Courage

Facing Adversity—An Interdisciplinary Unit for Grades 6–8

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Description

This unit focuses on finding the courage to face adversity and uses Freak the Mighty (Philbrick, 1993) as the central text. This integrated unit is intended to be implemented in grades 6–8 and is designed to be taught in 60-minute sessions five days a week for four weeks. The subjects of history and technology are integrated throughout this theme. Courage: Facing Adversity is an important theme for students to explore because it can be applied to all aspects of life. The outcomes of this unit will encourage students to stand up for what they believe and empower them to face adversity as it relates to disabilities, difficulties, or diversity. Students will learn to use the academic language of the unit in their everyday lives. As knowledge of history and technology informs contemporary perspectives of the world, students participating in this unit will be able to apply this knowledge to their own interactions with the world. Finally, the outcomes of this unit encourage students to take a stand against bullying within their school, and find ways that courage can be shown in their own lives.

In order to be successful in the participation of this unit, students need to have background knowledge in the use of graphic organizers and of the daily life of the Middle Ages. It is recommended that the classroom teacher build background knowledge of the daily life of the people of the Middle Ages before and during this unit of study. This background knowledge is necessary as portions of Freak the Mighty (Philbrick, 1993) make reference to the Middle Ages. This background knowledge will allow students to gain a deeper understanding of medieval history, as well as the technology used in that time period. Students can then use that knowledge to make connections to the contemporary world.

The information and skills introduced and practiced in this unit will be useful in the acquisition of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS; National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers [NGAC], 2010). Citing textual evidence is a component of the reading, writing, and speaking/listening standard in the CCSS. Because many of the CCSS require students to cite textual evidence as a way to support their understandings, the information and skills gained through the participation of this unit will be reinforced. As this unit of study
is designed for grades 6–8, the CCSS from all three grades are used. Students will gain experience justifying their ideas related to the theme during discussion and in writing. For instance, in the Grade 7 CCSS, students are expected to compare texts from different time periods and genres on similar themes, yet there is a corresponding standard at Grades 6 and 8.

Being able to work effectively in a group setting is also an important skill for students to learn, as knowing how to work in various groupings is essential for success in later grades and for work opportunities in the future. Students will work as a whole class, in small groups, and individually at different stages in this unit.

The overall goals for this unit are as follows:

- Students will understand how the characteristics of courage relate to their own lives and the world.
- Students will correctly use academic language.
- Students will show evidence of author’s differing viewpoints.
- Students will empathize with and understand overcoming disabilities.
- Students will find examples of and understand how technology impacts their lives.
- Students will understand and analyze how cultures and cultural groups contributed to world history.
- Students will understand and analyze how technology has impacted world history.

### Unit Overview

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<td>What can be done about bullying in our school?</td>
<td>Through discussion and writing, the student will describe three actions that can be taken to stop bullying in the school. The student will cite textual evidence to support proposed antibullying actions.</td>
<td>The students will read Chapters 1–15 of Freak the Mighty, while participating in discussion groups about the concepts discovered in the book. They will also focus their discussion on the vocabulary used in the text.</td>
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<td>How do our differing abilities affect our lives?</td>
<td>Through discussion and writing, the student will describe how his/her differing abilities affect one’s life. The student will cite textual evidence to support ideas related to differing abilities of individuals.</td>
<td>The students will read through Chapter 25 of Freak the Mighty. They will cite textual evidence for the ideas they share during discussion groups, particularly those related to comparison and contrast.</td>
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<td>How can we encourage tolerance for others?</td>
<td>Through discussion, writing, and filming, the student will describe how to encourage tolerance of others. Through discussion and writing, the student will research concepts about castles and how technology influenced the building of castles.</td>
<td>The students will read Castle, making predictions about the text and recalling information from the text. The students will create a digital anti-bullying film and a replica of a castle.</td>
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<td>Through discussion and writing, the student will compare and contrast concepts related to “inequality” and “ignorance.”</td>
<td>The students will write a comparison/contrast paper about the concepts discussed in the unit. The students prepare for the culminating project: The Living Museum.</td>
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<td>Culminating Project</td>
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<td>How can I share my knowledge of medieval times, courage, and facing adversity?</td>
<td>Through discussion, poster displays, and presentation, the student will share her/his knowledge of medieval times, courage, and facing adversity with parents and peers.</td>
<td>The students will share their learning and projects through a Living Museum.</td>
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## Texts

The texts for this unit (see list that follows) were selected based on how they portray the concepts of courage, history, technology, or overcoming adversity. Text complexity was also considered in the selection of the texts for this unit. Evaluating books on text complexity considers three measures: the quantitative, qualitative, and reader/task considerations (NGAC, 2010). While teachers have long considered the quantitative measures of reading, not as much attention has been paid to the qualitative and reader/task measures. In order to engage readers in more complex texts, the reader’s motivation and interest must be considered (Fisher, Frey, & Lapp, 2012). The texts selected for this unit are of varying quantitative measures and cover a range of topics related to the unit themes. The inclusion of informational, biography, and fiction texts of varied reading levels offers students the opportunity to engage with texts that support different structures, as well as language and knowledge demands. The Lexile levels (when available or approximated) are also listed with the texts. There are texts available for students that are approaching, at, and above grade reading level. Many of the texts have detailed illustrations or photographs to support student reading.

