

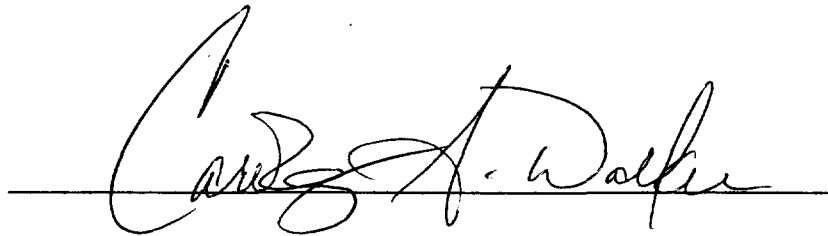
Creating Literature Based Experiences in the Classroom in Connection with the  
Indiana Academic Standards

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

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A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Carolyn A. Walker", is written over a horizontal line.

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### Abstract

This thesis project examining literature based experiences in the classroom in connection with Indiana Academic Standards consists of two components. The first section will be a report that will detail the purpose for connecting literature to the reading skills that students must learn in each grade level. It will detail the need for Indiana Academic Standards and how the activities and lesson plans relate to the Standard. It will also explore the importance of assessment in connection with the Standards. It will also look at some of the previous research done on literature in the classroom. The second section will be a collection of literature based activities and lesson plans that connect to Standards. In classrooms all over Indiana, educators must connect their lessons with the Academic Standards. This project combines research with authentic activities that can be used in the classroom to cover many reading standards.

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## **Introduction**

“Once upon a time, in a faraway land...” This famous line in children’s literature has been repeated countless times by people throughout the world. It is the start of an adventure through the pages of a book, and the start of a child’s development in the lifetime skills of reading, writing and speaking. Throughout the years many people have studied the importance of literature, or the books that are read by and to children, in a child’s development of reading, writing, and speaking. Chomsky found a correlation between children’s linguistic development and their exposure to literature. The more advanced in development, the greater the exposure to literature. Durkin found that children who learned to read before entering first grade had been read to by siblings, parents, or another adult. No other factor played a part in this development. Teale and Morrow have also done their own research on the importance of early exposure to literature for young children.

The results of this research have affected our society. One can find books for infants and toddlers, beginning readers, intermediate readers, juvenile to adult books in any bookstore reinforcing the fact that just reading literature aids the development of reading and writing skills in children and continues to do so into adulthood. These books range in topic from simple concepts like colors, letters, and numbers, to fictional stories and pertinent issues in today’s society.

## **The Dilemma of the Reading Curriculum vs. Literature**

The previous section discussed the research that was done to show how reading books impacts the early development of children. This section explores the different issues that arise with the reading curriculum and literature: the choice between basals and full length books, the

absence of appropriate reading materials in reading curriculums in intermediate classrooms, and the challenge to meet the state standards and teach through novels.

In looking at schools and how they choose to teach reading and writing there are as many methods as there are different topics of literature. Teachers across the country mix and match approaches like basals, whole reading, phonics, DEAR time, writing across the curriculum, balanced literacy, four block, and more in order to achieve the best reading results from their students. Educators are concerned with how well a child can read grade level excerpts or what comprehension skills are needed in order for them to complete the grade level.

Schools are also concerned with academic standards and proficiencies that will be assessed using statewide testing. How well they do on these tests is interpreted as a reflection of the school and how well they are educating the youth. Because of the need to meet these standards and proficiencies or cover what needs to be learned for the tests, reading novels is often pushed to the side in favor of basals with shorter excerpts and worksheets which focus on skills. If children do read novels, it is to write a book report that just summarizes the plot or to take a ten-question quiz that consists of knowledge level questions. Edwards and Mercer and R.C. Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, and Wilkinson propose that:

The teacher's opportunity to monitor student thinking is severely limited.

Written work is often confined to single-answer responses to questions on worksheets, and oral language is restricted to responding to teacher generated, text based comprehension questions. Such instructional designs do not provide for a community of learners with multiple opportunities to interact in a variety of ways leading to literate thinking. Instead, communication is controlled, restricting learners' language use and

teachers' abilities to build instruction on what children already know.

Novels encourage multiple ways in which students can interact with a variety of different methods, but they are often overlooked. Novels will resurface in high school English classes and students will be expected to read and comprehend books at a high school level.

