

Enhancing Character Through the Influence of Stories and Writing

*Melissa Audain-Pickett
Madison Elementary School*

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Overview

I plan to incorporate this unit into my second grade class at Madison Elementary School where I teach reading, math, writing, language and spelling. I work in a predominantly low-to-middle income, African American urban community. Madison is located in the Hill District of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The curriculum's intent is to strengthen students' understanding of ethics and good habits and character by laying out eight basic principles: a nurturing attitude, dependability, responsibility, friendship, brotherhood, high expectations, courage, and hope.

Many different ethnic groups have come across the oceans to America; with them, they brought a wealth of history and culture both in written and oral forms. This history has helped them to maintain a strong identity. These connections and ties to the past give a sense of pride, belonging and identity. This is what makes America and Americans a strong united people rich in both culture and diversity.

One group of Americans do not share this wealth. This group does not know its history or from where they have come. They were denied the right to speak, share and enjoy their oral and written history as well as their culture. As a result, many individual stories were lost... African Americans or Black Americans are a fragmented people because they lack a true original identity.

During a two-month long workshop at my school, Mr. Stanley Denton spoke about Clifton Taulbert's book, Eight Habits of the Heart: Embracing the Values that Build Strong Families and Communities. These habits include: Nurturing Attitude, Dependability and Responsibility, Friendship, Brotherhood, High Expectations, Hope and Transcending Habits.

I related so well to these habits because they were a part of who I was and who my parents and children are: These habits have molded me. It is here where I will begin my journey to build and embrace our good habits into my curriculum. Every society is built upon a strong foundation and we need to incorporate ethics and values into our classes through our everyday interactions. These habits of the heart seem to be tied to wisdom, knowledge, intelligence, and giving hearts. I believe they are essential to a happy and

productive being. I believe my students would greatly benefit by having these habits instilled in their characters. I wish to do my part by beginning to impart these habits. They are essential to being a happy and productive individual, family or community.

Rationale

Today in our fast-paced world we have so much of everything and not enough of what is needed in our day-to-day activities to help us to live happy, productive lives. Moral and ethical values have deteriorated into confusion and uncertainty. Many of our children appear to have no truth or values. They are taught to tolerate everyone, everything, and every belief. How confusing that must be. To have no truth, to tolerate everything, and to believe in nothing leads to confusion. To make up your own truth as you live can lead one down the wrong path. The messages are too vague. Our children are perplexed about what to do and how to handle small everyday decisions. What we give to children to guide their development is crucial to their very existence. If we do not rise to this occasion we will have only ourselves to blame. America's children are at risk.

Already our society is experiencing a downward trend with family, churches and religious establishments and communities are losing their strong hold on character. Positive character traits are the cement that holds communities, people and family together. They are what hold a nation together. With the breakdown of families, there comes the divide of extended families. With the breakdown of extended families comes the breakdown of generations. With the breakdown of generations comes the collapse of our young. The character in our young has begun to crumple and disintegrate. Not having an adult generation that has wisdom and ethical values and leaders, leads to the collapse of our teens and our community. This leads to a breakdown of our entire nation. This is where we stand.

In many communities all across the nation there is no respect for the young or for the old. We have no allegiance to anyone but ourselves. Fathers abandon their spouses as well as their children. Violence, rape, murder, drugs, and child abuse is commonplace. Putting self first is all we see in today's media. There is no intrinsic reward. Self-gratification is the norm. If no action is taken soon as a nation, our children and our country are in jeopardy. In many ways, our experience is very similar to the circumstances that existed prior to the fall of Rome.

The role of teaching habits, or ethical values, is something everyone can do. As teachers we do it daily. But we must not make it a short-lived idea. It must become commonplace and we must play a significant role in passing these values, habits and traditions on to our young in elementary, middle and high school environments. It needs to happen on a consistent basis. Henry Van Dyke summarizes this in the statement below:

Values, standards, ethics and moral decision-making are not learned overnight. They are conceptual. Seeds are planted. The role of the teacher is to nurture the seeds. The seeds will not mature in one season, like acorns of lupines, but will mature as the child develops, even as an acorn becomes a giant oak over the passage of time gathering strength from the Earth, the sun, and the rain.