It is expected that each student should read at least four additional books (averaging at least one additional book per week) related to the concepts of courage, history, technology, or overcoming adversity. In order to meet the CCSS recommendation of students reading more nonfiction than fiction texts at this level, the additional books chosen by the students should include three nonfiction texts and one fiction text. An example of a recording sheet for the texts read is included in Figure 2.

_Freak the Mighty_ (Philbrick, 1993) is used as an all-class read, while the remainder of the reading time will involve students engaged in choice reading. This novel integrates the concepts of courage, history, technology, or overcoming adversity. The teacher can use these concepts as points of discussion while facilitating the reading of the novel. To facilitate those discussions so that they align with the Speaking and Listening standards of the CCSS, it is suggested that the classroom teacher use Resnick’s Standards of Accountable Talk (Howell, 2010) or Webb’s Depth of Knowledge (Missouri DESE, 2012). To scaffold learning, students have the opportunity to work in groups and individually. Expressive reading, new strategies, and individual work expectations will be
modeled every day. When student work is completed, there is time for discussion/debriefing about the day’s reading. Student choice is also given in the creation of products to show learning.

Suggested Texts

Teaching and Learning Activities
In order to reach a variety of learners, the teaching and learning activities in this unit are presented in several grouping patterns. A whole-group configuration is used for read-alouds and minilessons. Small groups are used for the planning and implementation of the poster and coat-of-arms projects. Paired reading is used for the practicing of specific literacy strategies. Finally, students work individually to create personal dictionaries.

Week 1: What Can We Do About Bullying?

Group Description
These lessons are designed for individuals, small groups, and whole-group instruction.

Materials
- *Freak the Mighty* by Rodman Philbrick
- 1 additional text, selected by students
• Reading notebooks
• Individual word dictionaries

Objectives
• Through discussion and writing, the student will describe three actions that can be taken to stop bullying in the school.
• The student will cite textual evidence to support proposed anti-bullying actions.

Common Core State Standards and Learning Goals Achieved

Speaking and Listening, Grade 6, Standard 1
Speaking and Listening, Grade 7, Standard 1
Speaking and Listening, Grade 8, Standard 1
Reading: Literature, Grade 6, Standard 1
Reading: Literature, Grade 7, Standard 1
Reading: Literature, Grade 8, Standard 1
Reading: Literature, Grade 6, Standard 2
Reading: Literature, Grade 7, Standard 2
Reading: Literature, Grade 8, Standard 2
Reading: Literature, Grade 6, Standard 9
Reading: Literature, Grade 7, Standard 9
Reading: Literature, Grade 8, Standard 9
Writing, Grade 6, Standard 2
Writing, Grade 7, Standard 2
Writing, Grade 8, Standard 2

Procedures

Day 1
Tasks
1. Introduce the unit by completing the “K” and “W” of a KWL (Ogle, 1986) chart by introducing the concepts of courage, history, technology, or overcoming adversity.
2. Introduce the novel, Freak the Mighty by Rodman Philbrick. Discuss the cover and the book overview on the back of novel. Ask students how the quick version might relate to the concepts of courage, history, technology, or overcoming adversity.
3. With the students reading along, read aloud Chapter 1 while introducing the strategy “It Reminds Me of...” (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000). Model a think-aloud (Lytle, 1982) for the students during the read-aloud, telling them memories sparked by the text, while making connections back to the concepts of courage, history, technology, or overcoming adversity.
4. Add to the KWL chart to include any additional items related to courage, history, technology, or overcoming adversity.

Click here for details on the assessment for this lesson.

Day 2
Tasks
1. Ask the students to recall the main events of Chapter 1. With the students reading along, read aloud Chapter 2 of Freak the Mighty.
2. Conduct a minilesson modeling the strategy of Using Question Webs to Expand Thinking (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000). A question web is similar to a semantic web; however, it has a central question at the center. The lines coming from the central question hold responses and bits of information that support the answer to the question.
3. Assign students to read Chapter 3 in pairs or individually while practicing Using Question Webs to Expand Thinking. The question web should be documented in each student’s reading notebook (Buckner, 2009).
4. When reading is completed, ask the students to pair up to discuss an important line from text and what it means to them. The students should record their important line and what it means in the reading notebook. Within a whole-group setting, have the students pair to discuss the important line. Encourage the students to make connections between their important line and the concepts of courage, history, technology, or overcoming adversity.
5. Introduce and provide individual word dictionaries (McLaughlin, 2013) to the students. In a word dictionary, the students identify unfamiliar words, write them in new sentences, and create a project related to the words. Discuss how the dictionary is used in Freak the Mighty. Instruct them to make at least two word entries in their dictionaries as they read Chapter 4 of Freak the Mighty.

