

## Snapshot into the Civil Rights Movement

Intisar K. Hamidullah

The day I meet Dr. Brenda Flanagan, I had just taught my 8<sup>th</sup> grade students the poem “Incident” by Countee Cullen. We were reading *The Bronx Masquerade* and discussing the Harlem Renaissance, but I realized that I had to give them background information about the historical time period before, during, and after the Harlem Renaissance, while we were discussing the novel. I found that the paragraphs on the pages, the faces in the photographs, the words in the poems, the lyrics in the songs, and the underlined messages of everything captivated my students. It was interesting how much more they wanted to learn. They wanted to know how these events could have occurred in America, the same America they lived in. They wanted to know why they were never taught or exposed to these historical facts before. At that moment I was inspired to share my thirst for learning with my students. Then I read *New Boy* by Julian Houston, and I realized that this was the perfect fit to accompany *The Bronx Masquerade*. So what I have come to realize is that there is a wealth of literature that I have yet to read. Thus, I have yet to share it to my students. As a result I would like to create a unit that will expose other teachers to literature that I am learning. This literature is essential to exposing not only us as teachers, but also our students, because it is a vital part of American History, not just Black or African American History.

I want students to experience history first hand, instead of reading it in predigested form, in a textbook. The standard textbook for my classes omits a lot of literature that could be incorporated to make the course more interesting. And as all teachers know, textbooks do not teach everything; most of the additional resources are things teachers have to find on their own. I realize it is unrealistic for me to think that by using literature alongside a textbook, my students will instantly appreciate all the benefits they enjoy as citizens of this democratic society. I want to provide my students with various primary historical sources so they will really know why they enjoy the luxuries of reading, attending a diversely populated public school, having access to transportation, voting, and equal rights.

The basic concept for my unit is to introduce topics to the students using picture books. Picture books inspire children's visual, mental, and verbal imaginations for creative writing. They give students an opportunity to experience the world around them using language that is developmental appropriate. Picture books use illustrations to help children explore and learn about different concepts. They actively engage readers in dialogue that includes questioning, hypothesizing, speculating, inferring, and interpreting both pictures and text<sup>i</sup>. Books offer a safe, eye-opening look at life through vicarious experiences. There are situations that we would not want our children exposed to in reality because they may be frightening, painful emotionally or physically, or even deadly. Viewed from a safe vantage point, however, such experiences can broaden a reader's perspectives about people, places, and events, especially if the readings are followed by students discussing them with each other. We will explore several different genres to ensure every student's interest and learning style is captivated. At times, students don't realize that children's literature, novels, poems, songs, movies, and speeches are written from one common theme. Or that they are inspired by social issues that affect everyone.

## **Novels**

Although children's books can capture a small moment in time by using pictures, paintings and photographs, a well-written novel can go into more depth, and quench a reader's thirst for knowledge on a particular topic. *Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice*, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, *New Boy*, *The Greatest: Muhammad Ali* and *Students on Strike: Jim Crow, Civil Rights, Brown and Me* are the novels that will align with the unit. Students will read the novel of their choice during Literature Circles.

### Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice

On March 2, 1955 a high school student named Claudette Colvin was the first person to get arrested for refusing to get up from a bus but due to her youthful face she receives little credit. Consequently, Rosa Parks, secretary of the Montgomery branch of the NAACP, got arrested on December 1, 1955 and most people think she was the person who initiated the bus boycott. According to Colvin, her mother even said "Let Rosa be the one. White people aren't going to bother her. Her skin is lighter and they like her."<sup>ii</sup> According to the novel, that day in school, she was learning about Harriett Tubman and Sojourner Truth. They were talking about the Jim Crow laws and other instances of segregation. So when she was told to give her seat away she was thinking that she wasn't going to walk away voluntarily. When the police officers removed her from the bus sat her in the back of the police car they put handcuffs on her. One cop got in the back seat

with her and while they rode to the police station, they were trying to guess her bra size. In an effort to remain strong, she recited *The Lord's Prayer* and *Twenty-third Psalm*<sup>iii</sup>.

