Approaching Walden 2006
Curriculum Unit

Directing the Eye:
Interior and Exterior Landscapes

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Hopewell Junction, NY
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Directing the Eye:
Interior and Exterior Landscapes

The Hudson River Valley: The setting for a very personal Walden to be discovered within oneself in our beautiful backyard.

Teresa Sutton
John Jay High School
Hopewell Junction, NY
"Direct your eye right inward, and you’ll find
   A thousand regions in your mind
   Yet undiscovered. Travel them and be
   Expert in home-cosmography."
from Walden’s concluding chapter (Thoreau’s misquote of William Habbington)
Short Abstract of Curriculum Unit (3-6 sentences):

Henry David Thoreau believed that one did not need to search the world over to learn about life or to gain insight into oneself. Individuals have endless regions to explore in their own backyards and within themselves. Part 1 of this unit allows students to turn their own eyes inward and explore their developing beings and the area close to their homes. Part 2 allows students to learn all about the Historic Hudson River Valley, where they live. Both parts give students an opportunity to do service. In Part 1, the stewardship is directed toward the self. Learning self-nurturing is an important step in maturing, whether you grow up in a home that helps you develop a strong sense of self-esteem and belonging or not. In Part 2, the stewardship is directed towards the larger community. Students will learn that they can do something positive to help their community and the environment.

List of Reading Materials:

“Sounds” from Walden by Henry David Thoreau
“Where I Lived, and What I Lived For” from Walden by Henry David Thoreau
Poem “In a Dark Time” by Theodore Roethke
Writing Toward Home: Tales and Lessons to Find Your Way by Georgia Heard

List of Equipment (i.e. technology, scientific measurement tools, etc.):

Computer Lab with Internet Access for group work
“In a Dark Time” (Lesson 1)

Name - Teresa Sutton
Unit Title - The Inward Eye: Stewardship Towards Self
Lesson # - 1
Lesson Title – “In a Dark Time”
Lesson Duration - 1 day

“Direct your eye right inward, and you’ll find
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from Walden’s concluding chapter (Thoreau’s misquote of William Habbington)

Abstract (2-5 sentences):

Theodore Roethke’s poem “In a Dark Time” uses the metaphor of the eye as a portal to one’s deepest emotions. Analysis of this poem sets the stage for later discussions of the inward eye.

Goals/Objectives:

Students will analyze poetry for literary response and expression (NYS English Language Arts Standard 2).

Procedure:

Poem is read aloud in class twice. Students discuss answers to questions.

Timeline:

One 42 minute class period.

Topic(s) Covered:

Literary elements of theme and extended metaphor are discussed.

Specific Readings: Poem “In a Dark Time” by Theodore Roethke
Activities/Homework:

In-class poetry activity. (See Handout on next page.)

Assessment/Rubric:

Teacher observation.
“In a Dark Time”
by Theodore Roethke (1908-1963)

In a dark time, the eye begins to see,
I meet my shadow in the deepening shade;
I hear my echo in the echoing wood--
A lord of nature weeping to a tree,
I live between the heron and the wren,
Beasts of the hill and serpents of the den.

What’s madness but nobility of soul
At odds with circumstance? The day’s on fire!
I know the purity of pure despair,
My shadow pinned against a sweating wall,
That place among the rocks--is it a cave,
Or winding path? The edge is what I have.

A steady storm of correspondences!
A night flowing with birds, a ragged moon,
And in broad day the midnight come again!
A man goes far to find out what he is--
Death of the self in a long, tearless night,
All natural shapes blazing unnatural light.

Dark, dark my light, and darker my desire.
My soul, like some heat-maddened summer fly,
Keeps buzzing at the sill. Which I is I?
A fallen man, I climb out of my fear.
The mind enters itself, and God the mind,
And one is One, free in the tearing wind.

