



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2020 Volume I: The Place of Woman: Home, Economy, and Politics

Visionaries Can Change the World

Curriculum Unit 20.01.01
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Introduction

As a primary-level teacher, I am responsible for creating a classroom that operates as a community, with everyone's voice included in the day-to-day environment and provides opportunities for students to learn through literature, science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics. Key components of our school theme include equity and inclusion making social-emotional learning integral to any academic learning that takes place throughout the day. This unit will provide my students the opportunity to build an understanding of how we are all important to help make positive changes the world in the ways that we can.

I teach in a self-contained classroom at Edgewood Magnet School in New Haven. I find the neighborhood/magnet setting a rewarding environment, with students coming to school each day from a variety of home circumstances and with differences in academic levels. As a result of these variables, the young children have differing levels of background knowledge and life experiences. The classroom is a mixture of varied ethnicities, economic strata and social and emotional strengths and weaknesses. The use of collaboration allows all students at all levels to learn in an inherently differentiated environment, learning new concepts and experiencing the hands-on practices and demonstrations in this curriculum unit on understanding how we will all work together. Throughout the school year, the Kindergarten curriculum focuses heavily on social development. Our school staff is currently mandated to develop rich curriculum that supports our new S.T.E.A.M. focus, with support through social/emotional programs. This unit will be in direct alignment with my responsibility to design curriculum that helps our students learn social and community responsibility and understanding.

Young children often have a natural curiosity about people around them. They are fascinated to learn about what "grown-ups" do for jobs and somehow can easily see themselves in those roles. In the curriculum unit, students will explore the lives of a number of men and women who, through the course of history, have accomplished similar goals amid a variety of obstacles.

Within the set of compelling questions in the Connecticut Social Studies Framework for young learners are: *How do we learn about people from the past? How do past actions of people in our community still influence our community today? What historical sources can we study from the past?* Teaching younger students about our world's history and how the past influences the present and future is a bit lofty and challenging, but some

basic questions can help them think it through include: *What makes a good leader? How do members of a community help each other? What can we learn from each other that that helps make ours and others' lives better?*

I will use the picture book, *Little Dreamers: Visionary Women Around the World* by Vashti Harrison as a foundation for this unit. This text highlights the life histories and achievements of 36 curious and resourceful women, both living and deceased with some more well-known than others. These daring women from around the world are presented in one-page biographies that describe their challenges and triumphs with illustrations that include the tools of their trade or objects of study. From this beginning focus, the students will learn about a set of partners, one male and one female, who have achieved success in their field. By partnering like-minded men and women, I can demonstrate that success can come from passion, hard work, timeliness, and sometimes, good luck. The parallel accomplishments of the women and men we study will encourage my students to view the world as a place that both men and women are equally capable of leadership roles.

My students will use the lives of these brave and brilliant figures to consider ideas and goals for becoming an expert in their own futures. They will use the biographical format of the *Little Dreamers* text as a model their own plan - what area of expertise would they choose and who might benefit from any advancements, what would they wear for their specific type of work, and what tools or materials would they need to do their work.

Biographical Information of Figures

Listed below are groups of women and men whose accomplishments parallel each other in their degree of accomplishment. These short biographies provide an overview to introduce the set of experiences that connect them and characterize their noted accomplishments.

Olympians

Simone Biles is an American artistic gymnast. With a combined total of 30 Olympic and World Championship medals, Biles is the most decorated American gymnast. Born on March 14, 1997, in Columbus, Ohio. She and her sister, Adria, were adopted and raised by their grandparents Ron and Nellie, after their mother's struggle with substance abuse problem. Biles discovered her abilities at an early age. According to the official USA Gymnastics website, she visited a gymnastics center on a field trip with her day care group, noting, "While there I imitated the other gymnasts, and Coach Ronnie noticed. The gym sent home a letter requesting that I join tumbling or gymnastics."

