



CEL F Summer Institute '10

Subject: ELA Grade: 7th

School: Boston Latin School MA Teacher: Keri O

Unit: Let the Circle Be Unbroken

Designed by: Keri Orellana in collaboration w/Caroline O'cean & Joe Concannon

MA State Standards addressed by the lesson (Include minimum of two state frameworks goals for this subject and grade level that this lesson aligns to):

1. Reading and Literature Strand

Standard 7: Beginning Reading

Standard 8: Understanding a Text

Standard 9: Making Connections

Standard 11: Theme

Standard 13: Nonfiction

Standard 18: Dramatic Reading and Performance

2. Composition Strand

Standard 19: Writing

Standard 20: Consideration of Audience and Purpose

Standard 22: Standard English Conventions

Standard 23: Organizing Ideas in Writing

Standard 24: Research

3. Media Strand

Standard 26: Analysis of Media

National Education for Sustainability Standards addressed by the lesson (Include minimum of two EFS standards that this lesson aligns to):

1. Efs Standard 1

2. Efs Standard 2

3. Efs Standard 3

Brief Summary of Unit (including curricular content and unit goals):

For this unit students are required to read the novel Let the Circle Be Unbroken by Mildred Taylor. The novel is a sequel to Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry. Both novels chronicle the experiences of the Logans, a black family living in the American south during the Great Depression of the 1930s. In addition to exploring the overarching theme of “coming of age”, which is present in nine of the ten required readings for grade 7, two sub-units will be added to the existing unit in which students will examine specific elements in this novel through the lens of sustainability. Through outside readings, video clips, class discussions, group activities, debates, projects and compositions, students will more closely examine the systems of sharecropping and labor unions introduced in the novel. They will provide a thoughtful and informed response to the essential question of how these systems connect to the Big Ideas of Sustainability.

Stage 1 – Identify desired results

Enduring understandings (what understandings are desired?):

Students will understand that:

-Our environment, which goes beyond neighborhood, city and country, is a contained system and as such economic and social systems all over the world are interdependent. They must look at these systems, programs, etc. and question their equity, their impact on local and world communities, and their ability to make a difference in our environment.

Essential questions (what essential questions will be considered?):

How do the systems of sharecropping and labor unions incorporate the Big Ideas of Sustainability (Equity, Community, Interdependence, Ability to make a difference)? How do they relate to the three legs of sustainability (Economy, Environment, Equity)

Key questions on the sharecropping sub-unit

How does the sharecropping system work?

What elements of this system make it inequitable? Who loses out? Who benefits?

What was the role/impact of the AAA (Agriculture Adjustment Administration)?

What are farming subsidies? Who benefits from these subsidies?

How do the ideas of community & interdependence relate to farming/agricultural subsidies?

(US/World)

Key questions on the labor union sub-unit

What is a labor union? What purpose do unions serve?

Who benefits from unions and how do they benefit?

What rights should workers have?

Who is responsible for protecting the rights of workers? Why? (include the role of government)

Outcomes (what key knowledge and skills will students acquire as a result of this lesson/unit?)

Students will be introduced to...

-the initial concepts of sharecropping, farming subsidies, and labor unions and what industries they represent.

-vocabulary/terminology of sustainability

Students will be able to...

-Relate these concepts to their everyday lives as consumers and members of a community

-Examine these concepts and make the connection to the Big Ideas of sustainability and demonstrate their understanding of the relationship.

Stage 2 – Determine acceptable evidence

Performance tasks (what evidence will show that students understand?):

Journal reflections	Journal reflections
Group debate on farming subsidies	Small group collage/poster
Sharecropping “commons” game (pros/cons)	Group debate on unions
Position paper	Position paper

Other evidence (quizzes, tests, prompts, observations, dialogues, work samples):

Observation of group discussion	Participation in class discussion
Worksheets and graphic organizers	Review of notes
Novel test	Vocabulary quiz

Stage 3 – Learning plan

Learning activities (what will students do and what will you, the teacher do, to prepare the students to achieve the desired outcomes?):

Preview activities: Provide students with a glossary of sustainability terms that apply to this unit & “10 Myths about Sustainability” & discuss
Have students form groups and complete “What do we need for a fulfilling life?”

Sharecropping sub-unit

- 1.1 Students will copy down the key questions in the activities sections of their binders for future response.
- 1.2 After reading chapter ____ students will form small groups and using contextual clues come up with a working definition/description of sharecropping.
- 1.3 Students will view informational slides & video clips of testimonials from individuals who lived through the great depression to establish a real-life connection to the story’s setting.
http://www.livinghistoryfarm.org/farminginthe30s/water_11.html
suggested topics: Dust Bowl (clips: Stan Jensen)

No Water No Crops (clips: Leroy Henkel)

http://www.livinghistoryfarm.org/farminginthe30s/water_11.html

suggested topics: Okies

clips: Florence Thomas Migrant Mother,

Louis Houle on "Relief"

Labor union song: Woodie Guthrie's "This Land is Your Land"

1.4 Students will play a modified version of "the commons" game. Using cotton (cotton balls) on the plots of land instead of cattle. They will experience losses or gains due to weather, infestation, government intervention and changes in finances. Each group will share their end result with the class.

