**Title**  
“Stretching Literature: Teaching the Rwandan Genocide through *Left to Tell*”  
  
**Time**  
This unit will last three weeks. The first week will introduce students to the African country of Rwanda - its history, culture, etc. - paralleled with Part 1 of *Left to Tell* by Immaculée Ilibagiza. This will engage students with the country *outside of* the genocidal events that have occurred there, widening their view of the world. The second week will connect the aspects from Week 1 with the specific event of the 1994 Rwandan genocide, largely via survivors’ personal experiences, especially Ilibagiza’s, as told in Part 2 of *Left to Tell.* Finally, Week 3 will connect the Rwandan genocide with students’ lives by teaching students to realize why we shouldn’t ostracize people for being different. Part 3 of *Left to Tell,* where Ilibagiza explains her life after the genocide, will parallel with this week.  
  
As for our class periods, we are teaching in a traditional school with 50-minute class periods.  Any lessons from this unit could easily be lengthened into a longer class period if your school has block scheduling, but the lessons here are broken down by time assuming a 50-minute period per lesson per day.

**Setting**

Our school is located in a small city in central Illinois. The student population is 54% white, 32% Black, 4% Hispanic, and 9% Asian/Pacific Islander. Our 11th-grade classroom has 25 students. This is an honors class, where the students are on an accelerated pace and cover more content than the parallel English class for high-school juniors. In general, the students are dedicated, can be counted on to do homework outside of class, and reliably participate in class.

**Theory into Practice Background**

Unit Rationale: First off, note that we took ideas of how to actually plan a unit from Jim Burke’s chapter 10, which gives plenty of valuable ideas of how to actually sit down and begin to map out a unit of study of any English topic. With that background in mind, we moved on to actually planning our specific unit.

Since students are most likely to be incredibly uneducated on the topic of genocide, we realize how important a concept it is for our students to learn about. According to Samuel Totten, “What we need is an education that does more than provide students with the skills to work in a postindustrial postmodern world” (3). We, as future teachers, need to make the connection between something like genocide and the student’s actual lives in a meaningful way that can translate into real use of knowledge. (This explains the fact that the unit aims to connect common experiences and use genocide as a broad basis for small-scale social justice and tolerance issues.) As for this unit itself, it is based on the 1994 Rwandan genocide, as described in the book *Left to Tell* by Immaculée Ilibagiza. Using that book as a foundation, we plan to interject multiple supplementary texts into our instruction to give the students a comprehensive look at genocide as well as a  more in-depth understanding of the Rwandan genocide specifically.

Lesson Rationale: Each lesson for each day has a different rationale behind it based on theory. Everything following in this lesson plan addresses one particular lesson, in which students engage with different forms of media at stations set up throughout the room to learn more about different perspectives of the Rwandan genocide.

*Day 3:*Today, we differentiate our teaching through having students examine materials at multiple stations around the room. In doing so, we encourage students to employ many different facets of their overall ability to learn. According to Gardner, there are seven different types of intelligences. In this lesson in particular, students who are strong Bodily/Kinesthetic, Interpersonal,  Visual/Spatial, and/or Linguistic learners are engaged, as they’re moving around the room, having to understand and interact with their classmates as well as engage with the multiple viewpoints represented in the materials, and make sense of a variety of different information formats, including written text. What we hope to do this day of instruction is show students the fact that they can both learn in different ways using different formats (different intelligences) as well as the fact that they can then prove their knowledge to us in different ways (applying those intelligences).

Additionally, Burke talks about different types of literacies, namely Digital and Media, in Chapters 12 and 13. The different stations with different media forms will promote those literacies for our students, giving them experience interpreting forms of information-giving that differ from the “typical” texts studied in English class. The media forms we use will include video, newspaper articles, a podcast, and images, which fit Burke’s literacies as well as Gardner’s categories of differentiated learning.

**Objectives**  
1. Students will analyze varying source materials to discover outside perspectives of the Rwandan genocide.  
2. Students will connect these perspectives back to the themes of Immaculée’s own personal experience.