After dominating at the junior elite level, she won her first U.S. and world all-around titles at the age of 10. In 2015, she claimed a record third straight world all-around title. She went on to lead the U.S. Olympic women's gymnastics team, nicknamed "The Final Five," to victory at the 2016 Summer Games, while also winning gold in the individual all-around, vault and floor exercise and earning a bronze in the balance beam. Biles went on to grab a record sixth U.S. all-around title in 2019 and set another record by winning her 25th World Championship medal that fall. During her floor routines, Biles often executed what has become her signature move: a double-flip with a half-twist.¹

Michael Phelps is an American competitive swimmer and the most successful and most decorated Olympian of

all time, with a total of 28 medals. Phelps holds the all-time records for Olympic gold medals (23), Olympic gold medals in individual events (13), and Olympic medals in individual events over five consecutive Games, beginning in 2000. He has broken several world records in his sport. Even his record breaking has broken new records: he was the first swimmer ever to shatter two world records in individual events during a single day and the first to swim five new fastest times at a world championship meet. Phelps, whose best stroke is the butterfly, is said to have the perfect build for competitive swimming. He is more than six feet four inches tall, and his wingspan, as it is called, is even longer: from finger to finger he measures six feet seven inches across. These attributes have given him an edge in the highly competitive sport, but he is known by his teammates and competitors to have an inner drive who focuses on achieving goals. Phelps is known for his perseverance and concentration in the pool, listening to Rap music for focus during practice and before competition.

Phelps was born on June 30, 1985 in the Baltimore suburb of Towson. He has two older sisters and began swimming when they joined a local swim team. "At first, I was a little scared to put my head underwater, so I started with the backstroke," Phelps told Frank Litsky, a sportswriter for the New York Times, adding, "I was still scared because I don't think I had goggles." When he was eleven years old, he began working with a top swim coach who predicted that Phelps would be Olympic-caliber material by the time he was fifteen. That prediction proved to be correct.²

Social Reformers

Malala Yousafzai is a Pakistani education advocate who, at the age of 17 in 2014, became the youngest person to win the Nobel Peace Prize. Yousafzai became an advocate for girls' education when she herself was still a child, which resulted in the Taliban issuing a death threat against her. On October 9, 2012, a gunman shot Yousafzai when she was traveling home from school. She survived and has continued to speak out on the importance of education. In 2013, she gave a speech to the United Nations and published her first book, *I Am Malala*.

Yousafzai was born on July 12, 1997, in Mingora, Pakistan, located in the country's Swat Valley. Yousafzai attended a school that her father, educator Ziauddin Yousafzai, had founded. After the Taliban banned girls from attending school and attacking girls' schools in Swat, Yousafzai gave a speech in Peshawar, Pakistan, in September 2008. The title of her talk was, "*How dare the Taliban take away my basic right to education?*"

In early 2009, when she was just 11 years old, Yousafzai began blogging for the BBC about living under the Taliban's threats to deny her an education. To hide her identity, she used the name Gul Makai although she was revealed by December of that year. With a growing public platform, Yousafzai continued to speak out about her right, and the right of all women, to an education. Her activism resulted in a nomination for the International Children's Peace Prize in 2011. That same year, she was awarded Pakistan's National Youth Peace Prize. Nine months after being shot by the Taliban, Yousafzai gave a speech at the United Nations on her 16th birthday in 2013. Yousafzai highlighted her focus on education and women's rights, urging world leaders to change their policies.³

Fredrick Douglass was an American social reformer, orator, writer, and statesman. After escaping from slavery in Maryland, he became a national leader of the abolitionist movement. Douglass was a firm believer in the equality of all peoples.

Douglass was an early champion of women's rights and author of '*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass.*' He was born into slavery sometime around 1818 in Talbot County, Maryland. He became one of the most

famous intellectuals of his time, advising presidents and lecturing to thousands on a range of causes.

Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey was born around 1818 into slavery in Talbot County, Maryland. Despite a ban on teaching slaves, Douglass learned to read and write from a slaveholder's wife. It was through reading that Douglass' ideological opposition to slavery began to take shape. He read newspapers and sought out political writing and literature as much as possible. Douglass shared his newfound knowledge with other enslaved people. He tried to escape from slavery twice before he finally succeeded.

After settling as a free man with his wife Anna in New Bedford, MA in 1838, Douglass was eventually asked to tell his story at abolitionist meetings, and he became a regular anti-slavery lecturer. In addition to abolition, Douglass became an outspoken supporter of women's rights. In 1848, he was the only African American to attend the Seneca Falls convention on women's rights. Douglass spoke to say that he could not accept the right to vote as a black man if women could not also claim that right.

By the time of the Civil War, Douglass was one of the most famous black men in the country. He used his status to influence the role of African Americans in the war and their status in the country. Douglass was appointed to several political positions following the war. ⁴

Environmentalists

Greta Thunberg is a Swedish environmental activist who gained international recognition for promoting the view that humanity is facing an existential crisis arising from climate change.

