

Resources for Reading and Writing Rigor

Reading and the gifted student

1. Bloom would choose books that
 - ⇒ invite analysis of character, events and interactions
 - ⇒ allow the reader to synthesize ideas from the book using discussion or from reader's prior experiences
 - ⇒ evaluate relationships, actions, interactions, consequences, alternatives, and the possibilities

(Halsted, 1994)

{see "Books to Make You Think" list from Linda Riesterer}

2. McIntosh (1982) reported that highly able readers often have preferences for science, history, biography, travel, poetry, and informational texts such as atlases and encyclopedias and how-to books. Advanced readers may be drawn to reference material in their quest for knowledge or need to understand or solve a problem. Interacting with informational books may also provide an opportunity for advanced readers to develop a deep understanding of a particular topic.

Socratic Inquiry and Seminar Teaching

Optimal use—once a week

Rules

1. Seat students in a circle
2. Seminar leader may only ask questions
3. All students must have read the selection
4. Answers given to the question(s) are related to the text under study; no outside source is cited

Guidelines for the Socratic Seminar Leader

1. Asks an opening question
2. Asks for clarification and precision of the response
3. Redirects the question until a clear answer is given
4. Looks for connections of the response to larger issues
5. Involves everyone (keeping a seating chart can help with this)
6. Uses wait time
7. Is an active listener
8. Objectively receives the participant's answer

9. Does not insist on common agreement; seeks diverging opinions in the answers
10. Determines the resolution of the question

Developing Good Questions for Socratic Seminars

1. The questions for discussion should be interpretive (not factual or evaluative)
2. Should be an element of doubt regarding the answer to the question
3. Should be answerable based on what the author has said in the text
4. Should deal with the important, crucial elements of the work
5. Should relate specifically to the work at hand, rather than a question that could be asked about any work
6. Clarity and simplicity of the questions is important. The KISS rule applies.
7. Should be interesting to you as a leader of the discussion

Song Lyrics with Big Questions for Discussion or Writing

What A Good Boy (Barenaked Ladies)

When I was born they looked at me and said
What a good boy, what a smart boy, what a strong boy
And when you were born they looked at you and said
What a good girl, what a smart girl, what a pretty girl
We've got these chains that hang around our necks
People want to strangle us with them before we take our first breath
Afraid of change, afraid of staying the same
When temptation calls we just look away
I wake up scared, I wake up strange
I wake up wondering if anything in my life is ever going to change
I wake up scared, I wake up strange
And everything around me stays the same

Who Needs Sleep (Barenaked Ladies)

Now I lay me down not to sleep
I just get tangled in the sheets
I swim in sweat three inches deep
Just lay back and claim defeat
Chapter read and lesson learned
I turned the lights off while she burned
So while she's three hundred degrees

I throw the sheets off and I freeze
Lids down
I count sheep
I count heartbeats
The only thing that counts
Is that I won't sleep
I count down
I look around
Who needs sleep?
Well you're never gonna get it
Who needs sleep?
Tell me what's that for
Who needs sleep?
Be happy with what you get
And there's a guy that's been awake since the second world war
My hands are locked up tight in fists
My mind is racing filled with lists
Of things to do and things I've done
Another sleepless night's begun

Grade Nine (barenaked ladies)

I found my locker and I found my classes
Lost my lunch and I broke my glasses
That guy is huge! That girl is wailin'!
First day of school and I'm already failing
This is me in grade nine, baby, this is me in grade nine...
Well half my friends are crazy and the others are depressed
And none of them can help me study for my math test
Got into the classroom and my knowledge was gone
Guess I should've studied instead of watching Wrath of Khan

"Perfect" (Simple Plan)

Hey dad look at me
Think back and talk to me
Did I grow up according to plan?
And do you think I'm wasting my time doing things I wanna do?
But it hurts when you disapprove all along
And now I try hard to make it
I just want to make you proud

I'm never gonna be good enough for you
I can't pretend that
I'm alright
And you can't change me
'Cuz we lost it all
Nothing lasts forever
I'm sorry
I can't be perfect
Now it's just too late and
We can't go back
I'm sorry
I can't be perfect

Reflections (Mulan)

Who is that girl I see
Staring straight back at me?
Why is my reflection someone I don't know?
Somehow I cannot hide who I am
Though I've tried
When will my reflection show
Who I am inside?

