The Memory Books of Hope
Primary Content Area: English I

Introduction
The Memory Books of Hope project, which involves creating and revising short stories, was designed for the English I curriculum and can be easily incorporated into a unit on narrative writing and short stories. While reading short stories, students identify key narrative elements, which they then learn to incorporate into their own writing. In addition to developing their writing skills, students also learn about the plight of child soldiers and refugees. Teachers should use resources to choose which area / country they want to focus on. Children are being recruited into war and fleeing war / violence torn areas worldwide. The U.S. is currently (2014) experiencing its own child refugee crisis with thousands of children crossing the border to flee violence and poverty. Finally, students combine their new knowledge with their new skills to create an anthology of short stories that will be sent to the children of the teacher’s choosing (this could be done by having students vote after reading about two or more areas with child refugees.

Project Goals
- Students will be able to identify narrative elements in short stories.
- Students will be able to incorporate narrative elements into their own writing.
- Students will publish their writing into an anthology.
- Students will learn about and develop empathy for child soldiers / refugees of the teachers choosing – could chose one as focus or two or more to compare resources below.
- Students will reflect upon their experience.

Procedure/Project Sequence
1. Introduce students to the narrative elements by reading and analyzing published short stories. It may be beneficial to focus on one specific narrative element in each short story.
2. Through short writing activities, allow students to practice using these narrative elements. Allow time for peer and teacher revision.
3. Using resources from the list below and/or others you may locate, introduce students to the plight of child refugees.
4. Explain to students that they will be publishing their own short stories, which will be sent to the children in refugee camps or U.S. immigration detention centers. Remind students that the stories must be positive as the children of Uganda experience violence and pain on a daily basis. **Encourage students to write stories about their own experiences (since coming of age is a common theme of focus during freshman year, this may be a great topic to write about).**
5. Instruct each student to develop at least six story ideas that s/he may be able to turn into a complete narrative. Story ideas should only be about three sentences long and should include the conflict, the setting, and the main characters involved in the story.
6. Have students share their story ideas in small groups. Students should ask clarifying questions about each other’s ideas and then make recommendations about the story they believe would be most compelling to write. Students should then choose the one story idea they will turn into a complete narrative.
7. Write and revise narratives. Narratives should be revised until they are perfect! A real audience will be reading them!
8. Publish narratives into one anthology (you can type each narrative and have them bound at Kinkos or buy scrapbooks and give each student a page). Each student may also opt to create illustrations for his/her narrative.

9. You will need to locate a contact person for help sending your completed anthology to the refugee camp or immigration detention camp of your choosing.

10. Spend some time reflecting upon the experience. You may want to allow your students to decide how they would like to reflect: through writing, through art, through discussion, etc. Below are a few questions to guide your reflection: What did you learn about in this project that was most meaningful to you? What did we accomplish with this project? What went well? What could have gone better? What else could be done about this problem?

Community Partners/ Internet Resources & Articles
http://voiceseducation.org/content/child-soldiers
http://www.unicef.org/appeals/

Suggested Texts:
“The Cask of Amontillado” by Edgar Allen Poe
“The Stolen Party” by Liliana Heker
“Thank You, M’am” by Langston Hughes
“The Lesson” by Toni Cade Bambara

Addendum
Standards
This project addresses the following Social Emotional Learning Standards as well as the following Common Core State Standards
Goal 2: Use social awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships
A. Recognize the feelings and perspectives of others
2. Identify people’s varying attitudes and feelings about current issues

RL.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).
RL.9-10.5 Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

RL.9-10.6 Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature.
W.9.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Duration
Students should spend between 5-7 hours on this project depending on how much revision of their narratives is necessary.

Preparation: Power Point/Articles/Video – background information on Uganda – 2 hours
Action: Writing/Revision/Illustration of narrative – 3-4 hours
Reflection: Writing/Art/Discussion – 1 hour

Cross-Curricular Connections
Connections with social studies, World Languages (Spanish) art, and technology courses could be made during this project.