A COLLABORATIVE READING PROGRAM
TO DECREASE MIDDLE SCHOOL SUMMER READING LOSS

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Abstract

Research has revealed important information about meaningful learning and effective teaching of reading. This project researches a reading specialist’s plan for community collaboration to create a middle school summer reading program. This project has literature-based lessons for varied genres of middle school literature. The lessons would be shared within the school in the fall to foster community and reduce middle school reading loss. Classroom teachers along with the reading specialist would be able to use the database of lessons to create shared experiences based literature. These lessons based on research would help develop readers with the help of technology to inspire a community of readers.
Chapter 1

Introduction

Summer time might mean “easy living” for most middle school children. As educators we know that children experience “reading loss” over the summer months. Reading loss is any drop in reading levels that occurs over the summer. Many school-age children may participate in summer reading programs through their local library. The number of middle school students who participate in public library summer reading programs is significantly reduced. In one study of the Lancaster County library System the numbers speak for themselves. The number of elementary participates was 11,078 with 5,938 completing the program. The number of teens that participated was 3,222 with 1,135 completing the program (Lancaster, 2009). More than half of the elementary population finished the program and less than half of the declining teen population completed the program. Educators need to get teenagers to read more during the summer months.

Background

The target population of Moore’s 1999 study involved middle school-aged students, already deemed “literate” by most teachers. Often, educators and curriculum lose focus on teaching these students “reading skills”. Teachers need to be reminded that reading is a continuum, and middle grade students are still developing upon that continuum. With our developing technology, students in the 21st century will read and write more than any other time in our history. With that in mind, the middle schools are very rarely serviced by trained reading specialist (Moore, 1999).
The term literacy means one’s ability to read and write, but that definition does not say to what standard, and the standards are high. For example, the 1998 Reading Report Card produced by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NEAP) showed that a majority of U.S. adolescents, about 60%, can comprehend specific factual information. Yet few can go beyond the basic to advanced reading and writing. Fewer than 5% of the adolescents they assesses could extend or elaborated the meaning to create connections (Moore, 1999).

As mentioned, many middle schools do not have reading specialists available because reading specialists tend to be concentrated in the elementary or primary schools. Many believe that early reading intervention will prevent reading difficulties in the middle grades. Because reading occurs on a continuum there are stages of development. As children progress they read different types of fiction and nonfiction with increasing difficulty and vocabulary development. Each of these stages needs guidance and instruction so children are not left reading at a fifth-grade level. As readers progress on the continuum of reading they start to create text-to-text connections and themes, while building schema. All of these reading skills require an understanding of how reading develops and how the middle grade child develops into an adult reader (Moore, 1999).

Research has shown that middle school students need more reading time and exposure in order to develop literacy. In a 1996, NAEP found that one quarter of the tested adolescents reported daily reading of five or fewer pages in school and for homework. As they get older fewer read for “fun”. Literacy research and professional judgment support at least four reasons for providing adolescents access to inside and outside of school reading materials they can and want to read.
- Time spent reading is related to reading success.
- Time spent reading is associated with attitudes toward additional reading [students seek out new knowledge/material]
- Time spent reading is tied to knowledge of the world.
- Reading is a worthwhile life experience. Vicariously stepping into text worlds can nourish teens’ emotions and psyches as well as intellects (Moore, 1999).

When more time is scheduled for reading we can provide more opportunities to develop academic, healthy, strong and independent readers.

**Statement of the problem**

What are the characteristics of a middle school summer reading program as an effective method to prevent reading loss and promote literacy in a suburbia middle school?

**Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this project is to develop a summer reading list to be given to students at the end of the 7th grade year. The purpose of this list to make titles that are engaging and available to middle school students, while trying to motivate them to read during the summer months. This list will would contain eight titles to choose from; the students would then be required to read four of the books during the summer. When students return to school as 8th graders teachers would lead “breakout” sessions based on the books.

By sharing “good” titles and different genres written for this age group educators may spark reading interest and create lifelong readers. These shared experiences can also create shared experiences to allow teachers and students the ability to create more connections.
Research questions

1. How do educators work within a community to motivate middle school students to read during the summer months and why this is important to development and future academic success?

2. What are key components to developing an effective summer reading program that can be done with collaboration and support from a public middle school?

Definition of Terms

EBooks- this term refers to any form of electronic book reading devise for example a kindle, nook, iPad etc.

Reading Loss- Any measurable drop of reading ability that occurs over the summer months when some schools are on Holiday.

Literacy- the ability to read and write at grade level.

Reading specialist- a trained teacher who can identify reading deficits and help tailor instruction as needed.
Chapter II Literature Review

Understanding that reading deficits are not developed in isolation making it important to understand this target population as a whole to help to motivate, understand and encourage their development, while creating worthwhile instruction. When you talk among teachers there are usually two camps, those who are terrified to teach middle school and those who love middle school. When you Google “middle school students,” many negative things come up in the search bar. Some examples of the negative connotations: *middle schoolers making out, middle schoolers caught, middle schoolers bullied etc…* Middle school students often test their independence and with this come lots of mistakes and learning and personal growth. Middle school development is a short amount of time with a whole range of emerging behaviors, emotions, and attitudes. Teaching this population can be like riding a roller coaster, so teachers need to understand and work with changing emotions. Middle school is a time of trial and error, and committed educators are essential to student growth.

