

GRADE 11 ENGLISH: Notes Toward a Childrens' Literature Unit

This was translated into actual lessons on a number of occasions when I taught at Governor Simcoe S. S. in St. Catharines.

Contacts:

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Carousel Players: for story-teller?

Possible aspects of the Exchange

1. Get to know the kids we will read/write with
2. Get to know something about children's literature: the kinds of stories possible
3. Evaluate some stories: on our own; with the kids
4. Meet local writer of children's stories
5. Commit one story for children to memory for telling
6. Write one story for children
7. Write one story with children
8. Possible visit to Grantham library to sample books

Possible Sequence of Activities at the Public School

Day One

Simcoe students go to the public school where (hopefully) the librarian might introduce us to the kinds of stories appropriate to the age level we will contact. What's the range? What's the appeal?

We have some time to read some of these and to make notes.

Select one for reading next visit.

Day Two

We return to the public school for purposes of meeting the students there. We pair up, or sit in small groups and read stories from the library. At least one of these stories will be the one selected last time. Simcoe students should be investigating the appeal of this story on various students.

If it is possible for our students to establish one child with whom they will work in subsequent sessions, I might want our students to write a "profile" of their "client", based on interviews done with them. This might also serve to get people acquainted. My students would come prepared with a list of questions to ask Parnall students in order to find out pre-disposition to books and stories.

We might ask such questions as:

Do mom and dad read to you at home?
What sort of stuff?
What are your favorite stories?
Why these?
What TV do you watch?
How much?
Do you think stories in books can be as interesting?
When you 'read' a book, what matters most to you?
Can you name a favorite book?
Do you like books?
Do you like stories about "real" things, or fantasies, or...
Do you read well on your own?

Reading part of the time: Discussion with librarian/teacher for remainder.

Day Three

Simcoe students will have prepared a method for writing fables with their young partners. They will pair up and act as secretaries and guides for the Parnall students. The story will come from the younger students, but our students will write them down.

(This can take place on an earlier day, if desired)

The matter of illustration can be handled in different ways. The Parnall students can illustrate; our students can illustrate or find illustrators; through primary consultant, primary art students might be found to illustrate....etc.

Day Four

On this occasion, Simcoe students should go to Parnall with a first draft of their own children's story. The purpose of the visit will be to share the tale for purpose of getting suggested revisions.

If Parnall students have written stories, the process might be reciprocal.

Day Five

This should be the final visit in which Simcoe students return with fully illustrated stories to read to Parnall students.

Notes to be Made on Stories

Name of Story
Name of Author
Number of Pages
Number of Illustrations
Approximate number of words
Language of the story
Appeal of story
Description of Visuals
Story summary
Story type

Simcoe students