Questions:
1. Who or what does the poet meet ‘in a dark time’?
2. What happens ‘in broad day’?
3. What emotion does the poet say he feels with ‘purity’?
4. In as much detail as you can, describe the scene that the poem depicts and explain how it makes you feel.
5. This poem uses an extended metaphor to talk about someone searching for something. What does the speaker say he is searching for, and what does it stand for?
6. The poet comes to a ‘place among the rocks’ and wonders if he sees ‘a cave / or a winding path’. What is the significance of these contrasting images?
7. Is the poet’s dilemma solved at the end of the poem?
“Where I Lived, and What I Lived For” (Lesson 2)

Name - Teresa Sutton  
Unit Title - The Inward Eye: Stewardship Towards Self  
Lesson # - 2  
Lesson Title – “Where I Lived, and What I Lived For”  
Lesson Duration - 3 days

“Direct your eye right inward, and you’ll find  
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from Walden’s concluding chapter (Thoreau’s misquote of William Habbington)

Abstract (2-5 sentences):

Students will examine Thoreau’s thoughts about his personal search for meaning in his own life. This will set the stage for the next set of activities where students will imitate his process.

Goals/Objectives:

Students will read, write, listen and speak for literary response, critical analysis and expression. (NYS English Language Arts Standard #2 and #3)

Students will actively engage in the process of creating a piece of visual art. (NYS The Arts Standard #1)

Topics Covered:
Stewardship towards self  
Thoreau’s advice

Specific Readings:
“Where I Lived, and What I Lived For” from Walden

Procedure/Activities/Homework:

Part 1:  
Students will read “Where I Lived, and What I Lived For” from Walden for homework. Open class with a question: What does it mean to live deliberately? Discussion in class
will focus on stewardship towards self and Thoreau’s advice that appears in the form of adages such as:

“Simplicity, Simplicity, Simplicity.”
“To affect the quality of the day is the highest of the arts.”
“Morning is when I am awake and there is a dawn in me.”
“We do not ride upon the railroad; it rides upon us.”

Part 2:
Bumper stickers. Contemporary advice for self or peers. Students are to design bumper stickers with advice in the vein of Thoreau.

**Assessment/Rubric:**

Bumper Sticker Rubric:

(20 points - Excellent 19-20/Good 17-18/Average 14-16/Needs Improvement 14 and below)

Craftsmanship (20 points)
Effectiveness of Color Use (20 points)
Effectiveness/Cleverness of Adage (20 points)
Creativity (20 points)
Effort and Participation (20 points)
Total Points = 100

Extra Credit: You did something special, beyond all expectations.
**Self-Stewardship Project (Lesson 3)**

| Name - Teresa Sutton  
| Unit Title - The Inward Eye: Stewardship Towards Self  
| Lesson # - 3  
| Lesson Title - Self-Stewardship Project (or My Favorite Project - ME !)  
| Lesson Duration - 3 days |

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from Walden’s concluding chapter (Thoreau’s misquote of William Habbington)

**Abstract (2-5 sentences):**

Young people today experience a tremendous amount of stress across a variety of areas in their lives. Service is always directed outward towards others, towards the environment, towards the less fortunate. Why not also think of stewardship towards self? Who better to take care of you than you?

**Goals/Objectives:**

Students will practice one of the components of personal wellness (nutrition and weight control, disease prevention, stress management, safety, and physical fitness), establish a personal profile with fitness/wellness goals, and engage in appropriate activities to improve or sustain their fitness. (NYS Health, Physical Education, Family, Consumer Sciences Standard #2)

Students will read, write, listen and speak for literary response, critical analysis and expression. (NYS English Language Arts Standard #2 and #3)

**Procedure:**

Begin with a few leading questions: What do you do to take care of yourself? Why is it important to take care of yourself? What are some examples of unexpected situations that might turn everything upside down for someone your age? What would you do to cope? How aware of yourself are you? (School psychologist could be invited into class to help facilitate this discussion and kick off the self-care project.)
Assignment: Do something to take care of yourself. Identify something that you feel would improve the quality of your life.