It is a mistake to say, "Today education ends; tomorrow life begins." The process is continuous; the idea into the thought, the thought into action, the action into the character. When the mulberry seed falls into the ground and germinates, it begins to be transformed into silk. (Van Dyke 26)

Heartwood has an ethics curriculum for children. This program helps students become familiar with positive character traits. Identifying positive character traits may help lead students to higher achievements as stated by High Road, the organization that developed the Character Education Traits.

The breakdown of the family as a major factor as well as economic pressures, changing roles of women and men, high divorce rates, the loss of extended families all conspire to damage the age-old linkages between the adult generation and the young. (Heartwood Institute 1)

In the recent past, schools have concentrated on the three "R"s and avoided moral stories for fear of offending both religious and non religious groups, a classic case of throwing out the baby with the bathwater. Awareness is growing, however, that the schools can distinguish narrow sectarian perspectives from values that all civilized groups share; and awareness is growing that schools must take a major role in helping children learn these values. Moral education can no longer be ignored. It is now time for schools to have the courage to address human character development, to teach those human attributes common to cultures all communities, all religions. (Heartwood Institute 2)

Objective

My focus is to incorporate African and African American books into my classroom that integrate these principles and practices and to design lessons to speak directly to the experience and lifestyles of my students. I also want to have the students verbalize these habits so they can relate to them on a daily basis. In these lessons, I will have my students dialog, interpret and give witness to the Eight Habits of the Heart that would help to make them stronger individuals. The unit will present books that have familiar faces; people of color interims of and habits that embrace Black lives depict positive images. In these books students will identify with nurturing attitudes through discussion and/or writings. Hopefully these books and habits will help my students identify positive behaviors through role-play and then incorporate these values into their daily lives.

Young children are like sponges; they are accepting of practically anything. Their minds are like open vessels. They believe almost anything you teach them. If you teach them properly they will apply such lessons as a template for living and doing things. Even though they may stray off the beaten path many times, they always can look back to the template to guide them. If we give them no template, they will have nothing to look back to. If you give them the wrong template they will refer to and use that approach.

In my day-to-day communications with my students they are pretty truthful with their activities and their interactions at home. They allow you to come into their homes through their stories, dilemmas, and many heartfelt events. As a teacher, I see how they interact with family, friends and acquaintances. I also see what their parents will tolerate from them and how their parents handle situations. I see what they value by how they express what is and isn't important. My students are very excited and happy to please me. They want to do well and act decent for the most part. They know right from wrong under my watchful eye. But do they practice it on their own? Do they internalize the feeling, reaction, hurts, joys and pains of others? Do these children care? Children have to be taught ethics everyday.

Through literature families, teachers, and many organizations can give a wealth of meaningful character building opportunities to students that are common to all people, as well as "Embracing the Values that Build Strong Families and Communities." My intent is to teach moral, ethical judgment using quality literature with ethical content. The stories I choose will speak to problems found in all cultures, with answers that children understand and respond to. I want my children to see themselves in these situations. I don't want them to think they are the exception to the rules. They see many negative images of Blacks in the media and in their music.

Our values, ethics and habits must come from what we know, from the heart, from family ties, from grandparents and parents alike. For there are no people like African-Americans who have had to endure many arduous struggles for so long of a time and still continue today. My purpose is to design a curriculum that would help to develop my students' habits and ethical values. My approach is to touch the hearts of my students using a variety of African American and African Literature. By listening to stories, discussing the story and/or producing their own stories to read to their peers, students begin to develop the comfort and ability of sharing their learning as well as the love of reading.

The center of attention is moral literacy and ethical judgment. The Eight Habits will help students distinguish decisions, which are intrinsic. They will learn that many things are presented to them from all walks of life through music, videos and peer pressure. The Habits will allow children to develop a template of values, ethics, and morals to help them to guide their decision-making. The curriculum will encourage children through reading and writing, although this is not the heart of the program. The program will give confidence to children to incorporate characteristics that are essential to our community and themselves.

"The objective should foster moral literacy and ethical judgment by:

1. Helping students develop ethical standards based on multicultural understanding of the human condition and those things, which sustain, nurture, and promote growth of human beings and cultures.
2. Giving reference points for common cultural and ethical choices.