She sparked an international movement to fight climate change beginning in 2018. With the simple message "School strike for climate" handwritten on poster board, Thunberg began skipping school on Fridays and protesting outside the Swedish Parliament. Thanks to social media, her actions have spread and influenced millions of young people all over the world to organize and protest.

Thunberg has traveled the world, meeting with global leaders and speaking at assemblies to demand climate solutions and a recommitment to the Paris Agreement. Recently diagnosed with Asperger's, the activist has publicly shared her views on her disorder, referring to it as her "superpower." Thunberg was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in March 2019, and a few months later she became the youngest individual ever to be honored as Time's Person of the Year.

Thunberg was born on January 3, 2003, in Stockholm, Sweden. Thunberg began her climate activism at age 15. Invited to speak at the UN Climate Action Summit in New York City, which took place in September 2019, and later spoke before the House Foreign Affairs Committee and the House Select Committee in Washington D.C. on September 18th. Known for her blunt speaking style, Thunberg barely spoke before and instead pushed forward the latest UN report. "I don't want you to listen to me," she said. "I want you to listen to the scientists."

At the United Nations Climate Action Summit speaking before leaders, lawmakers and U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, Thunberg scolded them with one of her most indignant speeches. "You have stolen my dreams and my childhood with your empty words. And yet I'm one of the lucky ones. People are suffering. People are dying. Entire ecosystems are collapsing," she said. "We are in the beginning of a mass extinction, and all you can talk about is money and fairy tales of eternal economic growth. How dare you!"⁵

Henry David Thoreau was an American essayist, poet, and philosopher. His writings centered on natural

history and philosophy, in which he anticipated the methods and findings of ecology and environmental history.

Thoreau was born on July 12, 1817, in Concord, Massachusetts. He began writing nature poetry in the 1840s, with poet Ralph Waldo Emerson as a mentor and friend. In 1845 he began his famous two-year stay on Walden Pond, which he wrote about in his master work, *Walden*. He also became known for his beliefs in Transcendentalism and civil disobedience and was a dedicated abolitionist.

As one of America's most famous writers, Henry David Thoreau is remembered for his philosophical and naturalist writings. Thoreau went to Harvard University where he studied Greek and Latin. After college, Thoreau befriended writer and fellow Concord resident Ralph Waldo Emerson. Through Emerson, he became exposed to Transcendentalism, a school of thought that emphasized the importance of empirical thinking and of spiritual matters over the physical world. It encouraged scientific inquiry and observation.

In 1845, Thoreau built a small home for himself on Walden Pond, on property owned by Emerson. He spent more than two years there, seeking a simpler type of life. He spent much of his time devoted to his philosophical and literary interests. Thoreau started writing about his Walden Pond experiment. Published in 1854, *Walden; or, Life in the Woods* described living a life close to nature. The book was a modest success; it was not until much later that the book reached a larger audience. Over the years, *Walden* has inspired and informed the work of naturalists, environmentalists, and writers.

Thoreau writings have endured because so much of what he wrote about is still relevant today. His writings on government were revolutionary, with some calling him an early anarchist. Thoreau's studies of nature were equally radical in their own way, earning him the moniker of "father of environmentalism." ⁶

Caregivers During Wartime

Florence Nightingale was an English social reformer and the founder of modern nursing. Nightingale served as a manager and trainer of nurses during the Crimean War, in which she organized care for wounded soldiers.

Nightingale was a trailblazing figure in nursing who greatly affected 19th- and 20th-century policies around proper medical care. She was known for her night rounds to aid the wounded, establishing her image as the 'Lady with the Lamp.'

Part of a wealthy family, Florence Nightingale defied the expectations of the time and pursued what she saw as her God-given calling of nursing. During the Crimean War, she and a team of nurses improved the unsanitary conditions at a British base hospital, vastly reducing the death count. Her writings inspired worldwide health care reform, and in 1860 she established St. Thomas' Hospital and the Nightingale Training School for Nurses.

Nightingale was born on May 12, 1820. From a young age, Nightingale was active in philanthropy, ministering to the ill and poor people in the village neighboring her family's estate. Nightingale eventually concluded that nursing was her calling; she believed the vocation to be her divine purpose.

In the early 1850s, Nightingale took a nursing job in London in a Harley Street hospital for ailing governesses. In October 1853, the Crimean War broke out. In late 1854, Nightingale received a letter from the Secretary of War asking her to organize a corps of nurses to tend to the sick and fallen soldiers. Given full control of the operation, she quickly gathered a team of almost three dozen nurses. Their dedicated work under her

guidance established sanitary and care conditions that saved many soldiers' lives.