Some ideas:
- Try three new vegetables to improve your nutritional health.
- Make sure you get 8 hours of sleep every night for one week even if it means going to bed at 9 p.m.
- Share something, something that you would normally keep to yourself, something that has been weighing on your mind with your parent or guardian.
- Treat yourself to “me” time. Set aside 15 minutes a day to do something you enjoy, something you normally don’t have time to do.
- Read a self-help article that appeals to you. Try one of the suggestions that you think may help you in some way.
- Create your own idea. Do something to honor yourself.

(Give caveat before this assignment: Make sure not to write something that you feel uncomfortable sharing. Understand that you are in charge of setting your own personal boundaries and that just because someone is asking you a question, doesn’t mean you are required to give an answer. Make sure, for this assignment, that you choose something that is not uncomfortably personal because you will be writing a journal entry that your teacher will be reading.)

Journal Assignments:
1. Describe what you chose, why you chose it, how you believe it will add something positive to your life.
2. After testing it out, describe how it worked, how it felt, what difference you perceived, whether you think it’s something you want to continue. Also state whether you will be continuing on the same path or testing out something else, and why.
3. Reflect again on the positive aspects of your attempt. State whether you think this is something you will continue in the future after the assignment is completed.

Assignment due dates will be spaced approximately one month apart. On due dates, volunteers will be invited to share their reflections.

Activity is to be completed outside of the classroom. Reflective journal entries as outlined above are to be completed for homework.

Assessment/Rubric:
Student will do self-assessment regarding their effort and completion of the assignment.
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from Walden’s concluding chapter (Thoreau’s misquote of William Habbington)

Abstract (2-5 sentences):
Students will write journal entries from Georgia Heard’s book Writing Toward Home: Tales and Lessons to Find Your Way in order to discover or better articulate their sense of self and their place in the world. This is a series of exercises designed to turn the eye inward.

Goals/Objectives:
Students will practice using literary devices including point of view, apostrophe, setting, and imagery.

Students will read and write for literary response and expression. (NYS English Language Arts Standard #2)

Procedure:
Students will complete writing exercises from Writing Toward Home: Tales and Lessons to Find Your Way by Georgia Heard.

(1) Where Does Writing Hide (Heard 10) - Students make a list of specific places where writing hides for them.

(2) Feng Shui (Heard 16) - Describing the Feng Shui of a place where you have lived. Choosing a personal writing place with good Feng Shui.
(3) The Education of the Eye: Staring (Heard 35) - Learning to use your eye like a camera. Practicing to be a word photographer of your surroundings.

(4) Digging Beneath the Surface (Heard 44) - Looking closely at and describing your neighborhood.

(5) From an Onion to My Grandmother (Heard 62) - Word association that begins with one idea and lets your mind wander until you end with a seemingly unrelated idea.

(6) Visual Archaeology (Heard 77) - Using a photograph of yourself as a child to connect emotionally.

(7) Layers of History (Heard 80) - Writing in the voice of the land where you live. Telling the story of your neighborhood from its own point of view.

(8) Listening to the Corn (Heard 88) - Taking a walk, listening to whatever is around, and writing from the point of view of something that strikes a chord.

(9) Whispering into the Air (Heard 97) - Writing about something unresolved using the literary device of apostrophe.

Assessment/Rubric:

Each category is scored 1-4 (4 is the highest)

Completion/Effort
4 = exceeds the requirements of the assignment, put care and effort into the process
3 = fulfills all of the requirements of the assignment
2 = fulfills some of the requirements of the assignment
1 = fulfills few of the requirements of the assignment

Effectiveness
4 = journal entry is logical and effective
3 = journal entry is generally logical and effective with a few minor problems
2 = journal entry is somewhat illogical and confusing in places
1 = journal entry lacks logical order and organization
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from Walden’s concluding chapter (Thoreau’s misquote of William Habbington)

Abstract (2-5 sentences):
Getting to know our own backyard will be the focus of this activity. Students will research a variety of topics designed to familiarize them with our local Hudson River Valley area. Included in the research topics are: the Hudson River School of painters, famous local authors, wilderness trails and preserves, History of the Hudson River, the mansions, the old depot, production of local wine, cheese and fruit, local colleges, lighthouses, environmental groups, the Revolutionary War, and Native American influences.

