board, and keep their assignments organized. They completed the units involved in the study, with varying degrees of success.

Results

Students listened to the first four chapters as a class, while completing their work at their own pace, then transitioned to reading or listening individually. Once this shift took place, students quickly grasped what I expected of them. Students spent a significant amount of time in Schoology, both inside and outside of our 90-minute block class. Schoology collects this data for teachers, so that they can track each of their student's activity on the site.   Unlike Coursesites.com, used in the original study, Schoology only tracks the total time spent on the unit; it is not, unfortunately disaggregated by week. Table 1 displays this data in the form of total hours, minutes, and seconds.

Blended Learning: *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

Table One
Student Engagement on Schoology

Student	Hours, Minutes, Seconds Spent in Schoology in 4 week unit
1	5:51:52
2	6:42:01
3	4:53:31
4	11:05:11
5	6:53:30
6	6:01:32
7	6:50:17
8	12:12:51
9	5:53:28
10	9:44:58
11	7:29:50
12	12:43:19
13	5:18:07
14	3:46:38
15	4:56:01
16	12:28:45
17	2:42:14
18	2:16:36
19	4:13:12
20	9:20:24

Note: data provide by the tracking feature of Schoology.com

The student engagement data shows a wide spectrum in student involvement. Student 18, for instance, spent a very short amount of time in Schoology compared with the ten 90 min classes held in this four week span; in contrast, student 12 spent more than 12 hours more than student 18. What could account for such a wide gap in student engagement? This gap could account for reading ability, interest in the novel, or attention deficit issues, among myriad other things.

This definitely poses potential for further study. In the future, it would be interesting to interview students daily as they complete their online course work. This would make the information in the student engagement table more meaningful. Because

Schoology does not organize the data by day or week, it would be helpful for the teacher to check and record engagement each day and monitor growth or reduction in engagement. Each day, as they reflect on student engagement, teachers could ask students specific questions related to their engagement. It would be very insightful, for instance, to know what students were doing during online class time, their work and responsibilities schedule, their homework load, and anything weighing on their mind. This sort of qualitative data could provide valuable information to educators and would be a great aspect for further study.

Table 2
Student Engagement and Discussion Forum Data

Student	Total Minutes Engaged	% Discussion Forum Participation
1	351	13.89%
2	402	36.11%
3	293	52.78%
4	665	69.44%
5	353	47.22%
6	361	125.00%
7	410	25.00%
8	732	77.78%
9	353	36.11%
10	580	27.78%
11	449	30.56%
12	559	63.89%
13	318	25.00%
14	226	44.44%
15	296	61.11%
16	748	94.44%
17	162	19.44%
18	136	25.00%
19	253	52.78%
20	560	100.00%

Note: data provide by the tracking feature of Schoology.com

Discussion Forum Data

I used the discussion forum data in order to analyze my students' involvement in the discussion board, overall. I would have preferred to analyze the participation on a week-to-week basis, but that was not feasible with the data collections offered in Schoology. I wanted to stick with the tools in Schoology in order to study its usefulness. Unfortunately either the platform was somewhat limiting in this regard, or my skills were limited. Students participated in the discussion forum with wide degrees of variance. Some, going above and beyond, and others, barely participating at all.

Table 3
Student Responses to the End of Unit Survey

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Unanswered
1	7	8	1		0
2	6	9	1		0
3	8	5	2	1	0
4	10	5	1		0
5	11	5			0
6	2	8	4	2	0
7	9	5	1	1	0
8	9	7			0
9	6	8	1	2	0
10	7	7	2		0
11	12	4			0
12	8	8			0
13	5	9	1	1	0
14	5	6	4	1	0

Note: data provide by the tracking feature of Schoology.com

End of unit survey questions

1. The online content presentations (videos, Power Points) helped me to understand the literary concepts we studied in Their Eyes Were Watching God.

2. Participating in the discussion forums allowed me to deepen my understanding of the novel.

3. I accessed the online classroom when I was outside of school.

4. The design of the final project gave me the opportunity to creatively express my thoughts about the novel while also learning to use a new technology.