3. Providing an anchor for children in universal virtues common to the world's cultures and traditions' (Heartwood Institute 3)

Through my unit I want to draw upon shared experiences from acts of unselfish kindness that happen within the community and family. I want to give confidence and challenge children to incorporate characteristics that are imperative to the harmony, security, and potential well being of all. To do this we must give a template or reference point, and virtues that are illuminated by the stories of a people that will represent all of humanity. These stories will validate ethical and honest habits and choices that our children can identify with.

Strategies

Each month I intend to integrate a habit and ethics using one of the books listed in the classroom activities section as well as other stories that have a similar theme throughout the month to our reading and writing curriculum. These books will come from black culture from one country or another. I will begin by reading and the discussing the book with the class, and then complete two or more ethics activities and lessons from the Heartwood Ethics Curriculum for Children. Books the children can read and peruse through during independent reading time with the theme for the month will be placed about the classroom in reading and writing centers.

Children will have diaries in which they will write about anything they want. Hopefully I will see these values becoming a part of their daily lives and their thought patterns. They may share these entries with the class if they desire during our fifteen minutes of sharing time after lunch each day.

Students will have daily journals which they will use to write about the values and ethic they have incorporated into their day as well as habits they have discussed with their parents, siblings and/or friends. In these journals I will ask children to write about how they caught someone in the classroom, household or on the street doing something good and to write about it and perhaps share it with the class. These would be called random acts of kindness. The students can also write in their journals about how people's actions and words make them feel. It could be a good or bad feeling. Students might talk about the cause and the effect of a person's actions and how they the student might have done things differently to make the situation better. They may also talk about something they have done badly or good and how they might have changed their actions to make the situation more positive. In their journal students can write about anything that is meaningful to them. The journals should reflect small portions and fragments of their daily lives that they deem important.

We will chart. The class will locate on a world map the places where each story is set. We will use story pins to see where our story journeys take us. This will allow the children to see positive black images worldwide. This will also allow them to identify with a past.

Classroom Activities

Classroom Activity

Cornrows,

Reading Time: 11 minutes
Dependability/Loyalty
U.S.A./Africa-American

Concepts

Dependability/Responsibility

Heritage/Tradition

Faithfulness

Respect

Loyalty

Objective

The student will be able to discuss and define Dependability/Responsibility loyalty, love, faithfulness, and fidelity as they apply to this story.

After the Story

Discussion

1. What was Great-Grammaw really telling in her songs and stories as the braiding was being done: Emphasize the connection between braids, cornrow, stories of families “roots,” ancestor, pride, and traditions.
2. How were traditions brought from Africa and passed down during earliest times?
3. What are symbols or signs of loyalty that the family in this story shows to each other? What are the symbols of loyalty to traditions? To the past?

Interdisciplinary Ideas

Language

1. Choose a poem or story written by Langston Hughes to share.
2. Write a short story or poem about something your grandmother or mother does for you all the time. Tell us how you feel when they do this. Tell us why they do it.
3. Interview your parents about something they do for you daily or weekly. Ask why they do it. Write a poem with a parent sharing your special time.

4. Collect photographs of hairstyles from the African or African American cultures. Make into a collage. Choose one and write a poem about it. Display poems around the collage.

Art

1. Make African ritual dance masks. Write a caption under it describing the mask. Tell what it means.
2. Use soap to make a sculpture.
3. Weave paper strip basket “suku” style.

Activities

1. On the world map, locate the African countries mentioned in the story; Egypt, Senegal, Somalia, Swaziland. Place story pins.
2. Invite a parent to the classroom to demonstrate cornrow braiding or you can do yourself if you know how.
4. Find in the story and list on chart paper symbols of courage, honor, wisdom, love, and strength. Post in a prominent area. (Art sculptures, make, Braided hair.

Vocabulary

ancient
wisdom
sculptured
Ritual
Clan

Classroom Activity

Mufaro’s Beautiful Daughters

Reading time 11 minutes
Love/Brotherhood/High-
Expectations
Zimbabwe

Concepts

Love
Compassion
Respect
Generosity

Justice
Fairness

Objective

The student will be able to define and discuss love, compassion, generosity, justice, and fairness as they apply to this story.

After the Story

Discussion

1. What characteristics best describe Mufaro's daughters: Which qualities would you look for in a friend?

The names of the characters have significance in the story. Nyasha means "mercy", Mufuro means "the happy man" and Manyara means "ashamed". What would you like to be named?

2. Think about Mufaro's love for Manyara. Was she so clever that she was able to hide her faults from him? Are there times when you want to hide things from your family? Why not?

