Teaching and Learning Unit
Incorporating Cross Curriculum Use of Children’s Literature

EXPLORERS

Assessment Task 2

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9 May 2012

Explorers, Page 1
The Classroom

The classroom environment was light, bright and clean. The students had been studying a unit on Gold. There were displays which featured mostly student work. At the rear of the classroom was a row of desks where work and topic associated readers were located, including Clancy of the Overflow, The Highway Man, Gold Fever and Riding for Gold.

There was a display shelf with standard readers of varying levels. Some of the titles I noticed were: Monster Book, Cricket Gag, Dork, Mort, Sahara and Star Wars. According to the students these books were available for them to use during silent reading. However, most chose to read their own book, either from home or the library. I did notice the absence of picture books within the classroom. All books observed were either readers, novels or topic related. This affirmed my decision to incorporate picture books and visual literacy into my unit of work.

The Library

The school library environment was colourful and inviting - beautiful, big displays with book ‘dust covers’ used on the windows for privacy and atmosphere building. I would have liked these dust covers to be student designed rather than originals, as, although the displays were beautiful and eye catching, they didn’t reflect a great deal of student input.

There were many books displayed well in the Library and these included The Messy Mother’s Day, What’s the Matter Aunty May, Lighty the First Lion, Arctic, Goosebumps and Zac Powers, I Spy Books and Where’s Wally. The library is open on Tuesdays and Wednesdays during lunch times for student visits. Each class is provided with a one hour timetabled visit each week. The class teacher accompanies his or her class and the children use this time to choose books and read. The younger classes are read a story by their individual class teachers.

I found it surprising to note that the school librarian, although full time, takes no library classes. The only librarian input I observed was the checking in and out of books and returning books to shelves. Perhaps this is a task that could be passed on to senior students and the librarian could interact more with the students. One child asked for advice and was told to “look on the shelves” as she, the librarian was busy.
The Children

From the results of the reading survey it is evident we are all wonderfully different and individual human beings. The children in the class were mainly boys and I couldn’t help noticing that they just didn’t seem to share the same love of reading as the girls. Disappointing as the mother of a young son!

In regards to the survey, the conclusions were: the children had read somewhere in the vicinity of 40 to 400 books in the last year. Most learned to read in school however some mentioned a parent or sibling as their main teacher. People read - ‘to become smarter’, ‘because I have to’, ‘because my mum tells me to’, ‘I love it’, ‘so I can read about sport and footy’, ‘it can take you to another place and time’ and ‘it’s enjoyable’.

It was interesting to note that there was a correlation between the children who said they learned to read at home, the number of books in their house and their love of reading - the description of their favourite characters was also more detailed. Character description by the children tended to be insubstantial; this is possibly due to my being unfamiliar to them. I think a few lessons incorporating critical and visual literacy would greatly benefit this class.

A generalisation that I cringingly make is that the boys seem caught up in acting ‘cool’ and this seems to reflect on their reading patterns. If I were the teacher of these boys I would like to provide a wide variety of comics and sport or football related texts so as to slowly brainwash-coheres them to the joys of reading. Whilst I make these generalisations it must be remembered, all I witnessed was a snapshot of their day /schooling.

The most popular book was Harry Potter; J K Rowling featured as the most popular author also. Other authors mentioned were Emily Rodda, Eoin Coffer, Rick Riordan, Douglas Adams, Lauren Child, Enid Blyton, Jeff Kinney, Roald Dahl, Colin Thompson and of course R.L.Stein.

The books mentioned were the Harry Potter Series, Goosebumps Series, Zac Power Series, Diary of a Wimpy Kid, Deltora Quest, The Key to Rondo, The Wide Awake Princess, Wings, Molly Moons Hypnotic Time Travel Adventure, The Famous Five, The BFG and The Floods.
Rationale

The ‘Explorers’ unit was chosen after visiting the year six classroom (my survey class). They were currently studying a unit of work on Gold. To me this was a great springboard for this unit as the students would already have gained a strong concept of time, space and place. These are all vital when introducing a ‘historical’ unit of work. I wanted to incorporate historical fiction into my teacher learning unit, as from the onset of this course, this was the genre that I enjoyed reading about most.

