

Susan Place

EDTE 324

Annotated Bibliography

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1. Oh, the Places You'll Go!

By Dr. Suess (Theodor S. Geisel and Audrey S. Geisel)

1990 Random House

This book can be read to almost any grade level and will have different meaning for all of them. I would like to use it for an upper level intermediate grade to help them be aware of planning goals and facing obstacles. Even when faced with obstacles, as we all will in life, they can do it and do it well knowing that they are able to get past it. The pictures used in this story are colourful. They are abstract, not reality based.

He writes a light-hearted attempt to teach a deep lesson. He uses rhyming patterns to make the story flow. The bright colours of the pictures make you feel happy and they are used when the story is relating the parts of life when you are up and doing well. When the hard parts of life come up in the story, the colour scheme becomes darker. They are more confusing and less simple than the happy ones.

It would be good for the grade 7's since they are moving on to a new unknown time in their life and they will be making choices soon regarding where they are going to go with the rest of their life. In addition, unfortunately, the choices we make will not always happen the way we want them to and we may not always get everything we want. It is a hard life lesson yet it is one that they should be aware of.

At one point in the story, it relates to sports, which is good since it is something that most kids have experience with and one that many can relate to.

The art is not reality based, yet it draws on emotions. It gets the point of the text across well. I think it is more effective in some ways than just having text. It lightens the mood a bit. It gives the students something to focus on while listening.

Part of the cross-curricular expectation is that students become self-aware of their interests, aptitudes, and possible future goals. It also helps them with their problem solving. It shows them that they are not the only ones who will experience up and down times.

After reading the book, the students can write about their goals and possible setbacks they might experience and what they might do to get around this setback. I would have them work with pairs or a group to figure out this portion and then come back together as a group to discuss their findings.

We could brainstorm some common setbacks. I then could take these ones and assign them to groups. Those groups could make a poster to hang in the class or the hallway as helpful hints for how to manage that particular setback. Alternatively, we could do skits for the class with that as the theme. I would have some ideas of my own also to help get them started thinking about problems and resolutions.

2. Imagine a Day

Author: Sarah L. Thomson

Paintings: Rob Gonsalves

I would use this book with a grade 4-5 class.

This book invokes many feelings. The pictures are very imaginative and they correlate to the writing on the page opposite of the picture. The pictures have such details on them that it is almost like the more you look at it the more you see. I would use this book to show how art can be used to bring out details of your writing and vice versa.

Since the text is not the focus of this story and can be below most intermediate grades level, I would use this book as an intro to another assignment, such as art. I think I would also use other artists of similar styles (such as M.C. Escher) to bring in history and enrich their understanding of art. It is important to include the text more then just to enrich the pictures, it is an example of how using language in more then one way can be effective, being creative with your word choices. One page for example creates many images in my mind and describes things differently then we normally would. On that page, they describe autumn as a “burnt orange carpet”. This invokes many images and hopefully would get their minds going to thinking of things differently also.

After reading them the story I would have them think of a normal event they do, playing basketball for instance, and make a picture of that event but add a bit of unrealistic characteristics to it. Most of the images play with depth perception and trick our mind. Therefore, they can do something to that effect. They could then create a storybook of their own with this as their theme. Alternatively, they could make even just one picture and maybe a haiku to go with it.

3. The Boy who Drew Cats

Author: Arthur A. Levine

Paintings by Frederic Clement

I would use this book with a grade 4-5 class.

This book is a folktale about Japan and monasteries. It shows the importance of perseverance to go after what your dreams and passions are, to work for them and never give up. The main character was a boy who liked to draw in a society that demanded hard work, anything but was viewed as lazy. He was sent from home to learn how to do other things. He would try to do what others wanted always failing and resorting back to drawing. No matter where the boy was sent to he always drew and in the end of the story this gave him and others good fortune.

It teaches about religions such as what they have to offer and teach to people. It is important for the students to be aware of religions yet I would not get into detail about this to avoid any potential upset parents.

The artwork is beautiful and very descriptive of what is happening. It has many details. It invokes curiosity. It is different than artwork we normally see. It could be used to ask leading questions of, such as “What do you believe the character is thinking here?” etc.

