

September/October 2014

YCteen

LESSON GUIDE

Dear Educators,

Welcome back and thank you for using *YCteen* in your classroom!

As Youth Communication's first education director, it's my job to help teachers figure out how to best use *YCteen* and our other resources. As usual, the fall issue provides true stories by teens that can spark conversations about issues that matter. In our new and improved *YCteen Lesson Guide*, I'm including lessons that will help you guide these conversations, which are central to building the kind of relationships and classroom community you value.

For example, the lesson *Saying What You Feel to Get What You Need* that accompanies Mitzi Sanchez's story, provides unique opportunities for you to listen and learn from your students. The activities are aimed at drawing out even the most reluctant students' ideas, feelings, experiences, and needs. When you take the time to listen non-judgmentally to students' responses, you will build the trust needed for them to take academic risks in your classroom and achieve.

In recognition of National Bullying Prevention Month this October, I also created the lesson *From Bystander to Ally* to help empower students to speak up when a classmate is being harassed. The student handouts in this lesson come from Youth Communication's curriculum *The Courage to Be Yourself*, an excellent resource if you choose to do additional work on nonviolent conflict resolution (find it at bit.ly/couragetobeyourself). You will also find two less formal one-off learning activities, and a list of open-ended questions to use with any *YCteen* story, since we know that sometimes a 60-minute lesson isn't an option.

We're always thinking about new and better ways to support teachers like you, and we welcome your feedback. Feel free to email me at ejohnson@youthcomm.org or call me at 212-279-0708 ext. 103 any time.



Best wishes for a great 2014-15 school year,

Elizabeth Johnson
Education Director





COMMON CORE

ELA Literacy & Social and Emotional Learning *From Bystander to Ally*

Story to Use: “[Secret of the System: Why I Got a Safety Transfer](#),” by Paige Hodge, pp. 12-14

Story Summary: Paige is continually bullied by classmates; teachers look the other way and her complaints to her principal and dean are ignored. Finally, she gets her mother involved and steps are taken to have her switch schools.

Lesson Objectives and Common Core Connections

- Students share their experiences and empathize with others.
- Students gain skills at negotiating conflict in order to build and maintain healthy relationships.
- Students will read and comprehend literary nonfiction proficiently (CCLS R.10).
- Students will write routinely for a range of tasks (CCLS W.10).
- Students will participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners (SL.1).

Before Reading the Story (10 min)

This opening activity will activate background knowledge to boost reading comprehension and set the emotional tone for the story.

1. Review *Student Handout #1* together as a group. Check for understanding.
2. Introduce **Freewriting** by explaining that students will have 4 minutes to respond to a prompt in writing. The goal is to express their thoughts *freely* without worrying about writing conventions. The expectation is that everyone writes, without stopping, for the full time. (*Note: writing lists and/or drawing with labels are modifications that support diverse learners.*)
3. **Freewrite** prompt: “Think of a time when you have been in, or observed a bullying, harassment, or conflict situation. Which role did you play? What was the situation? How did you feel?”
4. **Partner Share** directions: Students should select a partner and/or turn to the person next to them. Facing each other, and practicing active listening, partners each take a turn sharing their responses to the freewrite prompt. Each speaker will have two minutes to talk and is in charge of what they choose to share from their writing. The listener does not need to respond. After two minutes, direct partners to switch roles.

During Reading (20 min)

By practicing active reading strategies while reading aloud and discussing as a group, students build comprehension and support fluency.

1. Introduce the story (see the summary above).
2. Share the expectations for a group read aloud- volunteers take turns reading aloud as much or as little as they would like. As the teacher, you may stop periodically to discuss or check in on active reading by asking students to share their responses to the story.
3. Tell students they will be practicing an active reading strategy called text coding. This will help them read for a purpose and be prepared to use the text in later activities.
4. **Text Coding** directions: While reading aloud together, identify the different roles people play in Paige's story. In the margins, write the following:
 - **T** (when someone is the Target)
 - **AI** (when someone is the Aggressor and /or Instigator)
 - **ALY** (when someone is an Ally)
 - **B** (when someone is a Bystander)
5. Read the story aloud together. Stop and discuss periodically, supporting peer-to-peer talk and non-judgmental listening. To do this ask for volunteers to share what they have text coded and why. Alternately, you can pose an open question like what stands out to you in this section and why? (Note: students should code many Bystanders in this story, both peers and adults. This is the role that will be focused on in the activity that follows.)

