

Media Assignment Compilation – Fall 2011

Acceptance

- One of the media forms that we chose is a web link that links to Chapter 5 from the book “[Echoes Of The Maggid Heartwarming stories and parables of wisdom and inspiration](#)”, by [Rabbi Paysach Krohn](#). <http://www.artscroll.com/Chapters/eomh-005.html>. This chapter describes a heartwarming story about a child with intellectual disabilities who was given the chance to join an ongoing baseball game as extra batter and allowed to bat in the most decisive moment of the game, and the reaction of all the players. The story ends with a comment about the players of both teams forgetting about winning or losing the game but actually reaching a level of perfection in their acceptance of the disabled child.
- "The Birthmark" by Nathaniel Hawthorne is a short story about a married couple, Alymer and Georgiana. Alymer is a scientist and Georgiana is his beautiful wife who happens to have a small birthmark on her cheek. When they first married, Alymer hardly noticed Georgiana's birthmark but as time passes he becomes obsessed with what he perceives as his wife's only visible imperfection. He performs a number of experiments on his wife which lead to a tragic ending. (Here is a link to the etext: <http://etext.virginia.edu/etcbin/toccer-new?id=HawBirt.sgm&images=images/modeng&data=/texts/english/modeng/parsed&tag=public&part=all>). This short story is great to use in class because it is a quick, easy read with a clear message that lends itself to easily to small or large group discussion. Key talking points include physical imperfection, perception, change, and acceptance.
- **Mask**, (1985 *Peter Bogdanovich film*) a movie that tells a biographical story of teenage boy, Roy L “Rocky” Dennis, who suffered from an extreme physical disorder, called *lionatis*. In addition to his physical challenges, is his home life with his alcoholic mother, played by Cher. Rocky overcomes these difficulties with humor in awkward moments in “regular” high school. The principal wants to send to him special school to meet his needs. His mother asks if that school teaches “algebra, biology and english at this school, because...these are Rocky's needs.” Rocky does very well in school and wins acceptance with other students by tutoring and ultimately finds a love interest with Diane, who is blind. Here is a link illustrating how Rocky uses humor to find some acceptance being new the new kid in class. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CZhNP08KYn4&feature=related> (at 3:40 mark) And here is a link where he finds love, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mJAxZt7joNE&feature=related>. The movie is dated (eighties music etc.) but is a good movie for the students because they can relate to the challenges of trying to fit in and finding acceptance even though they may not have the same challenges as Rocky.

Overcoming Adversity

- *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime* is the story of Christopher Boone, a presumably autistic 15 year old. Christopher discovers the aforementioned dog murdered in a neighbor's yard. Christopher overcomes his fears and difficulties in order to solve the murder while simultaneously studying for his O Level Math Exam. Christopher is able to use facets of his disability to his advantage to track down the murderer. In the process he discovers some startling truths about his family. Coming to terms with these facts is Christopher's biggest achievement. He overcomes the limitations associated with autism and is able to reconcile his relationship with his parents. In a classroom, a teacher could use this book as an example to show that each person has strengths and weaknesses. Since the book is written in first person, it would give mainstream students a glimpse of what an autistic person's life is like from their viewpoint.

