



Taking Pride in Our Character

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Of all the complex emotions...pride, perhaps, is the most plainly expressed.

-Charles Darwin

The Expression of the Emotions of Man and Animals

Introduction

Stand up for yourself. How many times have you heard this? My students hear this often. I teach a special education class at Lipman Middle School, located just south of San Francisco in Brisbane, California. Our school is a diverse group of two hundred students from two suburban communities and my current caseload totals ten. In my classroom, there is a spectrum of aptitudes, both academic and social.

At Lipman Middle School, we've adopted two models by which we structure our education. In brief, both the Highly Effective Teaching (HET) model and Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) provide our students with a strong sense of character and social awareness. In recent years, the social climate of our campus has dramatically improved. Though my students have a good knowledge of character and social awareness, they continue to lack social competence for a variety of reasons.

Of the fourteen special education eligibility criteria, Speech or Language Impairment (SLI) is the most prevalent affecting my students. The United States Federal Government defines the category of SLI as "a communication disorder, stuttering, impaired articulation, language impairment, or a voice impairment, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. ¹ " Within my current caseload, SLI represents itself most as a communication disorder, in which my students lack the appropriate skills to have positive social interactions. Through my unit, Taking Pride in Our Character, my students will gain social competence by acquiring social skills and techniques through an in-depth analysis of proud characters in literature.

Rationale

Society, in general, places high expectations on how individuals should or should not act in social interactions. According to Thomas Armstrong in his book *Neurodiversity*, people have to live in today's complex and fast-paced world, which places demands on them to read, be sociable, think rationally, follow rules, pass tests, have a pleasant disposition, and conform in other distinctly defined ways ² . My students are already

presented with many challenges, and this statement shows true with the demand to be social. In order to meet social expectations, one must have a strong sense of pride and courage – pride to be self-confident in decision making, and courage to follow through with the decision. My goal is that my students become competent in interactions with others.

In his book, Armstrong also makes a valid point with his view of the history of special education in our country. In the 1960's, parent advocate groups pressed forcefully for the government to serve students with disabilities other than mental retardation. By 1975, the Education of All Handicapped Children Act passed, mandating that children with special needs receive appropriate public education in the "least restrictive environment." And finally, in 1990, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) passed in Congress, making eligible for services the realm of learning differences we know today. The point Armstrong makes in providing this information is that we've created special education, which in a sense is a completely separate system from regular education. Students in special education have a label, are aware of this label, and need to have a strong sense of pride to overcome the stigmas attached.

The middle school years are a challenge for even neuro-typical students, referring to individuals without neurological differences. It's during the middle school years that issues arise with bullying, peers, family members, and authority. I want my students to have a voice and demonstrate integrity when faced with adolescent social challenges. In this unit, my students will read a variety of literary works with prideful and courageous characters that my students will both relate to and learn from.

Background

Speech or Language Impairment (SLI)

McCabe and Mellar state, in their study of how language impairment affects social growth, "children with SLI appear particularly susceptible to exhibiting behavior perceived as socially incompetent due to their increased difficulty with interpersonal communication. ³ " In their study, they define social competence as a repertoire of skills, including knowledge of social standards of behavior, social problem-solving, emotion recognition, emotion understanding, and communication and language efficacy. After thorough research with early childhood-age children, their results show that SLI children were rated significantly lower on the sociable composite than were non-SLI children, further proving that SLI children appear to be regarded as exhibiting somewhat less assertiveness, socialization, self-control, and empathetic responding, which are important aspects of social competence.

The results of the above study suggest that early childhood-age SLI children who demonstrate social

incompetence will continue to develop this deficit without intervention. I notice that although my students have learned the norms of social interactions through years of speech and language therapy, they lack the follow through in everyday interactions. In a similar study performed by Thatcher, literacy acquisition is evaluated for how it plays a role in social development. It's noted that, "literacy is obviously a critical skill for school success and lifelong success. Research demonstrates the relationship between speech and/or language acquisition and literacy. In fact, many of the children identified with speech or language disorders may also exhibit subsequent deficits in reading and writing. In addition to academics, students with communication disorders may experience difficulty in social and behavioral skills required in school. ⁴ " It is for these reasons that I will continue a therapeutic approach in the classroom linking literature to social competence.

