



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2015 Volume II: Explaining Character in Shakespeare

Sticks and Stones: The Bully and the Bullies in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *The Tempest*

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Introduction

Shakespeare, I hate it! I don't understand it! Please don't make me read it! For goodness sakes don't make me teach it! If this is your reaction to the works of the famous playwright William Shakespeare (1564-1616) you are not alone. Regardless of your opinion one can surely say that Shakespeare had a unique way of turning a phrase. As stated in *The Tempest*,

Even his characters comment, "Look he's winding up the watch of his wit; by and by it will strike." Such wonderful phrases as, "quintessence of dust, noble goose, red tailed bumble bee, foolish gnat, valiant flea, thorny hedgehog, toothpicker, and foul blot," amongst many others offer proof of his unique ability to slay his victims with words in astounding ways. Much like a baseball pitcher winding up to strike out a batter at the plate Shakespeare is able to send us just where he wants us to go. I believe that in using this wit and analyzing it's target (and aim) in the classroom with my second graders I will be able to teach the beauty and power of Shakespeare's words and their relevancy today.

Using the lines from *Romeo and Juliet*, *Merchant of Venice*, and *The Tempest* will help me make comparisons between the language and behavior used during his time and the language students use today.

Children are exposed at a very young age to songs and rhymes such as this well-known Mother Goose rhyme, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me."

The truth is that words do hurt, wound us to the core, and live on in our minds. Such behaviors that used to be thought of as rites of passage like, teasing, or taunting were considered to be acts that built character. These acts and the repetition of such behaviors over time are no longer being tolerated in schools. Many schools are adopting anti-bullying programs as a response to school shootings and cyber bullying, in an attempt to increase the positive school climate. Programs such as the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program are designed to help foster relationships amongst students. They are being structured in a way that strives to make the atmosphere a safer and more positive place for school age children to study and learn in.

Rationale and Classroom Demographics

I teach 2nd Grade in the small town of Brisbane, California. Located just ten minutes south of San Francisco and with a population of less than 4,000 Brisbane has drawn many young families looking for a strong, small town community. Many of these families have grown up and gone to school together. They have made the choice to stay and raise their families here just as their parents and grandparents have done.

Brisbane Elementary School is central to life of the town. With an enrollment of barely 200 students the school has an intimate and homey feel. The district consists of two elementary schools and one middle school.

After having taught in this district for 26 years I have seen a change in the behavior and attitudes of my students. Today's young child is very different from young children of the past. It is not uncommon for my students to spend many hours a day at computers playing video games, on iPads watching movies, or involved in "interactive" programs on their computers that are accessed through the internet. These second graders are becoming more and more technologically savvy and in turn socially lacking. This new level of technological awareness and sophistication belies their actual developmental level. This surface level of worldliness camouflages an underlying problem; students are less and less able to read social cues, make eye contact, and read and interpret basic body language. These are the tools that aid in basic communication. They are the building blocks to sustaining relationships amongst both peers and adults. Relationships are what lead to success in and out of the classroom.

Disagreements are a part of life in the classroom and life in general. Each person has their perspective and wants it to be recognized. Although having a disagreement can be uncomfortable, it can also be constructive. When we voice our disagreement with someone it means we care about it. No one is more passionate about his or her ideas and opinions than a seven or eight year old. It is at this age that students are suddenly becoming more independent. They are beginning to develop their own thoughts and opinions and are not afraid to express them. They can be very chatty, nosy, bossy, and in equal turns sensitive or rude. Emotions run amuck and words seem to fly without much thought or censure. Feelings can be hurt. Suddenly without knowing why- they are no longer so-and-so's friend, or invited to their birthday party. All this may seem very trivial, but these early experiences can shape their role and perceptions within the greater school climate. Not just in the present, but down the road to middle school.

Bullying is not a disagreement. Bullying is an abusive, malicious, and intentionally hurtful action. It is important to differentiate interpersonal disagreements from bullying because confusing the two can unintentionally harm the victim¹

It is with this goal in mind that Brisbane Elementary School has taken on the task of monitoring bullying by adopting the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. Dr. Dan Olweus, a professor of psychology from Norway has been researching bullying since the 1970's. The goals of the program are to keep children between the ages of 5 and 15 safe at school. By implementing this program we hope to reduce existing bullying problems, prevent development of new bullying, and achieve better peer relations overall.

