

Freedom writers assignment



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“ We fight each other for territory; we kill each other over race, pride, and respect. We fight for what is ours. They think they’re winning by jumping me now, but soon they’re all going down, war has been declared. ” Freedom Writers depicts students from different gangs facing problems from school life at day to gang violence at night. A new teacher at Wilson High School by the name of Myer Gies connects education with her troubled students’ daily lives to bring them together past the boundaries drawn by gangs.

Myer Gies teaches at Wilson High School, located in Long Beach. She is the teacher of her 23, “ below school average,” students in room 203 where she teaches English. Due to different experiences, Myer Gies struggles to understand how to educate students affiliated in gangs who struggle to survive every day. “ To realize what an experience or empirical situation, means, we have to call to mind the sort of situation that presents itself outside of school; the sort of occupations that interest and engage activity in ordinary life” (Dewey 302).

In her classroom, students sit next to those of similar race and reject to acknowledge those who are different. Any acknowledgement between different races results in fights breaking out in the courtyard. Another pattern of behavior is those of similar race coming to aide “ their own” during fights whether it is with guns or fists. “ The man that put your father in prison, he knew he was sending an innocent man. But you know, he was just protecting his own. Furthermore, in Freedom Writers, Caucasians are given special treatment by being placed in honors classes while African Americans and other minorities are denied that right. “ Being black made me an automatic outsider” (Hooks 517). The learning objective for the class of

room 203 demanded by the school was to teach them a fifth grade reading level. Mrs. Gies learning objective was to graduate her students from high school with a high enough reading level to get into college. She conflicted with her department head because of insufficient support and funding for her class.

Throughout the film, Mrs. Gies is forced to overstep her department heads authority and convince the Board of Education to give her permission to teach “ normal level reading for her below average” students. Furthermore, Mrs. Gies assigns each student a journal to write in everyday as a homework assignment. She even goes on to say, “ You can write songs, poems, anything, but you have to write every day. Keep a pen nearby and whenever you feel the inspiration...” Mrs. Gies unconsciously follows William Stafford’s method of writing. That is, he does not draw on a reservoir; instead, he engages in an activity that brings to him a whole succession of unforeseen stores, poems, essays, plays, laws, philosophies, religions, or—but wait! ” (Stafford 126). This assignment’s hidden curriculum teaches her students how to cope with situations and realize that others around suffer the same problems. By opening a common ground between all gangs, overtly, she is teaching her students how to break racial boundaries and except all those around them without violence and hatred. On the other hand, Mrs.

Gies overtly teaches her student grammar from orange grammar books. She teaches her students how to read higher level books. She overtly teaches poetry, vocabulary, and speech. However, all her overt curriculum’s learning is measured through tests and essay evaluations based on a letter scale.

Most importantly, Mrs. Gies presents her students with educational material

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that relates to their lives. This inspires learning to take place inside and outside of school according to Dewey. Mrs. Gies presents her students with books such as The Diary of Anne Frank and other books dealing with gangs, violence, and racism.

Mrs. Gies values the power of learning and the impact it will cause on her students. Her education also values how to deal with daily life and overcome those struggles to become someone better and more prosperous. She teaches her students about gang violence and the effect it has on others. She also teaches how to read by assigning difficult books that help them overcome the gang life also known as “ the war. ” Her method of application is through games, journals, reading assignments and field trips such as the one to “ Simon Wiesenthal Center - Museum of Tolerance. ”