5. I enjoyed interacting with my classmates in the online classroom.

6. I like learning online more than learning from my teacher.

7. I enjoyed working on the final project.

8. The online unit was organized and easy to use.

9. I would like to use the online classroom again.

10. The online classroom gave me more opportunities to share my ideas than when we have discussion in the classroom.

11. I prefer taking quizzes online rather than with paper and pencil.

12. The discussion forum rubric was fair and it helped me improve my initial posts and my responses to my classmates.

13. When I go to college, I will feel confident about choosing classes that are offered partly or completely online.

14. I would have liked more iPad time during class.

15. This is your chance to share about anything you particularly liked or disliked about using Schoology.

Responses to question 15 (student grammar and spelling errors maintained)

 "I just dont think that everything should revolve around Schoology."'

"Only thing I don't like is if my technology is acting up."

"I liked everything on Schoology"

"I liked Taking the online class Because I got to interact with students on the discussion board post I wouldn't normally talk to in Person and I Most likely has a Conversation Face to Face with the Student."

"I like that all the homework is on there and all the work is not on paper"

"I love using Schoology it is very organized and very easy to use."

"I didn't like how Schoology it would take a long time to load even when I updated my app."

"Schoology kept everything organized and allow me to remember to do it without losing my homework. Only thing I dislike was that if I didn't have wifi then it would be hard to do my work.

Eight of the students who took the survey did not answer question 15. The survey the students completed was taken directly from the Waldron study (2014). The questions were largely about students' impressions of the online classroom, their willingness to participate in an online classroom in the future, and their attitude about blended learning. Students were asked to rate each statement with strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree. Unfortunately, Schoology does not offer an anonymity feature, so I knew each student's response. This factor could have contributed to more than half the students' reluctance to answer number 15.

Question number 15 asked students for their overall opinion of Schoology. Some students may have thought that this question was optional, or completed the survey when they were pressed for time. Whatever the reason may be, I think that having students explain their success or challenges in their own words is an important part of

the process and should be sought from students with fervor in further studies.

Overall, students' specific complaints seemed to be centered on technology glitches and the sole use of electronic materials. In contrast, other students preferred online learning because of broader opportunities for interactions with peers and the simplicity of electronic organization.

The complaints about technology issues are certainly valid. Every day, I sent students to the media center for uncharged iPads, black screens, Internet connectivity issues, frozen apps, and so on. A few students refused to use their iPads because of these issues, and used their smartphone for everything they did in class, with varied success.

As for the sole use of electronic materials, I can understand why some students may have wanted paper copies of assignments. Since answering questions on a Pages document on an iPad is really no different than answering question on a paper—that is to say, the technology does not enhance this activity in any way—it may not be necessary to force students to use the technology for each assignment. Completing documents in the Pages app proved to be very frustrating in some cases because of delayed and malfunctioning keyboards.

Both items of positive feedback on the survey: organization and peer interaction are two of the strengths of this blended learning unit I noted daily. My class is certainly more organized when all the materials are online. I was about to organize each day's lesson in a folder with everything they needed for that day. Each folder was also organized by chapter, so it was obvious to students which assignments were due for that day. Since many of my students struggle with physical organization, electronic organization was a little easier; I uploaded all of the materials and all they had to do was

complete them. By far the biggest benefit to the students that I observed in this study was the increased peer interaction. Despite the varied participation rates shown in Table 2, I think the discussion board was the biggest success of the unit. I saw students interacting with others that I had never seen them speak to in the classroom. After we began this unit, and students took over the discussion boards, I saw this interaction spill into the classroom.   I happily observed a growing sense of community as the unit progressed. Students helped each other with their technology issues, encouraged each other to meet deadlines and complete classwork, and discussed the novel with each other both in and outside of Schoology.

Conclusion

This blended learning unit proved to offer both challenges and rewards to my students and me. On the design end, I spent more time planning materials, maintaining the website, and monitoring and interacting in the discussion board, than I typically would in my traditionally run class. Because of this added time and need for efficiency, I learned many organizational features on Schoology. One feature that saved me time and helped me provide prompt feedback was the discussion board. I could give instantaneous feedback and didn't have to open up a new window for each student or learn a new tool. Added to this, since the discussion boards are public to all students in the class, students could learn from my feedback to the others.

The major challenge of this unit was participation. Some students displayed startling low participation rates, especially in the discussion boards, and it was difficult to attribute one cause to this issue. This could be due to the unusually high level of out-of-

class commitments, attention issues, or the time of year during which this study was conducted.

In the Waldron study (2014), she designated specific time for specific tasks, whereas I gave students the freedom to work at their own pace. In the future, I may restrict this freedom a bit. For some students, it seems important for me to monitor the activities they complete, so that I can ascertain the submission of their work.

