

TEACHING INSTRUCTIONS



P.L.A.Y.
PERFORMING FOR LOS ANGELES YOUTH



DELAY

Written and performed
by Matt Sax
Developed in collaboration with
and Directed by Eric Rosen

[Sep 13–Oct 14, 2007
Kirk Douglas Theatre]



P.L.A.Y.
Performing for Los Angeles Youth

How to Use the Discovery Guide

Matt Sax. Photo by Michael Brosilow



TO THE TEACHER

The *Clay* Discovery Guide is designed to help you lead students through an exploration of the music and theatrical conventions used by Matt Sax in *Clay*. The initial portion of the guide is aimed at deepening students' understanding of the history of and cross-cultural relationships between different musical styles and types of storytelling. It is with this awareness of the interconnectedness of human expression that students can become even stronger critical thinkers, whether examining classical literature or modern day hip hop. The latter portions of the Discovery Guide are aimed at helping students find their particular voices through accessing personal experience, exercising poetic expression and exploring characterization. These Teaching Instructions also offer suggestions for alternate exercises, which will stimulate further discussion and the development of future creative work.

A chart is provided with a few examples that cross-reference instructional strands from the state Theatre Arts standards with English-Language Arts and English Language development standards.

The Discovery Guide is a starting point. Please adapt the material and extend the learning activities to meet the needs of your particular community of learners. Our hope is that the content is not merely useful, but also inspirational, and that you and your students will find joy in the process of learning through the multi-faceted art of theatre.

The Discovery Guide is not designed as an independent workbook. It is a resource for learners to develop skills in storytelling, literary analysis and collaboration that are essential in Theatre Arts, Language Arts, History/Social Sciences and other content areas. Oral discussion and writing prompts are designed so that students may relate key ideas to their personal experiences and the world around them. Teachers are expected to adapt or extend the prompts. Teachers may choose some prompts for small group discussion and others for the whole group.

Scope and Sequence of the Lessons
In order to provide a comprehensive and sequential unit of study, we suggest that students have the opportunity to explore the whole variety of lessons in the Discovery Guide.

The activities are designed for completion in sequence. Introduce the vocabulary before students encounter it in the reading. The activities on pages 4 through 10 are to be completed before the students see the production of *Clay*. The discussion and writing prompts on pages 11 through 14 and the Internet links and books on page 15 are intended to stimulate reflection, analysis and further inquiry after students attend the play.

THE GOALS

Regardless of grade level, the unit is designed to teach *enduring understandings* that students will take with them for life. One set of these understandings is about the art of theatre. The other is drawn from the play's themes. Charted below are some *essential questions* that can be raised before, during and after students' experience at the performance to guide them toward the enduring understandings.

	THEATRE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS	SOCIAL AND LITERARY THEMES
Enduring Understandings	<p>Knowing the basics of poetic language gives one the keys to understanding many forms of theatre, from a Shakespeare play to a hip hop musical.</p> <p>The basic archetypes of storyline and character are profoundly similar in both classical myths and contemporary drama.</p>	<p>The need for poetic expression and musicality is a fundamental human quality, not exclusive to any particular community of people.</p> <p>The basic themes in drama, such as the young person's journey into self-discovery and adulthood, are universal in every culture.</p> <p>The ability of the individual to channel personal challenges and hardship into artistic creativity is vital to the empowerment of that person.</p>
Essential Questions	<p>How does rhythm affect the intentions and impact of poetic language?</p> <p>Which elements of the main character's journey seem to be present in most myths and archetypal drama?</p> <p>Within the world of the play, how does a character's use of language, intellect and wit empower that character?</p>	<p>In what ways might audiences learn about their own lives by watching the journey of a character onstage?</p> <p>How might writing or rapping about difficulties or obstacles in one's life empower that person?</p> <p>What are the similarities between rap music and poetry?</p>

The Standards

ENGLISH-LANGUAGE ARTS

Literary Response and Analysis:

Structural Features of Literature

3.2 Compare and contrast the presentation of a similar theme or topic across genres to explain how the selection of genre shapes the theme or topic.

Narrative Analysis of

Grade-Level-Appropriate Text

3.6 Analyze the way in which authors through the centuries have used archetypes drawn from myth and tradition in literature, film, political speeches and religious writings.

Writing Strategies:

Organization and Focus

1.1 Establish a controlling impression or coherent thesis that conveys a clear and distinctive perspective on the subject and maintain a consistent tone and focus throughout the piece of writing.

