Title: Of What Value is Freedom? (Literature focus: Night, by Elie Wiesel)

Subject Matter Emphasis and Level: High School Language Arts (10th Grade English)

Author: Sue Morrell

School District: Wagner Community School

Email: sue.morrell@k12.sd.us

Brief Description of the Lesson/Unit:

Students will consider the topic of freedom as they undertake the production of the Voice of Democracy essay/speech (required by district policy) and read and reflect on the autobiography of Elie Wiesel, Night. As a piece of literature, Night offers excellent opportunities for student reaction and reflection, as well as writing and research. The work can be studied for its historical connections, its insight to human nature, and its lyricism. The reading and attendant activities will also serve to complement the writing of the Voice of Democracy essay/speech.

SD Content Standards:

The following SD Content Standards are addressed in this three to four week study:

READING
* To connect main ideas in eyewitness accounts and historical documents with literary development (the genre of autobiography);
* To analyze the structure of an autobiographical novel;
* To identify how historical and autobiographical writings shape our past, present, and future;
* To understand the effect of reader interpretation on various texts.

WRITING
* To develop writings that inform, explain, analyze and persuade;
* To use primary and print resources to support writings;
* To offer feedback and revise written essays and responses.
SPEAKING
* To analyze purpose, audience, and content for listening and speaking purposes;
* To choose effective verbal techniques for presentation of the Voice of Democracy speech.
LISTENING
* To ask approproate and focused questions of a group of panel presenters.

Stage 1: Identify Desired Results

1. What enduring understandings are desired?
   1) A growing understanding of the elements of effective writing;
   2) An appreciation of the value of personal and group freedoms in the broadest sense of the word;
   3) An understanding of how history and literature connect;
   4) An appreciation of the elements of theme that connect the author's experiences to our lives.
   5) An understanding of how words, texts, and images influence an audience.

2. What essential questions will guide this unit and focus teaching/learning?
   Of what value is freedom?
   What personal freedoms are we willing to defend?
   What sacrifices have our military service personnel made in the name of freedom?
   What can history teach about human nature?

3. What key knowledge and skills will students acquire as a result of this unit?
   1) The ability to compare and contrast eyewitness accounts, historical documents written in third person, and autobiography.
   2) The ability to research and evaluate the validity of historical documents, as well as understand the underlying emotional perspectives of an author of an autobiographical account.
   3) The understanding and application of essay writing skills, including group evaluation of drafts, revision, and final production.
   4) The ability to defend a personal opinion about the events of history or current events (i.e, genocide, mass killings, etc).
   5) The ability to create a product that persuades an audience to rethink a position.
   6) An understanding of how an author influences the tone of a work.
4. What prior learning, interests, misconceptions, and conceptual difficulties might be brought to this unit?

Most students have read *The Diary of Anne Frank* in junior high, and most have researched the Holocaust to some degree in junior high. Most students are not aware that genocide occurs today, -- that the effects of a single group's fanaticism and/or disregard for human life still take a significant toll in the world.

**Stage 2: Determine Acceptable Evidence**

1. What evidence will show that students understand?

   **Performance Tasks:**
   1. Reading and discussion of the novel in small groups (differentiated according to interest, completion of prior reading, and/or reading ability).
   2. Short papers of reflection, including metacognitive statements, entry slips (goal planning), exit slips (listing accomplishments and/or questions about reading).
   3. Listening and Questioning military service personnel (guests) about their experiences and thoughts.
   4. Drafting, revising and completing the district mandated Voice of Democracy essay.
   5. Optional: tape-recording the Voice of Democracy essay as a speech to be submitted to local veteran's support groups.
   6. Illustrations, word work, graphic organizers.
   7. Research of historical events and current events associated with the general topic of genocide.
   8. Completion of peer assessment rubrics following listening sessions, interpretive reading, or group discussion.
   9. Completion of each section of the Layered Curriculum assignment sheets for self-selected grades of C, B, or A.
   10. Completion of a project designed to inform and persuade a specific audience about the issue of genocide.
   12. Writing a unit culmination test essay answering the essential questions.

   **Other Evidence:**
   *Quizzes, Tests, Prompts, Work Samples (summarized):*

   Announced quizzes (to establish name recognition and/or event sequencing).
   Conversations with instructor.
   Instructor monitors group discussions and notes participation frequency and depth.
   Instructor provides feedback on each accomplished task in the layered curriculum assignment sheets.
Unprompted Evidence: (observations, dialogues, etc.)

See above.

Student Self-Assessment

See above

Stage 3: Plan Learning Experiences and Instruction

1. What sequence of teaching and learning experiences will equip students to develop and demonstrate the desired understandings?

