“Prejudice is a burden that confuses the past, threatens the future, and renders the present inaccessible” (Maya Angelou).
A WHITE TEACHER’S USE OF DRAMA IN CLASSROOM INQUIRY THAT
EXPLORED ISSUES OF PREJUDICE AND RACISM

A Thesis Presented in Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts
In the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

Lisa Renee Bauman, B.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
2003

Master’s Examination Committee:

Dr. Brian Edmiston, Adviser

Dr. Patricia E. Enciso

Approved by

[Signature]

Adviser

College of Education
ABSTRACT

Facing issues of racism and prejudice in today's society, and in my classroom, is not an easy task. The suburban middle school at which I teach consists of a majority of European-American students, with one or two each African-American, Asian, Hispanic, and Middle Eastern students per class. Racial concerns arise each year. Through a yearly unit over the United States Civil War and the novel *With Every Drop of Blood*, this study hoped to address some of these issues of racism. I used drama in an inquiry-based structure, along with the reading of the novel and discussion to confront racism both past and present.

Using drama strategies such as tableau, teacher-in-role, and student scenes, we entered the world of the novel and then transferred concepts and concerns into today's society. Evaluating student reaction was quantitative, and this paper records observations, student writing, and student responses in reaction to the issues.

Prejudice and racism were discussed and evaluated in an historical and a contemporary context. Students were asked to respond both in discussion and in writing to the examples and scenarios created. I learned a great deal about how to encourage the students that I teach to think more deeply about controversial issues, and how I can better manage the concerns in the classroom regarding race and prejudice.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to my OSU advisor and mentor, Dr. Brian Edmiston, for his guidance from my beginning drama class years ago to today. I wouldn’t be on this journey if it were not for him. Thank you to Lucila Rudge who helped me plan this unit and carefully observed and gave feedback along the way. Thank you to Nina Gilbert and Deb Belcastro, who struggled through their theses alongside me. Thank you to my wonderful husband, Jim, for his care and support and for tolerating my poor housekeeping until I was finished with this work. Thanks Tod, Cathy, and Carrie for special help and editing. Thanks to my Bible study friends for your prayers and encouragement. Thank you, perhaps most of all, to my 2003 eighth-grade class. Thanks for being the subjects of this study, for participating and commenting freely and honestly throughout, and for challenging me to become the better teacher I am today after our experiences together last year.
VITA

August 24, 1969 ...................................................... Born - Adak, Alaska

1991 ................................................................. B.A., Otterbein College

Majors: English, Dance; Minors: Education, Equine Science

Certifications: English & Dance, 7-12; Reading, K-12

1992-1995 .............................................................. Substitute Teacher

Columbus, Dublin, Delaware, Hilliard, Westerville

1992-1994 .............................................................. Dance Instructor, Dance Synergy

1994-1996, 2002-3 .................................................. Riding Instructor Otterbein College

1995-present ........................................................ 8th grade English Teacher

Dublin, Ohio

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field – Education

Drama, Language, Literature, and Reading
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vita</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama &amp; Inquiry: “Drama’s Better than Quizzes”</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controversy: Should I ‘Go There’?</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does Racism exist in Present Day?: “In Ohio?!”</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stereotypes, Prejudice, Racism: Transformation?</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion: Where I’ve Come/What Next</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendices:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A: Parent Permission Letter</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B: Class Magazine Assignment</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix C: Letter from Parent</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix D: Suggestions for Change</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 1</td>
<td>Class Cultural Makeup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2</td>
<td>Pseudonyms of Students/Ethnicity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

Maya Angelou stated that, "Prejudice is a burden that confuses the past, threatens the future, and renders the present inaccessible" (www.quoteworld.org). Racism and prejudice are burdens which a teacher, like myself, must address in the public school classroom. I am concerned when racial conflict occurs right in the hallways near my classroom and when I look at the racial conflict still intrinsic in so much of today's society. If I am truly shaping the future by working with children, I must allow and encourage them to explore the historical and contemporary issues related to racial tensions and encourage them to work to change the prejudice around them.

My parents met in the military and I grew up on Naval bases. The military has been integrated for over fifty years and is one of the most diverse institutions in U.S. society. Everyone lives together in the same type of housing regardless of race and shops at the same stores. I grew up with very few prejudicial thoughts or beliefs of which I was aware. I knew racism existed, but it never seemed to exist around me.

In this paper I use the terms racism and prejudice. Though they are often used interchangeably, they do have different connotations, and I will define them as follows for use in this paper. Paul Kivel writes, "Racism is based on the concept of whiteness...separating those who are entitled to have certain privileges from those whose exploitation and vulnerability to violence is justified by their not being white" (17). Kivel bases his definition on a concept of whiteness, although I believe it could extend to
a concept of blackness, for example, or of any other concept of color. Racism is based on skin color or racial background only. Prejudice is a slightly broader term, and can include feeling superior to, or a dislike for, any group of people who are different from oneself. Prejudice can include racism, but also classism, sexism, and age-ism, for example.

About six years ago, I discovered I was, in fact, prejudiced. I had been spending a great deal of time in Fremont, Ohio, while dating a man who took a job there. After some time there, I was horrified to realize that I felt superior to the farmers and factory workers who populated the town and the church. I mentally corrected their grammar and often dismissed what they said because they were “just uneducated”. I felt bored in the company of the people there. It was one Sunday afternoon that I was talking about horses with a woman from church that I realized I was saying to myself that she really didn’t know very much. I wondered why I was wasting my time talking to her. It shook me to realize that this is what prejudice feels like. I felt superior to these people because of my education and perceived social status, but that’s not the only reason humans sometimes feel superior to one another. This is what whites have felt about blacks for centuries in this country. I’d never felt that way about a person of another color but suddenly I realized how feelings of superiority does change one’s perspective of another person. I vowed to overcome it and change my thinking, and that experience continues to challenge me to accept diversity of all kinds and communicate that lesson to others, especially my eighth-grade students.

I teach eighth-grade English at a middle school in suburban Ohio. The middle school where I teach is organized around a middle school concept, in which a group of
core teachers make up a team. A team consists of a math teacher, science teacher, social studies teacher, and an English teacher, all of whom share the same ninety-some students. Parent conferences and meetings are held as a team. We work closely together as a whole in planning and discipline.

One interdisciplinary unit covered in the eighth-grade curriculum is The United States Civil War. There is a great deal of historical fiction written about the Civil War that addresses the issues in a reader-friendly fashion. I have used different novels in conjunction with the social studies teacher’s unit about the Civil War for years. Previously, I used the novel *Across Five Aprils*, by Irene Hunt, but two years ago we decided to change the novel if we could find one written at a lower reading level with higher interest. I found *With Every Drop of Blood*, by James Lincoln Collier and Christopher Collier, and it was approved and purchased by our building principal. The book is about a white teenaged Southern boy whose father dies from injuries sustained in battle. He decides to help the Confederate army with his wagon and mules and deliver supplies to Richmond. Along the way they are ambushed by Northern soldiers, and Johnny is captured by Cush, a black Yankee soldier. Johnny’s first reaction is distaste and anger, both at being captured and because this soldier is black. He expresses his dismay that the Yankees put a black soldier in a position of power over white prisoners. Eventually, he agrees to teach Cush to read in exchange for food, but he avoids the task. As they talk, reluctantly at first and then with greater interest in each other’s lives, they start to become friends. They save each other’s lives and discuss, at the end of the book, how they did not expect to become friends and how society will not yet be able to accept their friendship.
I love the themes in the book, including friendship, the importance of being able to read, and appreciating another person despite differences. Issues of race and prejudice are evident throughout the book in the context of the world of the Civil War and through the unlikely friendship of the two main characters. The reader reads the thoughts of the main character, Johnny, and hears a clear anti-racist lesson when the main character realizes the error of his ways and befriends the ex-slave. The outspoken racist character, Jeb, dies in chapter seven, closing that issue for the reader fairly early. Additionally, the book examines the causes of the Civil War from multiple perspectives, which is helpful for the social studies teacher.

The Ohio teens who I have taught rarely understand why the South fought in the Civil War. It is too easy for Northern teens to assume that all white Southerners were just racist and fought the Civil War because they did not like black people. Many white students figure that “we Northerners” are the good guys, the Civil War is all over, and that is the end of the story. Perhaps students do not think about today’s society in the middle of the unit or perhaps they just do not want to admit there is still racism today, but the reality is that racism and prejudice exist today and should be confronted. When an issue like racism is only viewed as historical, it’s easy to ignore.

Last year, the students in my class enjoyed reading With Every Drop of Blood but I was not sure they really connected with the characters or internalized the lessons about the issues in the novel. This year I wanted to integrate inquiry and drama into the Civil War unit.

Inquiry in the classroom can be defined as approaching curriculum as problem-based and encouraging students to “research inquiry questions of personal worth” (Beach
and Myers vii). Researching and studying issues and problems that are meaningful to students will involve them, stimulate their interest, and cause them to learn on a deeper level than some teaching methods can. Drama and inquiry work well together in the classroom, allowing students to role-play and interact in a different world and to answer their inquiry questions by doing so.

Drama in the classroom is not necessarily theatre; in other words, written scripts, costuming, and staging is not required in classroom drama. It is exploring and interacting with another world, the world of a novel or the world of an historical event. Drama involves imagination, particularly within the world of a piece of literature. Acting on this social imagination makes the world of a novel come alive for students. “Drama is a cognitive tool that concretizes the abstract, making it sensory and available” (Wilhelm and Edmiston 31). Inquiry and drama work together so that when questions are raised, all members of the classroom can explore in a role the possible answers to the questions.