1.2 Use precise language, action verbs, sensory details, appropriate modifiers and the active rather than the passive voice.

Writing Applications:

2.1 Write short stories:

- a. Relate a sequence of events and communicate the significance of the events to the audience.
- b. Locate scenes and incidents in specific places.
- c. Describe with concrete sensory details the sights, sounds and smells of a scene and the specific actions, movements, gestures and feelings of the characters.
- d. Pace the presentation of actions to accommodate changes in time and mood.
- e. Make effective use of descriptions of appearance, images, shifting perspectives and sensory details.

THEATRE

Artistic Perception:

Development of the Vocabulary of Theatre

1.1 Use the vocabulary of theatre, such as acting values, style, genre, design and theme, to describe theatrical experiences.

Historical and Cultural Context:

Role and Cultural Significance of Theatre

3.1 Identify and compare how film, theatre, television and electronic media productions influence values and behaviors.

Aesthetic Valuing:

Derivation of Meaning from Works of Theatre

4.2 Report on how a specific actor used drama to convey meaning in his or her performances.



Photo by Michael Brosilow

'BEFORE THE PLAY' Reading and Exercises

All of the questions posed to the individual student reader throughout this section of the Discovery Guide also provide strong material for pre-play and in-class group discussion.



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Page 4: The Seeds of Rhythmic Speech

Rationale: In *Clay*, performer Matt Sax uses hip hop music to tell a story. Although students may end up acquiring a deeper knowledge of hip hop, much of this Discovery Guide is aimed at deepening their understanding of hip hop's relationship to other forms of music, literature and storytelling. Because certain aspects of popular contemporary music may be "too close to home," it is important that students are presented with a broader view of the roots and history of the music. By tracing the lineage and relationships of rhythm, musicality and poetic language, particularly across different cultures, students can begin to appreciate the universality of the language of hip hop and apply this knowledge to other forms of drama and literature.

Exercise: Have students discuss their experiences of attending events such as hip hop shows, rock concerts or church services. Ask them how the rhythm and musicality of the events affected their experience.

Exercise: Read and discuss the descriptions of "The Griots of West Africa" and "Native American Tribal Chant." Just as these forms of rhythmic and musical speech served valuable functions within their respective societies, such as passing on tribal history and imparting wisdom, what functions might rap or other contemporary music serve within our daily lives?

Exercise: Play the first two selections from the provided CD, "Nege Sirimang" and "Sun Dance Song." The first excerpt is an example of West African griots music. There is also a video of griots on YouTube: type in "Griots of Yelekela." The second excerpt is an Apache sun dance. The sun dance ceremony celebrates renewal, spiritual rebirth and the regeneration of the earth. Have students write down what images come to mind for them. Then, ask the students to write down how the rhythm contributes to the overall experience of the song. Discuss what elements of rhythmic speech may be universal, regardless of language.

'BEFORE THE PLAY' Reading and Exercises

The Roots and Branches of Hip Hop

LIKE AN ENORMOUS TREE, the seeds of rhythmic speech have sprouted countless roots and branches the world over. In the United States, the rhythms, sounds, and language of Africa have merged with those of other immigrant and native cultures into an immense forest of musicality. One can trace the same strains of rhythmic speech through the work songs and spirituals of slavery, up through early blues music from the Mississippi Delta region, in the improvisation of jazz music, improvisation of scat singing and the work of the Beat Poets, and into the local street games and lingo of young people in urban centers. The same rhythms, rhymes and messages can even be heard in the speeches of African American preachers and political activists, such as Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, Jesse Jackson and Muhammad Ali.

In the early 1970s, performers like Grandmaster Flash flourished amidst a cultural explosion of dance (breakdancing), graffiti art and new styles of dress. Rappers like Run-DMC and LL Cool J carried the music to mass mainstream audiences. These new styles of music, dance and fashion became a meeting point for people of many different racial backgrounds, from African Americans to Latin and Asian Americans, to Anglo-Americans and many others. The Beatniks, those New York rappers of Jewish heritage, would become one of the most popular groups of the era. Several generations formed artists, such as Queen Latifah, came on the scene, breaking through gender barriers in the industry. While much of the music's tone focused on partying and dancing, some artists, such as Public Enemy, chose to use the medium to make sociopolitical statements, protesting economic and racial inequality. Different aspects of street life and culture began to surface in the music of various regions in the country, such as Gangsta rap on the West Coast (artists like N.W.A. and Ice T).