Moving forward, I would love to extend this study to my other 5 classes, and perhaps even the entire junior class. Further study would need to look closely at the variables related to participation. As mentioned in the results portion of this study, daily surveys of how students spend their time would be helpful in analyzing both a high and low participation rate. Additionally, students should track their own level of involvement 1) to help each student self-assess his or her own progress and time management and 2) as a means of making up for the lack of daily or weekly data from Schoology.

This action research study is intended to inform teachers of the benefits of accessing technology in a classroom through the blended learning model. Overall, many students took initiative and flourished in this blended setting. I observed students who rarely spoke in class, establish a strong online presence in our discussion board. I saw students collaborating in our online classroom, and creating subsequent friendships in the physical classroom. Many students in this study had reported rarely enjoying reading novels, but the novelty of the technology made reading fun for them. With further study and refining, blended learning could prove an effective way to enhance learning in the high school English classroom.

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Appendix A

Their Eyes Were Watching God
Before Reading Activity

Directions: In our next class we will begin reading the novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston. The following activities will help you to better understand the novel. Please complete each activity with a partner, **then each of you should submit your own copy for a grade.**

Part One

Directions: Discuss each of the following questions with a partner, then answer in 3-5 sentences. Be sure to explain your ideas and support your opinions *with examples.*

1. **What age range should people be within to date or marry? In other words, how many years apart max should a couple be to be together? Why? Are couples closer in age happier? Provide examples of why these types of relationship may or may not be difficult.**

2. **How many times can a person be in true love in their life? Why? How do you know? Provide examples and/or explanation.**

3. **Can a person grow to love someone? In other words, if you didn't love someone at first, could you ever start to love them? Why? How?**

4. **If you marry someone and make a commitment to stay with them forever, but you don't love them, should you stay with them because of the commitment that you made? What should you do? Explain your answer.**

5. **If you really wanted to do something with your life but you KNEW that it would make your family angry and possibly cause them to cut you off,**

would you do it? Why or why not? What would you do? Do you have examples of someone that has done this? If not, describe what it would be like.

Part Two

Directions: Click on the link below and read the following article about DIALECT. This will help you understand some of the language in the novel.

http://www.chron.com/news/nation-world/article/Dialect-Survey-gives-insight-into-regional-2092735.php

1. **What is dialect?**

2. **What can a person's language tell you about them?**

3. **How can a person's language affect their culture? Can you give any examples of how dialect can change a person's culture?**

4. **Where are you from? How would you describe your dialect? Give 3 examples of words that you pronounce with a specific dialect.**

Part Three

Directions: Click on the link below and take the dialect Quiz! Answer the questions below.

http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2013/12/20/sunday-review/dialect-quiz-map.html

1. **What are the three cities that showed at the end of the survey? Can you think of any reason why you would speak like a person from this area? Google the location if you don't know where it is.**

2. **Select <u>Show Least Similar</u>. Is there any reason why you would speak least like a person from this area?**

3. **Were you surprised by any of the results? What story do your results tell or say about you?**

Appendix B

Chapter One Discussion Board Questions

1. What is the effect of using standardized English in the narrative but vernacular in the dialogue?

2. What is the effect of using two distinct varieties in the same book?

3. Hurston's writing is an example of *code-switching.* Are you able to code-switch or is there ever a need for it in your life?

4. Consider language and power. Who speaks each dialect in this book? Who has more power? Explain your answer.

Examples of Discussion Forum Posts to the Chapter One Prompts (Student grammar and spelling errors maintained)

Student A

I am able to code switch because sometimes I'm at school when I talk to my friends how the way I really feel and when I'm at home I got to be i good girl to get what I want because I want raise to get smart around my parents but when they not around I do whatever.example me around my Grandmom I be like yes momom not yes Janet .and when I'm in school I be like yes mrs young and no mrs young but soon as I step out the class I start acting out

> **Reply 1**
>
> Yeah because you were taught to have a higher respect for your elders but since you wit your friends and they the same age group as you are then you gonna act out.

Reply 2

I agree because if you talk to a teacher the same way you talk to your friends your not giving them respect. You have to code switch when your talking to adults. When I talk to my friends I'll say anything but I use a filter when I'm talking to adults.

Reply 3

I agree with you because you already know how I talk when I'm around my friends and when it comes to serious conversations I don't normally curse only if something slips out.