Some drama strategies referred to in this paper include tableau, teacher-in-role, and a short sketch or scene. Tableau is a frozen picture, in which students become a character in a scene but are frozen in time, not moving or speaking. Tableau attempts to freeze an important moment, “photographing” a main idea or concept, and can be more effective than the performance of a longer scene. At times thought-track is used with tableau, and students are asked to speak the thought of the character at that frozen moment. They attempt to synthesize in a few words the important emotions of the scene. Teacher-in-role refers to times when the teacher may step into a role or character in order to facilitate drama. Often the teacher uses a costume, prop, or vocal inflection to indicate being “in role” and no longer the teacher. Students, then, are able to differentiate the
views or reactions of the character from their teacher. The last strategy for definition is a short scene or sketch, which is just a mini-performance of a portion of a reading or event. Students plan this out prior to performing it for the class and take on characters and may have props for this activity. Many more drama strategies exist for use in the classroom, but these are the three that I used as a focus for this study.

My students were not completely unfamiliar with the use of drama in the classroom, as I used some dramatic activities previously in the year, and the social studies teacher on my team frequently used drama in his classroom. One obstacle that had to be overcome was that the students typically saw drama in the classroom as a fun alternative to worksheets or reading out loud from the text. It took them a little while to think about relating the drama work to themselves and to their lives.

Any study of the Civil War would likely raise questions of racism. Because of the demographic of my classes, I was concerned that some of the issues in the novel might be disturbing to some students. The middle school where I teach has the most cultural diversity of the four middle schools in the district. Racial incidents occasionally occur in the building. For example, this year a fight broke out between two students, one Caucasian and one Hispanic, over a racial comment, and another student’s schedule was changed to get him away from an African-American he offended. My class sizes range from twelve to twenty-two students. Table 1, following, identifies the cultural makeup of my five classes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Period</th>
<th>Total Students</th>
<th>Caucasian</th>
<th>African-American</th>
<th>Asian-American</th>
<th>Middle Eastern</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 Russian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 Native-American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 Russian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 Russian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1: Class Cultural Makeup**

Pseudonyms of specific students referred to or quoted in the body of this paper are identified in the order they appear in the chart below (Table 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym of student</th>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Class Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yukio</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emma</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ryan</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sumira</td>
<td>Middle-Eastern</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madison</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>Burmese-American</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ayisha</td>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chloe</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anja</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mia</td>
<td>Chinese-American</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natasha</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leah</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheniqua</td>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brittany</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brandon</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2: Pseudonyms of Students/Ethnicity**

Incorporating lessons about diversity and acceptance is important both because of the cultural diversity in our building and because most of the rest of the district is
homogeneously Caucasian. When my students attend high school in the district, there will be a much smaller ratio of people of color. Our district central office deems multicultural education as important. This is exemplified by a Diversity Day in the building, a multicultural liaison at Central Office who provides speakers, and multicultural professional development classes for teachers. Despite these attempts to further diversity awareness, most of our students tolerate and accept each other but perhaps are not moving into a higher level of acceptance and awareness.

Sonia Nieto, multicultural theorist and textbook author, describes four levels of multicultural education in *Language, Culture, and Teaching*:

“The four levels to be considered are: *tolerance, acceptance, respect,* and finally, *affirmation, solidarity, and critique.* ...To *tolerate* differences means that they are endured, not necessarily embraced. ...*Acceptance* is the next level of supporting diversity. It implies that differences are acknowledged and their importance is neither denied nor belittled” (264).

When we have Diversity Day at our school, we are acknowledging the differences and accepting them. However, Nieto wants us to go beyond that once a year experience to the next levels, beginning with respect, that must be integrated into our daily living.

“*Respect* is the next level of multicultural education support. It implies admiration and high esteem for diversity. When differences are respected, they are used as the basis for much of what goes on in schools” (Nieto 266). Special speakers and professional development can move us toward respect.

“*Affirmation, solidarity, and critique* is based on the premise that the most powerful learning results when students work and struggle with one another, even if it is sometimes difficult and challenging. It begins with the assumption that the many differences that students and their families represent are embraced and accepted as legitimate vehicles for learning, and that these are then extended. What makes this level different from the others is that conflict is not avoided, but rather accepted as an inevitable part of learning. Because multicultural education
at this level is concerned with equity and social justice, and because the basic
values of different groups are often diametrically opposed, conflict is bound to
occur" (269).

Nieto would label our Diversity Day as the acceptance level, and she would likely take
issue with the fact that we show our acceptance in that way only once a year. I assume
that most of our staff and teachers do respect differences and affirm others, but it is not
always visible in our schools. Too many of our policies and strategies are still far back in
"monoculturalism", Nieto’s term for what most people call “color-blindness”. Assuming
that all of us are human under the skin is partly accurate and admirable, but it denies the
different experiences of those of color. Affirming and critiquing these differences is
Nieto’s goal for us.

There is no substitute for spending time in class discussing and critiquing
important issues of prejudice and racism. Julie Landsman, in her autobiographical A
White Teacher Talks about Race, stated that:

"We who are white do not want to talk about our white skin or explore what
‘whiteness’ has to do with all that is going on in our own lives and in the lives of
our students. Now, I believe, more than ever, it is time to talk. It is time to let our
children talk and our colleagues talk. It is time to study our memories: to explore
what it was in our childhood that formed our racial definitions, our prejudices”
(Landsman xii).

As much as I feel a tendency to deny the truth of what Landsman has to say, I realize that
I resist talking about being white and it does bother me to do anything but pretend to be
color-blind and live quietly in Nieto’s acceptance level. As a result of searching for ways
to break out of this complacency, I used the unit over the Civil War as a time to talk.

This thesis evaluates and analyzes the Civil War unit of Spring 2003 in my
eighth-grade classroom. It is my story, of using drama with inquiry in my classroom and
in learning to teach multiculturally through this unit. The central question I explored was this: what happens if I use drama in the classroom to explore racial issues and tensions? More specifically, I wondered if I could encourage my students beyond tolerance and acceptance by examining the racism of the Civil War and comparing and contrasting it to the prejudices of today.

In the following summary of the lessons in the unit, I have boldfaced some events that I will discuss in detail later. I did not plan this unit alone. A fellow graduate student, Lucila Rudge, began this unit about the Civil War with me. She helped me plan the activities and came to my classroom to observe the students. The unit was two weeks in duration, involving the reading of the novel *With Every Drop of Blood*, dramatic and other activities and a culminating project. Lucila was invaluable in the planning stages. I took risks that I might not have taken with her assistance and encouragement. She was able to help me see more possibilities and to allow for more discussion and analysis with the students than I would have normally scheduled in my always-time-conscious lesson planning. I have included anonymous student quotations and reactions to the drama activities. These were taken, with permission (see Appendix A), from their writing and/or a follow-up interview which I conducted with some students after school was over.

The original idea about integrating drama into the unit over the Civil War involved more thought about the concept of "war," particularly with the events of the 2002-3 "War on Terror," and the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Having recently finished a unit over World War II including some history of the war, reading *The Diary of Anne Frank* and *Night*, the students knew about the atrocities of war and seemed engaged by
the study. We had just returned from a trip to Washington, DC and Gettysburg, where the
students heard all about the Battle of Gettysburg, saw many monuments relevant to the
wars the U.S. has been involved with, and I expected that the students would have some
background knowledge about war. Much of the discussion in the unit began to center
more around the racial issues in the novel and some discussion of prejudice and
stereotypes.

Landsman’s words resonated with me when she wrote,

“So often, we mouth the words ‘celebrating diversity, celebrating our
differences,’ almost flippantly. It is easy to pay lip service to such words as
diversity, difference, and culture. This is because we tend to stop on the surface
of things. ... Celebrating difference can cause tension and complications for both
white people and people of color. We are often bothered by difference, by a
language we cannot understand, by a way of dressing that is not usual to us – a
veil, perhaps, or a yarmulke – a way of worshipping, a place of worship different
from our own. And we do not talk about it because it may be tense,
uncomfortable” (Landsman 147).

I have felt this tension and I still do not always know what to say or how to address the
issue.

In beginning the unit, I did not set out to examine or attack the issue of racism, to
be controversial, or even to transform my students. I started out thinking the concept of
war was a relevant one that could relate history to present day. During the drama, one
activity triggered a change in focus to racism and prejudice. In order to be flexible and
attempt to do some true inquiry with the students, lesson plans developed as we went
along.

What follows is a summary of the Civil War unit:

Day 1: I led a brainstorm activity where I had the words “freedom” and “war” in the
center of a web diagram on chart paper. Students called out ideas or thoughts that
connected with one or the other concept. Lucila and I had copied pictures of events of the Civil War and had them on the floor in the middle of the room. I handed out post-it notes and instructed the students to look at the pictures and write questions or comments on the post-it notes and attach them to the pictures.

Day 2: Students were invited to revisit the pictures, framed as journalists, and encouraged to add more questions and add a caption – what would they print under the picture in a newspaper at the time. They paired up and discussed the captions that they wrote on day one. I asked them to consider if they were journalists, writing about the pictures, whom in the photo might they want to interview to find out more information? What might they ask that person? At the end of day two, the copies of the novel *With Every Drop of Blood* were handed out to every student and their homework was to read the first two chapters.

Day 3: In order to check for understanding of the first two chapters, we had students get into groups of three or so and create a tableau based on an event in the story from the first two chapters. They were also given a strip of paper on which to write a headline that might appear in the newspaper over the picture they were going to create. Tableaux were performed for the class and discussed. We also added “thought track” to the tableaux, where I tapped each student in the picture and he said the thoughts the character might have been thinking at that moment. After that, remembering their interview questions from the day before, students were asked if they would like to interview that person in the picture and if they would like it to be me. The students were able to interview a character with me-in-role as a person from the pictures.
Day 4: Students wrote a journal entry discussing the concept of “promise.” I used this journal topic because the main character makes a promise to his father on his father’s deathbed, and promptly breaks it for what he thinks is the greater good. Students got into three groups in order to plan and perform a short sketch illustrating for the class “What is the most important thing to Ma/Pa/Johnny?” Each group got a main character and planned this value sketch. It was to be a mime, with a narrator off-camera reading a prepared statement explaining what is most important to this character and why this scene illustrates it.