**Motivating Middle school readers**

Educators need to understand the misconception that if students aren’t reading books they aren’t reading. Many children at home spend time e-mailing, instant messaging, and looking up information on websites, all acquiring knowledge without printing one page. Marra and Witteveen (2005) constructed a Teen Read Week Survey. The survey was conducted during Teen Read Week in 2001 and it received 2,681 electronic responses. In 2002 the survey had 6,458 responses and in 2003 there were 3,777 electronic responses. The survey was three question and collected basic demographic information but was mainly focused on reading. They asked three questions in the survey. The first question was “What are the Reading habits of
Teenagers?” The researchers found that 44.21% of the teens who completed the survey said they felt they did not have enough time in their day to read for pleasure but did enjoy it when they got the chance. The second question was “Why do Teens Read?” Here the results showed the following people encouraged them to read at home for pleasure, their Mom, Teacher, and Dad. However, the results showed that teens do not see adult encouragement as a factor. In the survey 44.21% teens said they read “just for the fun of it.”

Question 3 was “Why Don’t teens Read?” Most cited various reasons but some common comments made were that it was boring, or they had trouble finding books that kept their attention. While most participates who responded to this survey are probably library users and strong readers it gives some insight into the climate to teen reading.

Having a very general understanding of views that are held by teen readers can help motivate students within our classrooms. Throughout the literature there is much emphasis on creating choice among middle school readers. The only problem with that statement is that is it very vague. We all want choice, but we need to give teenagers some preselected choices to help introduce them to all genres to see what inspires them. Just walking into a library is too overwhelming. Having kids make recommendations with one another or creating a bulletin board with “Good Book” titles helps to shrink the library into a manageable size. Using peer-review and book sharing is a great way to create “book talk” in any classroom and introduce different genres. When teens know what they like to read they know what section to go to in the library, making the library more inviting and user friendly.

The 21st learner needs to be in a classroom that is “passion-based” or filled with a sense of “Wonderment” (Norton, 2010). With all the stimulation and visually elements that compete
for our students’ attention we need to create a classroom environment that is filled with wonderment. Print or eBooks, of reading can take readers on fantastic adventures. When students can find these texts they can learn from their own strengths. Norton states that while the information and communication technology continues to expand exponentially that the role of the teacher will shift in the 21st century classroom. This type of classroom environment doesn’t mean a “free for all” but a guided environment where reading is the teacher and the teacher is the facilitator, to help create connections and meaning.

Readers within a classroom can help engage the non readers in the classroom. However, we know that in a classroom environment we have the reluctant readers. Reluctant readers often avoid reading at all costs. There are two terms here that overlap and they are struggling readers and reluctant readers. The struggling reader has trouble with the process of reading, while the reluctant reader does not like the idea of reading. Most often they go hand in hand. If a student is not “good” at something then why would they want to do it? Truax (2010) found that the reluctant reader dilemma reaches its peak in middle school. The rate at which students move away from reading in middle school is increased. Guthrie and Davis (2003) found that when reporting enjoyment of reading from 3rd to 8th grade, only 27% agreed with the statement “reading is boring” while 65% of 8th grade students agreed with the statement. This study was conducted in the state of Maryland they compared third, fifth, and eight grade responses to a questionnaire about reading. This questionnaire was given out by teachers during the statewide assessment. The results showed that the middle school students were far less engaged in reading then the elementary students.

One of the most essential factors to motivate reluctant readers says Truax (2010), is to have them understand the purpose. Middle school students need to understand why the process
of reading is important. This could then later allow them to engage in out of school reading on their own accord. Reluctant readers need to see the gain and value of text and reading. Therefore if students see reading for a goal or topic of interest that might be useful to them they may pass on other activities that could hinder reading.

Good readers see themselves as good readers so naturally they want to read. Beers (2003) suggested creating positive experiences everyday when working with adolescents. Many times these readers have had lots of bad experiences that need to be replaced with positive experiences. Self confidence and reading ability go hand in hand. The classroom environment needs to value the learning process, and encourages risks taking.

**Effects of Summer Reading Loss**

The phenomenon of summer reading loss is well known to educators (Kim, 2011). Summer reading loss is any drop in reading levels that occurs during the typical three months holiday between school years (Gambrell, 2008). Since reading loss occurs each summer and is accumulative that mean during one child’s elementary years (grades 1-5) the loss can add duo to 1 ½ years of reading deficit (Bracey, 2002). This means that by the time this child enters middle school they would not be labeled “not proficient” in reading. If they get to middle school as “not proficient” with no reading specialist available to help them catch up to their peers, there is little chance of them becoming proficient before high school. Reading loss plays a major role impacting the achievement gap within the middle school population.

A 2007 Study by Alexander, Entwise and Steddel-Olson, found that 9th grade reading abilities are traced back to summer reading loss, linking the achievement in 9th grade and beyond. This longitudinal study examined the long term effects of summer reading loss. A
representative random sample of Baltimore school children from first grade to the age of twentytwo was monitored during their educational process. These students are separated into two
groups, one college track and one non-college track students. The gap is associated with
graduation rates and college freshman enrollment. Students who don’t graduate or do not
continue their education after HS are faced with more adult challenges then their “higher
educated” peers.

The research support what educators know, that summer reading loss is more of a
problem with lower social economic populations. Knowing this and fixing this are two very
separate issues. I am not ignoring the socio-economic problem but for my research I just focused
on the overall effects of reading loss. This is one on the limitation of my research.

**Effectiveness of summer reading programs**

Many teachers and librarians work on creating a summer reading program to help bridge
the summer gap. Although summer reading programs have been around for more than a century
more that 95% of all public libraries offer summer reading programs for school-aged
children/teen (Fiore, 2010). Librarians and teachers alike assign and generate summer book
lists. Gorman (2010) pointed out how teachers and libraries need to collaborate to ensure that
the books that are chosen are available at the local libraries. Gorman also investigated the
objective of the creating a reading list. Upon interviewing 10 educators or librarians who
generated reading list, Gorman found a variety of expectations for creating summer reading lists.
From those that were interviewed seven out of ten educators/librarians said they created the list
in hopes of reducing summer reading loss. Others wanted kids to read for enjoyment while high
school teachers wanted to read for academia. I thought it was interesting that 6 of the 10
interviewed said they created lists because parents had requested them. The conclusion of this qualitative study was that educators should work with the public library and local business to ensure that these books are available to all students and not just the ones who can afford to purchase them from bookstores.

