



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1997 Volume V: The Blues Impulse

Finding the Rhythm of Blues in Children’s Poetry, Art, and Music

Curriculum Unit 97.05.04
by Jennifer Blue

My teaching career is often highlighted by the actions and comments of my students. It is always a great experience when a student says or does something that leads into a perfect pedagogical period. It is crucial for a teacher to act on her feet and take advantage of every teachable moment. I can reflect on an instance where students in my first grade class underwent a stage of whining about their problems as opposed to finding appropriate solutions. Seemingly students would complain about every minor detail in their lives. For example, I recall when a student of mine was crying because her crayons were misplaced. She told me “I lost my crayons and my pencil too. And teacher I don’t know what to do.” Her tears stopped immediately when I exclaimed “sweetheart sounds like you have the blues”. For days my class engaged in creating and singing their own blues as well as listening to compositions by such artists as BB King and Billie Holiday. I was surprised to discover that my class of six year olds knew a great deal about the blues. I was so surprised that I felt compelled to explore the blues ideology a bit further.

The blues had their origins in early slave laments. These blues could be defined as secular sorrow songs. After Emancipation, the majority of southern blacks moved from being plantation slaves to being sharecroppers for white landowners. Their sorrow songs were now more likely to be sung by individuals, rather than by groups. The instrument most commonly associated with these songs was now the guitar, though most poor blacks learned on a makeshift instrument far different from what we know today as a guitar. Often it was a wire taken from the handle of a broom and nailed to a wall, stretched so that it had proper tone. As one hand plucked a beat, the other hand slid a bottle along the surface of the wire to change the pitch. The wall served as a resonator. These one-stringed wall instruments were very similar to instruments common in West Africa.

The songs played on these instruments were called the blues. Like the sorrow songs of the earlier plantation slaves, the blues represented the cries of people who had nothing, who seemed to get nothing no matter how hard they tried, and whose lives seemed hopeless. By this time, such songs were often sung in lively rhythms—like laughing to keep from crying.

The blues can be considered a survivalist’s coping mechanism. As stated earlier, the blues originated in slavery. The blues were a kind of musical cry-croons, work songs, and field hollers. Road workers or cotton pickers put whatever words that came into their minds to songs—singing out their own personal thoughts or sorrows. The blues were made up in the fields of the South to relieve the monotony of working or to express some thought passing through the singer’s mind. The pattern of the blues is: a twelve bar musical pattern—one long line of four bars which is repeated, then a third line of four bars to rhyme with the first two

lines that are always the same. In essence, their melody and beat are like those of a field holler.

The blues are almost always sad songs about being out of work, broke, hungry, far away from home, wanting to get on a train but having no ticket, or being lonely when someone you love is gone. In the blues, behind the sadness, there is almost always laughter and strength.

The blues has its primary expression in musical form. However, one can find the blues expression revealed in other forms of artistic representation. The blues can be considered a means where one can record the survivalist details of one's life experience. This artistic expression manifests itself not only in music but also in literature and visual arts as well.

I like to embrace in my classroom a multicultural curriculum. In this society children will be confronted with many cultures and races different from their own. It is a teacher's responsibility, if not every adult's responsibility, to help children understand the differences as well as similarities between cultures. It follows logically that while it is necessary to learn about other people, it is imperative to study one's own history. Since the blues has its origins and history in slavery, this unit, "Finding the Rhythm of Blues in Children's Poetry, Art, Music", will focus upon slavery in the USA along with the blues ideology. The unit is designed for first graders of a New Haven Public School, though it could be adapted for other grade levels. The students are predominantly African American, belonging to a low socioeconomic level. Their academic levels range from very low to high. It is this teacher's opinion that the students are all able to achieve.

My intention for devising this unit is to help children discover the blues aesthetic as a form of artistic expression. This curriculum unit will evolve in a language-based classroom. All projects are geared to achieve the goals of language acquisition and development, and artistic expression and interpretation. Therefore, all related activities will center around poetry, art, and music related to migration, slavery in the U.S., and African American culture.

