



The Changing of the Everyday Hero

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This curriculum unit is recommended for: Standard plus 7th grade Language Arts.

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Teaching Standards: See [Appendix 1](#) for teaching standards addressed in this unit.

Synopsis: This unit examines the use of heroes throughout literature with the use of novels, nonfiction and fiction pieces. We start off by defining the word hero and looking at the characteristics of a hero. We complete a WebQuest using the heroes of mythology. The WebQuest will help the students to examine what types of heroes were written about many years ago. As the students are working through the unit, they will be reading *Forged by Fire* by Sharon Draper. Students will examine a new type of hero in young adult literature. Students will read about a young man named Gerald and his coming to age story. Gerald is the hero of selected novel, *Forged by Fire*. Even though this is a young adult novel, Gerald goes through the hero’s journey which is presented by Joseph Campbell in video shown in the unit. Gerald goes through many hardships but comes out a hero in the end. Students will also look at current events that relate to the novel and the poem, “The Charge of the Light Brigade.” The unit is wrapped up by having the students complete a comic strip based on the code of ethics of the hero. Students will incorporate characteristics of a hero into their code of ethics for the hero of their comic strip.

I plan to teach this unit during the coming year in to 60 students in seventh grade standard plus Language Arts.

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The Changing of the Everyday Hero

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Rationale

As we grow up, we have people or characters that we think are our heroes. We idolized them. We wanted to be just like them. But as we grow through our lives, our heroes change. We look for different things that we can connect with in our heroes. When we are younger, we idolized superheroes, villains, or other cartoon characters. When we are tweens and teenagers going through middle school and maybe until freshman year of high school, we look up musicians, actors, and athletes. As we get older and our taste in the people we consider to be a hero changes again. Our list expands to maybe include the President of the United States, former teachers and professors, religious figures, artists, authors, Nobel Peace Prize winners, and so forth. As a seventh grade teacher, I see the change in who my students consider to be a hero from the start of the school to the end of the school year. With some middle students, their heroes change because of what is considered popular at that time. But isn't that the same for everyone? Are many of us not influenced by the latest person who is trying to save the world? Do our opinions change about our heroes on a daily, or maybe weekly basis?

With my seventh grade students in mind, I decided that I wanted to open up the horizons more about heroes. Most of them just look at what's on the surface with that particular person. They look at them as good looking or rich. They are quick to defend or accept the latest rumors about their heroes. The students don't take time to understand the true character of their hero. With this unit, I want to get the students to explore the characteristic of what makes a hero a hero and the psychology behind being a hero. We will also examine the difference between male heroes versus female heroes. We will start the unit by using mythology then moving into current events. We will look at military heroes and how they have changed throughout time. We will examine the idealistic views of a hero compared to the reality of a hero. Also, we will discuss the idea of leaders and how would a hero be a leader or a follower. We will also look on the flip side of that and look at does following order make a person or a group of people a hero?

With the idea of heroes or being a hero, one may wonder, how do they handle the pressure of being a hero? We will define moral dilemma and look at examples of how heroes handle their own moral dilemma every day. With that in mind, students will look at a pattern of a code of ethics that heroes may live by without even knowing it. Looking at my students, they have potential of being a hero to someone one day. So I will have them create their own code of ethics.

Background

I teach seventh grade English/Language Arts at Bailey Middle School in Cornelius, North Carolina. Bailey Middle School is a part of Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District which is located in Mecklenburg County in the city of Charlotte. Bailey Middle School is one of the largest and fastest growing middle schools in the area. We have a growing population of around 1, 600 students with 77% being Caucasian, 10% African-American, 15% Hispanic, 3% two or more races, 2% Asian, .5% Native American and .5% Pacific Islander.¹

Bailey Middle School is a middle school that exceeds high growth for the 2014-2015 school year. Our school performance grade was a score of 82, which is a B in letter grade, and one point away from an A. We have 536 students on grade level for reading and math with 73.7% students scoring above grade level and 81.2% students scoring on grade or higher. We have a grade level proficiency of 79.7% in both reading and math subjects.²

Our school district has a literacy goal that is imbedded at every school in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District. The program is entitled North Star Literacy which means literacy for every child in every subject. Other than English/Language Arts, all core subjects must include literacy in their daily lessons. I and the other English/Language Arts teachers work together with the Social Studies team to include and support each other with different reading strategies.

My classes consist of two honors classes and two standard plus classes. The honors classes consists students who are primarily at or above grade level. The honors students typically score a four or five on the End of Grade (EOG) test. Many of these students are reading at a high school level and are taking honors math or math I classes. The standard plus classes consist of a mixture of students who are at or below grade level. These students are taking standard math classes. In each of my standard plus classes, I have two or three 504 plan students. In one standard plus class, I have six ESL and ELL students. I have one student from Saudi Arab but has lived in the United Kingdom for some time. I have another student from Israel who can read and speak English but has a hard time putting his ideas in writing. I have

four Hispanic students who range from proficient English speakers and readers to no English at all. I do have an ESL teacher that comes in once a week to help the ESL and ELL students.