Day 5: We finished the sketches in some classes where all groups did not have time to go. After that, we did a different sort of thought track with molding. Molding involves positioning the character’s body and face to look like what the character should. I had three volunteers be Ma, Pa, and Johnny and stand in the middle of the room. I gave them the situation (Johnny’s broken promise) and had them stand or react as their character might. After observing, other students came up and molded them and said their thoughts. At the end of class, we watched the video of the scenes from Day 4 and discussed them briefly. I announced the class magazine assignment (Appendix B).

Day 6: The students took a quiz over the first half of the novel. We discussed the class magazine further, I answered questions, and we voted for two class editors.
Day 7-8: The students received highlighters and copied pages out of the book. Students read through a page in pairs and highlighted Johnny’s stereotypes or preconceptions about blacks. They shared them with the class. We discussed some of the things that Johnny thought about slaves, and asked the question “Where might he have gotten these ideas?” We covered the fact that his family did not own slaves, so he would not decide these things on his own. Students stood at their chairs if they could think of a place or situation where Johnny might have heard these racist things. We shared those aloud and grouped up to create a short scene illustrating those situations. Dr. Brian Edmiston was in class during these scenes to facilitate. The students performed these scenes for the class, and then were asked how it could relate to today. How would it be different or the same in today’s society? They reenacted the scene in some cases, transferring it into today’s circumstances. Discussion ensued about stereotypes (not just racism, but all sorts of stereotypes that teens see or deal with today). We listed stereotypes in discussion and revisited the scenes to ask “Could this scene happen today?” How would it be different or the same?

Day 9-10: We discussed language, both of the world of the novel and of today, as related to racial issues. We had some wrap-up discussion over “freedom” connected with Johnny & Cush. Some time in class was given to work on magazine articles or to take the test over the novel. Each class was given the choice to take the test on Day 9 or 10, and turn in the magazine articles on Day 9 or 10, so they were all on a slightly different time table.
In planning this inquiry-based unit, a key resource was Beach and Myers’ *Inquiry-based English Instruction*. In using drama, a key resource was Wilhelm and Edmiston’s *Imagining to Learn*. Dr. Edmiston himself was also a resource as I worked through this unit during a class with him.

Beach and Myers describe a model of inquiry for Social Worlds curriculum. Inquiry, as discussed in the book’s introduction, is defined as a research process where students study and search out answers to their questions in a problem-based curriculum. “Social worlds,” as defined by Beach and Myers, are those different contexts in which people locate themselves. Most people live in multiple social worlds: a family world, a job world, a social group’s world, and so on. Understanding the cultural practices in each world takes time and often takes instruction. Beach and Myers’ book explicates six inquiry strategies and their interrelation including the following six steps: Immersing, Identifying, Contextualizing, Representing, Critiquing, and Transforming (17-19).

Immersing, the first strategy, is “entering into the activities of a social world, experiencing the social world as a participant, or observing a social world” (17). Drama works with this strategy as the students and teachers can imagine the activities of a social world that is not their own and experience it, at least in a way in a scene or activity. Vivian Paley, in her book *White Teacher*, would agree that immersing into the world of another is the first step, “It is often hard to learn from people who are just like you. Too
much is taken for granted. Homogeneity is fine in a bottle of milk, but in the classroom it diminishes the curiosity that ignites discovery” (56). This spoke to me. I have often said how much I like that my building, rare among schools in my district, is culturally diverse. I have at least one African-American in each class, at least one Asian and Middle Eastern child in each class and I have quite small classes.

Yet, why do I like having that diversity if I do not address it and make use of it? I like to look out at a variety of faces, but I had not made that step into realizing that my students deserve to know how lucky they are to have each other as resources as well.

Again, we have our yearly “Diversity Day” in which we have special speakers, special foods, and so on. However, James Banks, multicultural theorist, takes issue with this “holidays and heroes” approach and advocates a deeper study of culture.

“The United States is made up of many different racial, ethnic, religious, language, and cultural groups. In the year 2000, people of color, such as African-Americans, Latinos, and Asian Americans, made up 28 percent of the US population. These groups are projected to make up 48 percent of the US population by 2050. ... A curriculum that focuses on the experiences of mainstream American and largely ignores the experiences, cultures, and histories of other ethnic, racial, cultural, language and religious groups has negative consequences for both mainstream U.S. students and students of color” (Banks 225).

I want my students to all feel included and important. They ought to be encouraged to look to each other to learn and grow together.

Identifying, the second strategy, is “defining concerns, issues, and dilemmas that arise in a social world, or from conflict across multiple social worlds” (Beach & Myers 17). Students can identify with those in other social worlds only when they care enough to consider the issues involved in that other world. Drama helps students identify issues when they are acting the part of another in a world they are not familiar with and they
realize a concern or issue that affects that character. Being in a more culturally diverse community, such as our school and classroom, enables students to identify concerns and issues of another person's world more readily. Lisa Delpit, an African-American teacher and scholar who wrote Other People's Children, agrees, "Rather than think of these diverse students as problems, we can view them instead as resources who can help all of us learn what it feels like to move between cultures and language varieties, and thus perhaps better learn how to become citizens of the global community." (69). Identifying issues should relate to the students in the classroom community and the groups most affected historically.

"It is neither possible nor desirable to view every issue, concept, event, or problem from the point of view of every U.S. ethnic group. Rather, the goal should be to enable students to view concepts and issues from more than one perspective and from the point of view of the cultural, ethnic, and racial groups that were the most active participants in, or were most cogently influenced by the event, issue, or concept being studied" (Banks 234).

In the case of the Civil War unit, the goal for the students should be to see slavery from white and black perspectives and to critique it in its historical context but also from today’s perspective.

Contextualizing, the third strategy, is "explaining how the activities, symbols, and texts used in one or more social worlds produce the components of a social world – identities, roles, relationships, expectations, norms, beliefs, and values" (Beach & Myers 18). Teenagers are not often known for their verbal skills, but their writing can prove invaluable in checking their inquiry into a social world at this level. Writing from multiple perspectives is an important skill to develop. In drama, taking on the role of another and writing 'in character' can assist with the process of seeing the world from
other perspectives. "We must understand that our view of the world is but one of many, that others see things in other ways" (Delpit 133). Contextualizing involves appreciating others’ views of the world and understanding why their view might be different from my own.

A teacher Paley knew told a student’s mom that she was color-blind... "What rot," said Mrs. Hawkins. "My children are black. They don’t look like your children. They know they’re black, and we want it recognized. It’s a positive difference, an interesting difference, and a comfortable natural difference. At least it could be so, if you teachers learned to value differences more. What you value, you talk about" (Paley 12). This woman’s comment convicted me. I hope that the students that I teach do know what I value because of what I talk about in and out of the classroom.

I used to think I did not see color. After life in the military and when being "color-blind" was the norm for whites, I was sure that color did not matter to me. Nieto would classify that as "monoculturalism" and encourage me to begin to see differences and appreciate them. I no longer feel that I am colorblind. I see color, including my own whiteness. In addition, I am capable of critiquing whiteness and appreciating a variety of faces in my classroom, as I discussed in the introduction.

Recently during some down time in my class, I asked a small group of girls what I should do with my hair, because I was "having a bad hair day." They giggled at the question and offered a few solutions. I commented that some days I wished I could shave my head because it would be easier. One girl said I could, but I said, "No, white women have ugly heads; they shouldn’t shave their heads." Ayisha looked at me and said, "You’re dissin’ your own people!" I said, "Well, it’s true isn’t it? Look at Sinead
O'Connor! Yikes.” They all laughed. I believe Delpit and Landsman would approve of my ability to critique whiteness and, albeit in humor, express my appreciation for difference.

Representing, the fourth strategy, involves “using symbolic tools to create a text that represents a lived social world or responds to a represented social world” (Beach & Myers 18). Drama is especially useful at this level, where students can safely represent the social world of another culture, group, or time period. When studying historical topics, representing can be difficult. Without the benefit of drama, the students just have to imagine what life was like during that time period. With little background knowledge and preparation time, establishing what life was like can be challenging. Using drama enables students to view others’ ideas about the past. “We did not just study history – the students’ (and the teachers’) questions about the past were examined and explored in rich integrated contexts that connected the past with the present” (Wilhelm & Edmiston 3).

To answer a question about the past, recreating a scene from the past in the classroom is a useful tool for the students. In this age of MTV and visual over-stimulation, I have found drama to be exceptionally helpful in answering students’ questions about history. When students can see and act out history, they understand it better than when merely reading it.

Critiquing, the fifth strategy discussed, analyzes “how a representation of a social world privileges particular values and beliefs; analyzing how particular literacy practices within a social world promote certain meanings while marginalizing other possibilities” (Beach & Myers 18). Understanding certain belief systems of the past is difficult for
students and they are often uncomfortable discussing topics such as slavery, racism, injustice, and so on. Christine Sleeter, a theorist, comments,

“As a whole, Whites do not talk about White racism. Even those of us involved in multicultural education examine and critique how White racism works far less than we ought. [Whites] are much more likely to discuss cultural differences than racism or Whiteness. If multicultural education is sometimes criticized as skirting around racism, I believe this is a result of Whites’ reluctance to address it rather than people of color’s disregard for it” (70).

I agree with Sleeter, as I know that I am sometimes uncomfortable discussing issues of color. I have caught myself checking the room or thinking twice before even sharing the topic of this thesis or bringing up current events that I worry might offend someone of color. In the teacher’s lounge, we chat and complain about everything from our home lives to our health to the students and parents we work with, but issues of color are rarely mentioned. I imagine that no one wants to be interpreted as blaming the color of a child’s skin for his/her behavior.