Vocabulary

Beat Poets: A group of African American writers and poets, popular in the 1950s and 1960s, who rejected traditional poetic values and artistic forms, many including black nationalism and poet Alan Ginsberg, incorporated Eastern philosophy and rhythms of jazz music.

Flow: A rapper's delivery, his/her particular cadence, rhyming ability and vocal style.

Shab: A style of jazz singing in which the vocalists improvised and usually left unfinished, often giving a rhythmic impetus to the music and inspiring movement or dance in the listener.

Scraper: A musical technique of changing the animal skin on most turntable left channels, often giving a rhythmic impetus to the music and inspiring movement or dance in the listener.

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The Roots and Branches...cont'd

In the 1980s, rap became more aware of itself as a media entity, many new artists began to play with their public images, pairing different pictures of themselves, and non-verbal characters in movies. Artists rapping about their own experiences, about making money and about realities in the media became commercial. Fewer and fewer artists are more than with the material rise and tragic deaths of highly talented rappers Tupac Shakur and The Notorious B.I.G.

A multitude of rappers and hip-hop artists have since emerged, with new styles nearly the same. However, the artists who have stood out over time are the ones who in some way, like Clay, have spoken their truth.

Exercise

Your teacher will play a selection of song excerpts for you. Listen carefully and respond below.

FIRST LISTEN: As you listen to each song excerpt for the first time, use this space to write words or phrases that stand out, images that the speaker is painting with their flow, etc.

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Pages 5–7: The Roots and Branches of Hip Hop

Rationale: Just as with studying any style of theatre or literature, it is important to familiarize one's self with the language, structure and themes of that style. Deeply intertwined with the history of hip hop is the history of both the United States and the many immigrant cultures that have commingled. The passion and struggles of the people can be heard in the voices and beats of the music. It is this through line of rhythm and basic human needs that makes hip hop so universal. As Matt Sax points out with *Clay*, regardless of race or circumstances, everyone has inner struggles and everyone must find a way to express those feelings and overcome them.

Exercise: Have students informally discuss their familiarity with current hip hop. Ask if any students know anything about the history of hip hop. If some students prefer different types of music, have them talk about what aspects of those types of music they respond to.

Exercise: Read and discuss the "Roots and Branches of Hip Hop" section, paying particular attention to the vocabulary words. Have students talk about their or their parents' familiarity with some of the older roots of hip hop, such as jazz and blues. It may be helpful for the teacher to share his or her particular musical taste and familiarity with these other forms.

Exercise: Listening Section

Play the selected excerpts from the songs on the CD provided.

First Listen: As you play each song excerpt for the first time, have students write down words as they come to mind. The purpose is for students to respond instinctually to the music.

Second Listen: As you play each song excerpt for the second time, have students answer the specific questions provided. This time, encourage students to think more critically about what and how the speaker is communicating. There is room in the Discovery Guide for only three responses. Choose three selections, or have students use a separate sheet for additional songs.

The excerpts on the CD are from the following songs:

- 1. Nege Sirmang** (Traditional)
Alhaji Amara Sahone:
Griots: Ministers of the Spoken Word
Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, 1975
- 2. Sun Dance Song** (Traditional)
Pow Wow Songs – Music of the Plains Indians (Apache) 1975
- 3. Kyema Mimin** (Traditional)
Choying Drolma & Steve Tibbetts: *Chö*
Rykodisc, 1997
Tibetan Buddhist chant, passed down from master to student over thousands of years

'BEFORE THE PLAY' Reading and Exercises

Exercise

SECOND LISTEN: As you listen the second time, answer the following questions for each selection:

1. What is the speaker communicating? Is he or she delivering a message? Telling a story? Stating or demonstrating something about him- or herself? (Strength, power, style, etc.) Conveying something personal?
2. What unusual words, code words or slang do you hear the speaker using?
3. What sounds do you hear the speaker using in place of words? What feeling do the sounds convey?
4. How does the rhythm of the song contribute to what the speaker is trying to express?

