

Cabinets of Wonder: Inspiring Literacy Across the Curriculum Unit Planning Template

Unit Designer: Kurt Wootton Grade Level: Secondary

Discipline(s): Literacy, Theatre Time Frame: From three weeks to a semester

STAGE ONE: Identify Desired Results What do we want students to know, understand, and be able to do?	
<p>Unit Overview <i>What will be studied and why?</i></p> <p><i>How does this study ask fundamental questions about the content or discipline(s) being studied?</i></p>	<p>Argentinean educator Emilia Ferreiro explains that, “There are children who enter written language through magic (a cognitively challenging magic) and other children who enter written language through training in ‘basic abilities.’ In general, the first become readers; the others have an uncertain fate.” Although Ferreiro is talking about young children learning to become readers, her general idea of reading being a magical act applies to readers across all age levels. How then can we inspire students to want to read? How can we create spaces in our classrooms that not only bring magic to the reading process, but, at the same time, provide a space that is “cognitively challenging” helping them to reach new levels of success? By taking up the theme of “wonder” we will examine ways that literacy in the broadest sense can be an inspired and magical process.</p>
<p>Enduring Understandings <i>What are the big ideas that give meaning and importance to the facts studied?</i></p> <p><i>What are the big understandings that reside at the heart of the study, that you want students to uncover and attempt to understand through this study?</i></p>	<p>When we read and write we often do so for informational purposes: reading an article in the newspaper or an instructional manual for our DVD player. If we stop at this point, we are literate in the strict definition of the term, but we would lack the full dimensionality of the reading and writing process, where words can nourish us in our professional and personal lives. One of our goals as literacy teachers must be to help students find a sense of wonder in the reading and writing process.</p> <p>In this workshop we’ll investigate what we mean by wonder in all its varied forms, not only in reading and writing, but in our lives as well. We’ll also examine how reading and writing can be an inspired and magical process</p>
<p>Essential Questions <i>What are the relevant, meaningful questions that will encourage deep exploration of ideas?</i></p> <p><i>What universal, compelling question(s) will focus the study and the final performance of student learning?</i></p>	<p>What does “wonder” mean?</p> <p>How do we bring a sense of wonder to the reading and writing process?</p> <p>Where do we find wonder in our own lives?</p> <p>How can we foster a sense of wonder in our lives and in our classrooms?</p>

<p>Desired Outcomes for Student Learning/Standards</p> <p><i>What do I want students to know, understand, and be able to do?</i></p> <p><i>What skills or insights do I expect them to gain?</i></p> <p><i>How do these ideas align to state and/or national standards and/or graduation requirements? (Include all standards for all disciplines being assessed that align with desired outcomes)</i></p>	<p>We want students to be transported when they read, to feel as if they are being magically lifted from this time and place to another. We want them to have a sense that they can own the text—that it is theirs to interpret through a range of symbol systems. Not only can they comprehend it deeply, they can recreate it through performance, visual art making, writing, movement, and dialogue. Text isn't something separate from them, something that has power over them. Rather through a rich, interactive process they gain power of the text and are able to use it to meet their own unique educational and professional goals.</p> <p>Although our highest standard is to inspire a deep love of reading, this workshop will also address the following Common Core Standards that are emphasized not only for Language Arts, but for a new category titled "Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, & Technical Subjects"</p> <p>Reading: Key Ideas and Details</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text. 2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas. 3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text. <p>Writing: Text Types and Purposes</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences. <p>Comprehension and Collaboration:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
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STAGE TWO: Determine Acceptable Evidence

How will we know if students have achieved the desired outcomes and met the standards?

What will we accept as evidence of student understanding and proficiency?

Assessment

How will I know if students have achieved the desired outcomes and met the standards?

What will I accept as evidence of student understanding and proficiency? How will I communicate this to students?

How will I evaluate student evidence of learning the desired outcomes?

How will I offer students the opportunity to expand on and apply what they've learned?

How will students have an opportunity for self-evaluation and/or revision?

The challenge in assessing a student's success in reading is that, since we don't know what is happening in the mind of the reader, we must leap to another medium (usually oral or written) to assess whether a student has achieved the standard in that area. We then enter a murky area where we aren't sure if we are actually assessing the student's ability to read, or whether we are assessing the medium of expression. For instance, a student reads a book and we ask her to explain what part of the book was most compelling for her. She might have completely entered the world of the book cognitively, but lacks the oral and language capacities to express the complexity of her reading. We are then not assessing her reading, but rather her ability to express herself orally. Here lies both the difficulty in addressing the reading standards, and the opportunity for the arts to provide a way to provide multiple windows into the processes of the reader.