Pride

In a global study on pride, conducted by Robins and Tracy, it is noted that over time, "researchers have largely neglected the self-conscious (or social) emotions, such as embarrassment, pride, and shame. These emotions involve complex self-evaluative processes, emerge later in development than do basic emotions, are thought to be unique to humans and possibly great apes, and play a central role in status seeking, dominance, and other fundamental social behaviors. ⁵ " In addition to these key facts, they also state that pride is a recognizable, nonverbal expression and has been reliably distinguished from similar emotions (e.g. happiness) and can be recognized in children as young as four years old. This emotion can be universally recognized as an individual having a small smile, head tilted slightly (approximately twenty degrees) back, expanded posture, and arms akimbo with hands on hips. This recognizable emotion may play a functional role in the maintenance and enhancement of social status. Given this information, I plan to incorporate the nonverbal expression of pride as introduction to this unit. I'll show my students pictures of proud individuals of different ages, cultures, and in unfamiliar situations. Prior to studying prideful characters, I'll have my students think of times they have felt pride and mimic their prideful stance to compare to one another and the universal description of the stance.

Multiple Intelligences

As Armstrong states in *Neurodiversity*, it's not how smart you are, it's how you're smart. Armstrong refers to the work of Howard Gardner to explain the categories of the multiple intelligences: linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, intrapersonal, and naturalist. Gardner argues that each intelligence has core cognitive components, can be visually represented (symbolized), is valued by all cultures, can be found in the animal kingdom, and can be found in prehistoric times. Most importantly, each intelligence can actually be located in specific areas of the brain. This is proven by Gardner's research on how selective impairment in the brain, as a result of injury or illness, compromises specific intelligences. In my strategies section of the unit, I'll describe how I complete a unit on multiple intelligences prior to this literature unit to educate my students about brain differences.

Highly Effective Teaching (HET)

The HET model has been in place in our school district for several years. It's important to note that I will teach this unit in an HET environment, where the language is familiar to staff and students. The model is brain-compatible and grounded in the biology of learning, effective instructional strategies, and the development of conceptual curriculum. In addition, the HET founders believe that emotion is the gatekeeper to learning and performance ⁶ . Within the model are the lifelong guidelines and lifeskills which provide a character building foundation for establishing classroom culture. The lifeskills provide students with a developed understanding

of the following: caring, common sense, cooperation, courage, creativity, curiosity, effort, flexibility, friendship, initiative, integrity, organization, patience, perseverance, pride, problem solving, resourcefulness, responsibility, and sense of humor. With pride and courage being two key lifeskills in our school community, I find it significant to teach social competence skills through prideful and courageous characters.

Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP)

Dan Olweus defines his program as a comprehensive, school-wide program that was designed to reduce bullying and achieve better peer relations among students with children in elementary, middle, and junior high school grades. The goals of the program are to reduce existing bullying problems, prevent the development of new bullying problems, and achieve better relations at school ⁷.

The OBPP has positively transformed our school's social climate. At Lipman Middle School, our students abide by the four anti-bullying rules when bullying occurs, which are to not bully others, help students who are bullied, include students who are left out, and tell an adult at school and home of any bullying situation observed. A key reason I chose to create a unit involving building pride and courage is because of the absence I see with my students achieving these four goals. Since the implementation of the program, my students are well-versed with the rules; however, my students need direct instruction on the ways to develop courage and pride and stand up for themselves and others. My classroom activities for the development of courage and pride through literature will not only include works involving bullying, but I do see it as an area where my students demonstrate weak social competence.

Literature Analysis

For the purposes of the objective of this unit, students should be familiar with the following literary terms. I plan to explain these terms in relation to characterization.