By using the brassy language of Shakespeare as a tool to show such forms of bullying as insults, name calling, and general abuse I hope to introduce both bullying and Shakespeare and deepen my students understanding of both. Introducing students to Shakespeare's characters through scene snippets will provide the backdrop to our class discussion of roles.

Content Objectives

Teaching Shakespeare to 2nd Graders is not a common practice. Using Shakespeare’s dialogue in tandem with the Bullying Prevention Program (BPP), however, can provide a vibrant and dynamic atmosphere in the classroom and a vehicle for teaching the Common Core Standards in English Language Arts, Reading, and Writing.

Children get great pleasure from being rude. It is with the thrill of speaking “bad words” that they will come to enjoy short excerpts of dialogue and isolated words from *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *The Tempest*. Each excerpt will focus on a different form of bullying. By reading these short scenes aloud students will examine the word choices of the characters and also examine the Shakespeare’s vocabulary. During class meetings students will ask and answer questions based on these readings. They will be able to describe how the characters in the play/scene respond to the events and challenges presented. They will then draw comparisons between the situations that occur in the classroom and on the playground and those experienced by the characters in the plays. By making these comparisons they will be able to insert themselves into the consciousness of the characters and write opinion pieces based on a variety to perspectives. A large component of the unit will entail collaborative conversations about the text with peers in small and large groups. Students will be required to ask and answer questions during these discussions about what the speaker has said.

Background Information on Bullying

Health Implications

The Olweus BPP defines bullying as follows:

Bullying behavior must be intentional, repeated and involve an imbalance of Power.²

In order to understand this definition it is important to look at the health-physical, emotional, intellectual, social, and spiritual aspects of children’s lives. Bullying can affect all of these.

Physical Health

This is how our bodies function on a daily basis. It’s how we respond to sickness or injury. It is obvious to see how the body responds to hitting, pinching, or pushing. We form bruises, scars, and cuts. It is harder to see how we respond to name-calling, exclusion, eye rolling, note passing, and other forms of psychological bullying. When exposed to these kinds of stress we do respond with a biochemical reaction. These reactions give us a temporary boost of energy, which enables a rapid response. This provides added energy and oxygen to allow for fight or flight. This steals energy, or glucose that builds proteins that help fight infection. Without these proteins we are more susceptible to infection and have a harder time making rational decisions.

Emotional Health

This is the feeling we have about others, our environment, and ourselves. Bullying makes us feel bad about all these. Over time bullying can cause depression, self-hatred, anger, and a sense of distrust that permeates all aspects of life.

Intellectual Health

This refers to our ability to gather information. We are constantly gathering and evaluating information. Bullying interrupts our ability to make these decisions due to a constant state of stress and putting us at the risk of making bad choices.

Social Health

This is the ability of a person to feel happy and comfortable amongst people. Bullies often function by manipulating the social group and damaging the victim's reputation. This can be most damaging, especially when peers stand by and do not offer assistance. This can lead to feelings of isolation and worthlessness.

Spiritual Health

This is when one experiences the interconnectedness of thoughts, actions, and surroundings. Being in harmony and at peace either through nature, or the pursuit of a favorite activity. Those who are bullied have difficulty finding pleasure, as do the bystanders of bullying.

Attitudes and Research on Bullying

Many people share the sentiment that bullying is something that has to be endured and is somehow character building. "Boys will be boys." "That which doesn't kill you, makes you stronger," are common adages that come to mind. These notions need to be dispelled and a brief look at the history of the research of bullying should prove this.

Konrad Lorenz, a scientist and Nobel Peace Prize Winner (1973) introduced the term "mobbing." This concept was based on his studies of aggressive behavior in ducks and geese. Lorenz makes the connection between aggressive animal behaviors and aggressive human behaviors, calling tendencies to gang up

Herding behavior; animals in groups will act differently than one animal acting alone.³

This concept of mobbing was based on his observations of groups of ducks that gathered together to attack a stronger predator.

Dr. Albert Bandura, a Canadian psychologist of the 1960's conducted a series of laboratory experiments examining the causes of violent behavior. Using control groups he had children witness adults punching a Bobo doll. He was able to prove that the children who witness these aggressive acts were 16-17 times more likely to show aggression than children exposed to the non-aggressive act. Bandura developed a theory about how people learn called the Social Cognitive Theory. The theory proposes that children learn violence by

watching other people engage in violence.

