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ED 327
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ENGLISH UNIT PLAN

Lesson Commentary

In Mrs. Thiems 6th grade Reading class I taught a spontaneous lesson on *The Boys of Greensboro* when I took over for her anxious substitute teacher. With no time for preparation, it was a challenge for me to implement the lesson Mrs. Thiems left on the fly. A few strategies I implemented were framing/previewing the text, a read aloud with assigned parts, a short discussion, and an exit slip activity.

To introduce the big ideas of the text, I asked students what Gallagher refers to as “text-independent questions” (Gallagher 47). Students were motivated to participate in the reading of the play. According to Maxwell, the use of informal classroom drama, “allows students grow in their capacity to send and receive increasingly complex and mature verbal messages” (Maxwell 109). It is important to use drama in the classroom because students enjoy reading interactive text which can act as a motivator. After reading the play together, I facilitated a classroom discussion about the big ideas. I asked several questions like: What does it mean to be strong? If you were faced with the same situation how would you react? Would you give up? What are you willing to stick up for? Maxwell encourages contemporary teachers to allow students to ask the questions for a more student-driven discussion. (Maxwell 89). If I had more time to prepare for this lesson I would have liked to take a more students driven approach to our discussion! Mrs. Thiems created an exit slip for students to fill out before leaving which read: “How are the boys

of Greensboro heroes? We had plenty of time left in the class period because of my poor time management so I asked students to write one word that means strength on the back of their exit slips. We did a quick share of these words and I wrote them on the board for students to use in their exit slips. This activity helped students think about how you must be strong to be a hero.

The weakest area of this particular lesson plan was the discussion portion. It was very difficult for me to keep a class discussion going without having a plan in place. However as Maxwell notes, discussion is very important in the modern classroom. “Classroom discussion and speaking are the foundation to the effective implementation of other contemporary classroom teaching strategies” (Maxwell 88). This means discussion must be well developed for students to understand other activities. I would try to take a more student focused approach to classroom discussion if I were to redo this lesson!

Assessment/Learning

I have decided to use various different forms of assessment for my Unit on heroes. This will allow all students the chance to succeed. Maxwell discusses the importance of varied assessment saying, “For assessment to be authentic, it must reflect an ongoing process of learning where varieties of activities provide the most favorable opportunities for a diverse group of students to learn” (Maxwell 283). My students are not often assigned homework so much of the assessment will be done during class time. I will require students to do an in-class group presentation with assigned group members on heroes in the news. Students will participate in a couple short writing assignments in class. There will be two different formal assessments in the unit. Students will have the opportunity to creatively display what they have learned. Students will also be given a test over the assigned reading of *The Little Rock Nine* and *The Boys of*

Greensboro. The test will indicate students reading comprehension. Students will be allowed to use their notes/annotations on the test.

The assessment I have chosen for the unit will challenge students to think creatively and analytically about character formation. After discussing several different heroes students will be challenged to think about their own personal heroes using what they have learned. Here is the rubric of assessments I will give students at the start of the unit:

PRESENT 50 pts	You will present a Hero In The News. This will be a group presentation. Come to class prepared to present your assigned hero. Your goal is to persuade your classmates to believe in your hero. There will be specific handouts to guide your planning. (50 pts.)			
TEST 100 pts	The unit will end with a test. Throughout our study on heroes you have the opportunity to take notes on your annotation sheet. This can be used on your test. The test will cover all of the heroes we discuss in class!			
CREATE 50 pts.	Write your own song or poem about heroes.	Draw a picture of your hero's story with a paragraph to explain	Create a comic strip featuring a hero.	Come up with your own creative way to present your hero. (see me)

Students will be assessed in three different ways. This allows all students to succeed in the unit! Students will have the opportunity to use technology (class computers) on their presentations or creative projects. My assessments will encourage students to meet the objective I have outlined. They will have to work together with their presentations to assess the important character traits of their assigned hero. Students will have an open note test and will be expected to know about all the texts we have read. Lastly, student will be challenged to identify a hero in their own lives and will complete a creative project about them. After all of these assessments I think students will have a complete understanding of what it means to be a hero!

Lesson Planning

Unit Overview

Key Focus: The key focus of this unit is for students to answer the question: What does it mean to be a hero?

Essential Questions:

- Character Traits: What makes a real life hero? What traits must a person have? What traits will a hero not have?
- Heroes & Time: How are heroes today different than heroes in America's past? How are they the same?
- Comparing/Ranking: How are the heroes we read about different? How are they similar? Are some heroes better than others?
- Your Life: Who do you consider to be a hero in your life? How is this person heroic?

