



Surviving the Struggle: Ruby Bridges, Ryan White, and Anne Frank

Curriculum Unit 02.01.04
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Why Teach This Unit?

Each year, my fourth grade classroom contains approximately twenty-five students. About ninety-five per cent are African American students, with a few Hispanics and an occasional white member. These proportions reflect the general population of my school. Students range in age from nine to eleven. They come from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds and home situations. Their academic ability and the level of their general knowledge also vary considerably. A number are below level academically. While some have difficulty reading, a few qualify for New Haven's Talented and Gifted Program. Generally their basic skill level is not high, but many have potential well beyond what they are presently achieving. Some are members of families with multiple problems. Few of their lives are without difficulties. Many parents or guardians are supportive of school, though a few are not. Most want to be helpful but are not sure what is the best way to go about assisting. Often the struggles of everyday life interfere with their efforts.

As is the case with many of us, most of my students have survival stories, some more dramatic than others. All of them are aware of hardships endured by the circle of people they consider family members and friends. Some of the stories they have heard or lived result in happy endings; others don't. Some they are willing, even eager, to tell; others remain unspoken. In the beginning, these personal stories will be discussed informally. Something as simple as achieving a high school diploma or going to college or hairdressing school can be the basis for a discussion about overcoming odds. Towards the end of the unit, a more formal approach will be made regarding this personal material. Each tale of survival will act as a springboard for further study. They will lay the groundwork for the presentation of the three individuals whose stories form the core of this unit. Newspaper stories, especially those surrounding local events, are also effective in helping students recognize how people manage to overcome problems.

General Objectives and Structure

Through a variety of activities, “Surviving the Struggle” will allow students to examine the lives of three young people who stood against tremendous odds during much of their lifetime. The obstacles which they faced could easily have defeated the spirit of those much older and seemingly better equipped to cope. In their own way, each of these young people managed to survive and triumph. These three individuals whom I have chosen are: Anne Frank, Ruby Bridges, and Ryan White. The thread of each life will come from books we will read together: *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *The Story of Ruby Bridges*, and *Ryan White: My Own Story*. There are films that also present the basic facts of each individual’s life. The use of these films will do much to enhance the written material. Together, the book and film will provide students with their initial picture of each survivor’s life.

Through reading, both individually and as a class, students will study the lives these young people lived. They will research background information on the Holocaust, the Civil Rights Movement, especially school integration in the South, and facts concerning the disease AIDS. Students will see Anne, Ruby, and Ryan as unique individuals, but also as people who shared a great deal in common. While they all withstood the assault of prejudice and discrimination, they all were sustained by an inner strength fostered in varying ways and forms by a combination of family, community, and religious support. How these factors varied and how they were alike will be important points to consider. The fact that these survivors are, at least, somewhat close to fourth graders in age will make it initially easier for students to relate to some, though not all, of their situations and feelings.

An Integrated Approach with an Emphasis on Literacy

This unit will be presented through an integrated approach, involving primarily the areas of reading, language arts, and social studies. In all activities, the underlying academic focus of most material will be on developing reading and writing skills. Comprehension and related reading skill lessons will be developed from the stories we cover. Writing activities will revolve around summarizing, conveying impressions, recognizing parallels, and making connections with themselves, family members, and acquaintances. I will develop some individual worksheets, which will focus on the skills developed in Degrees of Reading Power, a system that develops the use of context clues and is an important part of New Haven’s reading program. I have included an example in my section on specific lesson plans.

Though the foundation of this unit lies in the areas of reading language arts, and social studies, social development cannot avoid being the message of the entire unit. All activities should encourage and help students to understand the struggles which others face, struggles that did not defeat them. Hopefully, students will then be better prepared to handle their own personal obstacles in a positive manner. Academic activities will be integrated with material from the science and social studies curriculum. It will also blend in art activities and even music. The use of the Internet will be applied in many research situations. Informally, there will be opportunity to work on integrating some of my activities with those of Geraldine Martin, a first grade teacher at my school, whose unit is also a part of this volume. The other two fourth grade teachers have expressed an interest in collaborating on this unit next year. My experience has proven that such interaction

greatly enriches learning.