- *Tommy* is an album, rock opera, and movie by the band The Who. *Tommy* is about a boy who is described throughout the story as "deaf, dumb, and blind." Tommy's disabilities are developed at a very young age. After his father murders his mother's extra-marital lover, his parents tell Tommy that he didn't see or hear anything, which leads Tommy to become extremely traumatized, and his senses such as sight, hearing, and speech fall by the wayside. As Tommy grows older into a young man, his parents leave him in the care of his uncle due to their inability to "cure him." His uncle proves to be an evil man, so to escape from his reality, Tommy soon develops an affinity for playing pinball. Despite his limitations, he defeats the pinball champion in an epic battle and becomes famous. After his success and notoriety, his parents discover that Tommy's disabilities are psychosomatic rather than physical. They try to reach out to him with their new "cure" they have found, but he is not interested as he has overcome his limitations on his own. Students could learn from *Tommy* that certain limitations can be overcome with hard work and determination. Tommy's perseverance pays off as he overcomes his own adversity to reach fortune and fame.
- *The Blind Side* is a movie starring Sandra Bullock, who plays a wealthy southern housewife with strong Christian values and an even stronger personality. It tells the story of a homeless teenager named Michael and how he is changed by the relationship with Sandra Bullock. Michael had a lot of potential, but because of his learning disability and rough upbringing in the projects of Memphis, most people wrote him off as unintelligent. One day a wealthy, caring family welcomes Michael in and gives him the love and attention he needs, changing his life and future forever. The family sees the good in Michael when no one else does, and they take the time to teach him and provide him with a private in-home tutor. Once he was given the extra help he needed at home, Michael was able to succeed in school. Michael shows that he is a brilliant teenager and he also demonstrates his great athletic potential in school. Watch this film with a Kleenex box close by and learn about beating the odds. This film would be useful in a classroom because we all encounter students who come from similar backgrounds as Michael. Given the chance and help of others, everyone has the potential to overcome odds.

Perseverance

- *My Left Foot* is a moving film based on the autobiography of Christy Brown. Brown was an Irishman born with cerebral palsy. He suffered from severe spasms in both arms and his right leg, leaving him in total control of only one limb, his left leg. He showed remarkable dexterity in the use of his left foot and with the encouragement of his family and a social worker he began painting as a teenager. By the time he reached his twenties he was a noted painter. He published his autobiography, also titled *My Left Foot*, in 1954, at the age of twenty two. The movie, released in 1989, was hailed for the portrayal of Brown, played by Daniel Day-Lewis. It profiles Brown's journey from childhood to infamy and all of his stumbling and triumphs along the way. Most importantly it depicts Brown's own struggle with self-acceptance. Christy Brown's eventual self-acceptance allowed him to transform from a child many considered unteachable and vegetative to a brilliant painter and author.
- Having been an avid skier for most of his life, Chris Waddell was paralyzed at 20 years old after a terrible skiing accident. However, instead of letting his disability deter him from an active lifestyle, he set his sights on climbing Mount Kilimanjaro in 2009 so that he could help "break down barriers and stereotypes of people with disabilities." Chris climbed Mount Kilimanjaro in 7 days using a special four-wheel mountain bike. He only relied on his team to help him reach the last 100 feet to the summit. Chris Waddell demonstrates perseverance because he had the courage to challenge himself to a feat that has only been accomplished by few people, able-bodied or disabled. Even when the climb became difficult, he recognized the importance of continuing his journey. He dually received the satisfaction of attaining

his goal and brought attention to the capabilities of people with disabilities.