### The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks

This book is written exposing different chapters. One chapter contains information about her personal life whereas the next discusses medical aspects that surround the story. Rebecca Skloot learned about He La in a science class and was unable to turn off the questions she had about the lady behind the infamous cells. The aforementioned cells were considered a miracle in modern medicine because never before were cells successfully reproduced in a petri dish. Although Dolly the sheep is considered the first specimen to be cloned, that is, ironically a fallacy. In 1951, Dr. George Gey realized that Henrietta Lacks' tissue from her cancerous cervix reproduced he began using it to research other experiments. When the doctors took a piece of her tumor, they were mystified with the fact that the cells never died. Her cells have been essential in assisting with the polio vaccine, in vitro fertilization, cloning, chemotherapy, gene mapping, treating herpes, leukemia, hemophilia, Parkinson's disease, study lactose digestion, sexually transmitted disease, appendectomies, human longevity, mosquito mating, effects of steroids, hormones, vitamins and environmental stress, and learning what happens to cells in space. Doctors were careful in hiding her true identity. They called her Helen Lane or Helen Larsen. It wasn't until the 1970s that her identity was revealed.

When she was going to the doctor and reporting her symptom, the doctors did not accurately write down what she reported. After several visits, they finally felt what she had been reporting, and they began treating her. On June 1951, Henrietta told doctors she thought she could feel the cancer spreading. But the doctor wrote in her chart that "patient states that she feels fairly well...however she continues to complain of some vague lower abdominal discomfort...no evidence of recurrence. Return in one month." Like most black patients in the 1950s, Henrietta deferred to her doctors. This was called benevolent deception, and it was a common practice. Doctors also withheld information from their patients sometimes, not giving them any diagnosis at all. They believed it was best not to confuse or upset patients with frightening terms, like cancer, that they might not understand. Doctors knew best, and patients didn't question that, especially since most black patients felt fortunate to receive medical care. The novel is written to display how violations of medical civil rights were common practice. It also talks about how the informed patient consent form, and the Hippocratic Oath were created due to previous violations of patient rights.

### New Boy

Julian Houston has written an insightful novel about a 15-year-old boy whose educated parents send him to an all white boarding school to receive a better education. During the 1950s he is the first African American to attend this school. Although his new school is starting to integrate, his hometown remains segregated. While attending boarding school, he starts to negotiate his rigorous studies, new friendships, and being away from home. Despite being away from home, his friends keep him abreast of the progressive efforts they make in trying to eliminate segregation. When he comes home over the break, he desperately tries to understand and participate by attending meetings and questioning his parents about why they aren't as active in the fight to eliminate segregation. The main character, Rob, is depicted as a normal teenager trying to find his way amidst an ever-changing North, and slow moving South.

### The Greatest Muhammad Ali

Walter Dean Myers writes an excellent novel about the life of Muhammad Ali. He tells the story from his childhood into adulthood, and everything is cleverly written. As Cassius Clay in 1960, he was one of two black stars during the Olympics. During this time, athletes did not speak out about the Civil Rights Movement. Inadvertently, he inspired young people when he referred to himself as beautiful, confirming to other young people that black is beautiful. Some people thought that when he and Malcolm X changed their names, it was a negative symbol as far as the positive progression of the Movement was concerned.

The novel also reveals how he entered the draft on April 18, 1960 because it was required by law. Then he filed as a conscientious objector, stating that he was unable to go to war since it went against his religious and or moral beliefs. Other famous athletes talked to him and told him to go ahead and enter the army because it would be better than jail time or a large monetary fine. After his dispute with the military, he dealt with the body pain that came from decades of professional fighting. The novel ends with Ali entering the 1996 Olympic Games carrying the torch with visible signs of Parkinson's disease.

### Students on Strike: Jim Crow, Civil Rights, Brown and Me

The Manhattan Project is the name of the strike group with John Stokes and his friends. They wanted to end separate schooling for blacks and whites. April 23, 1951, John and his friends walked out of school. They were going to boycott until conditions improved. The memoir includes firsthand accounts of memories of trying to get parents and teachers involved to help teach until conditions improved. Their actions helped provide documentation and support for the *Brown vs. Board of Education* case. Growing up, he

knew his parents expected him to be educated. His mom was known for teaching them t Bible verses, whereas his dad read three newspapers every morning, and taught him and his siblings how to think critically after reading a text. Secrecy was a priority in their school strike project. They met with the NAACP and talked about how they were ready to fight because they did not want to be lynched. So they had to learn how to protect themselves and loved ones. In Prince Edward County, VA, Blacks in prominent positions were fired. For example, the principal of their school, and a county agent for colored farmers' positions were terminated after the protest started. The NAACP filed a lawsuit against the school board, then combined their lawsuit with other lawsuits collectively titled *Brown vs. Board of Education*. Thus, all five cases were heard collectively.

