

This is a lesson which takes grade 8 students through a process of research and sharing of that research to enrich discussion of an historical nonfiction text by author Sharon Draper. Students learn the value of research through whole class presentation, small group directed and independent research, individual conferencing, student discussion, peer support and discussion group practice, observation with technology, and critique. Research skills include selecting keywords and phrases to initiate information retrieval through print and nonprint resources. Research skills also include evaluation of resources for validity and point of view. Sharing skills will include support at the initial research stage and opportunities for Literature Circles discussion.

Rationale:

What student should already know: Students should have read the first third of the story about Stella and her family who live in the rural south in 1932 and know the story well enough to refer to names, times and places easily in discussion. Students have participated in literature circles discussion prior to this unit. Students have prepared for discussion in roles of “Questioner,” “Vocabulary Enricher,” “Connector,” and “Passage master.” These roles help students prepare to discuss one aspect of the book – questions about the story to extend meaning, key vocabulary which could give clues to deeper meaning, connections to a student’s life and an event in the story discussed to allow empathy, and strong text example that provokes further discussion. Now students will be introduced to the role of “Researcher,” who provides factual basis for events described in the story which may contribute to understanding the motivations for characters in the story or may add other insight.

What students will do: Students will be able to use a modified Big6 Inquiry approach (Samuels, H., 2016) to research the Great Depression period in a variety of formats and to share information to enrich discussion of a fiction text.

Expected result: Students should be able to show understanding of problems facing people because of color and to be able to empathize with Stella and her family as they move through significant and small events during the first few months of Stella's fifth grade school year.

Overview

Students in grade 8 are reading a Black-eyed Susan award nominee for 2017 called *Stella by Starlight* by Sharon Draper. Students will be discussing the story of Stella in Literature Circle discussion. They will be preparing for the role of Researcher to enrich discussion and allow historical perspective. Students will participate in whole class instruction of how to select a specific topic from a broader one. All will use a select database to search the Great Depression. They will record key facts and create a citation together. Research will continue in small groups choosing a variety of online and print resources after selecting search terms. Group discussions will follow. Teacher conferencing will be ongoing. Filming of Literature Circle groups will enable students to critique results of the discussions and to improve.

The Big questions will include: How will the student do research on a period of time that is not well covered in the research? How will the student bring together resources that enable objectivity yet empathy for the characters in the fiction story? How will students support each other in research?

Content objectives are connected to standards and include learning and practicing research skills, note taking skills, building a citation, and using information to support discussion. With teacher guidance and questioning, students will continually notice the process of *task definition*, review their *information strategies*, be able to describe how they reached a particular resource (*location and access*), demonstrate *use of information* in supportive discussion, and ultimately *synthesize* new nonfiction factual information into discussion of a fictional story. *Evaluation* by teacher and peers is ongoing.

Big Six Considerations:

Unit Title: Literature circles discussion roles and practice

Lesson Title: Research role in literature circles discussion

Teacher: Kate Hartig

Grade level: Grade 8 (Heterogeneous groupings)

Subject/Topic Areas: Social Studies/Library Class

Number of Periods: At least 3 classes

Calendar quarter: Second quarter or second trimester

Content objectives: By the end of the short research experience (2-3 class meetings) students will have learned: Names of presidents during the Great Depression, that there was an election in the United States in 1932, that African Americans suffered from many inequalities during that time and examples of those inequalities (school segregation, voting rights, low income, poor access to improving their economic status). Research requires selecting keywords, skimming, reading to answer a question, using reading complex text strategies, taking notes, and noting the source. Contributing research information in a Literature Circles discussion helps to understand the story, the setting, the motivation of the characters, and leads to discussion about similarities and differences today.