Order of Presentation

I will begin the formal part of my unit by focusing on Ruby Bridges. Though students will need to develop a clearer understanding of the Civil Rights Movement, there is probably less supplemental material needed in presenting Ruby's story. The general focus of Black History Month in school, at home, and in the media provides students with some understanding of that time period, so it seems easiest to begin with Ruby. Ryan White will be featured next. Though students are somewhat familiar with AIDS, understanding his story requires at least a deeper basic understanding of the disease and the prejudice against its victims. Children will also need to develop some knowledge of hemophilia, a hereditary blood disease. Finally, Anne Frank probably requires the most teaching on subjects that are not familiar to most students. Some understanding of Nazi Germany and the road to the Holocaust is essential to understanding Frank's struggle. Since most students have little if any, background facts on these topics, Anne Frank will be studied last. With different classes, another order may be more suitable.

The Civil Rights Movement

Through social studies and reading lessons, students will be presented with the fundamentals of the Civil Rights Movement. They will read *The Gold Cadillac* by Mildred Taylor and *The Watsons Go to Birmingham* by Paul Curtis. These stories present some of the conditions that existed at the time. These readings should lead to related discussion and research. The poetry of Langston Hughes ("Birmingham Sunday" and "Merry Go Round") and Countee Cullen ("Incident") and others ("Ballad of Birmingham" by Dudley Randall) will help illustrate the facts and emotions of the times. (More specific information on these poems and their location can be found in my 2001 unit, "African American Poetry: Songs of Protest and Pride.")

Ruby Bridges

A Brief Summary of Ruby's Life

When the United States federal government in 1960 ordered the desegregation of New Orleans public schools, a young African American student named Ruby Bridges and her family were thrust into the national spotlight. Ruby was born in Tylertown, Mississippi in 1954. In 1957, economic conditions forced her family to move to New Orleans where her father worked as a custodian and her mother cleaned floors at a bank. The entire family was actively involved in the church and their neighborhood community. When integration was ordered, the NAACP backed Ruby's assignment to a first grade class at William Frantz Elementary School. The president was forced to call up Federal Marshals to maintain order and insure safety. Ruby was soon the only student attending Frantz, as hostile white parents withdrew their children and protested at the school each day.

Despite the continuous harassment that Ruby and her parents faced, she continued to attend Frantz Elementary from which she graduated and moved on to high school. Though Ruby never went to college, she is now quite successful. Now Ruby Bridges Hall, she has raised four children, lectures around the country, wrote a book of her own, *Through My Eyes*, and heads the Ruby Bridges Foundation, which consults with schools to develop diversity programs and increase parental involvement.

Academic Approach

Students will first meet Ruby by viewing the famous 1964 painting, "The Problem We All Live With," by Norman Rockwell. This picture is shown on the two Internet sites I have included in my bibliography and in Ruby's book, *Through My Eyes*. Most likely a copy is also available in any collection of Rockwell's works. The picture shows Ruby, a tiny but proud little girl, being escorted by Federal Marshals whose job it was to see that Ruby arrived safely at school. They will be asked to comment on the content and composition of the painting and then assigned to write a brief narrative on what they think is happening. The results will be shared and discussed. I will then present a brief sketch of Ruby's life. This summary could be drawn from the facts listed above or another biographical source.

The Book

We will move on to reading and discussing *The Story of Ruby Bridges* where students will follow Ruby's struggle to survive in a hostile, often violent, environment. They will learn of the courage and determination she, as well as her family, exhibited in the face of obstacles that would have sent many others away. Though I will read the book orally, I will rotate extra copies around the classroom so that some students can follow in the book. They will be encouraged to reread the book on their own and to take a copy home to share and/or read to their family. The reading level is one, which most fourth and even third graders can handle. Occasionally, I will call on a student to read. Frequently, I will stop to clarify, question, and/or elicit pupils' emotional responses to story events. These questions will focus on helping students empathize with Ruby and her family, to better understand how difficult it must have been to withstand such pressures. We will also examine Ruby's sources of strength: her family, her religion, her community, and some committed white people.

The Film

The film, "The Ruby Bridges Story," a Disney made for television movie, will be shown after the book has been read. Both of these works clearly show the hatred and potential violence present in the mobs of angry people who confronted Ruby each day she entered school, but the film is definitely more potent. At the same time, each presents a positive image of Ruby's white teacher who was born in Boston. Despite negative pressure from her colleagues, she helps Ruby to cope with the situation. In spite of the imposing barriers that Ruby faced, she survived.

The support of Ruby's family is clear in the book as well as in the film. The film, however, adds another dimension by showing the conflicting feelings faced by Ruby's father who does not want his daughter used as a pawn. The film also examines the attitude of the black community towards the move to integrate and looks at the fact that related pressure caused her father to lose his job.

As a culmination, students will be asked to compose a letter to Ruby asking questions and stating their feelings regarding events in her story. Letters will be collected and distributed among the students who will assume the character of Ruby and answer the questions, as he or she believes Ruby would have answered

them.