My students often spend a great deal of time exploring their own emotions. Methods that I use with my students to explore emotions often include verbal, written, and/or artistic expression. This exploration gives way to the crucial language development of young learners. Often in the beginning of the school year, I find my students suffering from the "happy sad mad syndrome". In other words, many young students limit the description of their feelings to those three aforementioned categories. As a facilitator of learning, I attempt daily to illustrate and model for my students that the words "happy sad mad" do not always accurately and adequately describe how one might feel in a given situation or circumstance. I also try to convey to my pupils that one's own life experience often determines feelings, perspective, and interpretation. This particular curriculum unit is intended to increase and develop language acquisition within students.

As a result to the exposure of the blues aesthetic as represented in poetry, art, and music, students will utilize Writer's Workshop. Writer's Workshop is a teaching strategy which demonstrates that craftspeople (authors, poets, artist, etc.) are actively engaged in creating, exploring, and manipulating materials and ideals for the sake of artistic expression. Students will realize that writing is more than a mere assignment, but it is a process that follows a many structured steps. (See attached diagram for conceptual model of the writing process.)

(figure available in print form)

Instructors must keep in mind that students should be given an amount of freedom to explore topics in a classroom setting. They must have the freedom to write and converse as a means to self-examination and open the door to their own beliefs. The setting must be risk free, where modes of expression are not only

accepted but also encouraged. Instructors must afford the opportunity for students to share their works in progress.

When educating students it is necessary to promote positive youth development. Children must realize that confidence and effective expression and communication can ultimately help one function as a productive member of society. It is important to implement social development lessons within this unit. The city of New Haven has adopted a social development program called *Project Charlie*. This program is designated to boost the self-esteem of students. It is intended through *Project Charlie* that student decision making skills and self-awareness will increase. Several of the lessons deal with emotions. The user of this unit is encouraged to look through the *Primary Project Charlie Manual* and employ the materials already developed.

When dealing with the sensitive nature of the effects of slavery, an instructor must be prepared to handle the range of emotions that might occur. Some students may become angry while others may feel hopeless or possibly even ashamed with this portion of American history. Every child should feel empowered within the classroom. An instructor can not predict how students might react to learning about slavery. However, an instructor can help students understand by giving accurate accounts of their history as well as encouraging students to make definite, positive affirmations.

An affirmation is a statement which declares a situation to be true. It is the bringing forth of the life energy in a concise and positive way and releasing that energy in a concise and positive way. Everything we say is an affirmation. We can create our reality through speech. We can use our thoughts and emotions to create what we want and then speak the words which will then manifest as a reality. An affirmation is an empowering statement that is always positive, specific, and spoken with conviction.

After the exposure to slavery in the U.S., a child may internalize the concepts and history taught in a negative fashion. A student may feel ashamed to be African American or angry. In past lessons, I have had students shout "I don't want to learn about this!" and completely shut down. A teacher must alter and convert this negative language. Instruct students to repeat the following affirmations:

I am peaceful.

I am facing my history with courage and understanding.

I am proud.

I am strong.

I reiterate that the purpose of this unit is to find the rhythm of blues in poetry, art, and music centered around slavery in the U.S. As mentioned earlier, young students can identify with the blues impulse. However, the concept of slavery is somewhat difficult to teach the first grader. For some young minds it is not easy to comprehend a time and space outside of their immediate surroundings and environment. This fact is not so incredible. After all, it is just as difficult for adults to relate to a situation in which they are not directly involved as it is for children. According to Jean Piaget, the Swiss psychologist who is internationally renowned for his studies in the development of children's thinking processes, the mental framework for processing and organizing information and ideas is one's environment. One does not learn in a vacuum, When teaching

history to young learners, one must not merely spew a list of dates and facts. Learning is social. Therefore, learning must take place in a context relative to the learner.