### **Speeches and Letters**

#### *A Call for Unity and Letter From Birmingham Jail*

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. received the letter titled “A Call for Unity” on April 12, 1963 from eight white clergymen expressing their dismay over the tension created by the demonstrations in Birmingham, Alabama. They felt that the battle of racial segregation should be fought in the courtroom, not in the street. While incarcerated, Dr. King replied with his now famous “Letter from Birmingham Jail.” In it, he told them that they were interrelated because “injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” He felt remorse about the demonstrations, but informed them that the Black community did not have a choice because they were not being heard. Dr. King told them in the letter that the demonstrators were using nonviolent actions with the hopes that the community would see the reason for growth, and desegregate. The clergy had stated in their letter that the demonstrators’ actions were extreme. King’s response to that was people said Jesus’ actions were extreme so if participants in the Civil Rights Movement had to decide if they were going to be extremists of love or fate.

### **Poetry**

Although a poem is not as visually intimidating as a long novel or essay, it is challenging to be able to interpret the compressed meaning conveyed in its few lines. Somehow, poets are able to pick minimal words and phrases that convey a richer range of meaning than prose normally does. Sometimes the meaning is hidden in such a way that you are unable to grasp it after one read. Czelaw Miloszcz, a Nobel Prize winner, says “Poetry opens our life to invisible guests.” Those guests are the gamut of emotions and unexpected thoughts that poetry is able to evoke. According to Georgia Heard, there are three levels at which

we read poetry<sup>iv</sup>. For the first level, teachers should use poems that spark the interest of the students. The second level should help students make personal connections to the poem. The third level involves analysis of the poem. Heard also says poetry is a way to hold hands with strangers that have more in common with you than you think. That makes students feel as though they are not alone. That statement is helpful because students find poets remote and inaccessible. With this unit, I want to give them background information about the writer, context clues about the primary source to help them scaffold, and a photograph of the author so they can see that the person is a human being like them.

## Sonnets

Around 1200, sonnets appeared as expressions of romantic love in Italian courtyards<sup>v</sup>. Petrarch made the 14 lines popular with *Canzoniere*, a sequence of 366 poems dedicated to his beloved, Laura. Because the sonnet is short, it obliges poets to use condensed expressions. Petrarch influenced Shakespeare's English sonnet. Both the Italian and English sonnet usually have a shift in tone, stance and viewpoint. During the early Renaissance the sonnet was used as an expression of love to court an elusive woman. Then during the late Renaissance the sonnet turned for the most part to religious, philosophical and political themes. Recent sonnets are rarely written using strict traditional rhyme schemes and iambic pentameter. The unique structure of the Italian sonnet in particular allows the poet to develop a viewpoint in the first eight lines and then shift to a different position for the remaining six lines of the poem.

A "Wreath For Emmett Till" is a collection of sonnets written by Marilyn Nelson. Most sonnets are 14 lines long and contain a variety of rhyme schemes. There are two types of sonnets, the Italian (or Petrarchan) and the English (or Shakespearean). The Italian sonnet contains an octave (8 lines) and a sestet (6 lines). The octave rhyming pattern is typically abba abba and it contains a narrative, poses a question, or presents a proposition. The sestet is identified by cdecde, cdcdcd, or cdedce makes a conceptual comment, applies the proposition and solves the problem. The sudden change of mood in the sonnet, when it occurs, is called a volta. This book contains a heroic crown of sonnets in a sequence of fifteen interlinked sonnets, in which the last one is made up of the first lines of the preceding fourteen. Nelson wrote these poems about lynching because Till's name was a part of her life since she was nine years old, similar to Osama Bin Laden being a major part of my students' life.

Emmett Till grew up in Chicago, and he spent one summer in Money, Mississippi. During that summer he was accused of whistling at a white woman on August 24, 1955. Later that day, the woman's husband and brother-in-law took him from his home. His body was found three days later. The murderers had tied a heavy metal cotton gin fan to his neck with barbed wire and thrown him in the Tallahatchie River. He was also shot in the head. When they found his bloated body floating in the river his face and body were severely beaten. His mother had an open casket funeral to show what had been done to her son. The graphic photographs appeared in magazines and newspapers all over the nation. The all-white juror deliberated for over an hour and agreed on a verdict of not guilty on the allegations of them murdering Emmet Till. This not guilty verdict helped spark the Civil Rights Movement. Years later, the men who were tried admitted to the murder, but were never retried due to double jeopardy.