As a final piece of the Ruby Bridges segment of my unit, I will read the transcript of a 1997 interview of the now successful Ruby Bridges Hall. Students will hear her speak of the past, the present, and what she sees in the future.

AIDS

Before examining the struggles faced by Ryan White in his fight against AIDS, it will be necessary to present students with enough information to allow them to develop at least a basic understanding of the disease. As was the case when I wrote an Institute unit, "Using Film as a Springboard to Exploring the Truth about AIDS" in 1996, students of this age have a limited, usually distorted picture of AIDS and its victims. The stereotypes they hold are generally similar. The image gained from the media depictions of the "innocent," usually white, victims who acquired the disease through an unfortunate blood transfusion does not match the reality present in my students' lives. High profile personalities such as Arthur Ashe and Magic Johnson are sharp contrasts to what they know. Finally, there is still the message, spread a bit more subtly, that AIDS is a "gay disease."

Using some of the material from my 1996 unit (96.03.04). I will attempt to present a broader more accurate picture. This seems particularly important since Ryan White is one of those "innocent" victims whose story is easier to present. At the same time, it is vital to present Ryan as a real victim who suffered and "survived" the same physical and emotional assault to which all AIDS victims are subjected. It is also important to stress that Ryan went on to champion all people who contracted this disease, no matter what the source.

I will begin by discussing communicable diseases in general and AIDS in particular. New Haven social development department provides some excellent guidance, especially in Building Blocks, An AIDS Curriculum Guide for Early Elementary Education. There are a number of other excellent resources listed in my 1996 unit and a few I have included in this one. Though scientific breakthroughs have provided medication that prolongs the lives of HIV victims, there is still no cure. In order to more accurately answer possible student inquires, the teacher can gain more updated information regarding treatment, but for the purposes of this unit, what is suggested should be sufficient. There are a number of resources listed at the end of White's autobiography. I will also have some additional books, both fiction and non-fiction, which I will make available to my students. Some of these are listed in my bibliography. They are all designed to give students a more accurate picture of reality.

A Broader View of the HIV/AIDS Crisis

Though not relating directly to the survival of Ryan White, students need to become aware of the growing worldwide HIV/AIDS crisis. At a minimum, they should know about the millions of people living with HIV/AIDS throughout the world, especially in parts of Africa and now Asia. Since the XIIth International AIDS Conference (2002) has just concluded in Barcelona, there is a variety of information available on the internet. A site that I have found to be helpful is w.w.w.unaids.org/ Many articles may be found in publications from this time period (7/02) and on a continuing basis. The fact that an HIV-positive Muppet will soon join the cast of "Sesame Street" in South Africa should emphasize the urgency of the situation in that area of the world. Undoubtedly, the actual arrival of the character will be well publicized.

I will use these resources, and others that will appear in the future, to help me in making my students aware that, today, at an alarming rate millions of people are still struggling to survive AIDS.

Ryan White

A Brief Summary of Ryan's Life

The facts of Ryan's life are presented in both the book and film, which will be presented to students. I will, however, give students a brief summary of the major events in his life before sharing either story with them. The possible questions which I have included might be used then, saved for the film or book, or used after all have been examined.

Ryan White was born on December 6, 1971. He was a hemophiliac since birth. He contracted AIDS through a transfusion, one of many, given at home by his mother. These transfusions were necessary to keep Ryan alive. When Ryan was just a teenager, a biopsy performed to diagnose a severe case of pneumonia revealed the presence of the AIDS virus in his system. The reactions of most people in Kokomo, Indiana reflected the stereotypes held by most people. The family was harassed and eventually a court injunction prevented Ryan from attending school. Led by his mother, Ryan struggled in a fight to gain admittance to school. National attention soon made life almost unbearable for the Whites. Questions students will be asked to answer include: "Could other kids really get AIDS from using the same water fountain as Ryan?" "Were the accusations that Ryan was a homosexual reasonable?" "Would it have made any difference if he had been?"

Stereotypes hounded the family and people generally showed little understanding of the disease or compassion for the family. These were difficult times for the whole family, including his sister, Andrea who often had to take a backseat to Ryan. Students will be asked if people were fair to the family. "If you were a reporter, how would you have covered the story?" "How would you have reacted if you were Ryan's sister or brother?"