The new ACARA History document states “The process of historical inquiry develops transferable skills, such as the ability to ask relevant questions; critically analyse and interpret sources; consider context; respect and explain different perspectives; develop and substantiate interpretations, and communicate effectively.” One could be forgiven for thinking this was an excerpt from the English document. It demonstrates the outcomes we are looking to achieve.

I had intended to complete my unit of work based around the book ‘The Goat Who Sailed the World’ Jackie French. However, when looking at books for the book sell project I discovered ‘Taj and the great Camel Trek’ Roseanne Hawke. I decided I would like to compile a unit of work around this book as Ernest Giles is somewhat the unknown explorer who hasn’t received much acclaim and whose journey was one of struggle and persistence. Roseanne Hawke also released a picture book, ‘Mustara’ which was the inspiration for ‘Taj and the Great Camel Trek’; this gave me the idea of incorporating visual literacy in my unit of work.

Cross Curriculum Children’s Literature Focus Books

For the Explorers Unit

* Taj and the Great Camel Trek * Roseanne Hawke

* Mustara * Roseanne Hawke

* Land of the Brolga People * Percy Trezise

* Are We There Yet? * Alison Lester

* To the Top End * Roland Harvey

* Water * Frank Asch
Mustara Visual Literacy

Study a Picture Book

Objective
This lesson provides the children with an opportunity to increase their knowledge and interpretation of visual literacy. The students will begin to look at visual literacy as a series of choices made by the author and illustrator of a book. They discuss the impact pictures have on the story and text. Students will recognize visual literacy as a skill that can be used to understand and interpret the images that surround them. (NB Ideally this lesson would occur before the children have any knowledge of Taj or Mustara)

Outcomes and Indicators

RS3.7 Critically analyses techniques used by writers to create certain effects, to use language creatively, to position the reader in various ways and to construct different interpretations of experience.

RS3.8 Identifies the text structure of a wider range of more complex text types and discusses how the characteristic grammatical features work to influence readers’ and viewers’ understanding of texts.

WS3.13 Critically analyses own texts in terms of how well they have been written, how effectively they present the subject matter and how they influence the reader.

Procedure

1. The children are given the following questions to answer (with a partner if they choose):
Name your favourite picture books, Who are picture books written for? What is their purpose? If you were given the job of judging the “best” picture book, what criteria would you use?

2. The students, and teacher, as a class discuss the answers to these questions and scribe them on large paper for future reference (also to be used for self assessment)

3. The text from pages 3 and 4 of Mustara is read to the class. The children have no knowledge or sight of the book. Students must draw a picture which corresponds to the text they have been read.

   Every day Mustara and Taj look out onto a sea of yellow and read dust and stones. The sand rolls and shifts, Taj’s father says it is like the waves of the ocean and the spinifex bushes are little boats blown about by the wind.

4. On completion of the drawings the children are shown and read Mustara. As a class they make comparisons of the illustrations they have drawn to their friends and the illustrations in the book. Conclusions are made on the impact and influence of pictures on text.

Resources

Mustara Roseanne Hawke

Letter to a loved one

Objective

The students have been reading Roseanne Hawke’s *Taj and the Great Camel Trek* in guided reading. They discuss the story. Each student must design, make and maintain a diary as they read the text. The diary has to be written from Taj’s point of view, as he crosses the desert and adapts to new challenges. Following on from the diary the students must compose a letter to a loved one.

Outcomes and indicators

- RS3.5 interprets a variety of literary and factual texts
- RS3.5 reads extended novels and informational texts for personal enjoyment and interest
- RS3.6 attempts several strategies when reading difficult texts: re-reading or reviewing parts of the text; making notes about key features.
- RS3.6 summarises key information
- RS3.7 discusses how people from different cultures or backgrounds are represented in texts and whether these representations are accurate or fair
- RS3.7 considers events in a text from each character’s point of view
- RS3.7 justifies opinions about the motives and feelings of characters in literary texts

Procedures

1. The students are reading Roseanne Hawke’s *Taj and the Great Camel Trek* in guided reading.
2. They are to write a letter to a loved one, as a character in the story based on experiences and or incidents encountered on their journey across the desert.
3. They are to describe their feelings in relationship to the hardships encountered.
4. Using the Australian Education Resources website they are to compose a presentable finished letter.
5. Presentations are to be made to the class.