Song Title: _____

1. Message: _____

2. Invented Words/Slang: _____

3. Sounds: _____

4. Rhythm: _____

Song Title: _____

1. Message: _____

2. Invented Words/Slang: _____

3. Sounds: _____

4. Rhythm: _____

Song Title: _____

1. Message: _____

2. Invented Words/Slang: _____

3. Sounds: _____

4. Rhythm: _____

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4. **She Began to Lie** (Greg Hale Jones; contains "Sea Lion Woman" sung by Christine & Katherine Shipp)
Carter Burwell: *The General's Daughter* Motion Picture Soundtrack
Milan Records, 1999
"Sea Lion Woman" is an African-American work song, recorded in the 1930s.
5. **The Message** (Grandmaster Flash & the Furious Five)
Grandmaster Flash & the Furious Five: *The Message*
Sugar Hill Records, 1982
6. **I'm Bad** (L.L. Cool J)
L.L. Cool J: *Bigger and Deffer*
Def Jam/Columbia, 1987
7. **La Raza** (Kid Frost)
Kid Frost: *Hispanic Causing Panic*
Virgin Records, 1990
8. **Ladies First** (Queen Latifah)
Queen Latifah featuring Monie Love: *All Hail the Queen*
Tommy Boy Records, 1989
9. **Fight the Power** (Shocklee, Sadler and Ridenhour)
Public Enemy: *Do The Right Thing*
Motion Picture Soundtrack
Tamla Records, 1989
10. **8 Mile** (Eminem)
Eminem: *Music from and Inspired by the Motion Picture 8 Mile*
Shady Records, 2002
11. **I'm Raw** (Lyrics Born)
Lyrics Born: *Same !@# \$ Different Day*
Quannum Projects, 2005
Lyrics Born is a Japanese-American rap artist.

Alternate Exercise: Have students do the above exercise with other songs of your choosing.

'BEFORE THE PLAY' Reading and Exercises



Uncovering the Myth.

CARL JUNG (1875-1961) Swiss psychologist and psychiatrist. Widely considered the "father" of analytical psychology, Jung theorized that all people share similar patterns of unconscious thinking, which he termed the "collective unconscious." Symbols that appeared frequently in the collective unconscious he called "archetypes."

JOSEPH CAMPBELL (1897-1987) American researcher and author of many major works on comparative mythology. Highly influenced by the work of Carl Jung, Campbell explored the common functions of myths in human cultures, examining archetypes in folklore and literature from around the world.

Vocabulary
Archetype: A symbol, theme or character type that represents an essential element of a person's human experience.
Catalyst: A person, place or external character who, when united with the Hero, provides the hero with deeper strength and understanding when the hero is timid, the figure will often be male.
Hero: The main character, who embarks on a major quest and must complete both internal and external objectives in order to find his true purpose.
Mentor: The character who guides or trains the Hero. Frequently the "wise old man" or woman.
Oracle: The character or character's who have prophetic ability to be open to the laws of the universe or to the world of the story.

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Pages 8–10: Uncovering the Myth

Rationale: Just as all styles of music share certain common elements, so do many styles of storytelling. Particularly in the case of myths, which speak to very basic themes of human nature, the same types of characters and story arcs continually reappear, regardless of cultural difference. It is important for young people to see the continuity between classical tales and modern day stories. A basic grasp of fundamental character types and themes can be invaluable to a student, not only as a writer or performer, but also as a critical thinker in our often chaotic modern world.

Exercise: Read and discuss the archetype vocabulary. Have students break down the character types and story events within both *Star Wars* and *The Matrix*. Ask students if there are other modern stories (books, plays, movies) which may have similar elements. Consider the *Harry Potter* series, *Lord of the Rings* or similar contemporary stories.

Alternate Exercise: Choose a classic play or other work of fiction, such as *Hamlet* or *Catcher in the Rye*, which has similar archetypal elements. It may prove beneficial to pick a work which the students are already studying in English class. Draw parallels to the contemporary films already discussed. Whether examining works from classic literature or popular culture, this type of critical thinking will help students become more active participants in their environment.

'BEFORE THE PLAY' Reading and Exercises

Exercise

LET'S TAKE A LOOK at some more modern stories and see how Clifford's journey might be similar.