### **Claude McKay**

This young poet came to the United States from Jamaica during what is called the Harlem Renaissance period. In traveling through the country, he experienced racial discrimination. He wrote several poems about what he had seen and experienced. In his "America" poem, the speaker is expressing his feelings positively and negatively towards America. Most of McKay's work deals with excitement and struggle during the Harlem Renaissance. The poem is an American sonnet with three quatrains ending with a couplet. Throughout the poem, America is being compared metaphorically to a mother. The narrative voice in the poem laments the way it is treated but states that it loves America even when it steals "my breath away." Towards the end, the poem predicts that America will have a great deal to contend with in spite of its greatness. Another example of figurative language used in this poem is personification. The subject refers to America as a live being who "feeds me bread of bitterness."

### **Music**

"Strange Fruit" initially was a poem written by Abel Meeropoles. Someone approached Billie Holiday about singing the song, and at first she was apprehensive but when she was reminded of the visual imagery of her father she continued to sing. The song was *Time Magazine's* song of the century in 1999. The lines in the song contain a lot of personification and imagery. Trees bearing a strange fruit, black body swinging, smell of burning flesh, are a few of the lines my students will analyze.

Food

The roots of soul food can be found in slavery. During this time, African Americans had to make do with leftovers or undesired animal parts that their masters did not want to eat. Food was prepared in fireplaces or an open fire put inside a large swinging black pot or cast iron skillet. Since measuring cups weren't invented they coined the terms "a pinch of salt and pepper" or "until golden brown" to indicate how to continue to season to taste or to learn when to take the dish off the fire. Additionally, recipes were passed down verbally or from observation in the kitchen. Since they were living off the land, they grew what they ate: black eyed peas, okra, watermelon, sweet potatoes, collard green, and rice. During the Civil Rights Movement, Amiri Baraka coined the phrase "Soul Food" to coincide with the terms "soul brother, sister and music".

### **Children's Literature**

Read aloud is an essential component in any student's day. When a teacher reads aloud it helps prepare students for literary learning and helps them acquire essential literary skills. During this time they inadvertently develop an interest in reading and a positive attitude towards reading. It helps students broaden their vocabulary while increasing reading achievement. Additionally, it introduces various genres and different styles and triggers ideas for writing. It provides opportunities for social interaction in response to a book while enabling them to enjoy a story especially if it is presented by an enthusiastic adult. When an enthusiastic adult is reading it motivates children to read on their own<sup>vi</sup>. Not to mention using children's literature a teacher can model and a student can improve the application of effective reading skills and strategies because it lends itself to more practice. Then when a new strategy or skill is taught it can be practiced using other books and the learning will remain. The children's books selected reveal my secret obsession with the Civil Rights Movement along with my enjoyment of using picture books to teach age appropriate cross curricular objectives.

### Getting Away With Murder: The True Story of the Emmett Till Case

Most people think Martin Luther King or Rosa Parks triggered the Civil Rights Movement but I think many would disagree with them. According to Chris Crowe, Emmett Till's untimely death was the catalyst for the Modern Civil Rights Movement. In 1955, when Roy Bryant and J. W. Milam were on trial in Sumner, Mississippi, white citizens were upset because the media put their way of life in jeopardy. Despite testimonies, evidence, confessions of kidnapping by defendants the jury took less than 67 minutes to render a not guilty verdict. Even though one year before in 1954, Brown vs. Board of Education stated that all schools must be integrated, the South still dealt with Jim Crow, and segregation.



## Delivering Justice

Jim Haskins' book Delivering Justice: WW law and the fight for Civil Rights is an excellent depiction of how there were other boycotts than the ones you are used to hearing about and it is our job to find the traditional history our students are used to learning and force them to connect it to the history that is rarely taught. Although Westley, was a mail carrier he taught young people the sit in strategy. The sit in strategy was 1-dress neatly, 2-enter together, 3-sit together, 4-order politely, 5-do not react to insults, and 6- leave together. Since some of the students were inspired by what was going on in Greensboro they wanted to do a similar sit in at Levy's on Broughton Street. The students sat down at the Levy Lunch Counter and the manager called the police who arrested them for breaking the city segregation laws. The official boycott began on March 17, 1960 when they dropped charge cards on the sidewalk and announced that they were not going to shop there anymore until people were treated equally. This lasted for a year and a half white storeowners were unable to stay in business without black customers. Westley was helping with this initiative because he wanted Savannah, Georgia to be a better place. Since he was a mail carrier, a lot of people supported Westley so they asked how could be supportive, and what could they do to help the boycott. They started to execute their plan to desegregate the city by starting one business at a time.