It is the teacher's task to create a setting where children can comprehend what life was like as a slave in the U.S. specifically for slave children. This goal can best be attained through active experience and social interaction. There is substantial importance of children's actions on the environment. Active experience is a key element in cognitive development.

Actions may be physical manipulations of objects or events or mental manipulations of objects or events(thinking). Active experiences are those that provoke assimilation and accommodation, resulting in cognitive change.

Educators often focus on Piaget's work on cognitive development in the intellectual growth of children. Another significant factor in cognitive development is social interaction. By social interaction, it is meant the interchange of ideas among people. People can develop concepts classified as follows:

1. those that have sensorially available physical referents(they can be seen, heard, and so on) and
2. those that do not have such referents. The concept 'tree' has physical referents; the concept 'honesty' does not. A child can develop a socially acceptable concept of 'tree' (physical knowledge) relatively independent of others because referents (trees) are usually available. But the same child can not develop an acceptable concept of honesty (social knowledge) independent of others. To the extent that concepts are socially defined, the child is dependent on social interaction for the construction and validation of concepts.

Social interaction can be of many kinds. Children interact with peers, parents, and other adults. The events that take place in a schoolroom are most frequently the interaction of students with other students and with their teachers. There is also interaction with parents and others in their environment. All of these interactions are important for cognitive development.

It is my firm belief that the concept of slavery is an abstract one for young learners and is thus dependent on social knowledge. In most cases, the concept of slavery has no physical referents available. Therefore, social interaction is needed. I have stated that my students often focus on their own feelings. Since feelings, deep passionate feelings, are intricately woven throughout the blues ideology, students will be required to keep a personal journal. The journals will afford students the opportunity to discuss the dynamics of their everyday lives as well as the emotions involved. The journals will serve as a vehicle for students to explore self-evaluation, expression, and their development as readers, writers, and thinkers.

It is imperative that students acquire a firm language base that accurately captures their range of emotions. As mentioned earlier, words such as "happy sad mad" do not always best convey how one might truly feel. Through a teaching strategy called Synectics, in which students engage in role play, students will not only build vocabulary and increase language skills that is indicative of the blues, but students will also gain an understanding of slavery. Synectics should be done on a daily basis.

SYNECTICS EXAMPLE 1

Teacher: "Imagine you are a child living in the South a long time ago. Describe yourself." Students: "big , short, cute, small, tall fat, Black, etc." (These responses can be recorded on the blackboard or chart paper)
Teacher: "Imagine you were not allowed to go to school. How would you feel?" Students: "happy mad sad etc."
Teacher: "I think I would feel disappointed if I weren't allowed to go to school. Instead of going to school like other kids, you had to work , like an adult, outside in the hot field, without water, without pay. How would you feel? " Students: "mad sad disappointed (if student response omits the word disappointed, then teacher should offer it)"
Teacher: What does disappointed mean? (await responses) (pose such questions as:) When you are feeling let down, are you disappointed? How would you look if you were feeling disappointed? (await students' facial responses) Has anyone ever felt disappointed like this little child we just talked about? (await response)
Students are given the opportunity to share stories through verbal, written, or artistic expression. Exercises like this will continue daily, teaching new words to the young learners that may accurately describe the range of emotions a slave child may feel. Students will inevitably realize that they too possess a range of emotions. This part of the unit is not only intended to increase language acquisition but also to promote positive youth development.

