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**YA Lit**

**Dr. Sherry**

**Insider on Literature Circles:**

**6th Grade**

**April 19, 2012**

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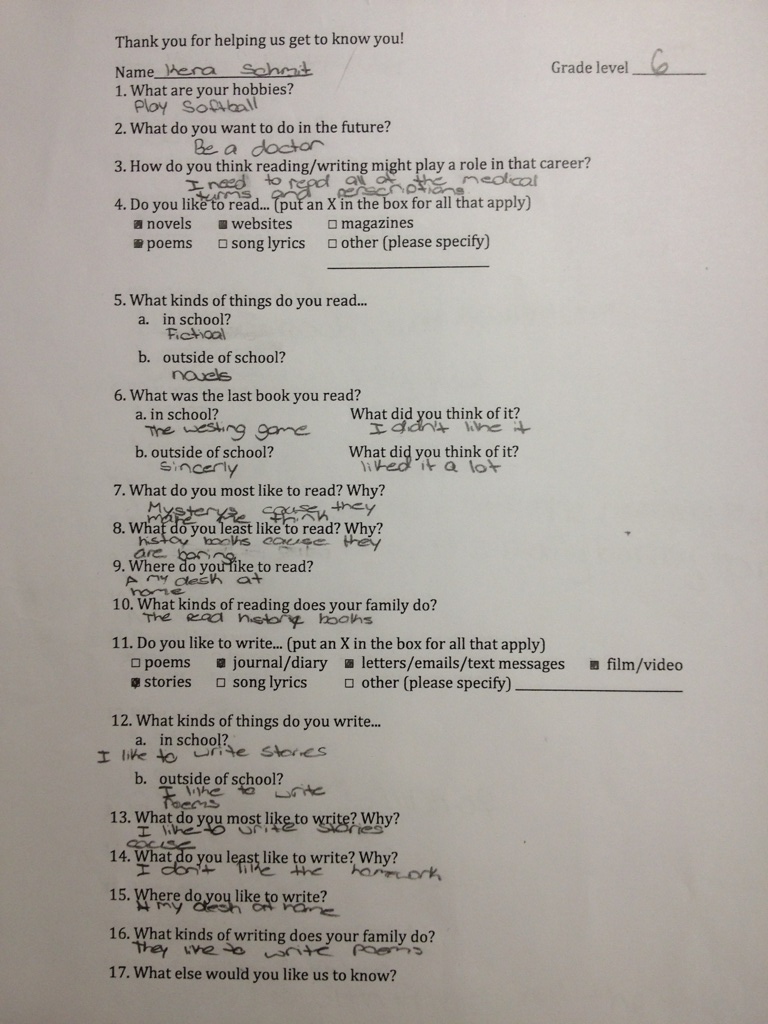
