

Lesson Plan
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I recently began working as a public school librarian. Before being hired I had to give a demo lesson for a class of students. I choose a bunch of books including *Owl Moon*, which won a Caldecott Medal in 1988. I began discussing the medal with the kids and explained how children's librarians get to vote every year on what book they think has the best illustrations. One child asked me "Did you vote for this one?" I had come very prepared for this lesson but was taken aback by this question. I replied "No, but I hope one day I get to." This inspired me to create a yearlong project with my students to create the PS84 book awards. I think so often kids are assigned what books to read but this does not provide students the creative choice they deserve, "They have the right to be allowed to produce and transform knowledge, not just consume it (68)" I want to give them the opportunity to collaborate with their classmates, and school community to open up the discussion on what books they enjoy.

Modern teachers face many issues; "The challenge is to make space available so that different life worlds can flourish; to create spaces for community life where local and specific meanings can be made (16)." My lesson plan will provide students with a place of community, allowing them to flourish as excellent readers. My objectives are to inspire my students to have a greater love of reading, expand their knowledge of literacy, become critical readers and a comprehensive understanding on what makes a good book.

I want to teach literacy skills in the classical sense of reading but also expand the definition to involve comprehension. I think literacy exists on a basis of interaction “All language is meaningful only on the basis of shared experiences and shared information. All language is inexplicit until listeners and readers fill it out on the basis of the experiences they have had and the information they have gained in prior socioculturally significant interactions with others (63)” Through discussions of books, the students can share their prior knowledge and personal stories of what books mean to them. By creating the PS84 book award it will allow the students to introduce books to their peers and open up collaborative discussions. There is a very diverse community at PS 84 and I want the books selected to reflect that. Within the school there is a dual language French and Spanish program. I hope to involve this diversity in the book selection. Since students will be suggesting books to one another, I think this diversity will be represented.

This lesson plan is set up to be used in a school library but could be adapted for public library branches. I will work with each class individually during their library visits but will collect the information to involve the entire school. This lesson plan will be implemented over the entire school year with multiple steps. There are many goals I aspire to accomplish with each step and will outline them in this paper.

I will begin the project by discussing with each class the aspects of what makes a story. I am going to start by reading a book with each class and then breaking them up into small groups (3-4 students). I will distribute my first hand out and allow the students to learn from each other. Throughout all my steps I want

to ensure collaborative work. I think this is an incredibly important skill children need to learn and an essential pedagogical principle. Many work environments have moved towards collaboration, “a movement towards people who can work collaboratively in teams to produce results and add value through distributed knowledge and understanding (50)” This can be instilled in children at a young age so that as they grow older they have plenty of experience.

I created different handouts for each grade to match the New York State standards initiative. The handouts are catered to each grade level standards and reflect the three reading groups, literature, informational text, and foundational skills. The groups will work on knowledge building by discussing what they know about each part about the story and help teach each other to learn the terms. After breaking off, we will come back as a group and discuss the terms and identify each part in the story we read earlier. They will be able to achieve higher in the zone of proximal development by working collaboratively and even further from my additional scaffolding. We will continue to discuss the anatomy of a story each visit for a month, to solidify the collective information for each child, “the actual work is not directed toward improving its minds but towards improving the knowledge that is being collectively created (50)” I will accomplish this by continuing to read stories each library visit and sparking discussion about the terms.

After I feel like the students have learned from one another and understand the important aspects of the story, we will move onto the next step of my plan. We will read from children’s book that have already won or have been nominated for various awards. The different awards that will be represented will be the Caldecott,

Ezra Jack Keats, Coretta Scott King and Newberry awards. I chose these books because of their notoriety and the promotion of different cultures. The Newberry, Corretta Scott King, and the Caldecott medal are all awarded by the ALA. They are picked by a committee and are the most prestigious children book awards. The Corretta Scott King award is given each year “to African American authors and illustrators for outstanding contributions to literature for children and young adults.” The Ezra Jack Keats award was created by NYPL to distinguish new children’s authors. I chose these awards to be represented because I think they should add diversity.