1. Context clues – The information gathered from the language, setting, and verbal and nonverbal cues of the characters. Context clues will be used to make predictions about the character's decision making and thought process
2. Description – A verbal picture of the characters, events, and setting.
3. Literary Analysis – The study of a literary work by a critic, student, or scholar. I hope for my students to analyze the characters in detail and take a stance on whether or not the character is reliable based on his or her thoughts and emotions.
4. Main Idea – The gist of a passage. We will discuss main idea when referring to poetry, short stories, and a novel. I'll spend more time with discussions on the main ideas of abstract works in hopes my students find multiple interpretations.
5. Metaphor – A figure of speech in which a word or phrase denoting one kind of object or idea is used in place of another to suggest a likeness between them. For example, he is drowning in money.
6. Narration – To tell a story or give an account of something dealing with sequences of events and experiences. Narration can be written in first person, where the author uses the terms *I* and *we*, or third person using *he*, *she*, and *they*. It will be interesting to see how my students react to the literature from these two very different points of view.

7. Nonverbal cues – Non-language communication, such as a noise, gesture, or facial expression. We will discuss nonverbal cues as a form of context clues to gather information about emotions and relationships within the literature.

8. Poetry – Literature in verse that can be written in a rhythmic pattern and often portrays great beauty, emotion, intensity, and profound insight. As a form of assessment in this unit, my students will have the option of writing a poem as a reflection of the courage and pride demonstrated by the character. I hope this will be an opportunity for my students to express their analysis of literature in a creative way.

9. Prose – Ordinary speech or writing without metrical structure; or language that is not poetry.

10. Simile – A comparison using the terms *like* and *as*. For example, white *like* snow or bright *as* the moon.

Strategies

This unit will take place in the fall and continue for five weeks. On the first day of school, I'll begin lessons on the multiple intelligences to give my students a better understanding of how they learn. I plan to deliver the concept of multiple intelligences to my students using the text, *You're Smarter Than You Think: A Kid's Guide to Multiple Intelligences* by Thomas Armstrong⁸. Each student will have copies of activities from the guide to recognize and improve how he or she learns. Each chapter of the book is dedicated to one of the multiple intelligences and uses youth-friendly (as opposed to scientific) language to guide the student to the end result – how does he or she learn best?

By allowing my students to explore the intelligences to see how they learn best, I will be instilling pride. They will be able to look at each new lesson or challenge with a clear view of how to approach it. With the unit on multiple intelligences, I will also incorporate lessons on each of the HET lifeskills. For my students to fully grasp the concept and emotion of each, I will include lessons that reflect their background knowledge and previous experiences. Through this approach of beginning the year with multiple intelligences and lifeskills lessons, my students should have a good idea of the meaning of pride and courage once this literature unit begins.

I will introduce this unit by leading a discussion on the topic of pride and courage. I will provide definitions and descriptions of each to tap into prior knowledge from our lifeskills lessons. I'll ask my students to brainstorm different characters in literature or historical figures that show great pride and courage. My students may think of the Cowardly Lion from *The Wizard of Oz* as an example of a courageous character or Martin Luther King Jr. as an individual who had great pride.

Following our review of courage and pride, I plan to begin the first week by reading a short story aloud. We will talk about the character in detail, but also about the other literary elements that contribute to the character's situation. We'll continue the unit in a similar fashion, so the progression will be as follows:

- Week One: Short Story ("Little Things Are Big" by Jesus Colon)
- Week Two: Poem (In text format – *Life Doesn't Frighten Me* by Maya Angelou)
- Weeks Three, Four, and Five: Novel (*The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie)

My technique for evaluating each character is as follows:

