
Interdisciplinary Learning Session

Making a difference: Cross curricular links History, Maths, English, Business Studies

(Notes by Roslin Pettigrew, Broughton High School.)

STARTING POINT: Victorian Edinburgh – Edinburgh 1870s – 1890s

A study of Levi Prinski's life and the other boys of the Edinburgh Industrial Brigade School reveals a lot about the conditions and causes of poverty. Also a consideration of the different lifestyles of Robert Louis Stevenson and Florence Morham living at the same time, highlights the various disparities in people's living conditions. This can lead naturally on to a discussion about charity and provides pupils with an opportunity to reflect upon how they can contribute to their own society. The purpose of this interdisciplinary learning session is to allow pupils, as responsible citizens, to plan and organise a fundraising day.

SUGGESTED PLAN

Preparation (some possible activities to explore Victorian Edinburgh)

Levi's Story

- Begin by showing pupils pictures illustrating poverty in Victorian Britain. Discuss what they see and ask for initial reactions. Ask pupils to consider why people were so poor.
- Introduce pupils to Levi's story. Pupils work in pairs to make a timeline of the events in Levi's life. More able pupils could be given the transcript in its entirety. For lower ability children the transcript could be broken up into segments and each pair would work on a different segment.
- Pupils feedback to whole class and timeline of Levi's life is produced on the board.
- Discuss with class the idea of how easy it was for Levi to fall into poverty. Pupils consider what prevents people from falling into poverty nowadays.
- Show pupils sample of the pictures from Florence Morham's life (e.g. shopping in Jenners, ladies school, on a day trip). Pupils consider the difference between the two children's lives.
- Using what they know about the two children, pupils could script an imaginary conversation between Florence and Levi if they met accidentally – perhaps outside Waverley Market whilst Levi was looking for an odd-job and Florence was waiting for her mama.

Boys of the Industrial Brigade

- Introduce letter to **Scotsman 24th December 1869** regarding the upbringing of delinquent children. Give the pupils a few minutes to decide whether they agree with the letter and ask them to explain their opinion.
- Move on to explain a little about the role of charitable organisations in providing provision for the poor in Victorian Britain, using the Industrial Brigade as an example.
- Divide pupils into groups of three. Each group should be given three entries from the Register of the Industrial Brigade. Each pupil in the group should take on the role of one

of the boys. The pupils should interview each other in order to ascertain how each boy ended up under the care of the Industrial Brigade.

- Pupils should look for common themes in each of the boys' lives.
- Feedback to the rest of the class. Class create a mind-map on the board of reasons why children ended up in poverty.
- Discuss with class the **“Statement as to the Working & Results of the Edinburgh Industrial Brigade for the 6 months since its commencement – 1868”**
- Pupils should design a poster advertising the work of the Industrial Brigade.
- Pupils could attempt the feather and string task mentioned in the letter.

Preparation for the IDL session

- Pupils could investigate modern day organisations that help poor children. The pupils could then work towards holding their own fundraising event.
- Emphasis should be placed on the pupils themselves choosing what they want to raise funds for. A starting point for this could be a class discussion around what the pupils would like to see improved in the local area. Each class could choose to raise funds for a different cause.
- Pupils could then work within their groups to research their chosen cause.
- Pupils would then divide into groups to decide upon a fundraising strategy and a fundraising goal. Each group reports back to the rest of the class and a vote is taken. Pupils then work collaboratively to plan their event.
- Each group could also prepare a stall for the fundraising day providing information about their chosen cause.

On the day

On the fundraising day, groups should put their plans into action.

Follow up

Pupils could write a report on their fundraising action and evaluate the success of the activity. In their evaluation, pupils should consider the value of raising awareness, encouraging community spirit, and the role of team work.