



Dr. La Tanya Manuel



Unit Plan: *One Crazy Summer* by Rita Williams-Garcia—literary analysis through the DSRP method (Grade 5)

Teacher: Dr. La Tanya Manuel, Mid-City's Prescott School, Los Angeles

Context & Background

Overview:

[*One Crazy Summer*](#), by Rita Williams-Garcia, is a Newberry Honor historical fiction novel published in 2010. It follows the lives of the Gaither sisters who travel from Brooklyn, New York to Oakland, California during the summer of 1968 to be reintroduced, reacquainted, and reunited with their mother, Cecile.

This unit focuses on a literary analysis of the novel in the four domains of English Language Arts (ELA)—Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking—and is driven by applying the DSRP systems thinking protocol (Cabrera & Colosi 2012).

What comes before:

Summer Break: This unit ideally begins soon after the start of the new school year.

Students reflect (either in writing or discussion) about their summers—followed by a student partner discussion to find 3-5 similarities in their summer experiences.

Students can tap into their personal experiences about their summer vacation and make a distinction: In what ways was your summer eventful and uneventful?

Other background concepts and knowledge (Note: These can also be introduced during the unit):

- [The UN Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs)
- [Systems Principles](#) underlying systems thinking
- [DSRP method](#) for systems thinking

What comes after this unit:

As this unit introduces the DSRP Method, students can use this systems thinking protocol throughout their subsequent learning.



Standards & Goals

Related ELA Common Core Standards

- **RI.5.1** — Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- **RI.5.3** — Explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text based on specific information in the text.
- **RI.5.7** — Draw on information from multiple print or digital sources, demonstrating the ability to locate an answer to a question quickly or to solve a problem efficiently.
- **RL.5.2** — Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.
- **RL.5.3** — Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).
- **RL.5.5** — Explain how a series of chapters, scenes, or stanzas fits together to provide the overall structure of a particular story, drama, or poem.
- **RL.5.6** — Describe how a narrator's or speaker's point of view influences how events are described.
- **RL.5.9** — Compare and contrast stories in the same genre (e.g., mysteries and adventure stories) on their approaches to similar themes and topics.
- **SL.5.1** — Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 5 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- **SL.5.2** — Summarize a written text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
- **W.5.1** — Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information
- **W.5.3** — Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.
- **W.5.9** — Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Related UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

- #1 No Poverty



- #2 Zero Hunger
- #3 Good Health and Well-Being
- #4 Quality Education
- #10 Reduced Inequalities
- #11 Sustainable Cities and Communities
- #16 Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions

Related Social-emotional Learning Goals:

- Empathy
- Developing positive relationships
- Community building

Related Systems Principles:

- Systems adapt and change
- Systems are interconnected
- Systems need energy
- Systems can be human-made

Materials & Resources

- [One Crazy Summer](#) by Rita Williams-Garcia (print or audio book)
- “I am” poem template (Click [HERE](#) for an example)
- United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
 - [Overview](#)
 - [Preamble](#)
 - [Introductory video](#)
- (Optional) Current events lesson: “[As New Police Reform Laws Sweep Across the U.S., Some Ask: Are They Enough?](#)” from “The Learning Network” in *The New York Times*
- Class journals
- (For Teachers) [Thinking at Every Desk](#) by Derek Cabrera and Laura Colosi. Click [HERE](#) for a general overview of the DSRP method

Instruction



OVERVIEW

Suggested time: 11 days with 60-90 dedicated minutes daily. Reading and learning applications can be done individually by students, collaboratively in small reading groups, or as a whole class.

DAY 1 (Chapters 1-3 in One Crazy Summer)

Text connection:

- Whole- or small-group KWL diagram on Cassius Clay. Click [HERE](#) for a brief introduction/review of the KWL strategy.

DSRP applications:

- **Distinctions:** Who are the Gaither sisters (main story characters)? Students identify character traits of the three Gaither sisters (Delphine, Vonetta, and Fern) in their class journals
- **Relationships:** Besides just being sisters, what relationships exist between Delphine, Vonetta, and Fern?