Resources

*Taj and the Great Camel Trek* Roseanne Hawke
*Mustara* Roseanne Hawke

Write a Letter Australian Education Resources
Explorers HSIE

Power point presentation

Objective

This lesson provides students with the opportunity to increase their knowledge of Australian Explorers and demonstrate the impact they had towards the colonisation of Australia. Literacy development will be enhanced by the opportunity to explore information reports, literary and factual recounts, explanations, expositions and discussions.

Outcomes and indicators

CCS3.1 Explains the significance of particular people, places, groups, actions and events in the past in developing Australian identities and heritage
Describes some aspects of colonial exploration and expansion and it’s impact on all Australians including Aboriginal peoples.
Identifies places associated with nationally significant events and people

CUS3.3 Describes different cultural influences and their contribution to Australian identities

CUS3.4 Examines how cultures change through interaction with other cultures and the environment

ENS3.6 Explains how various beliefs and practices influence ways in which people interact with, change and value their environment

Procedures

1. The students alone or in pairs will research an Australian Explorer other than Ernest Giles.
2. They have 2 weeks to gather information using books, the internet and the library.
3. They will create individual power point presentations for the class
4. They must include the name/s of the explorer, the dates of the expedition, what they were famous for and 3 other interesting facts.
5. Presentations are to made to the class and must contain at least 6 slides. They must be colourful, well organised and informative.

Resources

Australian Explorers http://www.davidreilly.com/australian_explorers/
Mustara Art

Create a Postcard

Objective
This lesson provides the children with an opportunity to increase their knowledge and interpretation of visual literacy. The students are responsible for creating a visually dramatic postcard. The postcard is to be from a place that Taj may have visited on his journey across the country. The use of colour, shading, collage, blending and other creative effects are to be incorporated. Upon completion of the postcards the children will write an exciting description full of information about the location.

Outcomes and Indicators

VAS3.1 Investigates subject matter in an attempt to represent likeness of thing in the world
closely observes details of things in the world and seeks to make artworks about these
utilises different artistic forms and explores how symbols may be used in their interpretation of selected subject matter

VAS.2 Makes artworks for different audiences, assembling materials in a variety of ways
examines a range of concepts to selected forms and experiments with such things as the expressive use of colour in painting or drawing.

Procedure

1. Using the book Mustara the children will engage in a discussion about picture qualities, effective use of colour and medium. In pairs they are to decide on one part of the story they wish to use for their art work.

2. On large art paper they may use their choice of medium to design and create an image that directly relates to part of Taj’s journey. An aboriginal design may be developed using the book Land of the Brolga People.

3. On completion of their art work the students are to photograph their work and transfer it onto the computer then to a postcard template ready for printing.

4. Once the postcard is complete the children will write a description of the location then make presentations to the class justifying why they chose the picture medium and why they believe their postcard will sell.

Resources
Art paper, drawing pencils - coloured and grey, charcoal, paint, brushes, material, cardboard glue, camera, computer

Postcard Template [http://www.lpb.org/opom](http://www.lpb.org/opom)

Mustara, Dreamtime Story - Land of the Brolga People - Water
Objective
This lesson provides students with an overview of the importance of water and how it is an essential resource for life. Students will investigate the different ways people use water everyday. From reading Taj and the Great Camel Race they will understand the need for water for life. They will make a mini solar still which will give them insight into the water cycle and the difficulties of finding producing water in an arid environment.

Outcomes and Indicators

LT S3.3 Identifies describes and evaluates the interactions between living things and their effects on the environment

ES S3.6 Recognises that the Earth is the source of most materials and describes phenomena and processes, both natural and human, that form and change the Earth over time

ESS3.6 Recognise that the Earth is a source of most materials and resources, and describes phenomena and processes, both natural and human, that form and change the Earth over time.