Queen Victoria rewarded Nightingale's work by presenting her with an engraved brooch that came to be known as the "Nightingale Jewel" and by granting her a prize of \$250,000 from the British government. Nightingale decided to use the money to further her cause. In 1860, she funded the establishment of St. Thomas' Hospital and the Nightingale Training School for Nurses. Nightingale became a figure of public admiration. ⁷

Walt Whitman was an American poet, essayist, and journalist. During the American Civil War, he worked in hospitals caring for the wounded. His poetry often focused on both loss and healing.

Walt Whitman is considered one of America's most influential poets. In 1855, he self-published the collection *Leaves of Grass*; the book is now a landmark in American literature, though at the time of its publication it was considered highly controversial. Whitman later worked as a volunteer nurse during the Civil War, writing the collection *Drum Taps* (1865) in connection to the experiences of war-torn soldiers.

Walt Whitman was born on May 31, 1819, in West Hills, Long Island, New York. He grew up in a family of modest means. At 11, Whitman was taken out of school by his father to help with household income. He started to work as an office boy for a Brooklyn-based attorney team and eventually found employment in the printing business.

When he was 17, Whitman turned to teaching, working as an educator for five years in various parts of Long Island. Whitman did not care for the work and by 1841, he moved on to journalism. Whitman proved to be a volatile journalist, a set of opinions that did not always align with his bosses or his readers. He backed what some considered radical positions on women's property rights, immigration, and labor issues. In the spring of 1855, Whitman, found the style and voice he had been searching for, self-published a slim collection of 12 unnamed poems with a preface titled *Leaves of Grass*, which marked a radical departure from established poetic norms. Over the years to come, Whitman added to his collection and republished a number of times.

In 1862, Whitman traveled to Fredericksburg to search for his brother George, who fought for the Union and was being treated there for a wound he suffered. Whitman moved to Washington, D.C., spending much of his time visiting wounded soldiers. This volunteer work proved to be both life-changing and exhausting. By his own rough estimates, Whitman made 600 hospital visits and saw anywhere from 80,000 to 100,000 patients. The work took a toll physically, but also propelled him to return to poetry.⁸

Astronauts

Sally Ride was an American astronaut and physicist. She joined NASA in 1978 and became the first American woman in space in 1983.

Dr. Sally Ride studied at Stanford University before beating out 1,000 other applicants for a spot in NASA's astronaut program. After rigorous training, Ride joined the Challenger shuttle mission on June 18, 1983, and became the first American woman in space.

Born on May 26, 1951, Ride grew up in Los Angeles and went to Stanford University, where she was a double major in physics and English. Ride received Bachelor's Degrees in both subjects in 1973. She continued to study physics at the university, earning a master's degree in 1975 and a Ph.D. in 1978.

That same year, Ride beat out 1,000 other applicants for a spot in the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) astronaut program. She went through the program's rigorous training program and got her chance to go into space and the record books in 1983. On June 18, Ride became the first American woman in space, aboard the space shuttle Challenger. As a mission specialist, she helped deploy satellites and worked other projects. She returned to Earth on June 24.

The next year, Ride again served as a mission specialist on a space shuttle flight in October. She was scheduled to take a third trip, but it was canceled after the tragic Challenger accident on January 28, 1986. After the accident, Ride served on the presidential commission that investigated the space shuttle explosion.

Ride became the director of the California Space Institute at the University of California, San Diego, as well as a professor of physics at the school in 1989. In 2001, she started her own company to create educational programs and products known as Sally Ride Science to help inspire girls and young women to pursue their interests in science and math, serving as president and CEO.

For her contributions to the field of science and space exploration, Ride received many honors, including the NASA Space Flight Medal and the NCAA's Theodore Roosevelt Award. She was also inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame and the Astronaut Hall of Fame.⁹

Neil Armstrong was an American astronaut and aeronautical engineer and the first person to walk on the Moon.

Armstrong was born in Wapakoneta, Ohio, on August 5, 1930. After serving in the Korean War and then finishing college, he joined the organization that would become NASA. Armstrong entered the astronaut program in 1962, and was command pilot for his first mission, Gemini VIII, in 1966. He was spacecraft commander for Apollo 11, the first manned lunar mission, and became the first man to walk on the moon.

Astronaut Neil Armstrong developed a fascination with flight at an early age and earned his student pilot's license when he was 16. In 1947, Armstrong began his studies in aeronautical engineering at Purdue University on a U.S. Navy scholarship.

