

We Have Not Overcome:

Comparison of Human Rights Violations in Sudan and the Civil Rights Era

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Introduction

Within the Charlotte Mecklenburg School district, there are approximately 47,000 Language Minority students representing 175 countries. Language minority students are those that have another language other than English spoken at home. There are over 25,000 English Language Learners (ELs) that are not proficient in English and need extra support in schools. This number continues to rise daily. Many ELs are from countries that have an unstable government or economy, while others have arrived to pursue a better life. Whatever the reason, we need to make our classrooms safe, so that students will feel comfortable expressing their opinions and having conversations that will lead to change and healing.

Learning Objectives

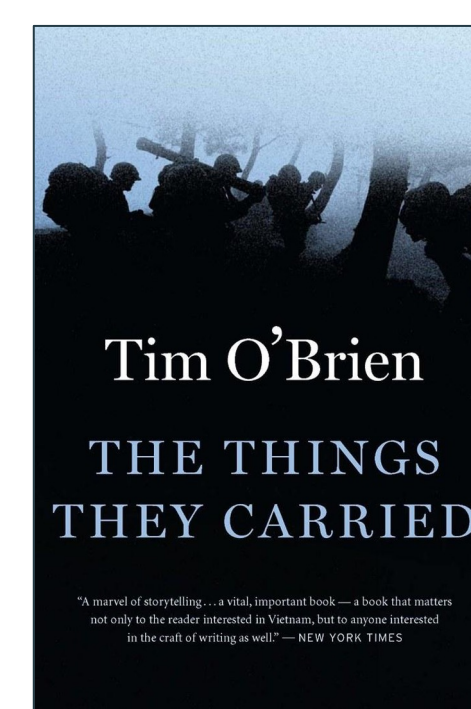
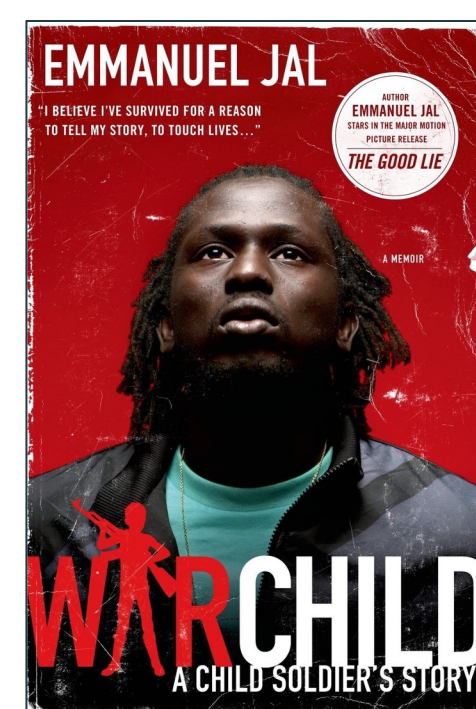
____ The overall objective of English III is to have students analyze American literature, from pre-colonial (Native American) to 20th-century authors, as it reflects social perspective and historical significance in its language. In order to give students a wide variety of exposure to the past and present, I felt they should see from whence we have come. While attending a Civil Rights trip, sponsored by Charlotte Teachers Institute (CTI), I was made aware of many atrocities that took place during the Civil Rights Era. In particular, the abuse of power of one man, Theophilus Eugene "Bull" Connor in Birmingham, Alabama from 1962-1963. He single handedly started his own war in his city. It was similar to what is happening today in Sudan and what some of my students experienced in their home countries. In an effort to make them socially conscious, the lesson will be based on empathy towards healing and helping.

- **Essential Question:** Using a lens of Harm/Healing and Heart, how will your perspective change and move to help after looking at stories of conflict?
- **Theme:** As Tim O'Brien writes in *The Things They Carried*, "To generalize about war is like generalizing about peace." Despite a lack of simple generalizations, war has profound effects globally, nationally, and personally -- even for those who were not soldiers.