Interdisciplinary Ideas

Writing Activity I

Think about Mufaro's love for Manyara. Was she so clever that she was able to hide her faults from him? Are there times when you want to hide things from your family? Why? Why not?

1. Make a web (see Appendix) Write "why" *the cause* you felt the way you did and "what" happened *the effect*.
2. Use your web and write about a time when you wanted to hide from your family.

Writing Activity II

1. Write a story with animals that talk, like the snake in this story.

Wrap-Up

Writing III

Write a poem and draw a picture that shows your understanding of “love.” Use sentence starters.

Love always...

A time when I felt really loved...

Language

1. Nyasha means “mercy” in the Shona language. Research the meaning of the name. Why did your parents choose that particular name for you? Write a paragraph telling us why and be prepared to share with the class.

Activities

1. Locate Zimbabwe on the world map and place a story pin.
2. Use your web and write about a time when you wanted to hide from your family.
3. The same words can be said in a kind way or an unkind way. Act out parts of the story. Contrasting kind and unkind readings of the same words.
4. Brainstorm kind things to do in school, such as kindness to others, the environment, etc. Have each student write two ideas on separate sheets of paper. Put all ideas in a “Kindness Envelope”. Daily draw out an idea. Carry out the kindness individually or as a group. Evaluate weekly.

Extension

1. Make a list of ways to surprise your family with different ways to say “I love you.” Share your list with them.
2. Make a coupon book for family member(s). Prepare and staple coupons together. Each coupon names a kind act and a person’s name is presented as an act of love.

Vocabulary

folktale
millet
garments

Classroom Activity

Chicken Sunday

Reading time 9 minutes

Respect/High Expect
U.S.A.

Concepts

Respect

Love

Trust

Loyalty

Courage

Objective

The students will be able to define and discuss respect, love, trust, loyalty, and courage as they apply to this story.

After the Story

Discussion

1. What happens on Chicken Sundays? Using the picture of the Sunday dinner, tell what this scene shows about the way the characters feel about each other. What is the relationship between Stewart and Winston and the girl? What clues tell this?
2. What causes the problems in the story? Why do the bigger boys throw eggs at Mr. Kodinskei's door? Talk about the incident. Do the bigger boys think about how their actions hurt Mr. Kodinski? Talk about thinking things through and showing respect.
3. Why does Mr. Kodinski telephone Miss Eula? Is that fair? Is it a caring act? Discuss.
4. What do the children do to show Mr. Kodinske they are responsible?
5. How do you think Miss Eula feels when Mr. Kodinski they are responsible?
6. How does Mr. Kodinski show respect for the children's courage and their devotion to Miss Eula? Talk about "chutzpah" and the tea party. Help student understand Mr. Kodinski chutzpah as a survivor of the Holocaust. (Note the tattoo on his arm.)
7. How does Miss Eula become the girls "gramma"? Talk about your community family. What special people are in your life? Why do we sometimes find others to respect who are outside our immediate family?

Interdisciplinary Ideas

Language

1. List famous black people whom the class respects. Have students read biographies of these people.

Social Studies

1. Find recipes for the food dishes served by Miss Eula, such as hoppin' john and collard green. Try them out in class.

Classroom Activity

1. Locate California, Russia and the Ukraine on the world map and place story pins.
2. List the ways the children, Miss Eula and Mr. Kodinski show respect for each other and illustrate with drawings. Draw pictures to show the meanings of the following concepts moderation, courtesy, honor, and appreciation. Drawings can be stapled in a class album. (Primary)
3. The people in the story are connected by shared experiences and caring despite their racial, religious, and cultural differences. Using a Venn diagram, graphically picture the differences and similarities. Note religions: Baptist, Jewish, and Ukrainian Catholic.
5. Miss Eula lovingly calls the children "baby dears". List the pet names used in your home. Make a nametag for your desk with a pet name someone has given to you. It must be a loving expression. (Primary)

Wrap-Up

1. Write a time when you showed respect by listening to advice from a grandmother, grandfather, or special member of your family. Be prepared to share it with the class.
2. Write three personal goals for showing respect this week. Follow up at the end of the week with a written report beginning with:

I show respect when...

Extension

1. From family members, collect wise sayings such as Miss Eula's "You'll be as flat as a hen's tongue." Share with class.
2. Designate one week at your school or in your classroom as Respect Week. Invite grandparents, adopted grandparents, and older community member to share stories and sayings.