SYNECTICS EXAMPLE 2

TEACHER: Imagine you are a slave child working in a big house. Describe yourself. Students: beautiful ugly sad happy etc.
Teacher: You are a lucky child because you do not have to work in the hot hot sun. How do you feel? Students: happy, glad, etc.
Teacher: The only problem is your mistress is mean mean mean woman. Because you are a slave, she hits you and yells at you all of the time. How do you feel? Students: sad mad etc.
Teacher: If I were this child, my feelings would be hurt. I'd feel so bad and so sad, I think I'd feel dejected. Can you all say dejected? (Students repeat word. Teacher writes word on the board)
Teacher: The mistress is so mean to you that she sometimes teases you and calls you names. How do you feel? Students: mad sad dejected (if student response omits the word dejected, offer it)
Teacher: I remember I felt dejected when.... (teacher will share a story of when he/she felt dejected. Then teacher poses more questions) How would you look if you felt dejected? (await students' facial responses) Has anyone here ever felt dejected? Again students share their personal stories through verbal, written or artistic expression. Upon conclusion of synectics lessons, teacher should emphasize that the emotions discussed are the blues.

Additional Terms: angry, terrified, petrified. horrified, dejected, inferior, lonely, depressed, dehumanized

LITERATURE

Students will be exposed to a variety of literature that encompasses the topic of slavery and /or the blues. The stories and poems can be shared with students during Circle/Story Time. For each literary piece that is introduced, students must be given the time to respond through written, verbal, or artistic expression.

Some stories will be shared with students orally in the African American tradition of storytelling. These stories will touch upon the bitter reality of such horrors as lynchings and other cruelty invoked by slavery.

To get even a remote, modest understanding of enslavement, one must feel the pain and experience the horror of millions of human beings torn from their homeland, packed into overcrowded ships, and shipped halfway around the world. Uprooting Africans from their homes and forcing them to sail across the sea to a strange land was a terrible crime against humanity. For 300 years, European ships became chambers of horror for millions of Africans. The separation, pain, brutality, and death that resulted from this barbaric practice is perhaps truly impossible to comprehend. Yet young learners need to be exposed to this story of history. Storytelling is imperative. Here, students will also be exposed to the rhythm of the spoken word.

Reading List

Children's

Poems That Sing to You by Michael Strickland

Pass It On: African American Poetry for Children

Honey I Love and Other Poems by Eloise Greenfield

Nathaniel Talking by Eloise Greenfield

Under The Sunday Tree by Eloise Greenfield

Everett Anderson's Goodbye by Lucille Clifton

Everett Anderson's Nine Months Long by Lucille Clifton

Everett Anderson's Friend by Lucille Clifton

Harriet Tubman and the Promised Land by Jacob Lawrence

Heritage Kids by Empak "Black History" publication Series

Follow the Drinking Gourd

I Live in Music by Ntozake Shange paintings by Romare Bearden

My Many Colored Days by Dr. Suess

The Genie in the Jar by Nicki Giovanni

The Block collage by Romare Bearden poems by Langston Hughes

Teacher's

African American History: A Journey of Liberation by Dr. Molefi Kete Asante

Betrayal By Any Other Name by Dr. Khalid Abdullah Tariq—Al Mansour

MUSIC

The blues has its principal expression in musical form. It is difficult to discuss blues music without mentioning Billie Holiday. John Chilton, who wrote a biography of Holiday, described her voice and style this way: “The timbre of her voice was completely individual, and her incredible sense of rhythm and intuitive knowledge of harmony enabled her to phrase songs in a unique way. She could reshape the bleakest melody into something that offered a vast range of emotions to her listeners; her artistry and timing gave her the ability to make poetry out of the most banal lyrics.”

Ms. Holiday’s biggest artistic triumphs were with songs that presented the reality of black life in America, and the reason for the blues- songs like “Strange Fruit” about lynchings in the South, and “God Bless the Child” about personal alienation.

It was that sense of alienation, that deep loneliness no one could share with her, that caused Holiday to become addicted to drugs and alcohol. As a singer , she remained professional , and she toured for number of years, but eventually her addictions caused her death. She died of lung congestion and other ailments in New York in 1959, at the age of forty-four.

Students will not only listen to selections from Billie Holiday , but also from artists such as Cassandra Wilson, and Wynton Marsalis.

