4.4 My Story: Exploring Figurative Language and the Writing Process

Unit Summary
In this unit, students will analyze who and how they are in their native languages vs. who and how they are when they are in their English-speaking environment, and analyze texts that use figurative language to create vivid images of these two contrasting worlds. The unit will culminate in a writing project that focuses on the writing, revision and editing processes.

Content Standards and Learning Expectations

Listening/Speaking
L/S.4.1 Listens and responds during a read aloud from a variety of narrative texts to comprehend and identify main character and setting.
L/S.4.2 Recognizes simple homophones and figurative language.
L/S.4.5 Identifies, states, and paraphrases the main idea or topic and important details from learned concepts or read alouds of a variety of simple informational texts; uses transitions to tell, retell, and explain a story using acquired vocabulary and appropriate language structure.

Reading
R.4.4 Identifies the main character(s), compares and contrasts character traits, and identifies setting within narrative and expository text.

Writing
W.4.4 Identifies elements in descriptive and narrative forms of writing; uses a variety of sentence types to write descriptive and narrative paragraphs.
W.4.5 Follows the writing process; applies prewriting strategies to generate ideas; uses the dictionary as an aid in the writing process; identifies spelling errors in writing.

Big Ideas/Enduring Understandings:
- Making connections to what we read helps us understand who we are.
- Metaphors and similes paint a picture in the reader’s mind.
- Setting can influence character.
- Good writers revise and improve their writing through the writing process.

Essential Questions:
- How can I use words to express who I am?
- Why do writers use metaphors and similes?
- Are we the same person in every setting?
- How do writers improve their writing?

Content (Students will know…)
- Figurative language (i.e. similes and metaphors)
- The writing process (brainstorming, free-writing/drafting, revising, editing and publishing)
- Pre-writing strategies to generate ideas (i.e. making a list, mapping and free writing)

Content Vocabulary
- Figurative language
- Images
- Similes
- Metaphors
- Context

Skills (Students will be able to…)
- Listen and respond during a read-aloud from a variety of narrative texts to comprehend and identify setting
- Use transitions to tell, retell, and explain a story (about who you are), using acquired vocabulary and appropriate language structure
- Compare and contrast character traits (i.e. between who you are in your native language and who you are in your English-speaking environment)
- Identify setting (in stories about yourself)
- Identify elements in descriptive and narrative forms of writing (i.e. figurative language)
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**Length: 5 weeks**

- Setting  
- Character traits  
- Visual imagery  
- Follow the writing process (i.e. to edit and revise writing about your character)  
- Use the dictionary as an aid in the writing process  
- Identify spelling errors in writing

### Stage 2 - Assessment Evidence

#### Performance Tasks:

**My Two Different Worlds**
- Sequence chart: Students will analyze the character’s traits in the story *My Name* (See Attachment: 4.4 Text – My Name) in the beginning of the story using a sequencing chart (See Attachment: 4.4 Graphic Organizer - Story Map) to identify how she changes from the beginning to the end of the story.  
- Paragraph writing: Students will write at least one comprehensive, well-written paragraph that describe who they are and how they act in their native languages vs. who they are and how they act in their English-speaking worlds. Each paragraph should have:  
  - A topic sentence  
  - At least 3 supporting sentences  
  - No grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors  
- Use figurative language (similes and metaphors) to describe their feelings

**The Real Me**
- Visual Representation: Students will create a dualistic visual representation that captures “Who Am I?” in both their *native* and *new* languages/cultures.  
- Have students select two pictures of themselves that best represent who/how they are in their native language/culture vs. who they are in their English speaking environment. Point out that these two worlds represented by their pictures may look the same or they may look different. Have them title their pictures, “The Real Me,” in *Spanish* or *English*.  
- On the poster, students will also draw a Venn diagram (See Attachment: 4.4 Graphic Organizer – Venn Diagram), which they will

#### Other Evidence:
- Journal writing: Have students write daily reflections on their reading (See Attachment: 4.4 Other Evidence – Journal Writing)  
- Complete paired-reading fluency check (See Attachment: 4.4 Other Evidence – Paired Fluency Check)  
- Vocabulary packet (See Attachment: 4.4 Other Evidence – Unit Vocabulary Packet) for this unit’s vocabulary words  
- Complete word square activity for new words (See Attachment: 4.4 Other Evidence – Word Square)
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use to compare and contrast their two worlds.

