Voting Rights, the Klan, and Race in *Stella by Starlight*

Asia Conyers, Individualized Studies, Winthrop University

Advisor: Margaret Gillikin, Ph.D., Department of Interdisciplinary Studies, Winthrop University

**Abstract:**

The purpose of this research is to explore ways to integrate two subjects effectively for an interdisciplinary unit. Teaching interdisciplinary lessons helps encourage students to go beyond the typical restrictions of just one content area, and it helps them to become more creative, focus on critical thinking, and work on communication skills. In addition, this project will include a unit plan integrating the subjects of social studies and language arts to teach the novel *Stella by Starlight* by Sharon Draper which takes place during the 1930s. The student-oriented lessons will emphasize reading comprehension and allow the students to apply the book’s concepts to historical events and to the students’ daily lives.

**Compelling Question:**

What impact did the Ku Klux Klan have on African American communities in 1920s & 1930s?

**Formative Tasks:**

1. Primary source analyses:
   - A Brief History of the Ku Klux Klan
   - Slave Narrative comparison
   - The state of Louisiana Literacy Test
   - Diagram of a segregated floor at Detroit Memorial Hospital.
   - Segregated Water Fountains

2. Reading reflections

3. Letter writing

4. Annotations on sticky notes

**Summative Task:**

Students will write an additional chapter for the book.

**Taking Informed Action:**

- Create public service announcement for the school’s morning show on the importance of voting
- Make posters to put around the school about the importance of voting

**Supporting Questions (selected):**

- What was the value of letter writing historically?
- What is the Ku Klux Klan, and what did they stand for?
- What are the issues occurring with the KKK in the novel?
- How does segregation impact lives of African Americans and whites during the Great Depression?
- Would you still vote, if your family’s lives would be in danger because of your voting? Why or why not?

---

https://images-gr-assets-com-books/1420982354/12256133.jpg

https://fathertheo.files.wordpress.com/2013/07/louisiana-literacy-1a.jpg

https://media.graytvinc.com/images/810*510/02-06-15+kkk+cross+burning.jpg

https://www.virginiahistory.org/sites/default/files/13SchoolInterior%20SuperGraphic_medium.jpg