What happens to reading novels, especially in the intermediate (4-6) grades? Children need to read novels and stories at this critical point in their development. Basals that claim to be "literature based" are often cut and revised so that the original message is skewed (Goodman). Teachers may also use full length books as their reading program, but still practice "skill and drill" activities (Huck, Hepler, Hickman, 158). Often, because students are not properly exposed to reading materials and skills at this time they become turned off to books for the rest of their lives because they had no bridge from primary books to high school novels. This love of reading that has been fostered in the early years with read-aloud books and stories is dropped and not picked up again until high school leaving a huge gap in the teaching of literature. The excuse is that educators must teach children reading and comprehension skills and a book will not cover all the skills adequately. This is not true. Through careful planning and research, literature can be used effectively in the classroom it can cover standards and skills that students need to know in every grade level.

Another area of concern in the world of education is an emphasis to align standards with lessons and assessment. It creates school and teacher accountability and assures that all the skills that are needed to move on to the next grade level are covered. Literature can be challenging to include into an already packed intermediate curriculum, but it is important that students use literature to learn these skills.

This project will discuss and give examples of effective literature use in the classroom and

how the activities and assessment can cover academic standards (for further reference, this project will use Indiana Academic Standards in English/Language Arts for Grade Level 6). Part one is a report on literature in the classroom, standards and the movement toward standards, linking literature with standards, and my own experience with literature and standards as a sixth grade student teacher. Part two will give examples of lesson plans that connect literature and standards and give some explanation as to how to set up lesson plans that link literature with the standards.

### **The Importance of Literature in the Classroom**

Walking through the aisles of children and juvenile literature in a bookstore or browsing through the stacks in a library, one can find a book on almost any topic. Children and juvenile literature ranges from realistic fiction to fantasy. It can present issues like multiculturalism, divorce, and even drug abuse in language that is developmentally appropriate for whatever the age. "Children's literature offers an avenue to help children develop understanding of people of different backgrounds, as well as deal with tragedies and stressful situations" (Lu, ED 457 525). In today's classrooms, educators have a responsibility to present diverse perspectives. It's no wonder that educators use literature to enhance their instruction. Literature can be a guide for educators and parents and help them to discuss issues that children face and promote and problem solving and diversity. Literature is open-ended; there is no one right way to use it. In other words, it can be interpreted and utilized for many different functions in the classroom. Children also have a chance to express themselves individually after reading and discussion.

Literature enhances all areas of growth in children. These areas include academic, social, and emotional growth. Reading or English is an academic subject mandatory from grades one to grade twelve. It is an academic skill that is a must in today's fast paced technological society.

Reading can also be a social and emotional activity. Students can share their reading with educators and parents as well as other peers. By doing this, they are engaging in social interaction and practicing how to comprehend, discuss and even debate issues, which are higher order thinking skills. They also gain diverse perspectives about real world issues. Literature can also be emotional growth for children especially children who have experienced issues like divorce, drug abuse, death, or other tragic circumstances. Literature can help the healing process by being a springboard into discussions and helping children realize that there are others going through the same emotional issues. It can even help other children who may not have these issues to understand and become more compassionate to those classmates who are experiencing difficulty. Literature, through its topics and format, can be a useful tool for educators and parents trying to find a way to guide children through difficult and often confusing issues that exist in today's society.

Critical reading can also be taught through literature. Critical reading is defined as "learning to evaluate, draw inferences, and arrive at conclusions based on evidence" (Collins, ED 363 869). In other words, children learn to think while reading. These thinking skills are important not only for schoolwork but also for life. In the past, children would have to know only knowledge or comprehension level questions (Collins, ED 363 869). Critical reading requires children to practice higher levels of thinking like synthesis, analysis, and evaluation. They must be actively involved in their reading. This is accomplished through questioning, modeling, and many other methods, but most importantly it is dependent on the material that is used for reading. Using longer works of literature with a developed plot will enable students in the intermediate grades to fully develop critical reading skills. A full-length book for a sixth grade student would include places to make inferences and practice thinking skills. A student would be able to make

inferences and use prior knowledge easier than he would if he only read a short passage.

Literature can be an integral part of the reading curriculum. Though many educators in the past may have felt as if reading an entire book would take up too much time in the curriculum or lead to incomplete coverage of grade level concepts, many are realizing that a novel can be a worthwhile part of the classroom. Novels can be a central part of a classroom unit. In fact, many educators have already created units in this way. A novel is rich with information and allows the class to investigate deeper and use higher level thinking skills. Literature can also be adapted to any level that a learner is on making it a versatile resource for any grade. It does take much planning in order to coordinate the concepts, but in the end, students are learning more skills and ones that they will be able to utilize throughout their lives.