Fiore (2010) has conducted two studied on summer reading loss the first study isn’t pertinent to the middle school population because it was conducted with first graders. The second study as mentioned in the article, Proof Positive A new study that summer reading programs boost student achievement and combat learning loss her findings are similar. This three year study was conducted on exiting third graders. They collected data based on surveys that were given at the beginning of the fourth grade. There were over 500 students who participated in the survey after they had parental consent. The survey data that was collected confirmed that that student who participated in a library summer reading program improved their skills. When interviewed many teachers reported that children who participated in the summer reading programs entered school with a positive attitude and were more confident in the classroom. Parents of children who participated in the summer reading program noticed that their children had less anxiety and were more prepared to start a new school year.

The Study also found that more girls than boys participated and most of the participants were Caucasian and 61% qualified for free or reduced meals (Fiore, 2010). In conclusion of this study it suggested again that there be more collaboration between public schools and public libraries, the need to get more boys involved in reading by offering more active activities then crafts. They also suggested using technology to keep reading logs, blog and the use of social media.
While 95% of public libraries offer summer reading programs to help combat summer reading loss, there is little literature when applied to teen achievement. Most of the studies are done on elementary aged readers. I choose to investigate our local libraries to see what was available for “teens” (grades 6-12).

In the summer of 2010 Herrick Public Library in Holland Michigan offered several teen activities. They offered a stepped program with the final completion with an invitation to a library lock-in. When I interviewed the librarian she said about 220 teens signed up 119 completed the program which is 54% of the teens. When looking at the children summer reading program they had 911 children sign up and 47% completed that program. The children’s reading program serviced pre-kindergarten through fifth grade. The middle school program services grades six through twelfth (Robinson, 2011). The same trend was evident when I interviewed Allison from the Grand Haven Loutit Library (Fox, 2011).

The best way to establish a reading program for teen is with collaboration between schools, local businesses and public libraries. When a community comes together to pool its resources all students can benefit. Morrison (2010) found that when she had a Teen Advisory Group that worked with the school and local library collaboratively they saw an increase of 130% in teen registrations and attendance when compared to the previous year’s teen programs.

The effect of creating community in a middle school environment

When children share a common experience they can be bonded and taught humanity through literature. Gillespie (2010) noted the power of community in a language arts classroom. When students interact with one another to publish or share their work they recognize their value to the class and start to build a cohesive working relationship. This is especially important in
middle school, where there is a real need to “fit in” when in a classroom. These are the types of classrooms where it is safe to take risks.

This generation of computer literate readers should also be exposed to online book communities. There are several sites available to get book reviews, facts about the authors, songs picked to accompany book questions designed to reflect and discuss and suggestions for hosting an event about books (Peowski, 2010). Just because teens aren’t reading books doesn’t mean they are not acquiring knowledge which is the goal of reading. These online sites can empower and engage readers in a manner that isn’t as risky to them as a classroom environment. Once a child builds his confidence online they may be more likely to take risks at school and academically.

**Conclusion and future study**

In closing, when considering development of a summer reading program we need to allow teenagers free choice, variety of media to discuss and digest a book, and collaboration among community libraries, teachers, and local businesses to make books available. When we all work together to motivate and spark interest in reading our community wins.

Having a strong community of learners based on books is a great way to level the playing field in a middle school. I tell my students to find the good in everyone no matter how hard that is, and books can help to create some “good connections”. Upon more research it would be interesting to do a climate survey to see if a collaborated summer reading programs affected the overall climate of the school. My assumption is that if the 8th grader felt they had a “strong” class bond that this feeling would trickle down and has a positive effect on behaviors throughout the school, because 8th graders are natural leaders at the middle school level.
Chapter III Results and Analysis

Researchers have long looked at the effectiveness of summer reading programs and their ability to closing the bridge with summer reading loss. There seems to be little literature to support how these reading programs affect the middle school populations. Most of the research from chapter II looked at reading programs ran by local public libraries. In our area we have two wonderful, new, modern and well staffed libraries. I was not surprised to find that each “teen summer reading program” had significant lower number of participates and completers. I do not think this population is not reading I just think they are not “just” reading books.

To motivate more teen students to participate in the libraries summer reading programs they may need to do more school visits, offer online chats or reading logs, and offer more activities geared toward boys. Both libraries had “Teen Advisors Panels” or TAP, but I’m not sure how active these are when developing and promoting summer reading programs.

Based on the research I would like to develop a Middle school reading program for outgoing 7th graders to be completed over the summer months and accumulated in the fall of their 8th grade year. I would be to generate a list of 8 book titles, from this list the students would need to choose 4 books to read during the summer. One of these books could be an audio book that they could get at the library or from iTunes. During the summer there would be opportunities to meet online to discuss the book. These online discussions would be optional. Then when the students return to school each teacher would lead a “breakout session” based on one of the books. The students could choose which session to attend.

The breakout sessions (see chapter 4) would give students and teachers the ability to create connections and discuss the book. There would be a food/snack that would be from the
book and also an activity based on the plot of the book. Students from the online book chats may have some input as to what best fits the book. These breakout sessions would be great way o welcome back students by giving them some free choice and building peer pressure to those who did not read the books.

These breakout sessions would be done each day for 90 for the first four days of school. The idea is to build on literature to establish relationship among the 8\textsuperscript{th} graders early in the year to ensure success throughout the year.

