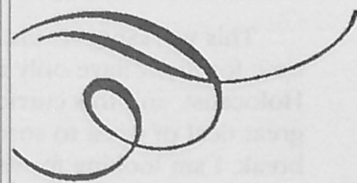


HOLOCAUST WORKSHOP FOR TEACHERS

by Vicki I. Schmidt



INTRODUCTION

In early 2007 the Indiana legislature ratified an act requiring high school teachers to integrate Holocaust studies into their U.S. history classes. In December 2007 Indiana State University offered an educational workshop for teachers that would help facilitate this goal. Instructors for the workshop included Deborah A. Batiste, Anti-Defamation League Project Director; Chaim Singer-Frankes, Training Specialist, USC Shoah Foundation Institute, California; and Stephanie McMahon-Kaye, International School for Holocaust Studies, Yad Vashem, Jerusalem. The essay below is about integrating this workshop into the author's classroom.

THE WORKSHOP

My 8th grade choir and 8th grade General Music classes will take three to four class periods of 39 minutes each to do an interdisciplinary project with the 8th grade English classes as they read *The Children of Willesden Lane* by Mona Golabek and Lee Cohen. The workshop that I attended at Indiana State University has given me the tools I need to adequately present accurate information on the Holocaust.

My field of expertise is in music and while studying in college, the Holocaust and how music affected the lives of the victims was not discussed. The information I have gathered since has been in bits and pieces and not enough information has been garnered to insure that students would receive authenticated information. The curriculum presented at this workshop has given me the resources I need to present reliable information and to show connections between current students and the daily lives of the victims of the Holocaust.

I am developing lesson plans that will show how music played an important part in the survival of some victims, specifically children, of the Holocaust. The workshop information is helping me to streamline the lessons I need, with accurate information, to present to my students. I will be able to show how the artists among the Holocaust victims were affected and how children, besides Anne Frank, turned to writing. Using

the information, I will help the students understand why the children found relief in the arts. Students in their 8th grade English classes have already read and researched many family members and friends of Anne Frank and created journals/scrapbooks. My classes will spend several class periods in the media center revisiting the books that were used with a different approach. How are the arts, other than journaling, mentioned and used at this same time period?

At this time (December), the English teacher is covering Anne Frank, but in the spring we, the 8th grade team and I, will work together to form an interdisciplinary project as the students read *The Children of Willesden Lane*. I will be using the music that Lisa Jura played while at Willesden Lane to let the students write reflections on why a particular piece was important to Lisa.

I would like to read the book *Little Eva and Miriam in the First Grade* by Eva Kor, her personal account of prejudice by the twins as first graders. It will also open the discussion of how some children were able to pass as gentile, with or without admitting they were Jewish.

Next, we will discuss the ghettos and the primary objective for establishing them, and then as a class we will visit The Yad Vashem Web site. We will view the online exhibitions of "To Live and Die With Honor," "No Child's Play," and "The Pen and the Sword," with a special emphasis on the quote by Alexander Bogen, "To be creative during the Holocaust was also a protest. Each man when standing face to face with cruel danger, with death, reacts in his own way. The artist reacts in an artistic way. This is his weapon" (Leven).

After this presentation, I will read to the students the book *Rose Blanche* by Roberto Innocenti. It is a simple and easy-to-read picture book that shows the curiosity of a young German girl who comes to the aid of the individuals in a concentration camp; the book will take only a few minutes. Music will be used in the background to show the effect music can have on a story. It gives another aspect of people who were affected by the war. From here I will make the connec-

tion with the music of Lisa Jura, from the book *The Children of Willesden Lane*, as she tries to survive along with many other children who managed to escape the confinements of the camps and ghettos.

This workshop could not have come at a better time for me. I have only a little knowledge of the Holocaust, and this curriculum provides me with a great deal of work to sort through during our winter break. I am looking forward to adding this to my curriculum in general music and finding ways to cover this in my 8th grade choir.

REFERENCE

Leven, S. The pen and the sword: Jewish artist and partisan, Alexander Bogen. *Yad Vashem Magazine*. Retrieved April 3, 2008, from http://yad-vashem.org.il/about_yad/magazine/magazine_new/the_pen.html

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Vicki Schmidt received her Bachelor (1975) and Master (1980) Degrees in Music Education from Indiana State University. She has taught for 32 years with 31 years in the elementary and middle schools of Tippecanoe School Corporation. She is currently the Choral Director and 8th Grade General Music Teacher at Wea Ridge Middle School in Lafayette, Indiana.