Finally, the judge lifted the injunction that had prevented Ryan from attending school. Throughout, Ryan continued to feel the effects of both of his diseases, which sometimes sent him to the hospital for treatment. Before Ryan could return to classes in Kokomo, his mother decided to move the family to Cicero, Indiana where they still experienced threats and harassment. However, in contrast to Kokomo, the Cicero school system had prepared the school population and community for Ryan's arrival. Generally the transition in school was a peaceful and positive one.

Though in many ways he tried to remain a typical teenager, it proved to be impossible. Due to the media focus on Ryan, he had become a celebrity. His fame continued to grow, as he became a spokesperson and fundraiser for AIDS, traveling and speaking at various events. In the process, he became friendly with Michael Jackson, Elton John, John Mellencamp, Jessie Jackson, and other easily recognized celebrities.

Finally, Ryan's body gave out under the pressure of continual physical and emotional pressure. He died on April 8, 1990. In August of the same year, Congress signed the Ryan White Care Act which established a system of services that has greatly improved the quality and availability of health care services to people living with and affected by HIV and AIDS, providing funds for a variety of health and social programs across the country.

Academic Approach

I will introduce Ryan White to my students by presenting a brief summary of his life, similar to the one above. I will relate it to the material we have studied regarding AIDS and hemophilia. I will encourage discussion but will put more emphasis on pupil reactions and additional information as we read Ryan's book and view the film.

The Book

I will present the book by reading it to the class. As with the story about Ruby Bridges, I will have extra copies available. They will be rotated among students so that some may follow each time I read. Though the book is written on a higher grade level and is too long for most students to read on their own, I will urge them to read sections on their own, especially the question and answer section at the end. They will also be encouraged to bring a copy home to share with their family.

The book itself covers a longer time period and gives us more details than the movie. It gives us a clear picture of Ryan's relationships with friends and family. We are much more aware of his feelings. It also takes us into his teenage years after the family moves to Cicero. We gain a deeper understanding of his sister, learn more about other people in his family, especially his mother's second husband, Steve Ford, we meet his friends, explore his relationship with the many celebrities he encounters, see him become a spokesperson in the fight against AIDS, learn of his feelings toward girls, watch as his body continues to battle against tremendous odds, and, finally, mourn as he succumbs to the years of physical and emotional pressures. It is made clear to us that he has "survived". His endurance allowed him to live and share his story, a story that reaches far beyond his life.

The Film

Beginning shortly before Ryan contracted pneumonia and AIDS was diagnosed, the film lacks some of the breadth and depth found in the book. It is, however, certainly not lacking in intensity, an intensity which clearly conveys the physical and emotional assault, by much of the community and media, that Ryan and his family, especially his mother, endured. The same intensity is present as we follow Ryan and his mother as they attempt, with dogged determination, to have Ryan reinstated at school. We are also given a picture of some of the other supportive people in Ryan's life: his grandparents, lawyer, nurse, doctor, and some of his friends. Containing many facts from the book, the film ends with Ryan's arrival at his new school in Cicero where he is given a positive reception from most of the community and school population. Both had been given accurate information regarding Ryan's condition. Students then will be asked to speculate regarding what probably was done in preparation for Ryan's arrival. They will draw upon the facts they previously learned about AIDS, facts that are reinforced in the book and film.

Now that the film is over, students will compare and contrast the book and the film. Though they might prefer one to the other, my goal is to show that despite a difference in style and, to some extent, content, both achieve positive results.

The Holocaust

The Holocaust was the systematic program carried out by the Nazi regime during World War II. Its aim was the elimination of the Jewish population in areas under Nazi control. Its result was the annihilation of approximately six million Jews.

Beginning in the 1930s, Jews under German control were required to register and be identified as Jews on their passports. Gradually, their property and jobs were taken away. Soon being employed in certain jobs, owning a business, having a bank account, and finally attending school were forbidden. In some places like Warsaw, Poland, they were crowded into walled-in ghettos where they lived in deplorable conditions. As the aim of the Nazi regime to eliminate Jews escalated, very little action of any magnitude was attempted to stop the atrocities. As early as 1938, the United States refused to change its stringent immigration policies that prevented thousands of Jews from fleeing to America. Though Hitler's actions before the war were not hidden from the public, there were few cries of outrage and little action from the world. Isolated acts by individuals and, in some cases, nations (Sweden in particular) could not stem the tide. The Denmark Rescue Mission which transported thousands of Jews to neutral Sweden, Oskar Shindler who protected the Jews working in his factories, Jewish resistance fighters, a Swedish businessman who helped Jews escape from Hungary, and many other nameless people were not enough. The vast majority waited and hoped that things would get better. More detailed information may be obtained by researching The Holocaust.