Rationale:

This unit will help students to develop morally. The nonfiction texts we will read during the unit will provide students with good examples. This unit is designed to be a character building experience for students. Students will be able to see that heroism is not something they cannot achieve in their lives. They will understand what it means to be a hero and how they can strive to be heroes.

State Standards:

EL.6.1.1: Decoding and Word Recognition: Read aloud grade-level-appropriate poems and literary and informational texts fluently and accurately and with appropriate timing, changes in voice and expression.

EL.6.1.2: Vocabulary and Concept Development: Identify and interpret figurative language and words with multiple meanings

EL.6.2: Comprehension and Analysis of Nonfiction and Informational Text: Students read a variety of non-fiction. Students read and understand grade-level-appropriate material.

EL.6.7.10: Speaking Applications: Deliver narrative presentations that establish a context, plot and point of view.

Abbreviated Lessons

Lesson 1:

Topic: Introduction to Hero Unit

Objective/SWBAT: Determine key characteristics of heroism. What do students already know about what it means to be a hero?

Activity: **1.** Introduction to 2 week plan (hand out rubrics and folder portfolios) **2.** Watch video (Hellen Keller), Read A Loud of hero poem (Ex-Basketball Player: John Updike), Listen to song (Hero-Mariah Carey), Picture slideshow **3.** Students will take notes on different visuals and we will discuss each of them keeping track of important character traits.

Strategies: Use of technology, Visuals for visual learners, Music of auditory learners, Class discussion of each example of heroism, students takes notes on annotation sheets

Assessment: Students will keep notes on their annotation sheets from today discussion. They will be keeping track of key words that define a hero.

Homework: I will provide students with a news article about a hero to read and annotate for homework (begin at the end of the period if there is time). Four students will receive the same article and they will work on a presentation of their story together.

Lesson 2:

Topic: Heroes in the News

Objective/SWBAT: Students will collaborate on a presentation of their assigned hero by determining the main idea of their story.

Activity: **1.** Students will meet with their group members **2.** Students will have time to review their articles **3.** As a group students will discuss and fill out a presentation sheet **4.** Students will be given a poster board to fill out **5.** Students will practice presentations if they have time

Strategies: Group work, Use of variety of resource materials that reflect different levels of complexity (assigned groups)

Assessment: Students will prepare for their presentation. They will create a poster board and fill out a handout individually.

Lesson 3:

Topic: Hero Presentations

Objective/SWBAT: Students will defend their heroes and teach the class about their heroes character traits.

Activity: **1.** First 15 minutes of class students will put the final touches on their presentations and practice presenting **2.** Each group will present their hero (everyone talks) **3.** Students will take notes during other groups presentations for their annotation folder **4.** Students will evaluate each other and ask questions

Strategies: Peer teaching, Oral Presentations, Guided note-taking, Reflection process

Assessment: Students will turn in their posters and their handouts from their presentation groups. I will also use a rubric to assess their presentations.

Lesson 4:

Topic: Boys of Greensboro

Objective/SWBAT: Students will be able to determine how strength is a vital part of heroism.

Students will relate this story from America's history to heroes today

Activity: **1.** We will watch a short video about the Boys of Greensboro **2.** Discuss the video and what the text will be about **3.** Students will read the play out loud with assigned parts **4.** We will have a class discussion and I will write important notes on the board. **5.** Students will write these notes in their annotation sheets **6.** Students will write one word on back of exit slip that defines strong and share them with the class **7.** Students will fill out exit slips

Strategies: Visual introduction to text, Class discussion, Read A Loud with assigned parts,

Guided note-taking, Exit slip

Assessment: Exit Slip: 1. How were the Boys of Greensboro strong? 2. How do The Boys of Greensboro relate to your hero from the news?

Lesson 5:

Topic: Introduction to Little Rock Girl 1957 (Major Unit Text)

Objective/SWBAT: Determine what Little Rock Girl is about and analyze how these girl became heroes.

Activity: **1.** Framing the text activity: Introduction to text themes **2.** Discussion predicting what will happen in the text **3.** Students will listen and fill out their annotation sheets as the first chapter is played from an audio tape. **4.** I will lead a discussion about what we listened to often stopping the tape. **5.** Students will fill out an opinionnaire on heroes

Strategies: Framing the text, Class Discussion, Audiotape listening activity, Guide note taking

Assessment: Opinionnaire asking students to decide what statements are true of heroes.

Lesson 6:

Topic: Little Rock Girl 1957 Ch 2.

Objective/SWBAT: Students will work with a partner to arrange events from Ch. 2 in chronological order

Activity: 1. Review Ch. 1 of Little Rock Girl 2. Preview the text for Ch. 2 3. Students will read the text with a partner in 6 inch voices 4. Students will keep annotations 5. Partners will complete a chronology activity handout together after reading the chapter.