Vocabulary

solemn
ceremony
babushka
hoppin' john
pysanky eggs
chutzpah (hoots' puh)
intricate
Ukrainian

Follow the Drinking Gourd may be a good book to use during Black History month. Many of the topics that I discuss during this month correlate to the topics in the selection.

Classroom Activity

Follow the Drinking Gourd

Reading Time 11 minutes
Courage/ Respect
U.S.A./African American

Concepts

Courage
Respect
Justice
Fairness
Freedom

Objective

The student will be able to define and discuss courage, respect, trust, freedom, fairness, and justice as they apply to this story.

After the Story

Discussion

1. Slavery was legal in the United States at the time of this tale. Describe -----, James, and Peg Leg Joe in terms of courage, justice, respect, and fairness.
2. Why do you think Molly and James did not run away before this? What led them to their decision to "Follow the drinking gourd"?
3. The runaway slaves risked their lives in their search for freedom. Think about the world today. Are there still people who risk their lives for freedom? Discuss.
4. Many of the characters in this story battled against the law. Share your thoughts. Were Molly, James and Peg Leg Joe criminals? What about the

- Quaker? What might have happened to them if they were caught? Why do you think they risked their lives?
5. Are there any laws today that you would like to change? Any that you would like to add? Why?
 6. Many things enslave people today (drugs, poverty, abuse, being mean spirit). Talk about the courage needed to “follow the drinking gourd” to freedom from these problems.

Interdisciplinary Ideas

Music and Writing

1. Locate and learn additional folk songs of the time.
2. Write another verse to “Follow the Drinking Gourd” that tells of the safe arrival in Canada

Classroom Activity

1. Locate the Ohio River on the world map and place story pin.
2. Role-play the ??????. Present it to another class.
3. Improvise the evening of Molly and James’ departure. What would they have said to each other? How did they talk Hattie and her grandson into going with them?
4. Learn the folk song “Follow the Drinking Gourd” and tape record it.

Extension

1. At home, locate the Big Dipper and the North Star in the sky at night. Retell, “Follow the Drinking Gourd” to your family.
2. Pretend you are living in the early 1800’s. Hold a family meeting to discuss whether you would have the courage to be a safe house.
3. Discuss with family and others the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960’s.
4. Visit the Science Center to view the night sky and the summer constellations.

Vocabulary

safe house
Underground Railroad
Quail

Classroom Activity

Honey, I Love

Reading Time: 12 minutes
Love/Brotherhood

Concepts

Love
Compassion
Self-esteem

Objective

The student will be able to define and discuss love, compassion, and self-esteem as they apply to these poems.

After the Story

Discussion

1. Would you like to be a friend of the girl in the book? Why?
2. Talk about what kinds of love are depicted in the poems.
3. How do you know the girl loves herself? Why is it important to love yourself?
4. What things does this girl value?

Interdisciplinary Ideas

Language

1. Write a poem about a relative whom you love. Put in memories, actions and lots of description. You might get started by beginning every line with: "When I think of (relative's name), I think of..."
2. Write a rope rhyme of your own.
3. Make a collection of your favorite poems.
4. Make a book and/or tape of the poems you have written.
5. Write a "When I am by myself" poem. You may begin the same way Eloise Greenfield begins, "When I am by myself and I close my eyes, I'm....."

Classroom Activity

1. Locate the U.S.A. on the world map and place a story pin.
2. Write a "Honey, I Love" poem. Don't try to use rhyme; just write what you love.
3. Fill a large ear outlined with loving words.
4. With one or more classmates, do a choral reading of the poems. Share with the class. You may audio or videotape record your choral reading.
5. Create a collage of favorite people, places, and things entitled "Honey, I Love...." Place your photograph.

Wrap Up

1. What is your favorite poem in this collection? In your journal, explain what you like about it.

2. Write a bio poem about a relative you love:
Line 1: First name (or name you call this person)
Line 2: Three adjectives describing the person
Line 3: Who loves _____, _____, _____?
Line 4: Who likes _____, _____, _____?
Line 5: Who dreams of _____, _____, _____?
Line 6: Who hopes for _____, _____, _____?
Line 7: Who hopes for _____, _____, _____?
Line 8: Last name (or another name you call this person or repeat first line)

Extension

1. Try writing a motion poem with your family. As you ride on the bus or in a car have someone jot down all of the things you see as you ride by. Listen, and put some “noise” words in your poem.
2. With your family, talk about the things that make you happy. Have each member in your family write a list of things that make him/her happy. Put your family lists in a scrapbook with family pictures.