Anne Frank

A Brief Summary of Anne's Life

Anne Frank was a German-Jewish girl who wrote a moving diary while hiding from the Nazis during World War II. Anne was born on June 12, 1929 in Frankfurt, Germany. Her parents were Otto and Edith. She had an older sister named Margot. She and her family moved to the Netherlands in 1933 after the Nazis began to persecute Jews. Anne immediately began writing in her diary, which she received as a gift for her thirteenth birthday in 1942. That same year, during the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands, the family began hiding in a secret annex behind the Amsterdam office of her father's business. Anne continued to record her experiences in the diary. Two years later, the family, along with the others with whom they shared the annex, were betrayed and arrested. Along with her sister, Anne died of typhus in the Nazi concentration camp in Belsen in March of 1945. Only her father survived the war. Her mother died in the Auschwitz-Berkenau camp in 1945. After supervising the publication, publicity, and distribution of Anne's diary throughout the world, Otto died in 1980. The diary was first published in 1947 and was later made into a play and film.

Academic Approach

As is the case when discussing the realities of slavery, students have a difficult time understanding how the Holocaust could happen. This will be a sensitive undertaking. I will attempt the following approach.

After a summary of the Holocaust, similar to the facts presented above, has been given, I will read *Terrible Things*, an allegory of the Holocaust (Teaching the Diary of Anne Frank, p.13). In this tale *Terrible Things*,

depicted as dark, ominous shadows, gradually eliminate animal creatures living happily together in a forest clearing. Each time they come to the clearing for a different category of animal, the others stand by and make excuses for their inaction. Finally, only one little white rabbit survives. Belatedly, he realizes that he should have spoken up and taken a stand, but now no one is left to hear him. With regrets for the past, he moves on to warn the other creatures, if they will only listen to him.

After a thorough discussion of what the animals did and did not do, I will read “First They Came for the Jews” by Martin Niemoller. Both of these pieces show the evils that can result from fear, indifference, and inaction. Discussing how the two works relate to each other and to the Holocaust will lead us on to the story of Anne Frank.

Selecting a Text

I have used four primary texts in examining the life of Anne Frank. Each of them has its own strengths, but all have a weakness for my class: their length and the difficulty found in their content. Most of my students could handle only segments of these books independently and, even with my guidance, some sections in each would be too difficult to comprehend adequately. As a result, I shall integrate parts of all four. I will keep them all available and will encourage students to read further on their own. I will rely mainly on *Anne Frank: Beyond the Diary* by Ruud van der Rol and Rian Verhoeven. It contains many photographs, diagrams, maps, and documents to supplement actual excerpts from Anne’s diary, which appear throughout the book. The text takes us from Anne’s birth to her father’s tireless efforts to present the human impact of the Holocaust through Anne’s diary. Additional excerpts from *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl* and Melissa Muller’s biography, *Anne Frank*, which goes beyond the actual diary, will be read though I will present most of the material from my main source. My final book, *Teaching the Diary of Anne Frank*, by Susan Mager, also contains valuable supplemental material, which I will integrate. Particularly, this book contains material on individuals and nations, mentioned previously, that did take a stand against the Nazis.

The fifth text, *The Story of Anne Frank* by Brenda Ralph Lewis, presents Anne’s life on a reading level that most third and fourth graders can handle. Though it is short the book presents the basic elements of the diary. Colorful pictures and some photographs help to make the text inviting to students who will read and discuss the material in small reading groups. The contents will also be referred to in large group discussions.

Discussion is essential as Anne’s story unfolds. As with Ruby and Ryan, we will look at the prejudices and hardships, both physical and emotional, which Anne and her family were forced to endure as we also examine the system of support that allowed her to “survive.” We will explore how the diary itself was a factor in Anne’s survival.

As a project, students will be asked to keep their own diary while we are reading about Anne. Students may name their diary as Anne named “Kitty.” For some, this could make it easier to share their thoughts. They may include reactions to our study if they wish. Unless they decide otherwise, their diary will be confidential. As the unit concludes, they will be asked to comment on their feelings toward their diary. “How did you feel about keeping a diary?” “Explain how it was or wasn’t a positive experience for you.” “Will you continue writing in your diary now that we have finished our study?”

The Film

The film I have selected is the most recent production, “Anne Frank--The Whole Story.” It is generally faithful to the material students will cover in their encounter with the text they read. We will view the film through life

in the Annex until the Franks are betrayed and captured. Material on the concentration camps is a bit too graphic for students this young. We will move to the conclusion where we view Anne's father, Otto, the only family survivor, return to retrieve Anne's diary, which, due to, his efforts becomes a lasting personal history of the Holocaust.