Search methods: keyword, controlled vocabulary, federated (360) or natural language (Lanning & Bryner, 2010, 80-86). *Keywords* or Controlled vocabulary for searching may include: “the Great Depression,” “voting rights,” “Hoover, Herbert,” “Roosevelt, Franklin Delano,” “segregation,” “school segregation,” other student-selected search terms

Evaluation methods:

1. Whole group contribution to Padlet, American Depression Time Period,
2. Completion of Researcher handout from larger Literature Circle packet,
3. Individual teacher conferencing regarding the completion of the handout,
4. Ongoing Peer review opportunities (small group, one on one, and large group opportunities),
5. Performance appraisal within group discussion,
6. Rubric for search, completion of handout, and use in discussion group (dispositions in action).

Primary teaching methods: Whole class instruction introduction; small group (2-3 students) research of topic; discussion group practice (5-7 students), video-recording and whole group sharing; whole class discussion of methods and value of researcher role for discussion within literature circles group.

Overview: Students will prepare for the role of “Researcher” within literature circle group discussion about the book, *Stella by Starlight* by Sharon Draper. This will allow historical perspective. Grade 8 studies 20th events in the United States in social studies (5 Examine significant ideas, beliefs and themes [in U.S. history] and 6A Construct compelling questions); and). Literature circles skills are previously introduced discussion skills which will allow students to take on the additional role of a researcher to enrich discussion.

Prompts: What does Stella’s dad talk about in the story? How is voter registration described for the black men wanting to vote in the upcoming election is mentioned. Franklin Roosevelt’s name is mentioned as is President Hoover; who are they? What is happening in year 1932? How is that time period different from today? (Segregated schools, few had cars, no mention of telephones). How does it seem similar?

Modifications:

The UDL approaches to multiple means of representation will include various means of perception and options for comprehension:

1. Whole class projection of a resource on the Great Depression and participation in creating a citation for all to see;
2. Use of the Padlet program for all to add information from individual laptops or computer as are available;
3. Various options for research online, or browsing a book, or reading excerpted text within a small group of researchers who will support each other;

The UDL approaches to multiple means of action and expression will include option for expressive skills and executive functions:

1. Work in small groups;
2. Changing position from time to time depending on activity;
3. Placement of resources both print and nonprint in clearly marked locations throughout the library space;
4. Use of digital recorder to review discussion methods within the Literature circle groups following research;

The UDL approaches for multiple means of engagement should include ways to recruit interest, sustain effort and persistence, and encourage self-regulation.

1. Use of web site resources which provide streaming video segments and pictures;
2. Reminder of steps to reading complex text which includes reading small portions at a time and self-questioning;
3. Options to work with others and support others in research;
4. Option to confer with teacher to improve Researcher role paper;
5. Use of checklist rubric instead of grading to encourage best work and learning.

Resources:

World Book encyclopedia

Discovery Unitedstreaming database

Specific articles related to depression era from Library of Congress (Library of Congress, 2016a; Library of Congress, 2016b; Library of Congress, 2016c; Library of Congress, 2016d)

Sharon Draper website (<http://sharondraper.com/>)

Visual from early Depression era (Loc.gov)

Excerpts from books and from online resources (in print copy)

Scripted lesson follows.

Accessing Information, Independent Learning, and Social Responsibility

Date: Winter
Subject: Library Media
Grade Level: Grade 8
Unit: Information Literacy, Independent Learning, Social Responsibility
Weeks: 4 meetings

AASL Standards :