Student B

Using standardized language in an English narrative gives more of an understanding to a concept. Standardized language is more of a respectful up to scale type of diction it shows the sophisticated side in an narrative. Standardized language brings out the intelligences in a person writing to show the how to go about things in a more classier way. On the other hand using vernacular dialogue shows a different part of the culture language. When using vernacular language in a narrative you are showing a specific group of people who use a certain type of terminology to greet each other or just used on the regular basis. Using vernacular language just gives a different view point in slang terms than standardized language would from a upper class view point.

Reply 1

I agree with this because if there wasn't standardized language the author would look uneducated. In the dialect the way the author sounds, she's using words that isn't spelled correctly because that's how they pronounced it back then. With the

standardized language it helps us understand what the reader is saying when they

are using vernacular language.

Appendix C

Chapter Two Discussion Board Questions

1.Should the n-word be banned from use? In particular areas? Or from particular people or cultures?

2.How has the meaning of the n-word changed? What might this change suggest about our society?

3.Should the use of the n-word be encouraged? Can there be a positive outcome to using this word carelessly?

Student A

How has the meaning of the n-word changed? What might this change suggest about our society? The meaning of the n-word has traumatically changed from a word that is used to hurt, defeat and belittle a selection of people, to now a days being a word that is used to determine friendship or be welcoming to the black American society. By just Changing er to an a has been a big impact on how the black Americans have used the n-word to embrace their culture. Using the n-word as a word of friendship and not in a harmful way shows that society can make the best out of situations such as changing the syllable of a word that was used in derogatory language towards black African Americans. Yes the word still has a powerful meaning behind its history when using it but instead of staying in that mindset of anger and pain the African American culture decided to use it as something they can be proud of the something that just means that your nothing but worthless. Using the in n-word with its history shows the evolution of how to turn something negative into something positive. Even though there are people that don't like

the words do still take offense to it till this day because of how it was used people are starting to learn and accept the word because it is not going anywhere and will be around for many years.

Student B

The n-word should not be used because it could offend a lot of people that are black people and I know it's apart of history but it's could still offend how people feel as an African American you could say colored people or blacks or just an person we as blacks went through a lot to just be so anyone could say that word just change because as of now any race could say it.

> **Reply 1**
>
> Any race may say it but the music artist are allowing it to be used because it's constantly said. Fans will follow whatever they're artist is says and think it's okay to use it. Yes it shouldn't be allowed but in this time, people think it's okay because of the way it's portrayed by older people.
>
> **Reply 2**
>
> I agree, r&b rappers use the "n-word" in many of their lyrics and of course a fan will repeat the following lyrics not looking at it as being disrespectful, over the years people have become comfortable with the following term and began using it as a friendly greeting towards one another.
>
> **Reply 3**
>
> But don't you think that if you take away then word, How would future generations learn about the history ?

Reply 4

But I believe saying colored or blacks is more racist than the n-word

Reply 5

You have a good point but I have to disagree. There's no point in banning the n-word because regardless people are still going to use it. The n-word has become a modern day word. People say it left and right while greeting their friends, rapping to a song or even talking on the phone. Banning it won't make the word disappear and it was a big part of African American history.

Student C

I don't think the n-word should be banned, I just think particular people shouldn't use it like the white people shouldn't use it because when blacks were slaves whites use to call them that. So I understand when some of us black people get mad when the whites call us the N word. So I just feel as if whites shouldn't use it, it shouldn't be banned .

Reply 1

There is not really a way to ban the n-word from certain people, that's not really fare considering the fact that we have freedom of speech. It's really about people being educated about this word. Not really only whites so blacks too so I agree that the word shouldn't be banned but I think people should just teach their kids better

Reply 2

I feel the same way about this. It depends on who uses the word an how they use it. The n-word can still be very offensive to some people and if a white person says

n*gger then automatically people are going to think they're a racist. It all matters on how the word is being used.

Student D

I believe the n-word should not be banned from anything. I say this because if the n-word gets banned or replaced with another word then that would be like trying to change history. The n-word is a very important part of history. The n-word should defiantly be apart of history because so when a colored person is in the room with a whole bunch of non colored people than he or she won't feel uncomfortable if the n-word just happens to come up in a conversation or comes up in a book that their reading and also so the white people won't say anything negative or even them feel uncomfortable. (Answer to question 1)