## Birmingham, 1963

On September 15, 1963, the KKK planted dynamite under the steps of Sixteenth Street Baptist Church and the explosion left 21 hurt and four girls dead. Those individuals who committed the crime were not convicted until 39 years later. During the early 1960s, Freedom riders/freedom fighters looked to young people to continue the nonviolent protest especially if the adults were in jail. For the first time a group of teachers defied the sheriff and superintendent. They marched together in the Civil Rights struggle on January 18-22, 1965 at Brown Chapel. At this point, Dr. King and the Rev. Ralph Abernathy were arrested. Despite their arrest, young and fearless kids, even elementary aged students, were ready to stand up and go to jail for their nonviolent protest. In response to being asked why they allowed children to march, the leaders said "Our children and our families are maimed a little every day of our lives. If we can end an incessant torture by single climatic confrontation, the risks are acceptable"<sup>vii</sup>.

## Marching For Freedom

People were told tear gas may temporarily blind you but do not rub your eyes. Listening to those directions makes me think how our students would have reacted in these times.

People were brutally attacked, and ABC, the television network, interrupted a Nazi war crimes movie to televise the violence in Selma. Viewers watched in awe while innocent civilians were attacked. Although Dr. King was not there, he sent word to other religious leaders calling for them to meet him to have a peaceful march on Turn Around Tuesday. Dr King was told by federal law enforcement not to march. But since he had promised the people, it was imperative that they continue with the work they had set to accomplish their goal. They were mindful that if they didn't go to Selma, the segregationists would win. So the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., started the march on Edmund Pettus Bridge. While approaching the bridge, he and other marchers noticed the blockade. Consequently after a praying the barricades were moved and the march continued. In the distance the marchers were motioned to turn around and walk back to the church since a federal court judge denied the petition for the march. Two weeks later, the march took place and over 30,000 people participated on March 25, 1965.

### Through My Eyes

This is a story about and written by Ruby Bridges when she was integrating William Frantz Public School. As a six year old, she played an integral role in integration along with other members of the "Little Rock Nine". Since she passed the school board test she was chosen to attend one of the white schools. Although her parents were torn about her entering the school, they allowed her to attend since they were assured by the NAACP that she would receive a better education and she would be safe. When it was time for her to go to her new school on November 14, 1960 United States Marshalls were there to escort her and her mother to the new school. She was confused because when she arrived she saw parents taking their children from school. The first day they just waited and waited. The crowd grew from the morning and she remembers the racist phrases people shouted and she was trying not to pay attention. She had class with Mrs. Henry. Even the parents who believed in integration were unsure about sending their children to school due to the danger from the crowd. By and by parents started bring their children to school. Despite rioters, the city school superintendent stated that integration would continue. Americans were proud of what their family had been doing and they started sending money, toys, books and clothes to help their cause. Hurricane Betsy came in 1965 and flooded parts of New Orleans. Unfortunately a lot of treasured letters and items were lost. Towards the end of the school year there were other students in her class and the US Marshals weren't needed to take her to school anymore.

### Freedom on the Menu: The Greensboro Sit-Ins

Freedom on the Menu is the perfect book to use to introduce the novel *New Boy*. It was written from a sibling's perspective on what her brother and friends went through while trying to integrate the lunch counter at Woolworth's. They were college students at NC A&T State University.

### **Teaching Strategies**

#### Socratic Seminar

This strategy is great when you want to track or assess how the students understand the concepts that have been taught and how they make connections with their classmates thoughts. As the teacher you will arrange the classroom desks in a circle so everyone can see each other. Then you will throw a statement or question and let the students respond. The statement needs to be open ended so the discussion can lead to a wide range of topics. Then while the students are discussing the teacher should have a map of the students desks and track the conversation by drawing lines to the students to see who is participating the most or least in the discussion.