1. Introduce the literary work. Provide any background information necessary to understand the character, whether it be historical information or the previous scene if the text is a selection of a larger work.
2. Read the text aloud.
3. Discuss the situation of the main character and how he or she is demonstrating courage or pride. This discussion will be student led, and I plan to ask open-ended questions to get the discussion going, for example, how do you think the character feels when this happens? Have you ever felt this same way?
4. Discuss the reasons the character needs to use courage or pride in the situation. What about the situation required assertiveness? Was the character confident in his or her decision?
5. Discuss how the situation would have a different outcome if the character lacked courage or pride. If the character didn't stand up and speak, how would the outcome have changed? Have you been in a situation where you should have used courage and didn't? How does that make you feel looking back at that situation?
6. Allow students to reflect on the character in his or her personal literature journal. I'll write a sentence starter on the board to prompt the writing, and for some students I'll format a literature journal as a fill in the blank template. For example, When *name of character* felt *list an emotion*, he or she chose to *name the action* – the student will be required to fill in the italicized.
7. Provide an assessment at the end of each week.

Forms of assessment will vary depending on the text I select. Examples of specific lessons can be seen in the classroom activities section. Weekly, the student will have a choice in his or her assessment. Examples are, but not limited to, one of the following choices:

1. Write a letter to the character, showing an emotional connection to the character and his or her use of pride or courage in the text.
2. Write song lyrics about the character's situation.
3. Artistically demonstrate an understanding of the character's emotions by completing a drawing, collage, or other art form.
4. Design an album cover for a compact disc with song titles on the back about the character's situation, for example, an album cover for The Wizard of Oz's lion may be a drawing of him receiving his medal of courage and a song title may be Coward, No More!
5. Compose a poem about the character's situation.
6. Write a monologue or skit with another student to perform about the character's situation.

Outside of my classroom, there is a large bulletin board to exhibit student work. During this unit, this board will be our Reader's Showcase, where students will show off their completed assessment for the literary piece. Their work samples will demonstrate that they have an understanding of the courage and pride used in the literature, and they will also feel proud by presenting their work for our student-body to see.

Student Objectives

I base my student objectives on the California Content Standards, our school-wide character-building curriculum, and my personal expectations. It is important to note that this academic and character building unit is created for special education students between grades five and eight and the objectives will be differentiated in the classroom. Through this unit of using literature to teach my students the meaning of pride and courage and to encourage the development of social competence, the following objectives will be implemented:

1. My students will demonstrate a deepened understanding of the HET lifeskills, in particular pride and courage.
2. My students will identify and analyze the basic characteristics of poetry, short stories, and novels.
3. My students will evaluate the author's use of various techniques for influencing perspective.
4. My students will analyze the effect of qualities and emotions (pride, courage, etc.) of the character on the plot.
5. My students will analyze the influence of setting.
6. My students will identify the speaker and point of view.
7. My students will critique the credibility of the character.
8. My student will identify how previous events influence the character.
9. My students will learn to make accurate predictions based on characterization.
10. My students will develop a personal voice and social competence through the in-depth analysis of characters and transfer this competence to real-life applications.

Classroom Activities

As an introduction to the HET lifeskills at the start of the school year, I'll integrate movement and bodily-kinesthetic learning by taking photos of my students as they pose to represent the emotion of each lifeskill. For example, one of my students may want to represent sense of humor with a photo of him or her laughing with friends, or represent problem solving with a photo of him or her working out a difficult math task with peers. This is simply an activity relevant to my classroom and school setting, but I'd suggest this as a reinforcement activity when discussing emotions.

When reading *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie⁹, we will do an ongoing activity throughout the course of the novel. Junior, the main character, is an example of an adolescent who is both prideful and courageous. The story portrays his adolescent years as he is living on the Spokane Indian

Reservation. He was born with water on his brain, and as a result is considered to be disadvantaged by peers and family members. However, he learns how to overcome and be successful in his academic and social life. Throughout the reading of this text in class, I plan to have my

students track Junior's emotions using an Emotional EKG. This term refers to an emotional electrocardiogram, in which the students will monitor the feelings and emotions of Junior as an electrocardiogram monitors heart activity. Students will have a strip of construction paper, with a horizontal line down the middle, to keep track of the ups and downs of Junior's emotions similar to an EKG printout. At each high and low point, my student will write a brief note of Junior's experience and emotion at that point in the novel.