Goals/Objectives:
Students will research and demonstrate their understanding of the history of New York State (revolutionary war involvement, Native American influences, etc.) (NYS Social Studies Standard #1)

Students will research and demonstrate their understanding of the geography of the Hudson River Valley and its importance to the local, national and global community. (NYS Social Studies Standard #3)

Students will research and demonstrate their understanding of how the arts shape the diverse cultures of past and present societies. (NYS The Arts Standard #4)

Students will read, write, listen and speak for information and understanding and social interaction. (NYS English Language Arts Standards #1 and #4)
Students will access, generate, process and transfer information using appropriate technologies. (NYS Mathematics, Science and Technology Standard #2)

Students will apply technological knowledge and skills to design and construct a Web Site. (NYS Mathematics, Science and Technology Standard #5)

Procedure:

Working in small groups in the computer lab, students will access the WebQuest I created entitled “My Own Walden: The Hudson River Valley” and complete the tasks as outlined. (Please see the attached WebQuest for specifics.) Each group will research a different area that pertains to getting to know our local area and local history. The results of each group’s research will be published on a class website about the Hudson River Valley. See attachment.
Stewardship Towards the Hudson River Valley
(Lesson 6)

Name - Teresa Sutton
Unit Title - The Hudson River: Caring for Our Place
Lesson # - 6
Lesson Title - Stewardship Towards the Hudson River Valley
Lesson Duration - full year

"Direct your eye right inward, and you'll find
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from Walden's concluding chapter (Thoreau's misquote of William Habbington)

Abstract (2-5 sentences):
In Walden, Thoreau shows his special connection with the land, the environment, his neighbors. This lesson is designed to help students better understand their local community and the issues it faces. Students will have an opportunity to turn that knowledge into action and make a tangible, positive impact on the community through stewardship. Students will become experts in home-cosmography.

Goals/Objectives:

Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding and social interaction. (NYS English Language Arts Standards #1 and #4)

Students will participate in and practice the responsibilities of citizenship. (NYS Social Studies Standard #5)

Students will acquire the knowledge and ability necessary to create and maintain a safe and healthy environment. (NYS Health, Physical Education, and Family and Consumer Sciences Standard #2)

Procedure:

Students will have three choices for a service project that will double to fulfill the graduation requirement of the Wappingers Central School District for community service hours. All of the hours are to be completed after school and on weekends.
Choice A: Restoration of the Hopewell Junction Railroad Depot


In Walden, Thoreau writes about the Fitchburg Railroad as both a boon and a curse.

“Have not men improved somewhat in punctuality since the railroad was invented? Do they not talk and think faster in the depot than they did in the stage office?” - Henry David Thoreau (from “Sounds”)

As our class sorts out Thoreau’s feelings towards this new technology, it will become apparent that he had a special connection with the railroad, what it could provide, how it could help, and how it might end up controlling all (his criticism that people set their watches to railroad time).

The Hopewell Junction Railroad Depot, built at the dawn of the American Industrial Revolution in the 1800s, was a major junction. The Depot itself will become a museum and the old roadbed will be used as part of the Hudson Valley Rail Trail for bikers and hikers.

Students will assist Mr. Bernie Rudberg, local Historian, in a public awareness campaign creating and disseminating information to garner additional public support for the project, which has been at a temporary standstill due to lack of funds.