**Obstacles**

**How to get the books?**

Working with the local library I would choose some titles that they have for teen book clubs. This way I could ensure that several of these titles are already on hand at the local library. I would also invite the librarian into school to make sure everyone knows how to get a library card and use the online resources that are available. Students could then place book titles on hold from other libraries when needed this could help make more titles available.

We have several independent book stores in town I may approach them to see what assistance they could be willing to serve. Other local business could be solicited to donate books that could be passed out at school or thru the school library.

There might also be grant money available that the Intermediate school district would be able to help with. This is another great resource that often has many suggestions.
Getting Teachers on board

This may be the hardest challenge. I would start with the language arts teachers and see if they would be interested in being part of the program and help me start a committee. This committee would then be in charge of planning these “breakout” sessions. The teachers would be asked to facilitate, as we want these session to be student led. The only sticky part might be getting the teachers to read the books. Then teachers should pick which books they would like to lead based on their personal connections to the book. Ideally this would be done during school hours but these sessions could also be done after school, limiting the number that can participate.

Motivating Students

This is where teaching with passion can help motive students. In the spring we can have a summer reading program kick off with the library. We would invite the library in to introduce the program and get some students to sign up. Working from that list we could pull some “leaders” and put them in charge of the online reading chats. These leaders would be trained on the websites after school if they are willing. We would make reading the four books a “requirement” for the incoming 8th grades in September.

Not everyone is going to participate but the thought is that when students return to school and see what they miss out on they will be inspired to read at least one of the books even on audio books. If the program is carried out well the in-coming 7th graders will already know what the expectation is and what “fun” the 8th graders got to have as a result of reading. The first year would be critical to the program’s success.
Chapter IV  Project Description

To educate is a form of art between practitioner and student and is built on personal relationships. This art form has been proven to be effective for hundreds of years; the learners of the 21 century need to be educated with new tools, technology. The pedagogy of teaching of reading has not changing but the method of delivery with the use of many forms of technology is changing. This project has two goals. The first goal is generate a summer reading program that will motivate and spark students into summer reading. The second goal is to have these lessons readily available on the school network drive as a database that would be as part of the language arts curriculum available to all staff within the middle school building.

Reading List

This list was created based on personal suggestions, specific genres, and age appropriateness in order to expand the readers’ schema and scope of reading. From this list of eight books in coming 8th graders will be asked to read four, of these four one may be an audio book. The Lesson ideas each include discussion questions and activities to build on the students’ comprehension, and ability to create new meaning from they have read over the summer. There are also resources to conduce online book chats. These could be monitored by a reading specialist during the summer but mainly ran by the students. I would use the online chats to help establish the snack/food ideas to be shared during the breakout sessions upon the return to school.
8th grade Book Choices

The Higher Power of Lucky (Patron, Susan) Fiction

Fearing that her legal guardian plans to abandon her to return to France, ten-year-old aspiring scientist Lucky Trimble determines to run away while also continuing to seek the Higher Power that will bring stability to her life.

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian (Alexie, Sherman)

Budding cartoonist Junior leaves his troubled school on the Spokane Indian Reservation to attend an all-white farm town school where the only other Native American is the school mascot.

The Giver (Lois Lowry) – Science Fiction

In a tightly controlled society where all seems perfect, 12 year old Jonas is chosen to be the one to receive its secrets from an old man known as the giver. What he learns from him changes everything.

The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane (Kate DiCamillo) - fiction

In search of its rightful owner, a stuffed rabbit takes an extraordinary journey around the world.

Hoot (Hiaasen) - mystery, environmental issue

Roy, a middle school boy who is the target of a school bully, gets involved in a mysterious case of vandalism and a barefoot boy’s commitment to save burrowing owls living on a construction site.

Holes (Sachar) adventure

Stanley Yelnats finds true friendship, a treasure and a new beginning at Camp Greenwood, a correctional camp in Texas for juveniles, where he is sent for a crime he did not commit.

Jackie’s Wild Seattle (Hobbs) - adventure

While spending the summer with their uncle at a wildlife rescue center, 14-year-old Shannon and her younger brother encounter life-changing experiences.

When My Name Was Keoko (Park, Linda Sue) Historical Fiction

With national pride and occasional fear, a brother and sister face the increasingly oppressive occupation of Korea by Japan during World War II, which threatens to suppress Korean culture entirely.
Break-out Session Materials

The Higher power of Lucky

Discussion Questions

1. Do you think Lucky lives up to her name? How is Lucky lucky? Why did the author decide to name her main character Lucky?

2. The author chose a desert setting for the book. How would the story be different if she had decided to have Lucky live in the mountains or near the ocean?

3. Among the things Lucky carries in her survival kit backpack are mineral oil, a book, specimen boxes, pencil and notebook, ketchup packets, can of beans, toothbrush and toothpaste, water, and a survival blanket. What do you think of her choices? What would you carry in a survival kit?

4. Her mother is dead and her father doesn’t want children. Who is Lucky’s family? What do you think the author is saying about families?

5. Lincoln is always tying knots from discarded string no one else wants and gives Lucky a ten-strand round knot, a knot with no loose cord ends that might unwind. What does the knot represent to Lucky?

6. Lucky is all set to runaway, but "Then for no reason she got a sudden exploding idea. She rushed to Brigette’s trailer and flung open the closet." From the closet, Lucky takes Brigitte’s red silk dress. Why?

7. After the dust storm, when the adults come looking for Lucky, Miles and Lincoln, why does Lucky decide that is the right time to open the urn with her mother’s ashes?
8. Lucky feels like she has no control over her own life since she’s only 10. Do you ever feel frustrated about not having control over something?