Student Reading
1. Instruct the students to read Chapter 4 at home while creating a new question web. The question web for Chapter 4 should be in the reading
1. Using Webb’s Depth of Knowledge (DOK) (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2012) or Resnick’s Standards of Accountable Talk (Howell, 2010; Michaels, O’Connor, & Resnick, 2008) as a guide, discuss the main events of Chapter 4 of *Freak the Mighty*. Webb’s DOK is similar to Bloom’s taxonomy in that it provides a framework for asking higher level questions. Resnick’s Standards of Accountable Talk include those participating in discussion groups being accountable to the knowledge of the topic, the learning community, and reasoning.

2. Read aloud Chapter 5 of *Freak the Mighty* with students following along in their texts. Model a think-aloud using the recall elements of Webb’s Depth of Knowledge or Resnick’s Standards of Accountable Talk.

3. Introduce related texts for the unit from the reading list. At this point students should choose to read one book for independent reading. After finishing students should choose another book from the list or one related to the concepts. Students should create a page in a reading notebook in order to document the books read (Buckner, 2009; Miller, 2009). A reading notebook, often in the form of a composition or spiral notebook, is a place for readers to record their thoughts and musings about what they have read. As explained earlier in the unit, it is expected that each student should read at least four additional books (averaging one book per week). Three of the books should be nonfiction, while the other should be fiction.

4. Conduct a group discussion about the various viewpoints presented in *Freak the Mighty*. Following the group discussion, direct the students to write a paragraph in their reading notebook about three different points of view found in the first five chapters of *Freak the Mighty*.

Student Reading

1. Using their time in class and at home, direct students to read Chapters 6 and 7 of *Freak the Mighty*. Students should add two words to their personal dictionaries.

2. Provide time for students to read their independent choice books.

Day 4

Tasks

1. Using Webb’s Depth of Knowledge (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2012) or Resnick’s Standards of Accountable Talk (Howell, 2010) as a guide, discuss the main events of Chapters 6 and 7 of *Freak the Mighty*.

2. Read aloud Chapter 8 of *Freak the Mighty* with students following along in their texts. Model a think-aloud using the skill/concept elements, specifically cause and effect, of Webb’s Depth of Knowledge or Resnick’s Standards of Accountable Talk.

3. Conduct a class discussion using the following prompts: “What can be done about bullying at our school? What actions can we take to stop instances of bullying?”

4. Explain a coat-of-arms. Ask how it relates to the concepts of courage and history. Also discuss how a coat-of-arms has affected the culture and histories of groups of people. Direct each student to create a personal coat-of-arms depicting the courage and history read about in *Freak the Mighty* and the bravery and courage that are needed to rid the school of bullies.

Student Reading

1. Assign students to read Chapters 9 and 10 of *Freak the Mighty*. Students should add two words to their personal dictionaries.

2. Provide time for students to read their independent choice books.
a think-aloud using the skill/concept elements, specifically cause and effect, of Webb’s Depth of Knowledge.

3. Divide students into groups of four. Explain that each group will create a “quote” treasure hunt for the other groups. Each group will create poster strips with quotes about courage. These will be placed around the classroom during the next day’s session.

4. Provide time for students to complete their coat-of-arms.

5. When completed, provide time for students to share their creations, focusing on how the coat-of-arms relate to the concepts of courage and history. Facilitate a discussion on how these concepts relate to overcoming adversity. This can be conducted in a whole-class or small-group setting.

Student Reading

1. Assign students to read Chapters 12–15. Students should add two words to their personal dictionaries.

2. Provide time for students to read their independent choice books.

Click here for details on the assessment for this lesson.

Week 2: How Are We Alike and Different?

Group Description
These lessons are designed for individuals, small groups, and whole-group instruction.

Materials
• *Freak the Mighty* by Rodman Philbrick
• *Castle* (video)
• 1 additional text, selected by students
• Reading notebooks

Objectives
• Through discussion and writing, the student will describe how his/her differing abilities affect one’s life.
• The student will cite textual evidence to support ideas related to differing abilities of individuals.