Content Background

This unit can be taught in seventh, eighth or ninth grade classes. I am using this unit for my seventh grade standard plus classes, but it can be adapted for honors classes. The primary novel that we are going to focus on is *Forged by Fire* by Sharon Draper. I will also include the poem "The Charge of the Light Brigade." Both pieces of literature deal with heroes and heroic acts, but in very different and similar ways. A short story will be used to parallel the structure of how a hero is presented in the story. We will read an article by Oliver Stone entitled "Where I Find my Heroes." The article helps to explain and show that heroes can be found all around you.³

Sharon Draper was a Language Arts teacher in Cincinnati, Ohio, where many of her books take place. She tried her hand at writing when one of her students handed her an application from *Ebony* magazine for an essay contest. Draper accepted the challenge and won the essay contest plus \$5,000.⁴ And the rest is history from there. The entry she submitted was entitled "One Small Touch" which later on became the first chapter for *Forged by Fire*.⁵ Sharon Draper is not the type of author to skip over the topics of abuse, love, and death in her novels. "Abuse and death are topics that need to be discussed by young people... I talk about these things because, unfortunately, those are realities of life for many teenagers today."⁶ Not only does she write about tragedy but she starts right off with it. It grabs the reader right from the first line of the novel which is "'If you don't sit your stinkin', useless butt back down in that shopping cart, I swear I'll bust your greasy face in!' she screamed at the three-year-old in front of her."⁷ This is what Monique, a mother, is screaming at her three-year-old son Gerald.

The novel that I am going to use for this unit is entitled *Forged by Fire* by Sharon Draper. *Forged by Fire* is a tragic story of a boy growing up in Cincinnati, Ohio. From the age of three, the main character and hero, Gerald, witnesses many things that a three-year-old should not see. He sees his mother abuse cocaine and alcohol. He also sees his mother with different men many times. His mother will hit Gerald to "teach him a lesson."⁸ Nel Noddings states, "Two apparently opposite evolutionary forces predispose males to warfare: a tendency on the one hand to violence and on the other to behave altruistically toward close kin."⁹ Gerald's mother is a young, single mother who doesn't know how to be a mother.¹⁰ She thinks violence will help

Gerald to understand how to behave like a man and how to take orders. He learns very early on to stay behind the couch if Monique is using the “white stuff” or has a man over.¹¹ The behind the couch becomes a safe haven for Gerald. For example, one day Gerald’s mother Monique gets all dressed up to get her next fix from a drug dealer is what we infer. Monique tells Gerald that she has to go out but will be back later. As the day goes on, Gerald finds his G. I. Joe to play with. As he is playing with his G. I. Joe, he finds Monique’s lighter. He remembered how Monique burned him with the lighter to teach him a lesson that he should not play with fire. But Monique wasn’t there, so he figured it would be fine. He used the lighter as a prop at first. Then he started to use it for a torch for G. I. Joe to fight the enemy. Before Gerald knew it, he caught the curtain in the dining room on fire. Not knowing what to do and knowing how much trouble he was going to be when Monique got home, Gerald thought it would good idea to go in his safe place behind the couch. Luckily, a teenage neighbor checked on Gerald because the apartment was too quite all day and saved Gerald.

Monique is put in prison and Gerald goes to live with his handicapped Aunt Queen. While living with her, Gerald learns what it’s like to be cared for and truly loved. He discovered that he liked school and that he was a good cook. Gerald was learning that you don’t need to have money to be loved or to help out another neighbor. Aunt Queen did not have a lot money but she would always give someone a hot meal or a place to stay if they needed. But on Gerald’s ninth birthday, Monique comes to take Gerald away from all that he loved. He loses his Aunt Queen in more ways than one.

Gerald goes to live with Monique, her new husband Jordan Sparks, and half-sister Angel. Things with Monique are different than before. She is loving and really trying to show Gerald that she has changed for the better. But then there’s Jordan Sparks. He is abusive and an alcoholic. He leaves Gerald alone, but one night Jordan came home drunk. Angel left some toys out and Jordan tripped over them. He starts hollering after Angel. Gerald hears this. Gerald watches Jordan raise his fist to Angel. Gerald pushes Angel out of the way and takes the beating for Angel. From then on he takes all the beatings for Angel. He even tries to fight back, but that only leads to a harsher beating from Jordan.

At life goes on living with Monique, Jordan, and Angel, Gerald figures out another secret that Angel has been hiding. Angel and Monique are both very terrified of Jordan. Monique’s reason is because Jordan is showing her who is boss and sometimes a woman needs to remember that.¹² For example from our seminar reading by Noddings, “. . .with the universality of tone and the observation that a

woman, group, or whole nation chosen by a dominant male becomes subservient: a woman to her husband Israel to Yahweh, the Christian church to Jesus.”¹³ Noddings is summing up a quote by Carl Jung where males show their dominance early on in history and in the *Bible*. This part from *Forged by Fire* is an example of that mindset from Monique. Gerald does not understand that, but he does want to protect her. He does not love or trust Monique yet, but she’s all he’s got. Gerald tells Monique something is very wrong with the way that Jordan touches Angel. All Monique can reply with is that Jordan loves Angel very much and would never hurt her. Gerald fed up with all secrets, lies and hurting turns to Mr. Washington for help. Together, they call the police. The police, with Gerald and Mr. Washington in tow, get to the apartment just in time to catch Jordan trying to molest Angel. Again, Gerald with the help of Mr. Washington saves Angel. Monique is very upset with children for telling lies, but the reality is that she does not want to believe that this was really happening. She is in denial that what Gerald was telling her was true. Monique could not believe it and refused to believe it.