- 1.1.1: *Follow an inquiry-based process in seeking knowledge* by searching three sources to find information on a topic related to the events around 1930 in the U.S. and in small rural towns in the South.
- 1.2.6: *Display emotional resilience by persisting in information searching despite challenges*
- 1.2.7: *Display persistence by continuing to pursue information to gain a broad perspective.*
- 1.3.4: *Contribute to the exchange of ideas within the learning community* by contributing to a literature circles discussion and sharing new information found in research.
- 2.1.1: Continue an inquiry-based research process by applying critical-thinking skills (analysis, synthesis, evaluation, organization) to information and knowledge in order to construct new understandings, draw conclusions, and create new knowledge *by selecting appropriate search terms, finding and reading information, taking notes and sharing information in discussion.*
- 2.1.2: Organize knowledge so it is useful
- 2.1.5: *Collaborate with others to exchange ideas, develop new understandings, make decisions, and solve problems* by working with a group to research a topic.
- 2.2.1: Demonstrate flexibility in the use of resources by adapting information strategies to each specific resource and by seeking additional resources when clear conclusions cannot be drawn.
- 2.3.1: *Connect understanding to the real world* by independent and small group research and by participation in discussion.
- 2.3.2: *Consider diverse and global perspectives in drawing conclusions* by relating historical information and personal experiences to Stella and her family's perspective on events of the day.
- 2.3.3: Use valid information and reasoned conclusions to make ethical decisions *by providing information that is accurate and by citing the source*
- 2.4.3: Recognize new knowledge and understanding
- 2.4.4: *Develop directions for future investigations* after teacher modeling researching a broad research topic and narrowing it to a specific (U.S. Depression, year 1930)
- 3.4.1: *Assess the processes by which learning was achieved in order to revise strategies and learn more effectively in the future* by small group research and teacher conferencing to determine content value.

UDL Compliance demonstrated:

Multiple means of Access/Representation: 1.1.3: *Develop and refine a range of questions to frame the search for new understanding* after reviewing the inquiry process with an example whole class and reviewing a variety of online and in print resources (books, articles, and selections).

Multiple means of Motivation/Engagement: 1.2.2 *Demonstrate confidence and self-direction by making independent choices in the selection of resources and information* by selecting a research topic to pursue with a small group.

Multiple means of Action and Expression: 1.3.4: Contribute to the exchange of ideas within the learning community

Intellectual Access when students: 1.4.4: *Seek appropriate help when it is needed* and 1.4.1: *Monitor own information-seeking processes for effectiveness and progress, and adapt as necessary* then share in small group about how this was accomplished.
(See UDL compliance expanded in Appendix)

Instructional Strategies (Content, Skills, Activities):

Task Definition:

After introduction to general research term and whole class search of a sample database, students will be able to

1. Narrow a research topic, Concerns and considerations of African American families living in the rural South during the American Depression era, and select keywords for research;
2. Search and read material from 3 sources (selected database, Library of Congress archives, and an encyclopedia) within that topic and
3. Record information about their topic independently and with small group support;
4. Include references to each resource in A.P.A. citation format

Information Seeking Strategy:

Whole class introduction to the American Depression by asking students what happened in the book that might help understand that period of time. Allow students to work at a computer to populate a padlet with keywords and phrases from the book that refer to nonfiction happening of the time. (<https://padlet.com/khartig/5p6we4gkzpiw>). Project the padlet to show ideas as they are added.

(Full steps in Appendix 1)

Location and Access

Allow time for most to complete the information from the first source. How can we find this place again and gather more information? Knowing how to relocate a resource allows the student to fulfil Standard 1 where the student accesses information efficiently and effectively (AASL & AECT, 1998, p.8, 9-14)

(See full steps in Appendix 2)

Use of Information

Use the Gist summary method to extract significant words related to who, what, where, and when and craft a summary sentence or two about the material. Use methods for reading complex text to read for understanding and to use own words. Identify new keywords, phrases, and questions to help search another database or print source for information to enrich discussion about the text. Note source information.

Synthesis

Break students into groups of 2-3. Allow time for research. Monitor participation, confer with students who are struggling (remind that they group works best when all contribute), can't settle on direction for searching (negotiate or assign a topic), or are close to finishing.

Use the author site, sharondraper.com to pull more true information from the text (Draper, S., 2016).

(See full steps in Appendix 3)

Evaluation

Rubric measures small and larger expectations for the research, information retrieval, and participation within whole class, small group (2-3 students) and literature circles (5-6 students) experiences. It is based on Common core standards and Maryland standards for

Library Media.

Evaluation are informal – Padlet entries and class participation, performance based – observation in small group research and large Literature circles group, and written and oral shared content – meeting a rubric of research strategy standards from AASL and Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) shown in the appendices.