#### Graphic organizer

Graphic organizers are used for students to organize new information. They can use graphic organizers to help understand material presented. They can be used in all phases of learning from brainstorming ideas to ordering new findings. This strategy is known to help the brain recall information better when personal creativity is involved. For the purpose of this unit students will organize their information using a the graphic organizer at their discretion.

#### Daybook

Ralph Fletcher states a daybook is your personal space to write badly<sup>viii</sup>. My students use daybooks as their safe space to record thoughts, feelings, highlights, low lights, newly learned concepts, notes from the board, formulation of plans for potential writing pieces, handouts from class etc.

#### Turn and Talk

Students will turn and talk to one another throughout various activities within the unit. The feedback from a peer is essential for students to be comfortable with one another. Their feedback is imperative for the thinking and writing process. Peers have just as much impact on each other's growth as the teacher does. So it is important that they are

comfortable receiving peer feedback. Additionally peer feedback gives them the opportunity to learn how to take and use constructive criticism.

### Word Wall

Rupley, Logan and Nichols (1999) stated that students who have strong vocabularies have less difficulty learning unfamiliar words, because those words are more likely to be related to words that students already know. As a result, I will use a Word Wall with my students to introduce, enforce and review vocabulary words associated throughout the unit. Additionally when students are searching for the correct spelling of a new word they will be able to find it on the word wall. Every word is placed on a sheet of construction paper with the corresponding letter. The words are color-coded to align with the subject.

### Literature Circle<sup>ix</sup>

Picture books use illustrations, graphics and or photographs in addition to text making them necessary and helpful to reinforce concepts in science and social studies.<sup>x</sup> My students perform academically on different grade level so I need to have a variety of books for students to read in order to accommodate their reading and interest level. During literature circles students will be broken into groups. I have found that when I let students pick their group members they hold one another accountable and help each other accomplish the academic task. During Literature Circle students have different roles within each group. Discussion Director, Illuminator, Illustrator, Connector, Word Watcher and Summarizer are the different roles. The Discussion Directors develops questions that the group needs to discuss and is responsible for facilitating the groups discussion. The Illuminator finds passages that are memorable, interesting, puzzling, funny or important for the group to reference. He or she must also reference where the word is located in the selection. The Illustrator draws what he or she reads. It could be a cartoon sequence, an important scene, organizational tree, or a map. The Connector connects what he or she is reading to what is being learned in class, books you have already read, current events, or popular trends. The Word Watcher looks for words worth knowing. He or she must also reference where the word is located in the selection. The Summarizer prepares the summary for the reading. He or she could make a timeline of events or write summaries as the selection progresses. Literature Circles are an excellent way for the students to discuss text with each other.

### Activities

#### 1-Picture Parade

### Read Aloud: The Beatitudes From Slavery to Civil Rights

To start the unit the bulletin board will be filled with pictures during the civil Rights era. Students will be asked to make predictions using post it notes to identify what happened in the picture. Or what is going on in the picture. The pictures will be chosen to spark curiosity with the students. The pictures will also help students visualize what happened while they are reading some of the literature and listening to songs.

Students will be asked to reflect in their daybook. How did the pictures make you feel? Have you seen the pictures before? What would you like to learn about the Civil Rights Movement now that you have seen some images?

### 2-Literature Circles

#### Read Aloud: Delivering Justice

Teacher will tell students that novels have been selected based on interest and the variety of reading levels in the class. Teacher will tell students a little about each book. Students will be able to select the novel of their choice to read and get into novel based literature circles. When students get in literature circle groups they need to decide who is going to be responsible for each role (Discussion Director, Summarizer, Illustrator, Connector, and Word Watcher). Students will be given a calendar so they can determine how many pages they need to read per day and what day they will have their discussions. Letting the students' guide their own discussion will make them in charge of their learning. Not to mention it is impossible for us to cover everything about the Civil Rights Movement in this unit. So at the end of the unit students will use what their illustrators drew as the bases for their presentations for each group to share what they learned.