Common Core State Standards and Learning Goals Achieved

Speaking and Listening, Grade 8, Standard 1
Speaking and Listening, Grade 6, Standard 2
Speaking and Listening, Grade 7, Standard 2
Speaking and Listening, Grade 8, Standard 2
Reading: Literature, Grade 6, Standard 1
Reading: Literature, Grade 7, Standard 1
Reading: Literature, Grade 8, Standard 1
Writing, Grade 6, Standard 2
Writing, Grade 7, Standard 2
Writing, Grade 8, Standard 2

Procedures

Day 6

Tasks
1. Using Webb’s Depth of Knowledge (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2012) as a guide, discuss the main events of Chapters 12–15 of *Freak the Mighty*. Ask the students to read aloud from the text to support the main ideas shared.

2. Read aloud Chapter 16 of *Freak the Mighty* with students following along in their texts. Model a think-aloud using the skill/concept elements, specifically prediction, of Webb’s Depth of Knowledge or Resnick’s Standards of Accountable Talk.

3. Have the students get into the groups of four from the day before. Ask each group to choose an event from Chapters 12–16. Ask each student to assume the role of one of the characters from the book. Each character should then retell the event from that point of view. Then prompt the students to discuss how the characters overcame adversity, such as disabilities.

4. Ask the students to then explain how they thought like the author. Students should then record those ideas in the reading notebook.

5. Remaining in the same groups, students should place their poster strips from the day before around the room. As a group, the students search the room for the quotes. When found, the quotes are written in the reading notebooks.

Student Reading

1. Assign students to read Chapters 17 and 18. Students should add two words to their personal dictionaries.

2. Provide time for students to read their independent choice books.
Click here for details on the assessment for this lesson.

Day 7
Tasks
1. Using Webb’s Depth of Knowledge (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2012) as a guide, discuss the main events of Chapters 17 and 18 of *Freak the Mighty*.
2. Read aloud Chapter 19 of *Freak the Mighty* with students following along in their texts. Model a think-aloud using the skill/concept elements, specifically prediction, of Webb’s Depth of Knowledge.
3. Introduce the 20 Questions strategy (Twenty Questions, 2013) to be used with texts about overcoming adversity. Students are to write 20 questions of various levels in their reading notebooks. Students should also write the responses in their notebooks. These questions will then be used for group discussion.
4. Introduce various texts, including online resources and novels, in which adversity is portrayed. Students need to choose one to read. While reading, they need to write their 20 questions in their reading notebooks. The answers should also be written.

Student Reading
1. Assign students to read Chapters 20 and 21. Students should add two words to their personal dictionaries.
2. Provide time for students to read their independent choice books.

Click here for details on the assessment for this lesson.

Day 8
Tasks
1. Using Webb’s Depth of Knowledge (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2012) or Resnick’s Standards of Accountable Talk as a guide, discuss the main events of Chapter 23 and 24 of *Freak the Mighty*.
2. Read aloud Chapter 25 of *Freak the Mighty* with students following along in their texts. Model a think-aloud using the skill/concept elements, specifically inferences, of Webb’s Depth of Knowledge.
3. Discuss comparison and contrast of the concepts of courage and overcoming adversity. Create a class Venn diagram to record the ideas shared.
4. Ask the students, “What is technology?” Have them pair-share with a peer. Then have students record thoughts in reading notebooks. The ideas can include facts, drawings, ideas, and stories.
5. As a way to build background knowledge, the students will view David Macaulay’s (2006) *Castle* video. After viewing, have students pair-share any new ideas about technology. Encourage the discussion of a contemporary view of technology. What do we consider to be technology today? How do we use it? Then encourage discussion about the more historical definition of technology being “the use of tools to complete a project.” Using this historical definition, discuss what was technology in the past? How was it used? What forms of technology were seen in *Castle*? Discuss how technology has affected their lives and world history. Students should record those ideas in the reading notebook.

Day 9
Tasks
1. Using Webb’s Depth of Knowledge (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2012) as a guide, discuss the main events of Chapter 23 and 24 of *Freak the Mighty*.
2. Read aloud Chapter 25 of *Freak the Mighty* with students following along in their texts. Model a think-aloud using the skill/concept elements, specifically inferences, of Webb’s Depth of Knowledge.
3. Discuss comparison and contrast of the concepts of courage and overcoming adversity. Create a class Venn diagram to record the ideas shared.
4. Discuss different poetry formats such as haiku, free verse, and cinquain. Share the poetry practice sheet located in Figure 3. Students should complete the poetry practice sheet in their reading notebook. Then the students should write a poem inspired by what they have read thus far in this theme of *Courage: Facing Adversity*.

Student Reading and Practice
1. Assign students to read Chapters 23 and 24. Students should add two words to their personal dictionaries.
2. Provide time for students to read their independent choice books.
3. Students should rehearse reading aloud the poem written.

Click here for details on the assessment for this lesson.
Student Reading and Practice

1. Students should read Freak’s personal dictionary from *Freak the Mighty*.
2. Provide time for students to read their independent choice books.
3. Students should rehearse reading aloud the poem written.