After Reading the Story (15 min)

During this post-reading activity students will make connections, build understanding, and rehearse positive behaviors.

1. Together, identify all of the bystanders in Paige's story. Write this list up on the board/chart paper. (*Note: this list should include teachers and administrators.*)
2. Distribute, and review together, the handout *Being a Good Ally*. Tell the group that **SOME** of us have been, or will be, targets and aggressors. But odds are **ALL** of us will be bystanders at some point. The bystander is a pivotal role in bullying and harassment situations. When the bystander chooses to become an ally he/she is using non-violent action to shift the power dynamic away from the aggressor. This positive impact of this benefits the target, the ally, and the whole school/classroom community.
3. **Table Talk** directions: Direct students to form small groups of 3-4. Each group should work together to complete the following, with one person writing down notes from the discussion:
 - Look at the list of bystanders and select one person who you agree could have been an ally to Paige.
 - Decide what that person should have done and said differently. Be specific.
 - Discuss what the positive impact of the ally's actions on Paige would have been. Be specific.
 - Discuss what the positive impact on the classroom/school community would have been. Be specific.
4. Have each group share out the notes from their discussion. Reinforce specific behaviors of good allies and the positive impact they have.

5. Close the lesson by informing students of your school's policies about harassment and bullying. Specifically, share the rights they have under *New York's Dignity for All Students Act*. Find out the name and office location of the staff person in your building who is the *Dignity Act Coordinator* and make sure your students know how they can file a complaint if they are the target of, or witness to, harassment. (You can download a brochure about New York's Dignity in Schools Act at www.p12.nysed.gov/dignityact.)

Student Handout #1

Roles People Play in Bullying and Harassment Situations

TARGET

A person or group being harassed or bullied.

AGGRESSOR

A person who taunts, threatens, humiliates, victimizes, or physically harms the target. Also known as a bully.

INSTIGATOR

A person who spreads rumors, gossip, or makes up things to encourage others to harass the target. Instigating can be done verbally, on the Internet, through instant messages or text messages, or through graffiti in public places.

BYSTANDER

A person who either witnesses or knows that the target is being harassed, and does or says nothing. Bystanders may be adults or even a friend of the target.

ALLY

A person who stands up for the target by defending her or him nonviolently and by challenging the attacks from the aggressor and instigator.

Freewrite Prompt...

Think of a time when you have been in, or observed a bullying, harassment, or conflict situation. Which role did you play? What was the situation? How did you feel?

Student Handout #2 Being a Good Ally

Without allies, the cycle of harassment continues unchecked. Here are a few things to consider when you confront or witness teasing, harassment, and bullying.

- ➔ Ignoring isolated incidents may work, but a consistent problem of harassment will probably continue unless you act to stop it.
- ➔ Many targets of harassment laugh in the beginning because they are nervous or embarrassed. They may believe or hope they can just “laugh it off.” Often aggressors and bystanders misinterpret the laughter, thinking it means the target doesn’t mind.
- ➔ When you feel uncomfortable or threatened, speak up in a strong, confident, and assertive voice. You have the right not to be harassed! Tell the aggressor firmly, “Don’t talk to/touch me like that, I don’t like it,” “Don’t go there. I am not starting with you- so don’t start with me,” “That’s harassment. If you don’t stop, I will report it.”
- ➔ Often, the harasser is angry about something (though being angry does not justify harassment) that has nothing to do with the target. It may help to ask calmly, “What’s up?” or “Why are you doing that?” Using insult or threats can escalate the problem rather than helps solve it, and can get you in trouble instead of the person who started it.
- ➔ If you choose to confront someone who is bullying or harassing you, **find allies who will speak up without using threats to support you.** This does not mean finding someone bigger to intimidate the harasser, because this has the potential to escalate the problem. **Act as an ally for allies.**

Being an ally for others...

- ➔ If you witness people being harassed, help them by being a good ally. Speak up without putting anyone down. Try saying something like, “That’s just mean, there’s no reason to go there,” “I think that went too far,” or “We don’t say that here.”
- ➔ You can make similar comments to people who are instigating, saying, “I don’t think that’s funny,” or “That’s just a rumor. Drop it.”
- ➔ It is especially effective if two or more allies speak up, because it helps prevent the harasser from turning on a single ally.