Research

- While visiting Birmingham, Alabama on a Civil Rights trip, I was reacquainted with Bull Connor, who served as the commissioner of public safety for 22 years. I was not aware that he amended ordinances to support segregation in his city. He amended section 597 with Ordinance 798-F. It stated, "It shall be unlawful for a Negro and a white person to play together or in company with each other in any game of cards, dice, dominoes or checkers. Any person, who being the owner, proprietor or keeper or superintendent, of any tavern, inn, restaurant, or other public house or public place, or the clerk, servant or employee or such owner, proprietor, keeper or superintendent, knowingly permits a Negro and a white person to play together or in company with each other at any game with cards, dice, dominoes or checkers in his house or on his premises shall, on conviction, be punished as provided in Section 4."
- While in office, he maintained a warlike atmosphere and inflicted fear in African Americans within the city.
- Using *"The Things they Carried"* as a anchor text, we will discuss war and warlike behavior.
- We will review the experience of child soldiers using excerpts from *"War Child: A Child Soldier's Story"*.
- By discussing these items and people in a safe environment, it is my hope that all students may heal and engage in peace building discussions.



Nature of Student Inquiry

The EL students, registered for ESL English III, at Ardrey Kell High school will engage in this activity. They will gain the tools needed to further study the effects of war on soldiers and civilians. After completing the activities, students will engage in their final English unit "America at War" which will focus on the following standards and study the novel "The Things They Carried" by Tim O'Brien.

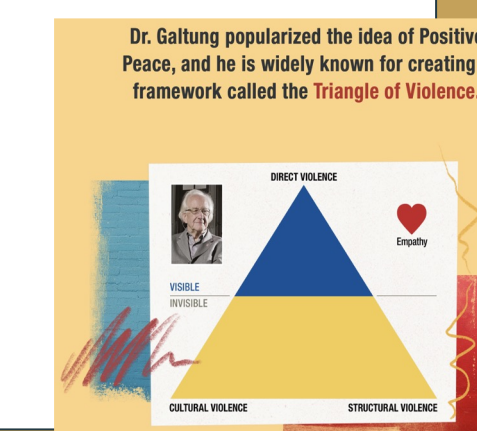
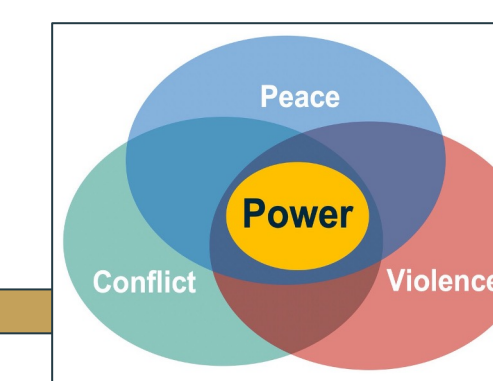
- **RL.11-12.3:** Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.
- **RL.11-12.7:** Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

Classroom Implementation

The final unit in the English III curriculum is entitled, "America at War". It is based on the Vietnam War and the novel study is "The Things They Carried" by Tim O'Brien. The novel is a meditation on war, memory, imagination, and the redemptive power of storytelling. In an effort to prepare students for the study of war, their emotions must be at a level where they can look critically without trauma or harm. The activities stated above will lead into the unit.

Activities

1. Using the peace and violence spectrum, students will determine if the world has gotten more peaceful or more violent. Venn Diagram of peace and Peggy Chinn's work on Abusive Powers vs. Peace Powers will be used to talk about leadership and power.
2. Video of Bull Connor will be shared for background knowledge. Discussion/writing prompt to follow.
3. Share excerpts from "War Child", video and hip hop anthem from Emmanuel Jal
4. Youth and Peace in Action Harm unit will be completed highlighting Galtung's triangle, activity that goes with it and Blanket game completion.
5. Youth and Peace in Action Healing and Heart units will be completed focusing on social change and a peacebuilding project.
6. Star Power Simulation will be conducted for culminating activity.



Evaluation

- Students will use the Fight-Flight-Freeze-Frenzy Body Posters as an assessment tool.
- Students will have a peace building project to be shared with the US.



Reference

NewGenPeacebuilder. 2021. *My Peacebuilder Foundations Online Course*. Accessed June 2022. <https://youthpeaceaction.thinkific.com>.