While reading the books I will open up the discussion and ask why the students think these books won the awards. I want to open it up to the class to discuss what are the positives and negatives of these books. For the older grades, each week we will analyze a different group of award winners. I will have the classes break into groups and then each group will have a different award winner. I will ask the students to read and analyze the books and then present them to their fellow classmates. I want the kids to have a dialog with their peers about the books. I will encourage them to think critically and decide if they think this book deserves the award it won. “It is not our job to produce docile, compliant workers. Students need also to develop the capacity to speak up, to negotiate, and to be able to engage critically with the conditions of their working lives (13)” The students will be able to make their own decision about how much they like the books and not be told they must love this book. I want to motivate them to think critically about what makes a great book and what aspects they dislike.

After a couple of weeks of analyzing different books we will start discussing what books the kids enjoy reading. This will begin with simply listing off favorite books and then progressing into examining what makes those favorite books interesting. I think giving the students the opportunity to critique different books will help them be better critical thinkers. Our society has begun to place more importance on the individual, "The new fast capitalism literature stresses adaptation to constant change through thinking for oneself; critique and empowerment; innovation and creativity; technical and systems thinking; and learning how to learn (12)." This is a big step away from traditional Fordism where workers were forced into authoritarian hierarchies.

This step of the lesson is aimed at giving the students as much creative freedom as possible. They will spend their library periods looking through the stack and providing recommendations for their classmates. Throughout the library there will be baskets with slips of papers asking questions about books. "What's your favorite author?" "What's your favorite book character?" "Book Recommendations." I will collect this information and make it visible throughout the library in the forms of poster and along the shelves. I will collect the recommendations and create a book of all of them so students can look through them to help see what their peers are reading. For the older grade I will start having the kids type up recommendations and attach them to the catalog. We use Destiny at the library and there is an option for students to include recommendations. This will be a fun way to promote catalog use and add some technology to the project.

After a month or so of the students freely choosing books, I will introduce the idea of creating our own award. I will first open up the idea by asking the students to go home and think about the idea. The next visit, we will start creating lists of favorite books and reasons why, from each student divided by grade. I will collate the list and send them home with the students encouraging them to check out some of the other books on the list. The next week I will break up the groups of students who like the same books and give them an opportunity to present their favorite books to the class. Once all the groups have presented I will open up the voting booths. Students can cast their ballot in boxes throughout the library.

The last part of the lesson is to allow the students to design what the award will look like. Literacy is not limited to letters and words but includes symbols. We will look at other examples of awards and then I will give out my handout for the students to draw their own version of the PS84 books award. I want the students to think about how to explain the award without words. Symbols and brands can hold so much power and I want the students to understand their importance. I will look through all of the entries and choose a winner, and multiple honorable mentions. I will also announce the winner of the award. Everybody who is involved with the design of the PS84 medal will be given a certificate of achievement. Although competition is an inevitable part of life, I want all the students involved to feel appreciated and proud of their design.

I am very excited to begin implementing this lesson plan at PS84. I believe through this plan, I will be able to accomplish all my goals. The students will become critical readers, reading lovers and collaborative experts. An essential part

of this plan is its ease of implementation and the flexibility involved. It is also a fun project that will allow the kids to feel a sense of ownership and community within the library.

Work Cited

Cope, Bill, and Mary Kalantzis. *Multiliteracies: Literacy Learning and the Design of Social Futures*. London: Routledge, 2000. Print.

What are the different parts
of a story?

Title

Author

Illustrator

Plot

Character

Setting

Theme

Examples of Childrens Book Awards.

Newbery Medal



Caldecott Medal



Corretta Scott King Award

Ezra Jack Keats Award



What's your favorite book?

What should the PS84 Book award look like?