



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2002 Volume I: Survival Stories

Survivor: Not Just a TV Show -- An exploration of the character traits of survivors of the teenage years

Curriculum Unit 02.01.09
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Introduction

Background Information

The school in which I teach is Hyde Leadership School. Hyde is organized differently than other schools, so it is important to examine our unique characteristics. Hyde is a character based magnet high school. Our focus is on character development. We place an emphasis on students' effort over their achievement. Students' learning is centered on self-analysis and the development of their unique potential. While at Hyde, students are guided through the process of self-discovery. When a student is acting out, instead of focusing on eliminating the negative behaviors, students are forced to examine their attitude. It is Hyde's belief that inappropriate behaviors are just symptoms of a problematic attitude. The belief is that if a student's character and attitude are developed as they need to be, then the achievement will naturally follow.

The Hyde Leadership concept is based on five guiding principles: humility, conscience, truth, destiny and brothers' keeper, and five guiding words: leadership, courage, concern, integrity, and curiosity. The subject curriculum is taught encompassing these words and principles. As character growth is a main focus, my curriculum takes the approach of analyzing characters' attitudes and approaches to obstacles in their lives.

Our statistical breakdown is not much different than most schools in this school district, though on a smaller scale. Our school is comprised of fewer than 200 students. The majority of our students are black. Even though most of our graduating seniors are accepted to and attend college after graduation, many of our students are lacking in basic skills. Our school is based in an urban setting and thus our students deal daily with the issues that typically accompany life in a small city.

The Survivor curriculum will be taught primarily to 9th and 10th graders identified with low reading and writing skills. These students will be identified by examining low CAPT scores and by their English teachers. The group will be a mix of students with special needs, students in regular education, and students with English as a second language. It will be a small group of students that are chosen for needing the remedial work in reading and writing skills. The curriculum could be delivered in any English class, but in my case will be delivered in an after-school mandatory enrichment program.

Purpose

Adolescence is a difficult time during one's life. The teenage years are a time of incredible learning and many critical life skills are acquired during this stage. According to a study conducted by the National Institute of Mental Health, "Adolescence and Stress", adolescence is the time period that coping and problem-solving skills are acquired and practiced. The study found that the skills, positive or negative, that are learned in the teen years are then carried over to adulthood. This speaks volumes of the importance of this time in one's life. This curriculum was developed after realizing that many of my students are struggling to develop productive coping and problem solving skills.

After observing a student in crisis, I realized that first I needed to find out the obstacles which students face in the development of their coping skills. I found that instead of spending the time focusing on their real concerns, the tendency of teenagers is to respond and adjust to external stimuli in their lives. The classic he said/she said scenario is very common. They may also find themselves responding to an event in a way that opposes their set of ethics. Going along with the crowd allows a sense of community, but may require one to act in a way that they would normally find disagreeable. Without the range of skills to allow them to sift through, compartmentalize, and cope with daily issues, many teens are overwhelmed by the issues they confront daily. Adolescence is the time teens should be focusing on their internal needs and practicing strategies for survival that will be with them forever, enabling them to be stronger adults. However, this is not always the case as many things may get in the way.

When looking for risk factors for adolescents that are not able to learn productive coping skills, the expected ones top the list: families that are not supportive, history of abuse, family and friends who are involved in negative behaviors, and difficulties in school. These risk factors have shown up in many studies of adults that appear not to have acquired positive strategies as deemed by their anti-societal behavior including criminal history, drug abuse and reliance on welfare. The majority of students in my school fall into one of these at-risk categories. Students are not able to change all of the influences in their lives, but they can identify and practice skills that help them cope with the hand they were dealt.

The next major thing to examine are the issues that many male and female teenagers are forced to deal with during their adolescence. Both genders deal with racial issues, family concerns, violence and threats, school pressure, relationships, and their future. This curriculum is built around these main concerns that students face.