As live went on for Gerald and Angel, things did get better, but Monique ignored them. As time passed, Monique was back to her loving self, like when Gerald went to live with Monique after Aunt Queen’s passing. Everyone was living a safe and calm life finally. Then Jordan gets released from prison early. The hatred and anxiety the children felt from before returns. The children now feel “...their beliefs and attitudes can be manipulated, how they might lose their moral identity, and how they may later be overcome by feelings of guilt and betrayal.”¹⁴ Monique lets him back into the apartment against Gerald and Angel’s wishes. Monique claims Jordan is a changed man and they need to give him a chance. Nowadays that would never happen. Jordan would have to register as a sex offender and he may have supervised visitation to see Angel if he’s lucky. Against the wishes of the children, Jordan moves back in and does try to prove he has changed. But that is only short lived.

Jordan starts touching Angel again and threatening to kill her and Monique if she tells. Gerald figures out that Jordan is touching Angel again. If there is a time when Angel has to be home with Jordan alone, Gerald misses school, basketball practice or work to be home with Angel. This time they know they can’t turn to Monique for help because they know she’ll never believe them. One day Monique was at work and Gerald was at school. Angel was home sick with the chicken pox. Angel decided to make something to eat. To her surprise Jordan came home from work to take care of her. Angel knew what was coming next tried to get away from Jordan. Gerald knew Jordan would be home soon, so he tried to get to the apartment as soon as he could. In the meantime, the food Angel had cooking on the stove caught on fire. Gerald saw the smoke coming out of the apartment. He ran in to catch Jordan trying

to molest Angel. He and Jordan get into a fight. Gerald, with the help of the fire, wins the fight with Jordan. Gerald saves Angel. This time, Gerald, Angel, and Monique know things are going to get better.

Sharon Draper writes in a way that teenagers understand the tragic problems that the characters face and are able to relate the problems to their own life or another person's life. It can be quick read because Draper writes in a way that leaves you hanging at the end of each chapter. Because students can read it quickly, they forget about the literary devices as they are reading, which can be a good thing and a bad thing at the same time. The good problem that this causes is that the students have to go back into the text to reread a few pages or a chapter. I have heard no argument when I have had to have the students go back and reread. Another good problem is trying to not get the students to read ahead. They get so involved with her books that they just want to keep reading. The students forget that not everyone reads at the same pace, and as they are discussing the weeks' worth of reading in literature circles, they tend to spoil future reading chapters for the rest of the students.

In the story, Gerald is a hero in more ways than one. "The unlikely hero is ubiquitous in young adult literature because it is classically a literature outsider."¹⁵ He isn't typical hero that one would picture but in the end of the story, he becomes the man that Aunt Queen would want him to be. According to Roshan Varghese in our seminar discussion, he stated some that fits very well with this novel. He said "one needs to conflict to overcome and improve."¹⁶ In Gerald's case, in order for him to step up and be a hero, he had to have that conflict first with Monique. Then improvement there would be he got to live with his Aunt Queen and have a better quality of life than living with Monique. The second conflict was living with Jordan. He learned that he can trust people again and they can help him. In another conflict with Jordan, Gerald learned that he can handle more than he thought he could and save those he loved. Gerald and many heroes in young adult fiction have change what the typical hero looks for teenagers. "The most positive outcome of the new heroic literature is its potential for providing hope and realistic notions of the hero at the same time that it deconstructs this staple of our culture."¹⁷ Even though Gerald always didn't have a positive outlook on things that were happening in his life, he did have hope that one day things will get better. He did not know when or how but he knew that thing would get better. He had a job saved money so that he and Angel did not have to go without if he could help it.

Through the novel, we get an insight on what moral dilemmas heroes, like Gerald, face every day of their lives. We also get see a little bit of survivor's guilt in Gerald and Angel, mostly in Angel. Survivor's guilt is "a mental condition that

occurs when a person perceives themselves to have done wrong by surviving a traumatic event when others did not.”¹⁸ Angel feels horrible when she has to testify against Jordan in court. Monique does not believe what happened still at this point. She can’t even watch Angel point out the place where Jordan touched her on a doll. Angel still feels like she did the wrong thing in telling Gerald even though it was the right thing to do.