9. What did you enjoy about this book?

10. Lucky eavesdrops on the meetings to find out how the anonymous people inside got control of their lives through their Higher Power but nobody ever explain how they found their Higher Power. Does Lucky find her higher power? What is it?

Activity

Create a wind chime just like those that are in the Found Object Wind Chime Museum.

Materials:

- 7 Forks
- Assorted Beads
- 14 White Paper Plates
- Yarn
- 7 Markers
- Box Crayons
- Box Paper Clips
- Assorted insects
- 6 Snakes
- 6 French Flag
- 10 Ketchup Packets
- 10 Cookies
- 6 Red Dress Pieces

Historical Information on Wind Chimes:

- The history of wind chimes dates back to prehistoric times in many cultures; however, their greatest and most elegant development was in east and south Asia, from Bali to Tibet and Japan. Buddhists attached thousands of elegantly decorated, cast, or carved wind chimes and wind bells to the eaves of sacred religious structures to create an almost deafening sound in the wind.
• In many areas, certain wind directions are often associated with specific weather conditions. For example, winds blowing off a large body of water may bring cooler temperatures in the summer. Northeasterly winds along the Atlantic Coast often signify a coming storm or one in progress; and westerly or northwesterly winds may indicate a cold front is approaching. If the wind comes from the north or northwest, it may mean a storm or colder weather is on the way. If the wind comes from the south, it may mean milder weather is coming. By strategically hanging several sets of wind chimes, you can hear the general direction of the wind; and the rate at which the clapper strikes the chimes can give an estimate of the wind speed. Today, wind chimes are widely used as decorations to produce interesting background sounds in our homes and gardens.

• Throughout history, wind chimes have continued to be popular for their beauty and pleasant melodies.

Goals:

• Create a replica of a wind chime.
• Include in their wind chime story structure.
• Give a short description of what they have created and how it relates to the story.

Resource Instructions

Listen to wind chime music and ask students of they know what it is.

1. Development
   1. Review parts of a story (i.e. setting, characters, plot, conflict/resolution)
   2. Explain what wind chimes are used for/history.
   3. Introduce activity.
4. Explain that this is an ongoing activity and that they will not know what each item on the wind chime will represent until the entire book is read.

5. Part of the wind chime (paper plate story elements) will be reserved to work on throughout the unit.

6. Allow students to select materials from front desk (4-5 items).

7. Students spend time working on project.

Teacher supervises and scaffolds learning activity.

1. Closure

   1. Have students pair and share to make predictions about what the wind chime pieces symbolize.

   2. Ask for a few predictions.

Extensions:

1. Back Pack: write about what they think is in the backpack.

2. What would you put in your own backpack survival kit? Writing/interactive activity

3. Graphic Organizer: compare climate of a CA to PA.

4. Learn/ explore about different types of bugs.

5. PowerPoint

6. Write a report on characteristics of a desert.

7. Research project on desert characteristics.

8. Why do you think Lucky got this far. What do you think she did and didn’t do?

9. Has anyone ever assumed anything that wasn’t true?
This break our session will be using small group discussion and the use of technology so a computer lab will need to be used.

Start this session with by choosing one of the discussion questions to do as a whole class to model group norms. Then split the class into small groups and have them draw one question from a hat. Have them discuss the question and be ready to share with the whole group.

Discussion questions

1. Consider the adjectives, “absolutely true” and “part-time.” What concepts appear to be emphasized by the images and the title? Does the cover appear to reference Junior’s internal struggle, or a struggle between Junior and the white power structure, or both, or neither?

2. By drawing cartoons, Junior feels safe. He draws “because I want to talk to the world. And I want the world to pay attention to me.” How do Junior’s cartoons (for example, “Who my parents would have been if somebody had paid attention to their dreams” and “white/Indian”) show his understanding of the ways that racism has deeply impacted his and his family’s lives?

3. When Junior is in Reardan (the white town), he is “half Indian,” and when he is in Wellpinit (his reservation), he is “half white.” “It was like being Indian was my job,” he says, “but it was only a part-time job. And it didn’t pay well at all.” At Reardan High, why does Junior pretend he has more money than he does, even though he knows “lies have short shelf lives”?

4. Junior describes his reservation as “located approximately one million miles north of Important and two billion miles west of Happy.” Yet when he and Rowdy look down from almost the top of an immense pine, he says, “We could see our entire world. And our entire
world, at that moment, was green and golden and perfect.” What forces drive the dichotomy of Junior’s perceptions of his world and allow him to see the land in apparently disparate ways?

5. Cultural outsiders who write young adult fiction tend to romanticize the impoverishment of Indians. Junior is having none of this: “It sucks to be poor, and it sucks to feel that you somehow deserve to be poor. You start believing that you’re poor because you’re stupid and ugly. And then you start believing that you’re stupid and ugly because you’re Indian. And because you’re Indian you start believing that you’re destined to be poor. It’s an ugly circle and there’s nothing you can do about it. Poverty doesn’t give you strength or teach you lessons about perseverance. No, poverty only teaches you how to be poor.” How does Junior’s direct language address this stereotypical portrayal of Indians? What about his language draws the teen reader into the realities of his life?

6. Junior’s parents, Rowdy’s father, and others in their community are addicted to alcohol, and Junior’s white “friend with potential,”

After Discussion questions talk about the importance of Junior’s ability to create comics. Using the website www.bitstrips.com or a Mac lab if available have students created their own comics about social issues. Bring in several examples from magazines or newspapers so they can create satirical or light hearted comics. The comics could then be used to create a “class comic book” or be displayed on a bulletin board.
The Giver

Discussion Questions

1. Jonas is chosen as the next Receiver of Memory. Is this an honor or a punishment?

2. If ignorance of the past is a benefit to the citizens of the community, why do you think that the Receiver of Memory exists?