In 1969 a popular Swedish talk show host Peter Paul Heineman reintroduced the term “mobbing”. This was brought on by a broadcast in which he discussed his observations of a youth being attacked by a group of children. This attack occurred during the Civil Rights Movement and attracted widespread attention.

In 1983 three Norwegian youths committed suicide as a result of peer abuse. As a result the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research assembled a team of researchers from the University of Bergen. One of these researchers was Dr. Dan Olweus who later developed the Bullying Prevention Program now used in schools worldwide. Olweus and his colleagues concluded that,

One of the main factors in determining who might be a victim is the number and degree of social connections. Friends are a primary factor in determining bullying incidents as youth who are not well connected are at risk of victimization.⁴

Viewing the progression of our perception of bullying and research seems to call for a solution to the end to bullying.

Understanding Bullying

Becoming aware of the possibility that bullying may be occurring at your school is the first step to making a change in your school climate and the success of your students. Knowing how to identify the behaviors of both bullies and the common types of bullying is an important place to start.

Types of Bullying

1. Verbal-name calling
2. Social exclusion
3. Physical-Hitting, kicking, shoving, and spitting
4. Spreading of lies and rumors
5. Taking or damaging money or possessions
6. Being threatened or forced to do things
7. Racial
8. Sexual
9. Cyber

Many of these behaviors may not be apparent in the elementary school classroom. In my unit I have chosen scenes that fit the common types of bullying between seven and eight year olds. The scenes I have chosen highlight insults, name- calling, exclusion, rumors, racial slurs and hurtful comments.

Physical Bullying

Physical bullying is one of the most common forms of bullying. Pushing, hitting, slapping, kicking, nudging, spitting, tugging on hair, stepping on someone’s toe, tripping, inappropriate touching, or throwing an object at the victim are all examples. This also includes actions that result in depriving a person of their personal

belongings, or failing to return an item, or intentionally damaging an item, or coercing someone to give a gift. Generally children in grades K-3 are engaging in random, unorganized play both in the classroom and on the playground. Bullies can take these situations and use them to mask their behavior. When they get tuckered out from all this exertion they might employ some little friend to do it for them. These individuals operate as “henchman.”

Is Bullying Teasing?

It might be hard to actually tell the difference between kidding around and bullying. Teasing is when two or more people are involved in playfulness that is equally divided. It is usually between friends and never involves physical or emotional abuse. Remembering the definition that bullying is intentional and repeated can help distinguish between what is teasing and what is outright bullying.

Causes of Bullying

Scientific research is based on identifying a problem and finding evidence that supports the specific cause of that problem. This link between factors proves causality. This is a very complicated process in the case of identifying causes of bullying. When pointing to the possibility of exposure to violence as a cause of bullying, it might be said that

There is biological plausibility to the idea that exposure to violence increases risk of perpetration, in that stress increases cortisol levels, which can impact normal neuro-logical development, which can put someone at risk for acting aggressively.⁵

When examining the causes of bullying in a school setting there are a multitude of variables-the reaction of the child being bullied, support of the bully being given by peers, the environment (both school and home)-these make it difficult to pinpoint one cause with exactitude. It is more widely theorized that violence-related behavior is due to a great number of factors.

Biological

Aggressive behaviors have been linked to brain malfunctions caused during pregnancy, genetics, neurotransmitters, hormones, and abnormal brain development. Traumatic brain injury (TBI) is a jolt or blow to the head that is severe enough to cause injury to the brain. Depending on the injury victims may suffer from impaired reasoning and emotions that can result in violence-related behaviors such as acting out or inappropriate reactions to social situations.

Alcohol and other drugs can have an indirect effect on behavior. If students witness violence in the home that is alcohol related they are at greater risk of bullying themselves, or victimization.

Learned Behavior

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) proposes that children learn violence by watching others engage in violence. SCT stresses that witnessing threats, hitting, slapping, punching beating, and attacking with a weapon are likely to develop violence-related behaviors. It also may influence those who do not engage the violent acts, but are bystanders by creating an increased willingness to participate in such acts in the future. This type of exposure can later lead to depression, poor grades, and possible alcohol abuse in later years.