Teaching Strategies

As I stated before I teach English/Language Arts all day, every day. I have the same students all year. I plan on teaching this unit in October when we start mythology. The overall theme of our *Spring Board* textbook for seventh grade is Choices. For this unit, I want to incorporate the theme of choices with the idea of heroes. We will look at what kinds of choices do people make to become a hero. Also, by following given orders, does it take the idea of choice away from people becoming a hero or does it make it stronger?

One literary skills that the students have been struggling with is making inferences. We started the off very different this year from the past. As a seventh grade English/Language Arts team, we started off right away with reciprocal reading and annotating the text. Using these two strategies repetitively, has begun to help students with making inferences to fiction and nonfiction text.

Another literary skill that students are struggling with this year is vocabulary and context clues. According to MAP testing data, the lowest scoring category that the students were tested was vocabulary. Our school uses MAP testing three times a year to measure improvement in skills or see what skills our students are still having a hard time with. The way the MAP test works is that it is an online, reading comprehension test. After the students answer a few questions in a row correctly, the questions and the reading passages get harder. The results from the test give us a good idea on what skills the students are struggling with. We use this to form small groups for remediation, specific literary skills mini lessons, seating charts, and reading/writing partners. So to help with vocabulary and context clues, I have started to include identifying unfamiliar words when we annotate a text. After the word has been identified as unfamiliar, then go back and use the text to come up with a meaning of that word. Once we are done annotating, the students and I go back to the identified unfamiliar words and look up the meaning of the word. We compare our definition to the dictionary and see how close we are. Sometimes, we are right on, but other times we are off.

Something else that we have started to do this year to support other core subject areas is the seventh grade English/Language Arts team has devoted one day to nonfiction text. Students are provided with an article from the week that they have to annotate and answer questions about the article. Many of our articles come from Vale Middle School. We used the Kelly Gallagher strategy of annotating and questioning the text. In the upcoming quarters, students will be given the task to find their own articles, bring them in, and lead the class discussion on their topic. My hope is that down the road students will use annotating strategies for the rest of their educational careers and become better nonfiction readers.

Another skill that we work on is making connections between text to text and text to current events. In September, my students completed some notes and a foldable on the elements of fiction. In the honors classes, we talked about how we take effective notes. In the standard plus classes, they were provided with guided notes. Guided notes provide the student with all the notes, but key words are missing. As the students are following along with the notes, they are writing in the key words from the presentation. All classes did a wonderful job with the notes. But then it came time for them to add in some examples to characterization, point of view, and conflict, the students struggled. Either they couldn't think of examples from texts or movies, or they just wanted to share out examples even though they were wrong. With many students, especially standard plus classes, the students just do not read a lot so it's for them to provide a text to text example. With this unit, to help improve this skill, we will read a text then part of their homework will be to find a current event or another piece of fiction that relates to the topic of discussion.

The strategies that I will use to facilitate instruction and learning include but are not limited to:

- Flipped Classroom
- Annotating text
- Cornell notes (honors)
- Guided notes (standard plus)
- WebQuest or blendspace
- Venn diagram
- Chunking the text
- Gallery Walk
- TAG –peer editing and revising
- Analyzing literary elements
- TP-CASTT
- Socratic seminar

Bubble mapping
Think-pair-share¹⁹

Students in my class use a three ring binder to help keep their notes, vocabulary, and classwork organized. Most of the work in their binders is completed individually and a few things are completed with a partner. Their binders are set up in five sections: warm ups, vocabulary, notes and reference, classwork and homework, and test and quizzes. The goal with the binder is to help the students gain organization skills. Many students lack the organizational skills needed for seventh grade. So I like to give them little steps with hopes that it help throughout the school year. This year with our binders we are making our binders inactive. With this unit, students will create student made foldables to support hands on learning with the myths that will be used in the unit.

Objectives/Standards

Bailey Middle School English/Language Arts teachers follow the North Carolina Common Core Standards. The common core standards that are implementing in this unit are from the reading standards for Literature, informal text and writing. The reading common core standards that are used as follows:

- Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from text. (RL1.1 and RI1.1)
- Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text. (RL1.2 and RI1.2)
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone. (RL2.4 and RI2.4)
- Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style. (RL2.5)
- Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events. (RI1.3)
- Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints. (RI2.6)
- Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums. (RI3.7)

The writing common core standards used are as follow:

- Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content. (W1.2)
- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sentences. (W2.3)
- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (W3.4)
- Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or typing a new approach. (W3.5)
- Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others. (W3.6)
- Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. (W4.9)²⁰

Materials students will need in order to be successful in this unit

- Copies of the novel *Forged by Fire* by Sharon Draper
- Copies of the article “Where I find my Heroes” by Oliver Stone
- Copies of the poem “The Charge of the Light Brigade”
- Butcher paper, makers, post its, highlighters, 3x5 note cards, pens or pencils
- Chromebooks (any laptop computer or iPad is fine)
- Varies suggested Ted Ed. Talks and online videos

Activities

Day one: On the first day we will do a write around the room. I will have questions posted on poster paper. The questions are: what is your definition of a hero, who is considered a hero and why, define villain, who is considered a villain and why, describe a current event that you heard about that has both a hero and a villain. The students will rotate around the room in groups of five. They will be given five minutes at each station to response to the question on the poster paper. I will set the timer on the computer and project it for the students so they can manage their time while they are writing. After the groups are done rotating through the stations, they will then go back through the stations and make comments about what was written. I will give the groups five post it notes. One post it note per question. Students will make comments as a group on if they agree or disagree with what was written on the poster paper. Again, I will time them. I will give them five minutes. I like to time my group discussions. If I don't time the students, the group discussions become

unfocused. After the groups have made comments on the poster paper, I will post them around the room and we will discuss the answers and the comments on each paper. For an exit ticket for today, I will have students complete a self-evaluation about the write around the room. The self-evaluation will help me to guide students in their understanding of the everyday hero. It will be 5 short response questions.