"What It feels Like For A Girl" (Madonna)

[Spoken:]
Girls can wear jeans
And cut their hair short
Wear shirts and boots
'Cause it's OK to be a boy
But for a boy to look like a girl is degrading
'Cause you think that being a girl is degrading
But secretly you'd love to know what it's like
Wouldn't you
What it feels like for a girl...
Do you know what it feels like for a girl
Do you know what it feels like in this world
For a girl

Hurt that's not supposed to show
And tears that fall when no one knows
When you're trying hard to be your best
Could you be a little less

Do you know what it feels like for a girl
Do you know what it feels like in this world
What it feels like for a girl
Strong inside but you don't know it
Good little girls they never show it
When you open up your mouth to speak
Could you be a little weak

"Numb" (Linkin Park)

I'm tired of being what you want me to be
Feeling so faithless lost under the surface
Don't know what you're expecting of me
Put under the pressure of walking in your shoes
(Caught in the undertow just caught in the undertow)
Every step that I take is another mistake to you
(Caught in the undertow just caught in the undertow)
I've become so numb I can't feel you there
Become so tired so much more aware
I'm becoming this all I want to do
Is be more like me and be less like you

"I'm Just A Kid" (Simple Plan)

I woke up it was 7
I waited till 11
Just to figure out that no one would call
I think I got a lot of friends but I don't hear from them
What's another night all alone?
When your spending everyday on your own
And here it goes
I'm just a kid and life is a nightmare
I'm just a kid, I know that its not fair
Nobody cares, cause I'm alone and the world is
Having more fun than me

Writing Activities

Fan Fiction*: fiction written by people who enjoy a film, novel, television show or other media work, using the characters and situations developed in it and developing new plots in which to use these characters.

Characters and props from more than one media work may also be incorporated into a single fanfiction (known as crossovers).

~en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fanfiction

Lesson: students write their fanfiction in drabble form—a story with exactly 100 words.

Postcard Activity*: Use postcards as a prompt for narrative and descriptive writing or poetry. Two students could have the same postcards and compare their responses when finished writing.

Writing Scales*: With the class develop standards of what an expert writer in a particular genre would look like. Work backwards to develop standards for developing and novice writers. Related to rubrics, but more student centered. Students bring examples of “expert” writing that they find.

Literary Analysis Ideas*: summarize the work in 25 words or less; draw a map, cluster, or timeline based on all or part of the work; rewrite a brief portion of the work; play the role of tour guide and take a reader on tour of the work, point out its highlights; write a “foreword” and make predictions; rewrite the ending; write a poem.

Sensory Field Trip*: Bring fresh baked bread and chocolate to class. Guide students in observing the color, texture, smell, distinguishing features, etc. of the bread. As they eat it, direct them to close their eyes and focus on the sense of taste. Students write words, phrases and sentences describing eating the bread. Allow 1-3 minutes to write. Repeat with chocolate (use Dove, if possible). Compare the 2 experiences.

Wayyyyyyyyyy Beyond Description!*: 1) Find 100 adjectives that describe who you are and list them alphabetically—try to find some words that no one else knows. 2) Write a short essay describing both an individual and an incident that has made you the person you are—in effect, that explains the adjectives you chose to describe yourself. 3) Use all 100 adjectives (or as many as you can fit) and create an illustration using only these adjectives that is connected, somehow, with the essay you just wrote.

A Case of Vowel Play*: With a group of 3 or 4 people determine which vowel occurs most often in your names. This will become the lost vowel in a children’s book your group will write and illustrate. You may use all the

alphabet letters in the first 3 pages; on pages 4-13 you will search for your missing vowel, but you cannot use this letter at any time; on pages 14-16 all the alphabet is together again and you can use all letters.

What I've Learned*: Share examples written by children and adults, then have students write their life lessons (in a single sentence or phrase) about family, friends, school, self, the world.

*For more detailed lesson ideas and plans, ask Linda for handouts