Linking literature with critical reading skills shows how valuable it is in the classroom. Critical reading skills are also part of the Indiana Academic State Standards (see Sixth Grade Reading Standards 6.2.6, 6.2.7, and 6.3.2). In the world of education today, there is a big push to create activities that will cover standards that students need to learn (La Marca, ED 458288). As stated before, many are abandoning novels in favor of more direct approaches to covering the standards. However if planned carefully, literature covers the standards as completely as any basal activity. In the next two sections academic standards and how they relate to literature will be discussed.

### **Standards and the Movement toward Standards**

In order to give children the knowledge that they need to function in society, how to do educators know what to teach and when to teach it? After they have taught the subject how does an educator know if the students have really understood it? These questions have fueled the

movement towards generating educational standards in many states. Academic standards, at their best, should answer the questions of what subjects and concepts should be taught and at what level. They should be “specific and measurable” (Gottlieb, ED 456 425). This means that standards need to clearly state concepts that need to be covered in each grade level and that there must be a way to accurately measure student progress in that concept. These standards should also be able to give educators a guide to assessing student mastery of the concept.

According to the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation’s 1998 report on standards the movement came about because of a “perception among some segments of the public that the level of scholastic achievement among public-school students left much room for improvement” (Gottlieb, ED 456 425). Standards were generated from professional organizations like the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and the International Reading Association (IRA) and they generated a list of voluntary guidelines. Gottlieb reports that many states felt that the guidelines were too general and that the standards were not measurable. In the past, many states left decisions about content up to the local schools, but now they started projects that would create standards that would be measurable and would assess student achievement in the state (Gottlieb, ED 456 425).

Standards also ensure that schools are correctly introducing skills that are supposed to be learned at each level. Standards should be set up in such a way that skills are introduced at the developmentally appropriate time and the prerequisite skills are learned in the previous years to the specific concept if need be. Standards also get rid of the ambiguity and inconsistency that exists between and among grade levels. Educators know what needs to be taught and when. If the standards are set up correctly, then the students will build upon concepts each year instead of having “holes” or “gaps” in their learning.

In addition, the alignment of standards with assessment, both in the classroom and statewide, help keep schools accountable for student learning. La Marca writes that “alignment can best be achieved through sound standards and assessment development activities” (La Marca ED 458288). Specific standards and valid tests will enable educators and others concerned with the improvement of academic achievement to accurately measure student learning. Schools are held accountable for students knowing certain skills at certain levels through statewide testing procedures. If the statewide test is based on the standards, then schools need to use the standards to structure their curriculum. If this is the case, then the educators in the classrooms will be held accountable for the lessons that they teach the students. These lessons need to be based on the statewide standards and educators need to use standards to create their classroom assessment of students as well. If districts and states want to accurately measure achievement through statewide testing, then alignment between standards and testing must be accurate. Specific standards can achieve steady, sequential progress through the curriculum and accountability in testing.

The next section will explore the Indiana Academic Standards and how they directly relate to an intermediate level novel. It will also explore ways in which the novel activities can be assessed in order for students to learn about the standards that they need to know and receive good exposure to literature. The section is focusing on the educator’s role in the process and the activities are geared toward an educator’s use in the classroom. They have the responsibility of accurately linking their lessons and assessments in math, English, science and social studies to the standards.

### **Linking Literature with Standards**

Research has been done on the importance of literature in the classroom and the

importance of standards for the curriculum and it has been discussed in the previous sections. Now the question must be asked: how do these issues fit together in the real world classroom? Since standards relate directly to the lessons in the classroom, literature, if it is being utilized to cover concepts, needs to meet the expectation of the standards at each grade level. Another important issue to remember is that educators are held accountable for the curriculum through statewide testing which is based on the academic standards and they must decide how to cover and assess the concepts that students need to understand by the time they leave the grade level.

As mentioned before, many educators do not use full-length books because they feel that spending too much time on one book would not give complete coverage to the concepts or would put them behind. Their reasoning is not faulty. When creating a literature based experience, educators must carefully plan the lessons in order to ensure that the standards are being covered. If an educator uses literature he or she will often include some of the basal coverage of concepts and skills. This is an excellent way to use the basal resources. Often, when educators have to make the difficult choice between literature and the basal excerpts, they will choose the basal excerpt because it is taken from a full length novel, but it is tailored to the skill or concept that needs to be learned. However, novels can be tailored to fit the specific concept as well and they have the added benefit of more practice of critical reading and higher level thinking skills needed for the goal of life long learning.