3. The Chief Elder lists five characteristics that a Receiver must have: intelligence, integrity, courage, wisdom and the Capacity to See Beyond. Was Jonas a good choice for this position?

4. Do you agree with Jonas’s decision to leave the community? Why or why not?

5. How realistic is this society? Could it exist?

A message from the Author

The file is in RealAudio format and the playing time is 1:36. To listen to it, you need to download the RealAudio Player, available for free at www.realaudio.com. The transcript of this message follows.

Kids always ask what inspired me to write a particular book or how did I get an idea for a particular book, and often it's very easy to answer that because books, like the Anastasia books, come from a specific thing, some little event triggers an idea. But a book like *The Giver* is a much more complicated book and therefore it comes from much more complicated places--and many of them are probably things that I don't even recognize myself anymore, if I ever did. So it's not an easy question to answer.

I will say that the whole concept of memory is one that interests me a great deal. I'm not sure why that is, but I've always been fascinated by the thought of what memory is and what it does
and how it works and what we learn from it. And so I think probably that interest of my own and
that particular subject was the origin, one of many, of *The Giver*.

Why does Jonas take what he does on his journey? He doesn't have much time when he sets out.
He originally plans to make the trip farther along in time and he plans to prepare for it better. But
then because of circumstances, he has to set out in a very hasty fashion. So what he chooses is
out of necessity.

He takes food because he needs to survive and he knows that. He takes the bicycle because he
needs to hurry and the bike is faster than legs. And he takes the baby because he is going out to
create a future. And babies always represent the future in the same way children represent the
future to adults. And so Jonas takes the baby so the baby's life will be saved, but he takes the
baby also in order to begin again with a new life.

Many kids want a more specific ending to *The Giver*. Some write, or ask me when they see me,
to spell it out exactly. And I don't do that. And the reason is because *The Giver* is many things to
many different people. People bring to it their own complicated sense of beliefs and hopes and
dreams and fears and all of that. So I don't want to put my own feelings into it, my own beliefs,
and ruin that for people who create their own endings in their minds.

I will say that I find it an optimistic ending. How could it not be an optimistic ending, a happy
ending, when that house is there with its lights on and music is playing? So I'm always kind of
surprised and disappointed when some people tell me that they think that the boy and the baby
just die. I don't think they die. What form their new life takes is something I like people to figure out for themselves. And each person will give it a different ending.

In answer to the people who ask whether I'm going to write a sequel, they are sometimes disappointed to hear that I don't plan to do that. But in order to write a sequel, I would have to say: this is how it ended. Here they are and here's what's happening next. And that might be the wrong ending for many, many people who chose something different.

Of course there are those who could say I can't write a sequel because they die. That's true if I just said, well, too bad, sorry; they died there in the snow, therefore that's the end, no more books. But I don't think that. I think they're out there somewhere and I think that their life has changed and their life is happy and I would like to think that's true for the people they left behind as well.

Activity

Role playing activity using characterization.

Objectives:

1) Students will be able to respond to literary material from personal, creative and critical points of view.

2) Students will be able to analyze how characters in literature deal with conflict, solve problems and relate to real-life situations.

3) Students will be able to adequately demonstrate the ability to apply key concepts to new situations.

Procedure/Activities/Closure:

5 minutes: Students will discuss the book and authors message to recap the storyline of the book.
15-20 minutes: Teacher will create assignment tags for students to draw out of a hat. Role Play: Teacher will act as the “Chief Elder” asking each student (according to their “assignment”) how s/he feels they can better the “community”? Students will respond in character. A debate will ensue, as students are encouraged to comment on the previous student’s answer. The teacher will indirectly demonstrate how status limits or excels the validity of their answers, this will lead into the importance of and how we make decisions based history.

5-10 minutes: Students will identify which job in this utopian society they would like to have and why based on the book and this activity. We would reflect about how important it was to understand the hierarchy of this society.

15-20 minutes: Since this book often disappoints the readers with its ending I would separate the class into groups to develop an alternative ending. These would be shared with the group.
The Giver, – Assignment Tags

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Receiver</th>
<th>Birthmother</th>
<th>Street Cleaner</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nurturer</td>
<td>Department of Justice</td>
<td>Committee Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Instructor</td>
<td>Elder</td>
<td>Leader of the Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee Member</td>
<td>Director of Recreation</td>
<td>Doctor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laborer</td>
<td>Speaker</td>
<td>Rehabilitation Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caretaker of the Old</td>
<td>Food Distributor</td>
<td>Committee Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elder</td>
<td>Planning Committee Dir.</td>
<td>Laborer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pilot</td>
<td>Committee Member</td>
<td>Fish Hatchery Attendant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birthmother</td>
<td>Department of Bicycle Repair</td>
<td>Instructor of Sixes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laborer</td>
<td>Childcare Specialist</td>
<td>Elder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Attendant</td>
<td>Food Distributor</td>
<td>Committee Member</td>
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Hoot

Discussion Questions

1. Mrs. Eberhardt tells Roy, "Honey, sometimes you're going to be faced with situations where the line isn't clear between what's right and what's wrong. Your heart will tell you to do one thing, and your brain will tell you to do something different. In the end, all that's left is to look at both sides and go with your best judgment." Discuss incidents where Roy's heart tells him one thing, his heart another.

2. Have you ever been in a situation like Roy's mother describes? What did you do?

3. How is Roy's family different from Beatrice/Mullet Fingers' family? What influence do you think the characters' families had on their actions? Explain.

4. Why does Beatrice feel a need to shield her stepbrother? Discuss whether there is a correlation between Mullet Fingers' family life and his desire to save the owls.

