

English Language Arts 6: Living with HIV*

Aim/Rationale

Cycle 1: Students will begin to understand the media's influence on the public's perception of what it is like to live with HIV/AIDS. They will exercise critical media literacy skills and develop a more complete and accurate idea of the reality of living with HIV/AIDS.

Cycle 2: Students will critically examine the media's role in their understanding of living with HIV/AIDS. They will begin to more fully understand the realities of contemporary life living with HIV and become more aware of the social issues surrounding it.

Trigger Warning

Discussions around HIV and live testimonial

Cycle 1 Competencies

- 1) *Uses language/talk to communicate and to learn*
- 2) *Represents their literacy in different media*
- 3) *Reads and listens to written, spoken and media texts*
- 4) *Writes a variety of genres for personal and social purposes*

Cycle 2 Competencies

- 1) *Uses language/talk to communicate and to learn*
- 2) *Reads and listens to written, spoken and media texts*
- 3) *Produces texts for personal and social purposes*

Lesson

Materials

Cycle 1 and Cycle 2:

Computer, projector, chosen film, six small Ziploc baggies per students, six different types of candy

Hook [5-10 min]

Cycle 1 and Cycle 2:

Class Discussion:

What is your conception of the daily life of someone living with HIV/AIDS?

Where does this idea come from? Can you think of examples from the media which portray the life of someone living with HIV/AIDS?

Development/Teaching Methods

Cycle 1 Learning Activity

Guest speaker

Have someone come to the class who is HIV positive tell their story (check for community HIV/AIDS organizations like ACCM in your area for a guest speaker). Let the students ask questions afterwards.

After the speaker leaves, review and discuss the following question, relating to the person's story.

- How old was the person when they contracted HIV?
- How did the person disclose their status? How did friends/family /colleagues react?
- How did friends and family influence this person's experience?
- How was this person's day-to-day life changed?
- What type of treatment did this person receive? What was it like to receive this treatment?
- What were some of the predominant feelings this person dealt with? Did they change as the condition worsened?

In their reflective journals have students write about how their conceptions about living with HIV changed or remained the same after the presentation by the guest speaker.

Adaptations for Cycle 2

The day prior to this lesson have students complete a simulated HIV medication regimen¹. Label 6 small Ziploc bags with the appropriate labels and fill with six different types of candy

- Take 1 Crixivan at breakfast and dinner (2)
- Take 1 AZT every at breakfast, lunch and dinner (3)
- Take one anti-nausea pill with meals (3)
- Take 1 3TC four hours after breakfast and dinner [on an empty stomach] (2)
- Take one anti-diarrheal pill with meals (3)
- Take one tablet twice a day for muscle loss (2)

Students must take the medication as "prescribed" and they must not reveal to their friends outside the classroom or their family that they are taking "medication".

In their reflective journals student will write about their experiences on the drug regimen.

Guiding Questions:

- How hard was it to adhere to the regimen? Imagine if you had to do it everyday, how might this impact your daily life?
- How hard was it to keep it a secret from your family and friends?
- How might the drug regimen create/propagate the stigma surrounding HIV?

¹ Explain to students that taking medication is much simpler now but that many people living with HIV have had to follow this type of complicated regimens before recent advances in HIV medication.

Culmination

Cycle 1 and Cycle 2

Have students reflect on how living with HIV has changed over the years. What prior knowledge do they have of the historical progression?

Performance Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

Cycle 1:

- Exercise critical media literacy skills
- More fully understand the realities of daily life for someone living with HIV
- More concretely situate living with HIV with the real experiences of someone living with HIV

Cycle 2:

- Exercise critical media literacy skills
- Reflect on the daily life of someone living with HIV
- Reflect on the media's influence on their perception of life with HIV
- Understand more fully the stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS

Assessment Ideas

Have students watch one of the following films which touch upon the lives of people living with HIV and/or AIDS:

- Philadelphia
- Angels in America
- A Mother's Prayer
- Rent
- And the Band Played On

Guiding Questions for Discussion:

After hearing the guest speaker (and/or after following the regimen) how do they feel about the accuracy of the film? How does the film situate itself historically?

Watch a clip from the show *Imagine Afrika*. How does this alter your perception of the life of someone living with HIV?

* *Cross curricular consideration* - this lesson is best suited to follow the science lesson about the basics of HIV transmission.



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