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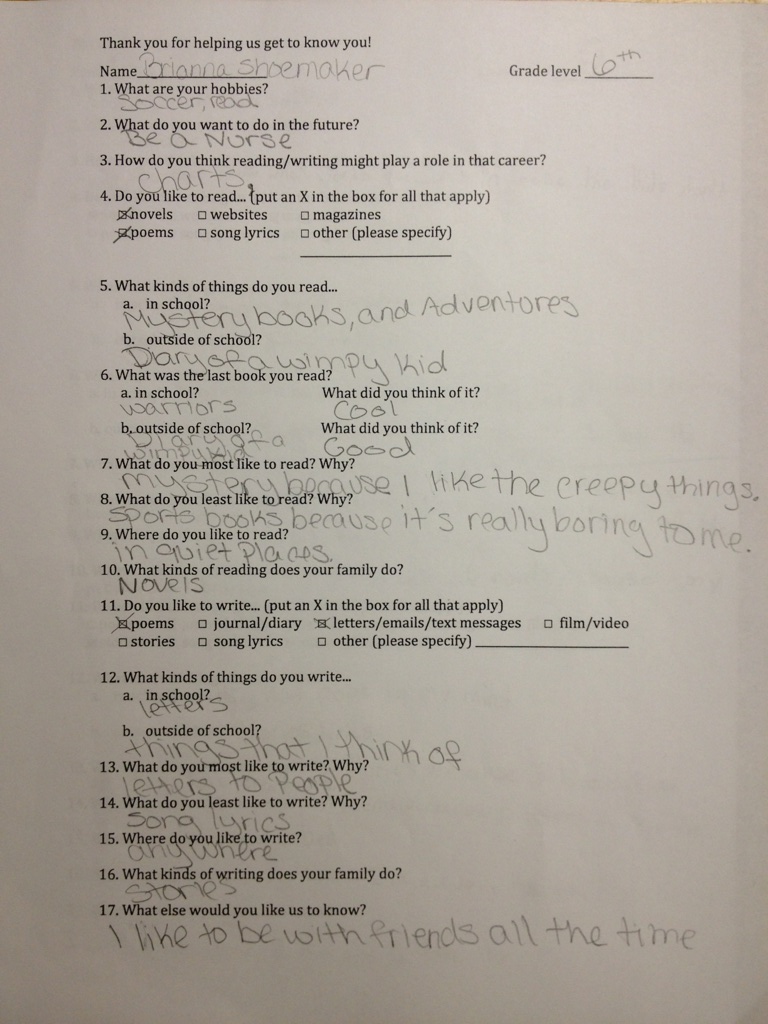
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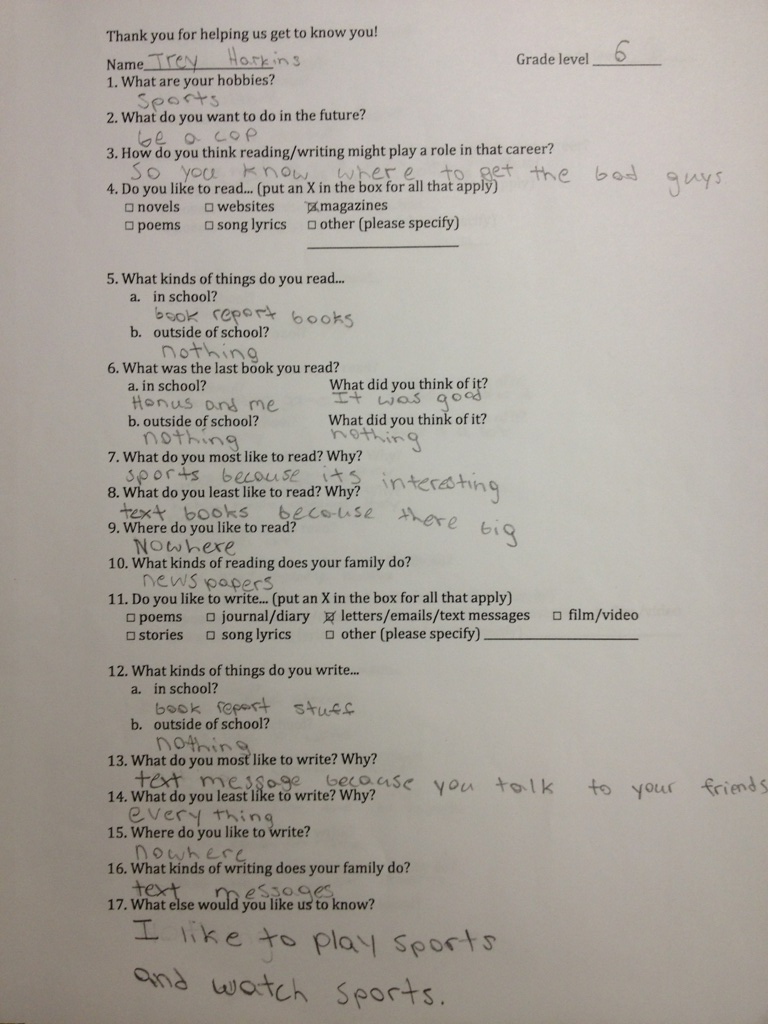
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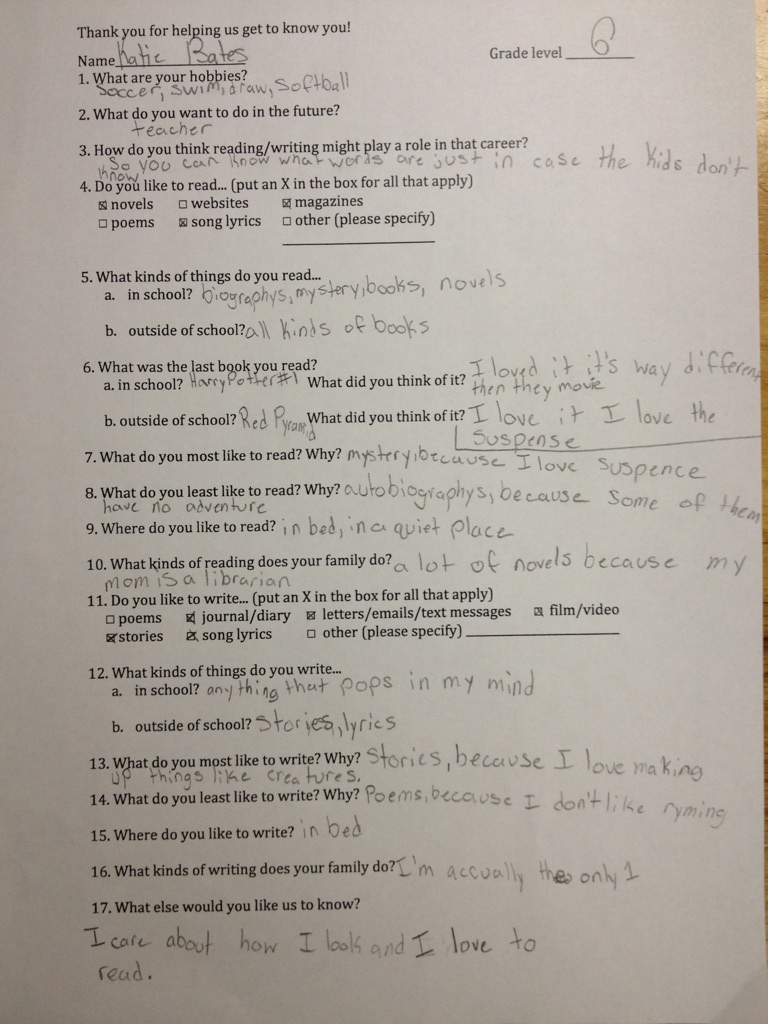