COMMON CORE

ELA Literacy & Social and Emotional Learning

Saying What You Feel to Get What You Need

Story to Use: “[I Stood Up to MY Macho Dad](#),” by Mitzi Sanchez, pp. 10-11

Story Summary: After Mitzi turns 18, her father becomes strict and their only interaction is when he orders her around. Feeling insecure, upset and depressed, she speaks to a social worker who convinces her to express her feelings.

Lesson Objectives and Common Core Connections

- Students practice communication strategies to express their feelings and advocate for themselves.
- Youth are able to recognize support resources at school.
- Students will read and comprehend literary nonfiction proficiently (CCLS R.10).
- Students will participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners (SL.1).

Before Reading the Story (10 min)

This opening activity will preview the text to boost reading comprehension and set the emotional tone for the story.

1. Share the following quote, lifted from Mitzi Sanchez’s story:
“One morning, I went to school with my hair a total mess, huddled in a blue hoodie. I looked like a bum and I felt unhappy. I grabbed a seat in my U.S. History class and- whoa!- I burst into tears.”
2. Ask students to think about what might be going on for Mitzi in this moment. Next, ask students how they predict the teacher is going to respond to Mitzi, and why. Volunteers share.
3. Tell students that we all come to class with thoughts and feelings about experiences we are having- and sometimes what we’re carrying inside is too big to hide. We all show difficult emotions, such as sadness, anger, disappointment, and frustration in different ways. Ask students to think about how they show (non-verbal body language and mood/vibe) difficult emotions while they’re at school.
4. Hand out drawing paper and a pencil to each student.
5. **Draw It** directions: Make a quick sketch of yourself at school on a day when you are feeling difficult emotions. Capture your body language, dress, and mood. (As an alternative, draw a close friend that you know well- but keep their identity anonymous!)
6. Have students hold on to their sketches. We will return to them later.

During Reading (15 min)

By practicing active reading strategies while reading aloud and discussing as a group, students build comprehension and support fluency.

1. Introduce the story (see the summary above).
2. Share the expectations for a group read aloud- volunteers take turns reading aloud as much or as little as they would like. As the teacher, you may stop periodically to discuss or check in on active reading by asking students to share their responses to the story.
3. Tell students they will be practicing an active reading strategy called reading for a purpose. This will help them to locate specific information they will need for later activities.
4. **Reading for a Purpose** directions: While reading aloud together students are going to identify the external messages and internal feelings Mitzi experiences. They will divide the work up as follows:
 - The LEFT side of the room will read for EXTERNAL messages. These include the things people say (verbal) and do (non-verbal actions) to Mitzi. They are the outside messages she receives, but doesn't have any control over. Students should draw an ARROW in the margins next to these text examples.
 - The RIGHT side of the room will read for INTERNAL thoughts and feelings. These include what is going on in Mitzi's mind. They are her reactions to the external messages she receives. Students should draw a HEART next to these text examples.
5. Read the story aloud together. Stop and discuss periodically, supporting peer-to-peer talk and non-judgmental listening. You can pose an open question like, what stands out to you in this section and why?

After Reading the Story (20 min)

During this post-reading activity students will make connections, build understanding, and rehearse positive behaviors.

1. **Text Based Discussion** directions:
 - Beginning with the LEFT side of the room, have students share out examples from the text of EXTERNAL messages Mitzi receives throughout her story. Write these words around the outside of the figure outline. (Alternately, have a student volunteer to write these up while you facilitate.)
 - Discuss these messages together. Ask the group where these messages come from, how they impact Mitzi, and if they have heard similar messages in their own lives.
 - Repeat with the RIGHT side of the room sharing examples from the text of INTERNAL feelings and thoughts Mitzi has. Write these inside the figure outline.
 - Finally, work together to find examples in the story of Mitzi expressing what she needs. What does she say? To who? What is his/her response? How does Mitzi feel afterwards? (Note, the two primary examples are Mitzi at school with her teacher and social worker, and at home with her dad.)