One component of SCT is observational learning. Younger students learn by watching older students, newcomers learn by watching those who have been in the school community a long time. If a student observes another student bullying and the bully gets away with it they come to believe that such behavior is acceptable. If students observe bullying and none of the other students step in to stop the behavior they may attempt to bully themselves. Bullies may actually be rewarded for their acts either with recognition, power, or control. They may gain a personal possession or monetary reward from the victim.

Role of the Henchmen

Henchmen are defined as being unscrupulous supporters and subordinates. That is a chilling concept when applied to children. During the German Holocaust some 10 million people of various ethnicities were killed. The Nazi party was able to commit these acts due to their power and the cooperation of henchman who did not question their racist tactics and lived in fear of retaliation. Dr. Stanley Milgrim developed a theory of Condition of Obedience based on his experiments where participants were instructed by authority figures to give others electric shocks of up to 450 volts. Milgrim found that 6 out of 10 people would follow the directions of the authority figures even though they were aware that their actions would be unethical or harmful. His research theorized that people are dependent on others and those who obey social leaders are less likely to become expelled from a group and more likely to survive.

Milgrim called the state of social obedience “agentic state.” In bullying, follower and supporter henchmen are often in an agentic state.⁶

Followers may find themselves doing things they might not do on their own and of their own volition.

Genovese Syndrome

It’s hard to comprehend how a woman could be fatally attacked while others looked on, but this was what happened to Kitty Genovese on March 13, 1964. This incident attracted nationwide attention and focused on the upsetting issue of the indifference of bystanders. This phenomenon was researched in a study called the Bystander Effect (Darley & Latane, 1968) that found,

With the diffusion of responsibility, the liability of action or inaction is diffused across a larger group of people. Each person feels less pressure or duty to act. The concept of diffusion of responsibility is used in firing squads. Procedurally, one shooter is given a blank or dummy cartridge and the other shooters are given live ammunitions. None of the shooters know who has the blanks and who has the live ammunition.⁷

Bullies act as if they are in charge. Others perceive them as being in a position of authority and do their bidding. Bystanders are fearful and remain silent thus perpetuating the bullying. Calling out the henchman as well as the bully and actively involving students in discussions can bring awareness and alter the environment where this behavior is thought of as the norm.

Bullying Prevention

Adopting a school wide program is the first step in banishing bullying from your school and the community. There are a variety of programs available, but the most widely used is the Olweus Prevention Program I will refer to throughout this document. Once a program has been adopted it is customary to begin with a questionnaire that is administered to students. This confidential questionnaire asks students to answer questions about their school experiences surrounding bullying. It is then sent away and assessed by a third party to ensure a level of objectivity. The results will inform the teachers and staff about the level of bullying the students are experiencing.

The second step is to hold a series of staff meetings discussing the results and forming a plan. Teachers may have input about behavior they have observed either in their classrooms or on the yard. At this point the Anti Bullying Rules will be introduced and later posted throughout the school and in each classroom.

Anti Bullying School Rules:

1. We will not bully others.
2. We will try to help students who are bullied.
3. We will try to include students who are left out.
4. If we know that someone is being bullied we will tell an adult at school and an adult at home.

Classroom meetings are crucial for keeping track of what's going on in the classroom and on the playground. The teacher facilitates these discussions by providing key questions that bring to the surface concerns of both students and staff. During the meeting students are asked what they think bullying looks like, as well as what types of behaviors constitute bullying. Students are asked to identify the roles of individuals involved; i.e. bully, victim, and bystanders. Once these topics have been covered the class discusses the consequences set out by the school for the bully and the consequences of being bullied. Focusing on the affects of the bystanders is important as they play a key role in either quelling or maintaining the status quo of bullying. Students are asked to consider why it is important to worry about someone who is bullied and what actions to take when they witness these acts. The class can brain storm positive ways to include students who are being bullied or excluded.

Ultimately the goal for students in grades kindergarten through third is to be able to identify and articulate their feelings in an appropriate way and to gain the confidence to seek help from an adult when it is needed.

Shakespeare Gets the Last Word on Bullying

William Shakespeare (1564-1616) created some of the greatest insults we know and use today. People of all ages seem to cry out for abuse and cringe at finding themselves the victim of it. Young children love to tease, but when teasing becomes habitual and students become ostracized is when it turns to bullying. Making students aware of the difference between lighthearted joshing and malicious behavior is what I plan to illustrate in these brief scenes from *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *The Tempest*.