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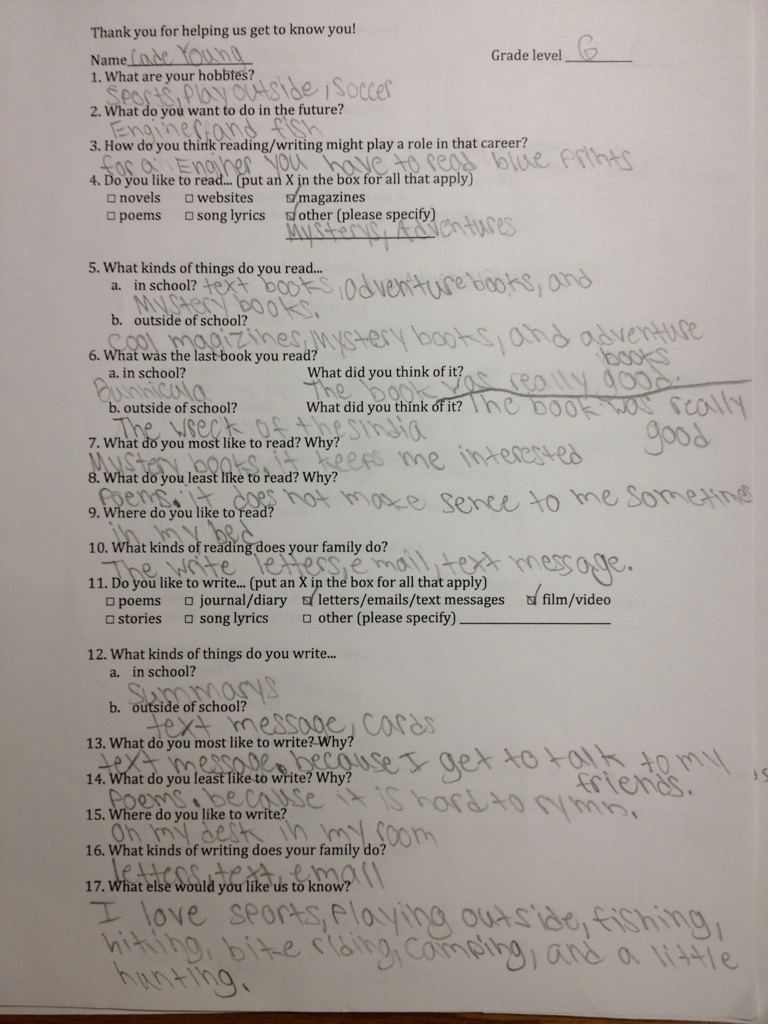
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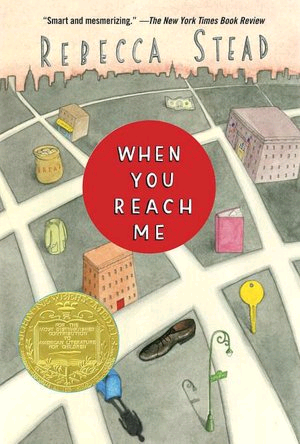
**Literature Circles**