The last concern is how do teenagers deal with the frustration they may experience? For boys, it seems they turn their aggression outwards, while girls turn their frustrations inward. In the novel *Lost Boys*, James Garbarino, PhD. explores the concern of increasing violent acts committed by teenage boys. He focuses on adolescent males, as the leading cause of death for this category, unlike any other age category, is homicide. He also states that teenage boys are ten times more likely to commit murder than females. This is a growing trend whose effects ripple out and touch everyone. According to William Pollack, Ph.D. in his book *Real Boys*, boys are 3 times more likely than girls to be victims of violent crimes and 4 to 6 times more likely to commit suicide (xxiii). This is a major concern. With all of these statistics disseminated, we now need to take the next step. When students come to school with thoughts of revenge, an upcoming fight, or an ongoing conflict on their minds, how can they be expected to achieve to their potential? What is being done to help alleviate these problems boys face and to give them acceptable outlets for their emotions and aggressions?

Adolescent girls face slightly different concerns than boys. They tend not to act out their frustrations, but instead turn them inward. According to the Commonwealth Fund Survey conducted in 1997, one in five high

school girls report being abused physically or sexually. Body image is frequently a foremost concern of teenage girls. Another study, conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 1997, found that 60.2% of tenth grade girls are reported to be attempting to lose weight at any given time. 9% were likely to have tried diet pills, laxatives or vomiting in this attempt. This obsession with weight and body image may begin in girls as early as age five and remains a major guiding factor in their thoughts and actions. The statistics also show that of the girls in high school that were polled, 35.7 % report feeling sad and hopeless over an extended period of time. While boys are frequently more successful in taking their own lives, girls attempt suicide twice as often. These statistics show how affected our adolescent girls are by the emotions that fill them. Obviously they do not have the coping strategies that are necessary to avoid feeling overwhelmed by those emotions.

The statistics themselves are not important, what is important is the gravity of the situation. The students I teach do not care about the national statistics, they care about the number of friends they have lost to fights and jail, sisters that have been abused, friends that feel hopeless, and family members that attempted suicide. Everything that happens creates an emotion, the trick is to help students realize the emotion, and then decide how to best deal with it.

Curriculum Information

The purpose of the “Survivor” curriculum is two-fold. Students will improve their reading and writing skills while exploring the character traits exhibited by teenage characters in a variety of media. Students will have the opportunity to use reading as a means of recreational research. Some of the pressure typically associated with reading and writing assignments will be alleviated by not making the skill acquisition the primary focus of the lesson. Students will be able to experiment with different techniques without fear of ‘failing the test’. During the readings, students will investigate the characters’ traits, which will allow for discussion regarding the words and principles by which our school is run. Through these two foci, students will ultimately be able to transfer the knowledge of survivor traits to their own lives and create their own ‘survival’ story.

Throughout history writing has been used as a means of self-expression. People keep diaries and journals as a channel for emotional turbulence and as a way to work through and document issues in their lives. There is a reason that many people turn to writing as a coping mechanism. It is an allowable means of emotional outlet. One example of survival writing is the collection *Ophelia Speaks*, by Sara Shandler. The author wrote a letter to schools, summer programs, and youth organizations asking for teenage girls to write expressing their “voice”. Contributors had the opportunity to write on any topic that was important to them. The result was a collection written by adolescent females in journal and poem form, highlighting the important issues they face. Shandler wrote that the contributors “wrote to communicate, to heal themselves, and to help other girls.” (p XV) Writing as a means of survival incorporates these three functions. The survival feeling can come from simply communicating your story to a pertinent audience. This communication often helps in the healing process. In order to explain your story, first you must examine and understand it. The last part is to feel the strength gained from helping others who may be in a similar situation. Allowing your story to offer strength to another can be a cathartic experience. This curriculum will allow the participants to experience these three purposes through the creation of their own survival story.

Even though writing will be the primary form of expression, the curriculum will still be accessible to the students involved. Teens participating in the curriculum will find that it will be taught on an instructional reading level, rather than the frustration level they typically face in their classes. Selecting and presenting appropriate material on a variety of reading levels will help accomplish this. If something is to be used which

is on a higher reading level than is comfortable for students, it will be supplemented with audio, read-a-louds, and play-acting to ensure all students are included in the comprehension.