Snippets from *Romeo and Juliet*

By beginning with *Romeo and Juliet* I offer my students Act 1.ii.40. This sets the tone of the play by introducing the characters Sampson and Gregory, the two servants of the Capulets. These young men are strolling the town of Verona, armed with swords and shields. It seems they are itching for a fight as they boast about what they will do if they see a Montague-member of the family and its entourage feuding with the Capulets.

Fighting or provoking fights has been forbidden which adds to the daring of their words. It is then that they run into Abraham and Balthasar, the latter a servant to Romeo.

SAMPSON.

Let us take the law of our sides; let them begin.

GREGORY.

I will frown as I go by, and let them take it as they list.

SAMPSON.

Nay, as they dare. I will bite my thumb at them, which is disgrace to them if they bear it.

Here the stage is scene it set and the tension is ripe. Even though my students may not know every word I am convinced that they will get the impression that all is not well in the moment. I will ask them, "What do you think just happened? What are the key words in those lines that act as evidence to support your opinion? What do you think will happen next? What is the mood of the scene? Then without analyzing the vocabulary I will present the next lines,

ABRAM.

Do you bite your thumb sir.

SAMPSON.

I do bite my thumb sir.

ABRAM.

Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?

SAMPSON.

(Aside to Gregory) Is the law of our side if I say ay?

GREGORY.

(Aside to Sampson) No.

SAMPSON.

No, sir, I do not bite my thumb at you, sir; but I bite my thumb sir.

My students will most likely be totally confused at this point, but that's exactly what I want! I want them to be uncertain of who's winning and who's losing. Are there any words they do understand? What does, "the law of our side" mean? The Signet Classic edition of the text gives the definition, "keep ourselves in the right." What about, "bite my thumb"? Is that like suck my thumb? Signet defines it as, "a gesture of contempt." My students won't know what contempt means, but again this is a perfect time to capitalize on their ignorance with some leading examples, such as, "When my mom made me eat that kale salad last night I gave her a look of contempt." Was I happy about the salad? No, I wasn't. It is with these contemporary examples that I will bring Shakespeare's words into the present.

Many incidents of bullying on the yard can be thwarted by simple interventions by either students or teachers. If a group of students is playing and another group approaches them in a menacing way with taunts and insults each group has to make a choice about how to respond. If a teacher observes a group of students in an encounter similar to the scene just described they should stop the interaction and question the students. By intervening the students are being given the message about what behaviors are acceptable in the school climate.

One can look at Act 111.i.1-5. for examples of a character trying to stop bullying and violence from occurring. The setting is again the streets of Verona. Benvolio, a nephew to Montague and friend to Romeo, is trying to convince the hotheaded Mercutio not to get into a fight with Tybalt, nephew to Lady Capulet.

BENVOLIO

I pray thee, good Mercutio, let's retire.

The day is hot, the Capels are abroad,

And, if we meet, we shall not 'scape a brawl,

For now, these hot days, is the mad blood stirring.

Benvolio is begging his friend to calm down. Benvolio is taking an active role and intervening before trouble starts. The students can learn a great deal from this short plea for nonviolence. The word choice, "retire", "brawl", and "mad blood stirring" evoke the heat and intensity of the moment both in climate and mood. Shakespeare is the master of the multiple meaning. The idea that blood is "mad and stirring" just like the hot air of the day makes it that much stronger. Unfortunately, Mercutio will not be swayed:

MERCUTIO

Come, come, thou art as hot a Jack in thy mood as any in Italy;

and as soon moved to be moody as moody to be moved.

It is a sad state of affairs that Mercutio cannot be convinced to cool off and walk away. He is in a bad mood. Everyone can relate to being in a bad mood. A short list generated by the students of, "Things that put me in a bad mood," will make them see the intention of the scene. After reviewing the lists we will reread the dialogue. It is at this point that I will ask students to rewrite the scene using their own words. We can also write it a second time with a modern context. I will allow them to choose an alternate ending for both. We will discuss the possible consequences of both scenarios.

Snippets from The Merchant of Venice

The *Merchant of Venice* may seem like a harsh choice for a second grade classroom. The common perception of Jews during Shakespeare's times was that of the scapegoat of Christendom: a usurer (money lender), and a pioneer of burgeoning Capitalism. The characterization of Shylock can seem like the epitome of anti-Semitism. Remembering that this play was written for audiences of 1596-1598 is important when presenting it to students. I use these select lines to show examples of hate from both sides. In Act 1.III.37., Bassanio (a Christian) has come to ask Shylock (a Jew) for money,

SHYLOCK

(Aside) How like a fawning publican he looks. I hate him for he is a Christian.

