Title of lesson: What Stories Do Our Scars Tell?

Suggested grade/age: K-12, depending on elements you decide to incorporate.

Approximate time needed to complete lesson: Three days, 20-30 minutes per day

Learning objective(s) and significance of lesson: Students will read, draw, and write about events that are physically and emotionally scarring to craft narratives, poems, and pieces in other genres about their own lives and/or about the lives of characters (analysis). I use these activities while students read The Glass Castle by Jeanette Walls. These could be fitting activities for any text that tracks the experiences of an individual or character.

Brief summary/outline of lesson:

Day 1
Read Thank You, Mr. Falker by Patricia Polacco.
1. Pre reading: Students will draw an image of a face.
2. During reading: Students will tear a picture of the face every time there is an event that is scarring for the protagonist.
3. After reading: Students may dialogue about the need to be “gentle” with each other (fitting for elementary).

Day 2
1. Draw an image of your own body (or of a character you create).
2. Mark places where there are physical scars. Label each scar with a signifying word.
3. Mark places that symbolize unseen scars. Label these with signifying words.
4. Pick one of the scars and write a narrative- the story- behind this scar.
5. Review this piece and do one of the following (or both):
   A. Explode the Moment. Circle a word that is particularly striking, evocative, or intriguing. Write about the scar again, this time with a focus on this word or aspect of it.
   B. Retell the story of this scar in a different genre. Refer to the Writing Genres A-Z Taxonomy, pick a different genre (invitation, birth announcement, cartoon) and retell the story of this scar.

Day 3
1. After reading a significant portion of The Glass Castle students will repeat Day 2 activities about Jeanette, Rex, or another character from the text.
2. Students will label each character scar with a signifying word and a quote from the text that illustrates the story of the scar.
3. Students will write the story of a character’s scar. This can take the form of an analytical paragraph, a complete essay, a poem, a Glog, or another piece.

Related Resources:
Possible extensions or adaptations for different purposes/student needs:
Teachers could use just one day of activities to fit the needs of individual classes and students. Teachers could also use the activities from Day 2 to have students create their own fictional characters.

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