Junior begins his story by describing his situation: his family, his hometown, his health, his friends, his likes, his dislikes, and how he expresses himself. His form of self-expression is invaluable and is a direct connection to my students and this unit. Junior draws. Artists are "spatial smart" in the realm of multiple intelligences. His explanation of why he draws will be a specific example that individuals have strengths and use their strengths to both learn and express. On page 5 of the novel, Junior states, "I draw because words are too unpredictable. I draw because words are too limited. If you speak and write in English, or Spanish, or Chinese, or any other language, then only a certain percentage of human beings will get your meaning. But when you draw a picture, everybody understands it...I feel important with a pen in my hand. I feel like I might grow up to be somebody important. An artist. Maybe a famous artist. Maybe a rich artist."

For the purpose of this unit, this is a powerful beginning because Junior has a great sense of pride in his drawings. On the emotional EKG, this opening passage is an example of high point. He states the importance of his artistic ability and the success it may bring if he pursues this strength. Each drawing he describes throughout the novel is illustrated, and I believe this is an engaging aspect of Junior's first person narration. Since the students will be "hooked" from their first encounter with Junior, the novel will truly be an emotional rollercoaster in which pride and courage are effective.

Below are samples of specific lesson plans I intend to use during the course of the unit.

Lesson Plan 1

Objective

My students will demonstrate a deepened understanding of the lifeskill of pride through the activity, Who Are You?

Lesson length

One 50 minute period

Materials

Paper and writing tool

Opening

Today, we are going to do an activity called, Who Are You? First, let's think about who you are. (I'll look to my students and tell them who I think they are, for example, "Alicia, you are a talented singer. Ben, you are an older brother. Christian you are honest." I'll provide a variety of examples so my students see that the activity

is about both external and internal qualities.) Now, I'm going to do the activity with our classroom aide for one minute. Can I have a volunteer to keep track of our time?

Activity

For one minute, I will stand face to face with my aide and ask the question, who are you? After each response, I will ask it again and continue this for one minute. At the end of the minute, she will have said several things about who she is, maybe qualities she is proud of and some she is not so proud of. Next, she will ask me the questions and I will respond. Following this, we will reflect on our response with the students input. After our reflection, I will write my personal responses that I am most proud of on the white board. I will explain to the students why these responses make me feel proud and give me a feeling of self-respect.

After the modeling of the activity, the reflecting upon my responses, and highlighting the responses that give me a sense of pride, the students will pair up and complete the question and response activity on their own.

Assessment

Once all of the Who Are You questions are asked, students will return to their seats and I will model a short "I am" poem that we are going create from this activity. The poem will be made up of six lines, with the last line being a name statement. My "I am" poem is displayed below:

I am dedicated to my family and friends

I am a teacher

I am caring

I am a Giants fan

I am a lover of the outdoors

I am Stephanie

My classroom aide and I will work for the remainder of the period helping students to compose their pride poems. Once complete, the poems will be on display on our outside bulletin board for the student body to see.

Lesson Plan 2

Objective

My students will identify and analyze the basic characteristics of poetry, in this particular case, symbolism.

Lesson length

Two 50 minute periods

Materials

A copy of the text *Life Doesn't Frighten Me* by Maya Angelou ¹⁰, and a variety of art supplies (glue, scissors, magazines for images, tissue paper, construction paper, clay, etc.) for the students to create a visual

representation.

Opening

Today, we are going to read a beautiful poem written by the very talented poet, Maya Angelou. The poem is titled "Life Doesn't Frighten Me." Who can tell me what this poem might be about? What types of things do you think will be mentioned in the poem? If you were to write a poem with the same title, what would you include in your writing?