Wynton Marsalis is a jazz musician and composer. Marsalis was born to a highly musical family. His father was a jazz musician and teacher. His mother sang with jazz groups. His brother is an established musician. It seemed inevitable that Wynton would be musically talented. This grammy award winning artist created a phenomenal, three hour long composition called *Blood on the Fields* . This work is about the Middle Passage and slavery. Of his work, Marsalis says,

“ It starts on a slave ship during the Middle Passage. We meet two Africans, Jesse and Leona, who until being forced into the equality of a tragic circumstance, occupied very different stations in life—he a prince; she a commoner. They get sold to the same plantation and are chained together on a coffle. Jesse gets wounded trying to escape, and in order to survive the journey to his new home (for lack of a better term), he has to lean on Leona. When they arrive, he doesn’t even thank her for saving his life. He had been a prince in Africa, so perhaps it was beneath his noble station to express gratitude to a commoner. But one thing is apparent, he’s caught up in the injustice of his circumstance. For him, freedom is a purely personal thing. He needs to have his understanding expanded, and Leona is equipped with the tools to do the job.

Eventually, Jesse goes to see Juba, a wise man posing as a fool. And Juba tells him that he needs to do three things. He has to love his new land, he has to learn how to sing with soul, and he has to learn who he will be when free—what will he call himself? nigger, colored, Negro, black, Afro-American, African American or the next name (maybe just American). Juba’s advice sounds too “Uncle Tom-ish” . Jesse escapes and gets caught. He has a painful awakening under the bite of the lash. This convinces him to transform his attitude and ultimately his character.

This transformation is completed when he sings the blues chant ‘Oh , anybody hear this plaintive song. Oh, who wants to help their brother dance this dance? Oh, I sing with soul, heal this wounded land.’

Blood on the Fields details in music what I feel it takes to achieve soul: the willingness to address adversity with elegance.”

(quote taken from introduction to BLOOD ON THE FIELDS written by Stanley Crouch) *Blood on the Fields* is slave blues and a great learning tool to illustrate the degradation of slavery.

Students will not completely understand all of the lyrics. However, listening to the rhythm of the music can certainly set a mood of which the students can discuss. Students will answer such questions as:

How does the singer's voice sound?

Is she angry, sad, depressed, joyous? Why do you think so?

Can this music be played to describe a slave child?

The musical selections can also be used to set a mood in Writer's Workshop.

VISUAL ARTS

Illustrations, drawings, pictures, and paintings are often used in early childhood education. Because young learners are still developing their reading skills, artwork is a medium that is very powerful in telling stories to children. My students enjoy looking at pictures or illustrations alone, without written text, and then predicting the plot of a story or even making up their own stories to correspond with the art. Two artists that students will examine are Tom Feelings and Jacob Lawrence. Both artists have depicted in their work the blues of slavery.

Tom Feelings is the creator of *The Middle Passage*, a book of illustrations which center on the slave trade. Tom Feelings' motive behind the work was to tell this part of our history (slavery) in a way that those chains of the past, those shackles that physically bound us together against our wills could, in the telling become spiritual links that willingly bind us together, now and in the future.

Jacob Lawrence has received many awards for his paintings and has been exhibited throughout the U.S. and in England. He has captured in vivid color aspects of slavery in panels which illustrate slaves moving through the Underground Railroad from South to North.

Students will observe illustrations and paintings from both Tom Feelings and Jacob Lawrence and reflect on their individual word banks to describe the mood of the selections. Students will also create a mural and other works that capture the mood of a slave plantation. Through the creation of artwork, students are bound to discover how color can reflect moods and feelings as much as words do. During this component of the unit, blues music should be played.

CULMINATING ACTIVITY—"I AM A SLAVE" BLUES ASSEMBLY

All of the elements of this unit will be tied together as students work on a production. The target audience are the students' peers and anyone else who is interested! During Writer's Workshop, students will generate their own literature on slavery. Some will perform dramatic readings of their poetry or prose. Other students will give narratives to educate peers on the blues of slavery. The mural and other works of art will be on display

during the assembly. Students will choose musical selections that they wish the audience to hear.