Classroom Activity

Wilma Unlimited

Reading Time: 9 minutes
Courage
Nonfiction
U.S.A.

Concepts

Courage

Hope
Fortitude
Determination

Objective

The student will be able to define and discuss courage, hope, fortitude and determination as they apply to the story.

After the Story

Discussion

1. Do you think *Wilma Unlimited* for this book? Why or why not? What difficulties did Wilma encounter as a young child? What problems did her family face? Where did they find strength?
2. What natural abilities and character traits do you think Wilma possessed? How did these traits help her overcome obstacles in her life? Who encouraged her? How? Who encourages you?
3. How did Wilma cope with being teased and with sadness? Do you think her determination made her strong? Explain.
4. As a child what were her hopes? What actions did she take to make her dreams come true? As an adult, what did she do to help others achieve their goals? Think about what you can do to make use of your own abilities in realizing your dreams or in helping others. Share with the class.

Activity

1. Find Tennessee on the world map and place a story pin.
2. Make copies of pages where Wilma is watching other children going off to school or playing on the playground. Add conversation bubbles to the pictures and write what Wilma might be thinking.
3. Invite someone from the Special Olympics to speak to you class, or research on-line. (Keyword: Special Olympics) Ask about the important roles of volunteers in this organization and its events.

Home Connection

1. Ask family members to tell about a person who has shown courage, fortitude and determination in overcoming obstacles in his or her life. Ask for permission to share with the class.
2. At home, discuss why it is considered more correct to use “disabled” or “physically challenged” in place of crippled.

Journal

1. Reread the Author’s Note at the back of the book. Write about what attributes Wilma displayed in here life before and after she retired from her careers an athlete.
2. Think about how you cope with teasing. Write some strategies that could be used to address this issue. Share with the class.

Vocabulary

fortitude
pneumonia
paralyzed
luxury
exhilarated
triumphant
propel

Classroom Activity

The Day Gogo Went to Vote

Reading Time: 12 minutes

Justice

South Africa

Concepts

Justice

Respect

Citizenship

Objective

The student will be able to define and discuss justice, respect and citizenship as they apply to this story. Students will become aware of freedoms often taken for granted.

After the Story

Discussion

1. In South Africa, people of color were not allowed to vote before 1994. Why not? Often we work for justice (fairness) after we see injustice (unfairness). Discuss the injustices in the story.
2. Why did Gogo's family want her to stay home and not vote? Why did Gogo insist on going to the voting station even when it would be very difficult for her? Talk about the problems that needed to be solved before Gogo could vote.
3. Explain how the ultraviolet machine ensured a fair election.
4. Gogo asked Tembi to accompany her and carry her blue bag when she went to vote. Do you think there are any other reasons she wanted Tembi to be there? Why was Gogo's picture in the newspaper? The newspaper caption said, "The past and the future: Hundred-year-old voter Mrs. M. Mokoena accompanied by six-year-old great-granddaughter, Tembi."
5. Who votes in our country? Has it always been this way? For what offices do they vote? Why is voting important for our democracy?

Interdisciplinary Ideas

Language Arts

1. Bring a family photograph to class that might be titled "Past and Future." Write about a time you shared with the people in the picture.

Arts

1. Imagine yourself at age 100. Make a self-portrait of what you might look like. Under your drawing write your name and the date.
2. Use books showing South African landscapes. Sketch a scene.
3. Sketch Gogo's face.
4. Sketch your Grandmother's face.

Math

1. Calculate how many times you will vote for Present if you live to 100 years old.
2. Determine when you will first be able to vote. Find out if it is the year of a presidential election.

Activity

1. Locate South Africa on the world map and place a story pin.
2. Design a voting activity where children will experience unfairness and discrimination. For example, vote on Friday's treat, destination for a field trip, class read-a-loud book, mascot or the next class party treats. Just before the vote, exclude certain students, such as anyone wearing red. After voting is completed, discuss what happened, how students felt and the unfairness (injustice) of the activity. Compare this to the situation in the story. Take a new vote with everyone participating.
3. Invite an election official or worker to talk to your class about how elections are conducted in your community, or visit a voting station. Inspect a sample ballot.