Click here for details on the assessment for this lesson.

Day 10

Tasks

1. Using Webb’s Depth of Knowledge (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2012) as a guide, discuss the terms in Freak’s personal dictionary.
2. Have the students share words included in the personal dictionaries.
3. Compare and contrast the words the students included and the words from Freak’s personal dictionary.
4. Conduct a Poetry Café (Scholastic, 2013). As a way to celebrate the poems written on Day 8, each student will read aloud the poems in the form of a Poetry Café. The Café is set up as one might see in a coffeehouse, and parents and peers are invited to hear the readings by the poets.

Student Follow-Up

1. Students create a cover for their personal dictionaries.
2. Provide time for students to read their independent choice books.

Click here for details on the assessment for this lesson.

Week 3: How Can We Be Tolerant of Others?

Group Description

These lessons are designed for individuals, small groups, and whole-group instruction.

Materials

- *Freak the Mighty* by Rodman Philbrick
- *Castle* by David Macaulay
- 1 additional text, selected by students
- Reading notebooks
- Large sheets of paper
- Drawing pencils
- Digital film cameras
- Props as needed for the anti-bullying messages

Objectives

- Through discussion, writing, and filming, the student will describe how to encourage tolerance of others.
- Through discussion and writing, the student will research concepts about castles and how technology influenced the building of castles.

Common Core State Standards and Learning Goals Achieved

- Speaking and Listening, Grade 6, Standard 1
- Speaking and Listening, Grade 7, Standard 1
- Speaking and Listening, Grade 8, Standard 1
- Speaking and Listening, Grade 6, Standard 5
- Speaking and Listening, Grade 7, Standard 5
- Speaking and Listening, Grade 8, Standard 5
- Reading: Literature, Grade 6, Standard 1
- Reading: Literature, Grade 7, Standard 1
- Reading: Literature, Grade 8, Standard 1
- Reading: Literature, Grade 6, Standard 4
- Reading: Literature, Grade 7, Standard 4
- Reading: Literature, Grade 8, Standard 4
- Writing, Grade 6, Standard 7
- Writing, Grade 7, Standard 7
- Writing, Grade 8, Standard 7
- Math, Grade 7, Standard 2

Procedures

Day 11

Tasks

1. Introduce *Castle* (Macaulay, 1997). Make predictions based on the cover and title page. Ask students to make predictive connections between *Castle* and *Freak the Mighty*.
2. Read aloud *Castle*. When finished, recall the names of the types of castles shared in the reading. Post these on a class chart. Discuss the place of castles in history and the cultures of people.
3. Previous to the read-aloud, create a CLOZE passage (Vacca et al., 2012) from the text in which the
types of castles are deleted. On the paper, provide a word bank of the castle types. In pairs, have the students complete the CLOZE passage, filling in the names of the types of castles.

4. In pairs, have the students research castle structures using books and Internet sources. While researching, the students should record the types of technology available at the time of the castle construction. Each pair should then create a blueprint of a castle.

**Student Follow-Up**

1. Students should work to complete castle blueprints and to research technology available during the time of the castle construction. Students should also research the historical aspects of the castle they have created.

2. Provide time for students to read their independent choice books.

Click here for details on the assessment for this lesson.

**Day 12**

**Tasks**

1. Begin with an update of progress on research and poster of castle blueprint. Take a status of the class of the progress.

2. Introduce novels related to the course theme, using the “good fit strategy,” that is helping students find books that are at their independent reading level and of their interest (Boushey & Moser, 2006). Allow students to choose a novel to read. This should be recorded in the reading notebook.

3. Allow for independent workshop time in which students can continue progress on their research poster and independent reading.

**Student Follow-Up**

1. Students should work to complete their poster of castle construction.

2. Provide time for students to read their independent choice books.

Click here for details on the assessment for this lesson.

**Day 13**

**Tasks**

1. Discuss as a whole group the concepts of courage, history, technology, or overcoming adversity noted in the books read for independent reading. Record these on a class KWL chart (Ogle, 1986). Record on the KWL chart how the concepts of technology and history connect to the concept of courage.

2. Finish reading Castle (Macaulay, 1997), asking the students to remember facts from the text. When finished reading, have them meet in small groups to discuss the facts remembered. They should record the facts in the reading notebook.

3. Provide time for finishing the castle blueprint.

4. Divide students into groups of four for the digital film assignment (Strassman & Donahue, 2013). In this activity, students first study film to analyze the difference between the written and spoken word. Then in small groups, they write an anti-bullying message. Finally, they film their anti-bullying message as a public service announcement in the upcoming lesson. The link to a more detailed description of the lesson framework is available in the References of this unit.

**Student Follow-Up**

1. Provide time for students to read their independent choice books.

Click here for details on the assessment for this lesson.