In 1962, Armstrong entered the NASA astronaut program. He and his family moved to Houston, Texas, and Armstrong served as the command pilot for his first mission, Gemini VIII. He and fellow astronaut David Scott were launched into the earth's orbit on March 16, 1966. While in orbit, they were able to briefly dock their space capsule with the Gemini Agena target vehicle.

Along with Michael Collins and Edwin E. "Buzz" Aldrin, he was part of NASA's first manned mission to the moon. The trio was launched into space on July 16, 1969. Serving as the mission's commander, Armstrong piloted the Lunar Module to the moon's surface on July 20, 1969, with Aldrin aboard. Collins remained on the Command Module.

At 10:56 p.m., Armstrong exited the Lunar Module. He said, "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind," as he made his famous first step on the moon. For about two and a half hours, Armstrong and Aldrin collected samples and conducted experiments. They also took photographs, including their own footprints. Returning on July 24, 1969, the Apollo 11 craft came down in the Pacific Ocean west of Hawaii.

New York City honored the astronauts with a ticker-tape parade. Armstrong received numerous awards for his efforts, including the Medal of Freedom and the Congressional Space Medal of Honor.¹⁰

Non-Binary Lives

Anna Pauline "Pauli" Murray was an American civil rights activist who became a lawyer, a women's rights activist, Episcopal priest, and author.

Pauli Murray was born on November 20, 1910 in Baltimore, Maryland, the daughter of Agnes and William Murray. Both sides of her family were of mixed racial origins, with ancestors including black slaves, white slave owners, Native Americans, Irish, and free black people.

Her father, a Howard University graduate, taught in the Baltimore public schools. Both of Murray's parents died when she was a child. Her mother died from a brain hemorrhage in 1914 and her father, a victim of typhoid fever, died in 1923 in the Hospital for the Negro Insane of Maryland, from a beating by a white guard.

Three-year-old Pauli Murray was sent to Durham, North Carolina, to live with her mother's family. There she was raised by her maternal aunts. Despite such heartbreaking tragedy, Murray worked to pursue her life goals. Murray lived in Durham until the age of 16, at which point she moved to New York to finish high school and prepare for college. She lived a cousin whose family was passing for white in their white neighborhood. Murray's presence concerned the neighbors, however, as Murray was more visibly of partial African descent.

In 1933 she graduated from Hunter College in New York City. Despite a stellar academic record, Murray in 1938 was denied admission into the University of North Carolina Law School in Chapel Hill. She later enrolled in the Howard University Law School in Washington, D.C. and graduated in 1944. Not long afterwards, Murray sought admission to Harvard University Law School in Cambridge, Massachusetts for an advanced law degree but was denied admission because of her gender. She enrolled at the University of California at Berkeley where she received a Master of Law degree in 1945. Twenty years later, in 1965, she became the first African American awarded a JSD (a law doctorate) from Yale University. Her degree was based on her dissertation, "Roots of the Racial Crisis: Prologue to Policy."

Murray argued that her experiences encountering and overcoming racial and gender discrimination gave her special insight into the nature of racial and sexual hierarchies in the U.S. and wrote about its various manifestations in America's legal history. Murray coined the term "Jane Crow and Jim Crow" to describe the impact of dual discrimination. She also joined both the civil rights movement and the feminist movement. In 1966 Murray was one of the founders of the National Organization for Women (NOW) with feminist icon Betty Friedan.

Pauli was a trailblazer throughout her life. She struggled with her gender identity, and her most intense romantic relationships were with women. She co-founded the National Organization for Women, serving as a vice-president of Benedict College in South Carolina, and becoming the first person to teach African American Studies and Women's Studies at Brandeis University. Later in her life, at the age of 62, she entered a seminary and became in 1977 the first black female priest ordained by the Episcopal Church and received an honorary degree from the Yale Divinity School in 1979. On July 1, 1985, Pauli Murray died of cancer in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In April 2016, Yale University announced that it had selected Murray as the namesake of one of two new residential colleges (Pauli Murray College) which was completed and opened in 2017.¹¹

Author Oscar Wilde was known for his acclaimed works including *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*, as well as his brilliant wit, flamboyant style, and infamous imprisonment for homosexuality.

Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde was born on October 16, 1854, in Dublin, Ireland. His father, William Wilde, was a celebrated doctor who was knighted for his work as a medical advisor for the Irish censuses. He founded St. Mark's Ophthalmic Hospital to treat the city's poor. Wilde's mother, Jane Francesca Elgee, was a poet who had a deep influence on her son's later writing.