In reviewing the surveys of my prospective literature circle students, I have assessed that they all share a common interest in mystery and suspense stories. I have researched and came up with the following four potential chapter book contenders for our literature engagement. In selecting appropriate books, I took into account the Lexile reading comprehension level for the average sixth grade student. The books in which I chose reflected a Lexile comprehension that was lower on the sixth grade range. I chose a lower Lexile since the books that the three students read in school were in the middle of the Lexile comprehension spectrum. Since the students will be reading the literature independently without teacher guidance, I want to ensure their ultimate ability in comprehending the text for our literary meetings.

**Book Choices: 4 Mystery Novels**

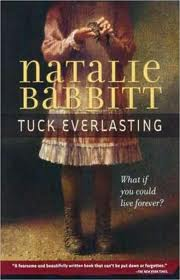
**1. When You Reach Me, by Rebecca Stead**

Lexile: 750 Synopsis: *(Barnes and Noble)*

By sixth grade, Miranda and her best friend, Sal, know how to navigate their New York City neighborhood. They know where it's safe to go, and they know who to avoid. Like the crazy guy on the corner. But things start to unravel. Sal gets punched by a kid on the street for what seems like no reason, and he shuts Miranda out of his life. The apartment key that Miranda's mom keeps hidden for an emergency is stolen. And then a mysterious note arrives, scrawled on a tiny slip of paper. The notes keep coming, and Miranda slowly realizes that whoever is leaving them knows things no one should know. Each message brings her closer to believing that only she can prevent a tragic death. Until the final note makes her think she's too late.

**2. Tuck Everlasting, by Natalie Babbit**

Lextile: 770 Synopsis: *(Barnes and Noble)*

Doomed to—or blessed with—eternal life after drinking from a magic spring, the Tuck family wanders about trying to live as inconspicuously and comfortably as they can. When ten-year-old Winnie Foster stumbles on their secret, the Tucks take her home and explain why living forever at one age is less a blessing that it might seem. Complications arise when Winnie is followed by a stranger who wants to market the spring water for a fortune.

The Tuck family is confronted with an agonizing situation when they discover that a ten-year-old girl and a malicious stranger now share their secret about a spring whose water prevents one from ever growing older.

**3. Among the Hidden, by Margaret Peterson Haddix**

Lexile: 800 Synopsis: *(Barnes and Noble)*

Luke has never been to school. He's never had a birthday party, or gone to a friend's house for an overnight. In fact, Luke has never had a friend.

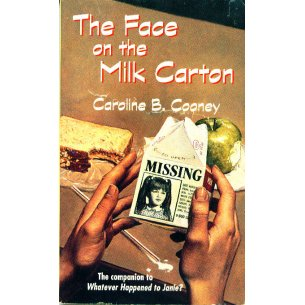
Luke is one of the shadow children, a third child forbidden by the Population Police. He's lived his entire life in hiding, and now, with a new housing development replacing the woods next to his family's farm, he is no longer even allowed to go outside.

Then, one day Luke sees a girl's face in the window of a house where he knows two other children already live. Finally, he's met a shadow child like himself. Jen is willing to risk everything to come out of the shadows — does Luke dare to become involved in her dangerous plan? Can he afford not to?

In a future where the Population Police enforce the law limiting a family to only two children, Luke has lived all his twelve years in isolation and fear on his family's farm, until another "third" convinces him that the government is wrong.

**4. The Face on the Milk Carton, by Caroline B. Cooney**

**Lexile: 660** Synopsis: *(Barnes and Noble)*

No one ever really paid close attention to the faces of the missing children on the milk cartons. But as Janie Johnson glanced at the face of the ordinary little girl with her hair in tight pigtails, wearing a dress with a narrow white collar—a three-year-old who had been kidnapped twelve years before from a shopping mall in New Jersey—she felt overcome with shock. She recognized that little girl—it was she. How could it possibly be true?

Janie can't believe that her loving parents kidnapped her, but as she begins to piece things together, nothing makes sense. Something is terribly wrong. Are Mr. and Mrs. Johnson really Janie's parents? And if not, who is Janie Johnson, and what really happened?

A photograph of a missing girl on a milk carton leads Janie on a search for her real identity.

***March 8, 2012***

Visiting the students who will partake in my literature circle for the first time allowed me to have the chance to get to know them better, beyond their surveys they had taken. Unfortunately I was only able to meet four out of the five students, but all and all it was a great first experience. The students were introduced to literature circles and what they entail. I gave a book talk for four chapter books, and the students voted on the one they liked the most. The most popular vote went to *The Face on the Milk Carton* by Caroline B. Cooney. This book is very suspenseful with a bit of mystery, a book that I’m sure they’re going to love. A teenage girl notices a face of a little girl on a milk carton, that little girl is her. She realizes that her current parents had kidnapped her, but why? Janie Johnson tries to piece things together in search of answers.

I was excited that my students chose The Face on the Milk Carton. The story touches upon many topics young-adults could relate to; friendship, love, self-discovery, and belonging. Knowing how the story unfolds in this book, I could design lessons that would focus around these topics. Focusing on these topics connects the text to students’ real-life experiences as young-adults.

I am really excited about our next meeting with our literature circles. We will be reading the first few pages of *The Face on the Milk Carton,* and we will be practicing the various roles students will have in participating in our future discussions together. I am hoping that all students will be actively engaged in their reading and taking upon their unique roles, and that we will have a great experience getting to know each other through our engagement with the story.

