**PLANNING**

**Theme:** Florence Nightingale

**Overview of learning:**

* The role played by Florence Nightingale in the reform of nursing
* Study of an historical figure
* Study of the past

**Interesting aspects:**

* Conditions in a war hospital
* The roles of nurses and doctors

**Inquiry questions:**

* How did Florence Nightingale change the role of nurses and improve conditions in Scutari hospital?
* How did people back in Britain hear of the war and the part played by Florence Nightingale?

**Narrative:**

Florence Nightingale, an experienced nurse and her team arrive at the military hospital in Scutari. Conditions in the hospital are very bad, infection is rife and the role of nurses is poorly appreciated by the doctors who consider them to be little more than servants. Florence’s mission is to improve conditions at the hospital, re-train the nurses in the latest methods, and improve the status of the nurses with the other medical staff.

**Expert team:** Nurses

**Client:** Florence Nightingale

**Commission:** To support Florence in the reform of the hospital

**Other points of view:**

* The soldiers in the hospital
* The doctors
* The journalists sent to report on conditions at the hospital

**Resources**

- The powerpoint - Florence Nightingale

**Steps:**

**Step 1: Introducing the context**  
(Note: this first step follows the sequence discussed in this blog - [Ref.])

[i] Show the class the engraving of Scutari [slide 2].  
Task: “Please take a look at this picture and see what you notice. Talk to the person next to you.”

Allow time for discussion.

[ii] Talk to the class about what they’ve seen. Aim to delve deeper, ask for explanation, strive to make connections. For example - “Could you say a bit more… What was your thinking… Do you imagine… I wonder if…”

**Step 2: Exploring the context**

[i] Narrate: “This hospital is in a part of the world called Scutari. It’s called an engraving. These soldiers have been brought in from the front where the war is happening. The war is called The Crimea War. Many things are different, some are the same.”

[ii] Task: “What kinds of sounds do you think might be in a place like this?”

Discussion. Support the class to imagine the sounds and then to make full sentences. For example, “The sound of soldiers moaning in their sleep. The shuffle of feet as the nurses move between the beds.” Etc.

(Note: Depending on the age of the children they will need more or less support for this task. Younger children will rely heavily on the teacher’s input and you may need to do much of the work for them. While older children could manage not only sounds but the other dimensions of dramatic imagination [Ref] - Sound/Silence; Light/Darkness; Movement/Stillness.)

[iii] “What other engraving might there be of the hospital?”

Task: Create the engraving. The students work in groups creating other engravings that might appear as part of the same sequence.

Give them time to formulate their ideas and then take time to look at some of them for meaning, following the format - Play, Dramatic Action, Invested Action, Reflection [Ref.]

Use - Action, Motivation, Investment, Models, Values to delve deeper [Ref.]

**Step 3: Developing the narrative**

[i] “I have to tell you this hospital was not always as clean and well organised as it appears in this image. In 1853, a year earlier, conditions were terrible. Filth and waste lay everywhere, bloody bandages scattered the floor, buckets of infected water were left next to beds, disease was rife, and the soldiers were as likely to die from infection as they were from their injuries. More likely!”

[ii] Show the class slide 2: the map of Europe and narrate the following, pointing out the places on the map as you go: “News got back to England of a disaster happening in the hospitals of Crimea, especially one called Scutari on the Turkish coast.”

[iii] Continue: “A team of journalists from the newspapers was sent to find out what was going on… They set of from England and sailed to the Scutari. When they got there they visited the hospital and interviewed the doctors and nurses.

[iv] Task: “If you were the journalists, what would you want to ask?”

Give the students time to draft their questions. Encourage them to write them down, explaining that the journalists would have kept notes so they could use them in their stories.

Discuss the questions.

[v] Explain that the journalists are going to meet one of the doctors and one of the nurses. The doctor is not pleased to be interrupted. The nurse has only agreed to talk to the journalists if her identify is kept secret, she is very afraid to speak openly.

[vi] Role - Doctor. The doctor is a captain in the army, he is loyal and proud. He is reluctant to talk to the journalists and is very guarded about what he says. The journalists will have to work hard to get anything meaningful out of him. He will be abrupt and forthright, without being rude. He will tell them that everything is being done to care for the soldiers in the proper manner. Conditions are testing, but nothing the army cannot deal with.

[vii] Role - Nurse. The nurse has only agreed to meet the journalists if her identity is kept secret. She has a very different tale to tell, the conditions in the hospital are awful, rats infest the wards, soldiers are dying from infections, and there is very little the nurses can do other than hold their hands and reassure them as they die. She is desperate for help. The relationship between the doctors and nurses is very bad, the doctors rarely listen to them and consider them as little more than servants.”