To assess whether a student has read closely we will:

- Assemble a "reading map" as a community to examine our reactions to the text
- Participate in numerous micro-conversations analyzing the text from different perspectives.
- Write our own personal reactions to the text examining "text to self connections"
- Perform the actual text itself, with practice, to evaluate issues of fluency, sound/symbol coordination, and understanding of vocabulary.

To assess writing we will:

- Revise writing until the student feels it is ready for "publication," supplemented by formal and informal writing conferencing with peers and teacher.
- Share writing in informal groups, pre-publication, to provide an informal audience and the opportunity for the students to hear their own words and revise accordingly.
- Perform writing with an authentic audience.

We will also be able to assess a student's ability to collaborate in small ensembles during the process of creating a performance piece for the stage. Numerous opportunities will exist to evaluate a student's interpersonal skills through structured, interpersonal processes of dialogue and planning.

STAGE THREE: Plan Learning Experiences and Instruction

What teaching and learning experiences will equip students to demonstrate the targeted understandings?

<p>Develop the Instructional Plan</p> <p><i>What is the scope and sequence of activities that lead to student success on the assessment(s) and academic rigor?</i></p> <p><i>Do activities require that students ask deep questions about their learning?</i></p> <p><i>Are there opportunities for students to develop language and conceptual understandings related to content?</i></p> <p><i>Are there opportunities for meaning-making and personal reflection on the part of students?</i></p> <p><i>Are students encouraged to revise and produce quality work?</i></p> <p><i>Do the activities provide multiple entry-points and accommodate for different learning styles?</i></p> <p><i>Is the teacher spending her time coaching, conferencing, leading, participating, and sharing responsibility for learning with the students?</i></p>	<p>Community Building and Pre-reading/Entering Text Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Movement and vocabulary experiences • Interacting in the space through The Human Atom • Developing a sense of <i>prior knowledge</i> through quick story sharing • Designing questions and exploring definitions • Call and Response and other activities to build fluency and inspire a desire in the students to read the text <p>Intensive Reading and Deep Comprehension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeated and various reading of texts from communal to individual • Individual space for reflecting on the text • Analyzing and considering the text’s various levels • Creating a visual map of the text • Micro-conversations around the text to deepen meaning in a social environment <p>Extensive Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing opportunities to read and discuss multiple texts around the theme of wonder <p>Writing: Responding to the Text and the overall workshop concept of wonder</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating “thick air” through guided writing activities • Allowing an individual space to structure ideas • Writing about “moments of wonder” in our personal lives. <p>Sharing, Editing, Rehearsing, and Performing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forming performance ensembles • Sharing personal texts • Synthesizing all workshop texts—personal and external—into a culminating <i>performance of understanding</i> • Participating in a technique called layered <i>performances</i> to arrive at a student-created final product. <p>Reflecting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Returning to the overall theme of “wonder” and reflecting as teachers.
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<p>Identify Materials and Resources</p> <p><i>What materials and resources—including student handouts, books, periodicals, media, software, URLs—are required to implement this unit?</i></p> <p><i>Are the materials and resources sufficient for exploring the topic and directly related to the essential question?</i></p>	<p>Numerous texts used for intensive and extensive reading from a variety of sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rachel Carson’s essay “A Sense of Wonder” • Poems from Mary Oliver, William Stafford, Mary Howe, and Jaime Sabines. • Work by and about Albert Einstein • Excerpts from Dr. Seuss and Shel Silverstein to stimulate thinking about childhood and our fascination with journeys of imagination and strange places. • Possible instruments for adding additional aural layers onto the performance • Paper, pencils, and the ideas and talents of the students.
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STAGE FOUR: ALIGNMENT and REFLECTION

Do the various pieces of my Unit Plan align with and support each other?
Upon completion of my unit: How did it go? What might I do differently next time to improve the unit and my practice?

<p>Implementation Alignment and Reflection</p> <p><i>How do the instructional activities support the achievement of the desired outcomes?</i></p> <p><i>How do the assessment methods demonstrate achievement of the desired outcomes?</i></p> <p>AFTER THE UNIT IS COMPLETE:</p> <p><i>What worked?</i></p> <p><i>What didn’t work?</i></p> <p><i>What would another teacher need to know in order to enact this curriculum?</i></p>	<p>We’ll see . . .</p>
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