Wilde was a bright and bookish child and excelled at Greek and Roman studies. In 1871, Wilde was awarded the Royal School Scholarship to attend Trinity College in Dublin. He placed first in the school's classics examination and received the college's Foundation Scholarship, the highest honor awarded to undergraduates.

In 1874, Wilde received scholarship for further study at Oxford, where he continued to excel academically, and where made his first sustained attempts at creative writing. In 1878, his poem "Ravenna" won the prize for the best English verse composition by an Oxford undergraduate.

After graduation, Wilde moved to London where he continued to focus on writing poetry, publishing his first collection, *Poems*, in 1881 and Wilde as an up-and-coming writer. In 1882, Wilde traveled to New York City on an extensive American lecture tour. He met with some of the leading American scholars and literary figures of the day, including Henry Longfellow, Oliver Wendell Holmes and Walt Whitman. His lecture circuit continued through England and Ireland and lasted until the middle of 1884. Through his lectures, as well as his early poetry, Wilde established himself as a leading advocate of the aesthetic movement, a theory of art and literature as a pursuit of beauty and not to promote any political or social viewpoint.

In 1884, Wilde married a wealthy Englishwoman named Constance Lloyd. They had two sons: Cyril, born in 1885, and Vyvyan, born in 1886. Wilde was hired to run *Lady's World* and revitalized the magazine by expanding its coverage to include what they think about and what they feel providing a platform for women's opinions on all subjects of literature, art, and modern life.

Beginning in 1888, Wilde entered a seven-year period of furious creativity, during which he produced nearly all of his great literary works published including *The Happy Prince and Other Tales*, a collection of children's stories; *Intentions*, an essay collection arguing the tenets of aestheticism; his first and only novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the story of a beautiful young man, Dorian Gray, who wishes that his portrait age while he remains youthful and lives a life of sin and pleasure. Though the novel is now considered a great and classic work, at the time, critics were outraged by the book's seeming lack of morality.

As a dramatist, many of Wilde's plays were well received including his satirical comedies *Lady Windermere's Fan* (1892), *A Woman of No Importance* (1893), *An Ideal Husband* (1895) and *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895), his most famous play. Unconventional in his writing and life, Wilde's affair with a young man led to his arrest on charges of "gross indecency" in 1895. Wilde emerged from prison in 1897, physically depleted, emotionally exhausted, and flat broke. He went into exile in France, where he wrote very little during these last years; his only notable work was a poem he completed in 1898 about his experiences in prison, *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*.

Wilde died of meningitis on November 30, 1900, at the age of 46. He is remembered for his exuberant personal life as well as for his literary accomplishments. His works are considered among the great literary masterpieces of the late Victorian period.¹²

Teaching Strategies

The core idea of project-based learning is that real-world concerns capture students' interest and provoke serious thinking as the students acquire and apply new knowledge in a problem-solving context. The teacher plays the role of facilitator, working with students to frame worthwhile questions, structuring meaningful tasks, coaching both knowledge development and social skills, and carefully assessing what students have learned from the experience. Project-based learning helps prepare students for the thinking and collaboration skills.

Organized around an open-ended questioning, project-based learning helps focus the students' work and deepen their learning by centering on significant issues or problems. Projects begin by presenting students with knowledge and concepts and then, once learned, give them the opportunity to apply them. It requires inquiry to learn and/or create something new - an idea, an interpretation, or a new way of displaying what they have learned.

Most importantly, it requires critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, and various forms of communication. Students need to do much more than remember information—they need to use higher-order thinking skills. They also must learn to work as a team and contribute to a group effort. They must listen to others and make their own ideas clear when speaking, be able to read a variety of material, write or otherwise express themselves in various modes, and make effective presentations. The format of this approach allows for student voice and choice. Students learn to work independently and take responsibility when they are asked to make choices. The opportunity to make choices, and to express their learning in their own voice, also helps to increase students' educational engagement.

Within the activities in this unit, literacy strategies and approaches include reading comprehension designed to help students understand what they read (and hear). They will identify how language, structure, and presentation contribute to meaning; draw inferences such as characters' feelings, thoughts, and motives from their actions; and justify inferences with evidence. Writing strategies will focus on students planning their writing by identifying the audience for (those interested in biography) and purpose of the writing (teaching others about their research and understanding), selecting the appropriate form and using other similar writing as models for their own. Harrison's style will provide the standard for the work. There will be uses of drama and art for students to express their learning through performances and interviews, role-playing and drawing and painting to share their ideas, experiences, and imagination.