Activity

One of the basic characteristics of poetry is symbolism. Who has heard of this term? What are some examples of symbols around us? Students may say that the American flag is a symbol for our country. I'll ask them to go one step further and think of what our country represents...democracy, freedom, multicultural, etc. My students will then hopefully make the connection that the flag is a symbol of freedom. In literature, in particular poetry, symbolism is when words may be used to represent something else. In a sense, the poet uses symbolism so the reader can use his or her imagination and interpretation of the text.

I'll read the poem aloud, very slowly and pausing often for the students to view the illustrations. Once I'm finished, I will go back to the second to the last page of the text, where Angelou writes,

I've got a magic charm That I keep up my sleeve I can walk the ocean floor And never have to breathe. Life doesn't frighten me at all Not at all Not at all. Life doesn't frighten me at all.

When revisiting these final stanzas, I'll stop and ask the students what they think the word "charm" represents. I'll explain that the author could be using this term as a symbol for something else. Do you think there is really a jeweled charm up the character's sleeve? If there isn't a charm, what could the character be referring to? What does the word charm symbolize?

The character makes a point that this "charm" is what keeps him or her from being frightened. In frightening situations, where you may need to stand up for yourself or use a tremendous amount of courage to overcome the obstacle, what is your charm? You may think of lessons your parents have taught you. You may think of a friend who is a role model. You may think of an image of one our lifeskills we practice at Lipman.

Assessment

If you were the character in this poem, what would your use of the word charm symbolize? What might the illustration be on the page accompanying the text? For the remainder of this period and into tomorrow, use the art supplies provided to visually represent your "charm". You can do a drawing, make a collage, create a 3-D sculpture, or another form of your choice to represent your charm.

Lesson Plan 3

Objective

My students will develop a deepened understanding of the lifeskill of courage after reading the short story "Little Things Are Big" by Jesus Colon.

Lesson length

Three 50 minute periods

Materials

A copy of the short story "Little Things are Big" by Jesus Colon from the text *Choosing to Participate* ¹¹ .

Opening

Today, we are going to read a short story written by a famous Puerto Rican author, Jesus Colon. He is going to tell us a story about one man's experience during a late-night bus ride home in New York City during the 1950's. The title of the story is "Little Things Are Big." What do you think his story could be about? What are some little things in your life that you consider to be a big deal, or significant? Let's see what little thing in Jesus' life is a big deal to him.

After this opening, I'd read this powerful story of a Puerto Rican man who chooses not to stand up for what he believes because he lacks courage. To Puerto Ricans, courtesy is a very important social skill. The main character in this story sees a Caucasian woman on the bus that may need help with her belongings and her small children at her destination point. The main character knows he should be courteous and offer to help, but hesitates because of how she may react to the color of his skin. This lack of courage leads him to make a promise to himself that in the future, he will always act on his what he knows is right.

Activity

I'll read the short story aloud. After, I'll ask my students put themselves in the main character's shoes. Have you ever felt the hesitation he felt? Have you ever known you are right in a social situation but been too scared to act? Starting today and over the next few class periods, pair up with classmate and create a skit of what might have happened in this character's situation if he was courageous. The requirements are as follows:

1. Find a partner.
2. Assign roles, one being the main character and the other being the passenger who needs help.
3. Reenact the situation with the main character using courage.

Assessment

In literature journals, students will complete the following sentence starters.

When the main character used courage, the situation was_____.

The woman's reaction to the main character's action was _____.

After using courage and helping the woman, the main character felt_____.

This basic assessment will show that my students understand how courage can influence a situation. This activity is created for my students with moderate learning needs and can be expanded using more elaborate skits and thorough writing assignments.

Resources

Annotated Bibliography for Teachers

Armstrong, Thomas. *Neurodiversity: discovering the extraordinary gifts of autism, ADHD, dyslexia, and other brain differences*. Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Lifelong, 2010. A text for teachers of all age levels and abilities. This text provides insight to the world of brain differences and the strengths of each of the intelligences, as defined by Gardner.