### 2-Lynching

#### Read Aloud: A Wreath for Emmett Till

Teacher will give students a picture of Emmet Till's mother crying while she is looking over his open casket. Students will be asked to write in their daybook what they think, feel, what their initial reaction is to the picture. Then students will be told the story of Willie Lynch. After they have been told the story students will listen to Strange Fruit. After they have listened to strange fruit once, they will listen to it a second time taking notes on lyrics that stand out to them. Once they have written down lyrics that stand out to them they will be asked to turn and talk with a neighbor about what they think those lyrics mean

Teacher will review with students what a sonnet is. Teacher will show students the sonnet sequence about Emmet Till. Sonnets will be given to groups of students to analyze. Once students analyze the poems in their groups they will be asked to compare and contrast the song and poem to increase understand. After students analyze a poem and song we will sit in a Socratic Seminar and discuss the difference between song and poem about lynching and if it makes a difference on how the message gets across.

#### 4. Through My Eyes

Read Aloud: Through My Eyes

After the teacher reads Through My Eyes students will be asked would the story have had the same theme or perspective if it had been told by someone else. Students will be asked to think about questions that they would like answered. Students will be asked to think of questions that they would like to ask someone who lived through these events. If you could ask someone five questions to gain a firsthand account of the events that they remember, what would they be? What do you hope to gain from the interview? In your daybook, draft some prospective questions. Use the pictures from the picture parade and information that you have been reading in your literature circles to help inspire your questions. After their questions are created, students need to interview someone living through the Civil Rights period to find out where were, what they they doing, and what they remember. If they had to tell the story through their eyes, which moment would they say was most memorable?

#### 5. Protest Songs

Read Aloud: Birmingham, 1963

Teacher will ask students to think about where song lyrics originate. How does an artist, poet, rapper create lyrics? Do they intentionally try to create a song that will empower others? Do they purposefully create something that they think will transcend time and inspire generations? Or do they create a song and hope for a hit? Students will be asked to respond to the aforementioned in their daybook.

Using the aforementioned song *Strange Fruit*, students will create a modern twist to the song. We will also look for the mood, tone, and historical context of each song. Then students will either create their own original song, poem or rap. Prior to sharing the songs about the Civil Rights Movement teacher will play the video for *We Are the World USA* and *We Are the World Haiti*. Students will also be given the opportunity to research other influential songs from the Civil Rights Movement.

## 6-Letter Analysis

### Read Aloud Freedom on the Menu

Some leaders have the natural ability to have a vision for the future. In literature we call that foreshadowing. Abraham Lincoln, Sojourner Truth, and Frederick Douglas were great leaders who were able to see into the future about what the world needed what people needed in order to make this world a better place. Think about personality traits that a speaker must possess in order to get a response from their audience. What traits does someone have to possess for you to be interested in their message? Once you are in your group for Literature Circle I want you to pick the letter your literature circle will analyze. The first time you read through the letter I want you to analyze the personality traits the person has to get the message across. Think about what the writer is asking the intended reader. Think about what the writer wants from the intended reader. Then I want you to read the letter a second time and find the textual evidence that helps you find the tone, author's purpose and mood.

## 7-Reflection

Teacher will set up the room for a Socratic Seminar. Teacher will start the discussion by asking what impact did literature have on the Civil Rights Movement. What impact did literature written during the Civil Rights Movement have on American Literature today? Students will be graded on their participation to the discussion.

## 6 Picture Parade

Now that we have studied the civil rights movement, students will be given the same pictures from the start of the unit. This time they will be given post it notes and asked to correctly identify what is going on in the picture. After students have had time to identify the pictures we will place the original poster on the board. This will give students the opportunity to see what the thought initially and compare it to what they have learned.

## Appendix

### Implementing Common Core Standards

R.L.8.2 The learner will determine the central theme or idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text.

Students need to be able to read a text and correctly identify the theme over the development of the text.

R.L.8.3 The learner will analyze how particular lines of text reveal aspects of the author.

Students need to be able to read a text and cite lines from the text that reveal author's style.

R.L.8.10 The learner will read and comprehend literature at the high end of the text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Students need to be able to read and comprehend text within the high level of text complexity

R.I.8.3 The learner will analyze how a text makes connections among distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events.

Students need to be able to read, listen, and interpret text in isolation and in another setting be able to analyze how the text is related.

R.I.8.6 The learner will determine the author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting viewpoints or evidence.

Students need to be able to read a text and identify the author's point of view and reason for writing the text. Additionally students need to

Annotated Bibliography for Teachers and Students

Bridges, Ruby. Through My Eyes. Scholastic. 1999

This children's book is written as a memoir about when Ruby Bridges was instrumental in integrating William Frantz Elementary School. The book descriptively tells the story of what she had to do to prepare to go to school and how she dealt with the emotional stress of the situation at home and at school.