This section will attempt to demonstrate that a full-length novel can be used to cover academic standards just as well as a basal excerpt. The novel that will be used in the examples was shortened to a basal excerpt and included in D.C. Heath's sixth grade basal reader, I Touched the Sun (1989). The Indiana Academic Standards for Grade Level 6 and the full-length novel, Dragonsong, by Anne McCaffrey will be used in the following examples. The standards will be

discussed then some suggestions for a lesson and how to assess it.

The first example in linking standards with literature is a vocabulary lesson. Two of the 6th grade standards are identify and interpret figurative language (including similes, metaphors, implied comparisons) and words with multiple meaning (6.1.2) and understand and explain slight differences in meaning in related words (6.1.5). Taking these two standards and the first two chapters of the book, the teacher can find examples of these standards within the text of the novel. For instance the “fog was like a blanket over the cove” (simile). She could then present these examples through a minilesson (short lesson focusing on the concept of metaphor, simile, and/or words with multiple meaning), word of the day and/or other creative lesson. Next, the students would read the assigned chapters. The teacher could assign them a focus for reading like look for the similes on pg. 4 or find a word that has a multiple meaning on pg. 6. To practice the skill students could create examples on their own for homework or find other examples from other books on their own.

To assess this skill the teacher will need to create a test in which the students will either find examples or create examples of metaphors, similes, words with multiple meaning, words with slight differences in meaning. This is just a simple example of a lesson, obviously there is a lot of room for a teacher’s own creative style to be used.

It is important to keep in mind that to create a lesson based on the standards, the lesson must begin with the standard and be created from there. Knowing the focus or the concept of the lesson helps to generate activities and assessment for the lesson. Attached to the report in Section 2 is an example of a vocabulary lesson using the book, Dragonsong, and Indiana Academic Standard 6.1.4, understand unknown words in informational texts by using word, sentence, and paragraph clues to determine meaning.

This next example of linking literature with the standards will show how a novel can be useful in creating literary responses and analysis (Standard 3). After Dragonsong is read the teacher can discuss the theme of the novel. The Indiana Academic Standard states that students will identify and analyze features of themes conveyed through characters, actions, and images (6.3.6). Theme can be difficult to explain to 6th grade students who are just being introduced to the concept, but through this standard, the teacher can begin the discussion with the concepts of characters, actions and images. See Figure 1 to look at an example of a template that a teacher can use to help the student list characters, actions, and images.

For example, if a student lists Menolly (a character), Menolly fed the fire lizard babies and she became their “mother” (action), Menolly’s fire lizards helping her and singing with her (image). After some guided discussion, the student might come up with the theme “be kind to others and the kindness will be returned to you.” After the discussion, students would write a literary response about theme and how they can take the characters, actions and images from the story to back up their theme. The teacher will grade these responses. A teacher can use the literary responses as an assessment because it relates directly to the Standard.

In this instance, a novel offers a student a chance to pick from various characters, actions, and images. This is very helpful in a class where the activities need to be differentiated for students at different levels of learning. A teacher could let the students pick a theme from the characters, actions, and images she picks. She could also pick a theme and the student would need to find characters, actions, and images to support it or she could encourage the students to come up with their own theme and characters, actions, and images to support it. Literature offers students a broader view of actions and images and more character development. This skill that they are practicing now will also help them to discover themes and main ideas in their high school

Figure 1

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Characters

Actions

Images

Theme:

and college level reading. Attached to this report in Section 2 is an example of a Comprehension lesson that covers making inferences and relating speaker's verbal communication to the nonverbal message (6.2.6 and 6.7.1).

In order to be useful to educators, Section 2 of this report also contains a Spelling lesson, book list, and a general overhaul that explains how this novel can be linked with a classroom unit.

### **Aligning Literature and Assessment of Standards**

Literature can be linked with many important grade level concepts in the standards. It is a useful tool for an educator when carefully planned and implemented into the curriculum. A literature curriculum needs to be sure to align with state standards especially if statewide testing is based on those standards. In other words, the true test of a literature based experience is assessment, both classroom and statewide. Most often, tests of literature are simple multiple-choice questions that test recall of the plot or, at best, comprehension of the story. Usually there is an essay which asks students to write about one concept out of the many that they were supposed to have learned. This does not encourage students to read and really develop some higher thinking concepts and appreciation of literature.

Assessment also depends on the literature focus. According to some research, there are three focuses that a literature curriculum can have. The focuses, according to Dixon, Purves, and Mandel, are texts and knowledge of the literary and cultural heritage of a group, development of skilled readers and critics of literary texts, and encouragement of personal growth through reading and involvement with the text. These three focuses can be combined in part or whole to any one curriculum depending on the emphasis of the school system.