The other reason teenagers will readily identify with the curriculum is because of the characters that have been chosen for analysis. The characters have been selected because they are teenagers dealing with issues my students can relate to. For instance, Ponyboy from *The Outsiders* is a character that many students enjoy reading about. He expresses his insecurities, his troubles with friends, troubles with the other 'group' in town, his response to the troubles, and the ensuing issues that arise. Even though my students will not have the same issues, they will be able to relate because they have experienced their own frustrations and insecurities. By examining a selection of characters in a variety of media forms, students will be able to be involved in the curriculum to a larger degree.

After analyzing several fictional characters, students will begin to create a character for their own story. Students will ultimately work cooperatively to create a survivor story of their own, and will need to be able to create believable characters. They will have the opportunity to write their own story or to create a fictional character that deals with similar issues. Regardless of the path they choose for their final project, all students will need to start the process within themselves. The only way to true growth is to examine our weaknesses, deal with them, and then to move on.

The initial step to self-examination is creating a comfortable and safe setting to encourage open dialogue. Even with a close friend whom we frequently talk with, we may not be comfortable enough to truly examine ourselves. With our friends, we generally discuss other people. Sara Shandler wrote of her discussion with a best friend "We laughed about how we can speak objectively about anything, so long as we don't have to attach a first-person pronoun to the discussion. Even then, with all of light-hearted criticism of our mutual aversion to the word 'I', we didn't disclose much about ourselves in the next few hours. Instead, we talked about Rachel" (p 11). In order to be successful, the curriculum discussion will begin with the third person pronoun and after analytical skills are acquired, move to the first person. We will critically examine the characters and their methods of coping with issues, then bridge to our lives and situations.

Topics of Discussion

Teenagers face many issues. Some may affect them personally, some come second hand. When I think back on my high school days, the biggest problem that I recall my peers and me dealing with is relationships. Instead of looking at that topic however, I realize now that it is the social issues that are occurring around that relationship that are creating the problems with the relationship. This curriculum will allow students to explore issues they feel affect their own lives. While this curriculum will be driven by the students' needs, the five main issues we will focus on are racism, family, violence, school, and the future.

Racism. Bigotry. Prejudice. Intolerance. Bias. These are words that unfortunately still have a place in our society. Students deal with the effects of intolerant behavior on a daily basis. In conversations with my students, I have found they feel they are targets of the 'cop persecution' phenomena. As black males they believe that everyone expects them to be carrying weapons and to be dealing drugs. Students have learned about the civil rights movement, know famous names like Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King Jr, and Frederick Douglas, but conversations typically stop there. This would give students a forum to discuss the different forms of racism they see today and the effects it has on their lives.

In addition to racism, we will also address family relationships. The saying "You can't live with them, you can't live without them" accurately applies to family. The typical family today has changed radically from a few

generations ago. According to the Census Bureau's March Current Population Survey (2002), only 7% of households consist of the traditional 'family' (parents married, only father working, mother home with children). Most of my students live in a house with only one parent, a grandparent, an aunt, or an older sibling raising them. Most parents work, which means students are forced to take on more responsibility around the house, often times are home alone, and do not always have someone checking up on them. This is all in addition to the typical family power struggles that happen when teenagers begin their struggle for independence. Despite of the struggles that may erupt, family is often the anchor for many students. They credit their success to the special person in their family that supported them. 'Your momma' jokes get people riled up for a reason. When mom is the one that sacrificed to raise the family, frequently there is a very strong bond between mother and child. Good or bad, family is often the focus of many stories from teenage years.