Students see a blatant statement of hate towards someone because of his religion. "Hate" is a strong word children love to bat about. "I hate her, I hate him, and I hate it!" Racial bullying is a very serious concern that occurs in all countries and is usually aimed at minority groups.

For many ethnic and minority children racist intimidation and bullying is the gauntlet that they have to run in the classroom, the playground, and the world at large on a daily basis.⁸

Racist bullying is where racism and bullying meet. It usually involves name-calling and is used to demean and cause harm. This can cause feelings of isolation and depression for students. Another example is this interchange between Solanio, a friend of Antonio's who the money was borrowed for. Act 1.III.5:

SHYLOCK

Thou call'dst me dog before thou hadst a cause,

But since I am a dog, beware my fangs.

SOLANIO

It is the most impenetrable cur that ever kept with men.

Shylock is playing the victim and calling himself a "cur", or dog. Often times victims will begin to put themselves in situations that goad the bully into further bullying behavior. This is name-calling, but is it still a bad thing if the person bullied uses it too? Shylock is also warning Solanio to beware of the monster he has

created. Later in Act 1V.i.64. during the trial scene Bassanio asks,

BASSANIO

Do all men kill the things they do not love?

SHYLOCK

Hates any man the thing he would not kill?

BASSANIO

Every offense is not a hate at first.

SHYLOCK

What, wouldst thou have a serpent sting thee twice?

They are debating at what point retaliation is necessary. This is a wonderful opportunity for classroom discussion. “When do you know you are fed up and can’t take it any more? If I’ve already told you something, how many more times do I have to repeat myself? Are you really asking me to do this?” Children are emotional and have not fully developed their reasoning skills at age seven, or eight. They become easily frustrated when they feel they are not being understood. Learning coping skills about what to do in situations like these are very helpful.

Assertiveness training can be a way to combat bullying and change the climate at your school. Knowing that an assertive response is better than a passive or aggressive one will empower students and increase their self-esteem. However, the burden should not fall on the student alone. Teachers can model assertiveness techniques that will be beneficial to all students. When students learn to communicate affectively they take themselves out of the passive role. “I” statements that are clear and direct; “I would like you to-----.” “I need you to stop-----.” Describing how another person’s behavior makes you feel is another component. “When you-----it makes me feel-----.” Finally, keep at it and repeat yourself if need be.

Snippets from *The Tempest*

The character of Caliban works perfectly when studying bullying. He is subjected to endless verbal abuse. Words like, “poisonous,” “lying,” “foul bombard,” and, “monster” are used by the other characters to describe him. Caliban is enslaved by Prospero and has to do his bidding. Some theatrical productions portray him as a fish, a lizard, an ape, a frog, or a monster with scales and fins. Rarely is he seen as a man. In looking at the dialogue in ACT 1.ii.44. we see examples of classic name calling at the expense of a weaker, unattractive character:

PROSPERO

Hag-seed, hence!

Fetch us in fuel; and be quick, thou’rt best,

To answer other business. Shrugst thou, malice?

If thou neglectst or dost unwillingly

What I command, I'll rack thee with old cramps,

Fill all thy bones with aches, make thee roar

That beasts shall tremble at thy din.

How horrible is this? Here is an example of threats built on humiliation and intimidation. Later Trinculo the jester attacks him further Act 11.ii.25.,

TRINCULO

What have we here? A man or a fish? dead or alive? A fish: he smells like a fish; a very ancient and fishlike smell; a kind of, not of the newest, poor John.

A strange fish! Were I in England now, as once I was, and had but this fish painted, not a holiday fool there but would give a piece of silver. There would this monster make a man.

Any strange beast there makes a man.

Caliban is being bullied. Bullying is defined as “when one or more persons with power repeatedly abuse a person with lesser power for the purpose of causing harm, distress, or fear,” consistently over time. The bullies see Caliban as less than themselves, not worthy of their respect, and therefore entitled to their abuse. Students may be able to recall a time when they witnessed the bullying of another student who looked different, or odd in some way. They may have also been party to comments, exclusions, and avoidance of this student because of these differences. They may have ignored the bullying behavior and in doing so acted as bystanders to the bullying. Or, they may have aided either actively, or as henchmen in some way.