1.5 Students will reflect in their journals on what they have learned about sharecropping and the outcome of their group in the "cotton game". They will try to answer the key questions in their binders (activities section) using what they have learned.

Students will make notes from class lecture on the AAA and farming subsidies. The lecture will include slides and video clips

http://www.livinghistoryfarm.org/farminginthe30s/water_11.html (AAA clips Leroy Henkel)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agricultural_subsidy (not source students can site for research but gives a basic definition of subsidies)

<http://legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/Agriculture+Subsidies>

1.6 Once students have developed a good understanding of farming subsidies they will be assigned to groups to participate in a debate on the merits of these subsidies. Groups will be assigned to argue for or against subsidies. Students will be directed to search the internet for information supporting their argument. Arguments must include the local and global impact of farming subsidies. Each group will provide a one page summary of their argument. Standard debate rubric may be used. Summary may be graded holistically or using Focus Correction Areas or whatever writing program is used in your curriculum. (This activity will also be done with the Labor Unions, so groups will be assigned pro or con for both topics. I have five sections of 28 students so I like to mix it up to keep things fresh)

Labor Union sub-unit

2.1 Students will copy key questions in the activities section of their binders for future response.

2.2 After reading chapter 5 students will form small groups use contextual clues to come up with a working definition of a union. Individually, students will briefly list all activities they completed the previous day from the time they woke up until they went to bed in the evening. They will then highlight the activities they believe are related to a labor union. Students will return to their groups and share and discuss their lists. Students will then participate in a whole class discussion of their definitions, their lists, and share any prior knowledge they have of labor unions.

2.3 Students will view a slide and listen to Woodie Guthrie's song "This Land is Your Land" http://www.livinghistoryfarm.org/farminginthe30s/water_11.html and view the clip of a California farm worker who is a retired labor union member <http://www.mefedia.com/watch/31783346>. They will reflect on the class discussion and the video in their journals.

2.4 As homework students will be asked to review the novel and their notes on the section where Stacey Logan and his friend Moe Turner have run away from home looking for work in sugar cane fields in an attempt to help their individual family's financial situation and what they experienced. Students will be given excerpts to read from the Human Rights Watch brochure *Fields of Peril: Child Labor in US Agriculture*. Students will create a graphic organize comparing/contrasting the experience of Stacey and Moe with that of the real-life experiences of children currently working on farms in the US. (*please note the information on Stacey and Moe is revealed near the end of the novel, so this assignment should coincide with the reading schedule for those chapters)

2.5 Students will make notes on a class presentation of *Fingers to the Bone: Child Farm workers in the US* <http://www.hrw.org/en/video/2010/05/03/fingers-bone-child-farmworkers-us> the presentation will be followed student reflection in journals. Students will be invited to share their individual entries with the class.

2.6 Students will be provided an overview of US labor unions during a class lecture.

<http://www.infoplease.com/timelines/laborunions.html#axzz0wVJ2JWYd>

<http://www.howstuffworks.com/labor-union.htm>

<http://www.econlib.org/library/Enc/LaborUnions.html>

Students will be directed to answer key questions previously recorded.

2.7 In small groups, students will randomly select an active US Labor Union. They will create a visual representation of the industries that union serves and the products created by the industries. On a standard poster, students will make a collage of various images (pictures, words, clipart, etc) associated with the union they select. Basic rubric w/ point total for each: no white space showing, relevant images, accurate information, visually appealing, proper mechanics. Groups will present their posters to the class with a brief (½-1 page) written summary attached to the bottom corner of the poster.

2.8 Once students have developed a good understanding of labor unions they will be assigned to groups to participate in a debate on the positives and negatives of this union. Groups will be assigned to argue for or against unions. Students will be directed to search the internet for information supporting their argument. Arguments must include the local and global impact of labor/trade unions. Each group will provide a one page summary of their argument. Standard debate rubric may be used. Summary may be graded holistically or using Focus Correction Areas or whatever writing program is used in your curriculum.

As a culminating project** students will complete an individual writing assignment on one of the two topics—farming subsidies or labor unions. They will compose a position paper in the following format:

- Intro: lens of the issue (who, what, where, etc) include in thesis statement will be their Position
- Body: reasoning/logos (statistics, facts) & pathos (emotional response)
- Conclusion: summarizing position & call to action

**Debates could be considered the culminating activity