I am confident that this curriculum unit will help students to not only find the rhythm and lyricism of the blues in music, art and literature, but it will also spark an understanding of the demoralizing effects of slavery.

LESSON 1

Goal:

To gain understanding of the Middle Passage

To increase language and vocabulary skills

To encourage creative writing

Objective:

Students will listen to a story about the Middle Passage

Students will respond to story in written or verbal form

(i.e. poetry, prose, or discussion)

Materials:

paper, pencils

Activity:

1. The teacher will ask students to get as comfortable as they can within the confines of a classroom. Students should also close their eyes.
2. Read aloud the following (or something similar. Be creative but accurate): Imagine crossing the ocean aboard a small ship made to hold 200 people but packed with 1000 weeping and crying men, women, and even children like you. Each person was forced to fit into a small space no more than 22 inches high and 24 inches wide about the size of your desk. There were no toilets, no lights, and little food. You could hardly move! You are chained to other people—some alive and some dead. When the ship rocked, people would fall on top of you or you would be thrown by the movement against the cracked wood of the ship. How do you feel about this? What would you do?
3. Instruct students to respond in written expression. Allow 20 minutes or more. Insist that there be no talking during this time—only writing.
4. Students will share written work with others in the class. This exercise sets a foundation for the unit and should be collected for it will be later displayed.

Extension Activity:

After students share their selections, read aloud Heritage Kids- How Kumi and Chanti Began Their Stories of African American History. In a comic book fashion, this book illustrates for young learners the slave trade and the middle passage.

LESSON 2

Goal:

To gain understanding of the middle passage

To express oneself through a color

Objective:

Students will listen to a sample of the blues reflective of the middle passage.

Students will discuss which colors describe the mood of the musical selection.

Students will create artwork to illustrate the music.

Materials:

a recording of “Move Over” and “You Don’t Hear No Drums” from *Blood on the Fields* by Wynton Marsalis
various colored construction paper poetry from previous lesson crayons, markers, paint

Activity

1. Play recordings of above mentioned selections.
2. Have a brief discussion on the music.
 - How do the singers sound?
 - Are they happy, sad, angry, frightened?
 - Why do you think so?
 - How do the instruments sound—loud, soft, fast, slow?
 - Does the music remind you of a ship rocking?
3. Teacher will ask students to think of colors that would describe this kind of music. List colors on blackboard.
4. Students will create an art piece(collage, drawings, etc.) using the colors that they chose to illustrate both the music and their writings from Lesson 1.
5. Artwork will be displayed

Extension Activity

1. Read *My Many Colored Days* by Dr. Seuss. This story should help students realize that colors could be linked to moods and feelings.
2. Use the aforementioned musical selections as well as “Work Song” from *Blood on the Fields* while students view illustrations by Tom Feelings in the book *The Middle Passage*. Tom Feelings has beautifully captured the slave trade in black and white drawings. Students will respond to pictures in creative written expression. Work will be displayed and recited. This book also gives way to rich, descriptive language within classroom discussion.

LESSON 3

Goal:

To learn the format of a friendly letter

To develop writing skills

To promote knowledge of *Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad*

Objective:

Students will read *Harriet and the Promised Land* by Jacob Lawrence.

Students will respond to the poem and paintings by writing a letter.

Materials:

paper

pencils

Harriet and the Promised Land

Activity

1. Teacher will introduce *Harriet Tubman and Underground Railroad* by reading above mentioned text.
2. Instruct students to take notice of the paintings. In whole group discussion students will answer:
 - Are the illustrations happy or sad or scary? Why?
 - What colors did Mr. Lawrence use?
 - Which colors are happy colors? Sad? Scary?
 - Why are the slaves painted black with little detail to their faces?

