Ngoc Vo

Dr. Warner

English 112B

25 November 2019

**Unit of Study: The Power of Courage**

**Rationale:**

*Courage* has been an exciting topic, especially when it comes to students. Today, most students must have been through some situations where they feel that they are being mistreated. They may experience unfair situations at home, on the playground, or in school. It is up to them to decide whether they should speak up or they should keep silence. The focus of this unit of study is the short story The Scholarship Jacket by Martha Salinas. The material is best used for middle school students (especially for 7th graders) because this story will be a great start for students who have not heard or think of the word *courage*. The text brings awareness to students about the hardship of standing up for what is right. The story The Scholarship Jacket is set in a small town in Texas. The protagonist is a young and brilliant girl named Martha. Martha has been the valedictorian in the school, and she hopes to receive the jacket just like her sister Rosie did before. With Martha’s father being a farm laborer, he could not make enough money to raise eight children, so Martha’s family is quite poor. Living with grandparents is a way that Martha can decrease the financial burden on her father’s shoulder. Therefore, Martha cannot afford to participate in sports at school, and that makes the scholarship jacket her only dream. However, Martha accidentally hears the dispute between two teachers about who deserves the scholarship jacket, it is either Martha – a Mexican American, or Joann – a Caucasian, and Joann’s father owns the only business in the small town. Martha’s dream collapsed as the Principal calls her to the office and explains the cost of the honored jacket will be $15 sharp. Poor little Martha holds her cry when she stands in front of the principal, promising she will ask her grandparents about the money matter. When little Martha comes home and asks her grandfather about the money for the scholarship jacket, he refuses to pay money for the jacket. Then, Martha’s grandfather explains that one should earn the jacket through hardship, and it is not right to pay money for what one deserves to be given. Martha tells the principal that she will not pay $15 for the jacket, and she offers it to the next student in line. However, after hearing what Martha said, the principal’s conscience awakes and decides to give the jacket to Martha. The girl returns home in happiness and shares the news with her grandparents.

The theme of courage is the perfect fit for The Scholarship Jacket. The story can be an experience for students when they ever feel intimidated by more powerful people. The story is told from the first-person point of view, which is more reliable when used as a lesson to educate students because the author has been through the situation. Also, books with a first-person point of view dive more into the main character's feelings and actions. Students can get a more in-depth understanding of the protagonist, which can help them analyze the literature piece easier.

Furthermore, students can learn about the different treatments that non-American people have to suffer, as Dr. Warner states in her *Adolescents in the Search for Meaning*book that “all students need to learn more about different cultures and their peers who come from different countries”(195). With the descriptive language, this piece of literature will somehow broaden students’ knowledge about the different cultures and different situations of the non-American people. As Dr. Warner also states in her book *AITSFM* “we need to know that humans are not always kind to each other” (222). Therefore, from the text, students can figure out that life is not easy for those who are not authentically American, and they need to stand up for what is right. Reading short stories with courage theme can boost many students’ confidence. The text is also a great steppingstone for middle schoolers to learn about courage, discrimination, or dreams. Furthermore, the short story can help students to connect to society; the issues of different treatment is never an old topic, so students need words of encouragement to stand up for righteousness. Since the story is short and easy to read, students can enhance their comprehension skill by rereading.

**Launching the Unit:**

Before the lesson, I will have my students participate in one of these activities below:

1. I will play the song Brave by Sara Bareilles, have students listen, and fill in the missing words in the lyrics handout that I gave.
2. I will have my students write a response to a question related to the material being taught: Have you ever been mistreated? Have you ever stood up for your beliefs against someone who seemed more powerful than you? I will have them participate in a class discussion and read aloud their responses.
3. I will have students read a quote that I chose, which is, “The most courageous act is still to think for yourself. Aloud.” ― **Coco Chanel**and have a class discussion on the quote about courage.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QUQsqBqxoR4>