ARCHETYPE	STAR WARS	THE MATRIX	CLAY
The Hero	Luke Skywalker	Neo	Clifford
The Mentor	Obi-Wan Kenobi	Morpheus	
The Oracle	Yoda	The Oracle	
The Goddess	Princess Leia	Trinity	
Training of the young initiate	Light saber and other Jedi skills	Martial art, spitting, bending laws of gravity, etc.	
Advice of the Mentor	"Use the Force"	"Free Your Mind"	
Temptation away from the true path	Luke is tempted by the Dark Side	Neo is distracted by the woman in the red dress	
Hero finds his true power	Luke becomes a Jedi	Neo becomes The One	

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Pages 8–10: *cont'd*

Exercise: After you see the play, have students fill in the “Clay” column in the archetype grid. The answers are as follows, although students may have alternate interpretations, which they should be allowed to defend:

THE HERO.....Clifford
 THE MENTOR.....Sir John
 THE ORACLE.....The Chorus
 THE GODDESS.....Jackie
 THE MENTOR TRAINING.....Rhyming, Beat Boxing Battle, Knowledge of Hip Hop
 MENTOR'S ADVICE.....“Speak Your Truth”
 TEMPTATION AWAY.....Clifford tempted to stay w/ Jackie
 FROM PATH and fight w/ his father
 HERO FINDS HIS POWER.....Clifford becomes “Clay”

Compare Clifford's journey to the journeys of the main characters from the film examples and other works you have chosen to include.

Exercise

MATT HAS USED MYTHS and archetypes to develop Clifford and the many characters in Clifford's life. In learning how to speak in the voice of another character, it is important to first understand that character and his or her point of view. Break up into pairs. Take a few minutes to interview your partner. Find out the answers to the following questions.

- What skills or power does your partner possess?
- Who has served as a mentor, teacher or guide for your partner? (There may be more than one.)
- What skills did those mentors teach him/her?
- What obstacles has your partner encountered in life?

(There are no wrong answers: struggles with parents, friends, school, gangs, money, feelings of isolation or loneliness; an accident that altered your body or mind; the loss of your physical or emotional foundation. All of these situations touch everyone's life in some way, and we each have our own experience of them.)

- Who would your partner like to meet one day? (Examples might be: athletes, musical artists, political leaders, actors, etc.)
- What does your partner hope to learn from him/her?

• OPEN QUESTION: Ask your partner something else that you would like to know about him or her. Write down something that you find surprising or unexpected.

Now envision your partner in the future. Imagine him or her as a real life master (or Jedi) with a set of extraordinary skills. These skills can be "realistic" or "fantastical," but must come from the core of who that person is. He or she may be an incredible artist, athlete, communicator or super hero; anything is valid. Use your imagination. Describe his or her skills and power.

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Exercise: Have students break into pairs. Give them a short amount of time to interview one another and answer the given questions. The purpose of doing this portion of the Discovery Guide in pairs is twofold:

- Working with a partner will allow students to practice stepping into the shoes of a character. The ability to understand another's experiences and desires is crucial to being able to write in another character's voice or to perform that character in a theatrical setting.
- Working in pairs enables students to develop a deeper understanding of each other's background and unique qualities. Through recognition of similar life experiences, students tend to feel less “alone,” and are more willing to share and articulate their own personal stories. These exercises are particularly effective when an atmosphere of fun and mutual respect is encouraged.

AFTER THE PLAY

ENTER THE PLAY

Stepping into the Flow

"Listen to me closely... it only comes out truthful if it comes from a truthful place. Let me repeat myself... it only comes out truthful if it comes from a truthful place."
— SIR JOHN M. CLAY

CLIFFORD LEARNS TO FIND INNER POWER through words. Instead of beating everything inside, or using destructiveness and violence to express himself, he chooses to channel all his thoughts, feelings and energy creatively into language. The more he practices or confronts the emotion, the more strength he gains by expressing them. The most important step in finding a flow is giving yourself permission to be truthful.

FREE ASSOCIATION
Choose an experience that happened to you, either recently or a long time ago. Try to choose one that was particularly emotional (joy, smiling, crying, confusion). As you remember the experience, use the technique from the first listening exercise on page 6. As before there is no need for grammar, complete sentences, rhyming or even logic. Just words. As if you are re-living the experience, either describe what is happening or simply use whatever words to describe your thoughts and impressions as they come to you.

EXAMPLE: "Can... anytime... Oh... so I can have... always... get with just that... the point of... about... all I remember is... and..."
By next to name yourself. And, as Sir John first advises Clifford, all you have to do is "come from a truthful place."