**Materials**  
·      Station 1, Video: Laptop or teacher’s computer with proper YouTube video pulled up, loaded, and made widescreen  
·      Station 2, Online Slideshow: Laptop or teacher’s computer with proper site pulled up and pop-up window maximized; 2 hard copies of interview  
·      Station 3, Interview with Journalist: Laptop or teacher’s computer with proper site pulled up; 2 hard copies of interview  
·      Station 4, Images: Full-page printouts of each image  
·      Printed Instruction Sheets for Stations 1-4, located at respective station  
·      Students carry around journals and pens/pencils

**Preparation**

Before students arrive, teacher arranges desks into 3 groups of 6 and 1 group of 7, and puts materials (artifact and instruction sheet) at groups. Teacher ensures that Station 1 (the video, which therefore likely will be the noisiest) is placed where there will be the least amount of risk that this station will distract others – perhaps further towards the back or corner of the room. Teacher also writes the day’s two Essential Questions on the board:

*1. How was the outside world involved with the Rwandan genocide? How does it affect the way we read Immaculée’s personal account?*

*2. How can looking at the Rwandan genocide through multiple lenses change our ideas about it?*

**Procedure**

1)    Students come into class, divide themselves into 3 groups of 6, 1 group of 7. Each group sits at one of the stations.  
  
Teacher briefly recaps yesterday’s lesson, emphasizing that it was all about Immaculée’s personal experience, her own perspective, of the Rwandan genocide. Today, we will look at *others’* perspectives of the genocide. Students are to keep in mind the day’s Essential Questions, written on the board, as they circulate. (5 mins.)  
  
Students rotate in their groups between stations. Each station holds an artifact showcasing some sort of perspective of the genocide. At every station, students should first read the instruction sheet, and then engage with the artifact and answer the questions accompanying it. Some questions are meant to be individual responses, while others require group work.   
  
2)    Stations activities. (10 mins. at each station – 40 mins. total)  
See Instruction Sheets, attached.  
  
Teacher circulates, engaging groups that may be falling off topic. (The limited amount of time, tasks given, and frequent switching of activities should head off a lot of this behavior, though!)  
  
3)    (5 min.) After each group has visited all stations, students make sure that each question has been answered thoroughly and to the best of their ability.  
  
Students will complete a journal entry at the end of class/finish for homework:  
           What do the perspectives of these artifacts have in common?  
           As a whole, do you see more *similarities* or *differences* when you compare these perspectives to Immaculée’s story? Defend your choice, using examples.

**Discussion Ideas**

*1. How was the outside world involved with the Rwandan genocide? How does it affect the way we read Immaculée’s personal account?*

*2. How can looking at the Rwandan genocide through multiple lenses change our ideas about it?*

This activity lends itself to discussion of questions specific to each station within groups, as well as realizing personal effect and connections to previous day’s lesson via journaling. Questions for each station are provided in attached Instruction Sheets. Teacher will write above questions on board as thought-provoking Essential Questions for the day. Students may choose to journal on these as well for end-of-day activity/homework.

**Bilingual/ESL Accommodations (Chinese)**

The multi-modal nature of the stations activities, coupled with the individualized nature of the personal journal responses at the end of the day, already make this lesson very appropriate for students who are bilingual/ESL. Since the questions at two of the four stations must be answered as a group, these students will have their peers to bounce ideas off of and explain concepts, if necessary. The teacher will also be circulating, paying particular attention to these students’ engagement levels, ready to offer extra explanation if necessary. The photo/poem-writing activity is individual, but should be accessible to these students because of the visual, not textual, nature of the subject they’re describing. These students should be allowed to jot down notes in Chinese, their first language, and then compose them into the short response and short poem/description required in English.

    Based on the individual students’ fluency levels, the teacher may elect to accommodate them further by printing out more copies of each station’s Instruction Sheet in Chinese, using a clip of *Hotel Rwanda* with Chinese subtitles, and/or finding a translation of the online slide show in Chinese.

**Special Education Accommodations (E/BD)**

The differentiated nature of the day’s stations activities, along with the focus on visually-stimulating artifacts, will act as an accommodation for these students’ special needs, holding their attention and interest. However, I think the most effective accommodation for these students will be something that should already be established in the classroom - its environment and expectations. Students will feel comfortable participating in group activities if the classroom atmosphere is one of respect, openness, and inclusion. Students with EBD also benefit from having clear and consistently-reinforced behavior management rules. Specifically in this lesson, the classroom may get a bit noisy because of the different stations (though I’ve tried to make some of them calmer and quieter activities). Some students with EBD may find the extra noise overwhelming, so having a designated “cool-down spot” in a quieter spot in the classroom (near the student bookshelves or by the teacher’s desk, perhaps) with books/material relating to the Rwandan genocide to peruse until the student feels that he/she is again in control.

**Assessment**

At the end of the lesson, students will have completed five responses in their journal (2 will be written as a group, 3 individually). The station activity questions help students engage with material on a basic comprehension level, introduce them to other perspectives of the Rwandan genocide, and ask them to relate this new knowledge back to Immaculée’s story.