Classroom Activities

Activity One: Introduce the unit with mentor texts

The activity will introduce the goals of the unit. Students will experience Harrison's approach to sharing the lives of some of the world's heroes and illustrating them in her iconic style as Little Leaders. These inviting texts will prepare students to think about bold leaders and visionaries. Students will keep journal entries (illustrations and texts) as they learn about new and interesting people.

Materials: *Little Dreamers: Visionary Women Around the World*, t-chart on chart paper with question, chart to track content from text (examples below), student journals

To introduce the unit on the, students will learn about various women and men discussed in throughout the texts. Students will listen to *Little Leaders: Bold Women in Black History* and *Little Leaders: Exceptional Men in Black History*. Collect some responses from the students.

Begin by asking some questions to activate background knowledge and build communication: *Why are we reading about these people? What do you notice about them? Do you notice what they have in common?*

Ask students the question posted on the chart, "What are some ways people can help our world be better?" Record any answers and ideas on the left side titled "What We Know." Read-aloud time occurs over several lessons about 15-20 minutes each to introduce two to three new biographies. Using the following format, choose profiles/biographies in response to specific student interest to log information for future reference.

Prepare T-Chart

What are some ways people can help our world be better?	
What We Know	What We Have Learned

Prepare text content chart

<i>Learning about Bold and Visionary Men and Women</i>				
Scientists	Artists	Musicians	Athletes	Reformers

Activity Two: Being Bold

This lesson is designed to help pupils explore ideas and speculate about themes in the books. They should feel free to discuss anything that comes to mind.

Lead-in questions: What does the title, '*Little Leaders: Bold Women in Black History*', make you think about? What does it mean to be 'bold'?

Task 1: Teachers will select four images for student reference. In small groups, students will choose one of the illustrations from the text.

Discuss the following questions:

1. What does your illustration taken from the text show?
2. How do you think it represents being 'bold'? Consider images, colors, shapes, actions of the characters.
3. Can you find any important objects or symbols in your illustration?

Students will share their findings with the class.

Task 2: Look at the four illustrations again. Can you find some of the following things and label them?

Task 3: Now that students have found all the things above, write down what you think each of them could represent and what it tells us about the women included in the book. Students will use their journals to document their learning.

Image	What could it represent?	What it tells us about these women

Prompt students: “Imagine you are included in the book. Draw two things that would symbolize how bold you are. Remember to consider what the images represent and what they say about you.”

Activity Three: Being Visionary

Lead-in questions: What does it mean to be ‘visionary’? How do you think being ‘visionary’ is different from being ‘bold’? Help students to understand that one is a state of action and one is a state of thinking.

Task 1: In small groups, choose one of the illustrations from *Little Leaders: Visionary Women Around the World*.

Discuss the following questions:

1. What does your illustration taken from *Little Leaders: Visionary Women Around the World* show?
2. How do you think it represents that particular woman’s ‘vision’? Can you guess each woman’s ‘vision’?
3. Can you find any important objects or symbols in your illustration? Present your group’s findings back to the class.

Task 2: In pairs, can you find clues in the illustrations to match each of the four women to the places they are from? What clues can you find?

Task 3: Share the following statement:

It is important to celebrate inspirational and visionary women from all across the globe.

Discuss as a class your thoughts and ideas about the statement, including whether you agree or disagree and why, as well as whether you would add to the statement in any way:

Activity Four: Exceptional Men

Lead-in questions: When have you heard the word ‘exceptional’? Can you use the word in a sentence? What do you think it means to be ‘exceptional’? Why do you think it is important to celebrate both men and women through history?

Task 1: In small groups, choose one of the illustrations from *Little Leaders: Exceptional Men in Black History*.

Discuss the following questions:

1. What does your illustration taken from text?
2. How do you think it represents how each man might be ‘exceptional’?

3. Can you find any important objects or symbols in your illustration?

Present your group's findings back to the class.

Task 2:

Share the following statement:

It is important to celebrate people equally based on their achievements, no matter their background, race, or gender.

Discuss as a class your thoughts and ideas about the statement, including whether you agree or disagree and why, as well as whether you would add to the statement in any way.