***April 10, 2012***

After voting on a book to use in our literature circle engagement, the middle school students chose the book *The Face on the Milk Carton*. In our following meeting we went over the different literature circle roles. We read the first three pages to see what the story was going to be like, and we also practiced the various literature circle roles after reading those pages to get an understanding of what each role entailed. We also set up a reading schedule and chose roles for our next meeting.

In our last meeting I asked my students to read the first four chapters of the book. To my surprise most of the students read beyond those pages and one even finished the book! I was thrilled that my students were so engaged in the text, it showed their enthusiasm for reading and their interest in the text. For our literature circle discussion, I asked those who read ahead to just focus their questions and input towards the first four chapters, since we didn’t want to spoil the story for the rest of the readers. In the meeting before, I handed out sheets for the different roles for each student to fill out in preparation for our meeting, unfortunately, I learned the hard way that they either didn’t fill them out, lost them, or left them at home. I initially thought that would break the chances of having a good, in-depth conversation of the book, but it didn’t. When we first gathered together to discuss the book, the students in a way looked to me for direction. I initially started the circle off by asking questions, about five minutes into our discussion I realized that the students didn’t need me to be the “sage on the stage” but rather act as the “guide on the side”. The students all had turns giving their thoughts, opinions, and relations to the text… it was awesome to watch! I was thrilled to witness how the students were excited to discuss what they had read. I believe they were so engaged because they were able to relate to the protagonist on a deeper level than I did. A lot of the things the protagonist went through, I believe I went through those same things in middle school and I believe my literature circle students are going through those things right now. After this meeting, I was influenced to design instruction for these students around a main idea that transpired in the text, an idea that sparks how we become who we are (as young adults) with the influence of our environment.

One thoughtful consideration I have for our next meeting would be to change the roles that I initially started off with (handing out worksheets to fill out) and instead apply the roles that we used in our own YA Lit class, this way the students are not taking home work but rather doing the “work” in the literature circle while chatting and collaborating with their peers and I. I’m looking forward to our next meeting and cannot wait to see what my literature circle students will be bringing to the table this time!

***April 13, 2012***

I thought this literature circle engagement went really well. Students were actively engaged in discussion the majority of the time. It seemed as if the students were having an “off” day and were worried about other things. Due to their lack of commitment to the discussion, it wasn’t as great as it could have been but I was still happy that they gave some contribution. The students had some very unique and insightful predictions about what they thought was going to happen in the next few chapters. Making predictions allows students to connect to the text together in a more authentic way. Prediction allows students to connect what they have read so far, to things that they believe may happen due to the events that already took place.

One thing that we need to work on is taking turns talking; at times the students were talking over one another or were having paired conversations instead of talking with the whole group. If this occurs in our next meetings, I will try to redirect students to a whole group discussion which focuses on utilizing the roles and taking turns. For our next literature circle meeting, we plan on paying attention to what everyone in the group has to say and also taking turns talking about the story.

***April 27, 2012***

For our last literature circle meeting, we discussed the final chapters and thought on the book. All but one of my students had finished, which was still great. For the students that finished the book, many of them stated that they were excited to start reading the next book in the series. I was thrilled that they wanted to continue engaging in the story of *The Face on the Milk Carton.* In conclusion to our discussions and text engagement together, the students created a picture that represented the story of *The Face on the Milk Carton.* My students were very excited in creating their picture, they also wanted to do a human body pyramid which would represent a milk carton, but we ran out of time. If we had more time in the semester, I would have liked to have gone back one more time so the students in all of the groups could hear what the other lit circles were reading about. It was a bittersweet day, but I’m delighted to have been able to partake in such a meaningful experience for me as a learner and teacher-in-training.

***Rationale***

Dr. Faith A. Wallace once quoted “young-adult literature is not classic literature written by dead white men.” I believe this to be a solid quote to live by as any educator who teaches young-adults. Young-adults should be exposed to various forms of literature, not solely those that were written by “dead white folk”, they should especially be opened to novels that were specifically written for a YA audience. Young-adults are at a stage in their lives where everything seems to be changing for them, their body, their personality, their place in society… through YA literature, these students are given a more mature understanding of self and the world around them through texts that they can relate to. More modern stories focus on current issues that young-adults are currently going through, which makes for a more meaningful and authentic literary experience.