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Monast, Sheila, and Elaine Smith. "Identifying and Expressing Emotions: A Language Therapy Program for Behavior Disordered Adolescents." *Communication Disorders Quarterly* 11, no. 1 (1987): 217-233.

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Rannard, Anne, and Sheila Glenn. "Self-esteem in children with speech and language impairment: an exploratory study of transition from language units to mainstream school." *Early Childhood Development and Care* 179, no. 3 (2009): 369-380. A study conducted to see how language impairment in early childhood students affects their education. Scheff, Leonard, and Susan Edmiston. *The cow in the parking lot: a zen approach to overcoming anger*. New York, NY: Workman Pub., 2010. A text about anger management and strategies to view anger in a positive light, as a way to learn and grow from emotionally negative situations.

Thatcher, Karen L., Kathryn Fletcher, and Blair Decker. "Communication Disorders in the School: Perspectives on Academic and Social Success An Introduction." *Psychology in the Schools* 45, no. 7 (2008): 579-581. A study showing the links to confident communication skills and overall school success.

"The Center for Effective Learning." The Center for Effective Learning - Susan Kovalik & Associates, Inc. - Educational Professionals. <http://www.thecenter4learning.com/html/resources/hetmodel.htm> (accessed July 15, 2011). A website with a breakdown of the HET philosophy and framework for curriculum.

Tracy, Jessica L. , and Richard W. Robins. "The Nonverbal Expression of Pride: Evidence for Cross-Cultural Recognition." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 94, no. 3 (2008): 516-530. A study conducted in three areas of the world to show that pride is clearly recognizable and has similar effects across cultures.

Reading List for Students

Alexie, Sherman, and Ellen Forney. *The absolutely true diary of a part-time Indian* New York: Little, Brown, 2007.

Angelou, Maya, Jean Basquiat, Sara Jane Boyers, Paul Zakris, and Robert L. Egolf. *Life doesn't frighten me* . New York: Stewart, Tabori & Chang, 1993.

Armstrong, Thomas, and Jennifer Brannen. *You're smarter than you think: a kid's guide to multiple intelligences*. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Pub., 2003.

Facing History and Ourselves Foundation, Inc.. "Reading 3: Little Things Are Big." In *Choosing to participate, facing history and ourselves*. 2009 ed. Brookline, Mass.: The Foundation, 1998. 15.

Implementing District Standards

This unit is created for fifth through eighth grade students with a wide range of abilities.

The following California State Standards will be addressed in this unit:

Reading

Read aloud with appropriate pacing, intonation and expression (5.1.1, 6.1.1, 7.1.1, 8.1.1) Students will recite passages from the short story, poem, and novel using the pacing and intonation to express the emotion of the character.

Discern the main idea in text (5.2.3, 6.2.3, 7.2.3, 8.2.3) Students will identify the basic literary elements of each work and will have an understanding of the main idea prior to engaging in classroom activities using the specific work.

Draw inferences, conclusions, and generalizations from text (5.2.4, 6.2.4, 7.2.4, 8.2.4) Students will make predictions, draw conclusions, and relate to various aspects of each literary work based on the emotions and actions of the characters.

Identify characteristics of poetry, drama, fiction and non-fiction (5.3.1, 6.3.1, 7.3.1, 8.3.1) Students will identify and notice differences within these different writing forms.

Writing

Edit and revise manuscripts (5.1.6, 6.1.6, 7.1.6, 8.1.6) Students will write in literature journals and also choose from a range of written assessments. Prior to submission, students will self-edit and offer editing assistance to peers.

Writing Applications

Write a response to literature (5.2.2, 6.2.2, 7.2.2, 8.2.2) Students will write responses and reflections to literary works in literature journals.

Speaking Applications

Deliver an oral response to literature (5.2.3, 6.2.3, 7.2.3, 8.2.2) Students will share thoughts aloud in class discussions, as well as create monologues and skits as a form of assessment to specific lessons.

Endnotes

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