(See Assessment section in lesson plan, Researcher role handout in Appendix 4, and rubric in Appendix 5)

Modifications/Adaptations:

Students have access to computers; signage and teacher prompts lead students to print resource location; students work in small groups to do research, though each student is responsible for final notes on their Researcher role paper; some students may individually confer with teacher before finishing the handout; some students will demonstrate understanding in discussion; students may also digital recording of a literature circle discussion group and enable literature circle groups to critique discussion and improve; all students are first language English.

Instructional Materials (Resources):

World Book encyclopedia

Discovery Unitedstreaming database

Specific articles related to depression era from Library of Congress

Sharon Draper website (<http://sharondraper.com/>)

Visual from early Depression era (Loc.gov)

Excerpts from books and from online from Library of Congress and other databases and print resources including Anderson, D., 2015; Bindas, K.J., 2007; Gershenhorn, J., 2010; Pascal, J. & Putra, D., 2015; Salvatore, S.C., 2009; Trotter, J. W., 2004; and Walker, M., 2004)

Method/s of Assessment: Performance based Rubric (includes MSDE standards) and Teacher observation of learning and research behaviors exhibited within AASL standards.

1.2.2: Demonstrate creativity by using multiple resources and formats *by using the encyclopedia and books in the nonfiction section as well as using online databases for research.*

1.3.3: Follow ethical and legal guidelines in gathering and using information *by noting the author, title and location source and date of an information source.*

1.4.1: Monitor own information-seeking processes for effectiveness and progress, and adapt as necessary *then share in small group about how this was accomplished.*

3.3.3: Use knowledge and information skills and dispositions to engage in public conversation and debate around issues of common concern.

4.3.1: Participate in the social exchange of ideas, both electronically and in person *by using Edmodo to share new information about the time when Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected and segregation in the South affecting voting privileges and education of African American rural inhabitants.*

Cross Curricular Connections: Library class, Social Studies, Language Arts

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Appendix 2

Location and Access (con.)

Allow time for most to complete the information from the first source. How can we find this place again and gather more information? Knowing how to relocate a resource allows the student to fulfil Standard 1 where the student accesses information efficiently and effectively (AASL & AECT, 1998, p.8, 9-14)

C. Visit the Library of Congress loc.gov database.

Demonstrate through a think aloud how a researcher would proceed to find information that can enrich a discussion about poor farmers and laborers at a sawmill in rural North Carolina in 1932. Ask how the page might be helpful? Demonstrate how to open new pages without losing information and invite students to read some information.

Review how to find this page

See: <https://memory.loc.gov/ammem/aahtml/exhibit/aopart7.html>

D. Visit Discovery Unitedstreaming website (this is password protected so provide students with individual passwords to access). Search “Great Depression” and view list of resources: pictures, short newsreels, newspaper articles, etc.

Remind that students do not have to read the whole article, but skim by looking for keywords, then read what may be helpful to find out more about the time and place in the story. Notice that source information is present on the site and can be transferred to “source information” on the Research Role handout.

Show *location* of special area where books about the Great Depression, and book samplings are located. Ask students to help all to review how to use the table of contents and the index to *access* information. Recall that you need to think of some keywords to help student find what needed information:

“African-Americans,” “rural south,” “segregation,” “voting rights,” terms that may lead to the election of 1932, Hoover, and Roosevelt (Franklin D.).

Appendix 3

Synthesis (con.)

Break students into groups of 2-3. Allow time for research. Monitor participation, confer with students who are struggling (remind that they group works best when all contribute), can't settle on direction for searching (negotiate or assign a topic), or are close to finishing.

Use the author site, sharondraper.com to pull more true information from the text (Draper, S., 2016).

Pull students back as a group for further discussion about their research strategies. If these questions have not yet been discussed, offer them now for discussion.

Notice in research that much documentation is about effects on white Americans.