After giving a “book talk” on four different books, all of which were chosen based on student interests and Lexile reading level, the five students voted for which book they would like to use in our literature circle engagement. The book that received the most votes was *The Face on the Milk Carton* by Caroline B. Cooney. In planning my lessons, I chose to focus solely on that text since it was an appropriate text for the young adults I worked with. This text affords students with an opportunity to engage in a story that they could relate to. There isn’t any violence, crude language, or unjust topics that would arise controversy. I believe students could learn many lessons through reading and engaging with the text. This book offers students with many great topics that they are familiar with. By utilizing this book in the classroom, students can understand that their peers are also going through the same situations as they are, they’re not in it alone, and it’s also an outlet for students to deal with those experiences. Developing lessons around the text I would focus on how our environment has a part in shaping us as individuals. As they are at the mere beginning of their lives as young-adults, the sixth-grade students that I worked with were ready to begin reading YA literature. Being exposed to various forms of YA literature now will help in preparing and develop their understanding of what is yet to come in their young-adult lives.



***Big Question***

* ***How***
* ***do***
* ***situations***
* ***that***
* ***happen***
* ***throughout***
* ***our***
* ***lives***
* ***shape***
* ***who***
* ***we***
* ***become?***

I chose this “big question” because I believe it can interlock with many topics that arise throughout the story of *The Face on the Milk Carton.* I believe many meaningful lessons for YA readers can be shaped around this one question. This question also causes students to ponder and analyze happenings in their own life and connect them to the story of *The Face on the Milk Carton.* Students might not have words for their feelings; I believe literature provides the words that they may not have been able to come up with on their own about the things that they’re feeling and the situations that they’re going through. Through language students can explain things; through literature students can interpret those things on a higher level.

**Sub Question: What kinds of new situations that arise in our lives change our current beliefs about self?**

**GRADE:** 6th **LESSON 1:** *The Face on the Milk Carton* (Chapters 1-3) **DATE:** 4/19/2012

**TIME LENGTH:** 50minutes

**MOTIVATIONAL DEVICE:** To spark students’ attention, show a picture of a milk carton with a missing child on it. Ask the question: How would you feel if you saw your own face as a young child on a milk carton?

**INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES:**

* Students will read the first three chapters of *The Face on the Milk Carton*, in order to be able to give relatable answers to the three discussion questions.

*Relatable answers would be ones in which students are referring back to the text and are relevant for the purpose of the discussion question. Also, I would hope that students would be able to relate the text to their personal lives.*

* After creating a collage that related to *The Face on the Milk Carton,* students will be able to give a deeper understanding of their thoughts about the events that have happened in the story so far.

*Collages offer readers with a way of expressing their interpretation and how they visualized the text. It will show if they really understood the meaning behind the words in the story.*

**MATERIALS NEEDED:** *The Face on the Milk Carton* by Caroline B. Cooney, chalk, paper, pencils, poster board, markers, glue, magazines, and newspapers.

**RESOURCES USED:**

Cooney, Caroline B. (1990). *The Face on the Milk Carton.* New York, NY*:*Radom House Children’s Books

**LESSON TYPE:** Language Arts, Art integration

**LESSON OUTLINE:**

1. Discussion (20 minutes)
   1. To open students’ up to discussion, these questions will be written on the board
      1. What was going through Janie’s mind when Janie saw her face as a 3yr old on the milk carton?
      2. Why do you think Janie’s parents are so overprotective of her?
      3. What was going through your mind when you learned that Janie’s parents didn’t have any pictures of her?
   2. Students will be asked to write their answers on a piece of paper.
   3. When students are finished, they will be put into groups of 3.
      1. Students will be asked to share their own thoughts on the questions with their group members.
         1. Every student should share.
   4. As a large class, groups will share their thoughts on the questions.
      1. Students will be asked if their opinions have changed or stayed the same after their small group discussion.
   5. Collect students’ original answers to the questions.
   6. Ask students: How can situations like Janie’s supposed kidnapping, can change who we are as a person?
      1. Allow this question to be open-ended for students’ to ponder and then answer.
   7. Ask students: How did situations that you have experienced change you as a person?

*At the beginning of each of the three lessons on* ***The Face on the Milk Carton,*** *I have students participate in whole-group or small group discussion. I believe this helps students to recall the events that had happened in the story, and through others answers it may help them see the text in a way that they normally wouldn’t have.*

1. Activity (25 minutes)
   1. Students will get back into their groups of 3.
   2. Pass out a poster board, markers, glue, newspapers, and magazines to each group.
   3. Explain to students that they will be making a collage that will reflect what they have read in chapters 1-3.
      1. They will be allowed to draw, write, paste on newspaper clippings or pictures from magazines.
   4. When students are finished, each group will come to the “author’s chair” and share the meaning(s) behind their poster and how they came up with the idea to create it the way that they did.
      1. Ask students: How does each picture in the collage connect to one another to tell the story of *The Face on the Milk Carton?*
      2. Ask students: How did you connect this text to your personal life?
2. Summary (5 minutes)
   1. Ask the key questions to assess understanding.
   2. Closure.