Is Harriet Tubman strong?

3. Students then compose a letter to Harriet Tubman. Emphasize the format of a friendly letter. ("Dear " is the greeting or how one begins the letter; the body is what one has to say in the letter; and the closing is how one says goodbye and sign one's name)
4. Share and display work.

Further readings on Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad are:

"Harriet Tubman" by Eloise Greenfield(Poem from the book *Honey I Love and Other Poems*)
Heritage Kids- Kumi and Chanti Tell the Story of Harriet Tubman by Empak "Black History"
Publication Series
Follow the Drinking Gourd

BLUES IN LITERATURE

Everett Anderson is a character created by poet and children's author Lucille Clifton. Everett is a boy about six years old who suffers with some tough life experiences. His father dies, his mother remarries and gets pregnant, and a new family moves in next door and the child is a yucky girl. Everett Anderson has the blues and Lucille Clifton expresses simply but poignantly Everett's blues in poetry in seven picture books.

Everett Anderson's 1-2-3

Everett Anderson's Christmas Coming

Everett Anderson's Goodbye

Everett Anderson's Nine Months Long

Everett Anderson's Friend

Everett Anderson's Year

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Suggested Activities to Respond to Literature:

Students can: write a letter to Everett Anderson and share some of their own blues
create their own “Everett Anderson Story”
write a book report discussing their favorite E.A. story
create artwork using colors that would reflect E.A.’s blues and/or their own

Student Bibliography

1. *Poem’s That Sing to You* by Michael Strickland
2. *Pass It On: African American Poetry for Children*
3. *Honey I Love and Other Poems* by Eloise Greenfield
4. *Nathaniel Talking* by Eloise Greenfield
5. *Under the Sunday Tree* by Eloise Greenfield
6. *Harriet Tubman and the Promised Land* by Jacob Lawrence
7. *Heritage Kids* by Empak “Black History” Publication Series
8. *Follow the Drinking Gourd*
9. *I Live in Music* by Ntozake Shange paintings by Romare Bearden
10. *My Many Colored Days* by Dr. Suess
11. *The Block* collage by Romare Bearden poems by Langston Hughes
12. *The Genie in the Jar* by Nicki Giovanni
13. *A is for Achieve! Building a Positive Self-Image is as Easy as A-B-C!*

Teacher's Bibliography

1. *African American History: A Journey of Liberation* by Dr. Molefi Kete Asante 1995
2. *Betrayal By Any Other Name* by Dr. Khalid Abdullah Tariq Al-Mansour 1993
3. *Black Music in America* by James Haskins 1987
4. *The First Book of Jazz* by Langston Hughes 1955, 76, 82
5. *Tapping the Power Within* by Iyanla Vanzant 1992
6. *Practical Ideas for Teaching Writing as a Process* ed. by Carol Booth Olson 1987
7. *Explore Poetry* by Donald H. Graves 1992
8. *Write Me a Poem* by Lorraine Wilson 1994
9. *June Jordan's Poetry for the People: A Revolutionary Blueprint* ed by Lauren Miller and the Poetry for the People Collective 1995
10. *The Development of Language and Literacy in Young Children* by Susanna W. Pflaum 1986
11. *The Writer in All of Us : Improving Your Writing Through Childhood Memories* by June Gould 1991
12. *Piaget's Theory of Cognitive and Affective Development* by Barry J. Wadsworth 1989
13. *The Piaget's Primer: Thinking, Learning Teachers* by Ed Labinowicz 1980
14. *Portfolio Assessment in the Reading Writing Classroom* by Robert J.Tierney, Mark A. Carter, and Laura E. Desai 1991

Musical Selections

"Strange Fruit " by Billie Holiday

"Strange Fruit " by Cassandra Wilson

Billie Holiday's Greatest Hits

Blood on the Fields Wynton Marsalis and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra

Miles Davis' Greatest Hits

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