In addition to family, another major area of a student's day can involve time hanging out with friends. For many of my students this camaraderie occurs after school on the street. This brings forth another issue. According to statistics today, the crime rate is up. The Social Health and Assessment Survey of New Haven found that 22% of students reported bringing a blade, knife or gun to school. According to this study 36% of adolescents in New Haven have experienced a violent act against them. In 1994, 46% of teens in New Haven reported having seen someone be shot or shot at. In 1995 28% of adolescent deaths in our town were homicides. While these statistics are up around the country, they are particularly problematic in our town. As much as we would like to ignore this problem and hope it goes away, it needs to be confronted. As a teacher I must deal with the issue of increasing violence in my students' lives before I can instruct them on proper grammar usage. While statistics show that not all students are personally impacted by the increasing violence, by talking to my students I feel that most of them have a story of a cousin or friend that was gunned down.

Students spend an average of 6 hours a day in school and an average of 8 hours per day at Hyde. Anything that takes up a quarter or a third of every day is bound to have a strong effect. Students hear questions demanding them to figure out their future. Teachers often ask them to acknowledge the importance of the subject course they are teaching. For some students the pressure is to achieve high grade point averages to enable acceptance to a good college. Other students struggle with the pressure of achieving passing grades in their high school courses. Regardless of what their individual struggle is, education plays a major role in students' life.

The last topic, which follows directly from the other 4 topics, is the future. Thoughts of the future weigh heavily on most peoples' minds. For teenagers the pressure may be even more. Teenagers are at a critical point when decisions they make can affect the rest of their lives. Some teenagers already feel that it is too late for them to change. Some teenagers are not thinking of the future at all. Some teenagers are very focused on the future, but feel powerless to control their destiny. We will examine the characters' traits and will discuss how their actions affect their future.

Goals and Objectives

Students will improve their reading fluency and written expression while examining the theme of 'teens surviving high school'.

Students will read different genres of literature including excerpts from a novel, short stories, plays, comic strips, interviews, newspaper articles and poems.

Students will record their thoughts and opinions of the passages in a response journal.

Students will use a variety of media, including movies, TV shows and songs to explore different characters, their situations and experiences.

Students will create character sketches of characters they select from the readings, focusing on the traits that enabled the character to work through the problem or situation that was introduced in the reading.

Students will analyze characters from different genres through comparing and contrasting their stories and the skills they used to cope.

Students will discuss the purpose and effectiveness of written survival accounts by teenagers.

Students will examine their own character traits and the role they play in their high school career and life.

Students will work cooperatively to create an outlet for their stories to be shared with other students.

Materials

After reviewing the five issues that many adolescents face, which this curriculum will address, I realized that much of the entertainment that is developed for teenagers as the primary audience would incorporate these topics. Using material that teenagers would voluntarily choose to enjoy as a means of exploring these issues would be more effective than forcing them to use material they cannot relate to. There are many forms that could be utilized, and when developing my list I went to the experts for ideas, my students. As new songs and movies are released, there will be more to choose from. I have collected a sampling of materials that could be used. Even though students may have already enjoyed a medium we use, after analyzing it, they will enjoy it on a new level!

The materials will be divided into 5 core concerns: racial issues, family concerns, violence, school pressure and education, and responsibility and thoughts of the future. In each of these sub-groups there are different materials and resources that would work well to highlight the issue. The characters in each genre offer different traits to be examined which will lead to open discussions. Many of the materials overlap in the issues they deal with, but are listed under the topic they are best matched with. They can be moved to correspond with the students' interests.

Racial issues:

'Remember the Titans'

This movie is set in the south during the 1970s. When a new black coach takes over the football team he finds that his players on the team stick exclusively to their own race. The coach decides that the only way to have a strong cohesive team is to break down the racial barriers and form a reliance on the teammates, regardless of their race and color. Even though it is a difficult transition, the team does break down most of the racial barriers that they began the season with. The coaching staff as well as the team members represent many different mentalities and personalities. Some of the characters adjust easily, some hold firm to their prejudices.

"In America" by Karisma Rodriguez (excerpt from *Ophelia Speaks* 249)

A fifteen-year-old Latino woman writes of her personal experience working in an office for the summer and the prejudice she was forced to deal with.