Procedure

1. Children view the You Tube video by Jay Z on the importance of water in our lives.
2. Talk of the importance of water for life and reflect on the extreme hardships experienced by the explorers. Talk of communities who suffer from the lack of water today.
3. Introduce the water cycle and reflect on the questions “where does rain come from?” and “where do the puddles go after the rain?”
4. Discuss the difficulty of finding water in the desert and introduce the process of making a mini solar still.
5. Children in small groups make small stills ensuring they all use the same quantities of soil water and same sized containers. These are then placed in various positions around the school and the children will monitor the amount of water collected over the period of one week.
6. Using measuring cups the children measure and graph as a class the amount of water collected in their stills.
7. In conclusion the children discuss why certain stills collected more water than others and the factors contributing to this.

Resources
Notes on how to make a mini solar still.
Equipment - plastic tub, cup, soil, water jug, cling wrap, tape, stone and measuring cup.
Jay Z Water diary http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2BXavkcVvVU
Are We There Yet? Maths

Make a compass

Objective

The children will read the book Are We There Yet? Taking time to look at and discuss the visual imagery. The story introduces them to a different kind of journey and enables them to make comparisons with the early explorers. All journeys require directions therefore the children will make their own compass and use it to find locations around the school. Comparisons will be made with modern GPS Systems and primitive compasses.

Outcome and Indicators

WMS3.1 Asks questions that could be explored using mathematics in relation to Stage 3
MS3.1 Selects and uses the appropriate unit and device to measure distances
SGS3.3 Uses a variety of mapping skills

Procedures

1. The students as a class listen to the story Are We There Yet? taking time to reflect on the visual imagery of the book and the impact it has on the story.
2. Comparisons are made of modern journeys and the journey of Ernest Giles. Students will discuss the compass used by Giles and the modern GPS system of navigation.
3. Children watch the YouTube video how to make a compass. (Teacher notes below)
4. In pairs the students will make their own primitive compass understanding that the needle always faces magnetic north.
5. The students then use the homemade compasses to plot destinations around the school. The coordinates need to be basic: north, south, east and west. e.g. take five paces north, then 12 west etc
6. Students have fun trying to find locations plotted by other groups.

Materials

Are We there Yet? Alison Lester
Paper, pencils and compass
Water, glass, cork, pin, magnet - for compass construction
How to make a compass http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VobcByagbPU
**TEACHER NOTES**

Instructions for Making a Mini **Solar Still**

1. Add one or two litres of soil or sand to the plastic tub – if making more than one still, add the same amount of soil or sand is used in each. You should also ensure the soil has a consistent and uniform moisture content.

2. Position the plastic cup in the centre of the tub, partially submerged in the soil for stability.

3. For a large tub such as this one, add 2 cups of water to the soil or sand. For smaller tubs (e.g. ice cream containers) add 1/2 to 1 cup of water. Sprinkle the water evenly over the soil.

4. Seal the tub with cling wrap and tape. Add a pebble or large marble directly above the cup forming a depression for the water droplets to roll down.

5. Place the solar still in a still and sunny location (it may pay to check with groundsman to find the best position – wind can cause the cling wrap to flap about so that the droplets miss the cup).

* Ensure the cup is directly under the pebble or marble – on sunny days exceeding 250C, the still should collect more than half a cup of water in approximately 3 to 4 hours.

Instructions for making a **compass**

1. Sewing needle 3cm long.
2. Small bar magnet.
3. A small piece of cork.
4. A small glass or cup of water to float the cork and needle.

1. Your compass will work better if you first run a magnet over the needle a few times, always in the same direction. This action ‘magnetizes’ it to some extent. Drive the needle through a piece of cork. Cork from wine bottles works well. Cut off a small circle from one end of the cork, and drive the needle through it, from one end of the circle to the other, instead of through the exact middle - be careful not to stick yourself!

2. Float the cork + needle in your cup of water so the floating needle lies roughly parallel to the surface of the water.

3. Place your 'compass' on a still surface and watch what happens. The needle should come to point towards the nearest magnetic pole - north or south as the case may be.

4. If you want to experiment further, try placing a magnet near your compass and watch what happens. How close/far does the magnet be to cause any effects?