The last strategy, transforming, “revises one’s meanings for the components of a social world, changing one’s actions and words within a social world to construct more desirable identities, relationships, and values” (Beach & Myers 18). Transformation of students is the ultimate goal, as “Transforming a social world requires participants to interact in new ways...to negotiate the taken-for-granted meanings of common words and actions...and to construct new, alternative representations both in the lived world and about that world” (Beach & Myers 76). After the paradigm shift involved with critiquing, transforming seems to me to be imperative, “...although White students may become traumatized by these discussions, bringing racism out into full view can become a useful pedagogical tool to help them locate themselves and their responsibilities
concerning racism” (Nieto 33). Nieto uses a strong word, “traumatized”, which bothers me because most teachers do not set out to traumatize their students. So I need to be cautious. However, it seems like a key step toward the goal of affirmation and solidarity.

An example of a white student feeling this tension my interview with Brandon after school. Right away he said, “The racial stuff was controversial. It’s not something I want to talk about. It’s uncomfortable, it’s not something we talk about [with friends or family].” A half hour later, he changed his mind. “We should’ve talked about [racism] more and everyone said how they felt. There was lots of tension and class ended, but we should’ve talked more. It might be easier for everyone if it’s out in the open, if they’ve heard how everyone felt.” I shared Brandon’s concern about the tension. There was tension, people were uncomfortable with the topic, and then the bell rang and everyone left. Perhaps on that day, a few students did leave a bit traumatized. The next day I addressed the issues again so that we could open up, admit the tension, and discuss it. At the time, I handled it the best I could. If there were no bells or time constraints, perhaps this issue would not be a problem.

Transforming students has to begin with the teacher’s willingness to admit to her tension and need to open up a discussion about race.

“In colleges and high schools today, most white teachers are hesitant to bring up what stares at us with brown or blue eyes, what is so obvious when we see a coffee-colored, freckled, or dark blue-black hand resting on a white page. ... We white people hide from the fact of skin color difference. ... We are so often afraid we will say the wrong thing, and so we say nothing. We become quiet, defensive, ashamed, or unwilling to respond. We pretend that racial differences do not exist; we are all alike under the skin, aren’t we? Thus, we do not acknowledge the experiences of people of color, precisely because of their skin – black, brown, yellow, or white, dark or light” (Landsman xi).
Admitting my tension and discomfort is likely far more beneficial than staying afraid and quiet. Acknowledging diversity and attempting to understand the experiences of a person of color in society is part of the goal of multicultural education and important for me to discuss in the classroom.

As I evaluated this unit, I focused on a few specific events for further discussion. A few seemingly unrelated events, as follows, reinforced to me the usefulness and success of using drama with inquiry in the classroom.

**Tableau**

When I used tableau on day 3 of this unit, it was primarily to check for understanding as the students began to read the novel. Most student feedback on using tableau was positive. Many said, as one girl did, “I liked this drama way more than quizzes. I think it makes you think a lot more and it extends your imagination.” They also understood that having to decide what the character was thinking forced them to experience the novel more deeply. Yukio said, “Acting a part out and partly becoming the character and thinking as that character would help [us] build up points of view that [we] did not have before.” Emma said, “I enjoyed the activities more than just discussing the book. I liked trying to figure out what the characters from the book because you had to imagine being that person.” Ryan wrote, “I learned more about what life was like back then. I also enjoyed coming to class more than usual.” Sumira wrote, “When we did the still thing it made us tell how the people felt and thought I really thought that the dramas were creative because it made us get more active.” I appreciate the positive feedback,
even if most of it was just a preference for drama over a quiz or worksheet. Tableau was an example of “immersing”, Beach and Myers’ first step in inquiry, as the students “experienced” life in the world of 1864 even if just for a moment.

**Value sketch**

In order to plan a scene illustrating what was valued by a character, the students had to think as if they were that character. For example, one group performed a scene at the dinner table and read Ma’s thoughts about her love for her family and her joy at seeing them all together again. Planning this scene was not easy, and in a few classes it became quite apparent who had read the assigned chapters and who had not. Further, one girl who works hard and gets straight A’s, commented, “I don’t like this, I want to take a test. This is hard!” I told her that was good and she could push herself a little bit by doing something new. Madison said, “Why don’t you just tell us what to do and we’ll do it.” I laughed. I could have researched why some of my “academically-oriented” students resist using drama, yet my “at-risk” students loved it and thrived during this unit.

I can identify with Madison. She thinks she has life under control and she knows the rules. She is an expert at playing the academic game and achieving her goals. She does not want to be pushed outside her comfort zone or to be forced to look deep inside a character. To “become” a character, to contextualize something as controversial as racism, is far more difficult than spitting out the right answers on a test or writing a lovely five-paragraph essay about the evils of slavery: two things Madison would prefer to do in class. Instead, she must think as a character from the Civil War and deal internally with the conflicts and concerns as such.
This short sketch was an attempt at contextualizing, because the students had to abstract what might be important to Ma, Pa, and Johnny. They had to think through their values and beliefs in order to make these judgments. I would evaluate that not all students achieved contextualization as many just pulled a page from the novel and re-enacted it as a weak explanation of what was important to the character. However, for those who did, it was an insight into the life of a character that they otherwise might not have realized. Thomas said, about the activity, “If I was born Johnny, I’d think like him. I guess I’d hate their race, if my dad was shot by a black person.” Considering the beliefs another person might have because of the circumstances in his/her life is an important step in contextualizing and in viewing the world through multiple perspectives.

Class editors

The magazine project was well-received, on the whole, by the students. At first many thought it sounded like too much work, but after some discussion, most students seemed to appreciate it as an alternative assessment. The journalist frame did not always work in class. Perhaps the students did not have enough background knowledge to really think like journalists and their inquiry questions (post-its) and interview questions (with me in role) were generally unimpressive. Perhaps I did not negotiate the role well enough with them or make the task clear enough. I was glad that I had success with most of the elected class editors. For example, in period one, Mary and Ayisha worked well together and pushed the class to do their parts. They spent time together in and out of class planning and drawing the magazine cover. The two girls offered to help the other students during study center on their assigned articles, and both girls turned in their own well-written articles in a timely fashion. In Appendix C is a letter from Mary’s mother,
explaining how Mary previously doubted her writing ability but after working on this project to create a magazine it sparked a serious interest in becoming a journalist. Mary is an organized student, a creative and inquisitive writer, and I am pleased that this project inspired her.

For the two editors in each class, and to a lesser degree for the rest of the class in their framework as journalists, the writing of their articles for the class magazine was a different sort of immersing. The idea was that they would truly see themselves as journalists and write from that sort of perspective and in that manner. Not all students were like Mary, but many students turned in articles that could clearly be in a magazine and were interesting and informative.

Using drama and inquiry in the English classroom can be exciting for the students and the teacher. Tableau as a substitute for a pop quiz is not extending my teaching much, but even that as a first step was encouraging for me. I likely would have stopped with the drama as described if it were not for Lucila and Dr. Edmiston pushing me beyond my comfort zone. Using drama to examine the more difficult parts of the novel and the Civil War would prove to be additionally challenging. In the inquiry model of education, students ask and research questions of personal worth, so as I continued through this unit, I tried to deepen the experience so the students could ask more pertinent questions.
CONTROVERSY: SHOULD I 'GO THERE'?

One event in particular caused some controversy early in the unit. It started out unengaging, but by the end of the day, seemed to make an impact on the students in the last class period. Students early in the day did not talk about the interviews or write about what they learned from the experience, while the students from the later classes did both.

Interview a character

Using the interview strategy was a way to represent a character from the time period (the Civil War) in a safe way. If the students interview the teacher "in role" (acting as if she were the character), then the students are safe to inquire while the teacher is in the spotlight. The students may ask questions of the character and gain factual knowledge as well as some approximated emotional impact of the circumstance of the picture.

Civil War pictures were laid out on the floor and students asked questions about them. In role as journalists, they were invited to think about interviewing someone in the picture to gain more information. The students were able to interview the character of their choice from those pictures. As we went through the day, I was not sure this was a drama strategy I would ever attempt again. The leaders in period one did not seem interested. Mary said, "No, thanks, that doesn't sound interesting." I thought that if I do this "inquiry" thing, then I should respect their wishes. I should have given an example
for them to imagine, a sample of me ‘in role’ as a character in a picture. I probably took the seemingly easy way out, but I had not thought through the possibilities well enough to realize that I needed a strategy to deal with the possible answer of “No, we don’t want to.”

Period two went better. They wanted to interview a soldier who had lost his arms, but their line of questioning was immature. They wanted to know how he took a bath and ate. One boy tossed a pencil near me [the soldier] and asked him to pick it up. After I answered the questions and came out of role, we discussed for a short while how life might have been if you were disabled as that man was. I wondered about their line of questioning and was confused as to how I could have redirected it while remaining in role and not just coming out of role and scolding the boys. We ran out of time for any more interviews in period two, and I noticed that most of the students were not engaged enough to mind the bell ringing.

Period seven has a number of students who love to act, so they wanted to play the characters themselves. Their factual knowledge was thin so most of the questions and answers were equally shallow. One African-American boy played a white soldier in a picture. The boy rattled off some racist comments about why he was fighting for the South. He said, “We’re gonna win and slavery will go all the way to Canada. Slaves should be treated wrongly!” That was ironic, to hear him voice those comments in the character as a white person. I wondered where he might have heard those comments before and how he felt speaking them in character.

Period eight interviewed me in role, but when they asked questions of me as the soldier with no arms, their line of questioning was much like period two. I made a
mistake allowing them to ask questions like whether I ate my meals through a straw. I saw many students giggling and laughing at the situation, not feeling sorry for the character. I felt quite frustrated.