"Hurricane" by Bob Dylan

Bob Dylan wrote this song in 1975 after the publication of Rubin Carter's book, *The 16th Round*, in which Carter explains his analysis of his imprisonment. "Hurricane" was written to gain public attention to the wrongful imprisonment of the boxer. A useful web site is:

<http://www.geocities.com/SunsetStrip/Studio/4909/hurricane.html>. Here you will find bibliographical information about Rubin Carter. Also included is a quote by the boxer where he explains during an interview for Penthouse in 1975, "I'm not in jail for committing murder. I'm in jail partly because I'm a black man in America, where the powers that be will only allow a black man to be an entertainer or a criminal." In order to provide students with both sides of the story, present them with information from the following website titled "Hurricane Carter: The Other Side of the Story": <http://www.graphicwitness.com/carter>.

"American Skin (41 Shots)" by Bruce Springsteen

This song confronts the dangers of living in our society. It highlights the prejudice that black males have faced when confronted with police. Talks specifically of Amadou Diallo's death from 41 gunshots from four policemen's gun.

Family concerns:

"Raheem's Father Comes Home" by Wiley Woodard in *Plays Without Endings*

The play opens with the teenaged male character, Raheem, meeting with his long lost father Dennis. Raheem feels anger toward his father for not being around for his youth. The play ends with Dennis asking Raheem to put his life on hold to spend time with him before he dies of aids. This topic is one that students relate to, as

most of my students grew up without a father in the household. Students are then able to discuss possible outcomes and write the ending of the play.

'Zits' by Jerry Scott and Jim Borgman

This is a comic strip whose main characters are a mother, father, teenaged son and his friends. This medium is an amusing look at the differences between the generations and the relationships between parents and their children. It offers insight into the different perceptions of the same activity from the adult and the teen point of view.

"Parents Just Don't Understand"

This song is an 80s hit by D.J. Jazzy Jeff and the Fresh Prince (Will Smith). It uses the refrain 'Parents Just Don't Understand' as it points out several points of conflict between parents and teens including fashion and driving.

"Clueless"

This movie does not revolve around a traditional family, but instead around a daughter, her divorced father, and her stepbrother. Their relationship changes as a result of the interactions between them. The stepbrother's influence on Cher, in turn is expanded out to her circle of friends.

"Sixteen Candles"

A classic 80s movie about a teenaged girl struggling to find her place in her family. She must recognize the different personalities and her role amongst them. She also faces turning sixteen, her older sister's marriage to a less than desirable brother in law, friendships, crushes and the clash of social classes.

"A Tiny Crease in the Silence" by Chana Joffe-Walt (an excerpt taken from *Ophelia Speaks* 97)

Written as an account of the emotions that the children may feel after a divorce. She writes about holding in the emotions, and wonders on the ability to release them after being bottled up for an extended period of time.

Violence:

The Outsiders by S.E. Hinton

This novel deals with a group of teenage boys that bond together to deal with difficult family problems, peer social problems, legal troubles and violence they encounter. The characters embody a variety of personalities and show different coping strategies. Written by a 17 year old, students are able to readily identify with the characters in this novel. There is also a movie version available of this novel.

"Insomnia- A Journal Entry" by Anonymous (excerpt taken from *Ophelia Speaks* 35)

A poem written by a 15 year old in which she explains her inner turmoil and her experience with self-inflicted wounds. This poem is written as a way to bridge the gap with other teens that may feel similarly and as a warning to others.

"Coming Home" by Cynthia Benjamin in *Plays Without Endings*

Play about a teenage male, Jamal who was able to make it out of his neighborhood and is home on vacation from his private school. His old gang members run into trouble by shooting a local shop owner, and look to Jamal to cover for them. Looks at the difficult position he is placed in, and how critical his response to the situation is.

“Children’s Story” by Slick Rick

This song is set up as a story to children before bedtime. The story shows the ease with which a young man slipped into a life of crime and violence, and ultimately ends when he is gunned down.