As a response to this reading I would look first at the rampant name-calling. He is being criticized for the way he looks. Students can easily relate to this. They are highly aware even at second grade of who’s wearing what, how so-and-so wears her hair, and what kind of backpack she has.

Next we would discuss the labeling of Caliban as a monster. I would ask my students if they thought he really had fins, scales, or smelled like a fish. Or was this just an exaggeration of some malformation that Trinculo seized upon?

Finally we will create masks. We will make a “pretty” mask and an “ugly” mask. After the masks are created students will be paired up to create short dialogues based on bullying situations either in the class or on the playground. They will get to play the “pretty” part and the “ugly” part. They will get to act these scripts out in front of the class and we will discuss how it felt to play both parts. Stepping into someone else’s shoes is usually an eye opening experience and should provide new insight for both the bully and the bullied.

In addition to these discussions I will bring in children’s literature as additional support. Eleanor Estes novel *The Hundred Dresses* is a chilling portrayal of a Polish girl who emigrates to the United States from Poland.

She is bullied mercilessly by a ring -leader Peggy because of her clothing. The other girls go along with Peggy because she is popular and no one wants to challenge her for fear of being ridiculed. I will also take time to look at popular cartoons as examples of bullying and how it takes place in our culture.

By exposing students to the, “pernicious rage,” of Shakespeare’s language and through regular classroom meetings I hope to increase awareness of bullying and its effect on my students and the community at large.

Activities

Classroom Meetings

Classroom meetings are the cornerstones of an Anti Bullying Program. Sitting down with students once a week for twenty to thirty minutes will provide a time and place for everyone to voice student concerns in a safe and welcoming environment. Topics for discussion can include:

- Bullying prevention
- Peer relations
- School safety and climate
- Respect for students and staff
- Student generated ideas

For your first meeting you will need space for students to sit in a circle so that everyone can see each other. This can be in chairs or on the rug. Introduce your students to the purpose of these class meetings and how this is different from other school subjects. Explain these occasions as follows: “Class meetings are a time when we can get to know each other better through discussion. We will learn about bullying and anti bullying. We will also learn how to problem solve as a way to prevent bullying in our school. During these meetings it is important for everyone to be heard, so as a class we will set some ground rules so that everyone can feel comfortable talking.”

Work with your class to come to an agreement on expectations and rules. Examples are:

1. We raise our hands when we want to talk.
2. Everyone has a right to be heard.
3. We let others speak without interrupting (within certain time limits).
4. Everyone has a right to pass.
5. We can disagree with being disagreeable or saying mean things; no put-downs.
6. When talking about bullying or other problems between students, we don’t mention names. (Students are told to speak to the teacher privately if they know bullying is going on in the classroom or playground.)

Discuss the rules with the students as each one is introduced and ask for examples from students for clarification. When you are finished write the rules on poster paper for use at each meeting

Introducing the Topic

The first question to present to the class is, “What is bullying?” Students will have a variety of answers. You may want to keep track on poster paper to refer to these later. Additional questions to consider are, “In what ways do students bully?” “Have you seen a bully?” “Have you been bullied?” “Have you witnessed someone being bullied, and if so did you want to stop it?” This should take at least ten minutes, as students will have a lot to say.

Defining the Characteristics of Bullying

Students need to understand the definition of bullying in simple terms so that they can reference it in later meetings. Here are three characteristics of bullying:

- Bullying is when someone says or does mean things to another person over and over.
- Bullying is done on purpose.
- Bullying is when one person has power over another and that power is used to hurt the other person.

Students will have a lot of comments as each example is presented. A silent journaling time might benefit those students who feel shy about speaking in front of the group. After the characteristics have been introduced the meeting should close with a statement about the school wide stance on Anti Bullying. The next class meeting will introduce the Anti Bullying Pledge and other topics that have come up in the interim.

Shakespeare and The Globe

It’s hard, but not impossible for students to understand what it was like living some three hundred years ago. A brief glimpse into the life and times of William Shakespeare will help get students in the mood for the selections presented in the unit.