Bringing Things Together

Though as we move along I will constantly refer to what we have previously read or seen, we will now be able to compare and contrast the lives of Ruby Bridges, Ryan White, and Anne Frank.

"How are their stories alike and different?" "As personalities, how were they alike and different?" "What prejudices did they each face?" "Explain." "Did each receive the same type of support?" "How did their support vary and how was it similar?" "What was the supportive role played by each family?" "Is religion an obvious influence in all three lives?" "How did each make a contribution to society?" "What were their attitudes toward education?" "What barriers did each face regarding attending school?" "How might you have felt in the same situations?" "How is education an important factor in all people's survival and feelings of self worth?"

These and similar questions will attempt to reinforce the fact that all three "Survived" very different situations which on the surface had little in common, but were actually quite similar. Hopefully, students will recognize that though each had initial motives which were far more personal, each of these young people made contributions to society as a whole, contributions which have lasted and will continue to last for years.

Getting More Personal

In the final section of this unit, students will be asked to find a survival story among family, friends, hear-say, or stories which appear in the media. Personal accounts will be encouraged. They may be as seemingly simple as a high school graduation or attending college or as obviously complicated as overcoming drug addiction or a jail sentence. They will write a short paper in which they will present the person, the obstacles, and the "survival." These stories will be shared with the class and perhaps with students in other rooms. They will be printed and compiled into a booklet for each student to keep and share with others at home. Together, they will design a cover appropriate to an anthology of their survival stories.

Finally, they will be asked to examine their own support system. Using the five paragraph expository form that they are taught in fourth grade, they will write an essay on "My Support System." Besides their introduction and conclusion, they will discuss three individuals or groups that give them support. These essays will be shared in the same manner as their survival stories. In conclusion, an attempt will be made to draw what they have learned about Ruby, Ryan, and Anne together with what is true for each of them.

Lesson Plans

Lesson One: Creating A Family Photograph Album Similar to Parts of Anne Franks Diary

In all of the books listed in my bibliography, there are pictures of Anne at different stages of her life, along with photographs of family, friends, and her surroundings. Their impact on the written words is great. Often Anne included these pictures in her diary that expanded well beyond the original red and white-checked cloth covered thirteenth birthday present. Besides writing in notebooks, she even used accounting books and loose sheets of paper that she sometimes inserted to expand on material written previously. A photograph album survived along with the actual diary. With the pictures Anne included, she wrote explanations and reactions to their content. This resulted in each element complementing the other, with the reader receiving a deeper understanding of both.

These pictures and comments will be the focus of some related lessons in which students will develop an annotated family photograph album of their own.

Subject Matter Areas:

Language arts, photography, art, social development

Objectives

To develop:

- deeper understanding of Anne Frank's survival.
- appreciation and understanding of the impact photographs and the written word can have on each other.
- ability to select significant subject matter for a family photo album.
- ability to write photo captions expressing feelings as well as facts.
- ability to sequence material in a logical, meaningful manner.
- stronger appreciation of family and the importance of its survival.

Procedure

To begin, examples of where Anne included photographs will be shown, read, and discussed. "Why do you think Anne included pictures?" "Why did she write comments?" "What would be different if either the picture or the comment were not included?"

Students will then be asked to collect "family" pictures of their own with the aim of producing a family album.

The project will be explained to parents/guardians, and they will be urged to purchase a disposable camera for their child's use in capturing the present. Cameras will be provided for any who are unable to obtain one. (Some means of financing will be arranged.)

Before students collect their various pictures, we will discuss potential subjects: Family, friends, home, pets, surroundings, school, previous trips or fun times, and whatever seems significant to the student.

As the pictures are compiled, students will write comments for each. These comments should contain an explanation of the picture's content along with the student's personal reactions, much as they have seen Anne do. Naturally, the length and depth of these comments will vary depending of the picture and the particular student. In some cases, they might include comments parents, family, and/or friends may have made regarding the picture. Besides the individual satisfaction to be gained from this exercise, students will be developing the skill of including personal reactions in their writing, a skill that is constantly being focused upon in both narrative and expository writing.

A construction paper album with an oaktag cover will be assembled. The cover possibly will be covered with cloth as Anne's diary was. Since our school has a simple machine for installing a plastic binding, we will use that to hold the album together, but ordinary fasteners should do the job well.

The pictures and comments will be arranged in a logical order, fastened into the album, shared with others, displayed, and brought home where hopefully each will become a lasting family treasure.