I could make a play out of this, have cards with different roles written on them for students to pick and later portray to the class or another class. It would be interesting to do this, especially since it is a short book yet has much to teach.

At the end of the story, there are characters in Japanese and their pronunciation and meaning. These characters were found on all the pages of text. While we read the

text, I will ask them what they think the symbols stand for and then check if they are right at the end of the story.

I could use this story as part of a bigger segment of studying other cultures. My son's class just had a segment on China and as their culminating activity, they went to a Chinese restaurant. I think that that is a great idea and I would like to do that also. They can practice any language or customs they have learned and sample some of the food common to that culture. For example, my son had to try eating only with chopsticks for 15 minutes. Another idea would be to bring in people from the community that are knowledgeable in that culture to share their stories and expertise. Especially if they know how to cook the food or have clothing from that culture etc. This experience gives children a real life example to explain what they can only imagine in books.

4. Ceremony – In the Circle of Life

Author: White Deer of Autumn

Illustrations: Daniel San Souci

1983 Carnival Press/ Beyond Words Publishing, Inc. Oregon

This story deals primarily with environmental concerns especially how humans are taking over the land from the animals. It gives the message that we need to think more about what choices we are making and what impact these would have on the other living things on the earth.

I think this book would be best suited for a younger intermediate group, the text has important meanings in it yet at times, the language is not very advanced. For a primary class I think the language is too in depth at times, especially when referring the abstract concepts of linking all things to the circle (all animals and celestial bodies, people etc.). It is a difficult call as to what grade would gain the most benefit from this book. I think all would gain something depending on how much discussion one does after reading this.

It sends a very good message about how everything on Earth is connected and that all life is precious. Every living thing on this Earth is impacted by another living things choice especially the choices humans make.

This book also teaches about other cultures and their values and sacred symbols. It teaches about Native American symbols and beliefs. A member of nations in the United States writes it. He typically writes poetry, I could incorporate poetry in the lesson as a result of this.

As with the Japanese book, I would include this in a theme honouring other cultures. The pictures highlight what means most to the culture discussed. Most of the pictures include nature in them. Underneath every page with text, seven symbols from the culture repeat throughout the text. The pictures show a utopian land that is full of life, colour and well-being.

One picture is showing how the earth is having a difficult time taking care of itself do to human's clear cutting and pollution. The picture is half-lush land, clean air and very colourful, the other half is dark colours with no natural life, just buildings and smoke. A very intriguing picture highlights what has been happening over the last few years to our Earth. These are what we need to work on to help Earth survive.

5. Magid Fasts for Ramadan

Author: Mary Matthews

Illustrated by: E.B. Lewis

I would use this with a grade 4-5 class.

This story talks about Ramadan and how one boy, named Magid, wants to participate in the fasting yet is too young. He does all he can to participate but in the end realizes that he should wait to do this until he is older. It is a touching tale and could be used to teach about other cultures to help the students become global responsible citizens.

I would use this during the month of Ramadan, which changes every year by 11 days since they go by the lunar calendar not the solar calendar, to show what other cultures practice. I think it is important to be aware of what is happening throughout the world. It is important to make other customs less of a thing to be fearful of and ignorant and judgmental of. Muslim religion is all over the world not just in the nations it originated in

I could also link this with Social Studies. At the same time, we could be studying the countries where this religion came from drawing the two together.

The illustrations are well done. They show emotion in the pictures and use colour effectively. Having the pictures really ties the story together. And since they are so well done we can have conversations about what the students observe in the pictures.

The end of the book also has a glossary for words that the story uses that are potentially unknown to people that do not know much about the celebration. Two pages give supplemental information about Ramadan and Muslims at the back of the story.

It also touches on the difference between what adults do and what children do, especially for safety reasons. We could discuss the reasons why the children would not participate in this fasting ritual and that adults do. We could relate this to things that other cultures deem inappropriate for children to do but adults are allowed to do. Ideas like voting, drinking, and marriage, depending on the age of the class and what is appropriate for them to discuss.