Day two: Students will be given a reading calendar and literature circle jobs. The reading calendar informs the students on what chapters they need to read each night. For their literature circle jobs, I have students complete a signpost job. This comes from *Notice and Note* by Kylene Beers and Robert Probst. The jobs are aha moments, contrast and contradiction, memory moments, tough questions, words of the wiser, and again and again.²¹ After the literature circle groups are assigned, I will give the students their signpost jobs to start. We will walk through how to pick out the details that would go on each signpost. Next, we do a quick power point on what the signposts are. Next, I will show a video entitled “What makes a Hero?” from edted.com. I will give the students guided notes to fill in as we watch the video. If time runs out, we will discuss the guided notes the next day. If we still have time, we will go over the notes and have a discussion on the video.

Day three: As a review of what makes a hero from yesterday’s and day one’s discuss, we will watch a video called “The Hero’s Journey.”²² This video goes through every type of hero in literature and it uses literature that the students are familiar with. It uses fun puppets and current connections, like Adam Sandler movies, to describe Joseph Campbell’s theory of the hero’s journey. It is very relatable for the students. I will also give them guided notes to complete as they watch the video. After the video and quick discussion over the guided notes, students will complete a web quest. The WebQuest is from www.htc.net/~thehuels/heroes.htm. The WebQuest is titled “How have the Qualities of Heroes Changed over Time?” It goes through the history of heroes starting with Greek mythology and moves into present day.²³ The purpose using a WebQuest “is an inquiry-oriented lesson format in which most or all the information that learners work with comes from the web.”²⁴ As the students are working on the web quest, I will walk around and monitor what the students are doing. I am also clarifying questions and text as the students need it. If they do not finish the web quest it will be homework and due the next day. We will wrap the class up with an exit ticket. It will be a 3-5 multiple choice question on the hero’s journey video.

Day four: We will look at one of the myths from our web quest from the previous day. I will let the students select a myth that they researched from the day before then group them based off what myth they selected. In their groups, students will

discuss the hero and the hero's journey in their myth and discuss how it fits in with the day one discussion posters they created. The purpose of meeting in a group is for the students to gather their thoughts on the myths before we move into the flipped classroom. Then students will participate in a flipped classroom. A flipped classroom is where the students teach the class on a certain topic that they are learning about. The students complete the work at home using a variety of videos and WebQuests. Then students run the class and the teacher just monitors and makes sure the students are participating. Depending on the class, especially a talkative class, I like to use a talking stick. The talking stick gives the students a chance to speak and be heard without others talking over them. It also gives an opportunity for those who normally do not speak a chance to speak. Students will be given speaking points that they will have to cover in their discussion with the class. The speaking points will keep the students focused on what they need to discuss about their myth and how it connects to the class definitions from the day one activity. Their exit ticket for today will be a short response question from the flipped classroom discussion. They will have to answer the question of how their idea of a hero has changed or stayed the same. They must provide evidence from the flipped classroom discussion, video, and WebQuest. Students will need to write a paragraph or more. Since this is a lengthy exit ticket, I will give them ten minutes to answer the question.

Day five: We will focus on the novel today. At this point in the novel, the students will read about Gerald's rough start in life and how Aunt Queen comes in and saves him. We will have our first literature circle. Before the first literature circle starts, I will give the students a 3x5 card. On the 3x5 card, students will write down keywords, phrases, images or symbols from text, etc. I will give the students five minutes to fill the note card as much as they can. They can use the book and signpost to help them write their ideas down. After time is up, students will move into their literature circle groups. Students will use the note cards and their signpost to lead the discussion. Students will start with the tough questions person to get the discussion going.²⁵ Students will use their signposts and note cards to answer the tough questions. If the discussion starts to fizzle, students can refer back to the note cards to get back into the discussion.

The majority of the day will be spent in literature circles discussing their signpost. The student who was in charge of the tough questions signpost will begin the discussion. The purpose of the tough questions signpost part is to come up with questions that deal with the characters of the novel. This person would be compared to the traditional literature circle director role where the student leads the literature circle group discussion. From the questions that the tough questions person asks, students will answer the question according to what they wrote on their assigned signpost. In

the perfect world, this will work out according to plan and the students' signposts will be completed. Tough questions will be answered by the signposts and discussion will move along according to plan. Well, this isn't the perfect world. So that is why I have the students complete the 3x5 cards. It helps to keep the discussion moving and the students focused on the novel and the signposts. Students will turn in the 3x5 note card and signpost for a grade.