Extension:

- Identify the route of the Gaither sisters' trip on a US map.
-

DAY 2 (Chapters 4-6)

DSRP applications:

- **Perspective:** From the Gaither sisters' perspectives, who is Ming?
 - **Distinctions:** What is a mother? and What is not a mother?
 - **Perspective:** From your perspective, draw an illustration of Cecile's green stucco house
-

DAY 3 (Chapters 7-9)

Text connection:

- Whole- or small-group KWL diagram on the Black Panther Party

DSRP applications:

- **Systems:** What are the parts and people that made up the Black Panther Party? What larger systems was the Black Panther Party part of?
 - **Systems:** Choose one of the book's characters. Create an infographic describing what parts (e.g., character traits, identities, stories) make up that character and what larger systems or relationships that character is part of.
-

DAY 3A (Introduce the UN Sustainable Development Goals)



Dr. La Tanya Manuel

- [Overview](#)
- [Preamble](#)
- [Introductory video](#)

DAY 4 (Chapters 10-12)

DSRP applications:

- Perspective: Describe the Black Panthers from Delphine's point of view
- Relationships: In what ways were the Black Panther Party and their work related to today's UN Sustainable Development Goals?

DAY 5 (Chapters 13-15)

General questions:

- What has surprised you so far?
- What questions do you still have about the characters?
- In your opinion, do you believe it is time for Fern to stop playing with Miss Patty Cake? Why or why not?

DAY 6 (Chapters 16-18)

General systems thinking application:

- Which Systems Thinking Principles apply to this text so far (provide supporting evidence)?

DAY 7 (Chapters 19-21)

DSRP application:

- Distinctions: What is justice? What is *not* justice? How does this relate to the book?

General application questions:

- When is it a good time to take a stand?
- What injustice would you take a stand against? Why?

DAY 8 (Chapters 22-25)

Current event connection:

- Policing and policing reform: Consider, as preparation, engaging students in an age-appropriate variation of [THIS LESSON](#) from "The Learning Network" from *The New York Times*

DSRP application (for homework):



Dr. La Tanya Manuel

- **Perspective:** Interview a family member, community member, or public servant (police officer, firefighter, etc.) about their thoughts about policing and police reform

DAY 9 (Chapters 26-29)

DSRP applications:

- **Perspective:** From the perspective of a character of your choice, craft an “I Am” poem for a class-wide Poetry Slam Click [HERE](#) for a template or use your own)
- **Perspective:** From your perspective of having read this book, how would you re-design and draw the book cover?

DAY 10 (Chapters 30-33 / end of book)

General systems thinking application:

- Focus on the systems principle—systems adapt and change. Which character(s) changed significantly over time in the novel (provide supporting text evidence)?

Additional work:

- Students peer edit, revise, and publish their “I Am” poems for their chosen character.

DAY 11: Class-wide Poetry Slam

So What?

Relevance and/or immediacy for this learning and this work:

- Students connect the systems encountered by the characters and other people of color in 1968 with to present-day local, national, and global reform efforts.
- Students grapple with the saying, “Don’t judge a book by its cover,” and seek opportunities to build positive friendships and family relationships

Level of importance (e.g., school, local, global):

This unit is important at multiple levels (school, local, and global). It works to teach students to show respect across racial barriers, recognize the injustices inherent in communities of color, such as police brutality, poverty, hunger, and unemployment.

Assessments

Formative: Note-taking and work recorded in students’ class journals



Dr. La Tanya Manuel



Summative: “I Am” poems from a character’s perspective

Affective: Understanding communities, practicing empathy, and building positive family relationships

Types of student work products: Student notes, drawings, and reflections in class journals, along with “I Am” poems

Applications

Students can deepen their use of the DSRP method by applying it to future work across disciplines.

Other similar age-appropriate titles for use later in the year or in student literature circles:

- [*Brown Girl Dreaming*](#) by Jacqueline Woodson
- [*Bud, Not Buddy*](#) by Christopher Paul Curtis
- [*Child of the Dream \(A Memoir of 1963\)*](#) by Sharon Robinson
- [*Stella By Starlight*](#) by Sharon M. Draper
- [*The Lions of Little Rock*](#) by Kirstin Levine
- [*The Watsons Go to Birmingham*](#) by Christopher Paul Curtis