**Day 14**

**Tasks**

1. Have the students sit together in their digital film groups. Have them discuss the ideas they have generated about the anti-bullying message they wish to express. Open up to class discussion in order to share ideas.

2. Have the students write the text for their anti-bullying film. The film must have an anti-bullying message and relate to the novel Freak the Mighty. The teacher should decide the length of the film, depending on the particulars of the school situation. The messages could be one statement or a short paragraph. Everyone in the group should speak as part of the video (this could be done chorally, or each say something individually, based on the script developed). The notes about and drafts of the anti-bullying message should be kept in the reading notebooks.

**Student Follow-Up**

1. Students need to complete the script and rehearse for filming. The teacher will need to monitor the groups’ progress in order to determine if more
time is needed for the filming of the anti-bullying messages.

2. Provide time for students to read their independent choice books.

Click here for details on the assessment for this lesson.

Day 15
Tasks
1. Groups work to film and edit their anti-bullying digital film. As the teacher decides how long the anti-bullying message should be, time for this portion of the assignment may vary. For instance, perhaps each group writes just one sentence that is an anti-bullying message. The group says their message as it is filmed, and all of the messages from each group are sequenced into one film. Another option could be that each member of each group writes a one-sentence message. Each group’s messages are filmed in sequence in order to create several anti-bullying messages. Still another option could be for each group to write a longer anti-bullying message with that text being divided up between the members of the group. Each member of the group says a portion of the text in the film.

2. The amount of time needed for the filming of the anti-bullying messages will depend upon the number of cameras available. If there are not enough cameras available for each group, students should use the time to be read independently, while continuing to add words to the personal dictionaries.

Student Follow-Up
1. Provide time for students to read their independent choice books.

Click here for details on the assessment for this lesson.

Week 4: How Is the Past Like the Present?
Group Description
These lessons are designed for individuals, pairs, and whole-group instruction.

Materials
- *Freak the Mighty* by Rodman Philbrick
- 2 additional texts, selected by students
- Reading notebooks
- Materials for invitations for the culminating project: The Living Museum

Objectives
- Through discussion and writing, the student will compare and contrast concepts related to “inequality” and “ignorance.”
- Through discussion, poster displays, and presentation, the student will share with parents and peers her/his knowledge of medieval times, courage, and facing adversity.

Common Core State Standards and Learning Goals Achieved
- Speaking and Listening, Grade 6, Standard 1
- Speaking and Listening, Grade 7, Standard 1
- Speaking and Listening, Grade 8, Standard 1
- Speaking and Listening, Grade 6, Standard 2
- Speaking and Listening, Grade 7, Standard 2
- Speaking and Listening, Grade 8, Standard 2
- Speaking and Listening, Grade 6, Standard 5
- Speaking and Listening, Grade 7, Standard 5
- Speaking and Listening, Grade 8, Standard 5
- Writing, Grade 6, Standard 2
- Writing, Grade 7, Standard 2
- Writing, Grade 8, Standard 2
- WA State The Arts Essential Academic Learning Requirement (EALR) 3

Procedures
Day 16
Tasks
1. Organize students into groups of four or five. Using Resnick’s Standards of Accountable Talk (Howell, 2010), have the students share their knowledge of the information they gained from the reading of their independent books. Then, they should compare and contrast (refer to ReadWriteThink, 2013) concepts of courage, history, technology, or overcoming adversity across books, including *Freak the Mighty*. These notations should be kept in the reading notebook.

2. The culminating project, The Living Museum, will be held on the last day of the unit. Parents and other classes should be invited to the event. At this point, notifications and invitations should be sent out. The teacher may decide to send out these notifications, or decide to have the students create the
invitations. If the teacher decides that the students should send out the invitations, time should be allowed for the completion of this project.

**Student Follow-Up**

1. Provide time for students to read their independent choice books.

Click here for details on the assessment for this lesson.

**Day 17**

**Tasks**

1. Using the notes from the discussion the day before, have each student write a comparison/contrast paper (see ReadWriteThink, 2013). At a minimum, the students should compare and contrast the concepts of courage, history, technology, or overcoming adversity between *Freak the Mighty* and two other texts. As a way to promote motivation and engagement in the task, the two texts chosen should be of student choice. The draft of the comparison/contrast should be written in the reading notebook.

2. When finished, the students should share their comparison/contrast paper with a peer.

**Student Follow-Up**

1. Provide time for students to read their independent choice books.

Click here for details on the assessment for this lesson.

**Day 18**

**Tasks**

1. Ask students about the uses and importance of helmets in today’s society. Ask them about the uses and importance in medieval times. Compare the uses in contemporary and historical times. Record these on a class chart. Show examples of helmets from the past.