**Extension Ideas**

This week of lessons is in itself an extension idea upon the original assignment we were given. Originally, we were supposed to write a mini-unit on genocide using our particular assigned book that lasted for one week (5 days) of instruction. Upon discussing the value of the unit and our desire to leave this particular class with a completely plausible and usable way to really teach the book and the genocide, not just gloss over the surface of the content, we decided to use a 3-week unit. This way, we can teach context, the book, and connect it all to the students’ lives within a relatively short unit of instruction. One idea for extension of this unit would be to do another unit that is almost exactly the same in structure using a different genocide from a different country and have the students do a more formal summative assessment (project) comparing and contrasting those genocides and the differences in personal experiences during those genocides as well as global involvement in each separate crisis.

There are many different activities we could add into this unit to delve even deeper into knowledge of the Rwandan genocide as well as cementing the lessons’ application to students’ own lives. Students could create and present a Glog from the perspective of a person somehow involved with the genocide (survivor, killer, the president of another country refusing to intervene). Students could also keep a personal journal/scrapbook throughout the unit in which they would respond to prompts about forgiveness, racism, etc. in their own lives in a more private way, through writing, drawing, pasting pictures, etc.

**Source of Activity**  
The activities that we came up with for each day of week 2 of instruction in this unit (as well as the concept for the entire unit) was entirely our own design. We had help with choosing the nonfiction text *Left to Tell* by Immaculée Ilibagiza based on a larger list given by our Curriculum and Instruction teachers here at the University of Illinois. The textbooks that were used for the theory section of this unit were also from that class. Other than texts, all other materials, activities, assignments, and assessments are entirely done by the members of this group. We would like to thank Professor Willis and Ms. Streitmatter for giving us the opportunity to create a unit on this topic, and for giving us reliable texts to use with ideas for teaching such a difficult topic. We’d also like to thank one another, who have been incredibly dedicated and hard working throughout the entire process of planning our unit. We appreciate one another’s willingness to both give and receive feedback on ideas and create a comfortable atmosphere for collaboration.  
  
**Resources and References**  
1**.** *Left to Tell* by Immaculée Ilibagiza  
2. Our own website that we made based on the book and the genocide can be found at www.teachinggenocide.weebly.com  
3. Illinois Common Core Standards found at: http://www.isbe.net/common\_core/pdf/ELA\_common\_core\_standards.pdf  
4. *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* by Thomas C. Foster  
5. *The English Teacher’s Companion: A Complete Guide to Classroom, Curriculum, and the Profession* (Third Edition) by Jim Burke  
6. *Teaching About Genocide: Issues, Approaches, and Resources* by Samuel Totten  
  
**Illinois Common Core Standards**  
1. CC.11-12.R.L.3 Key Ideas and Details: Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

This standard relates directly to Week 2 of this unit because there will be explicit discussion of point of view - especially how Immaculée’s point of view in telling her story of the Rwandan Genocide changes the perceptions the reader has when compared to solely reading historical documents and looking at facts and figures. Also, the assessment that takes place at the end of Week 2 is about perspective.

2. CC.11-12.R.I.3 Key Ideas and Details: Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.

On Day 4 of Week 2, students will be having a discussion on forgiveness and mapping out the different reasons that Immaculée finds to forgive those who hunt her and the different reasons that she gives that forgiving them is such a personal challenge. Forgiveness, along with faith and reliance on God, are two overarching themes of the book that students will be tracing throughout each of its sections.

3. CC.11-12.SL.1.a Comprehension and Collaboration: Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.

Based on the context we’ve given of the class we would teach this unit to, it’s apparent that typically our students come to class prepared. Because of that, they are reliable enough to meet this standard on their own without much extra help or instruction from us. In order for this unit to work, students must come to class prepared with the assigned reading done and the assigned homework completed. If you are teaching this unit in a classroom where your students do not often come to your class with all assigned reading and assignments finished, you may consider lengthening the unit so the students have more time to read in class. Our unit effectively meets this standard because our activities and daily class work reflects our students’ dedication and eagerness to participate in class discussion.

**DAY 3 SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS (Instruction Sheets for each station):**

**STATION 1: Movie – Opening of *Hotel Rwanda***

*Perspective: Rwandan citizen; Hollywood*

Directions:  
1)   Watch the **first 6:10** of the video clip pulled up on the laptop screen (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZprAN0o9oAI>).  
(REMEMBER TO STOP THE VIDEO AT **6:10** – OTHERWISE YOU WILL NOT HAVE ENOUGH TIME TO FINISH THE TASKS AT THIS STATION.)  
  