School pressure and education:

“Breakfast Club”

This is an 80’s classic where 5 students filling the high school stereotypes of nerd, jock, social outcast, preppy princess and the school thug, are stuck together in an all day Saturday detention. The students enter detention with their preconceived notions about the other members, but through the day are forced to open up their minds and really get to know each other. Shows how frequently people respond to the image of a person instead of making judgments based on the true person.

“The Façade” by Hilary Menges (excerpt taken from *Ophelia Speaks* 225)

An essay that describes the pressure the author felt, to appear in control while in high school. Sometimes just looking like you have it under control is not enough.

“Freaks and Geeks”

A television sitcom that portrays students dealing with different situations in a high school setting. Instead of focusing on the popular group like ‘90210’ did, this show follows a group of students who are outside of the privileged circle.

“Dangerous Minds”

This movie shows an ex-marine turned teacher entering an urban school and the challenges she and her students face.

“Intelligence” by Isaac Asimov

This is a short essay in which the author ponders the idea of intelligence. As one that has scored high on all traditional intelligence tests, he feels that he is intelligent on the scale created by others of the same intelligence. However, he cites examples where his academic intelligence is of no use, such as when his car breaks down and he runs to an auto mechanic. An interesting piece that shows that academic smarts are not always the only important smarts to have.

Future and responsibilities:

“Son of the Grand Goblin” by Sandra Widener in *Plays Without Endings*

A teenage boy finds himself in a difficult position. He learns that his father is the Grand Goblin of the local KKK.

His father puts a lot of pressure on him to prove he is a man by joining the local chapter in outing a new family from the neighborhood. The play ends with Michael having to make a decision about what path he wants his future to take. Students can discuss the qualities that they believe are embodied by a man, and how they believe Michael will respond to the pressure from his father.

“Don’t Let me Get Me” by Pink

A song that explains teenage angst growing up not fitting in with the norm and trying to become something while being told “all you need to change is everything you are”.

“Hit and Run” by Chiori Santiago in *Plays Without Ending*

Two male teenagers without licenses must decide how to deal with a fender bender they caused in a car they did not have permission to be in. They consider leaving and hoping no one saw them. An open ended play that allows for discussion about how they should respond and if they should take responsibility for their actions.

“Love Child” by Diana Ross and The Supremes

In this song the singer explains her hurt and shame at growing up the daughter of an unwed mother. She explains her past to her boyfriend to explain why she doesn’t want to go down the same road and wind up as an unwed mother.

“Responsibility” by Paul LaVasseur

This is a short poem that discusses the power to make positive decisions or negative decisions.

Standards

This unit will address the following Language Arts standards for grades 9-12 as approved by the New Haven Board of Education.

Content Standard 1.0 Reading

Students will demonstrate strategic reading skills before, during and after reading.

Students will predict, reread, sequence, infer, paraphrase and ask questions.

Students will give an initial personal reaction to text and describe its general content and purpose.

Students will construct an interpretation and/or explanation of text.

Students will describe the text- initial reaction, description of content and purpose.

Students will participate in a wide variety of reading experiences.

Students will read literary, informational and persuasive materials.

Students will compose narrative, expository and persuasive pieces related to selections read.

Students will exhibit comprehension by responding to a wide variety of texts through oral, visual, verbal, artistic, musical and technology formats.

Content Standard 2.0 Writing

Students will demonstrate successful writing behaviors.

Students will write to define, clarify and develop ideas and express creatively.

Students will participate in a wide variety of writing.

Students will demonstrate effective use of the writing process: pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing and publishing.

Students will reflect, use feedback and assessments and confer with others to plan for improvement.

Content Standard 6.0 English/Integrated Language Arts

Students will explain how literature represents, recreates and explores human experiences through language and imagination.

Students will create personal and expressive writing.

Students will write observations and descriptions.

Students will create narratives and original stories.

Lesson Plans for “Future”

Goal : Students will explore the connection between decisions they make now and their future.