It also brought up that some Muslims practiced the fast but others did not. How is that okay? This is questioned by Magid in the story. Some people it is pointed out take aspects of a religion and go further for them than others. His dad tells him that Allah knows what is going on in your heart, so not to worry. This point can be brought up with the class to make them aware that everyone is an individual so it is important to make those decisions for you. To relate this to the student's lives I could bring up the idea of peer pressure, advertising etc.

I do not think I would go too deep into the religion of Muslims but I would talk broadly about how different cultures have different values and that we should be aware that our way might not be the best way. Religion can be a difficult topic to teach especially depending on the make up of the class and the school; therefore it must be handled with care.

6. Charlotte's Web

Author: E. B. White

Pictures by: Garth Williams

1952 Harper and Row Publishers/ Scholastic

I would use this book with a grade 4 class.

This book is about a pig named Wilbur and a spider named Charlotte who are friends with each other. Wilbur was saved from being killed due to being a runt. He stayed at his home farm for a while until he got too big and then he moved. When he moved, he was lonely and made friends with the spider, Charlotte. She would write things in her web to save him from being slaughtered for meat. Due to the writings, he became a famous pig and therefore was too special to do anything but keep (meaning not eat).

This book could be used also to teach about spiders. There are little bits of information on spiders throughout. We could do a lesson on what spiders roles our in the environment. They could do a bit of research and bring to class what they found out. It would not have to be anything really formal but something to share with the class to broaden their knowledge of spiders; ideas such as diet, lifespan, and how they spin webs.

I would go through each chapter and pick out a few vocabulary words to give the students before reading. I could write them on the board and have them watch for them while we are reading. After reading, I would see how many people heard them and then go over the definition of each of them.

I would also link this to socials regarding the difference between living in a city and living on a farm. Such as what chores you have to do at one and not the other. In

addition, we could discuss the difference between animals allowed in the city and animals allowed on a farm.

There is much dialogue in the story between the animals. I would use this to bring up whether or not animals communicate with each other. Humans do have a verbal language that we know, is the same true for animals? We could go over the different ways that animals can use to communicate with each other.

The main themes in this story are friendship and loyalty. I think I would ask the class if they would have saved Wilbur from being killed because he was too small. Do they have a pet that is very important to them? This story is a good discussion for values and things we hold dear, whether they are alive or not, some people may not have pets but will have inanimate objects that are just as important as pets. The lengths that people go to for things that have meaning to them are amazing at times, as well as the lengths that some animals go to in order to save their owners.

The graphics in this story are very nicely done. They are simple but they show emotion and add to the story. They occur every few pages when it is important to have a graphic to add to the story. It also is a good pause to have for the students. The illustrations are also important when Charlotte makes the designs in the web.

7. Charlie and the Chocolate Factory

Author: Roald Dahl

Illustrator: Joseph Schindelman

1988 Puffin Books

I would use this book with a grade 4-5 class.

This book is about Charlie Bucket. He is a boy whose family is poor. He lives right next to Willy Wonka's Chocolate Factory. He walks by this factory everyday and wants to go inside. Then Willy Wonka holds a contest for five children to be able to enter his factory. As the story goes on the children are removed from the factory because they do not follow the rules or listen to his instructions. Charlie is the only child left at the end of the tour. As a reward for his good behaviour, Willy Wonka gives Charlie the factory as his own. Willy Wonka moves the whole family in to the factory as Charlie learns all the secrets of the factory so he can take over when he is old enough. This story shows how those that are good are rewarded and those that are not are punished.

Throughout this story, there are many descriptive words and good imagery. There are poems introduced when a child is removed. Willy Wonka uses many play on words. I might use some of his lines to ask the children if they can decipher what he is saying before we encounter them in the story. I could write them on the board and ask what the sayings could mean. The way that Willy Wonka talks is always with passion.

Since recently there was a release of this movie redone from an earlier version, I could compare this book to the movie and see which version children like better and why. This movie is more like the book than the first movie, though the movie has added the element of Willy Wonka's dad, which is not in the book.