2)   Choose one group member as a scribe, who will write your answers in his/her journal. MAKE SURE THE SCRIBE WRITES ALL GROUP MEMBERS’ NAMES IN JOURNAL, TOO!  
  
·      How does the Hutu Power radio program broadcast at the beginning of the movie villanize Tutsis? List some specific words it uses.  
  
·      How does the businessman respond to the events in this section (the urging of his Hutu friend to become more involved in politics, the accidental reveal of the machetes being imported, and the hostility of the Hutus in the rally)? How does his driver respond? Why are their responses different?  
  
·      *Hotel Rwanda* is an American film based on the true story of hotel manager Paul Rusesabagina and his heroic actions during the Rwandan genocide. Do you think allowing Hollywood to portray this story is a good idea? Why or why not?

**STATION 2: Timeline slideshow**

*Perspective: History book; other countries*

Directions:  
1)   Watch the complete slideshow pulled up on the laptop screen (there are also hard copies of the slides available) (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/ghosts/etc/cronflash.html>).  
  
2)   Individually in your journal, answer the following questions:  
  
·      What was the reaction of the US, the UN, and other countries to the genocide in Rwanda? Why did these groups behave this way? (Hint: Pay attention to May 25th!)

**STATION 3: Interview with journalist**

*Perspective: Mark Doyle, a British journalist – an outsider viewing the genocide firsthand*

Directions:  
1)   Skim the question & answer session between PBS and journalist Mark Doyle pulled up on the laptop screen (hard copies of the interview are also available) (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/ghosts/interviews/doyle.html>).  
2)   As a group, answer the following questions. Choose one group member as a scribe, who will write your answers in his/her journal. MAKE SURE THE SCRIBE WRITES ALL GROUP MEMBERS’ NAMES IN JOURNAL, TOO!  
  
·      Why was Doyle in Rwanda at the time of the genocide?  
·      Who is Captain Mbaye Diagne? What impact did he have on the Rwandan genocide? How did Doyle know him?  
·      Read the final question & answer: “The media can influence policy; why didn’t it happen in Rwanda?” What is Doyle’s answer?

**STATION 4: Images**

*Perspective: Various firsthand viewers*

Directions:  
1)   Examine each of the 7 images and their captions at this station. Choose one and, in your journal, do each of the following:  
  
·      Write a short personal response to the photo. What is your reaction to it?  
·      Then, write a few sentences/short description/short poem from the perspective of some*one* or some*thing* in the photograph. (For example, you could choose to write from the perspective of the person featured in the photo, or a person in the background, or an object that you see a person holding… be creative!) What is the person’s/thing’s reaction to its present circumstances? To the genocide in general?  
  
(Images below – for each, print out a large version, with the caption underneath.)

<http://i.dailymail.co.uk/i/pix/2008/08/06/article-1042059-022B01A40000044D-955_468x323_popup.jpg> - Interahamwe (citizen killing force – mainly Hutus) on foot & French soldiers (attempting to keep the peace) in Jeep

<http://blog.amnestyusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/11/zaire201lg2.jpg> - Rwandan refugees in Zaire

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_pictures/7713979.stm> - RPF rebels

<http://www.breitbart.com/image.php?id=iafp081218124353.18fo3e79p0&show_article=1> -Map of Rwandan genocide

<http://www.iamthenublack.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/Rwanda_genocide__archives.jpg> - Photo gallery of the tiniest few of the 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus killed in the Rwandan genocide

<http://www.salem-news.com/stimg/july192010/rwanda-refugees.jpg> - Rwandan refugee boys

             
http://www.guernicamag.com/art/962/picturing\_history\_in\_rwanda/  
“More than half of Rwandans are under nineteen now, too young to remember the genocide themselves. But a fifth of these children are orphans; for them, history is not a presence in their lives so much as an absence. It is difficult to say what legacy this generation will inherit, what stories they will grow up to inhabit themselves.”  
  
           <http://www.guernicamag.com/art/962/picturing_history_in_rwanda/> - “Surfaces are deceptive. The placid waters of Lake Kivu extend across the southwestern corner of the country. Countless bodies lie beneath its waves, dumped there by their killers or sinking with exhaustion in desperate but impossible attempts at escape. The genocide reached its apex in this region, where nine of every ten Tutsis were exterminated. For anyone ignorant of this fact, it must be one of the most beautiful areas of the country.”