**Explanation:**
The earth produces a magnetic field. This field, although weak, is sufficient to align iron and other paramagnetic compounds such as your needle within it. By floating the needle on the cork, you let it rotate freely so it can orient itself within the earth's magnetic field, to point toward the north or south poles of the planet.
## SELF PEER ASSESSMENT

To be posted in the classroom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explorers Self Peer Assessment</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Must</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Understand that life was different in the past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• make comparisons between life in the 1850’s and today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Should</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• recognise the changes in society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• enquire about the people who were around at the time and discuss life for an immigrant, aboriginal and English aristocrat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• use ict and other relevant sources to research and produce creative assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Could</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• select and combine information from different sources</td>
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<tr>
<td>• describe and compare features of the 1850’s and today on a time line</td>
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## Assessment Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Task 2</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beginning</strong></td>
<td><strong>Developing</strong></td>
<td><strong>Accomplished</strong></td>
<td><strong>Exemplary</strong></td>
<td><strong>Score</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RESEARCH</strong></td>
<td>Did not utilize resources effectively; did little or no fact gathering</td>
<td>Used the material provided in an acceptable manner but did not consult any additional source</td>
<td>Did a good job of researching; utilized materials fully, at times took initiative to find additional info</td>
<td>Went well above and beyond to research information; solicited material in addition to what was provided</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CONTENT ACCURACY</strong></td>
<td>Completely inaccurate; misleading facts on postcard, letter, map, power point presentation</td>
<td>Somewhat accurate; more than a few inconsistencies or errors in information</td>
<td>Mostly accurate; a few inconsistencies or errors in information</td>
<td>Completely accurate; all facts precise and explicit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GRAPHIC ELEMENTS</strong></td>
<td>Graphic elements were inappropriate or missing</td>
<td>Only 1 or 2 graphic elements were on pp., postcard etc and some inappropriate</td>
<td>Included required graphic elements; most were appropriate</td>
<td>All graphic elements required were included and appropriate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OVERALL VISUAL APPEAL</strong></td>
<td>No variation in style, color, font, or layout</td>
<td>Some variation in color, style, size, font, or layout evident</td>
<td>Differences in type, size, color, and layout enhance visual appeal</td>
<td>Very attractive; layout of postcard and other work visually striking in appearance</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MECHANICS</strong></td>
<td>Many spelling, grammar, or punctuation errors</td>
<td>Several spelling, grammar, and/or punctuation errors</td>
<td>Only 1 - 2 spelling, grammar, and/or punctuation errors</td>
<td>Flawless</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References

ACARA. Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority. History
http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/History/GuidedTour
Student Survey Results

How many books do you own?
45  12  300
120 heaps  I don’t know
30  72  100

How did you learn to read?
school  school  my mum and dad
school  teachers  my mum and my sister and my teachers
practise  my nan taught me

Why do people read?
To learn  to be smarter  because they love reading
It makes you smarter
People read so they are good in school and get a good job
Reading increases your knowledge, it is fun and you can learn about the world and the people in it
People read to get good results and help to do well in school and then enjoy their lives

What types of books do you like to read?
I love all kinds of books
I like to read books about myths and legends
funny fairy tale books
I like reading about sport and the Olympics
Books about Gold and the Gold Rush
Comics and K Zone
The Guinness Book of Records
Easy to read books

Who are you favourite authors?
Jeff Kinney  Roald Dahl
Enid Blyton  Douglas Adams
JKRowling  RL Stein
Emily Rodda  Jacky French

How often do you read at home?
every night  sometimes
3 times a week  when my mum makes me
all the time  everyday if I can count the sport in the paper
mostly when I’m bored  for homework

Who are you favourite authors?
J K Rowling  Emily Rodda
R L Stein  E D Baker
Jeff Kinney  Colin Thompson
Enid Blyton  Lauren Child

Can you describe your favourite character?
Not many children answered this question however here are some descriptions given:
“I love Hermione because she is so pretty and I’d like to be an actress like her one day”
“I really like the character Millie in The Dragon Princess because she gets really mad and turns into a dragon and is really scary.”
“Harry Potter is a wizard and he is my favourite character because his life is full of adventure and he always wants to be kind and nice to everyone.”
“Greg is my favourite character because he has a big brother who annoys him and so do I.”

How do you decide which books you will read?
I look at the cover  sometimes I ask my sister  I like myths and legends
I read what my friends are reading  I like books about sport
I only like Goosebumps  If it looks interesting
There are some authors I enjoy and I like to see other books they’ve written