**KEY QUESTIONS:**

1. What have you learned so far about Janie?
2. What have you learned about Janie’s family?
3. Do you believe that it was *really* Janie’s face on the milk carton?
4. How do you think the event of Janie suspecting her parents kidnapped her alters her as a person?
   1. Mind, body, soul.

**CLOSURE:**

1. Ask students to write on a sheet of paper what they think is going to happen next in the story.
2. Collect papers to use for the next lesson.

**FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT:**

1. Assess students’ understanding of the story by reading through their answers to the discussion questions.

*I’m looking for relatable ones where students are referring back to the text and are relevant for the purpose of the discussion question. Also, I would hope that students would be able to relate the text to their personal lives.*

1. Assess students’ understanding of the text by viewing their collages and listening to how they created one that sparked and connected the events that had happened in the book.
2. Assess students understanding of the key questions. If students are unable to give an answer, refer back to certain passages from the book.

**HOMEWORK:** Students will be asked to read chapters 4-7

***LESSON REVIEW:*** *By discussing and creating the collages, students are able to interpret how the situations that had happened in Janie’s life changed who she was a person. Connecting the text to the students, I’ve asked questions of how situations that happened in Janie’s life could have affected them in their own lives. From this lesson, I want students to be able to understand how the events that had happened in Janie’s life changed her as a person. I also want students to put themselves in Janie’s shoes and think about how they would react if those occurrences had happened to them. I want students to think about situations that they have already gone through and how it changed them as a person.*

**Sub Question: How do other people influence the way we develop?**

**GRADE:** 6th **LESSON 2:** *The Face on the Milk Carton* (Chapters 4-7) **DATE:** 4/19/2012

**TIME LENGTH:** 55minutes

**MOTIVATIONAL DEVICE:** Begin lesson by passing out student predictions that they wrote at the end of the last lesson. Ask students if any of their predictions were confirmed after reading the last couple chapters.

*I chose to have students analyze their predictions to make connections (if any) to the last few chapters that they have read. I believe relating predictions to actual events in the story helps in building student comprehension.*

**INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES:**

* Students will read chapters 4-7 of *The Face on the Milk Carton*, in order to be able to contribute their own thoughts and opinions to the discussion questions.
* Students will participate in a reader’s theater, in order to gain a deeper understanding of a specific passage from the book.

*Engaging in a creation of a reader’s theater which focuses on the text, students will be able to more authentically connect to the text by working with other students and sharing their interpretations on how a specific passage/part had happened and why.*

* Students will watch various reader’s theater skits, in order to be able to identify at least one new thing they learned about the story.

**MATERIALS NEEDED:** *The Face on the Milk Carton* by Caroline B. Cooney, chalk, paper, pencils, poster board, markers and magazines.

**RESOURCES USED:**

Cooney, Caroline B. (1990). *The Face on the Milk Carton.* New York, NY*:*Radom House Children’s Books

**LESSON TYPE:** Language Arts, Art integration.

**LESSON OUTLINE:**

1. Discussion (20 minutes)
   1. To open students’ up to discussion, these questions will be written on the board
      1. What thoughts came across your mind when Janie’s mother avoided giving Janie her birth certificate?
      2. Certain situations arose in these chapters that sparked a relationship between Reeve and Janie, what do you think is going to come of their relationship together?
      3. Who is Hannah?
      4. What was your reaction when Janie found a polka-dotted dress in her attic that matched the one the “she” was wearing in the milk carton photo?
   2. Starting with the first question, go through all of them and ask students what their thoughts and opinions are towards the topics being addressed.
   3. Ask students to find and share one passage that they believe describes or emphasizes how Janie feels towards her parents.
      1. Call on random students to share the passage.
      2. Ask students why they believe the passage that they chose was significant.
      3. Ask students if their parents’ beliefs can shape them as a human being?
         1. Do you see this happening to Janie?
         2. Do you see this happening to Reeve?
2. Activity (25 minutes)
   1. Students will be put into groups of four.
   2. Explain to students that they will be participating in a reader’s theater.
      1. Readers Theater allows students to use their voice, sound effects, and staging to recreate of a passage from the book.
   3. Each student is to share the passage that they thought reflected Janie’s feelings towards her parents.
      1. Students are to choose only one passage to do their reader’s theater on.
   4. When students have created and practiced their Reader’s Theater, they will be asked to act out their Reader’s Theater for the whole class.
      1. Students will be given the chance to ask each group questions.

*I chose to have students participate in Reader’s Theater because I believe it will help students in gaining a deeper understanding of the text. Not only are students working with the text themselves, but their also watching various other Reader’s Theater’s that will hopefully open a new lens to what the story could really mean. Through Reader’s Theater, students can take on the role of a specific character, and see the story through that character’s eyes.*

1. Summary (10 minutes)
   1. Ask the key questions to assess understanding.
   2. Closure.

**KEY QUESTIONS:**

1. How do Janie’s parents actions affect the young-adult that Janie is becoming?
2. What other people have an influence on Janie and her development?
3. From the information that we’ve read so far, do you believe Janie’s parents kidnapped her?
4. If Janie was kid napped, where are her real parents?