I could get a script and make this into a play. That would be fun and it would be a different way for the students to show their understanding of the novel.

I could have students create their own candy. There are many different kinds of candy that Willy Wonka invents. Some are really impossible but fun to imagine. For example there is “cavity-filling caramels – no more dentists (page 128) and magic-hand fudge – when you hold it in your hand, you taste it in your mouth (page 128). They could invent their own using the candy from the book as a guide.

Charlie lives with two sets of grandparents. Since they do not have a lot of money there is only one bed in their house and out of respect for their elders, they let the grandparents have the bed. In turn, Charlie and his parents sleep on the floor. I could use this arrangement as a discussion for how different cultures treat elders differently. How our society does not really have parents and grandparents living together too often. Independence is something that is highly regarded in our society and having our own home with just the parents and children is accepted.

The last poem is a very good one. It relates to how television is something that should be lessened in our society. I would discuss this with the class and see if they see any merit in it.

The illustrations do add something to the story somewhat but they are not really a crucial part of the story. I am not sure I would include them in part of my lesson plans.

8. The Giver Author: Lois Lowry 1993 by the Houghton Mifflin Company

Guidebook: Passages to Literature Prepared by Brian T.W. Way 1999 by the Althouse Press

I would use this book with a grade 6-7 class.

This story is about a utopian society that exists without strife, without differences and without pain. If one gets hurt that is instant relief from the pain. There are no biological ties. There is no colour; everything in their world is the same, they all age the same, have the same family construction and the weather is all climate controlled. Jonas is the main character. As the children grow, they celebrate their next year of life by getting more duties for the community until they reach the twelve when they become an adult and age matters no longer. Jonas is given the job of being the receiver of memories. This person's job entails holding all the memories of life prior to the sameness. They hold the memories so that no one else has to live through the pain of life before. They are asked to help if the town needs guidance on an issue, since the receiver has wisdom unlike other people. Jonas thinks that this knowledge should be shared with all so he and the Giver work out a plan to allow this to occur. The end of the story leaves us not knowing what really happens to Jonas and the baby he leaves with, she leaves us to make that decision ourselves.

This story deals with choices we make in our lives and makes us question how we function as a society. It focuses a lot on relationships between people, both in family and friendships. This town had no knowledge of the concept of love. Since the families were constructed by being given one boy and one girl from outside of biological ties, their goal

was simply to raise them to continue the cycle, not to love them. Jonas learns about love from the memories and this leads to why he leaves the community.

If a person acted out or was deemed inadequate for the society, they would be “released”. This concept was vaguely referred to in the first few chapters but we really learn what it means later when a twin baby was released for being smaller than the other one. They euthanize these people. This topic might be tough for some but is something that does occur in various forms. I would discuss how Jonas’s dad could practice this without caring. This is a practice that they have done their whole life. They have not questioned it. This society also is not based on feelings so it is not a difficult choice. The people, once gone, go to “Elsewhere”.

This story would be a good one to read to have the students analyze practices in our society, and how individuals have places in our society, both good and bad. Jonas one time questions why they cannot share the memories. The giver and Jonas come to the realization that if the people were able to make their own choices they might choose the wrong mate, wrong job, or make other faulty decisions, so it is better to have someone else guide them along their life.

There is a guidebook available with worksheets that go with each chapter. It is very handy. It has resources listed in the back that can enrich the learning from this story. It also gives ideas for pre-reading activities, such as having the students writing about what they think their utopia would look like. This would work to get their minds prepared for reading about a utopian society and later to challenge their ideals to see if any of the same issues would come up in their society.

There are no pictures in this. This is a good thing, I believe, as it adds more to using our imagination as to what their society looks like since it lacks, to them, colour and differences. In reality, it does not but they believe it to be so.

9. Dogsong

Author: Gary Paulsen

Cover Illustration by Neil Waldman

This book is about a young boy named Russell. He lives in an Eskimo village that has been brought into modern times but he is not happy with this advancement. He has a strong desire to be part of the culture that was before they lived the way it is now. He is very concerned about things from “outside”. He goes to see an elder in his village called Oogruk. He learns the ways of the past from him and then goes on a rite of passage journey. He learns to hunt and run the dogs. He learns his own song, Dogsong.