Journal

1. Write a response to the story telling what the young girl learned from her grandmother. Then write about something a grandparent or other older person has done for you.
2. List some character traits Gogo possesses. You may include the attributes or other ethical attributes or other ethical attributes. Give examples or explanations to support your statements.

Home Connection

1. Ask an adult at home to show you where he or she goes to vote.
2. Ask a grown-up at home to tell you about the most memorable Election Day he/she can remember.
3. On the first page of the book the author writes, "This is a tribute to grandparents and great-grandparents who struggled their entire lives for the right to vote." Ask about the struggles of your grandparents and great-grandparents. With permission share these stories with your class. (Heartwood)

Vocabulary

township
pensions office
political parties
ultraviolet

Annotated Bibliography/Resources

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Student and Teacher Readings

Brown, Little. *The Day Gogo Went to Vote*. New York: Little Brown, 1996.
A milestone in South African history comes alive through a child's eyes as her great-grandmother votes for the first time. Democratic government elections were open to black South Africans for the first time in April 1994. Justice exemplified in the right to vote is dramatically presented this compelling story. Sharon Wilson's rich pastels present authentic images of culture, landscape and people.

Camille Yarbrough, Camille. *Cornrows*. New York: Coward- McCann, 1979.
This rhythmic story weaves a spell as Man's and Great Grammaw's fingers weave the cornrow design. The cornrow patters reflect the strength and richness of the African heritage with dignity and respect, as the illustrations transport us to another time and place.

Greenfield, Eloise. *Honey, I Love*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1978.
Eloise Greenfield's gentle poems envision everyday things through the loving eyes of a child and are spoken from "the heart of a child." Portraits in black and white along with childlike drawings elicit memories and personal identification with feelings expressed in each poem. Remembering helps love to grow.

Knopf, Alfred. *Follow the Drinking Gourd*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc, 1988.

With this inspiring tale of slavery and the Underground Railroad, the reader follows a group of runaway slaves north to Canada-and to freedom. The bold American folk-style illustrations capture the courage and emotions of this historic journey.

Krull, Kathleen. *Wilma Unlimited*. San Diego: Voyager Books, 1996.

As a young child stricken with polio, Wilma Rudolph struggles with disappointment, pain and hardship. Instead of giving up, she faces adversity with fortitude. She later becomes one of the world's fastest women athletes, winning three gold medals in the 1960 Olympics. Artist David Diaz enhances this inspirational story with bold illustrations depicting Rudolph's determination, speed and triumph.

Polaco, Patricia. *Chicken Sundays*. New York: Philomel Books, 1992.

In this gentle, true-life story, the author skillfully weaves the themes of respect, trust, and love. Three cultures are explored, as African American, Ukrainian, and Jewish traditions are interwoven. Three children are mistakenly accused of an act of vandalism. As they attempt to prove their innocence, trust and respect are built and a through encouragement, friendships are born.

Step toe, John. *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters*. New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1987.

Inspired by an African folktale, this story tells of a father's unconditional love for his two daughters, one bad-tempered and one kind and sweet, which go before the king who is choosing a wife. Step toe's powerful illustrations portray the culture and characters with warmth and vision.