Since this research report focuses on literature and connecting it with the Indiana

Academic Standards that will be the particular focus. In connecting literature with academic standards it is important to remember to test or assess the standards being taught. This can be done through multiple ways. The daily work, homework, and in class practices will be a good indicator of growth and progress and can also let the educator know if students have mastered the concept or if some students need to be remediated. Authentic assessments like portfolios and journals are excellent ways to mark growth in various standards. Portfolios and journals can specifically focus on the students' growth in a particular standard. Projects will draw several standards together and give students a chance to showcase what they know in a creative manner. Educators can also generate checklists and rubrics related to skills and concepts in the standards to determine if the students have mastered the standard.

Assessment is important in drawing all the work, lessons, and projects together. Assuring that the assessment align with the standards is an important part of a successful literature based experience. Through correct assessment students will benefit from the literature and be challenged to develop the thinking skills that are essential for further learning.

### **Classroom Experience with Literature and the Standards**

During January through March 2002 I worked with sixth grade students at Rhoades Elementary in Indianapolis, Indiana. The teacher had various ways to incorporate literature into the classroom. After lunch, the teacher or myself would have a 20-minute read-aloud period. The books read during this time were Newbery books, classics, and books that pertained to the 20th century theme the class was studying. The class also had silent reading time in which they would read books they checked out from the library. Many read books from the Accelerated Reader (AR) program. Each book is worth a certain number of points and if they pass a

computer quiz they get those points. The teacher made it part of their reading grade and told them the number of points that he expected them to work for each semester. In this way, the teacher incorporated reading books into the curriculum.

While I was student teaching, the class was working on a 20th Century unit and I created a book project in connection with this unit in order to include literature into the classroom (see Section 2 for the assignment in detail). I received 50 juvenile fiction books from the Middle Grades Reading Network at the University of Evansville for the purpose of introducing literature into the classroom and helping students to become readers of juvenile fiction by exposing them to literature and making it accessible in the classroom. Most were Young Hoosier Books for grades 4-6 and 6-8, the rest were award winning books or book that were chosen by teachers and students. I realized that many were historical fiction novels and I chose the historical fiction novels that occurred during the 20th Century and added some others from the school's library.

The students were able to pick novels from the list and they were given the assignment. The assignment framework uses the Multiple Intelligence theory by Howard Gardner. Rhoades Elementary places an emphasis on Multiple Intelligence and I wanted to tie in literature with Multiple Intelligence. Students were to pick one assignment in any of the intelligences and complete the assignment which required them to read the novel, complete the general questions, complete their specific task for the multiple intelligence that they chose, and give a presentation to the class. Each task also included a writing component. Not only were students practicing their word recognition and vocabulary skills (Standard 1) through reading, but they also were practicing comprehension and writing skills (Standard 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6) in their assignment. Student also had to prepare an oral presentation, which is part of Standard 7, Listening and Speaking.

The results of the project were varied, but the focus was achieved. Every academic standard was covered if the students did the work. Students were exposed to literature as an integral part of the curriculum and had an academic and creative way to present what they had read. I also found that many did their projects in the visual/spatial intelligence. Many wanted to link their drawing/art intelligence to the novel they had read. One student performed a rap (musical intelligence) to express what he had read, and another did a pantomime (body/kinesthetic intelligence) of various scenes from his book. Most importantly, the students were able to link reading a book (literature) with something that they, hopefully, enjoyed doing.

After the project I gave out questionnaires and asked the students what they liked and/or disliked about the books. Several responded that they enjoyed having them in the classroom and they could check the books out whenever they wanted. In regards to the novels, I discovered that the students enjoyed the fact that the books were available for them in the classroom. I set up the books with library cards and pockets from a teacher supply store so that I could have a way of keeping track of the books. It also gave students the responsibility to return the books and keep them in good condition. The students also liked the different way to check out the books. I found that the availability of the books plus the fact that the librarian and myself gave book talks about them encouraged the students to read the books.

## **Conclusion**

This research report was a result of a lifetime love and interest in reading and education. I wanted to create something so that students could benefit from reading some of the great literature that is available to juveniles today and to show that it is possible for reading novels to be a meaningful part of the curriculum. I believe it is vital to keep children interested in books

throughout their entire school career, especially during the intermediate years of fourth through sixth grade. Through developing an appreciation of literature this way, they will reap the benefits that reading can offer them.

