Unit Title: *Taming of the Shrew*
Subject/Course: Language Arts
Topic: Understanding Shakespeare's Language
Grade Level: Eighth Grade
Designed By: Pamela Peters

Brief Summary of Unit:

Learning to read and use Shakespearean language is a skill all young students should develop. Often, students see Shakespeare as intimidating and undesirable material; however, with a little practice and understanding, they can learn to recognize its value from both a reading and writing standpoint. The six week unit will introduce Shakespeare through his play *The Taming of the Shrew*.

Established Goals Using the Common Core:

L.6.1e Recognize variations from standard English in their own and others' writing and speaking, and identify and use strategies to improve expression in conventional language.

L.6.3a Vary sentence patterns for meaning, reader / listener interest, and style.

L.7.3a Choose language that expresses ideas precisely and concisely, recognizing and eliminating wordiness and redundancy.

Students will demonstrate an increased ability to work effectively alone and collaboratively with partner(s) or in an ensemble (1.17)

Students will read plays from a variety of genres and styles; compare and contrast the structure of plays to the structures of other forms of literature. (2.11).

Understandings:
Students will understand that...

* The gender and sexual politics in Shakespeare's plays are complex and inform the modern world.

Essential Questions:

*Is a work like this relevant today?

*Is the play universal?

*Is this play sexist or is it merely a product of its times?

Stage 2--Assessment Evidence

Performance Tasks:
1) **Participation:** Participating in the learning activities described below.

Learning Activities:

1) Ask the students what a mathematical equation, Leonardo da Vinci's *Last Supper*, and an excerpt from Shakespeare's *The Taming of Shrew* (V.2.148-151) have in common. Wait for responses and discuss.
2) Explain to the class that all three examples are complex structures that can be broken down to their simplest forms. Discuss how this can be done with all three examples.
3) Students will work in groups eliminating words and phrases from Kate's monologue in V.2. 148-151. I will model for the students how to do this and how it moves the play forward and facilitates their understanding of Shakespeare's work. In addition from crossing out the extraneous words from the passage, the students will understand that they can find the theme of the passage and code-switch it into their everyday language. In this way, they will be working on their writing and grammar as we are currently composing complex sentences in grammar. I will review the elements of a complex sentence and model how the line that I have simplified can be code-switched into standard English. Finally, as alien as Shakespeare's words may sound to them, I want them to understand that Shakespeare's words transcend time and there are relevant themes that they can compose #Hashtags with, which is the student's current form of quick communication via the Internet. The students will allocate roles among themselves and work together.   They will have to assign roles to their group for who will cross out the extraneous words from the passage, compose a complex sentence from the passage, compose the Tweet, and compose the #Hashtag.
4) Students will work independently composing a complex-sentence, a #Hashtag, and a simplified version of their passage.
5) Each group will come up to the Smart Board and eliminate the extra words and simplify their passage, write their complex sentence and #Hashtags. The students who did not write on the board will be selected to explain their answers.
6) This is a formative assessment, and I will be observing **everyone** and expecting **all** to participate and demonstrate understanding. **All** students will be expected to demonstrate the technique of cutting out and simplifying Shakespeare's words and as we begin to read the play in the up-coming weeks. Students will be required to annotate their packets using this technique and answer the questions from their packet.

Performance Tasks:
After finishing this exercise, students should be able to do the following:
* Understand Shakespeare's language by taking an excerpt from the play and find the most basic elements of the story.
* Code-switch Shakespeare's language into standard English and apply grammatical lessons taught in class such as dependent/independent clauses (complex sentences).
* Code-switch Shakespeare's language into modern language by creating a modern day Tweet and #Hashtag from the original excerpt.