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Page 11: Stepping into the Flow

Rationale: During the process of developing *Clay*, Matt Sax spent a great deal of time improvising the language and storylines. It wasn't until a fair amount of revision, both alone and with director Eric Rosen, that the final play took its shape. One of the most important steps in beginning such verbal creative expression is freeing up any preconceived restrictions in the mind and allowing the ideas and words to come naturally.

With the Free Association exercises, the initial point is less about developing polished pieces and more about getting the student into closer contact with how they think and process language. The more a student is familiar with the way his or her mind works, the easier it will be to apply that mind to different modes of literary expression or performance. Whether a student is ultimately drawn to writing short stories, poetry, music lyrics or non-fiction, or performing through public speaking, rap or music, the starting point is affirming the student's unique voice and unique way of thinking.

Exercise: Free Association

Allow students, either in class or at home, to fill in the Free Association page. This is their space to recount a personal experience without any restrictions of form. In many cases, the process of writing words and phrases loosely, or out of rational order, gets one's mind closer in touch with the creative and poetic instinct, allowing emotional truth to surface more quickly. In *Clay*, the character of Clifford is able to transcend his dark, painful and confusing emotions by first confronting them and articulating them. Encourage students to be as honest as possible. The more honest the exploration, the more the student will have to draw from creatively.

AFTER THE PLAY

Finding the Form

MIKE TYSON
Light Saber Skills
Marital Arts Techniques
Lyrical Skills

SHAKESPEARE | EMINEM

JUST AS MIKE TYSON honed his light saber skills and then developed his marital arts techniques, Clifford is able to sharpen his lyrical skills through practice. With his life experiences and passion to communicate provide the raw fuel, it is his careful choice of words and increasing mental dexterity that make him stronger as an artist and as a person.

Ultimately, there is no wrong way to express yourself with words. Throughout history, countless poets and rappers alike have chosen to communicate in different ways. However, just like any athletes in their chosen sport or any artists in their medium, a writer's ability to master the form greatly increases his or her power. In many ways, careful word choice and poetic form are like the rapper's light saber.

SHAKESPEARE
If few shadows have offended,
Think but this and all is mended:
That you have bin dumfounded here,
While these visions did appear.
And this weak and idle theme,
No more yielding but a dream,
Gardes do not reprehend;
If you pardon, we will mend,
And, as I am an honest Puck,
If we have unlearned luck,
How to stagger the swaggers' tongues,
We will make amends ere long;
Else the Puck a liar call;
So good night unto you all,
Give my love to those that mend,
And Robin shall restore amends.
—Puck, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

EMINEM
Soon as a verse starts I eat an MC's heart
What is he thinking? How not to go against me? Smart.
And the dumbest few people hang on every word.
I'll probably never get the props I feel I ever deserve
But I'll never be served my spot is forever reserved
If I ever leave earth that would be the death of me first.
Cause in my heart of hearts I know nothing could ever be worse.
That's why I'm clever when I put together every verse
—"Til I Collapse," *The Eminem Show*

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LET'S TAKE A LOOK at some basic elements common to both rap and poetry:

Assonance: Repetition of a particular vowel sound
"Smooth since days of Uxendens, never less,
never choose to bruise crews who..."
—"Prophecy," *Notorious B.I.G.*

Consonance: Repetition of a particular consonant sound
"And the pillars and uncertain rustling of each
purple curtain"
—"The Raven," *Edgar Allan Poe*

End Rhyme: Rhyming the last word from two or more lines
"Ladies with an attitude/
Follows that were in the mood!"
—"Vogue," *Madonna*

Internal Rhyme: Rhyming words within a line
"Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak
December,"
—"The Raven," *Edgar Allan Poe*

Simile: A direct comparison of two unlike things using "like" or "as"
"Let it flow like a mudslide!"
—"No Sleep 'til Brooklyn," *Notorious B.I.G.*

Metaphor: An indirect comparison using a word or phrase that ordinarily describes one thing to describe something else
"All the world's a stage, and all the men and
women merely players"
—*In the Life 2*, *William Shakespeare*

Exercise

- CIRCLE** and label the uses of assonance, consonance, and rhyme, internal rhyme, simile and metaphor in the Shakespeare and Eminem samples at left.
- What are the differences between the two samples?

3. Pair up with your partner again. Take turns making aloud your "Nine Associations" poems. See if you can identify any use of simile and metaphor or perhaps any rhyming sounds in each other's poems. Write any examples you find below.