**Expanding the Unit:**

1. Centerpiece Work: The short story The Scholarship Jacketby Martha Salinas will be my primary text for this teaching unit. I chose this story because it focuses on the courage theme. Since the story is short, I will have each student read a paragraph in class, with a note that they need to have the exact tone for the character as they read.
* After the reading, I will ask students about the theme of the reading. For example, what they think of the definition of theme, what the theme of the story is.
* I will have students summarize the story in groups. Then, I will give each group a box of markers and ask them to come up the board. Each group needs to have a person come up with the board (one at a time); they will alternatively write a sentence that leads to the summary of the story. This activity is to practice teamwork and reading comprehension.
* I will have students write down the words in bold in the text into their notebook. Students will have to memorize the words, which includes its meaning and the form/part of speech of the words.
* I will hand out a Plot Diagram and have students complete the handout by using the textbook and help from their peers. This can be considered as their homework if they cannot finish in class.
* I will have students response about one character in the story. It is up to them to choose whom they want to write about, and they need to state the reason why they choose to write about the character. It will be a short response.
1. Supplementary Texts:
* I will spend around 5 minutes per period to read to students the book Behind the Mountains by Edwidge Danticat. I choose this book because it somehow relates to the text The Scholarship Jacket. After I finish the book, I will have students write quick responses to the book, and connect it with the text being taught in class.
1. Final Assessment:
* After the students finish writing the quick response, I will have them do a “Productive Partner” activity, which means they will pair up and share what they wrote to their peers. I will give commands like “The person with longer hair will start first” or “The person who wears more colorful socks will start first”. It is essential for students to write their response and then get a chance to share with their peers because they will have a feeling that their opinions need to be heard, and it matters.
* I will have students write a reflection on how they will react if they were Martha. I will have students share with the class.

**Young Adult Literature Selections:**

Speak by Laurie Halse Anderson: The book focuses on the main character being mistreated by her friends because she did something to protect herself. The protagonist does not tell her friends why she acted oddly after that destined party. After the main character tries to tell her best friend to stay away from the guy who once raped her, the situation changed.

Waiting for the Rain by Sheila Gordon: The book is about a couple of best friends, one is African American, and one is Caucasian. Things changed when they grow up. African American boy seeks for ways to fight discrimination, while the other friend would like everything to stay the same.

Children of the River by Linda Crew:  the book is a young adult novel by Linda Crew published in 1989. It pursues the tale of a little youngster who moves to a town to escape from the war in Cambodia. She, at that point, ends up conversing with an American White kid Jonathan McKinnon, which is taboo in her way of life.

Witness by Karen Hesse: *Witness* by Karen Hesse takes place in a small town in Vermont in 1924. This town has some new guests, the Ku Klux Klan. The Klan has been settling in this little town, raising a ruckus. As they draw in new individuals, numerous individuals are beset by their essence. A portion of these individuals is Leanora Sutter and her dad, Mr. Sutter, who are a little African-American family. Likewise, Ira Hirsh is stressed over his little girl, Esther. They are a Jewish family that is remaining with an occupant of the town, Sara Chickering. Others are enchanted and eager to go along with them the K.K.K. Small time that is glad to go along with them is Johnny Reeves, a nearby minister. Youthful Merlin Van Tornhought is a youthful grown-up that likewise appears to appreciate the Klan.

American Born Chinese by Gene Luen Yang: The narrative of American Born Chinese comprises of three separate stories. The principal story depends on the amazing society story of Sun Wukong, or The Monkey King, a character from the exemplary Chinese epic Journey toward the West. The subsequent story is the account of an original offspring of settlers named Jin Wang, who has moved from San Francisco's Chinatown to a for the most part white suburb. Jin Wang battles to fit in inside his new school, and inside white American culture. His story connects the other two stories, and fits the type of an ethnic happening to age.[3] At school, he battles to fit in, becomes companions with Wei-Chen Sun, a Taiwanese kid, and later dates Amelia Harris, an all-American young lady, yet the relationship doesn't last in view of his schoolmate Greg's objection to the relationship. The third story recounts to the account of a white American kid named Danny, whose Chinese cousin Chin-Kee (as in "Chinky")[3] comes and visits each year. Jawline Kee shows numerous American racial generalizations of the Chinese as far as highlight, dress, haircut, physical appearance, dietary patterns, scholastic execution, and leisure activities. Danny is grieved by Chin-Kee's visits. While the three stories are apparently inconsequential from the start, it is later uncovered in the book that Danny is really Jin Wang, who "changed" into a White kid in the wake of being kept from seeking after the young lady he had always wanted for being Chinese. In the long run, Danny battles Chin-Kee, just to discover that Chin-Kee is actually the Monkey King, who came to help him to remember his actual personality. At last, Jin Wang surrenders his "Danny" persona and grasps his Chinese personality.

**Closing the unit:**

After students finish the Plot Diagram, I will let them have a debate on the Rising Action parts, to see how many rising actions they will have and check on their understanding of the climax in the story.

I will also include a pop quiz on the word study.

Works Cited

*YouTube*, Sara Barreilles, 14 May 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QUQsqBqxoR4>.

Warner, Mary L. *Adolescents in the Search for Meaning: Tapping the Powerful Resource of Story*. Scarecrow Press, 2006.