5. Why did Mother Paula's Pancakes "lose" the Environmental Impact Statement? What do you think they could have done instead?

6. Through much of the book, Roy feels like an outsider. What finally makes him feel that he belongs in Florida?

7. Do you think other characters feel like outcasts? Which ones? Why would they feel like this?

8. Dana Matherson bullies Roy, but other characters also act as bullies. Which characters? Who are their targets? Discuss ways of dealing with bullies in real life.

9. Once Roy learned of Mullet Fingers' plan to save the burrowing owls, he wanted to help. Which boy's method do you think was more effective? Why?
10. Mullet Fingers vandalized the construction site and the patrol car. Was he justified in doing this? Why or why not?

11. Mullet Fingers shows Roy a great spot to get away and relax away from the stress of school and family. Do you have a place like this? Describe your place, or how you would like your place to be.

12. Mullet Fingers earned his nickname from his ability to catch a mullet fish with his bare hands. Think of a special talent you have - what nickname could you give yourself based on this talent?

13. If you could write yourself into this book, where/how would you fit in?

14. At the end of the novel, Roy begins to feel more at home in Florida. Why do you think this is? What makes you feel at home somewhere?

15. *Hoot* has been made into a movie. How do you think a movie would enhance this story? How might it hurt this story?

Activities

Helping Endangered Animals: The Burrowing owls are protected in this story. Mother’s Pancakes could not be built as proposed because these owls made the land their home. Ask the students to find out about animals in your area that are endangered or protected. Have them research and put together a project such as a poster or flyer that tells about the animal and why they are protected. These can be shared and then displayed for other students to see. Some organizations have ways to “adopt” endangered animals to help protect them. Your students may choose to raise money so they can help.

Optional activity
Standing Tall Against Bullies: Dana Matherson was a bad kid through and through from the way he looked, to the language he used, to the way he bullied everyone. Roy used his brains to eventually outwit Dana, although he was suspended from the bus and could have been seriously injured. Bullies are everywhere, even if they only a bully using words. They can be serious problems at school and shouldn’t be ignored. Have the class brainstorm ways to stop a bully like Dana. Have students create skits to help them see situations from different point of views such as the student who is being bullied, the ones who hang out with the bullies so they won’t be the one who is targeted and the others who stand back and don’t get involved because they are too scared. Invite your school guidance counselor or school law officer to be a part of the skits.

Holes

Discussion questions

1. In what ways is the saying "You can't judge a book by its cover" a good one for this story? For example, what do you expect Camp Green Lake to be like based on its name? What is it really like?

2. What do you think the title Holes means? What might be another reason other than the holes the boys dig in the lake? What hole (or holes) is in Stanley’s life when he first arrives at Camp Green Lake? Are the holes still there when he leaves?

3. Stanley’s father, an inventor, says, "I learn from failure." What do you think this means? In what ways have you learned from failure?

4. Why do the boys call Mr. Pendanski "Mom"? How does this name fit his personality? In what ways is it not a good name for him?
5. What do the boys’ nicknames tell about each of their personalities? Do you think a name changes the way others see a person and the way the person sees him- or herself?

6. Why do you think Stanley lies to his parents in his letters home? Would you do the same?

7. Stanley and his family half-jokingly blame their misfortunes on Stanley’s "no-good-dirty-rotten-pig-stealing-great-great-grandfather." Do you believe in fate — that people are lucky or unlucky — or do you believe, as Mr. Pendanski tells the boys, that we are all responsible for our selves and our destinies?

8. As Stanley becomes stronger and his skin becomes tougher from digging the holes, how is he changing inside? What are the causes of those changes?

9. Why do you think Stanley gives X-Ray the lipstick tube? What would you have done if you were in Stanley’s place?

10. Why do you think Stanley lies and says he stole Mr. Sir's sunflower seeds? If you were in Stanley’s position, what would you have done?

11. At home, Stanley did not have friends. But at Camp Green Lake, he forms a special friendship with Zero. How did Zero and Stanley prove their friendship to each other? In what way does Zero fill a hole in Stanley's life?

12. How is Stanley’s friendship with Zero similar to Kate Barlow's friendship with Sam? In each case why don't people approve of the friendship?

13. Why don't the other boys like Stanley and Zero's agreement that Zero will help Stanley dig and Stanley will help Zero read? Do you think it is fair to both Stanley and Zero? Do you think it is fair to the other campers?

14. *Holes* is really three stories tied together. One is about Camp Green Lake. The second is the tale of Stanley’s great-great-grandfather and the "curse" put on him by Madame Zeroni. The
third story is of Kissin' Kate Barlow - the outlaw who robbed his great grandfather. How do these three stories fit together within the larger story of *Holes*?

15. Stanley always seems to find humor even in the worst situations. He laughs on the bus to Camp Green Lake thinking about his "no-good-dirty-rotten-pig-stealing-great-great-grandfather." While walking across the hot, dry lake, he laughs at the sight of the boat, Mary Lou. Climbing Big Thumb, he even makes Zero laugh. What does this say about Stanley? How does his attitude help him?

16. What is the significance of Stanley’s name being a palindrome - a word that is spelled the same way forward and backward?

17. Where does Stanley find the strength to carry Zero up the mountain? Why did he do it even though he didn't know what he'd find at the top? Describe something you've done that at first seemed impossible. What did you learn from the experience?

18. Even though his fate is uncertain, Stanley is suddenly very happy as he lies awake on the top of the mountain, staring at the stars. Why does he feel this way? How has his life changed from the start of the story?

19. Why do you think Stanley starts to call Zero by his real name, Hector?

20. When Hattie Parker sees Katherine and Sam kiss, she says, "God will punish you!" Based on the events later in the book, whom do you think God punished?

