

Ethnic Conflict and The Power of Personal Stories

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The Power of Stories

Stories beget stories...

“The universal themes of life are found in our stories about birth and death, triumph and disappointment, courage and despair. When you touch me with your story, my world expands. We make a human connection. Through that connection, I access more of myself. Parts of myself I may have forgotten are awakened because of your story. I claim lost parts of myself.”

~ Michale Gabriel, Professional Story Teller

<http://education.jhu.edu/PD/newhorizons/lifelonglearning/early-childhood/learning-growing/>

Who am I, and Why am I here?

- Jennifer Wilson, from Erie, PA
- In my 19th year of teaching, most of which have been at North East High School, in North East, Pennsylvania



Who am I continued...

- I teach American History, AP European History, and an elective entitled “Ethnic Conflict: an Ethical Dilemma.”
- I have taught about the Holocaust throughout my career.
- I created my elective course after being inspired by stories I read, and experiences I had at the USHMM throughout the years.

Who am I...final!

- I am a Museum Teacher Fellow with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.
- My project was/is to help educators teach the Holocaust with appropriate pedagogical strategies, and to provide them with resources to get started.
- Today I am here as a history teacher with hints on content, how to bring stories into the topic of genocide, and how I use my class to reach students in a variety of ways.

My Course...

“ Ethnic Conflict: an Ethical Dilemma”

In my course, we:

- Define words like Genocide, Ethnic, and Race
- Review the eight stages of genocide
 - <http://www.genocidewatch.org/aboutgenocide/8stagesofgenocide.html>
- Review the articles of the Genocide Convention
 - <http://www.ushmm.org/confront-genocide/defining-genocide>
- Study historical cases of genocide: global cases such as Armenia, the Holocaust, Cambodia, Rwanda, Serbia, Darfur, and Syria
- Study domestic situations like the conflict between Native Americans and Europeans, and the Atlantic Slave Trade (which is of course global as well).

My course...continued

- We complete various activities associated with each case, usually research based
- We bring in literature, music, and art
- We try to complete at least one social activist project per semester. Past projects include:
 - An all school “awareness” assembly
 - Creation of informational brochures
 - Guest Speakers
 - Raising money for organizations
 - Entering contests that fit the theme of our course
 - We had an auction for the prizes and donated the money

Which led to the creation of:



Inspire

My student centered organization that I “advise” with the school Librarian, Nicole Fitch.

- More about that later, if interested....

The Brave Project

- The Brave Project is one that is very open ended, and provides a way to use personal stories to both connect to content and character.
- Students can study indirect or dramatic presentation of character through documents and interviews.
 - For instance... determining character motivation and the will to survive and actual chances of survival.

An Excerpt from the Brave Project

Directions:

THE BRAVE PROJECT
NOT JUST A SONG...

Brave: ready to face and endure danger or pain; showing courage.

As we look at important issues around the world, we are constantly faced with stories of great hardship as well as hope. It is hard to imagine sometimes how people have overcome the situations that they are faced with. The goal of this project is to provide a visual and informational display of stories that reflect the amazing side of humanity.

These will be displayed in the cafeteria/lobby area beginning on April 28th in preparation for when we host our Holocaust survivor for our Days of Remembrance event.

For our course, you will find a story of bravery that can be found in a variety of situations and countries. You will create:

- A case study of your individual
- A Creative Component

The Brave Project...pictures



USHMM Website

- The <http://www.ushmm.org/> website has a wealth of information.
- This link from the Holocaust Encyclopedia on the website has hundreds of video testimonies.
- http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/media_list.php?MediaType=oh
- This link is the Memory Project that provides written memoirs of survivors:
- <http://www.ushmm.org/remember/office-of-survivor-affairs/memory-project>

Other Websites....

- Besides the USHMM website, here are a few others to consider:
- Located in Jerusalem, Yad Vashem was established in 1953 as a world center for the study of the Holocaust:
- <http://www.yadvashem.org/>
- This link from the USC Shoah Foundation also has testimonies from the Holocaust:
- <http://iwitness.usc.edu/SFI/>
- Facing History and Ourselves was created by educators in 1976 and seeks to create global citizens and combat injustice:
- <https://www.facinghistory.org/paths/testimonies-genocide>

Other cases of Genocide

This link in the USHMM website has background information regarding other cases of genocide beyond the Holocaust.

<http://www.ushmm.org/confront-genocide/cases>

Link to Armenia:

http://www.genocide-museum.am/eng/personal_histories.php

The museum opened in 1995 on the 80th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide .

Links regarding Cambodia:

<http://www.cybercambodia.com/dachs/index.html>

The website of university professor David Chandler.

<http://worldwithoutgenocide.org/genocides-and-conflicts/cambodian-genocide>

An organization within the William Mitchell College of Law in St. Paul, MN

Other Cases of Genocide continued...

Links regarding Rwanda:

<http://www.rwandanstories.org/index.html>

Rwandanstories: A collaborative effort at healing and education about Rwanda

<http://voicesofrwanda.org/>

Taylor Krauss, director of Voice of Rwanda

Link to testimonies from Bosnia:

<http://cinemaforpeace.ba/en/testimonies>

The Cinema for Peace is compiling thousands of testimonies from Bosnia.

Link with stories from Darfur:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/5391656.stm>

BBC News Link

- “For the survivor who chooses to testify, it is clear: his duty is to bear witness for the dead and for the living. He has no right to deprive future generations of a past that belongs to our collective memory. To forget would be not only dangerous but offensive; to forget the dead would be akin to killing them a second time.”

~Elie Wiesel, *Night*