Lesson Two: Using Unit Content to Develop Degrees of Reading Power

Subject Matter Areas: Reading, Social Studies, Social Development

Objectives:

To develop:

skill at using various context clues to identify unknown words and as a result develop greater reading power.

reinforce understanding of information related to the unit's content.

Procedure

The goal of developing independent readers is a primary objective of the elementary school. One means of achieving this goal is through an approach that teaches students to look for various clues within the context of the material being read as a means of recognizing and understanding unfamiliar words which the student may encounter. Besides teaching these techniques for unlocking unfamiliar words, this approach trains students to read more carefully, resulting in an overall improvement in comprehension. All New Haven elementary teachers are familiar with this program designed to increase pupils' "degrees of reading power."

There are a variety of materials available for use while working with students in such a program. Basically, these materials provide paragraphs where key words have been omitted. Students are asked to find the

appropriate word from among four choices, all of which could “fit” within the sentence’s structure, but only one makes sense within the context of the larger piece. Students learn to explore the context before and after the missing word in order to find clues that will help in identifying the missing word. The important skills developed here are the procedures used to explore the context for clues and developing the ability to recognize and utilize these clues.

In this lesson plan, I provide an example by using material related to this unit’s content to create original worksheets that will be used to develop the skills discussed above. This sheet and others I will create will have the advantage of serving as reading instruction material as well as a source or review of information related to the unit. Its primary function, however, will be to improve the student’s reading ability. Initially, the procedure to follow will focus on the context that leads one to the appropriate missing word. Discussion relative to content will follow. It is best to use material with information that pupils have not yet encountered, since this will eliminate the use of previous knowledge to identify the word. If, however, this happens to be the case, the experience of finding the context clues that unlock the missing word is still of considerable value. The completed worksheets will be saved in a folder for future reference related to the unit’s content.

Here is a brief sample related to the survivors introduced in this unit.

Surviving Against the Odds

Read this paragraph carefully. Where there is a missing word, select the most appropriate word from those listed after the blank. Be ready to identify the clues that led to your selection. You may underline those words which helped you in making your choice.

Ruby Bridges, Ryan White, and Anne Frank are individuals who have ___1___ (a. lost b. finished c. survived d. vanished) against tremendous ___2___ (a. people b. odds c. accidents d. diseases) during much of their lifetime. They did not give up, though things were against them from the start. They each faced ___3___ a. obstacles b. houses c. mirrors d. weather) which could easily have blocked people much older and seemingly better equipped to ___4___ (a. dance b. capture c. cope d. cooperate). In their own way, each was able to handle their particular situation. They all suffered from ___5___ (a. diseases b. loneliness c. fear d. discrimination). Their race, religion, culture, or diseases were used as excuses to set them apart, but they were really not alone. Though, in ___6___ (a. varying b. frightening c. all d. no) ways, no two were exactly the same, family friends, community, and religion helped to ___7___ (a. lose b. silence c. hide d. support) their courage, so that they could keep standing strong.

Lesson Three: Making a Survival Quilt

Subject Matter Areas: Art, Social Development, Research related to unit material

Objectives

To construct a memorial quilt panel dedicated to each of the unit’s three survivors’

To research and select symbols appropriate to each survivor.

To develop an appropriate manner for presenting or displaying their Survival Quilt.

Procedure

These related activities would start with the showing of clips from “Common Threads: Stories from the Quilt.” This film vividly shows the development of the AIDS Memorial Quilt that was unveiled in Washington, D.C. and has traveled, at least in portions, all across the United States. Since AIDS is not the main focus of this unit, I will probably summarize most of the film’s beginning, leaving the dramatic unfurling of the quilt and the reading of victim names to be viewed and discussed by the group. We will talk about the quilt’s objectives. “How could the quilt help the victims, their families, their friends, and even us?” “How does the quilt relate to the survival stories we have read about Ruby Bridges, Ryan White, and Anne Frank?”

This discussion will lead to the creation of three quilt panels, one for each of our survivors. Students will suggest symbols for each panel: a dog for Ryan White, a white bow for Ruby Bridges, and a pen and diary for Anne Frank are only a few of the many possibilities. The choices will be drawn first and then transferred to appropriate material, which will be glued to a banner of sturdy material that will be hung from a dowel. Each banner will contain the appropriate survivor’s name, will be hung for display, and possibly be presented at a fourth grade culminating activity, if plans to collaborate follow through.

Bibliography

All of the books listed in this bibliography are suitable, at least in part, for both teacher and upper elementary students. The problem with some is that the reading level may be too high for some students to navigate independently. All material contains maps, articles, diagrams, and/or drawings that enrich understanding for everyone.