Shakespeare’s Schooldays

Around the age of four William Shakespeare would have begun his schooling in a “petty school”. This was a small private school where girls and boys learned to read. At age six the girls left school to learn at home and the boys continued in a local grammar school. School was taught six days a week for twelve hours at a time with a two-hour lunch break. The students were taught Latin. This was an important language to know at the time especially if you were planning on becoming a doctor, lawyer, teacher, or cleric. Little boys spent long hours on stools writing their lessons in “hornbooks” with quill pens. There were no tables so the books needed to be balanced on the pupils’ laps. Discipline was strictly enforced and the subjects taught were the works of ancient Roman authors like Seneca and the poet Ovid. The focus on these writings in Shakespeare’s childhood most likely influenced the writing of his plays.

The Theatre

There were no movie theatres in Shakespeare’s time. People enjoyed live music and theatrical performances. Many of these were held in big rooms and halls around the country. Later theatres were built that could hold larger audiences. The Globe was opened in mid 1599. It was built as a round structure (like the globe) where audiences sat on all sides. There were different tiers according to different prices. The “groundlings” stood on a dirt floor in front of the stage and were exposed to the elements. Then upward from that were the Gentlemen’s Rooms and the Lord’s Room. Audience capacity could reach up to 3,000. There were elaborate costumes bedazzled with jewels and fancy sets painted to look like whatever the script dictated. There was a

trap door for sudden entrances and exits and a fly gallery for actors to descend from. Students will find it interesting to note that there were no female actors, only men. Young boys played the female parts and wore many layered costumes and make-up. By reading to your students from Eyewitness, *Shakespeare*, Rosen and Ingpen, *Shakespeare. His Work & His World*, and Aliko, *William Shakespeare & The Globe* you will be able to present your students with many images of the life and times of William Shakespeare.

The Language

William Shakespeare invented some 2,000 words. Many of these words we use today. Introducing your students to some of these vocabulary words will help familiarize them with the dialogue of the plays. The Chicago Shakespeare Theatre has provided a list of ten ways to:

Talk Like Shakespeare

1. Instead of *you*, say *thou* or *thee*.
2. *Rhymed couplets* are all the rage.
3. Servants are *Sirrah*, males of equal status are “Sir” among other terms, ladies are sometimes *Mistress*, and your friends are all called
4. Instead of cursing, try calling your tormenters *jackanapes* or *canker-blossoms* or *poisonous bunch-back’d toads*.
5. Don’t waste time saying, “it,” just use the letter “t” (*’tis, t’will, I’ll do’t*).
6. *Verse* for lovers, *prose* for ruffians, *songs* for clowns—at least quite often.
7. When in doubt, add the letters “eth” to the end of verbs (*he runneth, he trippeth, he falleth*).
8. To add weight to your opinions, try starting them with *methinks, mayhaps, in sooth*, or
9. When wooing a lady: try comparing her to a summer’s day. If that fails, say “*Get thee to a nunnery!*”
10. When wooing lads: try dressing up like a man. If that fails, *throw him in the Tower, banish his friends and claim the throne*.

Students will have loads of laughs composing sentences with these phrases inserted into regular sentences. For more of a challenge you could have them write a short scene using the vocabulary and perform it in front of the class.

Guided Drawing of William Shakespeare

Using the cover drawing from the first folio of plays by William Shakespeare. The teacher will guide students through a portrait drawing. This can be done as a pencil sketch and later traced over with a fine point pen. Using an actual “quill” and ink (a feather with the end sliced into a point) can add an extra flair of authenticity. Draw your student’s attention to the hairstyle, collar, and fine facial features.

As a follow up activity have students make full figure drawings in the costumes typically worn in *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *The Tempest*. Use examples from the Internet to get the idea of color and texture. These drawings can be done on drawing paper or cardstock and made into stick puppets by attaching a long craft stick to the back. The puppets can be painted with watercolors or drawn in marker or crayon.

Taking the lines written by the students from the previous activity and using them with the puppets would be very entertaining. It would also be possible to use them with a variety of available adaptations written for children that I cite in my Bibliography.

Notes

1. Kuykendall [], Sally. "Bullying." xv
2. violencepreventionworks.org
3. Kuykendall [], Sally. "Bullying." 10
4. Kuykendall [], Sally. "Bullying." 49
5. Kuykendall [], Sally. "Bullying." 72
6. Kuykendall, Sally. "Bullying." 90-91
7. Kuykendall, Sally. "Bullying." 89-90
8. Kuykendall, Sally. "Bullying." 51

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