When period nine wanted to interview the same man, Lucila wisely advised me to push the envelope with them, to get angry and make them uncomfortable. So, I did. I got angry at their rude questions and asked them what they thought it felt like to be without arms. They giggled uncomfortably. Another group in period nine wanted to interview the central woman in a picture of a slave family. I answered in ways I knew to be historically accurate, including the selling of “my” children, the “breeding” of slaves, and the living conditions, which horrified some of the students. Their shocked looks told me I was touching nerves. David wanted to interview a white man in a picture who was smiling and pointing to the two black men being hanged. He asked a few pointed questions and I struggled internally whether to continue to push the boundaries and make them uncomfortable. As I debated inside myself for a very long moment, I saw the angry faces of parents wondering why we were talking like this in class; the face of my tired principal wondering why I had to cause a fuss at the end of May, for crying out loud; and Lucila’s face if I wimped out and let the issue slide by on the surface.

I decided that racism was truly the most important issue, and if I was going to take a risk on anything it should be this one, for better or worse. It was at this point that I realized the “war” concept for this unit was not the one to focus on. Racial issues were, and are, far more pertinent and important. So, I said a few racist things, answered his questions, and he ended the interview by saying, “Thanks for your time, you racist.” Well, I thought I would run with that comment a bit, and I continued in character, “Is he
callin' me names?" and I accused the people in the room of being racist deep-down and explained how the Northerners are hypocrites but we Southerners just do what everyone actually believes. It was more extreme than many of the students had ever heard voiced and they were uncomfortable. They began denying any sort of racism and got a bit angry with the character. One boy reminded me, "This is 2003" as if that answered any question about the existence of racism. Further, there were girls in the background saying, "Is that Mrs. Bauman or the guy? Does she think that?"

As soon as I came out of role, I explained that it was really challenging to play all three characters who were so unlike myself. It was a good thing that I had studied and taught the Civil War for years so I had the background knowledge to answer most questions. I reassured them that I definitely do not believe those things I was saying and wanted to allow them to hear what someone from that time period might really think, a character much like a couple of characters in the novel. Certainly the risk of taking on the role of such a racist man was intimidating. Considering the students in the room and the rapport that already existed was important to do to safeguard from difficult accusations.

We had a good discussion about it and later, when I interviewed a couple of students from that class, they said those interviews were the highlight of the unit and really made them think. Chloe said she was "uncomfortable because it was so serious and [David] took it really seriously. It was intense!" David himself discussed the interview, and he said he "was hoping for a legitimate answer – I was expecting to hear that the black people being hanged had actually hurt someone – not a stupid reason like talking to a white woman." He continued, "The interview was interesting because I don't
know anyone who has the viewpoints that person had. It was interesting to see how people could be so ignorant back then. I was upset at him, how could he do all that and smile. It felt better to call [him] a racist.” I’m glad to hear that David doesn’t have friends and family who hold those kind of racist views, but I’m glad as well that he worked at the interview to feel how it felt to talk to someone like this character.

Nearly all of the white students I taught believe that racism doesn’t exist today.

Sleeter stated,

“In general, Whites seem to believe that racism was gone once we eliminated Jim Crow laws, created an ostensibly colorblind legal system, and stopped openly saying negative things about groups of color. We maintain a worldview, however, that continues to uphold our racial privileges. We are willing to critique the psychological impact of slavery on Blacks, but not its impact on ourselves. … Groups of color have hoped that we would genuinely accept them as equals if we appreciated the intellectual sophistication of their cultural creations. Too often, however, our response is to experience ‘other’ cultures as a tourist or colonialist would, and tacitly accept White supremacy” (71).

Sleeter seems surprised that Whites do not want to discuss racism, and chalks it up to Whites still, consciously or unconsciously, wanting to keep the power. I believe, after observing the students that I teach, that the white students do not want to discuss racism because they are quite sure that no one is racist anymore, or at least people do not say they are. They were shocked when specific examples were shared, and as David said, they cannot think of anyone they know who believes that way anymore.

Racism is a difficult topic for teens, even situated in the Civil War, but “Within a caring community in drama it is safe to explore less caring ethical attitudes toward others outside the classroom” (Wilhelm & Edmiston 58). David felt safe enough to express his opinion about the character (“Thanks, you racist”). I try to make my classroom a caring community. I work on classroom environment by interacting individually with students,
by being consistent and fair with the rules, and by establishing a light atmosphere with humor. Students of all colors and backgrounds have told me that they feel like they can be themselves in my room and that I will accept them.

I wonder, though, about the non-White students in the class. Did I make them uncomfortable with my interpretation of the character in the picture? Was Sheniqua, the lone African-American in that class period, safe that day? It is hard to keep the classroom safe for everyone on every day and still deal with tough issues. Nieto allows for tension, but I am not sure I want anyone, of any race or culture, to feel unsafe in class.

The interviewing was an example of contextualizing and representing, as I used the pictures and the activities in the pictures as a basis for explaining the character’s belief systems or values. In ninth period, we approached critiquing in that the discussion of the interviews was much deeper and they questioned more, because they had been pushed out of their comfort zones and wondered about those characters.

Controversial issues are frightening to public school teachers. As white public school teachers, we are often afraid, as Landsman says, to say the wrong thing, anger the wrong parents, or be misinterpreted by a media that seems to enjoy putting teachers in a bad light. In this interview situation, in just this one class, I grabbed hold of this controversial issue and addressed it, in and out of role, and it made an impact on at least a few students, including Chloe, David, and Brandon.
DOES RACISM EXIST IN PRESENT DAY?: "IN OHIO?!"

By the seventh day in the two-week unit, at least a few students were disgusted with the white Southerners and some wrote about how upset they were that people could be that racist. As was evident during the interviews, though, most of the white students seemed to view racism as purely historical and not evident today. It seemed important that they identify the prejudices of the Civil War and work with the prejudices of today in connecting the two.

Highlighted stereotypes

When I passed out copied pages of the novel with highlighters, the students did not like reading aloud what Johnny thought of black people. However, the person in question is still Johnny, a fictional character. As students read the comments or thoughts of Johnny, some students said things such as, “Boy, that’s mean” and “I don’t like the things they say in this book.” I knew where we were going next so I allowed them to comment without discussion.

Short scene

The students were to create a short scene expressing racism during the world of the novel. A few students argued about whom had to be the racist in the group because none of them wanted to be saying those lines. Chloe said, "Being in the situation helps you feel what was going on" and she did not like it. Lucila, Dr. Edmiston, and I
moderated with the students, helping them with ideas and encouraging them as they wrote their scenes. We offered suggestions about how to state something that might be easier to say and hear but still make the point of the scene.

Revisited the scenes

When we revisited the scenes and compared them to present day situations, students were uncomfortable with the shift to present day. They were tense comparing the racism of the Civil War with today. I noticed that some tried to argue that we are much better today than we were 250 years ago, and they tried to back up that argument.

For example, one group recreated a scene at school where Johnny was in class and the slave was outside the window, not allowed to enter school. One member of the group said that everyone attends school, so we have improved today. When Dr. Edmiston or I pointed out ways that this is not always true, some looked away and some shook their heads in disbelief. Anja, a Russian girl in period one, wrote about the experience, "There are still people here today that hate black or Asian or Arab people because they are different." It seems that being different is enough justification for groups of people to hate each other. Kivel explains this way, "Racism is... justifying exploitation and violence against other peoples because they are ‘inferior’ or different" (17). The students that I teach seem to value some kinds of difference, such as being different from adults or from the “mainstream”. Racial differences are still seem to be ignored, either because students are “color-blind” and just see the person, or perhaps because they do not want to identify those differences and learn about them.
Anja went on about Johnny’s racism,

“I think Johnny really began to realize that black people are just like white people when Cush told him he wanted to learn to read. At first I hated how Johnny thought about black people. I got really mad. How could he even think they were that dumb and white people were so much better? That was really mean and rude. In drama we did the stereotype activities that I thought really helped me understand why Southerners thought about blacks that way. We talked about how people think black people are violent because of a group of people or one person. It was kind of the same back then too.”

Her emotional reaction is expressed effectively and I appreciate her candor. Since my goal with the stereotype activity was for students to view multiple perspectives and try to understand the view of a Southerner and others who are not like them, I am glad to hear that it worked for Anja.

In period nine, students were uncomfortable and giggly about transferring the scenes into present day. One scene included in the dialogue how the Southerners thought blacks had “their place” and whites had “their place”. Students said that this is better now because we all live together. Dr. Edmiston contradicted with a comment that real estate agents know how people feel in certain neighborhoods and how certain parts of the city are shown to families of color, while other neighborhoods are shown to white families, regardless (sometimes) of income. The students’ faces showed that they were not buying it.

Then a student in the class gave a similar example. Her mother is a real estate agent and once showed a house out in the country to an African-American man. He looked around the neighborhood and decided against the house because he was afraid there were too many white people and someone could burn a cross in his yard. At the end of her story, the temperature in the room dropped a few degrees and two students
said, simultaneously, "In OHIO?!" It must have been an eye-opening experience for
some that begins to approach transformation, if not at least critiquing. Mia wrote,

"I realized there are a lot more racism and stereotypes than I thought. I also felt
sad when [she] told us the story about her mom showing an African man some
homes. It made me realize that not all racism is gone and that you work one day
at a time and one person at a time to beat racism/stereotypes. It is sad that people
can't just get over people's looks/color of skin/race and just get to know someone
for who they are."

Sometimes it is disturbing to me to watch these rather innocent pre-teens learn,
throughout middle school, many of the harsh realities of life. A girl like Mia who has not
struggled much during her life and not faced with many difficulties has to learn about the
faults of society. I wish, at times, that I could just leave them thinking that we all get
along and people are basically good. I agree with her that it is sad.