Day six: After students complete the DOL warm up and write down their weekly homework in agenda, I will introduce TP-CASTT to the students. I will give the students guided notes as I explain what each letter of TP-CASTT does. TP-CASTT is used "to facilitate the analysis of specific elements of a literary text, especially poetry. To show how the elements work together to create meaning."²⁶ This is also a test taking strategy that the students can use on any poetry test or EOG test. The definition of TP-CASTT is "analyzing a poetic text by identifying and discussing Title, Paraphrase, Connotation, Attitude, Shift, Theme, and Title again."²⁷ The reason why I want the students to use TP-CASTT so they can see the connection between the poem and the novel.

After we take notes on the steps of TP-CASTT, I will model for the students how to complete a TP-CASTT using one of the poems in our *SpringBoard* books. If you do not use the SpringBoard Pre-A.P. program, then you can use any poem that you have available to use. I will walk the students through the whole process. This will take up quite a bit of class time. The exit ticket for the day will be to match the steps to TP-CASTT to the definitions of each step.

Day seven: After the DOL warm up, we will complete a spiral with TP-CASTT. A spiral is a review of the exit ticket from the previous day. With the spiral, we will quickly review the steps as a class. Students can use their notes or the exit ticket if needed. Then students will work in groups to complete a quick TP-CASTT on a short poem again from the *SpringBoard* textbook. I will give them about 15 to 20 minutes to complete the small group TP-CASTT. Students will be assigned to work in heterogeneous groups of four. Some groups may finish before the others. If that happens, students will be assigned to read "The Charge of the Light Brigade" by Lord Tennyson Alfred. I will provide the students with a copy of the poem so they can write and annotate on the poem.

"The Charge of the Light Brigade by Lord Tennyson Alfred is a narrative poem about a group of soldiers sent into battle. These soldiers had no idea on what would happen to them. All these men followed the orders, did not know what they were getting themselves into or the fact that they were all going to die. Six hundred soldiers rode to their death. The characters from *Forged by Fire* resemble the

soldiers of the Light Brigade. Gerald always sticking up for Angel and Monique because he knew it was the right thing to do, no matter what the outcome was or how badly he got beat up. Gerald may not have wanted to jump in front of Jordan's punching, but he did it to protect Angel. Just like the soldiers of the Light Brigade, they may not want to go into battle, but they followed their given orders in order to protect others. Only their ending was not a happy one like Gerald's. All the six hundred soldiers died in battle.

As the students read the poem, they will draw a picture for each of the six stanzas. The drawings are to help make connections between the poem and the language Lord Tennyson Alfred uses. For homework tonight, students will find a current event that resembles "The Charge of the Light Brigade."

Day eight: Once students have completed the DOL warm up, students will share their found current event in their small groups of four. I will let the students pick the groups for this day. It helps the students to be more comfortable and willing to talk. Students will complete a compare and contrast Venn diagram based off the current events and the poem. A Venn diagram consists of two overlapping circles. The part of the circles that overlap is where one would write the similarities. The two parts of the circle that do not overlap is where the differences are listed. Once groups have completed the Venn diagram, the groups will choose a reporter for the group. The reporter will share out the results from the group discussion and Venn diagram. Next, students will revisit the poem and complete a TP-CASTT. We will complete some of the TP-CASTT individually then come together as a group to check our answers and fill in the parts that some students may not have gotten or understood. There will not be an exit ticket for today, but if one is needed it will be a Kahoot based off the poem.

Day nine: Students will complete the DOL warm up. Students will read an article titled "Where I find my Heroes" by Oliver Stone. This is a wonderful article that Oliver Stone wrote for McCall's Magazine in 1992. I know it is an older article but it explains who Oliver Stone considered to be a hero. After students read the article, annotate the article, and answer a few guided questions about the article, we will have a discussion on how their idea of who is a hero may have changed. Some students may have changed their minds on who their heroes are, some may not. This will be just a general class discussion where students will look back at Oliver Stone article and the novel to answer questions. When I do a class discussion, I keep a list of Bloom's Taxonomy higher order thinking question stems with me and I give a copy to the students, so they can ask questions to me or each other. I also keep a list of students nearby to keep track of who has spoken or who has not spoken. I also use

the list to keep track of who I called on to answer a question. After I ask the first question to a randomly selected student and they answer the question, they get to call on the next person. The newly selected person has a choice. They can expand on the answer the previous student said or use the question stem list to come up with a new question to ask the class. For the exit ticket for today, the students will complete a write up comparing Oliver Stone's idea of a hero to who can be considered a hero from the novel and according to the article why would that character be a hero.