Local Historian, Bernie Rudberg, restoring the floor of the Hopewell Junction Railroad Depot.
The Hopewell Junction Railroad Depot

Depot after fire in 1986
Choice B: Scenic Hudson’s Great River Sweep

See http://www.scenichudson.org/
http://www.scenichudson.org/volunteers/index.html

Students can form groups to participate in Scenic Hudson’s Great River Sweep in April 2007. Scenic Hudson relies on a variety of groups to remove litter from along the entire length of the Hudson River. Students can organize a volunteer group of their peers to recruit local families to join in the sweep. Last year, Scenic Hudson had 200 different groups participating with approximately 7,000 volunteers who removed 100 tons of litter. A large local contingent from John Jay High School and the surrounding community can attempt to make a big contribution in numbers and hours. This project also involves creation and dissemination of information to recruit local volunteers.

Members of a group from Rensselaer County in upstate NY in 2005.

Members of a group from across the river in Ulster County in 2005.
Choice C: The Wappingers Creek: A Tributary of the Hudson River

Students will organize a group to raise awareness of the problems of the Wappingers Creek, a tributary of the Hudson River, that runs through our community. While many residents enjoy the creek for fishing, swimming, canoeing and kayaking, no town has taken responsibility for its maintenance. Students in this group will research the problems of the creek and create and disseminate information to educate the public about its problems. A cleanup schedule can be created and staffed with volunteers from the John Jay High School community and the surrounding area.

The Wappingers Creek at twilight.

Flooding of the creek 1995.
Assessment:

Students will maintain a diary/journal of active participation in the project of their choice. Hours of participation will be tracked via official sign-in sheets to satisfy the community service graduation requirement. Affective evaluation will be completed at the end of the school year with students writing a reflection about their experience and the personal benefits they believed they reaped due to their participation.
"Sounds" and Poetry of the Inward Eye
One is blue...Two is you...
Reading and Using Synaesthesia
(Lesson 7)

"Direct your eye right inward, and you'll find
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from Walden's concluding chapter (Thoreau's misquote of William Habbington)

Abstract (2-5 sentences):

In “Sounds,” Thoreau keeps the reader off-balance with his descriptions that contrast and blend natural and technological images. Students will write in a similar style by using synaesthesia and writing about one sense by describing it through another. The final project boards created to reflect each student's personal experience with this year-long unit will be displayed in a classroom exhibit. A final celebration with food of the Hudson Valley will be held for all of the volunteers.

Goals/Objectives:

Students will practice using synaesthesia in a creative poem or journal entry

Students will read, write, listen, and speak for literary expression, critical analysis, and social interaction. (NYS English Language Arts Standards #2, #3, and #4.)

Specific Readings:
“Sounds” from Walden
**Procedure:**

Students will read “Sounds” from *Walden* for homework. Open class with a discussion of Thoreau’s blending of nature and machine in the descriptions in this chapter.

“For the last half hour, I have heard the rattle of the railroad cars, now dying away and then reviving like the beat of a partridge.”

“The whistle of the locomotive penetrates my woods summer and winter, sounding like the scream of a hawk sailing over some farmer’s yard.”

Ask students to find additional examples and make a list on the blackboard. Discuss the effect of the blending of nature and technology and whether it is something of which Thoreau approves or disapproves. Discuss how this blending creates a feeling of contrast or imbalance. Use this as a segue to discussing synaesthesia. Give a definition of synaesthesia and several examples. Students will use poetry texts to find examples of synaesthesia in poems and write them on the board.

Ask students to write a poem or a journal entry using at least three examples of synaesthesia. The topic should be related to this unit. Suggest that students peruse their journals to mine for jumping off places. Final project should be artistically beautiful and presented on a small board with illustrations that are either hand created or computer generated. On day poems and journals are due, ask for volunteers to share their creations. For homework on sharing day, assign students to write a reflection on their creation that discusses how it felt to use synaesthesia, whether the process seemed easy or difficult, what insight they may have gained through the experience of writing their own or listening to the creations of others shared during class.