- Luca ‘Lazylegz’ Patuelli is a 27 year old Canadian breakdancer. He’s been featured on So You Think You Can Dance, numerous talk shows, movies, and he travels the world with his international dance crew “Ill-Abilities.” He has no use of his legs as he was born with the congenital disorder, Arthrogryposis. Patuelli chose not to let his disability discourage him from reaching his goals. When he is not performing with his dance crew, he is advocating for people with disabilities and trying to rid the negative stigma attached to the word “disability”. On August 7, 2010 Patuelli walked 1-kilometer without the use of his leg braces or crutches. This personal feat is a testament to his perseverance and serves as a source of inspiration for all people with or without disabilities.
- The Hoyt family is a story of a father and son, Dick and Rick Hoyt who compete in marathons and triathlons. Despite being physically disabled, Rick Hoyt is able to compete in these demanding events with the help of his father. When it comes to running Dick pushes his son in a wheel chair, in swimming events he pulls a small boat carrying his son, and a special bike with an extra seat propels the duo during cycling events. For Rick and his father this is a story of perseverance. When Rick was a child, doctors thought he suffered from a mental disability also, but his father refused to believe that and raised a son who graduated from high school. If a physically disabled individual is able to persevere, and compete in marathons then we are all capable of overcoming the obstacles in our own lives. This example could reemphasize the potential every student has on both a physical and mental basis should they aspire to a goal and put in the hard work. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dDnrLv6z-mM>
- “Precious: is a movie based on the bestselling novel: “Push” by Sapphire. Push is a semi-autobiography about Sapphire’s life experiences. It tells the story of Precious, an overweight, illiterate teenager who suffers from emotional and sexual abuse, which results in her doing poorly in school as well as emotional disabilities. Her home life is extremely difficult: her father repeatedly rapes her, leading to her having two children; one with Down’s syndrome, and a mother who is both emotionally and physically abusive. Despite the obstacles that Precious has to face, with her difficult home life, her disabilities, she still succeeds in removing herself from her abusive situation, and once removed, learns how to read, going on to author a book. The movie ends with Precious looking forward to the future with hope. When learning of Sapphire and her challenges, her story of determination and will could be applied to any student who is struggling with a specific concept; with the will and preservation Sapphire had a reading disability and is now a bestselling author. This movie is on Netflix instant play, as well as being in all movie rental stores. It was nominated for many Oscars, including best picture. Clips can be found on <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3UeJD031qRc>
- “I Am Sam” is a movie about a disabled man that has the intellectual capacity of a seven-year old who fights for the custody of his young daughter, who has been taken away from him by social services. Sean Penn plays a mentally disabled person, Sam, who is a good-willed, caring person, and Penn is able to take advantage of that to create a trusted advocate who knows he doesn't have an easy life ahead of him, but who keeps pushing for one. Though Sam provides a loving and caring environment for his precocious daughter, Lucy, she soon surpasses his mental ability and the court decides to remove her from his custody. Sam’s determination to show the court that he is willing and able to care for his daughter under constant hardship, as well as Lucy’s love for him and desire to be with him, portray a bond created out of love.

Teachers in the general classroom could use this film to highlight how, given the right support, the mentally disabled persons, no matter their disability can overcome obstacles to live happy,

productive lives. References can be found on both Youtube.com and summaries on variety.com and nytimes.com.

We are more alike than you think-together we can make a difference.

- A young lady, Regan, creates a unique way to send a message against the use of hurtful words towards individuals with disabilities. She is inspired by her younger brother Russell, who has Down Syndrome and Autism. Posted below are two clips.

In the first clip, Regan creatively uses Post-Its to send a message against negative words wrongfully used to describe people with disabilities. This clip could be used in the classroom as an introduction to a discussion about acceptance, leading to further discussion of examples on how people with disabilities are similar to those without disabilities. In the second clip, Regan shares with the audience her everyday interactions with Russell, such as water play in the front yard, hugs, giving each other a high five- a sister and a brother just playing around. This can be used in the classroom to demonstrate everyday similarities between ALL students. This clip can lead to further discussions on examples of successful, accomplished individuals with disabilities.

Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1iSlok6muY0>

Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IZ-vgSuvR-c&feature=related>

- Erik Weihenmayer was born with retina disease, he became completely blind in high school. He did not let his blindness hold him back, he joined the wrestling team in high school and did not want to be treated differently. Erik went on to be the first blind man to climb Mount Everest in 2001. On June 23, 2011 Expedition Impossible premiered, Erik was a part of the team "No Limits". He completed tasks such as rafting down white waters, rappelling down a 300ft waterfall and climbing mountains. Erik's team came in second place in the competition.

Erik Weihenmayer is a great example for a general education classroom because he shows that just because he has a disability he can do all the same activities as someone who does not have a disability. Erik has great character, he pushes himself to reach his life goals which is an inspiration for all students.

Link: <http://www.touchthetop.com/education/> (His website)

Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x3r6YjuuB94> (Clip of the show)

- Brian McCauley is a student at the Perkins School for the Blind with a professional interest in sports announcing. The attached URL is a 4-minute YouTube video uploaded by the Lowell Sun showing Brian announcing play-by-play at a Lowell Catholic HS football game in 2010.

Consider the general education value as a team effort found in any network control booth: communication occurs through a chat set with a program director feeding information to an announcer. In this respect, Brian performs his job much like any professional. He simply needs eyes on the play action (Provided here by John Rafferty.) Under this two-person team scenario, the sighted person has the vision and analytic skill, while Brian has the announcer's voice and enthusiasm. Give a listen! The actual announcing begins at 2:35 min:

Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D1oRDdYSQfc>