Major Learning Activities:

The sequence of activities revolves around the reading of the autobiography Night, completion of layered curriculum tasks, the availability of guests for the service personnel presentation, and the deadline for the local Voice of Democracy essay. Included here is a rough schedule:
1) Introduce the Voice of Democracy assignment, read previous winners' essays, and establish base-line criteria: What makes a good patriotic essay?
2) Introduce the book Night, with K-W-L and discussion of author, including an online interview with Elie Wiesel (listening in class).
3) Have students read the first 20 pages of the book.
4) After holding a preliminary discussion to ascertain who is reading, who is having difficulty with the story, and who has questions that foster thinking about the story line, introduce the first Layered Curriculum Assignment sheet. Explain the "independent choice" approach.
5) Foster planning for productive use of class time by using planning sheets (entry slips, exit slips).
6) Write a rough draft of the Voice Democracy in writing workshop in class.
7) Complete peer assessment, feedback, and revision of the essay.
8) Continue to work through the novel in (approximately) 20-page segments, each of which includes a Layered Curriculum assignment sheet.
9) Conduct Learning Dialogues (Socratic seminars) at the conclusion of the reading, focusing on the historical impact of the Holocaust and fostering thinking and research about modern incidents of genocide.
10) Assign the culminating project: a product (poster, power-point, collage, multimedia presentation, etc) designed to influence an specific audience and educate them about genocide in the world today. Provide web resources, print resources, and
primary sources for research. Identify potential focus projects in class brainstorming sessions. Each student designs his/her own final project, as well as the parameters for the assessment and presentation of that project.

11) At the end of the unit, students write a self-assessment of their learning.
12) At the end of the unit, students complete a test essay (optional oral response) to the Essential Questions for this unit.

Materials & Resources (technology & print):

Elie Wiesel's autobiography, Night -- one copy per student.
Text (Elements of Literature, 10th Grade, Holt-Rinehart-Winston) resources for autobiography, historical accounts and eyewitness accounts.
Various web sources of information about historical events and eyewitness accounts (like eyewitnessstohistory.com)
Various web sources of information about Elie Wiesel.
Various web sources of information about the Jewish Holocaust, and about 20th and 21st Century genocide.
Web links to the Voice of Democracy winning essays and the VFW group.
Primary sources: community members who have served in foreign wars.

Management:

It is essential that the teacher provide daily connections to the total picture, remind students of their short term and long term goals, and provide assistance to individual students as they seek to accomplish the tasks of the Layered Curriculum assignment sheets.

Support Services and Special Teacher Notes:

Some web sites are complicated and may need teacher directions so that students can access information that they need. A review of "what is a valid web resource" might be a good adjunct to this study, depending on the needs of the students. A checklist of skills and expectations can be provided by the regular classroom teacher to an aide or special education assistant working with identified students.

Extensions and Adaptation:

The Layered Curriculum has extensions and adaptations built into each sequence of assignments. Students have a lot of choice. For students who are not used to choice, the teacher may need to set specific goals for completion and time management. The Voice of Democracy speech assignment can be adapted to fit the needs of students who have difficulty managing longer works of writing. For example, the teacher can provide an outline or a series of paragraph starters, and the students can fill in with their ideas and specifics.
2. What differentiated instruction strategies are being used in this lesson/unit?

**Differentiated Process:**

Layered Curriculum Planning (i.e., Kathy Nunley)

- **C level activities:** Six or more activities selected for appeal to individual learning styles.
  
  For example: vocabulary work, mapping/locating points of interest connected to the novel, targeted passage reading and discussion in small groups, graphing key concepts (themes, plot developments), drawing/illustrating scenes, finding/composing music to complement specific scenes in the story, researching key historical figures associated with the Nazi concentration camps, etc.

- **B level activities:** Learning Dialogue discussions (each member has a role within the group discussion), Oral interpretation of significant passages (scored by group members using a rubric developed by the teacher), writing and sharing a paper of reaction and reflection for purposes of group discussion (with teacher-made directions for sharing and listening).

- **A level activities:** On-line listening activities (Elie Wiesel's interviews) with written comparison of Elie the elder with Elie the younger, Writing conversations (imagined) between prisoners in concentration camps; Imagining events from other perspectives; etc.

**Differentiated Content:**

The novel can be read solo (independently), in small groups with "popcorn" style reading, or with a teacher-provided tape. Students can choose activities that best suit their understanding and needs, and they can modify activities by negotiating a different assignment with the teacher (i.e., a spin-off assignment similar to one provided on the Layered Curriculum Directions sheets). Because students are working for most of the class period on independent and/or small group projects, the teacher can devote more time and assistance to those students who need attention. For some students who have writing difficulties, the writing can be scripted by an aide or special education teacher, or by the teacher if she is available. Students can negotiate extra time for specific tasks if necessary.

**Differentiated Product:**

The product of this study is a collection of writings (multiple drafts), drawings, listening activities, and group study questions that will be gathered, with a table of
contents, in a portfolio folder. At the culmination of the unit, students will write a self-assessment of their accomplishments and new understandings. The test at the end of the unit is comprised of essay-style responses to the Essential Questions posed at the beginning of the study.