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Pages 12–13: Finding the Form

Rationale: One valuable way to deepen students' knowledge and familiarity with different forms of classic poetry and prose is to reveal the relationship between the classic forms and current forms, such as rap. It is easy to forget that poetic skill is an enduring human art form. Sometimes the commercial or other material aspects of the music industry can obscure the profound talent and lyrical skill that contemporary performers possess.

Exercise: Have students read and examine the examples of verse from Shakespeare's *A Mid Summer Night's Dream* and Eminem's song "Til I Collapse." Have them label any examples they can find of assonance, consonance, end rhyme, internal rhyme, simile or metaphor. The focus can be less about writing a perfect structural analysis and more about beginning the process of identifying similar structural elements.

AFTER THE PLAY

Bringing It All Together

NOW THAT YOU HAVE EXAMINED the elements of poetic language, take what you learned about your partner and imagine him or her as a character in a story. Describe in a poem, rap or flow of words an experience in which your partner had to struggle or overcome a difficult obstacle. Write in the voice of your partner, as if you are the character. You are free to use any or all of the figures of speech discussed (rhyme, metaphor, simile, etc.)

NOW WRITE A POEM, RAP OR WORD FLOW using the description you wrote of your partner in the future. Describe his or her incredible abilities, skills or powers. Again, feel free to let your choice be realistic or fantastical. Write in the voice of your partner, as if you are the character. The type of poem, rap or word flow is up to you. You may write about your partner or from his/her point of view.

The Rhythm

YOUR CLASS is now going to assemble as a group. Whether you are standing, sitting in chairs or sitting on the ground, the important thing is for the group to be in a circle. It's up to you, as a group, to decide how your rhythm is going to be created. If a drum is accessible, have someone start a beat on the drum. Tapping out a rhythm on a desk or clapping is a great idea as well. If someone in your group knows how to beat-box, give that a try. If you have access to any other musical instruments or recordings of beats, feel free to use them. Just keep in mind that all you really need is a basic beat.

Take turns around the circle reading aloud your "Free Association" exercise on page 11.

Now, with the beat beneath you, take turns reading:

1. Your first poem, rap or word flow from this page.
2. Your second poem, rap or word flow from this page.

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Page 14: Bringing It All Together

Rationale: In *Clay*, Matt Sax's main character is able to empower himself by turning raw emotion and experience into poetic language. By speaking his truth and articulating his sense of self through intelligence and wit, he takes charge of his past and reinvents himself as the "hero" of his own story. By taking on the characterization of his or her partner, each student can practice dramatizing another persona through poetic language. Frequently, when taking on the stories of other people or fictional characters, we tend to say just as much about ourselves in the process.

Exercise: Using what students learned about their partners in the interview section of the guide, have them write a rap, poem or free flow of words describing an experience in which their partner had to struggle or overcome a difficult obstacle. Students will undoubtedly have varying levels of ability with rhyming or poetry, should they choose these forms. This is to be expected. The main point is to allow students to use whatever poetic language comes to them without any pressure to create the perfect composition.

Exercise: Ask the students to do the same exercise as above (rap, poem, or free flow of words) but have this piece describe their partner's abilities, skills or powers from the interview section. Not unlike the "hero's journey," this is a vision of their partner in the future. The student may be envisioned as an incredible artist, athlete, political leader or even

a super hero. Whether realistic or fantastical, the choices can reflect some truth of hidden potential in the student.

Exercise: Assemble the class as a group. It is usually valuable to have the students gather in a circle so that everyone is visible to one another. Have the students take turns reading aloud their "Free Association" exercise from page 11 in their Discovery Guide.

Exercise: The Rhythm
Creating the beat can be as simple as someone tapping out a rhythm on a desktop. If there is access to a drum, other musical instruments or even recordings of beats, feel free to use them. If any of the students know how to beat-box (create beats vocally), that rhythm can be a powerful choice as well. While assembled in the circle, have the students take turns speaking the following:

- Their poem, rap or word flow about their partner's struggle
- Their poem, rap or word flow about their partner's future powers or skills

Some pieces may fall in line with the beat more naturally than others. If the piece is a rap, working with the beat will be essential. If the piece is a poem or flow of words, you can allow the beat to drop into the background or simply remove the beat and allow the student to speak his or her piece *a cappella*. The main point is to have fun with this exercise, keep everything loose and tailor it as you see fit.