In her article, "Teaching Children to Appreciate Literature," Sharon L. Pugh writes:

Literature is the means by which people communicate across cultures and across ages--across all divisions of time and space to gather the collective wisdom of the human experience. It is also the way we explore and communicate with the future. Through teaching literature, we recognize the special claim that children have on the future as well as our willingness to share the past. To appreciate literature is to appreciate what it means to be a part of the entire human scene. No child should be denied that. (Pugh, ED 292108)

This sums up the true aim of literature in the classroom. Being able to pass on to children a knowledge of the past and a desire for continued learning throughout their lives through the pages of a book is the highest goal that an educator can achieve through a literature based experience.

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# Section 2

## Vocabulary Lesson

- I. Grade Level: 6
- II. Lesson Topic: A Vocabulary lesson using words from Dragonsong by Anne McCaffrey
- III. Objectives:
  - Given a list of vocabulary words, students will write down the definitions.
  - Students will use context clues in the story to define the vocabulary words.
  - Through making a semantic map, students will associate words that they know with the new vocabulary words.
- IV. Materials:
  - Word List
  - Large sheet of paper
  - Markers
  - Dictionary
  - Copy of Dragonsong
  - Word pictures
- V. Procedure:
  - A. Set/Motivation:
    - Students will have read a passage of Dragonsong all the way through.
    - The teacher will introduce the new words to the students by showing them a picture of what the words would look like. For instance, transparent could be written out on a transparency, skiff could be written on a boat, cove a picture of a cove, and so on. The five words that will be used for this lesson are transparent, skiff, fledgling, cove, and dragon.
    - The teacher will introduce the words to the students by telling them that the words are in need of some definitions and other words to describe them and that it is the students' job to find them out.
  - B. Lesson Body:
    - Students will get into five small groups and each group will be given one word.
    - The students will look for their word within the context of the story and write down the sentence that it was used in.
    - The students will write down the definition of the word from the dictionary.
    - The students will construct a semantic map for their word. If they have difficulty finding their own words to use they can use the context clues from the story and the definition that they looked up.

**C. Student Practice**

- Students will present their word to the class and explain their semantic maps and the words that they used to describe the vocabulary word.
- As students present the word, the students who are listening will take down the words that they used on the semantic map. This will be their vocabulary list.

**D. Closure**

- Students will put their vocabulary word on the Word Wall and refer to it when necessary.

**VI. Evaluation of Student Learning**

- Students will create new sentences using the five vocabulary words that they just practiced.

## Comprehension Lesson

- I. Grade Level: 6
- II. Lesson Topic: A Comprehension lesson using words from Dragonsong by Anne McCaffrey
- III. Objectives:
  - Given questions, students will respond to them by telling how they would feel or what they would do in a certain situation.
  - Given the discussion, students will be able to dramatize a portion of the story accurately describing how Menolly feels.
- IV. Materials:
  - Copy of Dragonsong
  - Any material needed for dramatization
- V. Procedure:
  - A. Set/Motivation:
    - The teacher will ask students if they have ever been in a strange or new situation.
    - Students will share any times that they have and the teacher will participate too.
    - The teacher will explain that the students are going to hear about Menolly while she is at the Weyr. Ask them to listen for how they think Menolly feels in the new situation.
  - B. Lesson Body:
    - After the discussion, the teacher will read aloud part of Menolly's experience in the Weyr.
    - After the read aloud the teacher will ask the students how they thought Menolly was feeling and why (Answers could range from hurt because her feet were in pain, happy because she would not go back to the hold, confused because she was crying, tired etc.).
    - The teacher will tell the students that they are going to dramatize one of Menolly's emotions that she felt when she was in the Weyr. They need to show why she was confused or hurt or happy and what the situation was.
    - Teacher will give the example of Menolly feeling tired because they gave her some medicine. The teacher will call on a student to help her and act out Menolly taking medicine and falling asleep.
  - C. Student Practice
    - Students will break into small groups and the teacher will hand out an emotion that Menolly was feeling when she was at the Weyr.
    - Students will work together in small groups to figure out what activity in the Weyr caused her to feel this way and how they can dramatize it.
  - D. Closure

- The teacher will summarize what happened at the Weyr by asking students to write it down on the chalkboard.
- Next to each action they will write how Menolly is feeling.

VI. Evaluation of Student Learning

- Students will present their group's dramatization to the class to show that they understood what was going on in the story.