This activity was critiquing and somewhat transformative. Being forced to shift
into present day in their scenes was uncomfortable for the students but did require them
to think through the values inherent in the scenes they were performing. For some
students, this activity was transforming. They saw, perhaps for the first time, or just in a
different way, how everyday scenes can be racist in even today's society. I was reminded
about everyday language as I worked through the scenes with Dr. Edmiston and the
students. He corrected Matthew on his use of the word "average" when he called his
character an average Southern guy. Dr. Edmiston clarified, "Don't you mean an average
white Southerner? You are implying that average means white, is that what you meant?"
Matthew was reminded that day that even our everyday language can be somewhat racist
without intention. I am faced with the same lesson. I need to not refer to all of the students that I teach in the same ways because of their diversity and I need to not make generalized statements that imply that average means white.

The language issue can be tricky in any circumstance and when there is only one African-American in the room, I wonder how to manage that. On the one hand, if I ignore that one student and ask the class in general for their responses, someone will think I am ignoring the obvious and leaving him/her out. On the other hand, if I ask the one African-American student to speak, perhaps I am putting that student on the spot and asking for an individual to speak for the whole race, which is uncomfortable and a poor example for the white students.

How many white students, like my student Matthew, look to the one or two African-American students to check their reaction? He commented that he was “uncomfortable talking about racism. Those topics are really hard with [the two African-Americans] in the room, because I do not know how they are going to react. I would look at [them] when we discussed to see what they thought. I wanted to hear from them more.” How often is one child expected to speak for his whole race? I am glad that Matthew wanted to hear from them but I do not want to pressure one child to attempt to speak for his race.

Too often in society, non-whites are seen as representatives of their race anyway. “A white applicant who exhibits problems is an individual with problems. A person of color who exhibits problems immediately becomes a representative of her cultural group” (Delpit 38). At times whites do not even realize that in our language and expectations,
“...whites are considered the norm, so are asked to speak only for themselves as individuals. We need only act for ourselves as individuals. We assume we do wrong as individuals. Meanwhile, blacks are often expected to speak for or represent all blacks..... And while other groups may be asked to speak for their entire religion, their culture, I am convinced it is not as pervasive, as constant, as it is for African Americans in this country” (Landsman 88-89).

Expecting one or two individuals to speak for their race was evident in my classroom during this unit, and I have to decide how to tackle this dilemma for next time.

Too many of those students who see themselves and their families as not the least bit racist might, in their language or otherwise, be perpetuating some forms of racism in their ignorance. Some would say, “The facts are clear to behold, but the BIG LIE of racism blinds all but its victims” (Stein 179). In our language, food choices, scheduling practices, and so on schools, teachers, or students might be perpetuating racist ideas unintentionally.

Racial discrimination is defining an individual by his group in a negative way, and asking an individual to speak for the group is really just a similar but reversed type of discrimination. Like so many other aspects of these tough issues, if I just explain that sometimes white people do this and share Delpit and Landsman with the students, they will become more aware and work to change that behavior.
STEREOTYPES, PREJUDICE, RACISM: TRANSFORMATION?

I found it tough to evaluate to what extent transformation, Beach and Myers’ last strategy, occurred in my classes. Fourteen year olds that I teach typically are not heading out to champion a cause or change the world, and it is often difficult to even know for sure if their attitude or mindset has been transformed especially at the end of the school year. They do not let teachers know what they are thinking very often, and sometimes they say what the teacher wants to hear. However, a few ending activities/discussions were geared toward achieving transformation through this unit.

Listed stereotypes

In order to bring the students closer to transformation, I knew that I had to bring the discussion closer to home in most classes. The white suburban student may not be able to understand the minority experience, so generalizing the discussion into all stereotypes would, I hoped, make the fact of prejudice more real to everyone in the room. I asked them what stereotypes they lived with, how people treat them differently or say “All ____s are _____.” We listed examples on the board. The stereotypes commonly listed by these teens included:

Asian kids are smart.

Black people will steal stuff.

Blacks are good athletes.

Middle Easterners are terrorists.
Teenagers cannot be trusted.
Cheerleaders are ditzy.
Women are bad drivers.
Blondes are dumb.
Asians have SARS.
If you ride a skateboard you must do drugs.
Suburban kids are all rich.

After brainstorming stereotypes and listing them on the board, we discussed how each might have come about and how these stereotypes affect their lives. In period one, Ayisha commented that sometimes if you are black, clerks follow you around a store. Most students in the class were shocked. That is horrible, a couple of white students said, giving a typically white response, I would complain! Ayisha laughed and asked if they thought it would do any good. There was silence. When faced with the reality of the black experience in suburban Ohio, they were silent. I suppose they did not know what to say. The white students said it was horrible, and they seem to feel that racism and racist actions such as those are wrong. However, I want them to think about taking action, being the ally of the minority student, and standing up for their friends who might be followed around a store. Teaching students appropriate action strategies should be added to next year’s plan.

Later, Ayisha wrote, “Stereotypes are actually really stupid. Racism personally pisses me off. I don’t think that skin color or race religion, etc. should matter. I think the only thing that matters is love, personality, and what’s inside.” Paley would appreciate Ayisha’s comments, when she said, “What you value, you talk about” (12). After
struggling through some of these activities, to hear students saying that skin color should not matter and it is what is inside that counts was meaningful. I want them to believe that, even after they hear that not everyone thinks so in our society.

A boy in period eight whose father is a police officer told a story about his dad pulling over a woman, shortly after 9/11, for a traffic offense. As he approached the car, he heard her on her cell phone saying goodbye to her husband because she thought this white cop would kill her. She was Middle Eastern. Most students in that class were shocked by that story. Natasha, a Russian girl in that class, wrote about her personal experience with racism, “I disagree with racism, when I was younger and didn’t ‘fit in’ with the rest of my classmates I was picked on because I didn’t know much of English and had a different background than my peers. It was very hurtful, but I got through it.” Natasha is white and looks so mainstream that it was a surprise to some of her classmates that she, too, was hurt by racism in early elementary school after immigrating from Russia. Expanding the discussion from slavery and blacks to all stereotypes was particularly helpful in eighth period because of these stories that were shared about prejudice against other groups.

Leah, from period nine, complained about the stereotyping that she endures based on her appearance. Academically successful and truly sweet, she gives a different first impression with her dog collar, black clothing, and dark makeup. She said that, “It is wrong to judge people based on their clothes.” I agreed. Sometimes we cannot control how others see us or treat us. However, I pointed out to her and the class, her clothing is a choice. She is actively choosing to dress that way. A person cannot choose the color of their skin or their height or cultural background, for example, and to judge someone
based on those qualities is even worse. She said that was a good point and she had not
thought about it like that. Perhaps she came close to transformation that day. Delpit tells
Leah and myself “We must recognize and overcome the power differential, the
stereotypes, and the other barriers which prevent us from seeing each other. … Until we
can see the world as others see it, all the educational reforms in the world will come to
naught” (134). Others should look beyond Leah’s choice of dress and see her world, but
should look even harder beyond skin color to see the world of the people of color.

**Discussed language**

Because of the discomfort expressed by some students connected with the
language of the novel, I felt we should discuss it. Terms in the novel such as “darky” and
“nigger” made some students tense. Media is an important part of the teenager’s world,
so part of the discussion centered around racism, language, and humor in current media.
In *MIB II*, Will Smith comments about the phony driver in his government car, “It came
with a black dude, but he kept getting pulled over.” The students and I observed that if
Tommy Lee Jones made the same comment, it might be interpreted differently by the
audience and people might be offended. In another show, *Hidden Hills*, the African-
American neighbor purchases tickets for his friend and tells him he owes him big because
he just does not understand what it is like to buy tickets as a black man. The scene
flashes back to the African-American ticket agent harassing him for purchasing those
tickets for ‘a friend’, because “Def Leppard is the whitest band in the country”. My
students shared other examples, such as an MTV comedy show “Wig Out”, hosted by
Snoop Dogg, where racial humor is used all the time. I asked them why they thought that was ok and why people find it funny, and a few white students guessed it was because Snoop Dogg is black, and they are allowed to make fun of themselves.

Additionally in our discussion of racism and language, the “n-word” was mentioned as a topic for conversation. Some students of varying ethnicities commented about how uncomfortable they were with the use of it in the book. An African-American period seven student had asked not to be in the room if we were reading aloud and people would be saying that word. In period eight, some students brought up the fact that African-Americans use the term among themselves and they did not understand that. They thought if it is derogatory, why would they use it? The African-American boy in that class answered that he did not know for sure, but where he came from, people used it all the time, blacks and whites, and “it was like by using it yourself, it wasn’t so rude or mean to say anymore.” His classmates seemed to understand the explanation.

In period nine, as the discussion ensued about the language of racism, one boy made a comment about the language and how “those people in the ghetto talk” and how “they use that n-word”. Sheniqua, the only African-American student in that class, became visibly upset and as she left the room, she grumbled about “his racist comments.” I spoke with her the next day before class, to check in and see if she was okay and if she would like to address that issue. So in class, I asked her if she wanted to say something about the conversation that had not been completed. She told this other boy that he should not talk about the ghetto because he has never been there and it is not that great. Her friend jumped to her side and elaborated, “Yeah, you talk like you’ve been there and it’s cool, but it is not. It’s rough and you wouldn’t last a week.” We had a brief
discussion about language and the difference in using the language if you are “inside” a group versus “outside” a group and a few other students discussed the current vogue of saying you are “ghetto” means you are cool or something. I commented on how even that trend could be considered prejudical and hurt some people.

I was hoping to follow up with Sheniqua and interview her after school was out, about this event and the unit in general, but she did not return my call. Here is what she wrote in her journal, “I think [the novel] relates to our lives today because there are still a lot of racist things going on. There are a lot of racist comments that people make today that people said when the Civil War was going on. Some questions I have about stereotypes is why do people do it, why do people care that much about skin color, and will it ever stop for good? I think stereotyping and racism will always be around… I think everyone should be happy. I don’t think nobody should be discriminated against nothing.” Sheniqua’s expression in writing helped me to understand how she felt during this unit, even if she did not say much aloud.