Notice there is a group that has done interviews during the period of the Depression (the Work Progress Administration and the Writers Alliance).

Have students try to summarize some causes and effects of the Depression.

Why would Americans want to elect someone new for president?

Voting rights act was signed into law in 1965; that was a long time after 1932 wasn't it?

What wasn't fair about voter registration for African Americans in 1932?

What Big questions will guide this unit and focus teaching and learning:

How will students do their best to share information about the time period described in the story when part of Literature circle discussion?

What is the importance of making sure I write source information?

Why is the role of the researcher in discussion is important?

How can we find information that is valid that will help us better understand the situation of the poor African Americans in 1932? (What technology was present then? Were the poor able to enjoy it? What laws seemed to be missing to protect certain people? How would you feel if you were not allowed to go to a school that was near you because of your color?)

Why is it a good idea to use more than one source for information?

Why would pictures and images of actual events be helpful?

There were violent events described from the perspective of a 5th grader, Stella (for example, segregation, cross burning, and the KKK). Why would it be important to know about these events? Would it benefit the group discussion to spend all my research time focusing on these particular events? Why or why not?

When doing research, how can we best choose key words to search for information? (suggestions from teacher, discussion with small group, remembering references to events in the book)

When research is complete, allow students to practice Researcher role within a Literature Circle group and to record, show, and review the event to evaluate value of true information when discussing a fictional story.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Title of the Book: Stella by Starlight
Author: Sharon Draper

Researcher

*As the **Researcher**, it is your job to dig up some background information on any topic related this reading. Maybe the author mentions the name of a musical artist or baseball team, the location of the story, a class pet or something true to help your group better understand the whole picture. Or find out something about the author and share that. Write the source(s) you used to learn more about your topic and summarize your work.*

1. Source(s):

A & E Networks. (2016). The Great Depression. History. Retrieved from <http://www.history.com/topics/great-depression>

Question I had and what I learned:

2. Source(s):

Question I had and what I learned:

Research Rubric (Performance-based)

Standards and activities	Below Standard	Approaching Standard	At Standard	Above Standard
<i>Follow inquiry process in whole group</i> by participation in whole class research on Great Depression (search and retrieval and reading the information), adding content to Padlet https://padlet.com/khartig/5p6we4gkzpiw , and participation in discussion building source information) (MSDE SLM 1.A.c. 6-8)				
<i>Determine scope of information need and formulate and refine questions to meet an information need</i> by participation in a small group to create questions and identify keywords and phrases, cite source information and record information on Researcher role handout. (MSDE SLM 1.B. 2-3.6-8) and <i>Locate and select sources to meet the information need in an ethical manner</i> (MSDE SLM 2.B.1.c.6-8)				
<i>Work independently and collaboratively to evaluate sources and meet the information need in an ethical manner</i> (MSDE SLM 2.B.2.a.6-8) when working in large group or small group				
<i>Use specific sources to find information</i> by using search terms to find information and explaining strategies with small research group (MSDE SLM 3.A.1.a-b.6-8)				
<i>Generate new data from research</i> when supporting text discussion in Literature Circle group (MSDE SLM 3.B.1.b.6-8)				
<i>Record information from research</i> (MSDE SLM 3.C.1.e-f)				
<i>Revisit the information need</i> by checking facts, revisiting sources, making corrections to notes (MSDE SLM 3.c.3/4.6-8)				
<i>Evaluate quality of information</i> during whole class, small group, or literature circles discussion (MSDE SLM 4.A.1.a-e)				
Within small group research and Literature Circles discussion <i>apply critical thinking strategies</i> (MSDE SLM 4.A.2.b, e.6.8)				
<i>Ethically create new understandings</i> from research (MSDE SLM 4.B.1.a, d.6.8)				
<i>Share findings/conclusions</i> (MSDE SLM 5.A.2.a)				
<i>Evaluate inquiry process and product</i> by recording, reviewing and ethically evaluating participation in Literature Circles group (5.B.1.a-d.6-8)				