- At the end of the project, have students present their posters to the class. Have them explain how the pictures they selected are representative of their two worlds.

**Expressing Yourself Using Figurative Language**

- Introduce Similes and Metaphors (See Attachments: 4.4 Performance Task – Introduction to Metaphors and 4.4 Performance Task – Introduction to Similes). Explain how authors create images using figurative language to explain an experience.

- Have students re-read *My Name* for the purpose of finding the images that the author created using figurative language.

- Have students analyze their experiences learning English using the five senses to describe how they feel and incorporating similes and metaphors that create images for readers (See Attachment: 4.4 Graphic Organizer – Brainstorming Using the Senses)

- Introduce the steps of the writing process (brainstorming, free-writing/drafting, revising, editing and publishing) and write them up on the board in a circle to show students that the writing process is a circular process in which you go back and forth from one step to the other.

- Have students take ideas from their Brainstorming Using the Senses worksheet (See Attachment: 4.4 Graphic Organizer - Brainstorming Using the Senses) and have them each write a paragraph describing their English- and Spanish-speaking worlds. Continue the steps of revising, editing and publishing as students complete their writing pieces (See Attachment: 4.4 Writing Tool – Peer Editing Checklist).

- At the end, have students share their writings with the class. You can have students assess their own writing (See Attachment: 4.4 Writing Tool – Writing Process Rubric). For each writing assignment, you may want to edit the content category (i.e. use figurative language to describe their two worlds).
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**Stage 3 - Learning Plan**

**Learning Activities**

**Figurative Language (Similes & Metaphors)**
- Give the class a list of similes and metaphors from different texts and have them underline the similes and circle the metaphors (See Attachment: 4.4 Learning Activity – List of Similes and Metaphors)
- Practice identifying the meaning of similes and metaphors
- Have students illustrate a simile and a metaphor. These could be similes or metaphors from texts or created by the students. Have them explain their illustrations to the class.
- Have students think of how they could use similes or metaphors to say that somebody: a) runs fast, b) is pretty, c) jumps well, and d) is strong.

**The Writing Process**
- Have students do a two-minute free-writing activity about their English-speaking worlds and two-minute free-writing activity on their Spanish-speaking worlds. Make sure that their pens/pencils continue to move during the two-minute exercise. If they run out of ideas, have them write whatever is on their minds and then have them come back to the topic you assigned. You may repeat this activity several times. The goal of this activity is for students to write non-stop and have them come back to what they wrote and search for writing ideas that they wrote on which they want to expand.
- After students have each completed a writing piece, have them work in pairs to edit their work (See Attachment: 4.4 Writing Tool – Peer Editing Checklist)

**Sample Lessons**

**Additional Resources**
- Resource for structuring your read alouds (See Attachment: 4.4 Resource – Structuring Read Alouds)
- Figurative language resources and activities: [http://www.sturgeon.k12.mo.us/elementary/numphrey/subjectpages/languagearts/figuresofspeech.html](http://www.sturgeon.k12.mo.us/elementary/numphrey/subjectpages/languagearts/figuresofspeech.html)
- Resources for activities on writing similes (See Attachment: 4.4 Resource – Writing Similes Activity)

**Literature Connections**
- Poems by Francisco Alarcon (See Attachment: 4.4 Text – Francisco Alarcon Poetry)
- *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros
- *My Name is Maria Isabel* by Alma Flor Ada
- *The Last Dragon* by Susan Miho Nunes
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- The Stranger by Chris Van Allsburg