Fletcher, Ralph. Breathing In Breathing Out: Keeping a Writer's Notebook. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. 1996. This is a great book to read if teachers are trying to start implementing the daybook in their classroom. It will explain the rationale for a daybook in a way that a workshop can't.

Fuhler, Carol and Walther, Maria. Literature is Back!: Using the Best Books for Teaching Readers and Writers Across Genres. New York, NY: Scholastic. 2007. Teachers who



love literature will enjoy this book. This book has several suggestions of text for a variety of subjects. It also contains a few activities that can be used in any classroom grades 3-8.

Haskins, Jim. Delivering Justice: W.W Law and the Fight for Civil Rights. Candlewick Press. 2008. This children's book is about how a mailman helped his community in Savannah, GA integrate despite segregation.

Hoose, Phillip. Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice. MacMillian. 2009. This is a great novel to give students insight on how a student made a difference even though she gets little credit for her contribution.

Houston, Julian. New Boy. Houghton Mifflin Company. 2005. This is one of the best novels for students to read about the Civil Rights Movement. If students understand the Greensboro Sit-Ins they will love how this novel extends what happened with students in Virginia. Additionally there is a twist in the novel because you assume the main character will be discriminated against when he attends boarding school but something different happens.

Myers, Walter Dean. The Greatest: Muhammad Ali. Scholastic. 2001. This novel is perfect for young boys who are interested in sports. This book not only tells the story of Muhammad Ali but it also goes into detail about his trials and tribulations when he converted to Islam, refused to go fight in Vietnam, the history of black athletes during the Olympics and how his career effected his health.

Nelson, Marilyn. A Wreath For Emmett Till. New York. 2005. This is an amazing book that can teach middle school students about sonnets. It also describes the story of Emmett and the events that surrounding the situation in a way students can understand.

Partridge, Elizabeth. Marching For Freedom: Walk Together, Children, and Don't Grow Weary. Scholastic. 2009 . Although this book is written as a children's book it contains middle school level text that tells the sequence of events that happened during 1965 in Selma Alabama.

Skloot, Rebecca. The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks. Random House.2010. This novel is perfect for students who are interested in the science behind one part of the Civil Rights Movement. The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks is written in a way to captivate anyone's interest. One chapter has the story of Henrietta while the other covers the medical implications of what is happening.

Stokes, John., and Lois Wolfe, PhD. Students on Strike: Jim Crow, Civil Rights, Brown, and Me. This is an excellent novel that tells the story of what John Stokes and his friends did when they staged a walk out at their school. The interesting part of this book is that it connects an isolated event in Virginia to four other events that became part of Brown vs. Board of Education court case.

Weatherford, Carole. Birmingham, 1963. Wordsong. 2007. This is a children's book with beautiful photographs that explain what on September 15, 1963 at the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama.

Weatherford, Carole. The Beatitudes From Slavery to Civil Rights. Eerdmans. 2010. This is a beautifully illustrated children's book that tells highlights of events in American history.

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<sup>i</sup> Fuhler, Carol and Walther, Maria. Literature is Back: Using the Best Books for Teaching Readers and Writers Across Genres. New York, NY: Scholastic. 2007

<sup>ii</sup> Hoose, Phillip. Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice. MacMillian. 2009

<sup>iii</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/26/books/26colvin.html> (accessed November 1, 2012)

<sup>iv</sup> Heard, Georgia. Awakening the Heart: Exploring Poetry in Elementary and Middle School. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. 1999

<sup>v</sup> <http://www.cranberrydesigns.com/poetry/sonnet/history.htm>. (accessed July 17, 2011)

<sup>vi</sup> Fuhler, Carol and Walther, Maria. Literature is Back!: Using the Best Books for Teaching Readers and Writers Across Genres. New York, NY: Scholastic. 2007

<sup>vii</sup> Partridge, Elizabeth. Marching For Freedom: Walk Together, Children, and Don't Grow Weary. Scholastic. 2009

<sup>viii</sup> Fletcher, Ralph. Breathing In Breathing Out: Keeping a Writer's Notebook. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. 1996

<sup>ix</sup> Daniels, Harvey. Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in Book Clubs and Reading Groups. Stenhouse Publishers. 2002.

<sup>x</sup> Christie, Kim. Using Picture Books in Middle School. Teacher Created Materials, Inc. 2004