Ruby Bridges

Bridges, Ruby and Marge Lundell (editor). *Through My Eyes* . New York: Scholastic Press, 1999. Contains historical information, photographs, and related quotes.

Coles, Robert. *The Story of Ruby Bridges* . New York: Scholastic Press, 1995. The author narrates the story of Ruby’s experiences beginning in Tylertown, Mississippi until her integration of Frantz Elementary School in New Orleans. Contains large colorful illustrations and vocabulary suitable for elementary grades. Most third and fourth graders could read this story independently.

Curtis, Christopher Paul. *The Watson’s Go to Birmingham-1963* . New York: Delacorte Press, 1995. This book follows an African American family from Flint, Michigan to Birmingham, Alabama where their lives intertwine with the 1963 bombing of a church in which four young African American girls were killed. Humorous and sensitive with a somewhat mystical ending.

Taylor, Mildred. *The Gold Cadillac* . New York: Bantam Skylark, 1987. An African American family driving from Chicago to Mississippi in a fancy new Cadillac faces the anger and hatred which their new car attracts from much of the rural population.

“A Class of One.” Online Newshour, February 18,1997. pbs.org/newshour/bb/race_relations/jan-june97/bridges_2-18html This transcript of an interview by Charlayne Hunter-Gault with Ruby Bridges Hall reveals things Ruby was feeling back in 1960 and during the years that followed. Copy of famous Norman Rockwell painting of Ruby is included.

“Forty years later, Ruby Bridges still fighting racism in schools” CNN.com. U.S. News, November 14, 2000. cnn.com/2000/US/11/14/ruby_bridges.ap/ Quotes and factual material bring us up-to-date on Ruby’s life, along with insights into her feelings regarding the past and present.

Ryan White

Geballe, Shelly, Janice Gruendel, and Warren Andiman. *Forgotten Children of the AIDS Epidemic* . New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995. Besides containing pieces of writing and artwork from children whose lives have been affected by AIDS, this book contains information which should be valuable to the teacher.

Korum, Kathy and Julie Hladky. *Building Blocks: An AIDS Curriculum Guide for Early Elementary Educators* . Washington, DC: American National Red Cross, 1991. Contains plans and related materials for teaching the basics about AIDS.

Mouloussamy-Ashe, Jeanne. *Daddy and Me* . New York: Alfred Knopf, 1993. This is a book that attracts student attention. Contains photographs of Arthur Ashe and his daughter taken by his wife. A narration by his daughter accompanies the pictures.

White, Ryan and AnnMarie Cunningham (contributor). *Ryan White: My Own Story* . New York: Horn Book, 1992. Main source for information presented about Ryan White.

"Unaid--A Joint UN Program on HIV/AIDS." www.unaids.org/ This site contains current information HIV/AIDS as a worldwide threat to health.

Anne Frank

Frank, Anne. *Anne Frank The Diary of a Young Girl* . New York: Bantom Books, 1952. Anne's diary entries follow her life from June 14, 1942 until her final entry on August 1, 1944. An Afterword contains facts concerning Anne's death and the publishing of her diary.

Lewis, Brenda Ralph. *The Story of Anne Frank* . New York: Dorling Kindersley, 2001. An easy to read account of Anne Frank's life. Almost all third and fourth graders could handle the reading level.

Mager, Susan. *Teaching the Diary of Anne Frank* . New York: Scholastic Press, 1998. Though aimed at grade five and up, this book contains ideas that can be modified for younger students. Filled with a wide variety of supplemental material.

Muller, Melissa. *Anne Frank the biography* . New York: Henry Holt, 1998. Narrates the life of Anne Frank. Draws on what the author says is new information from family and friends. Sections provide interesting supplements to simpler texts.

Vander, Rol Ruud and Rian Verhoeven. *Anne Frank Beyond the Diary* . New York: Puffin Books, 1995. Combines excerpts from Anne's diary with photographs, maps, diagrams, documents, and comments from friends and family.

Video Material

Anne Frank-The Whole Story . Disney Studios, 2001.

Common Threads: Stories from the Quilt . San Francisco, CA: Telling Pictures Inc., and the Names Project Foundation, 1989.

Important to lesson on "survivors' quilt."

Jeanne White--Ryan White's Legacy . Victories Series, Nineteenth Star, 1996. Ryan White's mother, Jeanne, tells her personal story of Ryan's "survival."

The Ryan White Story . MTV, 1989.

The Story of Ruby Bridges . Disney Studios, 1995.

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