2. Ask the student to design their own helmet. This can be done as a two-dimensional or three-dimensional design.

3. As a class, plan the Living Museum culminating project. At this event, the students will share the products they produced during the unit, including the castle posters, digital films, reading notebooks, dictionaries, coat-of-arms, poetry, and helmets. Assign each small group one or two of the artifact areas to display.

**Follow-Up**

1. Provide time for students to read their independent choice books.

Click here for details on the assessment for this lesson.

**Day 19**

**Tasks**

1. Discuss the various roles of medieval times, for instance, knight, king, squire, lady, lord, and serf. Discuss the concepts of “inequality” and “ignorance.” Discuss how these concepts relate to the roles of medieval times. Discuss these concepts as they relate to contemporary times. Discuss how these concepts relate to the theme of *Courage: Facing Adversity*.

2. Direct the students to compare and contrast (ReadWriteThink, 2013) the concepts of “inequality” and “ignorance” in medieval and contemporary times. The essay should be written in their reading notebooks.

**Student Follow-Up**

1. Provide students time to prepare for the Living Museum culminating project. Since the students worked in various groups during this unit, they should consider how they would like the projects presented within the Living Museum. For instance, the displays could be set up in “like” categories. The castle posters could be displayed in one location, with the helmets and coats of arms in another location. The digital films could be set up in an area with a projector and the films displayed through a loop. The poetry could be read in a stage area in another Poetry Café. The personal items such as the dictionaries and reading notebooks could be displayed on tables for the visitors to view.

Click here for details on the assessment for this lesson.

**Day 20: The Culminating Project: The Living Museum**

**Tasks**

1. Provide students time to set up the classroom for the Living Museum.

2. Students will share with parents and peers the projects they have completed related to the theme *Courage: Facing Adversity*.

Click here for details on the assessment for this lesson.
Assessment

Day 1
Use the content on the KWL Chart to gauge student knowledge and perceptions of courage, history, technology, or overcoming adversity. Specifically, examine what they know about courage and what more they want to know.

Day 2
Use the Participation Checklist in Figure 1. This checklist is designed to document student on-task behavior and discussion group processes. The teacher can create a table with enough spaces to document each student’s participation.

Day 3
1. Assess the writing in response to the prompt of three points of view.
2. As students complete the reading of their independent choice books, they should record it in their Courage Independent Reading Log (see Figure 2). By the end of the unit they should have each read four additional books related to the theme.

Day 4
Use the Participation Checklist in Figure 1. This checklist is designed to document student on-task behavior and discussion group processes. The teacher can create a table with enough spaces to document each student’s participation.

Day 5
Evaluate the coat-of-arms as a product, considering the portrayal of courage/bravery and history, the symbolism on the coat-of-arms, and the visual elements of the coat-of-arms.

FIGURE 1. Participation Checklist (Days 2 and 4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name</th>
<th>Student is on task (Yes/No)</th>
<th>Student listens to what others have to say (Yes/No)</th>
<th>Student contributes an idea into the discussion (Yes/No)</th>
<th>Student does not distract other students during the discussion (Yes/No)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

FIGURE 2. Independent Reading Log (Day 3)

Courage Independent Reading Log

Name ____________________________

My goal for the number of books to be read for this unit is four (4) books.
I will read at least three nonfiction (informational or biography) books and one fiction book.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Started</th>
<th>Date Completed</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Genre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Informational, Biography, Autobiography, or Memoir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Informational, Biography, Autobiography, or Memoir</td>
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<td>Informational, Biography, Autobiography, or Memoir</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Informational, Biography, Autobiography, or Memoir</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Day 6
Have the students write in reading notebooks how they elicited comments from peers and how well they participated in the group discussion. Use the following prompts:

1. What could I have done to make the text clearer for the reader?
2. How could I have made the words I used more descriptive?
3. What ideas did I get or learn from reading someone else’s writing and point of view?

Ideas for writing to the prompts can be modeled after Webb’s DOK or Resnick’s Standards of Accountable Talk.

Day 7
Evaluate students on the number of questions and responses generated, as well as the various levels of questions.

Day 8
Evaluate the students on the accuracy of the poetry practice sheet and evaluate each student’s poem using the Poetry Rubric (see Figure 3).

Day 9
Evaluate students’ reading notebooks for the ideas about technology.

FIGURE 3. Poetry Practice Sheet and Poetry Rubric (Day 8)

| Information to include in my poem: |
| Theme of my poem: |
| Characters or things in my poem: |
| The form I will use for my poem is: |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poetry Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Form</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Word Usage</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Poetic Techniques (elements)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language Conventions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Illustration</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Day 10**
Use the Poetry Reading Rubric located in Figure 4 to evaluate the reading of the poems.

**Day 11**
Use the observational checklist to document student behavior located in Figure 5.

**Day 12**
Use the observational checklist to document student behavior located in Figure 6.

**Day 13**
Have the students write to the prompts “How does *Castle* relate to the story *Freak the Mighty*?” and “How do the concepts in *Freak the Mighty* relate to the theme *Courage: Facing Adversity*?” Evaluate the comparison/contrast concepts shared in the writing.