2. **Draw It** (continued) directions:
 - Have students return to their individual sketches and think again about a day at school when they have felt difficult emotions. Tell them to add EXTERNAL messages they had received leading up to that moment by writing those around the self-portrait. (*Alternately, students can think of a close friend whose portrait they are drawing and messages/feelings they are inferring.*)
 - Next, have them write the INTERNAL feelings and thoughts they (or their friend) had with words on the body.
 - Finally, have them add a SPEECH BUBBLE to their self-portrait with something they could say to express their feelings and share their needs, and who they would say it to. (If needed, provide the example of an I Message “*When you... I feel... So could you...*” or “*I feel... because... and I need...*”)
3. Coming together as a group, decide on a supportive way to share drawings, such as in a partner share or an open share with volunteers. It is okay if students don’t share.
4. **Closing Go-round** directions: Moving around the group, give each student the supported space to respond to the following prompt: “*When I am having a difficult day I may look like... and I would like my teachers to...*”
5. End the lesson by helping students identify who in the school they can go to for support if needed, and the best way to do so. Be specific.

Quick Lesson

Think About It Discussion Questions and Activities

Story to Use: “[Change Is On the Way](#),” by YCteen staff, p. 3

Teens in the Youth Communication summer writing program interviewed Chancellor Farina. Below are some activities you can do with your students to engage them in reading, thinking, talking, and writing about the issues facing NYC public schools.

1. While reading the story, have students **text code** their opinions in the margin by writing an **A** for Agree and a **D** for Disagree. Afterwards, facilitate a text-based discussion where students share their opinions in specific response to the text, and explain their thinking.
2. As an alternative to a discussion, have students complete a **dialogue journal** by writing down quotes from the story that stood out to them, that they had a question about, or that they agreed/disagreed with. Next to each quote have them write their thinking. Afterwards, journal entries can be shared with a partner.
3. In small groups, have students **brainstorm** questions they would ask Chancellor Farina in an interview and why. Share these out and discuss together. Is there an authentic audience in your building for these questions?
4. Use these **discussion questions** to invite students to share their thoughts about NYC public schools. Remember to listen closely to learn about the school experiences that have shaped their learning and the values they hold about education.
 - What role have the creative arts (dance, art, theater, music) played in your education? What should schools offer? Why?
 - Like Matthew Bouyer, have you observed differences in the quality of schools between poor and wealthy neighborhoods in NYC? What are some examples? Why do you think these inequalities exist? What are the effects of education inequality on students, teachers, and communities? What can we do about it? What do you know about struggles for education justice and equality in the past? In other cities today? Why does this issue matter?
 - What have your experiences with standardized testing (Regents and new Common Core tests) been? How do you think the recent emphasis on high-stakes testing has impacted teaching and learning? What recommendations do you have?
 - What do you think is the ideal class size? Why? What are some effective strategies you have seen teachers use in a big classroom?
 - For you, what does “college and career ready” mean? Do you think your high school education is preparing you? Why or why not? What recommendations do you have?

Open-ended questions you can use with any story in *YCteen*:

1. What main problem or challenge did the writer face?
2. What choices did the teen have in trying to deal with the problem?
3. Which way of dealing with the problem was most effective for the teen? Why?
4. What strengths, skills, or resources did the teen use to address the challenge?
5. If you were in the writer's shoes what would you have done?
6. What could adults have done better to help this teen?
7. What have you learned from reading this story that you didn't know before?
8. What connections from your own life, the world, or other text you have read, can you make to this story? *This reminds me of.... (text-to-self, text-to-world, text-to-text)*
9. What surprised you in this story?
10. Do you have a different view of this issue, or see a different way of dealing with it, after reading this story? Why or why not?

YCteen Essay Contest

\$150 First Prize | \$75 Second Prize | \$50 Third Prize

Enter online at bit.ly/ycwritingcontest

Contest #224

If you could change someone's life, who would it be and what would you change? Why? It could be someone you know personally, a stranger you've observed, or yourself

Deadline: Friday, October 3, 2014

Contest #225

Climate change is no longer a far-off problem and will have a dramatic affect on teens. For instance, the flooding that we experienced during Hurricanes Irene and Sandy could become more frequent. Parts of New York City could become uninhabitable and droughts in California could result in food shortages. In September, world leaders will meet to discuss climate change proposals in preparation for a global agreement scheduled for 2015. In a letter to President Obama, using specific examples from your life, present three reasons why he needs to make this a priority today.

Deadline: Friday, December 12, 2014