[viii] Task: the students, operating as the journalists, interview the doctor and nurse (represented by the teacher-in-role) and make notes. Remember, the teacher can can come out of role at any time to support the students and give them guidance - “What do you make of that doctor? Do you think he might be hiding something? Did you notice the way he was twitching his hand while he was answering? Would you like to see that again?” And so on. The doctor and the nurse are effectively ‘text’ for the class to examine and as the teacher you can help them to ‘read’ the text in anyway they can.

[ix] Extension task: the students write up the story as a newspaper report, including details of events and reported speech. All the time being careful to protect the identity the nurse.

**Step 4: Introducing Florence**

[i] Narration: “Back in London a nurse was preparing to leave for Scutari, she and her team of nurses were determined to make a difference.

Task: Show the class slides 4 and then 5. “Look at these photographs, what do you make of her? Remember, photography was still in its early days…” Give the class some background history.

[ii] Talk to the class about Florence, who she was before she went to Scutari, her background, and why she was sent to the hospital.

**Step 5: Adult-in-role representing Florence**

[i] Narration: “Florence arrived in Scutari and wrote a letter to her mother.”

[ii] Task: to ‘build’ the role. Explore ‘signs’ such as the desk in her room, her paper and pen, and her shawl (a present from her mother).

Use a real table and chair, real paper and pen, and a real shawl.

[iii] An adult-in-role (AIR) representing Florence is introduced to the class. She picks up the shawl, wraps it around her shoulders, brushes it against her cheek and sniffs, then sits at the table and takes up the pen.

[iv] The teacher pauses the action and asks the class to consider what they have seen using ‘Action, Motivation, Investment, Models, Reflection.’ For example, “Did you notice the way she put on her shawl? Why did she do it that way do you think? Who might have given it to her? I wonder if it was handmade?” Etc

[v] Narration: “Florence begins to write: ‘Dear Mother, I have arrived safely. The voyage was long, but uneventful. Tomorrow I will visit the hospital for the first time. I am very apprehensive about what I will find. All of the nurses I have spoken to describe terrible conditions, infections, disease, and death. I hope I am up to the task, it sounds as difficult as the labour of Hercules! I will continue this letter tomorrow evening after my visit and tell you all about what I see. Hopefully, it will not prove to be as bad as I fear.’

[vi] Spend time reflecting with the class on what they have heard and seen.

**Step 6: Florence’s first visit**

[i] “I wonder what Florence saw when she visited the hospital for the first time?”

[ii] Task: “Shall we have a go? It’ll mean moving the tables and chairs around. Some people will have to be the doctors and nurses, some the wounded soldiers. I expect there will be people moving around, there might be treatment of different kinds happening. Here’s some paper if you want to draw things that Florence might see around the hospital - bloody bandages, buckets, severed limbs. etc. - you can use this.”

[iii] Support the students as they set the scene. You might need to focus them once or twice, perhaps using particular groups as models: “Sorry to stop you, but could everyone just gather round, there is something going on here that deserves particular attention… Can you see the way the doctors are working as fast as they can to save this man’s life? Back at this time in history there was very little in the way of aesthetic (to ease the pain and put people to sleep during an operation) so the surgeons were taught to work as fast as possible to spare the suffering of the patient.” Etc.

[iv] Once everything is ready and all the students know what they are doing in the fiction, the AIR representing Florence is brought in to the story through narration: “Florence stood for a moment outside, apprehensive about what she might find. Gathering her courage, she walked up the steps of the hospital and stepped inside for the first time. The sights and sounds that greeted her left an indelible mark, one that would stay with her for the rest of her life.”

[v] The AIR now walks around the hospital talking to the doctors, nurses, and patients about conditions in the hospital.

[vi] After this step the teacher gathers the children on the carpet. The AIR representing Florence sits on a chair in her room. The children now hear her reflecting on her experiences as if she was talking herself.

**Step 7: Florence’s letter**

[i] “I wonder what Florence will write in her letter tonight?”

[ii] Task: with appropriate support and resources, the children draft a continuation of Florence’s letter starting with the paragraph introduced to them in step 5.

**Further steps**

From here the teacher can take the work in a number of different directions, here are some possibilities:

* Other letters written at the time from doctors, nurses, and patients.
* Further newspaper reports, following on from the ones written before Florence’s arrival.
* Signs, poster, instruction manuals, guides, and reports written by Florence and her team to reform the hospital.
* Maps and plans.
* Paintings, drawings, and other graphic representations.
* Maths - data collection and processing, orders of materials, etc.
* Science - life processes, internal organs, medical terms, blood, bones, and other aspects of the body, etc.
* If the teacher wants to extend the work further they could create a further ‘expert frame’ as a team of people telling the history of Florence and her team. This could be represented in the form of an exhibition, or a pamphlet, or a book, or a documentary, etc. and would involve the children in more curriculum work.