Lesson One: “Love Child”

Pressures related to sex are something many students are bombarded with in their own lives, through their friends, in movies and television shows. As such there will not be much background discussion prior to discussion. Every student will have some personal experience to draw from. Guidelines will have already been established as to how to conduct successful discussions. Everyone will have the opportunity to comment and raise differing positions, but it will be done in an orderly fashion, allowing everyone the opportunity to hear and respond. These activities will take 3 days to complete.

Content Standard 1.0: Reading

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Content Standard 2.0: Writing

Content Standard 6.0: English/Integrated Arts

Materials:

Copy of the lyrics to “Love Child” by Diana Ross. Can be obtained from the Internet at <http://lyrics.coolfreepages.com/Lyrics/1969/821969.html>

Recorded version of the song “Love Child”. This song is available on several collections, including *Love Child , 25th Anniversary , Compact Command Performances (20 Greatest Hits), and The Ultimate Collection .*

Objectives:

Students will listen to and read the lyrics for “Love Child” by Diana Ross.

Students will examine the character traits exhibited by the singer. Some of these may include courage and truth. They will evaluate the effectiveness of displaying these traits through the song genre.

Students will discuss the timeless nature of the issue of deciding when to have sex. This song was at the top of the charts in 1969 and the topic is still present in many forms of media.

Students will brainstorm possible outcomes of this ‘discussion’ between the singer and the boyfriend.

After discussion, students will create a dialogue of the events that occur after she explains her situation and feelings to the boyfriend. Students will be given the option of responding to the song with a lyrical response from the male point of view, or to write the ensuing dialogue in a play format.

Students will self edit and peer edit their writing prior to sharing with the class.

Lesson Two: “Grand Goblin”

Pressure from our families is something we all feel. Families can affect many decisions one makes. Some students behave in strict accordance to their parents wishes while resenting the lack of control, others oppose everything their parent say. Students will discuss this phenomenon, and move toward the realization that while family is important, their ultimate fate rests on them. For background information students will need to review the Ku Klux Klan’s history and current status. This information can be obtained from the websites listed in the bibliography.

Content Standard 1.0: Reading

Content Standard 2.0: Writing

Content Standard 6.0: English/Integrated Arts

Materials:

Copy of Play Without Endings

Objectives:

Students will brainstorm the sources of pressure they feel is imposed on them.

Teacher will focus discussion on family pressure and how it affects the choices we make.

Students will be assigned roles and read "Grand Goblin" aloud.

After reading, students will write a response journal to the play. The prompt will be "How did reading this play make you feel? Which character could you identify with? How do you believe Michael will react to the situation he is in? Why?"

Students will create a flow chart showing 2 possible outcomes of the story- what may occur if Michael goes along with his father, and what may occur if he opposes him.

Students will break into two groups, and one group will act out the first scenario and the other group will act out the second scenario.

Lesson Three: "Responsibility"

The group of students that will be participating in this curriculum will probably not have had much experience reading poems. This poem is very short, and not difficult to decipher the meaning. The reference to "the bars that imprison me" can be analyzed on different levels, but the image of the prison bars will be one that my students can instantly relate with.

Content Standard 1.0: Reading

Content Standard 2.0: Writing

Materials:

Copy of "Responsibility" by Paul LaVasseur

Objectives:

Students will read "Responsibility" out loud as a class.

Students will discuss the message of the poem.

The class will discuss the poem in relation to Hyde's words. Is this poem representing any of the guiding principles? Is it contrary to some of the words?

Students will write a response journal answering the question: "How does reading this poem make you feel? Do you believe this poem is effective at making the reader think about the choices they make? Why or why not?"

Students will draw a picture of the feeling they get from the poem.

Students will have the opportunity to share their pictures and an explanation with the class.

Teacher's Bibliography

Gauld, J. (1993). *Character First: The Hyde School Difference*. Maine: The Hyde Foundation. The guiding principal of Hyde Schools. Written by the founders, this book explains the philosophy behind our ideology.

Harris, L. (1997). *The Commonwealth Fund Survey of the Health of Adolescent Girls*. Commonwealth Fund. This survey gives information on female adolescents and their habits.