## Spelling Lesson

- I. Grade Level: 6
- II. Lesson Topic: A Spelling lesson using words from Dragonsong by Anne McCaffrey
- III. Objectives:
  - When given a word verbally, students will be able to write it down on paper correctly spelled 80% of the time.
- IV. Materials:
  - Word Cards
  - Copy of Dragonsong
  - Materials for making set of the story in the book.
- V. Procedure:
  - A. Set/Motivation:
    - Students will have read Chapter 5 of Dragonsong all the way through.
    - The teacher will try to recreate the actual scene from Chapter 5 where Menolly runs away.
    - The teacher will make word cards of the spelling words and put them on or around the spot where they happened. For instance, the nebulous fog that surrounded Menolly as she left. Or how she left the hold doors unbarred and it was a terrible offense.
  - B. Lesson Body:
    - The teacher will go through the scene with the students. As she tells the story she will stop and spell out the words on the cards when she uses them in her story.
    - The teacher will ask for a volunteer to help her tell the story and as she tells the story, the volunteer will spell the words when she gets to them.
    - The students will have a moving spelling bee. As they go along and try to recount the story they need to stop at each place and spell the word aloud.
  - C. Student Practice
    - Students will also have the words on their own little index cards and they will practice them independently.
    - Students will also take place in a regular spelling bee for practice.
  - D. Closure
    - The words will go up on the word wall and be displayed until the day of the test.
- VI. Evaluation of Student Learning
  - Students will take a spelling test. The teacher will say the word and put it in a sentence and the students will write out the word on the paper.

## General Overhaul of the Lesson

The basal only gives a short, cropped version of a portion of the book, Dragonsong by Anne McCaffrey. This book is age appropriate for sixth graders. The basal asks some good questions and I could use those as we read from the actual text. However, it is only one chapter of the book that the basal covers.

I would include this book in a unit about dragons. In the book, fire lizards are a smaller form of a dragon and the book is also about what we would know as a typical, large, fire-breathing dragon. Dragons would give the students something interesting to focus on and the teacher would have many materials to use to base lessons on. I would definitely include a KWL chart assessing what the students know about the topic. I would also bring music and poetry into the unit by having the students create their own lyrics about a topic since the book is about a girl who was forbidden to make music in her own home. Instead of doing worksheets, students would be involved in making a dramatization of a scene, writing in a journal about how they think Menolly is feeling or predicting what will happen next in the story. They would also look for the vocabulary in the context of the story and try to create their own sentences out of the new words.

## Book List - Dragons

- Hoke, Helen. Barker, C. (ill.) (1972) Dragons, Dragons, Dragons.
- Kaplan, Howard S. (1968) The Dragon from the Bronx.
- LeGuin, Ursula K. Marshall, L. (ill.) (1989) Fire and Stone.
- McCaffrey, Anne. (1979) Dragondrums.
- McCaffrey, Anne. (1977) Dragonsinger.
- McCaughrean, Geraldine. Palin, N (ill.) (1989) St. George and the Dragon.
- Norton, Andre. Jacques R. (ill.) (1972) Dragon Magic.
- Passes, David. Anderson, W. (ill.) (1993) Dragons: Truth Myth and Legend.
- Prelutsky, Jack. Sis, P. (ill.) (1993) The Dragons are Singing Tonight.
- Spicer, Dorothy G. Sophia. (ill.) (1974) 13 Dragons.
- Tolkien, J.R.R. (1966) The Hobbit.
- Wrede, Patricia C. (1993) Calling on Dragons.
- Wrede, Patricia C. (1990) Dealing with Dragons.
- Wrede, Patricia C. (1991) Searching for Dragons.
- Wrede, Patricia C. (1985) Talking to Dragons.
- Yep, Laurence. (1991) Dragon Cauldron.
- Yep, Laurence. (1982) Dragon of the Lost Sea.
- Yolen, Jane. (1982) Dragon's Blood.
- Yolen, Jane. (1990) The Dragon's Boy.
- Yolen, Jane. Ming, L. (ill.) (1995) Merlin and the Dragon.



## BOOK PROJECT PART II

For the second part of your book project, choose ONE of the following activities to complete. You must tell Miss Rempala by Wednesday, February 13 which activity you will complete.

### 1. Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence (Word Smart)

-Compare and contrast the time period in the book you have read to today's world. You must have at least 5 similarities and 5 differences. You can do this through an essay (at least 7 paragraphs in length) or a poem.

-Pretend that the main character in the book has come to this time period. Give an oral report about the differences and similarities that s/he sees between the two worlds and the main action in the story (5 each is minimum). It must be told from 1st person point of view (tell the story from the character's point of view.). Dressing up or acting like the character is required.

### 2. Musical/Rhythmic Intelligence (Music Smart)

-Create a song or a rap about the story. Include similarities and differences between today's world and the time period in the story (5 each is the minimum). Your song must be written on paper and able to be turned in. Performance of the song or rap is required.