Appendices/Standards

Appendix A

Content Standards for the Pittsburgh Public Schools

Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening

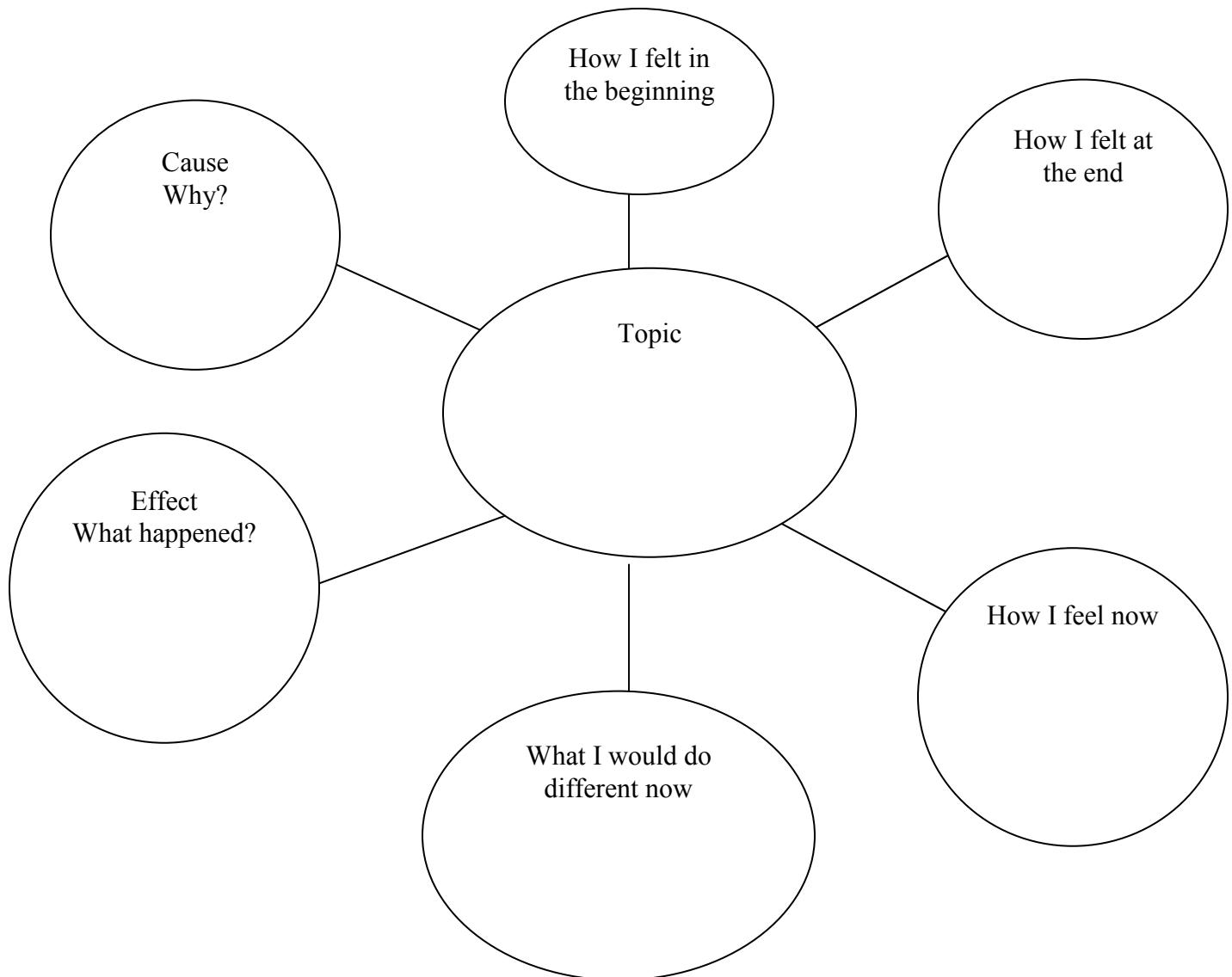
1. All students use effective research and information management skills, including primary and secondary sources of information with traditional and emerging library technologies.
2. All students read and use a variety of methods to make various kinds of complex texts.
3. All students respond orally and in writing to information and ideas gained by reading narrative and informational texts and use the information and ideas to make decisions and solve problems.
4. All students write for a variety of purposes, including to narrate, to inform and persuade, in all subject.
5. All students analyze and make critical judgments about all forms of communication, separating fact from opinion, recognizing propaganda stereotypes and statements of bias, recognizing propaganda, stereotypes and statements of bias, recognizing inconsistencies and judging the validity of evidence.
6. All students exchange information orally, including understanding and giving spoken instructions, asking and answering questions appropriately, and promoting effective group communications.
7. All students listen to and understand complex oral messages and identify their purpose, structure and use.
8. All students compose and make oral presentations for each academic area of study that are designed to persuade, inform or describe.
9. All students communicate appropriately in all situations.
10. All students communicate appropriately in business, work and other applied situations.

Appendix C

Writing activity I

Think about Mufaro's love for Manyara. Was she so clever that she was able to hide her faults from him? Are there times when you want to hide things from your family? Why? Why not?

1. Make a web. Write "why", *the cause* you felt the way you did and "what" happened *the effect*.



2. Use your web and write about a time when you wanted to hide from your family.