The book is told in three parts. The first part is about him first learning the ways from Oogruk. The second part of the story is while he is travelling on his own and goes into dreams about a hunter from long ago, his story overlapping Russell’s. The last section is seven-stanza poem that describes Russell’s adventures in becoming an adult.

This book I would use for a grade 6-7 class. It teaches about other cultures and about that culture’s rite of passage to adulthood. Students in those grade levels are gaining more responsibility so I could relate this to the changes they are experiencing; especially with the grade seven's moving to high school. High school is a different setting from elementary and they are a lot more independent. Comparing what they have to do as adults to, for example, get food to what Russell has to do is a good idea. Not many of the class would have hunted their own food and cut off its head. In addition, we could compare the ages of Russell to the students in the class. Russell is 14 when he goes out on his own with the charge of taking care of himself and the dogs. At 14 in our society, children are barely left alone for long periods of time, let alone foraging for their own

food and shelter. In addition, Russell does not even have to check in with anyone before he goes on his treks or stays at Oogruk's house. That would not happen in our society. I would have the students point out other differences they found; discussing which one they think is better and why. Would the way that Russell lives work in our society? Why or why not?

It would also be worthwhile to discuss the differences of the culture of Eskimos due to the government coming in. this subject is important to the story but not discussed in-depth. It is the reason that Russell decides to leave his community.

The book by Dr. Suess mentioned earlier would work well with this one also. It relates to changes and the way we deal with them. Russell chose to abandon his home and the "advancements" opting to find his roots.

10. Stuart Little

Author: E.B. White

Illustrator: Garth Williams

Harper: 1973

I would use this book for a grade four to five class, possibly higher but most likely not much higher.

This book is about a mouse named Stuart. He lives with a family of people. The book follows the adventures of the mouse and his difficulties living in such an environment. It also shows advantages of being small. He has a friend named Margalo. She is a wren. She leaves the house due to the cat named Snowbell. Stuart leaves on an adventure to find her.

Stuart gets into many tight spots throughout the story. I could use the obstacles he faces being small and relate them to obstacles we face being big. Stuart requires lots of self-discipline and self-esteem to get through his day-to-day troubles. He adapts his environment to allow for his comfort. We do this on a daily basis but it is interesting to think about how much work he has to do to fit in. I could correlate this to others in our societies that require adjustments to fit in, such as those in wheelchairs and other disabilities. This topic would have to be dealt with delicately but is an important thing to consider.

Stuart has to create many things in the story. I could have the students build things that he built and imagine having to live or use the things they build. He also participates in a sailboat race. The students could make their own sailboats and have a race.

There is also a movie about Stuart Little. As I suggested with Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, we could compare and contrast the two. I could show parts of the movie that are different than the book and discuss why these might be different. When they make books into movies, they have to adapt many aspects due to difficult ways to portray them, especially with a 2-inch high mouse.

The class do a study of mice. I would have them write down what they know about mice already, what they learn about mice from the story and then do research and compare them. I could also take a poll to see who would have a mouse as a pet if they do not want a mouse, I could ask what sort of animal they would want.

I think it would also be fun to have the students write an alternate ending or even an alternate chapter. If they think there is a way they would have wrote something differently than the original author then have them do so.

I also would take out vocabulary words from each chapter and have students make a guess as to what they mean and later fill out the answers. This would work better with the younger intermediate grades. This is not a difficult book to read so by grade seven they should know most of the words in these chapters.

The titles to each chapter are highly suggestive of what occurs in the chapter. I could ask the class to predict what is going to happen in this chapter based on the title alone. This might help them if they later want to rewrite that certain chapter with their idea instead of the author's idea.

I think the main thing I appreciate about the book is that it can be used to teach about differences and how we need to respect each other's differences. No matter what people's abilities are there are ways to overcome them.

This book is illustrated the same as Charlotte's Web. They add emotion and a visual to go with the content. They are simple and tasteful. They also help because so many have most likely seen the movie this will help them to see the book as the book, not the movie.