Task 3:

Create your own Little Leaders booklet in which you celebrate the achievements of at

least two people who have inspired you. Make sure that you include people of different

backgrounds, ethnicities, and genders. Use Vashti Harrison's style as a model to help you create the illustrations to go alongside your descriptive text.

Activity Five: Field Trip to Yale Art Museum

We are fortunate to have access to free field trips within the city limits. A trip to the museum would offer the students an opportunity to see portraits and artists' work. Students will prepare with a digital tour of some works of art they will visit, draw, and write about in their journals. Students will use the format of Little Leaders to share their thoughts with their peers in the classroom.

Resources

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Harrison, Vashti. *Little Dreamers: Visionary Women around the World*. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2018.

Harrison, Vashti, and Kwesi Johnson. *Little Leaders: Exceptional Men in Black History*. London: Puffin, 2019.

Harrison, Vashti. *Little Leaders: Bold Women in Black History*. UK: Puffin, 2019.

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Appendix - Implementing District Standards

Connecticut Social Studies Framework: *Kindergarten - Me and My Community*

In Kindergarten, students engage in the study of themselves, their families, and their communities and learn how to participate and use effective citizenship skills. They explore their classrooms, schools, neighborhoods, and home communities through an interdisciplinary approach including history, civics, economics, and geography. The study of themselves, their families, and their communities requires that students generate and research questions such as:

What is my role in my community?

What is “history” and how is the past different from the present?

How are we connected to the past?

Change, Continuity and Context

HIST K.1 Compare life in the past to life today.

Through this unit, students learn about visionary women and men who have made changes to our world that they are able to identify. They answer questions and make observations about how our lives now are changed because of these notable people.

HIST K.2 Generate questions about individuals and groups who have shaped a significant historical change.

Students will ask questions about the women and men that are studied in the mentor texts. They each include historical figures from around the world. Students will be making observations and creating charts that collect their learnings.

Compelling Question:

- How do our communities and the people who live in them change over time?

Supporting Questions:

- How does the time in which we live affect us?
- How is the past different from today?
- How has my family changed (where they live, what they do)?

Perspectives

HIST K.3 Compare perspectives of people in the past to those in the present.

Compelling Question:

- Were people in the past the same as people today?

Supporting Questions:

- How do past experiences shape who we are today (family, home, school)?
- How is my family's past similar to and different from my peers' families?

Common Core State Standards: *Kindergarten – Reading Informational Text*

CCSS ELA-Literacy RI K.1: With prompting and support, students will ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

In Activity One, students will be introduced to the mentor texts and will practice the skill of asking and answering questions about the historical figures, including discussion about the details within each biography.

CCSS ELA-Literacy RI K.2: With prompting and support, students can identify the main topic and retell key details of a text.

Students will use the format of the mentor texts to retell what they have learned through each biographical section. Students will understand the format of a biography and its purpose.

CCSS ELA-Literacy RI K.3: With prompting and support, students will be able to describe the connection between two individuals, events, ideas, or pieces of information in a text.

Students will use the comparison of two figures in specific fields to understand their similarities and differences. They will complete charts that show they details of each person's life and accomplishments.

Endnotes

¹ Simone Biles, Michelle Burford, and Mary Lou Retton, *Courage to Soar: A Body in Motion, a Life in Balance*; <https://www.vogue.com/article/simone-biles-cover-august-2020>.

² Michael Phelps and Brian Cazeneuve, *Beneath the Surface: My Story*.

³ Malala Yousafza, *I Am Malala How One Girl Stood up for Education and Changed the World*.

⁴ David W. Blight, *Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom*.

⁵ Greta Thunberg, *No One Is Too Small to Make a Difference*; Malena Ernman Beata Ernman, Svante Thunberg, and Greta Thunberg. *Our House Is on Fire: Scenes of a Family and a Planet in Crisis*; <https://time.com/person-of-the-year-2019-greta-thunberg/>

⁶ Laura Dassow Walls, *Henry David Thoreau: A Life*.

⁷ Lee Wyndham and Mort Künstler. *The Lady with the Lamp: The Story of Florence Nightingale*.

⁸ Justin Kaplan, *Walt Whitman, a Life*.

⁹ Lynn Scherr. *Sally Ride: Americas First Woman in Space*.

¹⁰ James R. Hansen *First Man: The Life of Neil A. Armstrong*.

¹¹ Kathryn Schulz, *The Many Lives of Pauli Murray*; <https://paulimurray.yalecollege.yale.edu/>

¹² Matthew Sturgis, Oscar: A Life; http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/wilde_oscar.shtml

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