Day ten: After the warm up, students will meet in their literature circles to discuss their signpost and to select new signpost jobs. Students are allowed to pick their own new signpost jobs as long as it is not the same job as the week before. After students selected their new signpost jobs, students will be given a 3x5 note card with a number on it. The number on the card relates to the number of the question on the board. Students are not allowed to switch note cards. They must answer the given question. I will give students five minutes to answer the question in complete sentences. If students need an extra note card, they may have one. Once the students answer their questions, they will share their responses to their group.²⁸ After this discussion, students will complete the rest of the literature circle discussion using their signpost as they did in day five.

Day eleven: Once the students completed the warm up for the day, students will complete another write around the room. The five questions that they have to answer this time are: what is your new definition of the word hero, how does the poem "The Charge of the Light Brigade" show who a hero is, who in the novel *Forged by Fire* is considered a hero and why, what characteristics do heroes possess and how are all the relates that we study relate to one another. Students will be in five groups. They will write their answers to each question on each piece of butcher paper. Students will get anywhere from three to five minutes to answer each question. I will time the students answering the questions and monitor them. Some students may need to have more clarification on the questions as they move through the classroom. After students answer the questions, they will then get post notes. On the post it notes, students will write down comments and questions to what the students wrote down on the butcher paper. Again, students will get three to five minutes to complete the task. After the writing around the room is complete, students will complete a reflection on what they discovered from the activity.

Days twelve, thirteen, and fourteen: Students will begin their final assessment of the unit. Students will create a code of ethics for the everyday hero. We will go over what a code of ethics is. Then we will discuss what characteristics a hero possess that makes them different that the average person. From this, students will create a

comic strip that has a storyline, setting, a hero and villain as characters, describes the hero's code of ethics. Students must color and illustrate twelve boxes. Students must have dialogue or thought bubbles in each box. On day twelve, students will begin a rough draft of their comic strip.

On day thirteen, students will finish up their rough drafts and move into peer revising and editing. Students will use the T.A.G. method for revising and editing. Students will be paired up with a partner based off their writing abilities, a high ability writer will be placed with a lower ability writer. Once students are placed with their partners, they will complete the T.A.G. editing and revising handout. The T stands for tell the writer three things that you like. The A stands for ask the writer a question. I have them ask the writer three questions. Finally, the G stands for give the writer a positive suggestion. Again, I have them give three positive suggestions. I just the students about fifteen to twenty minutes to complete the T.A.G. If students need more than fifteen minutes, I will add on five minutes. The goal for the students is to walk out of the classroom with an edited, ready to revise rough draft.

On day fourteen, students will get the whole class period to complete the final draft of the code of ethics for the everyday hero comic strip. The comic strip must be colored and the revised changes must be part of the final draft. Students will turn in the final draft, rough draft and T.A.G. handout when the final draft is complete. Once the comic strip is turned in students will complete a self-evaluation on the unit comic strip and on the unit.

I am measuring growth in knowledge using this comic strip and their self-evaluations. The comic strip is an acclamation from what we started on day one with the definition of a hero and the write around the room to the literature circle signpost to article and poem discussions to the final write around the room. This will show the thought process of the students and how it has changed or stayed the same. It will also show and measure a student's writing ability from start to finish.

Day fifteen: After the warm up is complete, students will move right into their literature circle. Today is the last day of the literature circle and because students on had a few chapters to read according to their reading calendar, this literature circle will be time for fifteen minutes. After the literature circle is complete and the final signpost are turned in, students will get the opportunity to share their comic strips that they turned in yesterday.

Appendix 1: North Carolina Common Core Standards

Reading Common Core Standards

The reading common core standards are used in this unit. We used RL 1.1 to cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. This will be used in the annotating of the text. Students will determine a theme or central idea of the text and analyze its development over the course of the text. RL1.2 and RI1.2 is used to support analyzing illustrations and dialogue within the text.

With the added use of vocabulary, RL2.4 and RI2.4, students will determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices with meaning and tone.

As students read the novel, an article and a poem, students will compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style. By using the standard RL2.5, students will create an Instagram between characters, tone, mood, and setting.

Again as students read the novel, article and poem, students will analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events. With this standard, RI1.3, students will be making connections with current events.

In order to complete the unit, students will determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints. By using standard RI2.6, students will be able to write dialogue and create illustrations from a different point of view.

With incorporating RI3.7, students will evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums. Students will reflect on using traditional text and use different strategies to close read the novel, article and poem.

Writing Common Core Standards

The writing common core standards used are to support the development of the unit. Students will use W1.2 to write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content. The activity for this will include Instagram, article responses, and code of ethics for heroes writing assessment, and the writing process.

The use of quick writes will support W2.3 where students will write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sentences.

This standard, W3.4, supports the students in producing a clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. This will be done in the code of ethics for heroes writing assessment.

With the use of standard W3.5, students will develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and trying a new approach. Again this will be used code of ethics for heroes writing assessment.

This standard, W3.6, will use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others. This will be used with the Instagram assignment and code of ethics for heroes writing assessment.

As we read the novel, article and poem, students will use W4.9. They will draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research in all their writing and class discussions.