Sheniqua was always very quiet in class, even when the topic was not so controversial or close to home for her. I wonder how much of her silence during this unit was related to her being the only African-American in the room. How much am I doing what Delpit says not to do when I ask Sheniqua to address an issue? Am I asking her to speak for her whole race? I do not want to be doing that, but she reacted to the comments the boy made, and I was glad that her friend supported her.

Landsman offers a possible explanation for Sheniqua’s silence,

“More and more in our suburban schools, black, Native American, or Asian students are the ‘only one’ in their classes: the only person of color in the room. Black students are frequently asked about slavery in the United States as though
they are the experts, the representatives of the ‘black reaction’ to slavery. Rarely are the white students even asked about slavery from a ‘white perspective,’ from the perspective of coming to grips with the phenomenon of whites owning other human beings and what that might mean to them. … If I must represent anyone else when I speak in this public context, then I might as well keep silent. But silence, in this case, is not my agreement with what is being said. Rather, silence is my protection, my relief, my escape from the absurdity of being asked to represent an entire race. This is especially true if I am, say, the only black student in a class of white students” (90).

Perhaps among the reasons she did not return my call in the summer was because she feels alone.

Perhaps she thinks I do not truly care, since I am white and the teacher, therefore with the power. As Delpit says,

“Those with power are frequently least aware of – or least willing to acknowledge – its existence … for many who consider themselves members of liberal or radical camps, acknowledging personal power and admitting participation in the culture of power is distinctly uncomfortable. On the other hand, those who are less powerful in any situation are most likely to recognize the power variable most acutely” (24).

So as I continue to develop understanding in this area of teaching multiculturally, I must confront the question of what to do with the Sheniquas of my future.

Recognizing power issues and learning to deal with them is key to achieving Nieto’s goal of affirmation, solidarity and critique. “I further believe that to act as if power does not exist is to ensure that the power status quo remains the same” (Delpit 39). I am beginning to think that part of my mission may be to cause my white students to acknowledge their power as whites and become aware of how to use it for good.

Power is a hard issue to grapple with personally and I think about my students. I know that as a teacher I have power in the classroom, and I know that as a white person I have power in some situations without even asking for it. The question then is how must I
utilize my power to accomplish positive goals. Teenagers typically see themselves as powerless, so it is tough for them to recognize that they do have power as whites. If I can help them to see the power structures in society, they might become motivated to make some positive changes and do something to change their world.

People of color typically do not have power in our society. I wonder, in classrooms with only a small group of students of color, how powerless they must feel, and how could they feel more empowered? When dealing with an issue such as slavery and racism, I need to consider how each group might feel, but especially those who identify with the groups most affected. As Banks said, “The goal should be to enable students to view concepts and issues from more than one perspective and from the point of view of the cultural, ethnic, and racial groups that were the most active participants in, or were most cogently influenced by the event, issue, or concept being studied” (234). I want my students to look at slavery from both white perspectives and from black perspectives. Drama is helpful in this situation to avoid putting the one or two African-American students on the spot to speak for their race, as discussed in Part Four.

Nieto’s ultimate goal for multicultural education is affirmation, solidarity and critique, involving appreciation for diversity, being able to critique one’s own whiteness, and allying oneself with the minority person in support. How can I better become the ally of the minority student? There are three ways that come to mind. I need to spend more time in small groups with all of my students, but particularly the minority ones. When I sit at lunch or study center with small groups of students, often we chat and get to

45
know each other on a different level than we can in the classroom. The power
differential changes from my English classroom to the lunch table. Laughing together
breaks down barriers, and I appreciate most eighth-grade humor.

So humor can be one of those ways to break down barriers. Connected with
humor, my ability to critique whiteness is important. When I can make a joke about
white women's ugly heads and hairstyles, students can see that I am aware of differences
and I appreciate them. The last way I must break down barriers for the minority student
is to always address any racist or derogatory comment made in my classroom. Too often
I will only half-hear a negative comment, give the offending student a glare, and continue
with the lesson. I realize that I could be perpetuating racism by doing this. The lesson
itself is less important than the long-term effects of such derogatory comments. I need to
model for students how to be an ally by talking about what to do to help friends who are
being talked about or followed around a store. I cannot control the comments that are
made outside of my classroom, but for my room to be a safe environment for all students,
of all skin colors and cultural backgrounds, I must address all comments made in class.
Professional development for all teachers to better equip them to handle these types of
situations in the classroom would be useful towards this goal.

Discussion over "freedom"

I referred the students back to the original web on freedom and war. I reminded
the students that at the end of the book, the war is over. So, I asked them, is Cush "free"?
Yes, they said, Lincoln freed the slaves. Is Johnny "free" since the Yankees no longer
have him prisoner. Yes, they said, he is now free. I asked them from what they might
not be free. Students discussed how the two boys are not free from others' stereotypes
and racism, because the end of the book addresses that. Johnny admits that his mama would never accept Cush as Johnny’s friend or let him come over for dinner. The students say that is sad and it should not be that way. So, I asked them if they were free. Why or why not?

Mia wrote, “It is really important to get to know people for who they are and not because of their skin color or where they are from.” Emily said, “I never thought about how I’d feel if I wasn’t free. I used to not know there was still stereotypes today.” Brittany wrote, “You should get to know someone before you decide not to be there (sic) friend. It matter what’s on the inside.”

Paley had a comment that relates to freedom from stereotypes. “Our safety lies in schools and societies in which faces with many shapes and colors can feel an equal sense of belonging. Our children must grow up knowing and liking those who look and speak in different ways, or they will live as strangers in a hostile land” (139). My hope for my eighth graders is that they will grow up knowing and liking those who look different from themselves so that everywhere they are, they feel accepted and believe they have friends. Some of the students agree and other seem to be on the right path toward the goal of freedom for all. Referring back to the issues of power differential, if some students can realize that power issues are there, then they will be better prepared to share the power and transform their social world.
CONCLUSION: WHERE I'VE COME/WHAT NEXT

Thayer said, "It is never too late, in fiction or in life, to revise" (www.quoteworld.org). This is true, in my life and in my teaching. I have always appreciated routine and not liked change. However, I took risks associated with this Civil War unit that I had not previously considered, and I believe I am better for it. It was a risk to play certain roles in the interview and to risk upsetting various students or parents. Discussing controversial topics can be a risk because a teacher never quite knows what the students will say in or out of class.

In evaluating Nieto's four levels of multicultural education, I would place my students in tolerance or acceptance levels. To move them forward to respect and further to affirmation, solidarity, and critique requires some planning and continuation of what I started in this Civil War unit. I hope some of the students moved towards affirmation as they were made aware of racism both historically and currently, saw today's society in a new way, and discussed ways to change stereotypes and stand up for their friends. Making history relevant to students' lives today both improves their knowledge of history and helps them to grow as citizens.

Delpit's hope for all classroom members included overcoming many barriers in the classroom.

"When we teach across the boundaries of race, class, or gender — indeed when we teach at all — we must recognize and overcome the power differential, the stereotypes, and the other barriers which prevent us from seeing each other."
Those efforts must drive our teacher education, our curriculum development, our instructional strategies, and every aspect of the educational enterprise. Until we can see the world as others see it, all the educational reforms in the world will come to naught" (Delpit 134).

As I work through Nieto’s four levels, seeing the world from the perspective of others is significant and necessary in that growth.

Schlesinger said, “In a world savagely rent by ethnic and racial antagonisms, it is all the more essential that the United States continue as an example of how a highly differentiated society holds itself together” (25). In a microcosm of that society, my classroom, I have to model affirmation and encourage the students to live the acceptance that they have demonstrated. The risks I took in this unit, the discussions we had, and the realizations that some students had give me hope that some achieved respect and perhaps even affirmation.

There were aspects of this project that I wish I had done more effectively. I am not sure my students were transformed. I feel sure some of them still believe the prejudicial things they grew up with, and I am not sure that I have changed the world or made a difference. However, I heard from some students that they had to think differently after this unit was over. I took some risks, I learned more about how to relate to teens on a controversial issue, and I found that I agree with Delpit and others when they argued that students do want to discuss these tough issues. I suppose, then, I accomplished Hubbard and Power’s stated goal of teacher research, “teacher research has the primary purpose of helping the teacher-researcher understand her students and improve her practice in specific, concrete ways” (3). I have a few specific goals now for next year, having completed this study and evaluated the students and myself. I intend to lessen the
number of activities and increase the discussion time. I plan to have students write more at the beginning of the unit and reflect back as we progress through. I hope to read their writing right away as well, so that I can address concerns in a timely fashion. In Appendix D, I have shared some specific suggestions for change both in my classroom and in my middle school.

Personally, as I reflect on the teaching of this unit over the Civil War and the issues of racism and prejudice, I am caught in a quandary. On the one hand, do I allow the white students I teach to think that there is not the problem with racism that there used to be, and that society has improved a lot? Many white parents seem to tell their children that they should not be racist, and no one they know well is at all openly racist. I am glad that they teach their children that racism is wrong. On the other hand, do we discuss and point out the racism in today’s society, the institutional racism and gatekeeping points that sometimes exist, as Delpit talks about. Should I bring up the debate over multicultural education and include Schlesinger versus Nieto and so on. Students are uncomfortable with the topic; their shock at certain realities and translating racial issues into today’s society bothers them. My dilemma is accentuated by Nieto suggesting the white students might be traumatized and by Delpit suggesting that the black students might feel alone and powerless.

Students want to believe that the United States is progressing as a society, so scenes and discussion point out the areas in which we have improved – blacks are not slaves, they can go to school, and so on. Yet, it might be unfair to stick to historical examples and not talk about current society. It would be academically unsound to do so as well, since students retain information that is relevant to their lives. "The canon of the
modern civil rights movement is replete with powerful symbols of dramatic confrontation: the federal troops in Little Rock, the fire hoses in Birmingham, the burning buses in Boston. The sensational theater of overt racism, however, all too often obscures the true backstage banality of unequal opportunity” (Jacobs 120). Encouraging the students to see the unequal opportunity of today and to challenge it will be a huge step toward transformation of their social world.