**CLOSURE:** Ask students to predict what they believe will happen next in the story.

**FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT:**

1. Assess students’ understanding of the story by listening to their answers to the discussion questions.
2. Assess students’ ability to participate in a Reader’s Theater, students’ should make connections to the characters and the situations in the story.

*Reader’s Theater provides students with a purpose for reading. Reading a passage and acting it out allows students to feel and understand how a specific charted might have felt when going through a certain situation.*

**HOMEWORK:** Students will be asked to read chapters 8-12

**Sub Question Continued: How do your beliefs about family and friends change as we grow up?**

**GRADE:** 6th **LESSON 3:** *The Face on the Milk Carton* (Chapters 8-12) **DATE:** 4/19/2012

**TIME LENGTH:** 50minutes

**MOTIVATIONAL DEVICE:** Write these facts on the board**:**

* **800,000** children younger than 18 are missing each year, or an average of 2,000 children reported missing each day.
* **200,000** children were abducted by family members.
* **58,000** children were abducted by nonfamily members.
* **115** children were the victims of “stereotypical” kidnapping. These crimes involve someone the child does not know, or knows only slightly, who holds the child overnight, transports the child 50 miles or more, kills the child, demands ransom, or intends to keep the child permanently.

*Janie thinks that her ‘parents’ abducted her from a shopping mall when she was only 3years old, now Janie’s is searching for her ‘real parents’… how do you think this might change Janie as a person? Do you think Janie could be 1 of the 115 children that were kidnapped and kept permanently by their kidnappers?*

**INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES:**

* Upon completion of their reading of chapters 1 through 12, students will have enough information to be able to take a side of who they believe are truly Janie’s real parents.
* After analyzing passages, students will be able to come with at least three facts that back up their beliefs of who Janie’s parents really are.

*Through this lesson, I want students to take a side using evidence from their reading, and feel passionate about doing so, of whom Janie’s true parents are. It’s most likely that not all students will have the same viewpoint, and that’s fine. I want students to use the facts that they have learned and their own knowledge in coming up with who Janie’s true parents are. This allows students to see that Janie herself was faced with evidence from both sides, making it very hard for her to choose. This situation has put a great burden on Janie and has changed her feelings towards her parents and her own life.*

**MATERIALS NEEDED:** *The Face on the Milk Carton* by Caroline B. Cooney, chalk, large post-it paper, markers, crayons.

**RESOURCES USED:**

Cooney, Caroline B. (1990). *The Face on the Milk Carton.* New York, NY: Radom House Children’s Books

**LESSON TYPE:** Language Arts, Art integration

**LESSON OUTLINE:**

1. Discussion (15 minutes)
   1. To open students’ up to discussion, these questions will be written on the board
      1. What do you think about the story that Janie’s parents told her of how she became their daughter?
      2. How do you think Janie and Reeve’s relationship is developing?
      3. What did you think about Janie going to the Spring’s household? Would you have acted the same way Janie did?
   2. Have students pair up with a partner to discuss their answers to the questions.
   3. Starting with the first question, go through all of them and ask students what their thoughts and opinions are towards the topics being addressed.
2. Activity (30 minutes)
   1. Students will take a side of who they believe are Janie’s *true* parents.
      1. On the post-it paper, students are to include two columns
         1. Column one should represent the Johnson’s
         2. Column two should represent the Spring’s
      2. Students are to work individually and come up with passages and facts that would persuade their audience in believing that which ever set of parents they chose are Janie’s *true* parents.
      3. One side they believe is Janie’s parents and the other side they do not believe are Janie’s parents.
         1. Students must include passages facts from the text to support their opinions on both sides.
   2. When students are finished, we will take a class poll of who they believe are Janie’s real parents.
   3. Each student will have the opportunity to share their posters, and why they chose that particular set of parents to be Janie’s true parents.
3. Summary (5 minutes)
   1. Ask the key questions to assess understanding.
   2. Closure.

**KEY QUESTIONS:**

1. Would talking with who Janie thinks may be her *real* parents, influence her to betray and run away from everything that she’s used to; home, school, friends, etc.?
2. How would finding out that the Spring’s may be her true parents affect Janie’s relationship with Reeve?

**CLOSURE:** Ask students to predict what they believe will happen next in the story.

**FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT:**

1. Assess students’ understand of the story by listening to their answers to the discussion questions. If a student is not participating in discussion, call on him/her specifically to give input.
2. Assess students’ understanding of who they believe to be Janie’s true parents. Did they give enough evidence to support their opinions? Did their work show that they understood the story?