**Assessment:**

Assessment of the class discussion will be by teacher observation. Assessment of the creative work will be by rubric.

**Rubric:**

Scale of 1-5 (5 is the highest)

Three examples of synaesthesia are effective ___/5

Creativity ___/5

Final project is artistically beautiful and mounted on a small board ___/5

Illustrations are relevant, attractive and neat ___/5

Piece shows time and effort ___/5
Celebrating Our Own Special Place:
The Hudson River Valley
(Lesson 8)

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from Walden’s concluding chapter (Thoreau’s misquote of William Habbington)

Abstract (2-5 sentences):
As a culminating activity for this year-long unit, a celebration will be held one evening in the classroom. The room will be decorated with the students’ project boards (poems or journals written in synaesthesia about the year-long project). All volunteers and community members who participated in any of the stewardship projects will be invited. Students and teachers will provide potluck refreshments featuring the bounty of the Hudson Valley (local fruits, cheeses, meats, etc.). Photographs that document each lesson of the unit will be made into a PowerPoint that will be shown for all. Administrators will be invited to thank everyone involved.
Attachment:

My Own Walden: The Hudson River Valley

A WebQuest for 11th Grade English

Designed by

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**Introduction**

This past summer, I was lucky to be chosen to participate in a program for teachers called *Approaching Walden*. I learned about Henry David Thoreau and other transcendentalists. One of the most important lessons I took away was that one doesn't have to physically travel to Walden Woods or Walden Pond in Lincoln, MA to experience the closeness to nature described by Thoreau in his famous work, *Walden*. Thoreau would be most pleased to know that others have developed a deep, abiding sense of place right in their own backyard.

For this WebQuest, both of my 11th grade English classes will research and publish information about the Hudson River Valley, our own little Walden.

**Learners**

This lesson is designed for students in 11th grade American Literature class. Students will research information about the local area and write succinctly about it to teach a general audience about the Hudson River Valley.

**Curriculum Standards**

Students will work in small groups to produce sections of a class web page on the Hudson River Valley. Activities are tied to the NYS English Language Arts (ELA) Standards.

Students will read, write, listen and speak for information and understanding, literary response and expression, critical analysis and evaluation, and social interaction.

**Process**

Each group will complete a publishable web page using Netscape Composer. Pages must be illustrated. Groups must email source for permission to publish their art on our class website. Artist consent via email must be submitted with the final copy of your webpage. The links provided with each topic should be viewed as a jumping off place. Groups are free to find additional web sources for information.
1. The Hudson River School of Painters
   Marist Summer Scholars
   Albany Institute of History and Art
   Desmond Fish Library
   PBS: The Hudson River School

2. Writers of the Hudson Valley
   Washington Irving
   James Fenimore Cooper
   William Cullen Bryant
   John Burroughs

3. Wilderness
   Parks and Trails
   Mohonk Preserve

4. Wildness.
   The Lemon Squeeze

5. The Hudson River
   Henry Hudson
   The Half Moon
   Fishing

6. The Mansions
   The Rockefeller and Other Estates
   http://www.nps.gov/vama/
   Hudson River Heritage Mansions
   FDR Home and Library

7. Restoring the Depot in Hopewell Junction

8. From the Land
   Winemaking
   Coach Farm Goat Cheese
   Apple Orchards
   Poughkeepsie Farm Project at Vassar

9. Higher Learning (Famous Graduates)
   Bard College
   Mount Saint Mary College
   Culinary Institute of America
   Dutchess Community College
   Marist College
   SUNY New Paltz
Resources Needed
Internet access.

Evaluation
<> Students will assist in the development of the evaluation rubric for this project.

Conclusion
After all web pages are created, groups will orally present their work to the class. This website will be used for future class activities relating to a sense of place, particularly journaling and other creative writing.

Credits & References
Photo of Hudson River
www.summerpierre.com/2006_02_01_archive.html