On the topic of multicultural education as a curricular issue, I am caught somewhere between Schlesinger/Sacks and Nieto/Banks. I agree with Schlesinger that if schools try to study every culture equally we may get confused and actually increase the segregation and emphasize the differences. Matthew, from period seven, shares my concern. When I asked him in an interview whether we talk enough, not enough, or too much about discrimination in school, he said it was about right, that “if you talk about it too much it makes people more separated. Pointing out the differences between people puts them in the spotlight.” He admitted, for example, to looking over at the two African-American students in his class often when we discussed slavery and racism, to see how they reacted and what they were thinking. He wondered aloud if that made them feel bad or set apart or anything.

However, Schlesinger goes too far when he says that there is no value in Afro-centric education and special occasions like Diversity Day. Nieto makes an excellent point about multicultural education that social justice may never come about if whites do not question the status quo. “To be more inclusive and balanced, multicultural curriculum must by definition be antiracist” (Nieto 31). Of course, if my students already
see themselves and their families as antiracist, that is an optimistic outlook. I can build upon that by giving examples of racism in current society and pushing them towards transformation and social action.

I have come to a tentative conclusion that it is valuable and necessary to discuss prejudice and racism in my classroom when an appropriate time arises. The diversity in my building should be celebrated and any racist attitudes or actions should be addressed. These discussions last spring, at times, made me uncomfortable. At least Sleeter and Nieto pointed out that I am not alone. Sleeter stated,

"Two topics in particular that appear to have great saliency for many students, regardless of their backgrounds, are bias and discrimination, yet these are among the issues most avoided in classrooms. Perhaps this is because the majority of teachers are European Americans who are unaccustomed, afraid, or uncomfortable in discussing these issues" (Nieto 131).

Nieto went on to state, though, teenagers do want to talk about it, whether they feel uncomfortable or not. "Students, however, seem eager to address these issues, but are rarely given a forum in which such discussions can take place" (Nieto 144). Giving them that forum is one of my goals.

**Goals:**

I have asked myself questions throughout this unit of study. I have two long-term goals and two shorter term goals by which to hopefully make strides toward the long-term ones. In summary, I want to spend more time in class valuing discussion and multiple perspectives, to achieve transformation of the students I teach and their working toward affirmation, solidarity, and critique with the eventual goal of transformation of the social world, i.e. getting rid of racism in our society.
Landsman’s words will continue to influence how I approach history in the future.

“In many American History textbooks, even today, when I come across a picture of slaves on the auction block, of lynchings in Mississippi, the text makes me think all that—the ugliness of auctions of human beings, the hanging of men and women, the runaways—all that has ended. Rarely is there time given in the lesson plans, or in the text itself, for a discussion of the lasting effects of this history, effects that influence the way people think, act, and perceive themselves and others today” (Landsman 35).

I approached some of this discussion during this unit. My students want to believe that the ugliness they see in history is over, but the discussion of how it affects society today makes them uncomfortable. A history teacher of mine said that “The only proper use of history is as a mirror.” I have to continue to realize that a little tension is ok and some discomfort is what will bring them to transformation. Helping students to realize their power in the existing structure and discussing how to change the “status quo” may encourage them to work to change their world.

Lastly, am I too influenced by what others think as I considered whether to answer those interview questions? Should I be less worried about the time factor when it comes to dealing with important issues? Brandon, from period nine, wrote about this issue, “I liked the stuff we did, but we didn’t really discuss people’s feelings on things. Sometimes I wish class was longer (I dare to say). All the feelings we had in this class sometimes gets [us] off track.” I now realize that the feelings and discussion of them are important, often more important than “the track”. This was an important lesson for me.

In twenty years, my eighth-graders will not remember who Johnny was or the details of this novel, but they may be affected by the discussion and drama about racism enough for that to impact their life in the future. Perhaps Matthew, who said he was an average Southern guy, will think more specifically about his choice of language, having
been corrected to say "an average White Southerner", rather than presume that "average" means "white". Helping the students to become aware of racism and stereotypes and empowering them to transform their world may be my most significant goal as a teacher. In this way, perhaps the insidious trace of racism that still exists even in the most enlightened circles can be eradicated with the help of teachers like myself.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Famous quotations. Available {online}
http://www.quoteworld.org/browse.php?thetext=histor,past, 7/14/03.


APPENDIX A

Parent Permission Letter

Dear parents:

I have really enjoyed teaching your child this year at Dublin Middle School. I love teaching eighth-grade and this year has been no exception. This group of students has been energetic and verbal, and I have enjoyed trying new things this year and evaluating with them the effectiveness of different teaching methods.

I am working on my Master's thesis and writing chapters on drama and inquiry related to students' engagement in the classroom. I am studying the difference between students' interest and involvement when the material is presented traditionally versus using a dramatic or kinesthetic approach. I hope to become better able to teach effectively, increase students' interest in the subject matter, and integrate inquiry and drama into the curriculum. As I reflect on this year, there are so many things about it that I would like to analyze in my thesis.

Some of the things I am hoping to utilize from this year in my research include the following: samples of student work; responses from students, both in class and in interviews to be conducted at a later date; and descriptions of lessons and students' reactions to the lesson presentation. I would appreciate your permission to include copies of your child's work and responses in my thesis. I will not be interviewing every student in depth, but I would like your permission to record his/her responses if I do interview him/her.

I plan to use only first names in my paper, but if you would prefer that I use a fictitious name to protect your child's privacy, please note that below. I can be reached at 614/XXX-XXXX if you have questions or concerns.

Please sign below and return to me, indicating your permission for me to use your child's work and/or responses in my research. Thank you so much.

Sincerely,

Lisa Bauman
8-1 English

---

Your child's name

Parent or guardian

Comments:

57
APPENDIX B

Civil War Magazine Project

Civil War class Magazine due: Fri. May 23

We will be producing a class magazine. Everyone in the class will contribute articles and pictures to our magazine. Below are all the requirements. You will have at least two days in class as workdays, plus any time outside of class that you work on your pieces.

Two primary sections of the magazine:
1) War News - factual, informative. (choose one):
   Summary of the war 1860-1861; 1862-63; & 1864-65
   The outcome of the war/significance of the end
   Choose a battle (no repeats)& write an article, explain: Who, What, When, Where, Why.
   Obituary page - Obits for Stonewall Jackson, Pa, Jeb, someone else from War.

2) Opinion/editorials - multiple perspectives, themes, etc. Write an opinion column or a letter to the editor from the perspective chosen and addressing the theme chosen. Share his/her opinions, tell a related story, etc.
   Choose a character: & Choose a theme:
   Pa                         Freedom
   Ma                         Discrimination
   Johnny                     Stereotype/racism
   Cush                       Loyalty
   A Yankee soldier           Friendship
   A Northern mother at home  Justice/Injustice
   A Southern mother at home
   A journalist in Vicksburg during siege
   A Confederate soldier
   A Northern General
   A Southern General
   A slave
   Jeb

Requirements:
Each student will write 2 articles, one each War News & Opinion. The articles should be in a magazine format (3 col. Per page) 2-3 columns each, 12-14 pt. Font, single-spaced. 2 pictures should be submitted as well that would go along with one or more articles.
Total of 3 pages or more. Your articles & pictures are worth 50 points.

Advertisements: Ads are up to 3 extra credit points, depending on quality & size. You may submit up to 6 ads for the magazine. Remember this is the Civil War! Historically accurate ads only please! Bonus points - the best class magazine, to be voted on by the teachers.

Special Job: Assistant Editors - up to two per class - These people will keep writers on task, conduct sign-up for article topics, survey class for ideas & then decide on magazine's title. S/he will write ONE article instead of two because of these extra duties, or may write extra article for extra credit.
APPENDIX C

Letter from Parent

Dear Mrs. Bauman,

Thanks for all your hard work with Mary's class this year.

To add to what I said on the permission form, any assignment that involves art intimidates Mary, including posters. The computer helps, but she does not feel confident with her art skills, and these assignments are stressful.

However, on the day when she and Ayisha played schoolteachers in slavery times, she came so excited! That class set her on fire. She also told me about helping with the class newspaper, and I think she is considering journalism as a career now.

Mary wants to be her own person. I know she is a great writer, and I try to encourage her in her writing, but she is leery of being a writer. This week [another teacher] told Mary that she is a fabulous writer. Mary is beginning to realize that God gave her a gift for writing and that my being a writer has nothing to do with her own career.

Thanks for what you have taught Mary this year.

Christine Smith
APPENDIX D

Suggestions for Change

In My English Classroom:

- Find more supplemental literature with positive multicultural characters, including poetry, short stories, and novels.
- Move the multicultural book report project to earlier in the year. Students choose a novel from a recommended list of multicultural novels. If they did this earlier in the year, it would open up more opportunities for discussion early on.
- Discuss with the students the possibility of a penpal activity with an inner-city classroom to broaden their perspectives of the lives of others.
- Consider a theme for the year along the lines of appreciating diversity, and begin right away with discussion of stereotyping in our first readings.
- Foster a safe environment for all students, and develop closer relationships to those individual students of color.
- Continue to model acceptance and respect.

In our Middle School:

- Diversity Day should be moved to September. If this special day were earlier in the year, more activities could be continued from it throughout the year and the themes that are introduced during that day (acceptance, respect, affirmation) can be carried through the year.
- A Multicultural club or an Ally club of some sort could be started at the middle school level. The high school has an African-American Students Club, and those students might be interested in coming to the middle school and organizing some activities at our level. Students of color and their friends who want to learn to be allies might benefit from such an organization.