### 3. Logical/Mathematical Intelligence (Logic Smart)

-Choose 5 different events in the story that are the cause of something happening in the story and what is its effect. Write about these five cause and effect instances. Also include in your story for each cause and effect event whether or not you believe that this was the most logical or best thing to do. If it was, then explain why. If not, explain what you would have done.

### 4. Visual/Spatial Intelligence (Picture Smart)

-Create a new book jacket for your book. Be sure to add all the important information included on book jacket (ex. Author, title, publisher, summary, information on the author, reviews on the book). Write a paragraph explaining why you chose to draw the picture you did for the cover.

-Create a mural of the events in the story. Include at least 5 different events or pictures in your mural. Write a paragraph explaining how each of the pictures relates to the story.

### 5. Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence (Body Smart)

-Pantomime at least 5 different characters, objects or events from your story. Write 5 paragraphs that explain how these characters, objects, or events relates to the story and why you chose the pantomime.

**6. Naturalist Intelligence (Nature Smart)**

-Write an essay (minimum of 7 paragraphs) about the nature of one of the characters in the book. How does the character adapt to change (problems) in his or her environment? What are his or her strengths and weaknesses? What would the character think or do in our world today?

**7. Intrapersonal Intelligence (Self Smart)**

-As you read your story keep a journal of your thoughts and feelings about the book and the events that are happening in the book. The journal entries can also include what you think is going to happen next, similarities and differences in the world events in the story and the world events today, and what you feel about the way the story ended. You must have a minimum of 7 journal entries each a paragraph in length.

**8. Interpersonal Intelligence (People Smart)**

-Prepare a skit or reader's theater about your story. It can be a scene from the book, an adaptation of the story, or a skit about the similarities and differences in the world events of the story and today's world. You will need to enlist the help of your classmates for this assignment. (Note: This does not count as the project for classmates who help with this skit)

**BOOK PROJECT PART III**

For the third part of your book project, you will present the project that you have done in class. You will read your essays or poems; sing songs or raps; present artwork and talk about it; and present pantomimes, skits or character talks. These will be presented during the week of March 11-15.

## Scoring Sheet for Book Project- 50 points

Name \_\_\_\_\_

### Part 1- 20 pts.

\_\_\_\_\_ All information on questions 1-3 is provided - 5 points

\_\_\_\_\_ All information on questions 4-6 is provided - 5 points each question - 15 pts. total

### Part 2 - 20 pts.

\_\_\_\_\_ Project has all written information needed (paragraphs, essays)- 10 points.

\_\_\_\_\_ Project includes all things asked for in the description of the assignment- 10 points

### Part 3 - 10 pts.

\_\_\_\_\_ Presentation of project to the class explains what you have done for the project- 5 points

\_\_\_\_\_ Describes the book what historical time period the book took place in- 5 points

## List of Books

Directions- Check up to 25 books that you want to keep in the classroom

- The Basket Counts
- Because of Winn Dixie
- Born Blue
- Choosing Up Sides
- Death at Devil's Bridge
- Down the Yukon
- Football Nightmare
- Francie
- Gathering Blue
- The Ghost in Tokaido Inn
- The Ghost of Lizard Light
- Good Night, Maman
- Homeless Bird
- The Moonlight Man
- The Mysterious Matter of I.M. Fine
- Over the Wall
- Rats
- Silent to the Bone
- Stargirl
- The Summer of Riley
- The Wanderer
- A Wrinkle in Time
- The Birthday Room
- Can You Feel the Thunder?
- The Case of the Firecrackers
- Cody Unplugged
- Eye of the Great Bear
- Faraway Summer
- Jason's Gold
- Love from Your Friend, Hannah
- Nowhere to Call Home
- Ordinary Miracles
- Pioneer Girl: Growing up on the Prairie
- Preacher's Boy
- Seeing Lessons
- The Starplace
- Survival! Train Wreck, Kansas, 1892
- William Shakespeare and the Globe
- All Alone in the Universe
- Among the Hidden
- The Beetle and Me: A Love Story
- Bradley and the Billboard

- \_\_\_\_\_ Cast Two Shadows
- \_\_\_\_\_ Circle of Magic: Sandry's Book
- \_\_\_\_\_ Dave at Night
- \_\_\_\_\_ Downsiders
- \_\_\_\_\_ Safe at Second
- \_\_\_\_\_ Soldier's Heart
- \_\_\_\_\_ When Zachary Beaver Came to Town

What did you like/dislike about having the books in the classroom?

Did you like/dislike the books for read aloud? Why?

How many books did you look at or read from the above list?

If you used one of the books for your book project, what did you think about it?

**Return to Miss Rempala by the end of Morning Work  
Time!!!!**