Strategies: Group/Pair work, Guided note-taking, chronology worksheet to keep track of what happens in the text

Assessment: Partners will turn in their chronology handout

Lesson 7:

Topic: Little Rock Girl 1957 Ch 3.

Objective/SWBAT: Determine the main idea of what happens in Ch 3. by reading carefully and obtaining clues from scavenger hunt activity.

Activity: 1. Review of Ch 2. of Little Rock Girl (look at student annotations) 2. Preview of Ch. 3 as a class 3. Explain scavenger hunt reading activity 4. Students will read Ch 3. on their own silently 5. Students will be dismissed 2 at a time to different stations in the back of the classroom and in the hallway 6. Students will fill out scavenger hunt handout by visiting all the stations 7. Students will keep annotations from the text.

Strategies: Class discussion, silent reading, scavenger hunt, Guided note-taking

Assessment: Scavenger hunt handout and annotations will be turned in with students portfolio.

Homework: Study for test

Lesson 8:

Topic: Little Rock Girl 1957 Wrap Up

Objective/SWBAT: Propose how the little rock students are considered heroes using character traits and their annotation notes.

Activity: **1.** Review of Ch 3. and of annotations **2.** Read the last chapter as a class and takes notes **3.** Group discussion of the text as a whole **4.** Students will be given a piece of paper and will be expected to answer the question in a one page response: How are the Little Rock students heroes? **5.** Students will have time to organize their annotations to prepare for test and ask any questions they still have

Strategies: Auditory reading, Group discussion, Written response

Assessment: Written response will be turned in and graded. Students are expected to use their notes from the past few classes to answer this question with specific references to the text.

Homework: Study for test! Students should organize and review their notes.

Lesson 9:

Topic: Test Day

Objective/SWBAT:

Activity: **1.** Students will have the opportunity to review any material or ask last minute questions **2.** Students will have the whole period to complete the test **3.** I will hand out creative assessment sheet so students can begin to think about their creative mini projects

Strategies: Review, Open note form assessment, Introduction to mini project

Assessment: Formal test that will be graded and count for most of the unit.

Homework: Determine a hero in your life for your creative mini projec

Lesson 10:

Topic: Creative Mini Projects

Objective/SWBAT: Identify a hero in their own life and define what heroism means to them

Activity: 1. Students will define heroism in a paragraph, sentence, and word. 2. Students will have the rest period to work on a creative interpretation of their hero. 3. Students will identify character traits of their hero and use them in their mini project.

Strategies: Creative mini project offers student choice, definition of heroism

Assessment: Students will complete a visual representation of their hero using a few guiding suggestions. These will be hung in the classroom for students to see!

Commentary

This unit is organized for students to see heroes from several different time periods. I think the students will be able to define heroism in their own words after examining several different heroic examples. I want the students to have several opportunities to work in groups. I think students will be able to take their hero portfolios and define heroism. The idea is that students will see value in important character traits when the unit comes to a close. Students should identify their own personal values and what is most important to them as young adolescent learners. Students should strive to become heroes after the unit because they should want to make a difference in their world. The big idea of the unit: “what defines a hero?” will be a part of every lesson plan. This will help the unit come to a cohesive set of lesson plans where students determine what heroism means to them

All students are encouraged to learn in my unit plan. I realize the diverse needs of my students and have organized the plan so that all students will succeed. I try to target all students

by using many different strategies and even using an open note assessment approach. My lesson plans offer a lot of time for group work. Students who struggle in class will have the opportunity to work together with classmates. The student collaboration that is incorporated in the unit will be useful for students who need extra attention.

Each chapter of the main text of the unit Little Rock Girl will be read in a different way so that all students can benefit. Auditory learners will listen to the text read aloud for the first chapter. For the second chapter students have the opportunity to work together to determine what they believe to be important. The third chapter will allow students to work on their own and at their own pace. The last chapter we will read together since students will need guided practice to piece the text together. The students can use the notes they have been taking as we read the different texts in the unit on the test. If they take good thorough notes the test should not be a problem for students. All students have the opportunity to succeed with the creative project also. Students have the freedom to depict their hero in whatever way they prefer. The project is a small in class assignment so students can help each other. Overall, I think every student in my class will succeed as long as they put forth their best effort!

Students are required to identify a hero in their own lives. This means students must be familiar with the term hero. They must be aware of different heroes they already know about. I think students will be ready to learn about heroes especially after the introduction day. I will provide students with many examples of heroes on the first day of the unit and we will discuss heroes the students already know about. This unit is an example of best practice because of the multiple reading strategies that are used. Students are encouraged to make meaning in their own lives from this unit. I think this unit is a good example of best practice because students can apply what they learn to their personal experiences.