

# **CINDERELLA**

## **Teaching Notes by Raymond Huber**

### **Introduction**

#### **Why use Cinderella for teaching higher-level thinking skills?**

- \* It's a divergent tale ideal for divergent thinkers. Almost every culture has its own version of this tale, using a similar structure. There are over 600 variants altogether, spanning 2000 years.
- \* It raises many ethical issues including: child abuse, appearance and character, power and violence.
- \* Fairy tales appeal to children's sense of justice. Cinderella is essentially the triumph of good over bad, in a family context.
- \* It provides an opportunity to develop advanced learning skills in:
  - reading the visual language of picture books
  - recognising the conventions and patterns in traditional tales.
  - classification of fairy/folk tales
- \* The tale is familiar and this unit encourages students to go beyond the known by integrating many curriculum areas.

### **Resources**

- \* Picture book versions of Cinderella by Perrault and the Grimms.
- \* A website collection, The Cinderella Project:  
<http://www.usm.edu/english/fairytales/cinderella/cinderella.html>
- \* Yeh-hsien by Ed Young (oldest version: AD850)
- \* Ashiepattle by Grimm
- \* Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters by John Steptoe (African)
- \* Egyptian Cinderella by C. Climo

- \* The Princess on Glass Hill- a Norse folktale variant with a male Cinderella.
- \* Prince Cinders by Babette Cole (fractured fairy tale)
- \* Chinese Cinderella by Adeline Yen Mah: autobiography

## **Activities Using Bloom's Levels (and Multiple-Intelligences)**

### **KNOWLEDGE LEVEL**

Read a variety of versions.

Retell as a newspaper reporting this 'rags to riches' story.

List all the names of the Cinderella character in different cultures' versions.

Plot story events on timelines: by the years of Cinderella's experience, or by the days of her transformation.

Classify versions by cultural background.

Measure the variation in foot size of those around you (with their permission of course).

Map one version of the story: use a map grid reference system to identify places.

Outline one of the transformation scenes in a series of pictures.

Find a description of Cinderella in a non-picture book version: and draw her as you imagine her.

Mime an exciting sequence from one version.

Collect a variety of old shoes to display.

Investigate shoe design by dismantling and drawing a lonely old shoe.

Find a song or music to be a theme for the Cinderella story.

Listen to the music from the musical version.  
Learn the steps to the waltz.  
Retell a favourite version with a small group.  
Share your most favourite and least liked characters in the story.  
Chart the feelings of Cinderella from one version.  
Prepare a statement on Cinderella's biography.  
Locate the settings/countries of origin of versions on a world-map.  
Find pictures of shoes from different cultures or periods of history.

## **COMPREHENSION**

Write a diary from Cinderella's point of view.  
Devise a factual quiz about the story.  
Summarize one version that you are not familiar with.  
Use Venn diagrams to compare 2 versions: note the differences.  
Graph the magical changes in animals during the evening of the dance.  
Draw a picture gallery contrasting different characters in one version.  
Draw diagrams of the coach from side and bird's eye views.  
Identify different art styles and media used in various picture book versions.  
Construct a display of magical items from different versions.  
Write dialogue for one version and read aloud.  
Add sound effects to accompany your own dialogue.  
Sing along to songs from the musical video.  
Discuss in a group the best qualities of the Cinderella character, and agree on the most important one.  
Explain to a partner the differences between 2 versions.

Work with your partner on one of these comprehension activities.

How did you feel at each point in the story?

Describe the ugly sisters.

Research the historical time setting of one version.

Research the geographical location of a version.

## **APPLICATION**

Write your own fractured fairytale: use fairytale conventions and structure but change character roles.

Write a public proclamation from the Prince about the Search for the Slippers' owner.

Write an excuse note from Cinderella to her Fairy-godmother explaining why she was late home from the dance.

Chart the many versions to show differing antagonists (stepmother, father, siblings etc).

Make timelines to show changes between 8pm and midnight on the night of the dance.

Make a technical diagram of the pumpkin coach.

Construct a working model of the pumpkin coach.

Design a poster of the Prince's Proclamation.

Create a multi-media presentation showing how the magic transformations might have worked.

Plan and perform some magic tricks that feature changes.

Find pieces of music that reflect the changing tensions and action in the plot.

Make up a 'Mean Sister Rap.'

With a partner, devise a new ending for one version.

Read a picture book version to a group of younger children.

Interview a magician.

Read the novel Chinese Cinderella.

In what ways is Cinderella like an abused child?

Find out which agencies care for children in New Zealand.

Make a poster showing different cultural icons. Eg Slippers in China.

## **ANALYSIS**

Contrast the features of the Disney Cinderella with other cultures' Cinderella character.

Critically examine why you think the Disney version is so gentle and passive.

List advantages/ disadvantages of being beautiful.

Use the A/T Index to classify versions by these motifs : impossible gifts, disguises, events in threes.

Draw the transformation scene from lizard to footman showing several intermediate stages of 'evolution'.

Create a modern comic style version using popstar photos from Teen magazines.

Convert your comic version to dialogue and perform.

Rags to Riches: Take an raggedy op-shop item of clothing and make a fashion statement.

Add pop music to your modern version and give each character a signature tune.

Change words to the video musical.

Survey people about their attitudes to housework.

Find out what the Cinderella Syndrome means (relating to housework).

Organise a debate titled: 'Mothers do too much housework.'

Consider what action you would take if you knew a child was being used like Cinderella.

Should the child be taken off the parents? Give reasons for your opinion.

Read Yeh-hsien (Chinese version). What does it tell you about Chinese society at that time?

Devise special conditions for a magic trick to prove it is just a deception.

## **SYNTHESIS**

"There is too much violence in fairy tales". State your view, giving examples of how evil is punished in the original Brothers Grimm's tales.

Devise a version in which magic is **not** used to solve Cinderella's problems.

Make a legal case against Cinderella's abusers:

- List evidence, witnesses, motives suggesting guilt.
- Make a judgement statement.
- Sentence the abusers.

Show how the ideas of beauty in art have changed over the past 500 years.

Create your own art work on the theme 'Ugly and Beautiful.'

Design a glass slipper.

Create a dance sequence on the theme 'Ugly and Beautiful.'

Devise a musical beat sequence for your dance.

Compose and record 'magical' music and effects.

Devise strategies for a child to help them deal with abuse by a sibling .

Find out how your school deals with bullying.

Design a campaign motivating people on a family-related issue.

Find out about the job of a Counsellor :training, qualifications, work routines.

Find and learn a poem about childhood (Wordspells is a good poetry book).

Write a personal response to the poem.

Create your own way to classify fairy tales.

Make a slipper from natural materials.

Find a Maori or Pacific Island folktale similar to Cinderella in themes.

## **EVALUATION**

Write what you think is the most important moral lesson in Cinderella tales.

What punishment is the most fair from all the versions you read.

Pick one picture book version that best shows words and illustrations working equally together to tell a story.

Compare the Disney animated version with your best picture book.

Evaluate the differences.

Evaluate the songs composed for the video.

Debate: 'Good looks are more valued by the media than behaviour.'

What do you feel most satisfied with in the work for this unit?

There are 700 versions of Cinderella across many different cultures.  
What features make this tale so special and enduring?