Annotated Bibliography

"Bailey Middle School, Cornelius NC - Rankings." Carolina School Hub. Accessed September 20, 2015. <http://www.carolinaschoolhub.com/bailey-middle-school-cornelius-nc.cfm>. This is a helpful, user friendly website that list background of the school.

Beers, G. Kylene. *Notice & Note: Strategies for Close Reading*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2012. 212-235. This was used for the sign post that were created for literature circles as they read the novel. This book also breaks down how to incorporate close reading with any type of text.

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History /Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects. Charlotte: National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010. This where we can see our common core standards outlined. It also provides examples lessons and essays.

Dodge, PhD, Bernie. "WebQuest.Org: Home." WebQuest.org. 2015. Accessed November 13, 2015. <http://webquest.org/>. This website explains the purpose of using WebQuest in the classroom.

Draper, Sharon M. "One." In *Forged by Fire*, 5. New York, NY: Simon Pulse, 1997. The class novel that we are using for this unit. It goes through the life of Gerald Nickelby.

Gay, Rick. "Peace Education." Lecture, CTI Seminar, Davidson College, Davidson, October 15 and 22, 2015. I used this part of the seminar for activities in my unit that we did in the seminar.

Noddings, Nel. "Masculinity and the Warrior." In *Peace Education: How We Come to Love and Hate War*, 37. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Cambridge University Press, 2012. This is the book that we read for the Peace Education seminar. This book gave an insight on how peace education should be taught in schools.

"Ohio Reading Road Trip | Sharon Draper Biography." Ohio Reading Road Trip | Sharon Draper Biography. 2004. Accessed November 20, 2015. <http://www.ortt.org/draper/>. This website gives some insight behind Sharon Draper's life.

"Sharon Draper - Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia." Wikiepedia. October 9, 2015. Accessed October 30, 2015. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sharon_Draper. This website explains the life of Sharon Draper.

"SpringBoard Instructional Strategies Index: Reading Strategies." SpringBoard English Textual Power Level Two. United States of America: College Board, 2011.383-385. Print. This is a textbook resource that we use with all our students. It is common core aligned resource. It provides us with a wide variety of nonfiction articles, poems, chapters of novels, etc.

Stone, Oliver. "Where I Find My Heroes." *McCall's* 1 Nov. 1992. Print. I used this article to help students see that there are many types of heroes out in the world.

"Survivor Guilt." Wikipedia. Accessed October 30, 2015. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Survivor_guilt. I used this to gain more insight on what survivor guilt really is.

Trupe, Alice. "Thematic Guide to Young Adult Literature." Google Books. 2006. Accessed October 22, 2015. <https://books.google.com/books?id=M1khLoBVyscC&pg=PA107&lpg=PA107&dq=Mary+Tasillo+heroism:+what+does+it+mean+to+be+a+hero?&source=bl&ots=I7MHzeUTwX&sig=UPPrcezEhMBxF3l14IgLdR-ryVPY&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjJzbGSsaTJAhWFSiYKHZIMBAgQ6AEIGzAA#v=onepage&q=Mary+T>. I used this chapter in the book to see how heroes in young adult literature have changed throughout the times.

"The Hero's Journey." YouTube. June 18, 2013. Accessed October 22, 2015. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yZxs_jGN7Pg. This video describes the hero's journey using current connections.

Varghese, Roshan. "Peace Education." Lecture, CTI Seminar, Davidson College, Davidson, September 10, 2015. Mr. Varghese made a statement about needing conflict in live in order to learn how to live.

"Welcome to the Official Site of Sharon Draper." SharonDraper.com. Accessed October 30, 2015. <http://sharondraper.com/>. Sharon Draper's official homepage that contains a biography, lessons, and Draper reading parts of her novels.

Winkler, Matthew. "What Makes a Hero? - Matthew Winkler | TED-Ed." December 4, 2012. Accessed October 22, 2015. <http://ed.ted.com/on/14UDfbcC>. This video goes through a detailed discussion on Joseph Campbell's theory on the hero's

journey.

"Heroes." Heroes. Accessed October 22, 2015.

<http://www.htc.net/~thehuels/heroes.htm>. This is the WebQuest that the students will use in the unit. Students will complete assigned parts of this WebQuest.

Notes

¹ "Bailey Middle School, Cornelius NC - Rankings." *Carolina School Hub*. Carolina School Hub. Web. 20 Sept. 2015.

² "Bailey Middle School, Cornelius NC - Rankings." *Carolina School Hub*. Carolina School Hub. Web. 20 Sept. 2015.

³ Stone, Oliver. "Where I Find My Heroes." *McCall's* 1 Nov. 1992. Print.

⁴ "Sharon Draper - Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia." *Wikipedia*. 9 Oct. 2015. Web. 30 Oct. 2015.

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- ²⁴ Dodge, PhD, Bernie. "WebQuest.Org: Home." *WebQuest.org*. Bernie Dodge, PhD, Learning Design and Technology, San Diego State University, 2015. Web. 13 Nov. 2015.
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- ²⁸ Gay, Rick. "Peace Education." CTI Seminar. Davidson College, Davidson. 15 Oct. 2015. Lecture.