Activity

**SET UP AND PREPARE.** Obtain a copy of the Disney movie, *Holes*.

Prepare the drawing of the Double Bubble Thinking Map ahead of time. You can then quickly
add the items as the students tell events from the book only, movie only, and in both. You may have discussion about where the events belong. When all the changes have been made, make a finished copy with the events on different shapes, colors, or appropriate items from the book (shovels, hats, snakes, etc.) cut from the Ellison machine. The students can help with this.

REPRODUCIBLES  Double Bubble Thinking Map
Directions

1. The students will watch the 117 minute movie. Before the students begin viewing the movie, discuss the questions and explain to them that they will be making a Double Bubble Thinking Map at the conclusion of the movie. They should be looking for differences between the book and the movie as they watch. After finishing the final segment of the movie, the class will make the Double Bubble Thinking map.

Jackie’s Wild Seattle

Discussion Questions:

In the story, Cody was an eyewitness to the events of September 11th How did it affect his behavior?

1. Shannon and Cody spent the summer in a totally different environment than they were used to in their normal lives. What were some of the most dramatic differences?
2. Shannon discovered that Uncle Neal had a secret he had kept from his family. What reasons do you think he had for keeping it from them?
3. Why did Shannon feel she needed to keep his secret, too?

Activities

Story Quilt: Make a class story quilt, with the circle of healing as the theme. In one of the emails received from the mother she says, “We’re so proud that you are helping your uncle and the wildlife center this summer. You are helping to heal the world. Each of us can only make a small difference, but together we can make a big difference.” With this quote in mind the students can brainstorm ideas and create an illustrated quilt square. At the bottom of the quilt square they
could find one quote to support their illustration. This can be done with a hole punch and stitch together with yarn to display.

Optional Activity

Bumper stickers: Cody and Uncle Neal were always on the lookout for funny and unique bumper stickers. Ask students to list all the bumper stickers from the story and talk about what makes them good. Some are funny, some ironic, some thought-provoking, etc. Then invite them to make their own bumper stickers, either with original sayings or using sayings they've seen on other stickers.

**When my name was Keoke**

Discussion questions

1. Which characters showed courage in this story? How did they show it?
2. Describe Abuji. Do you know anyone like him?
4. How does Tae-yul's interest in mechanical things like bicycles and airplanes influence what happens in his life? Do you have an interest that might shape your life?
5. How is the family in this story similar to yours? How is it different?
6. After the Japanese soldiers burned her diary, Sun-hee writes, "You burn the paper but not the words." (p. 106). What does she mean?
7. She goes on to write, "You silence the words, but not the thoughts. You silence the thoughts only if you kill the man. And you will find that his thoughts rise again in the minds of others-twice as
strong as before!" Does this remind you of any other events in the history of our country or another?

8. How are females treated differently than males in this story? How is that similar to or different than our culture?

9. On page 142, Sun-hee describes one way that war "turned everything inside out." What are some other ways?

10. Describe how the conditions in her country impacted Sun-hee's friendships. Have you ever had a friendship strained by outside forces?

11. We heard this story from the voices of Sun-hee and Tae-yul. How might the story have been different from Tomo's point of view?

12. Sun-hee wonders, "How could an alphabet - letters that didn't even mean anything by themselves be important?" (p. 107) Can you respond to her question?

13. How are the kamikaze pilots like the 9/11 attackers? Why did Tae-yul volunteer? What other kinds of things might lead people to make that sort of choice?

14. How do you feel when you read that a Japanese soldier talks about "the sickly pale Americans?"(p.108) How do you think many of the Koreans to whom he spoke responded?

15. When Tae-yul is speaking to a Japanese officer (p. 120), he makes a distinction between lying and acting. What do you think about that?

16. What do you think of Sun-hee's question, "If a war lasts long enough, is it possible that people would completely forget the idea of beauty?" (p. 110)

17. What did you learn that you did not know before about Korea and Japan? Does this author show a bias?
Activities

Discuss the background of World War II in Korea. Then have students brainstorm a list of countries that were occupied during World War II.


• Assign a small group of students to each of the countries. Research and present to the rest of the class including the following topics: rules imposed by occupying forces; resistance groups formed; what resistance groups accomplished; and what your reaction would be to occupation

Invite a Korean chef to share the food that is talked about in the book and discuss how important food can be to a culture.

Online Resources

There are several online resources for be creating online blogs. One major concern for this age group would be privacy. Wikis and facebook have the ability to create private or closed groups, which means only members of the group can see or post information.

Online Book Communities

www.Readergirlz.com

and its blog

http://readersgirls.blogspot.com this successful site offers young adults a place to go to read book reviews, facts about the author, questions, and much more.

Guys Lit Wire http://guyslitwire.blogspot.com provides teen boys a place to find “good” reads.
www.Facebook.com would allow users to create a closed group to protect teens privacy.

www.Wiki.com wiki offers the ability to also create closed groups in order to protect teens privacy.

www.goodreads.com this site keeps track of what you read and allows you to create or participate in an online book club.

www.librarything.com the world’s largest book club.

Working with the local library I would suggest using their website to create links to the online reading groups. As the reading specialist I would then monitor these sites to generate questions, make general comments, and gage summer reading. In the spring I would train a group of students to be in charge of the summer online discussion groups. Technology is such a great tool to help students keep engaged with reading.
References


Bracey, Gerald W., (2002). Summer Loss: The Phenomenon No One Wants to Deal With. 
EBSCO Publishing from Education Research Complete Database.


Fox, Allison (June 2011) telephone interview.


Robinson, Mary (May 2011) Telephone Interview