**Day 14**
Use the participation checklist in Figure 7 to assess student participation in the digital filming project.

---

**FIGURE 4. Poetry Reading Rubric (Day 10)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Body Language</td>
<td>Stands/sits up straight and makes eye contact with the audience; uses facial expressions and is enthusiastic</td>
<td>Stands/sits up straight and makes eye contact with the audience</td>
<td>Sometimes stands/sits up straight and makes eye contact with the audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparedness</td>
<td>Is prepared and has rehearsed</td>
<td>Is prepared, but could use a couple more rehearsals</td>
<td>Is somewhat prepared, but needs more work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pauses/Clarity</td>
<td>Student uses at least two pauses to clarify meaning or add emphasis; speaks clearly and enunciates</td>
<td>Student uses a pause to clarify meaning or add emphasis; speaks clearly</td>
<td>Student uses pauses, but they do not clarify meaning or add emphasis; may not always speak clearly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volume</td>
<td>Student speaks loud enough for everyone to hear</td>
<td>Student speaks loud enough for everyone to hear most of the time</td>
<td>Student speaks loud enough for everyone to hear some of the time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listens to Other Students</td>
<td>Student uses active listening skills to show interest in other students’ poems, and doesn’t do anything distracting</td>
<td>Student uses active listening skills, but may do something distracting</td>
<td>Student mainly listens, but may sometimes appear to not listen, and may do one thing that is distracting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FIGURE 5. Checklist Observation (Day 11)**

1. Members of castle group are participating _____ / 5
2. Group members are all participating in research _____ / 5
3. Students complete CLOZE procedure worksheet _____ / 5
Total ________/15

**FIGURE 6. Checklist Observation (Day 12)**

1. Members of group are all helping to finish poster covering technology and castle architecture _____ / 5
2. Every student chooses a novel _____ / 5
3. Research poster shows names of group members, research on castle architecture naming at least three different types of castles, and three different technologies of the time _____ / 5
Total ________/15

**FIGURE 7. Checklist Observation (Day 14)**

1. Student came to class with an idea of what their group was going to do for filming _____ / 5
2. All group members are contributing to filming project _____ / 5
3. All group members are assigned a task to do on the project _____ / 5
Total ________/15
Day 15
Use the Anti-Bullying Campaign Video Rubric located in Figure 8 in order to assess the contents of the video.

Day 16
Use the Group Discussion Checklist located in Figure 9.

Day 17
Use the Writing Prompt Rubric located in Figure 10 in order to assess the comparison/contrast paper.

Day 18
Use the Helmet Rubric located in Figure 11 to evaluate the helmets created.

Day 19
Use the Caste System Writing Rubric located in Figure 12.

Day 20
Use the Dictionary Rubric located in Figure 13 to evaluate the personal dictionaries.
REFERENCES


Twenty questions reading strategy (2013, April 30). Available at http://www1.cbsd.org/sites/teachers/middle/csikora/Academy%203/Twenty%20Questions.pdf


### About the Authors

**Sharryn Larsen Walker** is an associate professor in literacy at Central Washington University (CWU) in Ellensburg. Her areas of interest in teaching and research are children’s literature, early literacy, and undergraduate teacher education. She often integrates academic service learning and student research projects into her courses. For this student research project, Sharryn mentored the co-authors as they created this unit plan as a class assignment in a literacy methods and materials course. Since starting at CWU, she has helped the students start a student council of the International Reading Association (IRA). For the past several years, members of CentralWORD have provided service to the community and have attended the IRA conferences. She may be reached at swalker@cwu.edu.

**Lacey Goble** is a senior at CWU. She will receive her bachelor’s degree in elementary education with a minor in literacy in 2014. While at CWU, Lacey served as a student ambassador for the school’s admissions office, often leading campus tours for prospective students. Representing the East Cascades, Lacey placed in the Top 10 in the 2013 Miss Washington Pageant.

**Kyle Hutchinson** is a senior at CWU. Kyle will receive his bachelor’s degree in elementary education with a minor in literacy in 2014. As a result of this project, Kyle presented at the 2013 International Reading Association Conference in San Antonio. Kyle completed his practicum in the literacy program at CWU in Macau, China.

**Katie Wilson** graduated from CWU in 2013 with a degree in elementary education and a minor in literacy education. While at CWU, she played rugby for the Women’s Rugby Club. She is in her first year of teaching.

**Naomi Zornes** is a senior at CWU. She will receive her bachelor’s degree in elementary education with a minor in literacy in 2014. With Kyle, Naomi presented on this project at the San Antonio IRA. She has a gift for storytelling and has used that skill in her teaching with children.