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Reflecting on our Past, Present, and Future Heroes (Lesson plan)

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Thematic Unit: Segregation, Integration, and Celebration of the Civil Rights Movement
Lesson: Reflecting on our Past, Present, and Future Heroes
Created by: Syri A. Kohn, Memphis, TN
Time Frame: One-Two Weeks

Applicable Subject(s)- All subject areas

Competencies

Students will develop the structural and creative skills of the writing process necessary to produce written language that can be read, presented to and interpreted by various audiences

Objectives

- *Students will research significant biographical information about an African American figure of their choice.
- *Students will analyze the selected person's contributions in American history.
- *Students will demonstrate understanding and appreciation of an African American hero through various performances.
- *Students will evaluate their future aspirations to the guiding principles outlined in Martin Luther King's Nobel Prize Acceptance speech, his "Where Do We Go From Here" speech, and the "Letter from a Birmingham Jail."

Procedures

Days One and Two:

*Upon completion of the Civil Rights Movement (the activists, the protests, and the struggles for equality), point out to students the contributions that past heroes have made in our society. Use various examples of artists, leading activists, entertainers, legislators, etc. who were determined to change their present conditions in order to achieve equality and justice for all people.

*To help students gain a greater understanding of the efforts made by our past heroes, show a visual clipping of Eyes on the Prize if a copy is available. Other substitute films are Hoxie: The First Stand and Standing on my Sister's Shoulders.

*Once students have viewed the film(s), reflect and orally respond to the following discussion questions:

- a. What are your initial feelings upon viewing this film?
- b. How has the Civil Rights Movement changed our society today?
- c. Describe some of the privileges and rights that are afforded to all people today as a result of the Civil Rights Movement?
- d. Discuss what our country would be like today if our past heroes had not made personal sacrifices and taken a stand for what was right.
- e. Name and describe the contributions of present African Americans (politicians, entertainers, athletes, artists, writers, scholars, etc.)
- f. How have our present heroes motivated you to achieve your dreams?
- g. Name some positive character traits that you possess. How will you effectively manage your life as a responsible citizen of this country?
- h. Discuss some of the current racial issues that are affecting ethnic

relationships?

- i. What can you do as an individual to make sure that people of all races are appreciated and respected?

Days Three-Seven:

Tell students that they will be researching influential people from the past and present who have pioneered new areas of research, thought, or development for future generations. Ideas and thoughts about these people will be developed into a research paper. Research papers should include general biographical information about the person, as well as an evaluation of that person's contributions to modern-day times.

**Conduct student conferences concerning the content and quality of research papers.*

Days Eight and Nine:

Encourage students to demonstrate knowledge of the Civil Rights Movement using **multiple strategies**. Multiple strategies should be creative and reflect the students' emotions and perspectives concerning the Civil Rights Movement.

Days Ten and Eleven:

Play, read, or view a recording of Martin Luther King's speeches. As a further evaluation and assessment of the Civil Rights Movement, write a five paragraph expository essay explaining how King's speeches can be applied to your dreams and future aspirations.

Day Twelve

Encourage students to be trailblazers for the next generation of leaders by reflecting on Martin Luther King's speech. Explore the ways his ideas and mannerisms inspire people to assume responsibility for the welfare of mankind. After discussing some of Martin's speech techniques with the class, assist students as they utilize their ideas from the expository essay into their own speech.

**Discuss characteristics of a well-informed oral presentation. Include such topics as tone and level of voice, eye contact, gestures (facial, bodily), and characterization.*

**If your school celebrates Black History through a yearly school-wide assembly, select the best orator of your class to present his or her speech in front of the student body.*

Suggested Assessment:

Research reports and oral presentations

Materials/Sources:

Various speeches of Martin Luther King Jr. (audio or visual)
- see www.stanford.edu/group/King/index.htm for audio
-see www.mlkonline.net for written copies

Library copy of Eyes on the Prize

To help students begin their research, provide a list of notable African Americans from the past and present.

-see www.factmonster.com for reference

Film Standing on my Sister's Shoulders

-see www.wmm.com/standing/

Film Hoxie: The First Stand

-see www.cinemaguild.com/