Leschied, AI & Cummings, A. (2000). *Female Adolescent Aggression: A Review of the Literature and the Correlates of Aggression*. Canada: Public Works and Government Services Canada. A look into aggression in adolescent females.

Murry, V. (1995). *Black Female Sexuality: Within Group Differences*. *Womanist Theory and Research*, 1.2. This is a study of black females and their sexuality. Looks at the issues that they face, and highlights the fact that not all black females fall into the negative stereotypes that society accepts as the norm.

Nebraska Council to Prevent Alcohol and Drug Abuse. (2002). *Quick Stats on Female Adolescents*. Retrieved May8, 2002 from the World Wide Web: <http://www.prevlink.org/therightstuff/campaign/statisticsg.html>. This site offers statistics on alcohol and drugs, tobacco, violence and child abuse, suicide and depression, sexual behavior, and body image.

Pollack, W. (1998). *Real Boys: Rescuing Our Sons from the Myths of Boyhood*. Canada. Fitzhenry & Whiteside Ltd. Pollack explores the stereotypes that are placed on boys that they and their caregivers may feel societal pressure to uphold. Discusses some ways that parents and teachers can help boy mature into a man they are comfortable being, instead of one that society forces upon them.

Williams, L. (2000). *It's the Little Things: Everyday Interactions That Anger, Annoy and Divide the Races*. Florida: Harcourt, Inc. An interesting book written by a black woman discussing the differences in the races. Her examples are primarily from the black point of view, but do highlight many noteworthy topics.

Student's Bibliography

Canfield, J. & Hansen, M. (2000). *Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul III: More Stories of Life, Love and Learning*. Florida: Health communications Inc. This is a collection of short stories written by teens about their experiences. Uplifting and thought provoking entries that can be used for discussion openers and journal responses.

Caruso, D & Weidenborner, S. (1992). *Reading, Responding, and Writing: Short Essays and Stories for Composition*. New York: St. Martin's Press. This is a collection of short essays by many famous authors on a variety of topics. It gives examples of student responses and how to encourage them to develop their ideas into complete essays. Includes Asimov's essay 'Intelligence'.

Hinton, S.E. (1967). *The Outsiders*. New York: Penguin Group. This is a fictional account of teenage boys coping with social inequity, dissolved families, legal troubles, and peer relationships. Written by a female author when she was 17 years old.

Kloos, L. (1996). *Plays Without Endings*. New Jersey: Globe Fearon. This book contains 20 play beginnings. Each play introduces characters and an issue, asks questions, then allows students to discuss possible outcomes and the way they would handle the situation.

Shandler, S. (1999). *Ophelia Speaks: Adolescent Girls Write About Their Search for Self*. New York: HarperCollins. This book was created as a vehicle for teenage girls to have a voice to explain their positions and thought on different topics. There are several topics that are dealt with. Some of the entries are very moving.

Helpful Web Sites:

<http://lyrics.coolfreepages.com/Lyrics/1969/821969.html> A site that has free lyrics to many songs that can be utilized in the classroom.

<http://returntothefire.com/newsletter4-1/responsibility.html> This is the site on which to find Paul LaVasseur's poem 'Responsibility'

www.teenpeople.com Set up in the magazine format, this web site has current events, editorials, and the latest star gossip.

<http://www.kingfeatures.com/features/comics/zits/about.htm> Gives background information and copies of the comic Zits.

<http://www.americanknights.com/ny/> Lists the 9 core beliefs of the KKK. This site is organized by a current and active group.

<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAkkk.htm> Historical information on the organization of the KKK.

<http://www.us-israel.org/jsource/anti-semitism/KKK.html> Lists several of the current groups and their purposes.

http://www.televisionwithoutpity.com/freaks_and_geeks/ Episode summaries for the television show "Freaks and Geeks".

http://www.ameristat.org/Content/NavigationMenu/Ameristat/Topics1/MarriageandFamily/U_S__Nuclear_Meltdown.htm Gives Census information on the break down of families.

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